

Arsha Vidya Newsletter

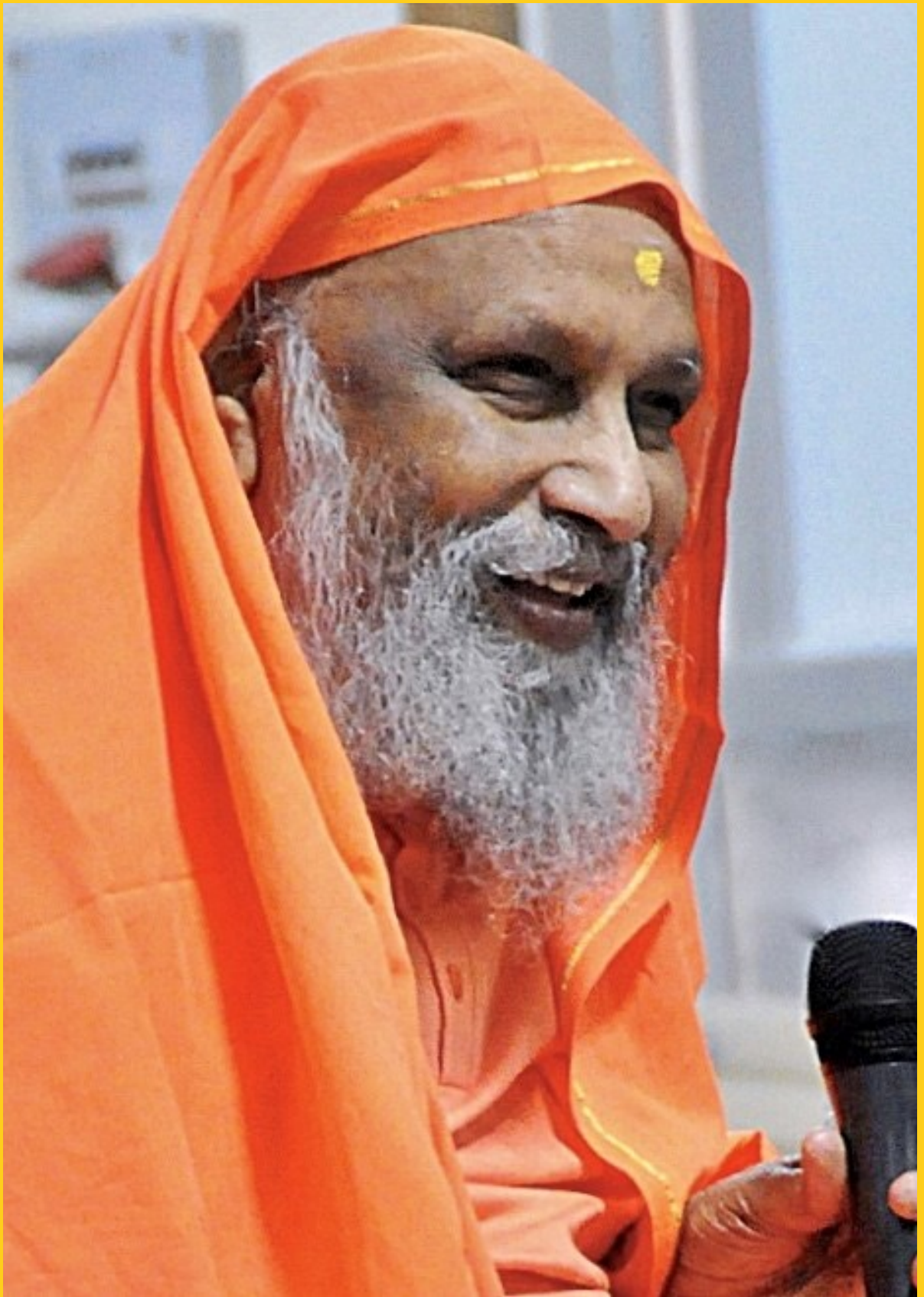
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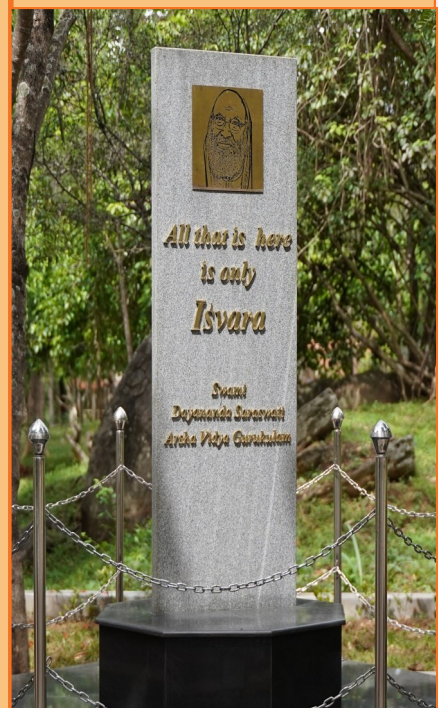
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Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

