



Arsha Vidya Newsletter

Rs. 15



Pujya Swamiji's
80th
birthday



Pujya Swamiji's
70th
birthday



Pujya Swamiji's
60th
birthday



“In the Vedic vision, all that is here is the manifestation of *Īśvara*. The order that we see in the world of sound, like any other order, is *Īśvara*. When one is exposed to music, one is in harmony with *Īśvara*. There is joy; there is love. The contentious ego resolves into the experience of *Īśvara* whether one recognizes it as such or not.” - Swami Dayananda Saraswati

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All that is here is only Īśvara

Editor's Note

Pujya Swamiji's 90th star birthday was on 9th August and 15th August was his date of birth. As a gratitude to his teachings, we are dedicating this August 2020 Newsletter to the topic, "All that is here is only Īśvara".

Pujya Swamiji's two major emphasis being

- 1) Veda is a *pramāṇam*.
- 2) All that is here is only Īśvara.

This he brought out in his characteristic style in his various talks.

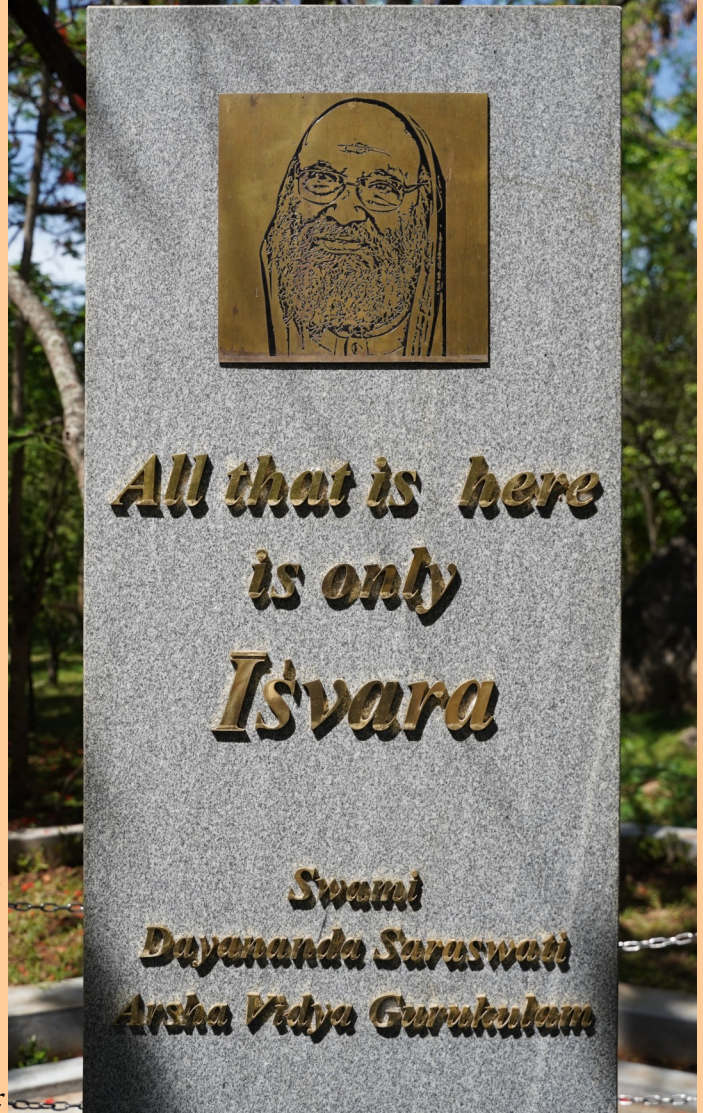
To quote Swamiji himself --

"The Vedic vision of God is a whole vision. And the truth is that there cannot be many versions of God. Like the fact that one plus one equals two, the truth about the nature of God is not open for accommodation. The Veda tells me, "All this, whatever moves in the world, is to be [understood as] pervaded by Īśvara," īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñcana jagatyām jagat."

"All that is here is Īśvara," is the opening sentence of the īśāvāsyā upaniṣad .

The Veda is not saying that there is one God; it says there is only God. If you do not see that, you have to prove that it is not true. It is not a matter of belief. When I say that all that is here is Īśvara, it is something to be understood, not to be believed "

Keeping this in mind this August 2020 Newsletter is bringing out three major articles, in addition, an insignia of "All that is here is Īśvara" is being added in page 3 as permanent feature.



All that is here Is Īśvara
Swami Sakshatkrithananda

The Vedic vision of God is unique. Although the topic of God is not meant to be open for notions or speculation, we find that the concept of God differs from person to person and from religion to religion. If there is a God, why is there so much difference in how people view that God? The answer is very clear. God is one being whom one doesn't know, and yet, whom one cannot but say something about.

Vedanta, which is found at the end of the four Vedas, has something to say about God. In fact, it is the means of knowledge, or pramana, available to know things that I cannot know through any other means—perception, inference and presumption. Although pramana is generally translated as 'authority', the literal translation is 'that which is instrumental in giving knowledge'—pramayah karanam. Prama or ma means 'knowledge'. The suffix ana (lyut) indicates the karanam, or means. The Veda is a separate means of knowledge because the subject matter of the Veda consists of those things to which my senses and other means of knowledge have no access. Each means of knowledge is independent and self-proving. For instance, both my eyes and ears are pramanas. However, the knowledge that my eyes can provide, the ears cannot provide, and conversely, the information that my ears can provide, my eyes cannot. Also, what is understood by inference is generally not available for perception at the time the inference is made. Similarly, there are certain things talked about in the Veda to which we otherwise have no access. Therefore, the Veda is looked upon as a pramana.

In the Vedic tradition, a nastika is one who may believe in God, yet does not grant the status of a pramana to the Veda. On the other hand, one who does accept the Veda as a pramana is an nastika, even if he says there is no God, like a Sankhya, for example. Sankhya is a school of philosophy propounded by Kapila, who was a person of great intellect. However, his conclusion that there is no God was an unfortunate one. Why don't we leave God alone? God is the most abused being. In fact, it takes nothing less than God to be able to handle the abuse that God is subject to. We call him names:

God is a punisher; God is terrible. Yet at the same time, he is also very loving. Various theologies give us the double message. "He loves you; be careful." It is something like saying, "I love you; get out of my sight." To a worldly authority you can apply for leniency, but God does not seem to be available for mercy petitions. Here, at least you may be able to get help from a human rights organization if you are subjected to capital punishment. You may get a last minute reprieve. Not so when you are subject to God's sentence. You go to Hell forever. It is amazing that there are theologians who try to establish that when God says, "Go to Hell!" he really means it. Thus, people have different concepts of God. Even the person who says, "I don't believe in God," is only dismissing his concept of God. When asked which God he is talking about, he will say, "You know, the God who sits in heaven and dropped down all these planets—I don't believe in that God." I would agree with that person that such a God doesn't exist. In fact, I would prove it. Such a God is, therefore, not a matter for belief or non-belief. Even the person who dismisses God is only dismissing his own concept of God. Being a rational person, he has got to dismiss that concept. But whether dismissed or not, one always has some concept of God.

