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**Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti - Guru-Pūrṇimā celebration photos**



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**Sādhana-pañcakam**  
**Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk**

*This is the sixth part of the serial article, continuation from July 2021 newsletter.*

## **FINDING A TEACHER**

*Sadvidvān upasṛpyatām*; previously *satsaṅga* was talked about but too many people are there. They are good people, but that is a different thing altogether. Here, however, he says *upasṛpyatām*, may the *sadvidvān* be approached properly. Who is the person to be approached? He should be a *sadvidvān*, a person who is a *satpu-ruṣa*, one who is dedicated to truth and a *vidvān*, one who knows the truth. He must also be a *śrotriya*.<sup>36</sup> Unless he is a *śrotriya*, he is not going to teach. He will do some *satsaṅga*, but that has already been done, *saṅgaḥ satsu vidhīyatām*. Mere *satsaṅga* is not going to help now. What you require at this point is a good teacher, a clean teacher. That teacher must be a well-informed person, therefore *sadvidvān*. Instead of saying *sadguru*, he says *sadvidvān*. Naturally, *guru* is implied here. At the same time, the *guru* is defined by saying he should be a *śrotriya*. So you should approach the *sadvidvān* properly.

Even if you approach him properly, why should that *vidvān* teach you? Is it because you are going to give him *guru-dakṣiṇā* ?<sup>37</sup> If he is going to teach you for *guru-dakṣiṇā*, then what will he teach? The teaching will be as good as the *dakṣiṇā*. So to get the knowledge of Brahman, you should give Brahman *guru-dakṣiṇā*, nothing less. In order to get the infinite, you must give the infinite. But how can you give the infinite? Can the infinite really be given as infinite? No, there is no such thing. So you cannot really give anything to a *sadvidvān* to make him teach you. Then what can you do? You cannot also go to him and cry like a beggar pleading, 'Please teach me, teach me, teach me Brahman,' constantly bugging the person. He will just refer you to a mental hospital.

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<sup>36</sup> One who has studied the *śāstra* properly.

<sup>37</sup> Gift traditionally given to a *guru* by a student.



He is not going to be easily tempted by your offers. He may be a *kṛpā-sāgara*, an ocean of compassion, but why should he teach you? Where is the necessity for him? In his vision, you are okay as you are. He does not want you to change. However, you should make the person teach. What should you do?

## SERVING THE TEACHER

*Pratidinam tatpādukā sevyatām*;<sup>38</sup> *pratidinam*, daily, may the *pādukā*, sandals, of the teacher *sevyatām*, be worshipped. *Pādukā* can also mean *pāda*, feet. Why should the feet be worshipped of all places? Why should not the head be worshipped? But here, the *pāda* are worshipped because the *pāda-aravinda*, lotus-feet, of the guru are the lowest part. That means you have to bend down. Bending is required. It is emotional bending, in the sense that you submit yourself to the teaching and the teacher's will for the time being. If the teacher himself does not have personal axes to grind or personal ambitions, then it is a very safe place to surrender, to submit one's will.

Submitting your will is very dangerous. You have to be careful, because you can be exploited or manipulated. Your will is the only thing you have for surviving in this world. Your own choices are very important. You must not lose your self-dignity or self-respect. Retaining them is crucial so others do not exploit you in any manner. At the same time, if the teacher is a *sadvidvān*, then one can safely submit one's will to such a person. There is a freedom in this submission. Bhagavān is very difficult to see, but the person who has no will is as good as Bhagavān. Therefore, having approached the teacher, *tatpādukā sevyatāmanudinam*, *pratidinam*, may his feet be worshipped daily. Let your mind enjoy that kind of *śraddhā*, wherein the words of the teacher are valued. Whether one understands the words or not, they are valued so they can be understood later. Once the guru has been chosen, there should be no problem.

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<sup>38</sup> तस्य पादुका सेव्यताम् खर तस्य पादुके सेव्यताम्

That worship of the *pādukās* is called *śuśrūṣā*.<sup>39</sup> *Śuśrūṣā* means a desire to listen, but by implication it has come to mean service to the teacher. This becomes a very important thing because in those days the students used to do the daily chores at the *gurukula*. This service is talked about in the *upaniṣads*. The students had to sit there for many years and the teachers did not even talk about the knowledge. They said, 'Just go on doing *sevā*, service. We will see later.' Thirty years would go in such a way. Students had to wait so many years for the guru to teach. The reason for this is that after doing *sevā* for so many years, the teacher's words become valuable. Then when he teaches, naturally it will go straight in because you have earned it. If you wait a long time for this *jñānam*, you will find it works wonders when it is given to you. You have been maintaining that desire for so long, without getting sidetracked. It is an excellent thing. So now the *sadvidvān* is there, and you begin doing *sevā*. Then one day, when the time comes, ask him. What should you ask him?

### ASK FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE

*Brahmaikākṣaram arthyatām; arthyatām* means *prārthyatām*, may you pray for, ask for *ekākṣaram brahma*,<sup>40</sup> Brahman, that which is *ekam*, one, non-dual. It is also *akṣaram*,<sup>41</sup> not subject to any kind of decline or death, and it is the subject matter of *parāvidyā*, higher knowledge.<sup>42</sup> Previously he had *aparāvidyā*, worldly knowledge, now he is seeking *parāvidyā*, knowledge of Brahman. 'Adīhi bhagavo brahmeti',<sup>43</sup> please teach me that one thing by knowing which, everything is as well known.' May this Brahman be asked for, prayed for. After you ask, when the person teaches you, you should listen properly.

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<sup>39</sup> श्रोतुम् इच्छा इति शुश्रूषा<sup>4</sup>

<sup>0</sup> एकं च अक्षरं च इति एकाक्षरम्

<sup>41</sup> न क्षरति इति अक्षरम्

<sup>42</sup> अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते (Muṇḍakopaniṣad 1.1.5)

<sup>43</sup> 'Please teach me Brahman.' (Taittirīyopaniṣad 3.1.1)



*Śrutiśirovākyaṃ samākarṇyatām*; may you listen well to the words of Vedānta. *Śrutiśiras* means *śruteḥ śiras*, the head of the *śruti*. *Śruti* means Veda. If the Veda has a body, then the head of the Veda will be Vedānta. That is the *upari-sthāna*, the top-most part. Therefore *śruteḥ-śirasah vākya* means the *vākyas*, statements, of Vedānta. All of the teachings, the upaniṣads, are called Vedānta. *Samākarṇyatām* means *śrūyatām*, may you listen to those words properly, with *vicāra*, inquiry. So when the Vedānta *vākyas* are heard by you, you come to hear, 'I am Brahman.' This is what is said by the *śruti*, its *tātparya*, vision. The *śruti* tells you that you are Īśvara, *tat tvam asi*, 'That thou art'. 'That' refers to Brahman, the *jagatkāraṇam*, the cause of the world. The cause of this entire world is you. That means the Lord is you.

