



# Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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**Sri G.K. Sundaram**

(29.5.1914 – 18.5.2009)

*- an admirable person who was an era-maker.*

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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!

# 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

### Dakshinamurti Stotra

२७। ओं वदनाब्जजिताब्जश्रिये नमः।

अप्सु जायते इत्यब्जं पद्मम्। वदनं अब्जमिव। तेन जिता अब्जस्य श्री शोभा यस्य सः। तस्मै नमः। सनातनधर्मे पद्मस्य कश्चन महिम अस्ति। पद्मं सौन्दर्यस्य निधानमिति न केवलं कविसमय एव किं तु वेदेऽपि तथैव वर्णनं दृश्यते। सर्वमपि सुन्दरं वस्तु पद्मेन उपमीयते। एषा सौन्दर्यस्य परा काष्ठा यत् पद्मसौन्दर्यमपि निराक्रियते। शिशोः हृदये मातुः स्मितमेव सौन्दर्यनिधानम्। तथैव भक्तस्य भावनायां भगवतो मूर्तिः सौन्दर्यराशिः प्रतीयते। सुन्दरं पद्मादिकं वस्तु दृष्ट्वा तत्समकाल एव भक्तस्य हृदयं भक्तिभावनया आप्लुतं भवति। जगत्यस्मिन् मांगल्यं सौन्दर्यं च सर्वं भवद्विभूतिरेव। जगत्यस्मिन् यत्किञ्चित् सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरमस्ति तत्स्वयं भगवानेव।

Salutations to the One, the beauty of whose lotus face, surpasses the beauty of the lotus flower.

The glory attributed to the lotus in Indian tradition is something unique. That the lotus is a storehouse of beauty is not just a poetic convention. Similar description can also be found in the Veda. All beautiful things are compared to a lotus. If something were to surpass even the beauty of the lotus, then that would be the ultimate in beauty. The mother's smile alone is the most beautiful thing to the child. Similarly, the Lord's form appears as the repository of all beauty to the devotee in the contemplative mood. Seeing beautiful objects such as lotus etc., the devotee's heart instantly overflows with a feeling of devotion to the Lord. Whatever is auspicious and beautiful in this world is the glory of the Lord alone. Whatever reality, auspiciousness and beauty that is there in this world is the Lord Himself.

२८। ओं वदनेन्दुस्फुरद्दिशाय नमः।

वदनं इन्दुरिव तेन स्फुरन्त्यः दिशः यस्य सः। तस्मै नमः। भगवतः चन्द्रस्य पूर्णबिम्बं चन्द्रिकया आप्लुता दिशश्च अवलोक्यैव मनस्सद्यः प्रसन्नं भवति। तथैव भगवतो दरहासमुधुरां मूर्तिं दृष्ट्वैव भक्तस्य मनसि स्थिता ग्लानिः दूरीभूय मनः प्रसन्नं आत्मसाक्षात्कारचरणं च भवति।

Salutations to the One whose countenance lights up the quarters as the Moon would.

Seeing the full Moon and the quarters flooded with the moonlight, the mind instantly becomes cheerful. In the same manner, seeing the sweet smiling form of the Lord, the afflictions in the devotee's mind go away; the mind becomes cheerful and gains the capacity for Self-realization.

२९। ओं वरदानैकनिपुणाय नमः।

वराणां दाने एकः मुख्यः निपुणः समर्थः। तस्मै नमः।

भक्तान् भवान् वरैरभिवर्षति। भक्तवसलो हि सः। भगवतः कृपा अपि भवति सर्वव्यापिनी देशकालवस्तुपरिच्छेदरहिता च। परं तु भक्तास्तां कृपां भूगर्भजलमिव बहिः प्रकटीकर्तुं यत्नं कुर्यात्। वरो हि नाम कर्मफलमेव। कर्मफलस्य सर्वस्य दाता ईश्वर एक एव। विभिन्नासु स्थितिषु फलप्राप्तेः निमित्तानि भिन्नानि दृश्यन्ते। तथापि सर्वस्य कर्मफलस्य मोलस्रोतः भगवानेक एवेति वेदान्तसिद्धान्तः। फलमत उपपत्तेः ३-२-३८ इति भगवान् बादरायणस्सूत्रयामास।

Salutations to the One who alone is the single most competent authority to grant boons.

The Lord showers the devotees with boons. He is full of love and care towards them. His love and care are called grace. The Lord's grace is as all-pervading and free from limitations of space, time and objects as the Lord Himself is. The devotee should try to elicit that affection, just as the ground water has to be brought out with effort. The boon is indeed a reward for the actions performed. Only one Lord dispenses the fruits of all actions. The causes for various fruits of actions in different situations may also appear to be different. Nevertheless, it is the basic tenet of the Vedanta that the prime source (or giver) of all fruits of actions is the Lord only. Bhagavan Badarayana indicated it in an aphorism. "On ground of logic, the fruit of action is from the Lord (3-2-28)".

३०। ओं वरवीणोज्ज्वलत्कराय नमः।

वरा श्रेष्ठा वीणा। तया उज्ज्वलन्तौ अधिकं शोभमानौ करौ यस्य सः। तस्मै नमः।

सर्वासां चतुष्पष्टि कलानां सर्वेषां च विद्यास्थानानां च उद्गमस्थानं परमेश्वर एवेति हिन्दुतत्त्वशास्त्रस्य विशिष्टो राद्धान्तः। केवलं वेदा वेदगान्येव परं तु संगीतशास्त्रं नाट्यशास्त्रं इत्यादीनि सर्वाणि शास्त्राणि अखण्डज्ञानस्वरूपात् ईश्वरादेव सृष्ट्यादौ तत्तद्विमुखत उद्गच्छन्ति। एतं दर्शनमधिकृत्य परमेश्वरस्य सगुणरूपाणि पुराणादिषु वर्ण्यन्ते। संगीतप्रमिनो भक्तस्य हृदये संगीतकुशलः भगवान् धारणया आरध्यत इत्यतीव समीचीनम्।

Salutations to the One holding the choicest vina (a stringed musical instrument) in his resplendent hands.

The distinct doctrine of Hindu philosophy is that the Lord alone is the source and origin of all the sixty four arts and all branches of knowledge. Not only the vedas and vedangaas (auxiliary texts of the veda), but also all branches of knowledge such as music, dance and drama etc. have emanated in the form of pronouncements by sages at the beginning of creation from the Lord alone, who is of the nature of indivisible and undivided Knowledge. Lord's manifest form is vividly described in various Puranas in accordance with this vision. It is most appropriate that the Lord is contemplated in the heart as proficient in music by the music-loving devotees.



## Pujya Swamiji's Ten-days Camp at AVG, Anaikatti On Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram



Pujya Swamiji conducted a 10-days camp on “Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram” of Sri Ādi Śankarācārya, at Anaikatti from April 21 to April 30, 2008.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram is a set of 10 profound verses where Śankarācārya brings out the essence of Vedānta.

The gist of the teaching in the camp is as follows:

Any knowledge is about what already exists; only ignorance is removed. Īśvara is all-knowledge. Knowledge in our culture includes both the relative and the absolute, and both are sacred in our culture. We can invoke any knowledge from the deity which represents that branch of knowledge. Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti is the deity representing all spiritual knowledge.

Dakṣiṇa means south and mūrti means idol. So Dakṣiṇāmūrti means the idol facing south. When the idol is facing south, devotees naturally have to face north. This is so because the direction south symbolizes

‘death’ and north symbolizes ‘mokṣa’ – freedom from bondage. So the devotees are always on the path to mokṣa when facing the deity. Another meaning of the word Dakṣiṇāmūrti is dakṣa – meaning one who is capable (of creation, sustenance & destruction) and He is also the one who is amūrti – formless. The idol symbolizes eight components viz. the five elements space, air, fire, water and earth, the sun and moon and finally the devotee himself. Space is represented by the ḍamaru, air by the bandana on the forehead (worn to prevent the ‘air’ from blowing the hair away), fire by the torch, water by Gangā on the head and earth the material with which the idol is made.

The common refrain of verses in the Dakṣiṇāmūrti stotram is – ‘I salute this idol of Guru which is nothing but Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti. In the first verse, the experience in the waking world is equated with dream experience. In a dream we conjure up all kinds of objects and enjoy

the resultant experiences. As long as we are in the dream, it is absolutely real for us. He is like a person who has just had a six-course meal and gone to sleep and who can dream of being stranded and starving in some place with no one around. As long as he is in the dream, he is desperately looking for food but once he wakes up he finds that his stomach is still heavy with the food eaten before going to sleep! After waking up we realize that all the dream objects and experiences have been created by me alone and there is nothing else other than me. In the same way, on gaining this knowledge one understands that all that is in the so-called 'outside' world exist in ME alone. The other analogy given is that, just like we see the reflection of a city (or part thereof) on a mirror we see all the objects in the world as though being 'outside' of (what we consider as) ourselves while in reality they all exist in ME alone. Here 'I' am like a mirror reflecting all that is outside.