It is like the situation I face when I travel. People looking at me have to make some comment, some judgment about me. They have to either accept me, dismiss me, or make some comment because I am funny-looking. Once when I was leaving a hotel, a woman pointed to me and said, "Look! What a man won't do for attention!" People have to make judgments, even when they see a picture of the swami. Many people, knowing nothing about Vedanta, have come to my public talks. Even in a new place, where I was not known at all, people came to the lecture. When we asked why they came, they said it was because they saw the picture. So, they had to deal with that picture; they needed to make a judgment. They may say, "Oh, some strange fellow has come from India," or "Another swami is here." They must say something because they have to deal with that photo in one way or another. Although a swami, of course, doesn't need to be dealt with, the picture does.

You can't really avoid the question, "What is God?" because it is a part of your psyche. Whether you have dismissed or accepted God, his existence remains a mystery to you, for you find yourself in a given scheme of things

that consists of certain laws. These laws are many and varied but they do form a universe. You can, perhaps, even reduce this entire universe to mathematical equations. You can have differing standpoints based on these equations and derive different models of the universe. One thing is very clear, however: whatever be the standpoint, there is a given world, a given scheme of things. And in the scheme of things you find you are a person, an individual. This individual has certain endowments, a physical body that is alive, was born alive, is capable of growing into adulthood, and is subject to aging and passing away. These are given facts. When I look at this body I find it consists of certain laws, *niyati*. The body is caused by, and is subject to, certain biological laws. There also are physiological laws that govern the body, and there are definitely psychological laws. So, too, there are laws governing your ability to remember, to recall. There are laws governing your knowing and not knowing. All these laws can be brought under one word: 'order'. There is a physical order outside, a biological order, a physiological order, a psychological order, and there is an intellectual or epistemological order. All these constitute one huge order that is given.

Within this order, you have a certain freedom. As a human being, you are endowed with a freedom to desire, a freedom to will, which you call 'free will'. And you have the freedom to act, to accomplish, which is also an endowment. In this order I have the power to know, to explore. That power, the faculty of knowledge, is given to me—it is not something that I gather later. All of these are given—the seat of emotion, the faculty of knowing, the sense organs, and so on. In order for me to see this world as well as I do, my physical body/mind/sense complex is implied by, is part of, this given universe. And when I increase my knowledge and see the world more clearly, both that capacity and that knowledge are also given.

So much is given, in fact, that no one can say that he or she has created anything. Nobody can claim to be the sole author of anything, including a person who has discovered something not known before. For instance, in fundamental scientific research, a person may discover a law, a phenomenon not previously known. Perhaps his name is attached to the discovery. Yet we still cannot say that he is the sole author because his very faculty to know, to discover, was already given. And there must be something already there for him to discover. Further, the people who had worked on the pro-

ject until then also have to be acknowledged. The prior generations of effort, exploration, research and discoveries, mistakes, corrections—all these are supporting him. He has a better view of things because he is standing on the shoulders of these prior generations. His being in a certain time and place to be able to take advantage of all the prior knowledge, is given to him. And so he makes a discovery. How can he say “I am the sole author”? Thus, nobody is the author of anything. That is why you will find that many works in Sanskrit don’t even have authors. They are all anonymous. Some of the best verses are collected in a work simply called Subbhashitani, Good Sayings. The authors cannot be traced, but that does not matter, because the writers knew they were not the authors. They understood that they were endowed with certain potentials, which are given. Even the fact that there is a potential is given. And that you have the capacity to tap a potential is given. So the most you can say is that you can tap a potential.

You find yourself in a given world with a given body/mind/sense complex. This is the truth that nobody can deny. That is why the child asks the fundamental question: “Dad, tell me, who made all this?” Dad can only say what he himself was told when he was young and never questioned afterwards. When he was young, he was told that God made all this, and nobody questions that further. His granddad also confirmed what his father said. But the boy is not satisfied. He persists with questions: “Where is that God? Have you seen him?” The father says, “I have not seen him; I hope to see him. He is in heaven.” The father’s statement that God in heaven created this jagat, the world, is a literal interpretation of such of Vedic statements as: divi tishthan sarvam karoti. “Situated in divi, he made everything.” God is divi-tishtha, but a literal interpretation may not be the intended one. Divi can mean ‘in heaven’, or, more appropriately here, ‘in his own effulgence.’ Thus, the correct translation would be, “Being rooted in his own effulgence, he created everything.” Unfortunately, it is taken literally as meaning “God in heaven created this world,” resulting in a cosmological and psychological split. And it is propounded from every pulpit as such. Thus a son or daughter, maybe as young as four or five years old, will ask: “Who created heaven, Dad?” Dad, very serious, says “God.”

“Dad, who created heaven?”

“God created heaven.”

“Where was God before God created heaven?” And the child has to come up with the only answer possible: hell. God in hell created heaven. Hell was so hot, he couldn’t really sit there. To air condition all of hell is a hell of a job, and therefore, God went to heaven and kept hell for certain people. Still the questioning continues: “Who created hell?” Finally he has to say that God created hell. “Where was God before he created this hell?” The only answer Dad has left is this: “Shut up. You ask too many questions.” Whenever you cannot answer, you use authority to stifle further questions. Using abusive language when you cannot answer is an old trick.

But that nascent, growing mind, with a freshness of its own, cannot easily give up the questioning. For a long time the child persists before giving up. Then he shuts his mouth and mind about that fundamental topic, that inevitable question. Later, he may conclude that God cannot be known, saying, “I am an agnostic. I don’t say God is; I don’t say that God is not.” He relegates the topic to the background, behind more important questions like how much he has on his credit card. When it comes to whether God exists, his mind is wide open and can go in any direction, like a freeway.

But at least he doesn’t just say, “I know where God is—he is in heaven.” That person has stopped thinking and just believes what he was told. The question, however, is never given up. Do you know why? The question is simply lying there, dormant, because, as a rational being, you seek an answer. And you can never dismiss your own reason. There was a person who claimed, “You should not be too rational.” I asked him why. “Because that makes life miserable,” he said. He used reason in giving me the reason for his conclusion, and argued with me for one-and-a-half hours, just to prove that he is not rational. It was quite amazing. Basically, you are a rational person because viveka, discrimination, is your basic endowment. And it is arguably your greatest endowment. It makes the difference between a questioning person and a non-questioning person. We cannot simply just go about conducting our lives, leaving this question about God to the philosophers or to some swamis to discuss. That is not possible because this question very much affects your personal life.

Unless this question is answered to some extent, you will feel insecure and uncertain about yourself. Everyone is born helpless, and to compensate, everyone is born with a capacity to trust totally. Whichever pair of hands