This is too much to swallow. 'How can I be Īśvara?' This is a problem. 'Īśvara is omniscient, it is said. I can't even spell the word. I can't be the all-knowing, all-powerful, all-pervasive Īśvara. My knowledge, power and pervasiveness are all limited. How can I accept that I am Īśvara?' *Śraddhā*, faith, can help you believe in the existence of a heaven. It can make you believe in the usefulness of going to heaven. *Śraddhā* can make you believe you will reach heaven. But no *śraddhā* is good enough to make you accept that you are Īśvara. Since heaven is another place where you are not now, you can accept that and may even reach it. That promise is held out, and you can believe that if you have enough faith in the words. But here, there is no room for belief because there is nothing to believe. You are told, 'You are Īśvara.' This is not a matter for belief.

*To be continued...*

“THE whole world (*kṣetra*), including my physical body, mind, and senses becomes evident to me, the knower (*kṣetrajña*). The *kṣetrajña*, *ātmā*, is self-revealing and therefore self-evident, while everything else becomes evident to the self. Any evidence is in terms of knowledge. Any knowledge implies the presence of consciousness or awareness. The invariable factor in all forms of knowledge is but this awareness.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

*This is the third part of the serial article, continuation from July 2021 newsletter.*

### **Self-knowledge destroys the bondage of ignorance**

Self-knowledge initially loosens and then completely destroys the bondage created by ignorance. What is the nature of the bondage? It is, after all, nothing but a notion. That we are bound is a notion, which is the result of our false perceptions of ourselves. We are thus bound by our own conclusions, by our own opinions, by our own judgments, and by our own complexes. In reality, nothing binds us, other than our own complexes. On account of our ignorance, we look upon ourselves as limited. We find ourselves to merely be one among the many, one among the countless. We find ourselves separated from the rest of the world. We feel that we have to defend ourselves or protect ourselves because we are insecure or fearful. In this manner, various complexes, such as taking oneself to be limited, insecure, wanting, and lacking, bind us and come in the way of our freedom; they do not let us be what we want to be. There is always a fear that comes in the way of our free expressions of ourselves. While it is not true that expressing ourselves as we want is necessarily freedom, our complexes surely deny us the enjoyment of whatever it is that we understand freedom to be.

The constant need to cover or protect oneself, the constant need to present oneself as acceptable to the world, the constant need for the approval of the world, and the constant need to please other people comes in the way of our simply being as we are or what we are. If we examine the pattern of our thoughts, we would understand the nature of this bondage and the extent to which fear is inherent in everything we do. Occasionally, when we know that we are not being judged, we do experience moments of freedom; for instance, when we sing in the shower, the tune simply emerges and we enjoy ourselves. Truly, this is when we are not conscious of ourselves as limited beings. Yet the moment passes and all it takes is one thought of our perceived limitations to make us instantly unhappy. The very sense of being limited is binding.



## All bondage is entirely notional

Vedānta says that it is not something real that binds. It is just the sense that one is a limited being that is binding, and, therefore, freedom is nothing but becoming free from the sense of being limited. Being limited is a notion that results from the ignorance of the true nature of the self, and that notion can be removed by the true knowledge of the self alone.

It is very comforting to listen to Vedānta, because this is one place where we are told that we are limitless, that we are beautiful, and that we are fine as we are. Nowhere else in the world are we told so; we are only used to being told that we are lacking in some way or the other. Vedānta tells us that we are harmony, we are love, and that we are limitless. This may not be seen to be flattery, because Vedānta also provides the supporting reasoning for this. The statements are to be understood, rather than simply accepted, because accepting doesn't do anything for us. The attitude that "Swami says I am limitless, so I must be limitless," does not help in any way. Therefore, the statements of the Upaniṣad are to be carefully analyzed and understood.

Understanding the meaning of the statements of the Upaniṣads would amount to understanding the true nature of the self, because they reveal the true nature of the self. The revelation is presented in a very simple statement: *tat tvam asi*, 'that thou art,' which proclaims that we are limitless. Somebody once asked Pūjya Swamiji, "Swami, suppose somebody comes up tomorrow with a better knowledge, what would you do? What will happen to Vedānta?" Swamiji simply replied, "I am telling you that you are limitless. Can you improve upon that?" The limitless is not subject to improvement. That is the *tātparya* or purport of all the Upaniṣads.

## We already are that which we seek to be

To understand this statement of three words, *tat tvam asi*, which asserts that we are limitless or that we are *brahman*, we need to understand the meaning of each of the words: *tat* or 'that,' which indicates *brahman*, *tvam* or 'you,' which indicates each one of us, and *asi* or 'are,' which indicates the identity between the self and *brahman*. The entire study of Vedānta is nothing but an effort to understand this

simple statement.

Many years ago, I attended the course on Vedānta taught by Pūjya Swami Dayānandajī. On the third day, while unfolding the basics of Vedānta, he made it very clear that Vedānta teaches of *prāptasya prāptiḥ*, the attainment of that which is already attained, in the sense that there is nothing new that one must attain, there is nothing that one must become; the teaching is simply of the recognition of what is. Pūjya Swamiji said, “Look, today I am telling you that you are *brahman*. At the end of the course also, I’ll tell you that you are *brahman*. Nothing new is to be told.” It was this one sentence alone that was being unfolded all along!

One may wonder how it is possible to listen to the same teaching day after day for years together. The fact of the matter is that we don’t seem to get tired of it at all. There is always freshness in it, always some new dimension or some new insight that dawns, because nobody ever gets tired of listening about themselves. It is like looking into a mirror at yourself. Perhaps looking at yourself first thing in the morning may be justified, if only to make sure nothing has happened during the long night! But why look again, after barely an hour, and why every time you enter the bathroom or leave it? It is because, no matter how we look, we love looking at ourselves. Particularly, therefore, when somebody says we are beautiful and wonderful, we never get tired of hearing that said of ourselves.

Vedānta says that we are limitless, we are beautiful, and there’s nothing lacking in us. We need not achieve anything; all that we need do is own up to what we are and just be what we are in the recognition of what we are. This is something we love to hear. We love being told this. Somebody once asked me, “Swamiji, did any miracle happen in your life?” I said, “Yes, a miracle happened on the third day of the course that I attended.” That is when I came to know that one already is what he or she is seeking to be. The idea that there is nothing to be done, because each one of us truly is what we are seeking to be, offered the greatest comfort. That was a great revelation.

*To be continued...*



## **The Wholeness of You** **by Swamini Saralananda**

*This is the third part of the serial article, continuation from July 2021 newsletter.*

### **I Cannot Give What I Do Not Have**

I cannot give something that I do not have within myself. This is why self-love is not self-ish, if I have unconditional self-love, it will be a natural consequence that others around me will enjoy that presence of my being. That self-love, is not an accomplishment, it is my BEING, my ESSENTIAL NATURE. It is like a cool, fresh oasis in the desert where animals come to drink, the water is not forcing itself to be wet and thirst quenching...it just is, what it is. I can be unconditionally loving towards others simply because that is my nature not because I have to create it by anything I do. There is nothing more important in one's life than to discover this fact of one's being.