For assimilating this truth we have to analyze the world before us because it appears so real. When we analyze the world, we find that every object is a collection of names. The object is just many sub-components (represented by names) meaningfully put together. And each name stands for a particular meaning. The 'meaning' is nothing but knowledge. Ultimately the whole world of names and meanings is just knowledge. Before manifestation also each object exists in the form of pure knowledge. This is what is said in the second verse as 'Just as a sprout exists in a seed, the world also existed in an unmanifest form before manifesting in the form available to us'.

How then is the world available in this form before us? Just like a magician creates objects magically or a great yogi (like Sage Viśwāmitra who created a separate heaven for Trīṣaṅku) creates things, the Lord by his own power of saṅkalpa (thought) brings forth this world. What really is this world?

It is the association, as though, of space and time (which are relative). Still it is the glory of Īśvara that even though everything in the world has only a relative reality, it is still fascinating and wondrous to behold. But when subjected to analysis everything reduces to knowledge alone.

How do we obtain this knowledge (of oneness)? When we analyze the methods in which we usually gather knowledge about the external world, we find that all knowledge is obtained through the sense organs. But knowledge of the 'Self' is not objectifiable by any of the sense organs. Even then there are some similarities between knowledge gathered by the sense organs and knowledge from the śāstra which can be illustrated with an example. After a person, who is blind, undergoes an operation to get rid of his blindness, however much the doctor convinces him that his eyes are fine, he must finally open his eyes and 'see' it for himself. In the same way, to understand that the śāstra works, we should first look at ourselves through the words of the śāstra and assimilate the knowledge when we 'know' for sure the truth is expounded there. This is what we call śraddhā (faith) which later gets converted in to direct knowledge. How does śraddhā get translated to knowledge? Swamiji illustrated this by holding up a 'rose' and calling it as an 'apple'! However much we would like to believe Swamiji, it is not possible accept the rose as an apple because we cannot go against what is perceived clearly by the eyes. This is so because what are perceived by the eyes are 'knowledge' and not mere 'faith'. We surrender completely to the eyes and other sense organs in their respective fields of action. Such should be our approach to the śāstra and only then does a person see 'truth' as it is.

This knowledge can be obtained only from a teacher who has in turn obtained this knowledge from his teacher and so on. The

primary source of this knowledge is the Lord himself. When the teacher handles the sentences of the Upaniṣads like 'Tat tvam asi' etc., committed students appreciate the reality directly in the form of existence. And once the truth is understood in this manner, there is no return to the ocean of saṁsāra.

How is the knowledge manifest in the world? Just as the light from a lamp inside a pot with many holes comes out (through the holes) the Self shines forth through the various sense organs like eyes, ears etc. in the form of knowledge. This is seen when we cognize the whole external world as 'I know' in the form of perceiving form, taste, smell, touch and sound. That cognizer is the 'real I'. When that is the truth who are the people who see the Self differently? They can be classified broadly into those who commit a mistake due to ignorance, those who do not accept the śāstra as a 'means of knowledge' but commit mistake and those who accept the śāstra as a 'means of knowledge' but still commit a mistake. People place the Self in the body, the prāṇas, the senses, flickers of consciousness and as a void. The Vedāntin, to establish the nature of the true self, does not have to directly negate all these people because in the same order the later one negates the earlier like the one who considers the prāṇas as the ultimate dismisses those for whom body the ultimate, those who consider the prāṇas to be the ultimate dismisses those who consider prāṇas as the Self and so on. All these people are childish, dull witted, deluded and are wasting their time by blabbering.

How actually is the ignorance covered? Just as the Sun is covered by Rāhu, the shadow planet, māyā veils the intellect of the ignorant.

How does this knowledge get revealed? As a person waking up from deep sleep where

all the sense organs and organs of action are resolved, cognizes as 'I slept earlier' (once a person gets the knowledge he realizes that all that he has undergone is just māyā). And the Guru communicates the nature of the ultimate truth with the help of the auspicious cinmudrā (the sign where the tip of the thumb is joined to the tip of the index finger with the other three fingers remaining separate). The truth is – Just as, passing through the various stages of life like childhood, youth, old age etc and the various states of experience like waking, dream and deep sleep, the cognition that "I am" is constant through all the stages and states. Others being variable, this 'I' alone is free of all attributes.

How does the ignorant one perceive the world? Due to ignorance, one sees the world as one of relationship between cause and effect, me and mine, teacher and student, father and son etc. This is so in both the waking and dream states.

How is the world available to us as? The whole world, even though does not have an independent reality, is a manifestation of Lord Dakṣināmurti's eight-fold form viz. space, air, fire, water and earth, Sun (representing all stars) and the moon (representing all satellites). We offer our salutations to that Dakṣiṇāmūrti again and again through these verses.

This briefly is what is said in the Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram. Chanting, listening, analyzing the meaning and contemplating on this stotram, makes clear the all-pervasiveness of ātmā and one understands the underlying unity of the universe.

Pujya Swamiji also talked on the meaning of satyam, jñānam, Anantam and the three orders of reality viz. the absolute, relative and one's own subjective projections.

*Report by Br. Sivatma Chaitanya*



## Pujya Swamiji's Second Camp on Ribu Gita at AVG, Coimbatore.

Around 100 students of Pujya Swamiji attended the second camp on Ribu Gita between 2nd May 2009 and 11th May 2009 held at Anaikatti. The campers were spell bound by the traditional worship in the temples of Lord Dakshinamurthy and Lord Subramanya in the mornings and evenings. During the mornings, Pujya Swamiji conducted guided meditation class.

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswathi conducted three Vedanta classes every day. He taught Chapter I of Ribu Gita which described what is not Brahman. He also explained Chapter II of Ribu Gita which explains what Brahman is. Pujya Swamiji made people see that their true nature is 'ananda'.

In the afternoon Swamini Saradananda and Swamini Vedarthananda taught Vedic chanting and Sloka chanting to the campers. Swamini Brahmaleenananda taught Durvasana Pradeekara Dasakam. This text explains the ways to get rid of bad tendencies.

At 8 p.m every day, there was Satsang. Pujya Swamiji answered the questions of campers.

One day Pujya Swamiji instructed the campers to maintain silence for the whole day. The campers complied with this and discovered the ananda in maintaining silence.

Upanayanam function of Chi. Dheer was held in Anaikatti Dakshinamurthy temple during the camp. The campers were offered delicious feast by his family during this celebration.

There was Jalatarangam concert by Smt. Seethamma one evening. Another evening there was Carnatic music concert by Kumari Darshana and Kumari Sowmya. On another evening Dr. Krishnan gave a lecture on the challenges faced by Hinduism.

On the concluding day, the campers offered vandanam to the guru and offered their guru dakshina.

Campers Sri Ramesh, Sri Jayaram, Smt Vinod, Sri N. Avinashilingam and Sri Muraleedharan spoke on the occasion and thanked Pujya Swamiji and other teachers for the rejuvenating spiritual camp.

*Report by N. Avinashilingam*

## UK students at the Rishikesh Camp (14-28 March 2009)



The party from the UK broke the record for being the largest group from a single location to attend a study camp conducted by Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, twenty-seven people – students of Swamini Atmaprakasanda in London (with three friends from Spain) – clambered out of the afternoon heat at Delhi Airport into a waiting AC coach to make their way to Rishikesh.

For some, this would be their first introduction to a camp conducted by Pujya Swamiji. For some, this would be their first introduction to India! And India delivered! Hot, exotic, welcoming, chaotic. (And, by way of proving it, one lady's luggage didn't arrive with the rest at Delhi Airport!)

Nine hours later, after dodging trucks and bicycles, bullock carts and lazy goats, the coach pulled up outside the cream-coloured gates of Arsha Vidya Pitham. It was like landing on a different planet. The crowds, noise and dust gave way to space and order and tranquillity, dotted here and there with the orange robes of resident sannyasis. Rooms were allocated and orientation established. And then the group had their first glimpse of Ganga by moonlight.

The next morning the camp kicked off in earnest. The regular programme was to be: 5.30am *puja*, then meditation, breakfast, followed by the first study session on Rama Gita unfolded by Pujya Swamiji, yoga/ Sanskrit/chanting, second Rama Gita session, lunch, afternoon break, more

chanting/Sanskrit, third Rama Gita session at 5pm, *puja*, dinner, *satsang*.

As many as 250 people attended from all over the world – from Australia to Argentina, Spain to Norway, Canada to Chennai. And even though more than the registered number packed the meeting hall, Swami Aparokshananda and Swami Suddhananda, who were responsible for running the event, took everything in their easy stride.

The profound message of Rama Gita was expertly unfolded over fourteen days. "Through the presence of the guru and the great Vedic statements, immediate knowledge of Brahman is born. Having recognized in one's own mind one's self as pure consciousness devoid of *upadis*, one may set aside the entire inert world which is available for objectification (as *mithya*)."

What a rich daily diet for the mind!

The two-week camp delivered additional delectations. The first was the feeding of 250 sadhus at a *bandhara*. They all came with their hand-delivered invitations and were seated under a red canopy erected in the courtyard. They ranged from the very ancient to the 15 year old; some with matted locks, others with shaved heads. It was a gathering of proud giants. And then, barely half an hour after they arrived, the meal over, with the call of *Hara, Hara Mahadev*, the group rose as one body and vanished into the back streets of Rishikesh, leaving not a trace behind – just a few palm plates and the very aged slowly making their way back to their places. A few days

later we were privileged to witness a second *bandhara*.