picked the baby up—that pair of hands was trusted totally by the child, thank God. A baby does not have distrust or mistrust—it has total trust. It has to, because it is helpless. If you are helpless, you have to seek help. That is intelligent living. And when somebody offers help, you need to be able to trust that person. If somebody offers help but you don't trust him at all, then what would be the result? A baby is born helpless and therefore, it needs to trust. It trusts totally, but slowly it loses the trust. That is because for the growing child, dad and mom are infallible, almighty—until there is a cockroach. Then the child runs to mother, thinking mother is infallible and that she will take care of it. In fact, only after running to mother would the child even look at the insect. When the child is with its mother, there is no problem—it looks at the roach. That means the child trusts mother. Then the mother calls dad. “Don't worry, I'll call Dad.” This is how the erosion of trust begins. So, mom is fallible. But then, dad must be infallible. And dad—a big guy, comes and says, “Oh, that's only a cockroach—don't worry.” He phones the fire department! I am just given an exaggerated example. But this is how the child loses trust. You lose trust, and afterwards, all your life, you are searching for the infallible. In fact, your whole life is a search for the infallible, and unless you discover the infallible, you are insecure. But the concepts of God, that we hear about from various religious pulpits are only fallible; they exhibit traits which even humans are exhorted to overcome. I have been told that I cannot afford to be judgmental. But God himself is presented as judgmental. On judgment day, he will judge you. When we present this God as judgmental, where is the infallibility? How a person can be judgmental and still be infallible? And what is the basis of his judgment? These concepts of God that are floating around are really damaging to a human being's psychological well being. God is presented as all good things, and all the opposite qualities are said to belong to the devil, Satan. Thus you have a vertical division right in your psyche. The person, the personality, is divided. And due to that split, you feel you can't afford to have jealousy because if you feel jealous, then the devil has entered into you. But still, you do have jealousy due to some psychological reasons—perhaps due to circumstances when you were growing up. When somebody gets something that you don't, then you feel jealous. You may say, “I am not.” Then what are you? “I only feel sad.” Why do you feel sad? “Because I don't get what

others get.” What does that mean? All right, you feel sad—do you enjoy the other person’s happiness, at least? “No, I can’t enjoy the other person being happy. I get angry.” That is called jealousy—the affliction arising on seeing another’s excellence is jealousy, para-utkrshtam drstva jayamanas santapah matsaryam. This santapa, sorrow, that occurs when you see another person being happy is defined as jealousy. At least, you think he is happy. In your jealousy, you cannot but think he is happy, yet that may not be true. If you were to ask that person, he might tell you otherwise. There was a person who could not get married, and got very jealous when somebody else he knew got married. But the person who got married came to me, saying, “Swamiji, I want to come along with you and be a sannyasi.” From this we can understand that all of this is our own projection. We think that others are happy, which is not totally true, and therefore, we feel jealous. We can get rid of that jealousy, but not by bracketing jealousy as Satan’s doing. Satan is not sitting somewhere, pushing jealousy into your head, deciding, “Let this fellow have jealousy today. Let him have some hatred today.” There is no such vertical division. If there were a Satan, even he could not be separate from God. By definition, such a Satan could not exist.

The Vedic vision of God is a whole vision, without such a split. And although it is a fact, not simply an option that one may choose, there is a necessity to qualify it as ‘Vedic’, for the unfortunate reason that there are dualistic versions of God. And the truth is that there cannot be many versions of God. Like the fact that one plus one equals two, the truth about the nature of God is not open for accommodation. You cannot choose to have one plus one equal three. That is not a cultural option. It is not like choosing a style of music. For instance, both Indian music and Western music have their own beauty. One is not greater than the other, and if you think that one is greater than the other, it just means that you don’t understand the other. Things are different and we have to take them as they are; we try to understand them. When that is the case, each style is valid. Music is open to your choice, but the sum of one plus one is not. It is two. You can’t say, “In my country, one plus one equals three”, or “In my culture, one plus one is four.”

So, too, there is no such option about the truth of God. If God is a reality, then definitely I have to discover that.

To be continued...

All that is here Is Īśvara¹

By Swaminathan V

INTRODUCTION

A human being, endowed with an intellect, which is more evolved in comparison to that of other beings, encounters a world (*jagat*) while living. The world consists of other human beings like oneself, other living beings and the inanimate objects. This world is an objective world, which is empirically real for every being in it. On account of the evolved intellect, the thinking process of an individual human being (*jīva*) is influenced to a large degree by the principle of causality. Hence, a *jīva* concerns himself/herself with the question of what the cause of the *jagat* is. In other words, the *jīva* correctly presumes that there must be an intelligent causal factor for the *jagat*, as otherwise the intelligent functioning of it cannot be reckoned with. That is, the outcome of the concept of causality is that there is a creator for the intelligent creation. One who accepts causality, invariably names the creator as God. In contrast to such a person, a theist, there is the atheist who does not accept the existence of God, and there is an agnostic who accepts causality but maintains that the human mind has no access to the all-intelligent creator. Then, among the theists also, there is a wide range of beliefs of God, the causal factor. Naturally, any discussion of God among the theists, is tantamount to a comparison and confrontation of their respective beliefs; and with the other two groups, any discussion becomes irreconcilable. This contentious altercation has remained an enduring situation in the human society.

The tenets of *Sanātana* Dharma have systematically explored this relation between the *jīva*, *jagat* and the causal factor, God or *Īśvara*, by examining the reality of each. Pūjya Swami Dayananda Saraswati² systematically unfolds the process of inquiry of the reality of the triad, *jīva*, *jagat* and *Īśvara*³, and he starts off with the assertion that God or *Īśvara* is to be understood and not to be believed⁴. He would say that when *Īśvara* is understood, then there is no risk of belief⁵. Consequently, one is also unencumbered from the theological quagmire. This article attempts to capture the salient points of Pūjya Swamiji's teaching on *Īśvara*.

¹ The title is an inimitable expression of a reality by Pūjya Swami Dayananda Saraswati. An attempt will be made in this article to describe the systematic exploration of this topic by Pūjya Swamiji. In doing so, the author paraphrases to the best of his ability Pūjya Swamiji's unfoldment, drawing freely from his teachings documented in several of his books. The reader can refer to the citations in this article for further elucidation.

² Will be referred as Pūjya Swamiji in the rest of the article.

³ The word *Īśvara* will be synonymously used for the word God to denote the causal factor.

⁴ "God, Man and World", in Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda, Compiled by Swamini Srividyananda, Vol. II, p.20, 1st edition 2006. (Note that a new edition of the book has been published recently by Arsha Vidya Research & Publication Trust, Chennai, India.)

⁵ Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda, Compiled by Swamini Srividyananda, Vol. II, p.490, 1st edition 2006.

ALL IS GIVEN

While acknowledging that the cause of the creation is sought after by any human intellect, Pūjya Swamiji underscores an important point that the creation (*jagat*) is only from the standpoint of the individual (*jīva*)⁶. The *jīva*'s own dreams and other imaginations form a subjective creation. However, apart from the personal creation, he/she sees an objective creation into which one is born, and that which is empirically the same for all the *jīvas*. This objective creation, which is not created by an individual, is naturally the Lord's creation. Time, space and whatever that exists in time and space, come with the creation. Pūjya Swamiji would draw attention to one's own body-mind-sense complex⁷ to point out how it is intelligently put together and how one is not an author of it. In fact, the body-mind-sense complex is given to one⁸. One may state from a standpoint that the body is given by one's parents. There is some validity to that statement. However, lo and behold, the parents themselves have a body that is given to them. Their knowledge of the anatomy of the body is as incomplete as that of the individual. While unfolding the creation, Pūjya Swamiji would humorously ask whether anyone knows where the spleen is in their body. Most in the audience would draw a blank. Really speaking, parents are given to an individual and he/she is given to them.

In fact, no one has created anything. Everything is given. The planet Earth that one finds oneself in, is given along with the minerals, mountains, rivers, seas, animals, plants etc. The sun is given. The moon and the planets are given. The fundamental forces – the gravitational, the electromagnetic, the strong and weak forces – are given. That water boils at 100 degrees Celsius at one atmosphere is given. In other words, the laws that govern the universe are all given. All the resources are given. The capacity to act and create are given. All the possibilities are given, so that one can explore, and the ability to explore is also given. It is easy to appreciate that one is placed as an integral part of a macroscopic scheme that is available for one's acknowledgement and appreciation. As a self-conscious being, endowed with a given body-mind-sense complex, the individual fills a slot in the macroscopic order, and relate to it.