### **The Fundamental Problem of Wanting**

Who we seem to be in this life, bottom line, is a constantly wanting being? While we can place blame on the culture of consumerism with its endless enticements, we ourselves fall for it and thereby support it. This is because a feeling of emptiness, no matter how vague, unrecognized and unacknowledged is relatively painful. Most people helplessly and unconsciously do their best to stay distracted from these feelings. I can easily avoid feelings of emptiness by keeping myself busy engaged in cogitating about and going after what is to want next. The feeling of 'always something missing' is a symptom of the original alienation that stays deeply buried in the unconscious.

### **What Do I Really Want?**

Often times we don't know what we want or should want; what's going to do it, what will fill the emptiness. We want relationships so that we won't feel lonely; we want certain things: "If only I could have...or be...or my significant other would be....". Not that this is bad, it just is the way we unconsciously keep ourselves on a mechanical treadmill of an unexamined life. What we need to see is that no matter how much pleasure I get from fulfilling desires, the satisfaction never lasts and just leaves me wanting more. Everyone can make a list of wants and life is just an ongoing challenge to keep working on our never-ending list. But what I really want is just to simply feel full and complete, content within myself, not having to depend on anything outside.

First, I just need to become more conscious and aware of how I am living and why. I need

a better, deeper understanding of what underlies my struggle. Like for instance, we always think that the unhappiness and problems we have in life are due to the difficulty we have in getting what we want. Since we live in a culture of 'more', an embarrassingly indulgent consumer culture, it could easily be said that consumerism is our actual national religion. We always want more.

Think of it, wherever we take our heart that it feels most inspired, and give attention to that 'altar', that is a religion. For a lot of people that's The Mall and now of course especially the on-line mall. The underlying principle that runs this everyday religion is, "If a little bit is good then more is better. "The better car, bigger TV, latest computer etc., etc., etc. The great worldwide business of advertising wins, it dupes us and dopes us; it creates and encourages our desires constantly; and we enthusiastically respond to it. But do I want to stay duped?

### **Constant Is A Problem**

Even with just a relative degree of maturity and common sense we can begin to see the game that is running and the false value that we place on the things and things that we are sold on. What we really need is to see is that what we want is not the problem, it is that we want. The wanting itself is the problem. Because no matter how much we gain and achieve it's never enough. This is the fundamental problem of our lives; we are never free from want. Wanting and desiring are not comfortable, they are like itching that demands scratching. I am an 'itching', wanting being first and last in my life. In-between I get some spells of satisfaction but they never last.

Typically, the wanting being that I am and any feelings of emptiness are not recognized, analyzed, and labeled for what they really are. I am just not yet awake there. In their deepest and most well entrenched form they stay buried in the unconscious where they never get resolved and they run our conscious, everyday life. We will never find any real and lasting contentment in life unless we look at and deal with this deepest, fundamental root of the problem first, that I am a dissatisfied, incomplete, wanting being. I need to ask 'why'.

As we gain more common-sense maturity from our life experiences, hopefully we become more introspective and observant of life itself; we can consciously at least begin to see this problem. Early on, even with a conscious acceptance of this fact, if it is still something difficult to assimilate, we continue to seek and manage to find ways to avoid facing it. Even if there is ambivalence at least it is no longer totally unacknowledged, at least I



am more aware.

We are not to blame that the heart is tempted to keep this issue under wraps, it's only because we have no idea how to pay attention to it. So, the uncomfortable, 'itching' of wanting remains as the background music of my life: "I want.....I want...I want." We still naively wait and hold on to the hope of that promised day of 'happily ever after'. It is a dream we are easily sold because it was already very well seeded in childhood. It is a monstrous die-hard. It was one of the greatest disservices done to us that we were fed fairy tales like "Cinderella ". "Happily, ever after", a proverbial carrot hangs on at a very emotional level as a distant dream of what's at the end of the road and it keeps us in the cycle of doing and getting that never satisfies. "I can't get no... satisfaction" sang the Rolling Stones. When will a time come that we can feel, "All that I have is enough, I have finally made it in my life"? The dream keeps our life in an expensive, deluded flow with an occasional 'glow'. It keeps the whole society dancing, running, going round and round, here and there with both hands out to grab the next new something. These days we are so addicted to both novelty and instant gratification. But all our winnings in this grabber-game of life never work to stop the wanting and fill the emptiness lying in wait inside. The consumer dance can keep us so busy that we don't take time to look at the real issue.....the great grand dysfunction of seeing value where there really isn't any. 'I' the wanting being never gets any direct attention.

### **Societal Addiction To Pleasure**

Especially in the west, the societal addiction to excitement and pleasure is a form of false therapy, because I do not see the connection between what I really want and what I get. Our gratifications serve as a fix. Without the success-achievement and pleasure fixes, we have to be with, sit with, our self, the one who is just an empty costume waiting to be 'filled out' for the next new act or game to begin. We can't even be put on hold for a telephone call but that we need to have music.

The main point being made here is, that we need to see why our wanting is never satiated. It is because what I really want is fulfillment in a never-ending contentment. Now make a big jump in the thinking here: Can we ever want something that is unknown to us? Would you desire to have some *ubguloda*? You'll have to find out what it is first and if it sounds good to you, you can say 'yes.' But never do we long for and want something that is totally unknown to us. So, we need to ask the question, "*Do I want to feel whole and complete, a happiness in a contentment that lacks nothing? Is this a most fundamental want*". In addition to that what else is there to want? It would be the end of all want-

ing. We all want this and therefore this state of being cannot be something totally unknown to us. Somewhere, sometime, somehow we have known, at least tasted, glimpsed, such heights of our being. We have experienced instances of feeling Whole and Complete and we want to get back to that again, and stay there all the time.

### Deep Intuition That I Should Be Whole

Thus, this desire can only be there because we do know what that state of being is. It may be very quietly unpronounced, maybe not consciously acknowledged, it matters not, the point is that it is not unfamiliar. We have all had peak experiences where at least for a few moments, “I was feeling so ‘on top of the world’ that my worst enemy could have come and kicked me and I would have just felt nothing but love for him anyway. In those moments nothing can diminish our Fullness. And it is something so profound and potent to experience that once we have ‘tasted’ it, we will never lose that glimpse of knowing how real it is. And even long after even if we can’t seem to reexperience it. We will always remember, because of the very fact that it was not something separate from me. In those ‘high’ moments, we are not enjoying happiness like in the way we lick an ice cream cone. Those moments are profound because the ‘I’ and the happiness are one and the same, one wholeness of being. *It is not an experience of happiness, “the happiness is me”*.