The next special occasion was the initiation of two new sannyasis. Both looked impossibly young, yet self-composed and bright. They had spent the previous night in prayer and meditation on the banks of Ganga and were ready for the ceremony the next day. After their initiation by Pujya Swamiji, they threw their *purva ashrama* clothes into Ganga and were led back into the cave under the ashram where they delivered their first address to Swamiji and the resident sannyasis.

The nourishment of the daily advaita teaching was complemented by the nourishment from the kitchens under the watchful guidance of head chef Subramanyam, regular Ganga dips, shopping trips to Ram Jhula, Telegu New Year celebrations with wonderful *rangoli* patterns created by the ladies, the cable car rides to Mansadevi and Chandidevi temples, the spectacle of Ganga *arathi* at Haridwar, the intimacy of Ganga *arathi* performed by the priests at the Dayananda ashram, the daily chanting led by Brahmachari Ram, the unflappable Gunananda in the office, the quiet dedicated service offered by Kayesh and team who recorded the daily talks and stayed up till midnight each day editing them in preparation for delivery before final departure.

This is India at its finest. For all delegates from the UK the visit has been inspiring, for some it has been life-changing.



## Tenth Annual Day Celebration of Dr. Vijaya Home for the Aged, Pillayarpatti, Thanjavur



“Dr. Vijaya had dedicated all her earnings and savings to run this Old Age Home. To all the old age people, she is functioning as a friend, as a doctor and as a counselor. A number of persons were benefitted by her service. She has been able to run this Home with great dedication without compromising with her own standard of care”, said Pujya Swamiji in his *anugraha bhashan* on the Tenth Annual Day Celebration of Dr. vijaya Home for the Aged at Pillayarpatti, Thanjavur, held at assembled in the open ground of Swami Dayananda Nursery & Primary School, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 2009.

Sri Mahesh Hari Sharma, a resident of the Old Age Home garlanded Pujya Swamiji.

Sri Radhakrishnan, Old Age Home Manager welcomed the gathering of donors, old age home residents, staff of the Old Age Home, teachers and other school staff.

Dr. Vijaya, Managing Trustee read the report about the Home from its inception 10 years ago.

Pujya Swamiji gave prizes for the residents and staff of the Home and the school children who participated in the cultural programme.

Pujya Swamiji presented a Gajalakshmi shield to all the VIPs and well-wishers of the Home.

Pujya Swamiji then gave his *anugraha bhashan*.

In his *anugraha bhashan*, Pujya Swamiji said: “Dr. Vijaya had dedicated all her earnings and savings to this Old Age Home. To all the old age

people, she is functioning as a friend, as a doctor and as a counselor. A number of persons were benefitted by her service. She has been able to run this Home with great dedication without compromising with her own standard of care. There are people who run such institutions. Some of them do not have the dedication and care. There are other homes which do not have dedication for care and are not qualified to give medical care. Because of Dr. Vijaya’s dedication, other fellow doctors also come forward to help her out.

Everyone thinks that human beings are essentially selfish and self-centered. But everyone is essentially good. Everyone has got kindness. Insecurity hides all the good qualities. They have to be brought out. The good qualities come up when we see good people, when we move with good people and when we participate in good actions, bad qualities go away. When a drunkard takes the medicines, he is able to avoid bottles but the taste for the drink still remains inside. This also will go when he moves in the company of non-alcoholics.

“Home for the Aged” is a good service. Such good things should go on everywhere. Everyone can do some good service according to each ones capacity Joy derived when serving is fantastic. All should assist this Old Age Home.

This was followed by programme by Old Age Home residents and school children which was appreciated by all.



The quiet end of Sri.G.K. Sundarm was like the quiet, deep and contemplative life he lived these past few years. A role model in many spheres of day-to-day life, G.K.S. was an admirable person who was an era-maker. The conflict-free living of enviable discipline made him enjoy an alert mind even in his nineties. He was an unfailing support for any good cause. A person of his stature continues to live as a source of inspiration in the lives of thousands of people who admired him for his fairness, justice and purity.

**Swami Dayananda**

## Sri Swami Sarvabhutananda in Brasil



Sri Swami Sarvabhutananda conducted a four-days retreat and three public talks at various places in Brasil from three public talks from the 15<sup>TH</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 2009.

He spoke on Values and Karma Yoga and conducted meditation classes. Initiation into japa and personal interviews formed part of his program. Mr. Andres who is running a Yoga Institute training teachers for Yoga sponsored this program. .

He emphasized that the Yoga for the body, meditation for the mind and Vedanta for the intellect would help the participants to have a vision of spiritual pursuit.

The audience comprised doctors, doctorates, IT professionals, lawyers, students, teachers, psychologists, housewives, retired professionals etc.

There were about 30 participants and the program was conducted at Sorocaba, Campinas, Saojos and Saopolo.



## The Psychology In Vedanta

### "An Interview with Swami Dayananda" <sup>1</sup>

#### Q. What do you see as the relationship between Psychology and Vedanta?

**Swamiji:** In psychology, the therapist doesn't condemn a person. It is a very beautiful thing. He never condemns a person as evil. He tries to find out why a person is given to offenses, such as violence and crime. Without condemning the person, he tries to find in the person's background why there is such a pleasure in becoming a habitual offender. This is a benign approach because there is a total absence of condemnation. I was appalled at what I read in a book by Scott Peck, who wrote, "*The Road less Traveled*". His book called "*People of the Lie*" is a book about people who lie. He calls them "evil people", and sets out to prove that there is evil. He is a born-again Christian who believes in evil and that there are people given to evil. He was a psychiatrist.

In psychology, there is total absence of condemnation; there is acknowledgement of habitual offence or crime, and then the effort to find the background. There is a similar approach in Vedanta. In the vision of Vedanta, a person, by virtue of his own essential nature is totally, absolutely, pure and free. Compassion, love, giving and sharing are all dynamic forms of this absolute happiness (*ānanda*). You are limitless fullness, complete, lacking nothing. So too, in the vision of Vedanta, the person is never condemned. These are two different levels of approach. But the approach itself is very similar.

Suppose you want to help a person. What do you do? In therapy, you try to make the person understand that there is an order. When you say that in a given background, this behavior is expected, it means that you are accepting an order. Vedanta will go one step further by saying that the order is the Lord or God (*īśvara*). First you validate the person. Then the therapy becomes a process of helping the person see that he or she is all right. Being in order means that it was appropriate for him or her to have acted that way due to the background and circumstances. Relatively, the therapist will say that in the overall scheme of things, there is an order for the sadness, an order for the anger, etc. One has got a right for every emotion. The person is validated, including his background, emotions, etc.

Vedanta does the same thing. It points out that you are already free. That *you are already free* is not only a fact, it is a method of teaching. Just like in therapy, there is a method. In therapy, you make the person see. In Vedanta also, we try to help the person see. In therapy, you create situations to help the person see and let things out. You are allowing the person to talk the anguish out and talk the anger out. Thus things are appropriately ventilated.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview conducted by Payton Tontz at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, September 15, 2005, transcribed and edited by John Lehosky.

In Vedanta, all these are considered to be a *means* of assimilating the knowledge of oneself or (*sādhana*). Finally, Vedanta, by constant exposure, helps to make the person see. It's a process whereby, over a period of time, the clarity grows. In spite of situations, you come to find that you are okay with yourself. And we know that it is necessary to see that I am okay in spite of other situations, whatever the human situations are—emotions, needs, and so on. In spite of that, there is a possibility of seeing yourself free—I am free enough to have emotions. So in psychology, you validate emotions and in Vedanta, also, we do the same. We validate everything, including the basic person.

I find that there is a certain similarity between psychology and Vedanta at different levels. One is the emotional level. The other is the basic level. In psychology, when you try to point out the background, which one is not totally aware of, there is transference. The person in the therapy transfers the blame to the therapist. The therapist asks a question like, "At any time did you have this kind of experience when you were a child?" So it's very clear that one is unconscious; and until the discovery of the reality, the therapist will become the mother or father, etc. The therapist is blamed for no fault of his own. At this particular time, the therapist is able to point out things because he is informed. He is trained in how to handle that situation.

In therapy, two things are clear. There is a veil of ignorance. Something is as though covered in the unconscious. Then there is a projection onto a person, place, or thing born out of that ignorance. In Vedanta, the veil of ignorance is called (*āvaraṇa*). The projection is called (*vikṣepa*). There is a veil of ignorance in the sense of not knowing who I am. One does not question whether I am, but who I am and what I am. The vision of Vedanta: *what I am is Brahman*, that I am absolutely free is not known. In that place or locus of self-ignorance, there is a projection. Thus I feel that I am a limited being, a wanting person (*saṁsārīn*). Therefore, there is *vikṣepa* and *āvaraṇa* in Vedanta, and also, in psychology at a relative level. It is the same power that covers and projects in both psychology and Vedanta. It's like in the dream; there is a cover. At the time of the dream, whatever you are in waking life is covered over completely. Then something different is projected. This power of veiling and projection is there in everybody. I think it is necessary in the case of the child, to save the child from pain. Here, I think that the unconscious is a must. Therefore, *āvaraṇa* and *vikṣepa* are there at the psychological level. At the basic level, spoken of in Vedanta, they are there also. In this way, they are similar.