THE GIVER

If everything is given, a natural question arises as to who the giver is. A cow, which also falls into a slot in the scheme of things with its own body-mind-sense complex, cannot ask this question. All animals are programmed to respond in a certain predictable manner as the situations unfold for them. On the other hand, the human

⁶ *Satsaṅga* with Swami Dayananda Saraswati, in *Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda*, Compiled by Gyanakumari, 1st edition 1999, p.428. (Note that a new edition of the book has been published recently by Arsha Vidya Research & Publication Trust, Chennai, India.)

⁷ The individual's body-mind-sense complex is called the *kārya-karaṇa-saṅghāta*. The physical body is *kārya* and the mind, senses, and *prāṇa* are *karaṇa*. *Saṅghāta* is the assemblage of the physical body, mind, senses and *prāṇa*.

⁸ *Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda*, Compiled by Swamini Srividyananda, Vol. II, p.482-486, 1st edition 2006.

intellect, burdened by the law of causation, would want to know who the giver is. Endowed with the capacity to reason, a human intellect will refuse to accept that the intelligent universe is a serendipitous or a natural outcome. Using the example of a simple gadget like a wristwatch, which is an intelligently put together ensemble of numerous delicate parts such as gears, springs, jewel and so forth, Pūjya Swamiji would point out the incongruity of an answer that would assert that the watch is found naturally in the valley of the Swiss Alps. He will proceed to define creation as something which is intelligently put together to serve one or more purpose such as a house, a car, the shirt that one wears etc. The body-mind-sense complex is the most astonishing apparatus, consisting of the heart, lungs, stomach, digestive system, brain, hands, legs etc., that is intelligently put together. It is a meaningful creation as well. The cause of the body-mind-sense complex, by any stretch of the imagination, cannot be called natural. One has to recognize an intelligent being for not only its creation but for the creation of the entire *jagat*.

Pūjya Swamiji points out that a deliberate, intelligent and meaningful creation implies knowledge, and knowledge cannot have an inert matter as its locus. Inevitably, it has to rest with a conscious being. This is easily assimilable with a simple example of a creation such as a pot. The potter must necessarily conceive of the pot, knows the purpose of the pot and has the know-how for its creation, or at least the ability to find the skills elsewhere, if needed. Similarly, a weaver has the knowledge and the skill to make the fabric. There is no natural cause for the creation of the pot or the fabric. Now, when it comes to the *jagat*, its creation encompasses the entirety of it, including both known and unknown, along with all the possibilities to create, correct, change, adapt, etc. Just as the creation of the pot implies pot-knowledge, of the fabric, fabric-knowledge and so forth, the creation of all, the entire *jagat*, implies all-knowledge. This all-knowledge has to reside in a conscious being and that being is all-knowing, all-skills, all-power and almighty. This conscious being, the causal factor of the creation, can be called God or *Īśvara*. This *Īśvara* is neither a consequence of an imagination nor a concept. It need not be imposed on anybody and there is no compulsion of a belief. One can rely on one's own thinking faculty, that which is given, and that which is wedded to causality, to reason and discover the causal factor as a conscious being that is all-knowing.

EFFICIENT CAUSE & MATERIAL CAUSE

Pūjya Swamiji helps us understand this simple fundamental discovery by further inquiry of the process of creation. Any creation requires two causes – a creator and the material for the creation. The creation of the pot requires the pot-maker and the material to make the pot. So also, *Īśvara* requires the material to create the *jagat*. The question is where would *Īśvara* find the material, within himself or outside of himself. Keeping in mind that space and time are also part of the creation, there is no outside of *Īśvara*. The only choice that is left is that the material for the creation

has to be from *Īśvara* himself. How does one assimilate this? Pūjya Swamiji draws a parallel to one's dream to underscore the point that just as the material for the dream world comes from one's own memories, *Īśvara* the creator, must have the material to create the *jagat* within himself like a spider. It is said in the Muṇḍakopaniṣad that the spider is both the creator as well as the material cause for the web it creates⁹. The spider finds the material to weave the web from its own saliva. In the same manner, *Īśvara* is both the maker and the material cause. The maker is called the *nimitta kāraṇa*, the 'efficient' or 'intelligent' cause, which includes both the knowledge and skill. The material cause is called the *upādāna kāraṇa*.

The single locus for both the efficient cause and the material cause of the *jagat*, knocks off the theological connotations of God with a locale creating the world. For example, the water required to fill up the dream swimming pool is also found in oneself alone. The space and time of the dream world, as well as the material objects of the dream world, are all created from the dreamer alone. What applies to the dreamer and his/her dream world also applies to *Īśvara*. Before the creation, there was no time and no space. Along with time and space, the empirical world comes into manifestation. As the efficient cause of the *jagat*, *Īśvara* is 'He' the maker and as the material cause, *Īśvara* is 'She'. Here a question can be posed. Does the creation rely upon multiple creators, *aneka kartā*, just as a house that is intelligently put together for a purpose, requires for its creation a carpenter, a mason, a plumber and so forth? The idea of *aneka kartā* will bring logical inconsistencies before the creation of time and space, and further will contradict numerous upaniṣadic statements about creation such as the one quoted above.

Unlike the creation of the pot, with respect to the creation of the *jagat*, the fact that *Īśvara* is both the efficient and material cause of the creation, brings about an extraordinary situation. In the case of the pot, the pot-maker is different from the pot. That is why when one buys a pot, one brings home only the pot. The pot-maker does not come along with the pot. In the case of the *jagat*, where the creation is, there is present not only the material but also the maker, *Īśvara*. So, the question of 'where is God?' is superfluous. Suppose space is created by *Īśvara* out of himself, then space is not away from *Īśvara*. In fact, space is *Īśvara*. Similarly, time is *Īśvara*. The stars, sun, moon, air, water, fire and everything on earth are non-separate from *Īśvara*. Being the material cause, the entire creation cannot be separate from *Īśvara*. This means, one's body-mind-sense complex is also nothing but *Īśvara*.

⁹ यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः सम्भवन्ति । *yathorṇanābhiḥ sṛjate grhṇate ca yathā pṛthivyāmoṣadhayaḥ sambhavanti* ।

यथा सतः पुरुषात् केशलोमानि यथाक्षरात् सम्भवतीह विश्वम् ॥ *yathā sataḥ puruṣāt keśalomāni yathākṣarāt sambhavatīha viśvam* ॥ MU

1.1.7. "Just as the spider creates and withdraws its web, just as the plants and trees come into being from the earth, just as hair on the head and body grow from a living person, in the same manner, here, the creation (world) comes into being from the imperishable Brahman." "

There is nothing in the creation that is separate from *Īśvara*. In fact, the creation is *Īśvara*. This is the meaning of the statement that *Īśvara* is everywhere. The question, ‘where is God?’ can arise only after space is created. Space and time are also part of the creation. Therefore, *Īśvara* can exist without the creation whereas creation cannot exist apart from *Īśvara*. Everything that is here is non-separate from *Īśvara*. If this is understood, then there is no confusion of many Gods. In fact, Vedānta asserts that it is not one God but there is only God.