Even if the glimpse does not stay with us consciously, still it will never be lost. It will remain in the unconscious, waiting for the right time to stand revealed again and get some attention. In fact, even when buried beneath the turmoil and embroilments in terms of our life as a wanting being, it will never let us be; the longing for that ultimate state of my true nature, keeps demanding to fulfill itself as though it has a life of its own. And actually, it does because the desire to be Full was not picked up by my choosing it. It is inborn and universal to all and will finally fulfill itself when it is assimilated to already be my very nature. **It is something to know and be, not something to do and get.**

*To be continued...*

“ *Vēdānta* does not promise a salvation to the soul. In its vision, the soul is already free from any limitation. Freedom from limitation (*mōkṣa*) is a fact and the release of the individual from this sense of limitation is the outcome of understanding the equation, ‘*tat tvam asi*’ (that thou art).”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

## Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

*This is the second part of the serial article, continuation from July 2021 newsletter.*

Even today the Ramayana attracts many people. They do *kathanam*, *rāmakatha*. The story of Rama is told, many people come, and there is always some music in it. The verses are always sung. Making the Ramayana more popular, other verse translations have come in regional languages. In North India the Hindi Ramayana is popular. It was written by Tulsidas. Another language, Brijbhasha, influenced his version. Many in the North have forgotten about the original, and Tulsidas' version is all they know. They will read their Ramayana in nine days. It is called *parāyaṇam*: just repetition of the verses some many hours each day. In Punjab, the Sikh *gurus'* words, called the Guru Granth Sahib, are repeated over the course of ten days in the same manner. The *paṭhī*, the one who does the reading, follows a specific method for the reading. There are rules for all of it, and it is a religious act of worship. The reading of the Ramayana is an act of worship to Rama.

*Katha* is narrating the stories of Rama. For the *katha* they draw verses from the original or from the translations. They recite one or two verses, and then they tell the story. The verses give you the feeling of the original and that authenticity. Everywhere you will find ten, twenty, even forty *katha* of Ramayana. In the South there is the ancient Tamil version written by Kampan, Kambaramayana. It is very interesting, and you will find variants there from the original. They have that license; they add and subtract. They make it their own. But I found that, at the same time, the original sense is never lost. That is why it is still called Ramayana. In the South the original is equally popular. In fact, what you hear daily is the original, and they refer to the local versions. The main thing is the original. The *kathakāras*, the ones who narrate the story, use music and dance, and the hundreds of songs of Rama and the sculpture of the temples. Thereby, Rama, and more Rama than Krishna, has come to influence the people and their lives. Because



Rama's life is something from which you can draw a certain value structure. Krishna's life is not as clearly a source for a value structure. It is easy to draw from Krishna's teaching, and you can draw from his life story. But you need to be more informed than you do for listening to Rama's life. Any ordinary person can listen to Rama's life, and it gives him a value structure. Fully understanding Krishna requires a certain maturity and wisdom.

Even an Indian Christian or an Indian Muslim, though he says he has nothing to do with this, has been influenced by the books like the Ramayana. Nobody can say anything against the Ramayana; its influence has been prevalent and deep. The Ramayana is not *śruti*, not a revealed scripture, it is a written book. Rama was a historical person. There were many stories that circulated about and around him. Some may not be true. As with many important figures, the main stream of his life is there, and there are many embellishments. That makes it an epic-like composition.

There is a story about how the story itself came to be. Valmiki, before he became Valmiki, was a bandit. He was a robber. He was married, living with his parents and his wife in a cottage in the forest. Daily, as if going to work, he would go and stand by the nearby road. There were few who came by, but he would wait for travelers to pass. When someone came, he would size up the fellow and decide if the traveler could be robbed. He would do the deed, and bring the booty back to the house. This is what the family was living off of. This was his daily work, and he never thought twice about it. If someone had to be pushed around or beaten up, he would do it, snatch the goods and run. He was fast and intelligent and strong. He got away with it for a long time.

One day on the road there came this famous Sage Narada. This posed a problem. Narada was a great troubleshooter - and a troublemaker too. First he would create the trouble, and then he would solve it. Narada is a wonderful figure in the Indian tradition, and everyone knows Narada's tendency to stir up trouble and then resolve it. He would get it going before it blew up itself. He

knew where trouble was brewing, and before things got worse, he would come deal with it. He would provide all of the factors necessary for the problem to get solved. This is Narada, and he comes in many stories.

Narada came that way - perhaps purposefully. It was said that he could travel in all the three worlds. The earth, the heaven, and all that is in-between are considered to be the three worlds. *Bhūḥ bhuvāḥ svaḥ* are those three. He needed no provincial passport, and nobody asked any questions. He had his inter-terrestrial passport. He had the capacity to move freely in all these three worlds. He is a colorful figure, and he always comes with the word Narayana in his mouth. Even in the Upanishad he comes - though it is in a different situation. Narada comes with the *ekatala*, the one-stringed instrument which gives you this drone. It gives you the pitch. He sings Narayana to that pitch, descending from the clouds. At least that is how in the movies they depict him appearing in this world.

Narada comes to the place where this would-be Valmiki, the great poet-to-be, is waiting. Narada meets him there and stops. The robber asks what Narada has in his bag. Narada says that he is a *sādhū* and that he has a few things in his bag. "Why do you want to know about it?" Narada asks.

The robber says, "Please, give it to me."

"I am a *sādhū*; what would I be having in this bag? Why do you want it?" says Narada.

"I know that *sādhūs* carry many different things. I want to see what you have." says the robber.

Narada hands over the bag. There was not much in it. He asks, "Why do you do this?"

"Why shouldn't I do it? There is no other way I have to live."

Narada says, "But there are other ways of living. You cannot claim my possessions from me. I have the right to carry what I want. How can you take it away from me? If I were to give it to you, that would be different. But if I want to keep

it, how can you justify taking it from me? Is it not a wrongful action?"

"Nothing is wrong or right." says the robber.

"Who told you things were that way?" asks Narada.

The robber says, "I take the risk; suppose you beat me. Somebody could get me. I take the risk, and the law or the people can get me. I may be caught, and I take that risk. I've been careful and lucky up until now. I know the right fellows to rob. If you do not take a risk, you do not get anything. This is my way of earning a living. When you do business, you take risks and you make money. I too take risks, and I make money. What is wrong with this. I don't risk just my investment, I risk my life. I too earn my way."

Narada replies, "This is not earning a way. Money that is invested involves a risk, but there it is your money and not somebody else's money. If it gets you what you want, it is fine. If you are not lucky, then you can still live with that. But just to want what I have is different. What I have legitimately earned I should get to keep. You cannot claim what is mine. Even if you find a lost bag on the road, you should try to find the owner and return the bag. If you cannot find the owner, you should give it to a temple, or do some charity because it is not yours. To take someone else's possession is not correct."

"Why do you bother about this? I've been getting away with it." says the robber.

"No, you do not get away with it. This action is a wrong action, and it will produce a result. It is an improper action." says Narada.

"What is improper action? I have never heard about that." queries the robber.