In Vedanta, there are places where there cannot be more emphasis regarding the psychological-emotional well being. It is talked about and elaborated so much—things like compassion, accommodation, values, and attitudes. Attitudes are all psychological. Values we can say are ethical, but attitudes are psychological. Erosion of the common ethical value structure is due to psychological pressure. Since it is so well recognized, the neutralizing of this kind of pressure is available in the society. In therapy, it is handled in a different way. It is said that in life one has to grow into that person who can handle all the psychological pressures of parenthood or whatever comes along in living one's life. That person becomes a candidate for Vedanta. That's why there are two things that we talk about. One level is the person's eligibility (*adhikāritvam*) which includes emotional stability and a

general sense of security. In this way, Vedanta addresses the reality of the person's emotional life. How it helps solve the problem is by cognitive changes and a way of life.

Cumulative change works with the cognitive person because the value structures must necessarily undergo change. Thereafter, the pressures become less. When one has a bigger picture, then what were once big things become small things. Suppose I have a big goal. I know that I am limitless, that I am infinite. That is very big. Then, all other things become relatively small. The various forms of lack, which create all those pressures, become less. That is what we call emotional well-being in Vedanta.

**Q. Can you describe the relationship between the self and the mind and define these terms as they are understood in Vedanta?**

**Swamiji:** In Vedanta, we have words like *indriyāṇi*, *manah*, *buddhiḥ*, *cittam*, and *ahaṅkāraḥ*. We have to understand it that way. From there, we come to what we mean by mind, etc. The five senses of perception (*indriyaḥ* or *indriyāṇi*) are hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and the sense of touch all over the body. Then, we have the faculty of thinking behind these five senses. This faculty is in the form of thought modifications. It is what we call *vṛtti*. *Vṛtti* means a thought, thoughts or thought-forms. We further define *vṛtti* by three main types, although there are so many of them. One type is *mana*, another is *buddhi*, and the third type is *citta*.

Thus, we are defining the *vṛtti*'s as a three-fold manifestation. *Mana* is generally referred to as the mind. Emotions, desires, doubt, and vacillations are all *mana*. Then we have another type of thinking where there is deliberate enquiry. When there is resolution, decision and will, we call it *buddhi*. The process of reasoning and inference, etc. all comes under that. Then recollection and memory, we call *citta*. So these three – *mana*, *buddhi*, and *citta* we call *antaḥkāraṇa* or, in general, mind. The one who owns the mind is the ego (*aham*). This is the individual—the 'I' thought or the one who employs the mind. Therefore, the ego (*ahaṅkāra*) is the sense of "I-ness". Any ownership, knowership, enjoyership, doership—all "ships" belong to (*aham*).

We always look at the ego through the mind, the *buddhi*, the *citta* and the body, or the senses. Even with reference to the external world, you look at yourself as "I am a son; I am a daughter; I am a husband or I am a wife". When you look at yourself from an external standpoint, it is the ego. We are just giving a definition of this ego from different standpoints. The ego (*ahaṅkāra*) is the self for the time being. Vedanta questions whether this ego can really be the self, since in deep sleep you do not have the ego. But then, you find that you are there. It means you are able to relate to that sleep as 'my sleep' when you say, "I slept like a log", etc. You were there in sleep, correct? So, I was there before sleep, I am here after sleep and in sleep, also, I was there. This is one way of saying it. In a certain way, you can also say, "I was aware of my sleep." "I slept" is an experience. "I slept well" is an experience. That "I didn't see anything in particular" is also an experience. So, in deep sleep, I was there. In a moment of joy, I am there. The ego that I know—the individual 'I', the self that I am familiar with—is not there. Therefore, from various standpoints, when you look at what the self is, Vedanta says, "The ego is the self: the self is not the ego". The self is the invariable in all



situations. Whether you have doubt or emotion, whether you are exploring or have deliberate thinking or decision making, whether you recollect or remember, it is the self that is invariable in all your experiences. In all situations, one thing is present, and that one thing is what you want to be present. "I am" is present because all these experiences are strung in the self. The self that is present in all these experiences is the eternal, timeless self.

Vedanta says that the *self is simple consciousness* as such. While the ego is consciousness, consciousness appears as though variable in the ego. What the ego is, and what the ego is aware of are both the same self. So the mind is the self. The mind is consciousness. Every thought is consciousness. The "I"-thought or ego-thought also is consciousness. The thought of any object is consciousness; when the mind thinks of a tree, the tree thought is consciousness. So consciousness is invariable and it is the self. Is that consciousness which is the very self alone, related to the mind? In what way is it related to the mind? Really speaking, it is not related to the mind. The mind is related to the self in the sense that the mind *is* the self, having no independent existence separate from the self. But the self is not the mind. Just like this table is purely wood and never apart from wood, while the wood itself is not merely the table. The wood will continue to be even when the table ceases to be. This is the relationship, the *relationship between what is and what appears to be*.

**Q. How does Vedanta define 'ego', and how is the individual ego created or developed according to Vedanta?**

**Swamiji:** Vedanta doesn't look at the ego as an independent entity devoid of identification with other relational things like the physical body, the breath (*prāṇa*) the five sense organs, the mind, the intellect (*buddhi*), and memory (*citta*). Without identifying with any of these, where is the ego? The ego has to lean on something or the other. The ego itself consists of the sum of past memories or experiences (*samskāras*), our own dispositions and predilections, etc. which, taken together, makes a person different from all others. It is variable also; so it never stays the same. Now it's a happy ego, now it's a confused ego, now it has got some clarity. With reference to certain facts, the ego is clear. With certain other things, it is not very clear. And it is sometimes conditioned by one's own unconscious (*kaṣāya*). One's emotional life especially, and sometimes the ego's response to the world is dependent upon its' own *kaṣāya*. This includes its own knowledge, past memories; its own upbringing and also the culture, society, and so on. This ego includes all of these.

The response of the ego to an external situation or an internal situation depends upon a number of factors. Therefore, there is no big discussion in Vedanta about its development. Vedanta doesn't talk about psychology so much. It only deals with psychology to the extent that it has to for a sane, objective, and dispassionate life. It doesn't deal with it as a subject matter, but there is adequate discussion about the emotional life and how one can be more objective. There are complete discussions dealing with neutralizing likes and dislikes by understanding the values which help to promote healthy attitudes, and thus, emotional maturity. For all these, there is discussion. But there is not a very big discussion on the development of the ego. There is considerable discussion on how one obtains language skills and how a child picks up a language. There is a lot of linguistic or language based discussion in Vedanta because Vedanta is using the medium of language for unfolding the truth of the self, the world and God.

**Q. (a) What is meant by bondage or self-ignorance and what is the root cause for this? (Include an explanation of *anyonyādhyāsa* or mutual superimposition)**

**Q. (b) Can you explain why the condition of living in the state of bondage leads to causing emotional pain and suffering?**

**Swamiji:** Whatever I don't want to have, but I can't get rid of is bondage. In Sanskrit, it is called *bandha* or *bandhana*. It is derived from the Sanskrit root word, *bandh*, to bind. The bondage itself is *bandha*. It means you are bound. One cannot extricate oneself from certain things, which he or she wants to get rid of. What is it that one does not want? Pain and sorrow, limitation, fear, old age and being subject to disease and mortality are just a few things that most of us do not want.

When one doesn't love certain things or doesn't like certain things, but cannot get rid of them, they become bondage for the person. It is that wanting to get out of something and not being able to. I want to get out of this struggle to become happy but I cannot rid myself of the struggle. I want to be free from insecurity, but I find myself helplessly insecure. That's bondage. Being insecure is bondage. Being bound by time is bondage. Being bound by various limitations is bondage. Who is it that feels this bondage? Vedanta discusses it this way. The physical body does not feel the bondage. Neither does the mind. The mind is a *kāraṇa*; it is a simply a means or instrument.

The person or the ego feels the bondage. No matter who the person is, wherever there is "I" sense, there is a sense of bondage also. That I want to be different from being what I am is bondage. In Vedanta, we say that a life of becoming is a life of bondage. In one word, we call it *saṁsāra*. "I am a *saṁsārīn*" means *I am not acceptable to myself as I am now*. That is *saṁsāra*. A *saṁsārīn* is the one who has *saṁsāra*. This is the one who appears *to become* a *saṁsārīn* because—*he or she wants to become*.

I cannot but struggle to become because I am not acceptable to myself as I am. I struggle to become that person in whom I can be free, meaning in whom I find total acceptance, complete acceptability. Suppose I become that person in terms of wealth, in terms of health or in terms of any accomplishment that I gain. Then afterwards, once again, I want to become. Thus, I am always in the process of becoming. That is *saṁsāra*.

This ongoing act of becoming itself reveals that there is no way of becoming free. You don't *become* free, because the very fact that you want to become reveals that you are not free. The attempt to become free is a denial of freedom, according to Vedanta, because it betrays a self non-acceptance. We can say that this is the *original sin* or the original problem. That constant wanting to become or needing to become somebody else is the original problem. And in that somebody else, I expect to see myself as a free person, free from want, who won't need to become any more. Suppose one has pursued a life of becoming for forty years. The remaining 40 or 50 years I may have is not going to be any different. The recognition of this is what is sometimes called the *middle age crisis*.