BHĀRATĪYA CULTURE

The all-knowing *Īśvara*, who as the material cause of the *jagat* non-separate from the creation, can be invoked in any form. When there is only God, there can be any number of Gods. That is why in the Bhāratīya culture all forms are looked upon as forms of *Īśvara*. The whole cosmos is the Lord’s form. Every name is Lord’s name. *Īśvara* can be invoked in any one of the forms. In the Bhāratīya culture everything is sacred. The Lord is invoked as space, air, fire, waters and earth. One can invoke the total in any one form in the *jagat*. Also, certain traditional forms that have been in vogue for eons are worshipped as the Lord. The Lord in the form of Rāma, or in the form of Kṛṣṇa, provide a connection between the form and what it stands for. The form of Lord Rāma stands for the moral order in the creation. The form of Kṛṣṇa stands for joy. Then, looking upon the *jagat* in a three-fold way of creation, sustenance and resolution, gives rise to Lord Brahma as the creator, Lord Viṣṇu as the sustainer, and Lord Rudra as the one who withdraws the creation into himself. When different aspects of the same *Īśvara* are invoked in different forms, therein emerges the concept of one’s own personal deity, *iṣṭa-devatā*. This is a unique aspect in the Bhāratīya culture as every form of prayer and worship in any language are equally valid. Any one form is as efficacious as any other form to invoke the Lord. For the sake of prayers, the material cause is looked upon as the female aspect, and the efficient cause is looked upon as the male aspect. Thus, there are Gods and Goddesses. Really speaking, they are one and the same. One can worship *Īśvara* as father or mother, or both. The depiction of the Lord in the form of *ardhanārīśvara*, the right half as male and the left half as female, highlights this vision of *Īśvara* as both the efficient cause as well as the material cause.

THE CREATION AS AN ORDER

The entire creation is nothing but the manifestation of the all-knowing *Īśvara*. In every aspect of the creation there is knowledge. One can say, ‘all that is here is *Īśvara*’ or ‘all that is here is knowledge’. Wherever there is knowledge, there is order. The whole creation is nothing but order¹⁰. One can look at the world as consisting of discrete objects or systems, or view it in the form of various orders. The physical

¹⁰ “Relating to *Īśvara* – Recognizing the Order,” in Talks and Essays of Swami Dayananda, Compiled by Gyanakumari, 1st edition 1999, p.277.

aspect of the universe represents the physical order, which is what one studies in physics. The biological world stands for the biological order, which forms the study of biology. There is a physiological order that unfolds the functions of the life force that permeates every living organism. The psychological order encompasses human behavior and responses. There is the cognitive order, which examines the realms of epistemology. Even the increasing entropy of the universe representing disorder is in order only. Then, there is the world of viruses, which constitutes the discipline of virology as proven by the recent worldwide pandemic caused by COVID-19.

Even examining one's physical body, which encompasses multiple disciplines of knowledge, is enough to see that the body is an intelligent and efficient ensemble exemplifying the various orders. Anywhere one looks in the universe, there is only order, there is only knowledge. There is also a moral order, including the laws of dharma and adharma, which are simply what one wants others to do towards oneself, and what one does not want others to do unto oneself, respectively. This moral order, which is not created by us, is commonly sensed by all living beings. It stands for universal right and wrong. Thus, *Īśvara*, who is all knowledge, is one total, *mahā*, order.^{11, 12} In this appreciation of *Īśvara* as one total order, one is not away from *Īśvara*, as everything in the creation is within the purview of some order or other. One cannot move away from the presence of *Īśvara* either in time or in space. One can live in the awareness of *Īśvara*. One can trust the order, as the order is infallible. Pūjya Swamiji would assert, "I do not say God is infallible. I say the infallible order is God." The cognitive change with reference to what is *Īśvara*, makes one to relax in the lap of *Īśvara*. This is how one can bring *Īśvara* into one's life.¹³

To be continued...

¹¹ Public Talk Series: 1, Swami Dayanda Saraswati, Arsha Vidya Centre Research & Publication, Chennai, India, 2006.

¹² Public Talk Series: 2, Swami Dayanda Saraswati, Arsha Vidya Centre Research & Publication, Chennai, India, 2006.

¹³ This article is penned by Dr. V. Swaminathan, State College, Pennsylvania, USA.

Note: We could not publish the serial articles in this month newsletter due to non availability of printing space.

- Editor

Knowledge of Īśvara

By Swami Shankarananda

If I have to believe in a God that God must be someone who is beyond my perception, my inference, and who should not be contradicted by my perception and inference. All those concepts of God, if I can dismiss rationally it is silly to continue to have those concepts. The beauty of our scriptures lies in its vision. It is the vision of God which is a challenge for you. It does not present a God other than what you see, what you are. It says, all that is here and the one who observes all that is here, all these are Īśvara. What are you going to do with this? Where is the question of belief? Being an equation it is a challenge; any equation is a challenge. In the vision of someone Matter is equal to Energy; it is clear to that person; and to you it is not clear. And therefore, you have a challenge in your hands. You have to know what that vision is; how true it is.

Here is a belief; it is a different type of belief. Here is a belief, you can call faith; trust is a better word. There is a trust that this man must be saying something true, I have not understood so far. Just because I don't understand I don't dismiss what is being said, because it is said by a person who has some credentials and therefore, I don't question the credibility of the statement, the validity of the statement. I question my own limitations of knowledge. So the benefit of doubt is given to the one who has the credentials. The person who says is not just somebody; he is someone who has the authority to say, like an Einstein. When he says $E = MC^2$, even if I don't understand suppose what he says, the benefit of doubt is given to him. Even though I try to understand what he has said, what he has written about this, how he has arrived at the equation I go through all this but nothing makes any sense to me. Just because the whole thing doesn't make any sense to me I don't dismiss the person, whereas I give the benefit of doubt to the person; I take his words in good trust and continue to pursue my enquiry. That is something reasonable; that is what a rationalist will say. (6.00) In fact the rationalists are the problem. Rationales are acceptable. We want people who are rational but not rationalists. Rationalism does not belong to one particular fellow and nothing said here is irrational.

You tell me what is irrational here? So the whole jagat is Īśvara; it is a challenge for you.

One fellow tells, "There is no God. If there is God I give him two minutes", and the entire audience in the beach is waiting for two minutes. *Ellarum thirumbi thirumbi*

parkara, engeyavathu vararannu. (says in Tamil - Everybody is looking around to see whether he is coming somewhere) Nobody is coming, except for *thengai, mangai, pattani, chundal* Avandhanya (says in Tamil – except the man selling a snack, a mixture of coconut, mango, peas etc nobody is coming. He only is God). (Laughs out loud). Except this boy nobody is coming. So, naturally this fellow says, after two minutes, if there is God he would have come. He is not there. I say if there is a God sitting somewhere he would definitely come there, but if the God is the one who is already talking, as though he is God, and the people who are listening are also God, and everybody else, the *thengai, mangai, pattani, chundal* man is also God; and the *chundal*; is also God. Then how can he ever come?