Narada replies, "Improper action is that which catches you if not now, later. It is always credited to your account. You are the one who performs the wrong action, and every action produces a result. The result of good action is *punya*. Wrong actions produce *pāpa*. For all the wrong actions you have done, you have definitely piled up a big bundle of *pāpa*. I tell you. You are going to pay for it."

*To be continued...*



## Guru-Pūrṇimā (2021) at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti

The Guru-pūrṇimā celebrations was conducted in the AVG lecture hall. The altar with śaṅkarācāryaji, Vēdavyāsaji and all other gurus was well-decorated by the students of the two-year course. The gurukulam accommodated a few guests who wished to participate on this occasion. Swamini Brahmaleenananda, swamini Vedarthanandaji and swamini Shardanandaji, sw Prashantanandaji , sw Jagatdatmanandaji , acharyaji and several other students, guests and teachers were present.

The function started at 10 am with anujna puja in Guru-teertha followed by shobhayatra carrying puja material from Guru-teertha to main lecture hall chanting gurustotram and placed at the altar. Guru puja was performed to Vyāsa Bhagavan and other acharyas as per tradition by our two resident priests- Sri Rambhatji and Sri Krishnaji.

After the puja, Acharya Sw Sadatmanandaji sang a short bhajan - *guru maharaj, guru jai jai para brahma sadguru jai jai*. In the following stanzas of the bhajan, Swamiji very nicely added in place of *sadguru jai jai* the name of each of the gurus represented at the altar - from Vēdavyāsaji, śaṅkarācāryaji to Sw Taranandaji, Sw Chinmayanandaji, Sw Pranavanandaji to Sw Dayanandaji jai jai – saluting each one of them. This was followed by a talk in English by Swamiji. In his talk Swamiji highlighted the importance of guru-purnima. He also spoke of the important aspects of a guru-shishya relationship. The transcripts of swamiji's talk is given below.

This was followed by a **talk by Swamini Brahmaleenanandaji** in Tamil.

Swamini elaborated on two important points. Why do we celebrate Teachers' day and guru-pūrṇimā separately? Because the role of teacher and guru are different. Generally, a teacher teaches the student different subjects, but both live their own private lives. The teacher does not interfere into the student's life outside the school. Whatever the teacher teaches, always leaves something still more to be learnt. Whereas the guru not only teaches but takes responsibility for the entire person, transforms one's life and leads one to *pūrṇatvam* desiring nothing further to be learnt. Secondly, Swamini spoke of how the guru handles all the *namaskarās* and *stutis* received. Anyone who takes the *namaskarās* and *stutis* received as meant for himself allowing them to stagnate with him, is bound to get a bloated ego leading to his own destruction. The guru understands - I am only a link in the *parampara*, a conduit and immediately passes on the *namaskarās* and *stuti* received to his/her teacher, then to the teacher's teacher, finally going upto the *ādiguru*. Also while blessing the student, guru considers it as īśvara's blessing flowing through him to the student. Swamini also paid respects to her teacher, Pujya Swamiji by

highlighting his quality of *saulabhyam* – easy accessibility and quality of *dayā* - compassion. In Pujya Swamiji's pictures, one can see his eyes expressing his *dayā* and his face reflecting his *ānanda-svarupa*. He was always bubbling with *ānanda* and gave others *ānanda*. May we all have the grace to learn from Pujya Swamiji and be blessed by him.

Swamini said - We express our devotion with not just '*namāmi*, I salute' but with '*pranato'smi* - I remain saluting all the time' because we are always indebted to our guru for what we have received from him/her. *Om tat Sat/*

The guru pūrṇimā celebrations ended with a special lunch prepared for the occasion by the kitchen staff. In the evening satsang, Smt Sharda Subramaniam sang several guru bhajans and Pujya Swamiji's compositions. It was a happy day where we all got an opportunity to express our gratitude to the guru parampara and felt blessed to be in the presence of our teachers.

### **Talk by Swami Sadatmanandaji, Chief Acarya -**

Today we are celebrating Vyāsa pūrṇimā otherwise called Gurupūrṇimā. Pūrṇimā means full moon day. Vyāsa pūrṇimā means a full moon day dedicated to Vēdavyāsa. This day happens to be the birthday of Sri Vēdavyāsa. In vedic culture, the importance of Vēdavyāsa can never be over-emphasised. Vēdavyāsa is considered to be a re-incarnation of Lord Vishnu- *vyāsāya viṣṇu rūpāya vyāsa rūpāya viṣṇavē*.

He is called Vēdavyāsa because he compiled the vēdas with the help of his 4 disciples- Paila, Vaishampayana, Jaimini and Sumantu. Otherwise his original name is Krishna Dwai-payana. He has contributed a lot for the preservation of Śruti ie, vēdas and also smṛiti. Smṛiti means secondary literature based on vēdas which are called primary literature. He has written Vyāsasmṛiti. And also Bhagavad Gita is compiled by him. The slokas were composed by Vēdavyāsa, but the teaching was given by Lord Krishna in prose form. Vēdavyāsa has written 18 puranas and he was given the title Purana-muni. He has contributed to yoga sastra by writing a commentary called Vyāsa bhashyam on yoga sutras. Mahabharata, an itihāsa. was written by Vēdavyāsa. Thus he has contributed to Śruti, smṛiti, purāṇa, yoga sastra and itihāsa. Therefore, we express our gratitude to Vēdavyāsa on his birthday. In our culture a single person is not considered important. The paramapara is considered important. Vēdavyāsa represents this guruparampara. Therefore, his birthday is also celebrated as Gurupurnima- full moon day dedicated to guru, the teacher. Infact, we have a teacher's day on sept 5<sup>th</sup> on the birthday of Dr Radhakrishna, former president. But in our tradition, Vēdavyāsa's birthday is celebrated as teacher's day.

### **What is the significance of Guru Pūrṇimā ?**

On this day we express our gratitude to all our gurus who have contributed a lot in our

life. *gṛṇāti upadishati iti guru*- One who teaches is called a guru or guru is explained as - *gu-kārō andhakāra: ru-kārō tannivartakaḥ; andakārō nirōditvāt guruḥ iti abhidhīyatē.*— *gu* means darkness and *ru* means remover of darkness and since guru is removing darkness of ignorance, therefore he is called guru. In various areas, we have ignorance and he removes them and so a teacher is called guru. We express our gratitude to our guru on this day. The significance of guru is talked about in Śruti, smṛti, purāṇa. In sruti there is a sentence in Mundaka upanishad- *tad vijñānārtam gurumēvābhi gacchēt samitpāṇiḥ śrōtriya brahmaniṣṭhaḥ* - For knowing this ultimate reality, one should go to a teacher appropriately. There Bhashyakara makes a note in his Bhashyam in the Bhagavad Gita- *śāstrjñōpi svatantrēnaiva brahmajñāna-anvēṣaṇam na kuryāt* - So even if a person is an expert in śāstra, grammar, nyaya, etc, one should not try to understand the vision of sastra independently because one may be misled and confused, if he tries to understand independently. Therefore, Śruti says - *gurumēvābhi gacchēt* - One should go to a guru. Chandogya Upanishad says- *ācāryavān puruṣaḥ vēda* - A person who has got a teacher, he will know *brahmātmatattvam*. Sruti gives this guarantee. In Svetasvatara Upanishad it is said- *yasya dēvē parā bhakti, yathā dēvē tathā gurau tasya hi ētē kathitārthāḥ prakāśantē mahātmanaḥ* - If a person has devotion to the lord and the same devotion to one's guru to that person the words of sastra will be revealed.