So freedom from this constant attempt to become; from becoming itself, is called *mokṣa*. One eventually comes to recognize that freedom from becoming cannot come by becoming. How can I become free from being a limited person when I am limited as far as I can see? All the

features about myself are found wanting. If I look at myself, an individual ego, it is like a compartment. It is an advocate of a lot of things. The ego itself doesn't exist. When you look at yourself from one standpoint or the other, you become wanting. From the physical body standpoint in terms of health, in terms of strength, in terms of height, I am found wanting. In terms of pervasiveness, time or mortality (being subject to old age and death), I am wanting.

Then in terms of mind, if I look at myself emotion-wise, I cannot always command a cheerful mind; thus wanting. In terms of knowledge, I am always wanting. In terms of my capacity to remember, I'm again wanting. What I want to recollect doesn't come. The moment the situation is not there and I need not recollect anymore, or the person is gone and I don't need to remember his name, then it comes, thus wanting. And the storing capacity also is wanting. Everything is wanting. Certain memories that I don't want to have keep appearing. So what I don't want to have also is there, thus, *I am wanting* in terms of the need to remove it.

So it appears that any way I look at myself, I am found wanting. In terms of my own partial viewpoint, I see myself as wanting. I always wish that I had not done a few things because I feel guilty of commission. Perhaps I had hurt someone. Then I wish I had done a few things I had omitted, that could have made the situation better. Vedanta talks about that. *kim aham sadhunākaravam kim aham pāpam akaravam iti* . Why didn't I do the right thing? Why did I do the wrong thing? This is there in everybody. There is guilt. Also, there are so many hurts. Why did others not do the right thing? Why did that person do this to me? Why did this person not do this for me? So, in terms of hurt, I am wanting. In terms of guilt, I am wanting — wanting in the sense that I wish I had no guilt. I wish I had no hurt. So this wanting all the way is what the ego is.

Looking at oneself as a daughter, son, mother, father, again I am found wanting. I wish my mother was a little different, my father was a little different, and so here I'm wanting. Money-wise and relationship-wise, I see myself wanting, always wanting. But this wanting person doesn't like to be wanting. It is not natural. Why? Because I cannot have a sense of want centered on my self and totally accept myself at the same time. It is not possible.

In the reality of being a *wanting* person, there is a denial of self-acceptance. Therefore, I feel I have to fix up this situation of being a wanting person by fixing up so many things. I have to fix up my mother. I have to fix up my father. I have to fix up the world. How? This is what we are doing. We try to fix up the world, fix up countries, fix up people. Can we finally fix all these things up? No doubt, we have to do certain things, but nothing seems to really stay fixed up. What we do leads to another situation, which again continues to need fixing and so on.

So it's a continuous process going on and it's never-ending. Individually speaking, I see myself in a non-winning situation. Struggle alone is necessary, but without an end to the struggle, it's not a struggle worth making. When I am very sure that there is no end to the struggle, then why should I struggle? But can I give up this struggle? No, because I cannot accept myself, so I cannot but struggle, and I begin to see the uselessness of the struggle. So one is just getting on with one's life and not really living life fully. When one just gets on with one's life, it's kind of a half-life in the sense that people become emotionally numb. Why?



Because the human freedom of expression, the freedom to grow, the freedom to express one's fullness seems thwarted. There is a kind of dumbness (something hidden, not known) and thus an emotional numbness to the situations.

So there is a struggle without meaning. This is the bondage. Afterwards, there are the hopes, the occasional happiness—the paperback promise. The paperback books you read talk about the human potential and all of that. These are written by the self-made people who offer you some hope. Then afterwards you discover the new-age promises. Yoga, alfalfa and so many things, all promise something different. We want to start somewhere again anew. So we begin to notice and look into the self-help groups and various kinds of alternative type things, etc.

Vedanta recognizes the struggle here as meaningful. It is not a meaningless struggle. It has a meaning. What is the meaning? That *the struggle is meaningless* is the meaning. That is the meaning of the struggle. Now, please look into the other option open to you. Either you struggle, which is meaningless, or without struggle, you should solve the problem. If without struggle, you have to solve the problem, it can only be a problem of ignorance, self-ignorance.

Therefore, one has got to look into and understand what the self is. Maybe the self is not the one that you think you are. The self that you know is just a composite. In terms of seeing, in terms of hearing, it is a seer, a hearer. Minus or stripped of all that please see the self. Without being a seer, without being a hearer, without being a son, without being a daughter, is there a self? A basic self must necessarily be there. Perhaps that is the self that you come across when you are happy. Otherwise, in spite of all this struggling life, one cannot find oneself happy, even occasionally. The fact that one is happy occasionally itself proves that in order to be happy I need not struggle. Maybe that self that obtains when I am happy is the truth of the self, the self of which I have experience but no knowledge. So maybe there is a cognitive pursuit open to me, a pursuit of recognizing what I am.

Vedanta offers a solution to the problem, saying that there is *no absolutely real* problem. In terms of relations, or relatively, we address problems of maturity. But one assumes there is a problem of essential self-limitation, and then goes about trying to solve it. That assumption is wrong. If the assumption is wrong, then you have to re-shuffle your thinking and re-examine yourself. You have to inquire into what is the very core of yourself. Is it possible that I am always a changing self or can my self be unchanging at all times?

Therefore, this "Who am I" question, becomes very, very significant. How am I going to look at myself? What is the means of looking at myself? In this process, the whole Vedanta teaching becomes a means of knowledge. In the vision of Vedanta, *you are the whole*. In that you have the big picture—the vision of a free, stable and unchanging self. That I am the whole is the solution. If I am the problem, the problem is one of being confused about myself. If I feel split into so many parts, then seeing the fact that 'I am whole' should necessarily be the solution. All the parts should fall in place by recognizing one homogeneous whole. If I am not acceptable to myself, and the self is by nature acceptable, then I have to discover that I am acceptable to myself. The self that is not different than the whole is acceptable because it cannot be better than it is.

Nobody really needs to fix up the self. Though one has been trying to fix up the self all along, it is already free. If this is true, it means I have to completely relook at myself. In this process, there is necessarily a complete shift of emphasis. When such a shift takes place, with reference to the entire unconscious also, there is more trust in oneself. There is more trust in the bigger picture. You relax, and when you relax, the unconscious can release all the unresolved problems. If there are problems, the person can go on to understand and resolve things that help him or her mature emotionally. Therefore, support systems, prayer, and therapy all become useful for further clarity. In this way, even therapy becomes a means or *sādhana* for gaining self-knowledge. A relative degree of emotional maturity and stability should be there for gaining more clarity in self-knowledge. In fact, when you have the bigger picture, it's not only much easier, but essential for the growth of the person.

Once there is such a thing as self-ignorance, there will be self-confusion also. The self is self-evident. Therefore, "I am" is self-evident. That *I am wanting* is a conclusion, a wrong conclusion in fact. But I have no other way of taking myself. What else will I take myself for? I can't take myself to be anything else other than my body, which I am intimately connected to. So, my body-mind-sense complex becomes me. And that is limited. This is what we call superimposition. Here, the self is "miss-taken" for the body-mind-sense complex. That the bodymind-sense complex is myself is okay. You can say that from a standpoint.

Suppose you say, "I am forty years old, fifty years old". Then you are referring to yourself from a standpoint, which is fine. If somebody says "I am an engineer, I am a doctor", that's fine from that standpoint.

But then, what is I? That's the problem. Here we have a mutual superimposition. In Sanskrit, it is called (*anyonya-adhyāsa*). The self (*ātman*) is taken to be the body-mind-sense complex. The body-mind-sense complex is taken to be the *ātman*. When two things are mixed up, and each is taken to be the other, this is recognized as a mutual super-imposition or *anyonya-adhyāsa*. B is A. A is not B. That is Vedānta. The seer is "I", but I am not the seer. If I am the seer, I will be seeing all the time. I am the hearer, with reference to hearing, seer with reference to seeing, knower with reference to knowing. But I, myself, am just a being, a simple conscious being. Then what is that being? Here is where Vedānta becomes a means of knowledge. If the true nature of the "I", the person, or the being is not known, I will be wanting. I will be subject to all the pains and changes of mortality, etc. Then the unconscious will remain with all the unresolved emotions. Even for a normal unconscious, (not highly loaded), assuming the child grew up in a functional home and the childhood evolved normally without any serious problems, still there are unconscious needs. Then the conscious waking life is full of failures, disappointments, regrets, guilt, and hurt. So many things are involved, and therefore, emotional problems are unavoidable in human life.

In fact, this emotional life is the price you pay for freedom from the problem of emotion. If one has a certain emotional pain, one should learn from it. The learning should be uplifting. If I learn something from it, that's the price I pay for what I have learned. Otherwise, I am stuck with only pain now, pain from the past, fear of pain in the future, and I do not learn anything from it. Emotional pain leads you to something. It takes you somewhere. Therefore, we don't want to bypass emotions or the emotional life.