That is the reason why when you offer 108 *modakams* to Gaṇeśa, if Gaṇeśa is a fellow, circumscribed by his own dimensions etc. as an individual, he would definitely extend his trunk, and take all the 108 *modakams* in one sweep after all or he would at least have a bag of his own and put them in his own place because you offered to him, if he has got a place of his own. The problem with Gaṇeśa is where will he keep it; inside is Gaṇeśa, outside is Gaṇeśa and everywhere is Gaṇeśa. Therefore, he can't place the *modakams* elsewhere which is his place from the place which is your place. But the *modakams* offered where they are placed that is also his place. The cover of every *modakam* is Bhagavān and what is inside is also Bhagavān. That is the reason why all the *modakams* are left on the plate. Thank God. If he begins to take away all the *modakams* you offer, you will go over and talk to everybody, *parthiyodi engathle* (says in Tamil - did you see what happened in our house?). Thus you would go over and talk to everyone. Do you know what happened? I offered 108 *modakams* and suddenly they all disappeared. Gaṇeśa took all of them. Thus it would make a big news. *Dinathandhi* would also perhaps have a headline *vizhungivittar* Ganapathy (Ganapathy swallowed). Then there would be a huge headline. There would be lot of news. Thank God that he does not take away, for he cannot take away.

And therefore, what is this vision, this concept of God? This concept is it something that you can simply dismiss? You cannot dismiss this concept. You can only appreciate this concept; dismiss is impossible because you have no choice for dismissing. I do not present a God other than what is here. Therefore, don't you have a challenge? You have a challenge in hand. I say space is God. I say *Vāyu* is God. I say *Agni* is God. I say *Apaḥ* God it is. And then I say *Prithivi* is God. Everything else is God and the one who talks is also God etc. Then where is the question of anyone proving that there is no God etc.?

That is why if anybody tells me there is no God I will ask him what is your concept

of God, tell me. Which God you are dismissing? When you say this type of God I am dismissing I will say you are only dismissing without proper reason, I will give you all the reasons how it should be dismissed. Then you come back to this. Therefore, this is a challenge. Our scriptures are a challenge. For challenge sake you should accept. Just for your intellectual challenge you should accept this. If not for anything else you should accept this for just a challenge. If you have got a *buddhi* you better accept this challenge because it is not an ordinary challenge; it is a life time challenge for everyone.

After all, when you dismiss God also you should have thought about it because otherwise why should you dismiss that? There are so many countries in Africa; we don't know these countries existed. Suppose somebody says there is one country called Wollongongong. You don't care to dismiss that country because you don't worry about that; you don't think about Wollongongong. There are so many countries; this is also one of them. Who cares whether that country is there or not? You didn't care to dismiss that country but you have to dismiss God because it is your in-dweller. It starts as a three-year-old when you begin to wonder about all these things. Because you come to know when there is something in the fridge, you know it is not the fridge that is providing you. You slowly come to discover that in time that somebody is there who is putting it there. You know that very well. And therefore, when you look at this world naturally you are going to ask questions, because anything that is in front of you is always provided, and naturally, the question is who provides etc. starts when you are young. Who is that? And you have to silence it there is no one. There is no one. Who is that? There is no one.

First what comes is there is one. Then you have to say no; first we have to think of God and then we have to say he is not. And naturally you have that challenge in your hand. And therefore, as we saw this challenge is such a beautiful challenge for it just releases you. Generally, when you meet with the challenge and then perhaps when you are successful in the bout and then you have some joy lasting for some time and then you look for another challenge to surmount. But then here is a challenge, a challenge you meet with and then relief is complete. The smallness of you, the insignificance of you disappears as you will see later.

Therefore, as we saw, the Lord being both the *nimitta kāraṇam*, the maker, and also the material cause, the *upadana kāraṇam*, there is nothing that is away from that Īśvara. Therefore, every phenomenon in the creation is Īśvara. Therefore, you can look at the Lord, the *nimitta kāraṇa*, can be invoked through a phenomenon. Thus a lightning is a phenomenon; the *parjanya*, the clouds can be a phenomenon; water is an element which is a phenomenon; *Agni*, the fire is a phenomenon; time,

kāla, death or time, is a phenomenon. Is there a culture where death can be worshipped? Lord Yamaraja, death is always something everybody is frightened of; we worship death; why, because that is another law. That is the law. If that law is not there, the law of change is not there. *Kālaḥ*, he is called *Kālaḥ*, why because it is the Lord of time as it were; and the time *kālo bhakṣati*, *Kālaḥ* is someone who just swallows *jagat*. *Kālo jagat bhakṣakaḥ*. The *kālaḥ* is *jagat bhakṣakaḥ*. He just swallows and devours the entire world; *jagat bhakṣakaḥ*, the great devourer of the entire world. Who can say that I am away from *Kālaḥ*. A fellow was saying I have conquered time; then one heart attack and the fellow is gone. All the Rāvanas are gone already. They all thought they had conquered time. Bhasmāsura thought he was great and he had such a great power; the poor fellow put his own hand on his head. And you find all empires at all levels have all gone, all tyrants had their last days. Death always has its last laugh but we are not frightened of that Lord Death. We give him a pedestal and worship him also, as Yama; he is a devatā.

Why? Why, because any phenomenon in the creation is non-separate from Īśvara. And therefore, I look at the Lord, please do understand here, I look at the Lord from that phenomenon stand point, the Lord becomes the *adhiṣṭhāna devatā*. Therefore, you can have as many Gods as you can count the phenomenon. You can have any number of Gods. Only we can say there are many Gods. Others cannot say because he is the fellow sitting above and can be only one. For us it is not one God; for us, as I have told you, there is only God. There is a lot of difference between One God and the Only God. This 'one God' is just a lip service to God. If he is one God, I ask where is he? *Akkada unnaru*. (says in Telugu) There is a song, a very interesting song. (Sings a song in Telugu)

Ākkadavunde Pandurangadu ikkada unddade, Ikkadavunde Pandurangadu akkada undāde.

Entha pedha vākyamadi? Cūdandi. (What a big statement. Look at this.)

Akkadavunde Pandurangadu, he is there in Pandaripura, *ikkada unddade* (He is here). It is all in our culture. *Ikkadavunde Pandurangadu akkada unddade.*

Idhuvarayum nanna irukku (It is good until this) Then afterwards, *rendaiyo, rendaiyo Pandaripuramu pothanu*. (Laughs out loud) First he said the Panduranga who is there in Pandaripuram is here, the Panduranga here is there. That means he is everywhere. That is fine. Once you say he is everywhere, *rendaiyo, rendaiyo*, means please come Sir, come Sir, let us go to Pandaripuram. There is one song like this. Very interesting song.

If he is somewhere in Pandaripuram alone, somewhere above, he is one God. One

God business is real business. He is really business. One God is business, I tell you. There is one God, therefore, *ekkada unnaru* (where is he)? He must be somewhere. There is only one God. They say we have modernised the religion. This is the modern religion. There is only one God and he is a clean God.

The only problem with that is that there is a Satan and he is always putting spokes in his wheel. God wants to do nice things, goody things and then Satan comes and creates problems for you. You have to be very careful about Satan. God also has to be careful. You still call him God; restricted by Satan. God wants to come to you, Satan comes first. God does something nice, Satan walks behind and destroys everything he has done. This is God. If he is one God, Just please listen to this; if he is God, other than you, other than the *jagat*, he is the one who created this world like a donut, sitting there he dropped the donut of *jagat*, and he is sitting there somewhere, and this one God, just imagine, did you ever imagine this God is different from everything else. And therefore, every insect will be after him. After all he will be different from insect because he is only created the insects without knowing what they can do. And then amoebas etc. all of them will be after him because he will be restricted because all his creations have got some power which he does not. Every insect has got some power; every human being has got some power. And all these powers will be excluded from *Bhagavān* and therefore, this *Bhagavān* will not be *Bhagavān* because he will not be almighty. He may be like one of my uncle mighty; uncle also gets sick; naturally this Lord also will fall sick one day because every mosquito will get him. Mosquitoes are more powerful. I gave you a logic once upon a time. Mosquitoes are more powerful than human beings because a human being uses a net to catch all animals but when it comes to the mosquito he gets inside a net. (Laughs out loud) And therefore, mosquitoes are more powerful than human beings. You shake the logic, let me see. And they will definitely get him.