If this devotion is not there, even though person listens or reads sastra, one will not get the real purport of sastra. They also add, *kathitāḥ akathitāḥ api* - Even if certain points teacher has taught or not taught, the person who has devotion will understand whatever is implied. In Chandogya Upanishad elsewhere it is said- *ācāryād ēva vidyā veditāt sādīṣṭam prāpyatē* - Knowledge received from acharya, that alone becomes effective. Thus sruti talks about greatness of the guru. In smṛti also, in Bhagavad Gita the lord says - *tad viddhi praṇipātēna paripraśnēna sēvayā* – May you attain this knowledge by going to the teacher and doing seva, doing namaskara and by asking questions, then you can learn from guru.

There is a text called Gurugita which is a part of Skanda purana. Thus not only sruti and smṛti, but also puranas talk of the importance of guru. This text has so many slokas which are full of descriptions of the importance of guru. If understood properly, it helps to develop devotion. The gurustotram - *akhaṇḍamaṇḍalākāram* ..... is extracted from this text. In this text there is a very popular sloka chanted in north India - *dhyānamulaṁ gurōḥ mūrtiḥ, pūjāmūlaṁ gurō pādamaṁ, mantramūlaṁ gurōrvākyaṁ, mōkṣamūlaṁ gurōḥ kṛpā* – The root of meditation is the form of guru

( Idea is when you start your meditation you remember your guru). The feet of guru is root of puja (you start puja remembering the guru). Traditionally a mantra becomes mantra when it is received from the guru , therefore it is said here the utterance of guru alone



is the basis for mantra and the basis for attaining freedom is the grace of guru. Thus, greatness of guru is presented in all of them- Śruti, smṛti, purāṇas.

### **What are the important aspects of the relationship between guru and śiṣya?**

We can now think a little about the relationship between guru and śiṣya.

Pujya Swamiji would warn against idealising anything. But a good effective relationship between guru- śiṣya will have certain aspects. If you are aware of that, it will help us in relating to our guru.

1) The first aspect of the relationship between guru and śiṣya is - mutual love and respect . Means guru loves and respects the disciple and the disciple loves and respects his/her guru. You must have heard of the disciple loving and respecting guru. But guru also loves and respects the disciple. Only the expression of love and respect on the part of the guru will be different. Without having love for the disciple, real teaching cannot happen.

Like the milk from the mother cow flows only when the mother has love for the calf. Similarly, real effective teaching can happen only when guru has love for the disciple. Out of love alone, the teaching comes out. Otherwise he will blabber something. Pujya Swamiji is used to say very nicely - What is the meaning of guru having respect for the student ? It means guru does not take the disciple for granted as” *Oh, this person is here only. If I take the class okay, if I don’t take also, it is okay*”. This is taking śiṣya and his time very lightly, thinking that anyway, he/she will not understand whatever I say. So, I need not prepare anything whatever I say is okay. That type of approach shows that guru does not have respect for the student. Pujya Swamiji was very, very particular that you should never take your student for granted. So guru also has got respect for the disciple. And the disciple, the student has respect for the guru.

Not only respect, but love also is an important element. Otherwise without love, there will be an atmosphere of fear because sometimes in respect, there is fear. So love will make a comfortable atmosphere , create a comfortable space between the guru and śiṣya. So śiṣya also has love for Guru, not only as a part of parampara, but as a person. The student loves to be in guru’s company. Not thinking that “*I am waiting, when this course is going to be over and I can run away at the earliest*” - that is not the feeling of the disciple. Disciple would love to be in the company of the teacher. Love for the teacher, respect for the teacher, respect for his knowledge, respect for the guru as a person. This is the first aspect of a good effective relationship between Guru and śiṣya.

2) The second aspect is -the student needs to have shraddha in both sastra and Guru. What is shraddha? shraddha means *prāmāṇya buddhi* - sense of validity. If that is not there, either in shastra or in Guru, then the relationship will not be smooth.

And also, we talked about bhakti where there is reverence for the guru parampara and sastra which was covered under love and respect .

3) The third aspect of relationship is that both the student and teacher need to have patience especially in the pursuit of atma jnanam. Guru needs to have patience because the śiṣya may not understand first time, second time, third time even. So guru needs to tell again and again.? And also śiṣya has to have patience to listen to the same subject matter presented in different ways. If śiṣya feels that guru is repeating the same thing - atma is brahman, atma is brahman and not proceeding further. Same thing is repeated because it is not understood, therefore needs to be told again. *bhūyō'pi pathyaṁ vaktavyam* – If something is good, it should be told again and again. And therefore, patience is required.

4) The fourth aspect of relationship is that śiṣya does not to expect perfection from the guru and of course, guru also would not expect perfection from śiṣya. As a human being, no guru will be perfect. I have seen so many gurus, but I have not seen any perfect guru. From upadhi standpoint, perfection is not possible and not required. If shishya idealizes that my guru should be like this. Then every time he will try to see whether Guru is behaving like this or not. He will keep on judging. And that relationship will not last. Even if it lasts, it will not be effective.

5) One more thing about this guru- śiṣya relationship is that in the initial stage if possible, one should have only one guru. Modern problem is that people have multiple gurus. Morning they listen to one guru, afternoon another and again evening and night another. So they listen to 3-4 different gurus. Like having 4 different meals in a day. If one listens to one guru at a time and then certain things you want to learn further, you go to a second guru. That is alright. Listening to so many gurus simultaneously in the initial stage of sadhana is not advisable. Why? It is not that any one guru is right or wrong. All may be right. But every guru has his own style and emphasis. One guru will be emphasizing one thing. The other guru will be emphasizing another thing. Therefore, you may be confused and all gurus will be doing different different texts. You are listening to Tattva Bodha of one swamiji and Mandukya Upanishad of another swamiji, So, you have all reasons to be confused.

Therefore, in the initial stage, if possible listen to one teacher and if you are not satisfied, go to the next teacher, the next teacher. It's all right. In Siva samhita, it is said, you can give one year to one teacher. If you are not satisfied, you can go to another teacher. But atleast one year you should wait. But nowadays students like to listen to multiple teachers. Even then, consider one guru to be your main teacher. That at least you can do. You can say- “*Primarily I will be following this teacher, the other teachers I am listening, but one teacher, I will consider as my guru*”. Like all women are my mother, but I have my

own mother. So one teacher, you consider to be the main one. That is very important. Otherwise, I have seen people are so confused. They think more the merrier. One guru is good, two gurus is better and three gurus is the best. It doesn't work that way. Like one medicine is a good for blood thinner. But just because it is good, if you take three tablets, it is not good. So initially if possible have one guru or if that is not possible, consider one guru as your main guru.