At a time when emotions have a secret to give, we should take them very seriously, but not give them more reality than they deserve. We don't dismiss them as nothing, nor do we take them as everything. They lead you to something, something more profound. So emotional pain is there and, even physical pain is there drawing your attention. Suppose physically some part of the body is giving you pain, it demands your attention. So too, emotional pain draws your attention and you have to learn from it. What does it convey to me? It all leads you to *mokṣa*, really speaking, or to freedom.

Any enquiring person comes with a background in terms of a culture and education. That background seems to be a very important factor because it helps to give the person a direction and makes him or her available for a given enquiry. If what one seeks is available in the culture itself, then that is very good. One knows exactly what to seek. Like here, in the American culture, therapy is well known. Therapy is available, and it doesn't carry much stigma. Once you know there is such help available, then you seek help. If somebody is suffering from alcoholism, and there is such a thing as AA support groups available, one can seek help right there. So if, in a culture, this kind of spiritual truth or pursuit is available, people will be naturally given to that pursuit. Emotional problems can lead to that. In American culture, during the 1960's and 70's, there was a kind of discovery or enquiry with respect to a more meaningful spiritual pursuit. Many people wrote off the hippies as idiots or radicals, but it was not an ordinary thing. There was an awareness of something more fundamental, more basic. Whenever such a thing happens, it looks very drastic, but it brought about a certain change in the awareness of the society.

**Q Can you talk about the self as the source of love and happiness and specifically describe what is happening psychologically when the selfignorant person seeks happiness in the form of fulfilling worldly desires?**

**Swamiji:** If you look at a moment of happiness, certain things become clearly evident. In a happy moment, there is self-acceptance. There is world acceptance also. The present world confronted by you is accepted at that time. What has passed in your life is also accepted. Your past doesn't inhibit your happy moment. Neither do your future fears inhibit the happy moment. Your credit card situation does not inhibit your happy moment. And any complexes that you may have also do not inhibit that moment.

In a happy moment, the subject-object get fused, and there is happiness. This fusion of subject-object doesn't mean that the object becomes the subject or that the subject becomes the object. No. The object remains the object, like music is music. And the subject is the subject. What you love is recognized as an object. You are the subject, in this case, the limited self. Here, the subject as though becomes the object due to ignorance of the nature of the self, being object-free. So, there are two different objects. But still there is fusion here inside. That flame of fusion is what we call happiness. If there is an object that pleases you, you call it love. That happiness alone is love. In reference to another object it is called love. In reference to your-self, it is called happiness. The object you love pleases you. If it doesn't evoke the pleased self, there is no love. Love falls out and there is no falling in love. Once you place conditions on why I love you, it is always a nuisance. Why? Because all conditions are never fulfilled.

We are not trying to place conditions on what one should or should not do. We are saying that when there is love, there is the pleased self. The object of love evokes the pleased self. Really speaking, the love that is extended to the external object is the love for the pleased self that is reflected in the object outside. That is the truth. So the dynamic form of happiness (*ānanda*) is love which itself undergoes some changes in the form of compassion, giving, understanding, sharing, and caring. All these are one emotion, really speaking. The fact about your-self, *that happiness that you are by nature, is love.*

That happiness recognized in the subject-object fusion reveals that the self is limitlessness, which is also wholeness or completeness. It cannot be abridged. Nor can it be edited. It is always the same. It can only be diminished by some kind of distorted thinking; it can look as though it is covered. It cannot be covered. This is a fact. It remains always the same because limitlessness is the nature of consciousness. Consciousness is not subject to time, nor is it subject to space. Time is an object of consciousness. Space is object of consciousness. Consciousness is spatially limitless and time-wise limitless. That is the person's nature. It is you. Therefore, the more I understand myself, the easier it is to be more loving, caring and compassionate. It is just natural. There is nothing great about understanding myself. It is very natural to seek for personal freedom or *mokṣa*, just as natural as it is to seek for security, comforts, pleasures and a harmonious and happy life.

We don't differentiate worldly desires from all other desires. Desires are desires. It is entirely the Lord (*Īśvara*), even that desiring capacity that you have. And desiring is not a matter for guilt. Desiring and having ambition is all a part of oneself. But the idea that by fulfilling all my desires I am going to be happy is wrong. Fulfilling desires so that I can be more comfortable, etc. are privileges. This is objectivity, which is very important in a spiritual pursuit.

**Q. What is liberation according to Vedanta and by what process does it take place? And can you describe the relationship between liberation from bondage and the process of developing psychological maturity? In what ways are they the same or different?**

**Swamiji:** Liberation is freedom from self-confusion, freedom from error about oneself. That's liberation. That is freedom. That also implies a lot of other things. There is freedom from becoming (*saṁsāra*). Then afterwards, there is freedom from birth and death etc., according to the karma model. In the model of karma, each person is born according to his or her own karma. The individual (*jīva*) assumes different bodies at different times. And when an individual assumes a human body or equivalent to the human body enjoying a free will, one will gather karma. Otherwise one would be mechanical and there could be no new karma.

Whenever one has free will, one can earn positive karma or comfortable situations (*puṇya*). Or, one can earn uncomfortable situations (*pāpa*). So, you can gather *puṇya* and *pāpa* only in a human body, only when the *jīva* or individual has free will—a human body or equivalent to human body, we don't know, but you must have free will. Only then, can one gather new karma. Therefore, this cycle is self-perpetuating. It is beginningless. Its cause is ignorance, which has no beginning.

Confusion, therefore, has no beginning. It means taking myself to be a doer (*kartā*), to be an experiencer (*bhoktā*). It means taking myself to be limited. This particular mistake is due to



self-disowning, self-ignorance. And this will continue as long as one is under this spell. It is very similar to a long dream. In the dream, as we know it, everything is *as though* real, as long as one is under the spell of the dream. So this is a long dream with respect to the individual. Until one wakes up to the reality of oneself, the person is bound. Once it is clearly known that the self is not bound by any limitation, that the self is free from karma, free from doership, free from birth and death, this dreamlike bondage cannot stage a comeback.

Therefore, liberation or freedom is from this error, this ignorance centered on myself. And the process is the process of knowing the truth of myself. It has two parts. One is the emotional maturity. This also implies a life conforming to *dharma* and that is a long process. The whole lifetime one has to grow into that person. In this two-fold process, one is growing into that person who is emotionally secure, who has relative freedom from wrong attitudes and other local problems. This is the first freedom.

The second freedom is by knowledge. So, it is a two-fold freedom. And it is highly connected to emotional life because there is a self-growth involved in all this. Only after self-growth can there be self-discovery. Self-discovery is not growth. The self is already limitless. You don't grow into limitlessness. But you grow into a person who can own up that limitlessness, who can understand and assimilate oneself. And that doesn't take place unless you ventilate the unconscious and resolve the hurt and guilt centered on the self. It all gets taken care of over a period of time. Therefore, a life of prayer is so important. A life of *dharma* and prayer, a life of growth and growing is called yoga. That growing is a life of yoga when there is an end in view, when the bigger picture is clearly recognized. Therefore the yoga includes all disciplines like values and healthy attitudes etc.

#### **Q. What are the emotional benefits that result from liberation?**

**Swamiji:** Emotionally, unless we are more or less free, we cannot have that knowledge. The liberating knowledge one can't really have unless one has gone through the process of emotional growth. What are the benefits of liberation? I would put it the other way— *liberation is a benefit of emotional growth* . Liberation itself is a benefit of emotional growth. We are not putting it the other way. We do not put the cart before the horse. We grow into that person who can understand. That person is emotionally mature. One who is emotionally mature is one who is able to manage one's emotional life, more or less, with a certain composure (*samatvam*). That certain self-satisfaction and self-image, all that is to be taken care of. Therefore, we don't bypass a solid emotional structure. Emotional needs must necessarily be satisfied. Thus we also have to take care of these things.

#### **Q. Does Vedanta include any concept equivalent to the unconscious in psychology, and if so, what is the concept, and how is it made meaningful regarding the psychology of the individual?**

**Swamiji:** We have an equivalent concept of *saṁskāra* or *kaṣāya*, which is a better word. *Sa kaṣāyam vijāniyāt samah prāptam na vicālayet* . May one understand that one has *kaṣāya*. It's advice that is given here. If one has certain types of emotion for which one is not able to find immediate causes, or one has situations which cause over-reaction etc., then one has to know that he or she has *kaṣāya*. And if one does have *kaṣāya*, how is one going to process that *kaṣāya*?

One can process or resolve *kaṣāya* by allowing more Īśvara to come into one's life through contemplation, meditation and a prayerful life. Let go—let Īśvara be. Let go.

Don't fight with your emotions. Never fight with emotions. It will all get twisted. Welcome fear. Use support systems. Use prayer. Use your will. At the same time, resolve the anger, etc. by some form of expression like sharing. Sharing neutralizes grief. In India, after death, there is a period of bereavement. They have a period of grief, so they do not keep it inside. They make the people affected, the bereaved persons, cry. People connected go and make them cry. Even if they don't want to cry, they make them cry so that the grief comes out. Then there is a one-year grief period where they miss all the festivals. They don't allow it to be a normal year. They use the entire year for grieving it out. All festivals are avoided and there are certain things they do every day. Like in front of the house, they will have *rangoli*. Daily, they will make geometrical patterns using rice powder. Ants and birds will come and eat the rice powder and so it's a kind of *yajña* or daily offering. It's like welcoming *Lakṣmī*, Lord of *Lakṣmī* to the house. It's a welcome thing that, they will do for the entire year. For that year, by sharing the grief or letting it out, it gets processed. They do without so many things and a lot of talking is involved. So, this is the culture itself.