Therefore, you are only giving a lip service to the Lord. You call him Lord and in the next sentence you finish him. Therefore, there is no one God; we don't say there is one God; we say there is only God. Challenge for you Sir. There is only God. That means what? That means I can have any number now because there is only God, everything is God. Therefore, in any one phenomenon I can look at the Lord, as a *devatā*. Therefore, I can look at the Lord, in a given aspect because every phenomenon is an expression, a manifestation, a *nama-roopa* of that *Bhagavān* and therefore, through the material cause if I look at the Lord, then the whole if I look at I call *Parameśvara* and if I look at the Lord from a given phenomenon which the material cause has expressed itself in that form, then that becomes the *adhiṣṭhāna*

devatā. Therefore, we have *devatās* and *devatās*.

When I look at the Himalayas, as mountain, then there can be an Īśvara on the *parvata*. When I look at the river after all it is a flowing water, it is a river, what is there in the river you will say. What is there in the river is only water, if it is there, whenever. What is there in the river is water. But for a Hindu, he knows it is a river, but what makes him say this is sacred, and what sanctifies that river, is the *adhiṣṭhāna devatā* of the river. The *Prithvi* is after all is *Prithvi* the earth, a *jada*, but it is not *jada* because it is also part of Īśvara. And therefore, it becomes the *adhiṣṭhāna devatā*. If I look at it, just as earth, through the earth I look at the Lord then the *Prithvi* becomes a *devatā* like; the Lord becomes the *devatā*, with reference to *Prithvi*. *Prithvi matha* we can say, gender male or female it is all the same for us and therefore, we say *Prithvi mātā*. We don't make any big distinction, we say *prithvi mātā* or any one element like *Vayu* is *devatā*, *Varuna* is *devatā*, *Agni* is *devatā*, even *Akāśa* is *devatā*. There are *dig-devatās*. East *devatā*, then again West *devatā*, then there is North *devatā*, South *devatā*; and in between also there again *isānya devatā* etc. all these are *devatās*.

Look at our culture and then you will understand. That is the reason why when you are building a house, naturally we do puja, *vastu* puja, for all the directions etc. All the *devatās* we invoke. "Hey, Please let me have the grace of all of you". We invoke their grace; why, because I don't look upon it as a piece of land. *Bhūmi* puja we do. Every year before sowing the seed they do puja to the *bhūmi*. As a boy I have gone year after year to that place to a particular field they will go and then they will do puja. I used to think what puja they are doing? for what? for this *kalimannu* (clay soil). What for they are doing puja. In the beginning I used to wonder what puja and afterwards And slowly I felt there must be something.

My mother used to tell me I should go around this field. I have to go around the field? I would say, "Why should I go around? I have nothing to do going around the field. What would I do? I don't know this cultivation; I am not going to take care of the water etc. and the paddy fields. You should go around the field, for what? I don't do anything". "You don't do anything. You are supposed to be the *yajamāna* and the crop should see you, the standing crop should see you".

The crop should see me? What are you talking about, this crop should see me? The crop is not going to see me. Then she would tell me 'you go' and then I go. Then I go and come. Once or twice I went as routine; these crops when they have this paddy, the ear of paddy, with the weight of the paddy, in the wind they all nod their head. I thought they recognised me. She said they should see the *yajamana*. They should see, then only they give. What a concept, my God what a concept! Be-

fore I till the land I do puja to the land and even as the crop is standing I go; they tell me the crop should see me. We don't look upon anything as less sacred; anything more sacred.

That is why when somebody tells me Swamiji I have no time for religion, I say you have no time for religion if religion is separate from the world, from your life, from your breath. Therefore, you don't require; why do you create sacred and secular. Then afterwards you say I have no time for sacred, I have time only for secular. We don't have anything secular therefore, the question of time does not exist at all. I have no time at all is meaningless for us because when everything is sacred then what is not sacred tell me. When I take a bath I say *asmin* bucket *jale gange cha yamune caiva, Godāvari Sarasvati Narmade Sindhu Kāveri, jale asmin sannidhim kuru*. I am not adding anything, *jale asmin sannidhim kuru; asmin* bucket *jale*; means what? *In this* bucket of water I invoke, I bring all Ganga, Yamuna etc. I need not go to Ganga and Yamuna to bathe.

This is a religion of *bhāvana*. It is the question of looking at these as it should be looked at; it makes such a difference. It is food on your plate. If it is offered to the Lord and brought it is *prasāda*; this is *bhāvana*. It just changes; your own attitude is different. Therefore, any one thing being what it is, is not separate from Īśvara. We have any number of Gods, and still we say not one God. You forget this one God business. One God is pure business alone. You put him sufficiently away so that you can get along with what you are doing. But then there is only God. That is the reason why we can have many Gods. If somebody says I have got a new God, alright we can take that person also into account. That is another type of puja. In fact, in this country there were many tribes each one had some *devatā* and all of them we accepted. As you just drive through Tamilnadu or Orissa or any place you go there are varieties of forms you can see standing there on the roadside. These roadside Gods, they all seem to receive daily worship because you see on their faces *kumkumam* and *chandanam*; whether you wear them or not they seem to get them alright, and therefore, I know they are worshipped. And how do they look? All kinds of odd looks they have got. Any form and any expression of worship is acceptable totally. It is acceptable to us. It is totally accepted and validated and then it becomes one of our forms of worship. There is no tribal God; there is only God. There is a tribal form of worshipping Īśvara. There is no tribal God. Therefore, we didn't try to modernise our tribal tradition because they are as valid as any other form.

To be continued...

The 90th Janmadivasa of Pujya Sri Swamiji

The 90th Jayanthi of Paramapujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswatiji was celebrated at our Rishikesh ashram on 9th August 2020. Acharya Swami Sakshatkritanandaji performed ekadasha-dravya abhisheka to Sri Dayanandeshwara. Swami Suddhanandaji and all other sadhus in the ashram were present along with other residents. Swamiji also performed archana and offered upacharas at the adhish-tanam.



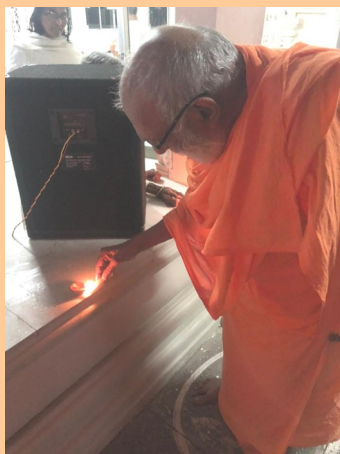
Chanting of Kaivalya Upanisad and bhashya parayanam was also done and continues to be done everyday. Swamiji personally distributed prasadam to all present.