6) And another aspect for good relationship between guru and shishya is - Do not compare your guru with any other gurus. My guru is my guru for me. He's the best for me. Thoughts like - he is better than others or not so good like that other guru. Or my guru is not that popular. That guru is so popular- All these comparisons should not be there. So no comparison of one guru with other gurus. Also, no comparison with other disciples. Like- See that other disciple is better than me. He is getting more attention from guru. I get less attention - All this can be very detrimental to the guru-śiṣya relationship.

7) One more aspect of this relationship is śiṣya, the student has got the attitude of gratitude. Always he or she feels indebted, grateful to the teacher. If this gratitude is not there, vidya will not bless. There is always gratitude for whatever we have learned, we appreciate the grace of the guru.

These are the different aspects of guru-śiṣya relationship which one should take care of for effective learning.

**Now question is –“Swamiji, how to develop this devotion to the guru. How to strengthen my devotion?”**

- One thing is, Have gratitude and whenever there is opportunity, please express the gratitude. By stuti, by pooja. by seva, by some form of contribution. Whenever occasion, arises express your gratitude appropriately. Expressing the feelings, strengthens the feeling. And therefore, whenever there is an opportunity to do seva, to do puja, whatever, that will help us to develop this devotion to the guru. And we take care of those factors which are becoming obstacles to have devotion like comparison, expecting perfection, etc.

If these things are taken care of, then we will have the blessings of the guru.

- One more thing is a śiṣya, to make the relationship better, let there be sincerity in the pursuit. The most important thing which pleases the guru is the sincerity of the student. Not just dakshina, etc. The main thing is the sincerity, the readiness to learn, doing more and more follow-up, if homework is given in any class it is done, or any other type of follow up required it is done and one comes prepared to class. That is highly motivating for the teacher. It is the responsibility of the student to bring out the best in the teacher. The best is brought out from the teacher by the student. Pujya Swamiji was very



particular of who should sit in front of the teacher. He would tell I require some face in front, which invokes the best from me.

And if all this is done the relationship with the guru will be wonderful. In our tradition, it is said – *ājīvanam trayassēvyāḥ vēdāntō gurur īśvaraḥ. ādau jñānāptayē paścāt kṛtagratva nivṛtayē* - All our life these three are to be worshipped - vedanta, guru and ishvara. Even if we have completed our study, but still gratitude would continue for them. If gratitude is not there, it means a person has not received the vidya properly. If he has received properly, gratitude is bound to be there. so let there be gratitude for the teachers throughout our life. And to express our gratitude, the day like gurupurnima is useful. That is why we have a day like this. Like Mother's day, Father's day. We have a teacher's day called Gurupurnima day. It will help us to express our gratitude in an appropriate manner.

That is why we celebrate gurupurnima. And we need to remember that we are really not worshipping any one individual. We are worshipping the entire parampara, our entire lineage of the gurus which is represented by my teacher. This lineage is started by the Lord Sadashiva himself – *sadāśivasamārambhām śamkarācārya-madhyamām as-madācārya-paryantām vandē guru-paramparām. OR nārāyaṇam padmabhuvam vaśiṣṭham śaktim ca tat putra parāśaram ca*. Either you say Narayana or Shiva. We are worshipping this parampara by worshipping our teacher. And since this parampara is started by the Lord, when you do namaskara to the teacher, it goes to the initiator of the lineage of acharya's. So with this attitude, we express our gratitude through pooja, etc.

And today is the day when sannyasins take **chaturmasya vratam**. In olden days, they used to always be on the move, that is why they were called *parivrAjakAh* and during monsoon time they will be staying in one place in some village. The householders will come and request this sannyasi that you please stay in our place, we will take care of you. This sannyasi will stay in that village and during that period of 4 months of monsoon time, he will be teaching sastra. It is a mutual benefit scheme where these householders are benefited and the sannyasi also is taken care of.

Thus, **chaturmasya vratam** is from purnima upto kṛttikā masa or sometimes upto ekadashi this vratam is followed by sannyasis. During these four months, they will not cross the river. They will remain in one place and follow certain vratha's. But nowadays, sannyasins are busy therefore *pakṣōvai māsaḥ* - one fortnight is equal to a month. By that type of calculation, four months are reduced to two months. Therefore they follow only two months. They will remain in one place. Even now in Rishikesh many mahatmas follow this. They don't cross the River Ganga and they remain whatever side they are for this period. This particular vrata is associated with sannyasi. vratam means vow. *vriyatē iti vratam* -That which is chosen by you to follow is called vratam. And for a non-sannyasi

also, there is vratam. For these four months – – *āsāḍa* to *kṛttikā* - a householder or a brahmacari or a vanaprastha, whichever ashrama a person belongs to, he/she takes some vratam.

This vratam is of two types- One is *tyagalakshanam vratam* – giving up something and the other is *grahanalakshanam vratam* – taking up something for these four months or atleast two months. For two months I will not take sweet or pickle or something you like or are addicted to. Like two month I will not watch TV which I am addicted to. So, whatever is addictive and creating obstacle in your pursuit and if reduced will help in your pursuit. That type of thing can be dropped for four months. But don't drop study of Vedanta or Sanskrit for four months! What you drop should be such that it helps you, not harm or obstruct your pursuit. Or I am talking too much, so for four months, I will not talk or I will talk only after 12 o'clock. The other type is *grahana-rupa* ie, the vow in the form of adopting some new activities. That also is of three types - *kāyika*, *vācika*, and *mānasa*. Like I will do ekadasa pradakshina of Dakshinamurti. Or I will do *pañcōpacāra* puja everyday for 2 months. This is *kayika vratam*. Or *vacika vratam* – Everyday I will do parayanam of Lalita sahasranamam or Vishnu sahasranam or purusha suktam or dakshina murti stotram or whichever sukta that you can take as a vratam. Or manasa vratam - I will do mental Japa or I will do upasana everyday for half an hour on devi or Vishnu or Dakshina-murti.

Also manasa can be taken in a slightly different manner. For example, during these two months, I will pay attention on one particular value. In Dharma sastra, they talk about *ashtaguna*- eight qualities.

\* Like *dayavratam*. I am a little bit harsh. So let me have compassion to others and compassion to myself. So everyday, I will pay more attention to this quality. At the end of the day, I will see that did I follow the value of compassion during the day or not? So for these two months I will take up this as my vratam.

\* Or *kshamavratam*. I am a very quarrelsome person who easily fights with people. So for two months I will pay special attention to this value.