The culture and the support system take care of the psychological well being. Even though, the belief is there that nobody dies, that everybody is re-born, still they don't dismiss the fact that the person is not going to be there forever in the same form. They acknowledge the fact that there is a void, a permanent void. They accept that and talk it out all the time. All the omissions and commissions, are talked out, so that the grief can be permanently resolved. This is an emotional commitment. Whatever way one chooses, be it prayer, support system, meditation or something else, this *kaṣāya* or unconscious is taken care of. In the Hindu culture, there was no therapy, just as in the earlier western culture there was no therapy. But they had a good support system like teachers, family, friends, neighbors and others. The more structure that was there, the less heavy was the unconscious.

In the western culture also, there were very good structures and family values and you knew exactly what you were going to do. Competition was not very big. The economic structure was mainly agricultural. They had similar values and life was simpler. When the lifestyle is structured, there is more sense of security and predictability and it is easier for people to relate to each other. And the various pre-schools were not there. I think that this is one of the most damaging things that modern society has introduced. I feel that sixty to seventyfive percent of the therapists will have no job if we remove the pre-schools. If the children go to school when they are five, there should be no problem. The logic is very simple. The formation of the unconscious is nearly complete after four to four and a half years. There is a frozen child. Afterwards there is a conscious life with conscious problems.

So the conscious problems are one type of problem; that is a different type of problem. But when the problems are in the unconscious, it means that you cannot do anything about it. Thus you come under the spell of anger, loneliness, the sense of not being at home with oneself, problems of intimacy and trust, etc. It's all in the unconscious and one doesn't know what it is all about. Between the cognitive growth and conscious life, there is no connection. That includes Vedanta also. One can be very good in one's understanding of Vedanta. Clarity may be there, but still the unconscious can take one for a ride. Until it is processed, it's a problem.

Therefore, it is better to avoid the unconscious getting heavier. If you are sending the two and a half to three year old child to school, what will the child think? The child doesn't know, "I am being sent to school for my own good." The child will think, "My mother doesn't like me, and therefore I am banished." Since the child feels incomplete without mother, it goes on with a sense of insecurity and helplessness. Therefore the second year, third year, and fourth year become a problem. Although the Montessori and other forms of preschooling may be good in so many ways, during these times, the child has to be with the mother. The schooling should not separate the child from the mother. So I have started a school in India where the child has to come with the mother. I hope to bring about that revolution. Montessori schools came within the last sixty to one hundred years. Before that, there were no schools which children attended at such a very young ages. So, we should get rid of this. We can make use of the Montessori method by bringing up the child, challenging the child to help the child pick up some extra IQ by giving situations where the child has to figure out more things. That's all very good. But that should be done along with the mother, so that the child does not feel banished.

I feel that the emotional issues we now have, our society did not have before, either in the west or in the east. Modern issues were not there and not because of modern life being more complex or anything. These pre-schools can be and are villains of the peace. And I have no doubts about that. I am highly convinced that nobody should separate the child from the mother. At least mother should be there in those early formative years. Then the child is complete for a healthy upbringing. It's connected—otherwise it's alienated. When the core person is alienated, you have to connect the person to the Lord, Īśvara . There is no other way. Only Vedanta will help.

Therefore in Vedanta we are connecting people to Īśvara again, all the way, cognitively. And that cognitive light should percolate and light up the unconsciousness, and surface it until it gets ventilated—*śamaḥ prāptam vicālayet* . Our masters recognized this. In the seat of meditation you handled that, throughout your lifetime. So allow all the bubbles of thought to come and surface. Allow the emotions to come and never overlook or try to suppress them. Just allow them to go. Another thing is, with insight, remain dispassionate, *nisaṅgo bhavet*, remain dispassionate. Further, *nāsvādhayet rasam asam* . If there is any happiness or overwhelming condition there, don't just sit there and enjoy it. Don't allow yourself to be overwhelmed by joy. With knowledge, know that happiness to be myself. Assimilate that happiness. That's why in meditation, I always say assimilate. Acknowledge any peace or anything that you experience. With any comfort, assimilate that I am comfortable by nature. When you assimilate, that is how you let the light percolate and light up the unconscious, slowly healing by that cognitive understanding. Whatever is there will surface slowly, over a period of time. In Vedanta, this is how it is managed and has been by the Sage's ( *ṛṣi's*) of yore. Nowadays, because of preschool classes and some lack in structure, we need to have various supportsystems. So a lot of prayer and more Īśvara in one's life is the answer.

**Dr. Shrikant Jichkar**  
**ARSHA VIJNANA GURUKULAM,**  
**Vedapuri, Nagpur Dist., Maharashtra**



Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati announces the inauguration of a six-month-resident course in Vedanta and Samskritam at Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam from July 26, 2009. Those who are above the age of 30, interested in this indepth course can apply to Swamini Brahmaprakasananda at the address given below, giving the details about themselves with postal address, telephone number and email. The minimum

qualification expected of the applicants is a bachelor degree in any faculty. The medium of instruction would be English. The letter should preferably reach us before July 10, 2009.

Address:

**Swamini Brahmaprakasananda**  
Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam,  
S-72, Bharat Nagar, Amravati Road,  
Nagpur – 440033

Phones:

Swamini Brahmaprakasananda :  
98226-99996, 93706-63555

Smt.Rajshri Jichkar :  
98222-34567

email: brahmapra@gmail.com

Please note that after receiving your letter, we would be sending you an application form. You are requested to fill the application form and send it back to us with a recent photograph of yourself. The course will begin on July 26, 2009 with the inaugural classes by Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati.



# To Handle an Argument Swami Dayananda Saraswati<sup>1</sup>

## WHY DO WE ARGUE?

Different people have different perceptions and these different perceptions are the main cause of an argument. Dissimilar likes and dislikes are inevitable because two minds never think alike. This is the reason we have different perceptions for any given situation. One may perceive a situation objectively while another may be very subjective about the same. However, the person who is subjective is totally unaware of his or her own subjectivity. In an argument it is very fundamental to know that any issue is relative. For instance, there are arguments over which party is good, the Republican or the Democratic party? On this issue you can argue on both sides and the one who can argue tactfully will always win!

## DISCUSSIONS ARE BETTER THAN ARGUMENTS

On the other hand, in a discussion there is no winner because the discussion is meant for revealing the facts. Discussion is helpful and it is also healthy. Moreover, through discussion you can look at a situation little differently so your perception of the situation can be widened. In an argument you may not notice any particular facts, but, in a discussion you can see the other side properly. In a discussion there is no victory, there is only an understanding. In Sanskrit an argument is called “jalpa”, where the attempt is only to win and never to accept the defeat. That is the reason arguments are not healthy;

discussions are healthy. An argument only creates problems, such as when you lose your temper and say undesirable things. When you are in a tight corner of an argument, it is easier to get angry and become defensive. Like they say, “The best defense is an offense”. It is called a pre-emptive strike; before an argument begins you launch an offensive attack on a person. You punch the fellow before he punches you because, if he punches you first, he may not stick around when it is your turn to punch him. Accordingly, one may adopt the same policy in an argument where, there is no dialogue or real discussion.

## TO AVOID THE EXPLOSIONS, SMALL ARGUMENTS ARE BETTER

However, avoiding an argument is not always possible. Like in an earthquake if there are not any small tremors there will be a huge eruption. So only to avoid big out bursts small arguments are healthy. They remove the tension and, if one avoids these small arguments constantly, they will eventually blow up. Whenever you are confronted with an argument and you choose not to argue, it will be bottled up inside. With such a bottled up anger sooner or later an explosion will take place. The explosion may be on a very petty topic such as one may say, “There is no salt in here!” and that is enough to have an outburst. Then, the rest will have nothing to do with the salt and, whatever is piled up inside will come out. Thus, avoiding an argument is not advised in Vedanta. However, the very teaching of Vedanta is

<sup>1</sup> From a talk given in Saylorsburg, PA. Edited by Lata Pimplaskar. Published in the ninth anniversary souvenir of the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, 1995. [www.AVGsatsang.org](http://www.AVGsatsang.org)

through discussions. A student raises an objection and an objection is clarified with an explanation. It is an excellent way of analyzing and understanding a piece of knowledge. This process of raising an objection and clarification leads to analysis of an issue. This analysis is through discussion, where you make sure all issues and questions are answered.