Lunch bhiksha was offered by Sri Kannan of Sriram Group. Residents participated in witnessing of online programme of the celebrations from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m. telecast by AIM for Seva. The programme included the special puja done for Pujya Sri Swamiji on the occasion of 90th Janmadivasa with an elaborate sankalpa. The visual presentation of chanting of Dayananda Pancakam was part of the programme in the evening.

Ram Mandir Bhumi-pujan Celebrations

The whole day, 5th August, 2020 was Sri Ramamaya at our Rishikesh ashram. In the morning ekadasha dravya abhishekam was performed to Lord Sri Gangadhareshwara to seek his blessings for successful completion of the temple for Lord Sri Rama at Ayodhya.

Sri Swami Sakshatkritanandaji himself performed the final gangodaka-abhishekam. Puja was also performed to Lord Sri Hanuman around 10 a.m. and vadamala offered to him. All the Swamis were present in offering the salutations to Lord Hanuman on this auspicious day.



In the afternoon bhandara was offered to sadhus along with dakshina. The bhandara was sponsored by Sri Ram Kini and Smt Varuna Kini. All the sadhus wore masks and food was handed over to the sadhus in their vessels in view of the Covid situation.

Ganga Arati was performed in the evening to seek the blessings of Ganga Mayya for construction of the temple without obstacles. It was a grand sight to see the swirling and surging waters of Gangaji.

In the night, lamps were lit in the temple and at the adhishtanam of Paramapujya Sri Swamiji by Sri Swami Suddhanandaji, Sri Swami Sakshatkritanandaji and others after which bhajans in praise of Lord Sri Ram and Lord Sri Anjaneya were sung in the temple by a bhajan group. The entire day was prayerful and very fulfilling.

90th Jayanthi Celebration of Pujya Swamiji at AVG Saylorsburg

The sun rose to a cool balmy morning on the 9th of August 2020. The air in Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Pennsylvania was palpable with excitement since it was the first celebration after the four and a half month lockdown was lifted. The management at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (AVG) had locked its gates for the first time in thirty-five years as the shelter in place was announced. It was indeed an auspicious occasion to celebrate the 90th Jayanthi of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of AVG.



The gates were opened as pre-registered guests pulled in one by one. Everyone's registration and temperature was taken. The temple auditorium was organized in small groups of families sitting together yet six feet apart from other family groups. As one entered the temple hall temperature was taken and people used hand sanitizers to ensure personal safety. All the attendees had assigned seats so there would be no confusion and the CDC guidelines and protocols were implemented.



Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati ji's 90th Jayanthi celebrations started with a Vigneshwara Puja. With the auspicious blessings of Lord Ganesha, the Samashti Sankalpa was done, followed by the Kumbha Puja and the Lahunysa purvaka. The audience sat in rapt awe as a group of six priests and the audience chanted the Sri Rudra chanting twice. It was a unique experience as it was history in the making with people chanting in masks. Following the parayanam was the Rudra Homa and Trishati. The celebrations concluded with the Deeparadhana. Under the able guidance of Swami Vidadatmanada ji and Swami Tattvavidanand ji the swamijis at the ashram , Swami Pratyagbodhananda ji, Swami Jnanananda ji, and Swami Muktatmananda were honored. Following which the priest Sambhavan was done. The limited guests of 50 were thanked and there was a joyous air as everyone was thrilled to be a part of this celebration, which concluded with a sumptuous lunch at the new dining hall. The event was also live streamed for one and all around the world. The continued and generous support of AVG by Piyush and Abantika Shah is greatly appreciated.



Pujya Swamiji jayanthi at Saylorsburg Ashram



Written by: Sashi Prasad

90th Jayanthi Celebration of Pujya Swamiji at Anaikatti Ashram

The 90th Birth Day of Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati was celebrated in a grand manner on 15th August 2020 at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam under the auspices of Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati ji, Chief Acharya of the Gurukulam. Usually hundreds of people used to rush to the Ashram and participate in all programmes. In view of the pandemic Covid-19 situation this year entry of public was totally restricted. But the proceedings were streamed online and a voluminous number of audiences were present to view the functions through the streaming. The ashramites and the students of two year Vedanta course which is in progress currently attended the events. Sri Shivalingeshwara Swamiji of Sri Kamakshipuri Adeenam, Coimbatore who was closely associated with Pujya Swamiji in Aim for Seva and Acharya Sabha activities made his divine presence on the occasion. Swamiji offered garlands to Pujya Swamiji's murty and paid his respect. Swamiji was kind enough to be present for the whole programme.

The celebration started with the *anujñā pūjā* initiated by Swami Sadatmananda ji at Guruteerthaa at 10.15am. After offering flowers to the statue of Pujya Swamiji, the Swamijis, Swaminis and the students proceeded to the Sri Medha Dakshinamurty temple in a procession carrying the puja articles and singing the Guru stotram. The main function organized was the Dakshinamurty Mula mantra japa. Having received the offerings and prayers with special abhishekam and alankaram early in the morning all deities were glittering with a flow of enormous grace. All participants were seated in front of the main sanctum sanctorum and inside the Satsanga Hall provided with a picture of Swami Medha Dakshinamurty and flowers. Initially Swami Saradanadaji chanted the Mula mantra and the same was repeated by all. The group chanting continued for one and half hours in which everyone was deeply involved with devotion. All student participants were cheerful to engross themselves in the occasion as it was a very new divine experience for many of them. After the chanting was concluded the *upacāra pūjā* and *mahādīpārāadhanā* was offered with Vedic chantings to Sri Medha Dakshinamurty Swami. The celebrations were concluded around 12.30pm and the *mahāprasādam* was distributed to all participants.



Pujya Swamiji jayanthi at Anaikatti Ashram



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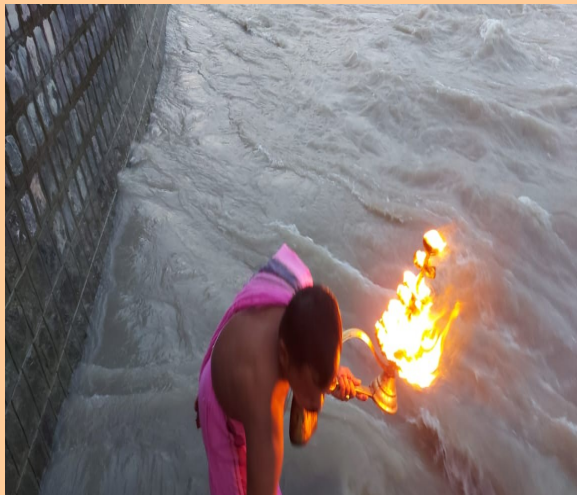
“The recognition of *Īśvara* as the *karma-phala-dāta*, the giver of the results of the action, is what makes you appreciate *Īśvara* in your daily life. *Karma* I can do, but *karma-phala* is something that takes place because of the laws that are the Lord. Therefore, every action producing a result, even a small action like opening and closing the eyelids, is the work of the Lord. In every action, there is an intended result that sometimes happens and sometimes does not. It is all according to the laws. Therefore, as a *bhakta*, a devotee, I continuously confront *Īśvara* as I receive my *karma-phala*.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

ARSHA VIDYA PITHAM, RISHIKESH



Puja Swamiji jayanthi at Rishikesh Ashram



Ram Mandir Bhoomi Puja celebrations at Rishikesh Ashram