\* Or *anasuyavratam* – not have fault -finding attitude. Some people have a proof-reader's mind. They don't see what is right They see only what is wrong. So that fault-finding, I drop at least for two months, I will not criticize anybody mentally also. Even if I find something wrong, I will say that person is in order. *Sarve bhavanti sthAne* - all are in order.

\* *akārpaṇyam* -Not having inferiority complex, not looking down upon oneself, healthy self-esteem. *kārpaṇyam* is the opposite – self pity, inferiority complex. Some people have this habit that whenever they get an opportunity, they will put themselves down- I am an

idiot or this idiot had gone. They themselves use the word idiot with regard to themselves. Or my wife and children say I'm useless. I have also started thinking I am useless, good-for-nothing. *akārpaṇyam* is saying I am, okay. Whatever I am, I am in order. With all my background, this is how I can be. I am blessed to be what I am. Pujya Swamiji used this expression - *anugrihithosmi* – blessed I am to be what I am. I am not superior or inferior to anyone. I am ok, acceptable. This is *akārpaṇyam*.

\* *asprah* - Not having obsessive binding desire, I want this? I will not take no for an answer. That type of obsessive insistence, we try to reduce.

\* *anāyāsaḥ* - relaxation. It's a very important value. And I, as a means relaxation, keep appreciating *viśrāntō'ham*, *viśrāntō'ham* - Relaxed I am. I have reasons to be relaxed. Keep seeing this. This is a good vratam. I really love this vratam of relaxation. Take a vratam that I will not run with anxiety for two months. I will do things in a leisurely manner. I will start on time and I will be relaxed.

\* And *mangalam* - auspicious. In thinking, there is auspiciousness - *sarvē bhavantu sukhinah*. In my verbal expression there is mangalam. I speak, always beautiful words. Pujya Swamiji would always say in tamil to those he met – *nalla iru* – be well. I love that. So always having mangalam in your expressions. Not using harsh words. In thinking mangalam, in verbal expression mangalam, physically also mangalam. Applying chandana, bhasma are signs of mangalam. It is our culture. People are nowadays, feeling ashamed of putting these. You know, when you apply chandanam, Kumkum, bhasma, you are worshipping the Lord who is present in our body. So, mangalam in our expression, in our demeanour.

Thus, I will pay attention to anyone of these qualities. That also can be a vratam. And thus today can be a starting point for following a vratam. I have given a variety of vratam, so you can choose the one appropriate for you. As I said today is the day, we invoke the grace. We have really so many reasons to feel blessed that we are part of this parampara, that we are exposed to this parampara where Pujya swamiji's and his disciples are our teachers. Where Vēdavyāsa is a great link, where śaṅkarācārya is one of our brightest link. It is one of the great links started with Lord Sadashiva. We express our gratitude, we offer our namaskara to all our acharyas and seek their blessings, so that we can continue our pursuit and fulfill the purpose of human life.

With this, I conclude. *Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ*.

Note: Photos in wrapper pages (#2 and #31)

## Truth about falsehood By Swami Sakshatkritananda

I am going to write briefly on this topic. It is very interesting title. It has significance both in the paramarthika level and vyavaharika level. Truth about false is that it is non-separate from truth. False is truth but truth is not false. That is why Sruti says adharma is also vastu but vastu is not adharma. Katha says brahmatma is different from both dharma and adharma while dharma-adharma is non-separate from vastu. Dharma-adharma have their existence because of brahmatma.

Vastu gives satta-sphurti to any name and form, be it vyavaharika enjoying transactional reality or pratibhasika enjoying apparent reality. So a person does work for dharma without getting perturbed by the adharma. Otherwise a person living a dharmic life will not find peace in the midst of adharma. So Vedanta is the ultimate solution by which one goes beyond dharma and adharma.

Coming to Vyavahara, these days falsehood is made to appear real, by repeated assertion of the false. We see in the media how sustained effort is being made to present the false as real. Allegations are spread against people and sometimes it is too wild like alleging that our PM (who is the most honest person in the political arena) is corrupt. It does not make any impact on people who know and who are alert. If not, falsehood can change the mind of the person as everyone wants to be on the side of the majority.

Anyone can become a victim of false allegations and hence it is good to know about it. False allegations have two purposes. One is very evident which I need not elaborate. The second is to destroy the person in the eyes of others so that the person does not appear in public. We will not talk about how a worldly person should take it. A spiritual person should take it as karma phalam and so it is within Isvara's order. He or she can do whatever is to be done to counter the allegations if desired. A worldly person also can try to understand this statement and face it. If one happens to have some understanding of sastra, it does not bother him or her because it does not touch the person.

But sometimes the false allegations can make an opposite impact. A false allegation can give more energy and enthusiasm to the victim to work more for the society because he or she has nothing to accomplish. One can test one's objectivity in the light of the understanding of sastra that one has. If one welcomes such challenges in life, then there is nothing that can challenge a person in life. Therefore, Vedanta is the only means by which one can live with sanity in public life.

To conclude, the truth about false is false can never become true and the truthful should leave the false to prove itself to be false.



**Birthday 2021**  
**Poem by Sri John Warne**

Mother *vaidik* Tamil land, Father Ka in starfire sky,  
All or nothing earthborn wonder, for karma's last good-bye.  
Unbent by childhood loss and gain, sound and kind to others,  
Born to link all Bharat truth, Siva's dance of self discovered.

Brilliant dawn, *homa* blazing, Shastra coursed into him,  
Guruji's chant echoed lion pulse he knew and felt within.  
Serve and learn, grow and dare, discern the sacred whole,  
Solemn path, *saptarshi* precept, wherever Ganga flows.

A jungle hut - dips, snakes, and prayer - Tarananda Brahmasutra,  
God-given wisdom swallows world, White Cloud Way unfurled.  
Wherefore identity beheld, self-image guise negated,  
Diamond reason, *mahavakya jnanam*, infinite unabated.

No claim he made to what he now knew, knew it belonged to all,  
And deeply shared Upanishad, probed Maya's potent thrall.  
Creation, Darwin, unconscious psyche all accommodated,  
Brahman not reached by mind or words, consciousness unmitigated.

Every shame, curse or mistake will to *pramana* yield;  
The knower of the whole, the knower of the field.  
Recall whenever challenged, a choice to stand or stray,  
Expand your vision totally, reckon *satyam* all the way.

He'd made that shift, one he would teach, *jivakarma* left behind;  
One absolute, divine repose, reality's design.  
Perhaps easy, the shift for some, karmic generosity;  
A fool believes himself complete born midst good company.

There's work to do, the work he'd do, his heartwork every day:  
Embrace, encourage, protect and nourish all Ishvara's display.  
Be not big nor small, a presence sound, a force contained while freed,  
Just one behest, that every priest justify his earnest creed.

Starlight will not reach him now, ponder being and non-being,  
A hundred years among us, timeless Swami's seeing.  
Mark instead maturity, the universal lesson,  
Your participation in and devotion to his enlightened compassion.

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