### **ARGUMENTS ARE INTRINSIC TO NEGATIVE EMOTIONS**

Let us look at another point which deals with the emotional predicament. In all arguments intense emotions are involved and emotional situations are mainly a personal attack. In these attacks the issue is gone and the person is attacked. When you cannot avoid an argument due to the differences in likes and dislikes you are setting yourself up for a no-win situation. For an example, when a couple goes for a shopping trip together, one does not like what the other one wants to buy. Soon it becomes a personal agenda. "You have this habit", one says; "not only you, you mother also has the same habit," he or she goes on. Thus the argument begins and, an issue is no longer an issue; it goes in the vacuum cleaner and it vanishes! Aside from the likes and dislikes, some situations are involved with differences in perceptions. It is impossible to make the other person see your point if there is no acceptance. All of this is due to the ignorance of our own emotions. We do not analyze our emotions properly which leads to confusion, and naturally the perceptions are all distorted. Each of us has loss of emotions making it difficult to have an objective mind.

### **THE FEELINGS BASED ON PERCEPTIONS ARE REAL**

Perceptions may be wrong but the feelings are real. Perceptions are wrong because of our

varied backgrounds. The background includes the parentage, your family, the culture you are born in, etc. You are the product of your background. You cannot be different from your background. Everyone should accept what his or her background is. This upbringing builds the core personality of a person, which may have lots of problems. From that alone you perceive all your emotions. So the perception comes from the background, and, no perception can be objective unless you analyze yourself and free yourself from the anger, anxieties, etc., which are part of your background. Very few people exist in the world who have achieved that perception. The people who have not analyzed themselves thoroughly are not going to have an objective perception. So accept what you are, accept your own subjectivity and when you can accept that, you are safe. You may succeed in turning an argument into a healthy discussion.

### **HOW TO SETTLE AN ARGUMENT BEFORE IT BEGINS**

To settle an argument or even before you have an argument, don't say what you don't mean. It is important that you say only what you mean. Before you begin, you should say, "This is how I perceive, I may be right or wrong". First you learn to say this and, it will eliminate the defense in another person. Allow the other person to point out whether you are right or wrong. If he or she points out whether you are wrong, initially you may not accept it. If you didn't mean what you said, you can't say you meant it! Therefore, when you say, "This is how I perceive, I may be right or wrong," please, mean it and you will see it works, it will help you to avoid an argument!

## Śrī Satyajñānānanda Sarasvati



Śrī Satyajñānānanda Sarasvati attained mahāsamādhi at 10.45 a.m. on Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 09. He was healthy, and the end came suddenly without any suffering. Swamiji had attended to his normal morning routine, and just before resting, breathed his last. His samādhi rituals as per Sringeri tradition were performed at around 4 p.m. at Vidyaranya Estate, Kirke, Sringeri. Aradhana will be performed for 10 days with Narayanabali on the 12<sup>th</sup> day. On the 16<sup>th</sup> day, a ṣoḍaśī bandārā will be performed at Rishikesh.

Satyajñānānanda Sarasvati was an example for discipline and dharma. He built a Centre for Arsha Vidya Learning at Sringeri and handed over the same to Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti, Coimbatore, where regular classes of Vedanta and Sanskrit are conducted by one Sri Giridhara Sastri. He was very fond of listening to the audio tapes of my classes on 'Satyaṁ Jñānam Anantam Brahma' of the Taittiriya Upaniṣad, and therefore, he loved to call himself Satyajñānānanda so that he could remain contemplating upon the śruti Vākya.

**Dayananda**

## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Day Celebration of Yoga Shanti Gurukulam of Sri Swami Brahmayogananda

The Yoga Shanthi Gurukulam, founded and guided by Sri Swami Brahmayogananda celebrated its 14<sup>th</sup> annual day on Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2009 at Chandrasekar Kalyana Mandapam, West Mambalam, Chennai. Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswadi presided over the function and blessed the large gathering.

Pujya Swamiji was received with a *poorna kumbham* at Kasi Viswanathar temple amidst Nadaswaram music and Vedic Chanting by 108 Vaidikas.

At the nearby Sankar Mutt Pujya Swamiji performed an Arthi and also a puja at the temple goshala. There was a procession led by motor cycles, the general public and Nadaswaram by Sheikh Maulana troupe from Trichy. A big temple umbrella accompanied Pujya Swamiji's Silver Paadhuka and this was followed by the 108 Vaidikas and a grand horse chariot with Sri Dakshinamurthy decorated on it. Pujya Swamiji's car followed the chariot .

On reaching the venue, Pujya Swamiji was given a traditional welcome with an arathi song. The Gurukulam children gave a deepa and pushpa swagatham with the song "Bho Shambho" reverberating in the back ground. Kum. Revathy Kumar gave a vocal recital. Swami Brahmayogananda performed a traditional pada puja to Pujya Swamiji. T

The function commenced with the lighting of traditional lamp by Padmasri Kum. Shobana Chandrakumar and an invocation song. After the welcome address by Shri Ln S J Sharma, special address was given by Shri K. Suryanarayana Rao, RSS Senior Pracharak.

Swami Brahmayogananda delivered his *arulurai* before Pujya Swamiji's talk. On behalf of the Gurukulam, Swami Brahmayogananda offered Guru Dakshina to Pujya Swamiji towards AIM for SEVA cause.

Pujyasri Swami Dayananda Saraswati's **Anugraha Bhashanam** was relished by one and all where he emphasized that even if we have the blessings of all the Ashta Lakshmis, complete happiness is not possible without the presence and blessings Goddess Saraswati. 'Only Knowledge can lead to happiness', he said

Pujya Swamiji also released MP3 CDs of Swami Brahmayogananda's Vedanta classes which covered complete text of Mundaka Upanishad and text portions of Bhagavad Gita Sankara Bhashyam. Dr (Mrs) Y G Parthasarathy received the first CD copy.

Many eminent personalities from diverse backgrounds participated in this auspicious event as special invitees. The three-hour event was interspersed with many songs by the Gurukulam students.

Under the able guidance of Swami Brahmayogananda, his students put in nearly 1000 hours of disciplined hard work day and night for more than a month to make this three-hours function a success. Pujya Swamiji commended that the whole event was well planned, organized and executed to perfection.

This memorable event concluded with a prayer song and prasadam. The 2,000 strong audience who attended this function carried back joyful memories of this unforgettable evening.





### First New Zealand Hindu Youth Conference

Source: <mailto:indu.nz@gmail.com>

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, May 2, 2009: The first New Zealand Hindu Youth Conference, "Living in Modern New Zealand with Traditional Values," was held May 2, 2009 in Mangere, Auckland. The conference was organized by the Hindu Youth Foundation, a division of the Hindu Council of New Zealand Inc, with enthusiastic support from the Hindu Elders Foundation.

Over 130 delegates, including six parliamentarians, participated in the conference. All were welcomed in the traditional Hindu way by placing a tilak on their forehead, and the conference started with lighting of the lamps by special guests. Maori elder Haare Williams blessed the conference with a Maori karakia (prayer and blessing) and Swami Vigyananand blessed the occasion with a Vedic prayer.

Speeches given by youth leaders Meena Lakshmanan, Nikita Sharma and Deepal Singh drew enthusiastic applause. Meena Lakshmanan pointed out that in terms of youth power "Hindu civilization is the youngest!" because 700 million Hindus are below the age of 35, 560 million are under 25, 350 million are under 19, and 250 million are under 14.

Workshops and youth meetings were held. In addition, the dynamic participants launched the New Zealand Hindu Students Forum, for university students

### More Atheists Shout It From The Rooftops

Source: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

CHARLESTON, SC, USA, April 27, 2009: More than ever, America's atheists are linking up and speaking out. They are connecting on the Internet, holding meet-ups in bars, advertising on billboards and buses, volunteering at food pantries and picking up roadside trash, earning atheist groups recognition on adopt-a-highway signs. Polls show that the ranks of atheists are growing. The American Religious Identification Survey, a major study released last month, found that those who claimed "no religion" were the only demographic group that grew in all 50 states in the last 18 years. Nationally, the "nones" in the population nearly doubled, to 15 percent in 2008 from 8 percent in 1990. At the University of South Carolina, in Columbia, 19 atheist students gathered in a group that uses humor to convey their opinion. They say that their goal is not confrontation, or even winning converts, but changing the public's stereotype of atheists. A favorite activity is to gather at a busy crossroads on campus with a sign offering "Free Hugs" from "Your Friendly Neighborhood Atheist."

### *Arsha Vidya Newsletter*

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## **Medical Camp organized by Swamini Atmaprajananda Saraswati of Arsha Vidya Vikas Kendra, Bhubaneswar**

Arsha Vidya Vikas Kendra, Bhubaneswar conducted a Health Camp in Phajilpur village, in Jajpur district, 35 km from Bhubaneswar. The Camp was led by eminent Neurologist Dr. R. N. Sahoo assisted by Dr. Trilochan Panda, Gastro-enterologist; Dr. Manoranjan Pattnaik, T.B. & Chest Specialist; Dr. Pitabasa Routray, Paediatrician; and Dr. Ashok Das, Medicine Specialist.

More than 1,200 patients from the village and nearby villages were attended to by the team of Physicians, and free medicines were distributed by the accompanying Medicine Companies.

After the camp, Swamini visited the nearby Buddhist site on the Langudi Hill along with her students.



**Swamini Atmaprajananda Saraswati**  
**Arsha Vidya Vikas Kendra, Bhubaneswar**  
[www.arshavidya.net](http://www.arshavidya.net)



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