This is the twenty second part of the serial article, continuation from Nov 2022 newsletter.

BE INDIFFERENT TO PRAISE OR CENSURE

Jana-kṛpā-naisthuryam utsrjyatām: This compound can be split *janānāṁ kṛpā naisthuryam*, do not react to the praise and censure of others. Sometimes people have got *kṛpā* and they praise you. Sometimes they censure you also. Here *kṛpā* means *praśamsā*, praise. People have great appreciation for you and therefore they praise you, flatter you, but do not get flattered. Or they will censure you, but do not become flat. So the advice is, 'Don't get flattered or flattened!'

People will praise you based upon their own judgment and say you are a great *mahātmā*. Then afterwards, when they do not get what they want, they will put you down. You are what you are and they will praise you from their own standpoint. You do not know what things they have on their scales for measuring you. If you do not fulfil those things, then you will fall in their image of you. Once you fall in their image, you become upset because they are so important for you. Why? Because they flatter you. This is a problem for *mahātmās*. People will praise you and they will put you down also. You cannot stand that so that is why he says from the beginning, *kṛpā naisthuryam utsrjyatām*. *Utsrjyatām* means *parityajyatām*, may that be given up. Even if there is censure, do not censure yourself. Do not try to please people either. Appeasement does not work at all. Do not try to please them just because they censure you. Simply leave them alone. *Duniyā to baḍā vistār hai!*, the word is a very vast place.

When people censure you, the world is very vast. You can go away and leave them alone. Everybody has got accommodation in this world. Do not try to appease them. Appeasement never works. I have seen this and learnt the hard way. You should never take up appeasement work. Those who need appeasement need treatment. It is a waste of time and not helpful for you or the other person. Therefore, let them say you are bad, it does not matter. Leave them alone. You have not taken charge of people in the world. Bhagavān is there, he will take care of them. You need not bother about it. You take care of yourself, that is enough.

AVOID USELESS SPEECH

Then, in between, the verse says *na tu vṛthā vākyaṁ samuccāryatām*; may you refrain from speaking words that have no meaning. *Vṛthā* means *vyartham*, useless, so *vṛthā vākya* means words that have no meaning. *Na samuccāryatām*, may they not be spoken. Why? Because they have no meaning. This is called *vāk-tapas*, discipline with reference to speaking. If your speaking is alright, your thinking will also become alright. It is in speaking alone that you have to correct your thinking. Because you cannot really do anything about how you think. If you can correct your expression, then your thinking will naturally adjust itself. The whole thinking will change as your speaking changes. Therefore, words which have no meaning at all, even complaints that are not heard by anybody else, all of these should be given up. They have no meaning because they have no productivity. Maybe it is good for you to exhaust your energy or some emotional buildup, but a *mumukṣu* definitely should not speak useless words.

This includes unproductive words such as gossip. Gossip is also called *vṛthā vākya*. May you refrain from gossiping. If somebody did something, why do you bother about it? People who bother about what others did are people who want to do the same thing. That is why they talk about it. If someone says, 'Did you hear...?', it means that that is exactly what this person wants to do. Suppose you want to do something and you cannot, either because you are chicken or because you have some kind of value or whatever. And if others do it, you start gossiping. Talking about others is one of the worst things that one can do. A *mumukṣu* cannot afford to do that. Leave people's personal lives alone and do not talk about them. This is a very important thing. No one's personal life should be attacked by anybody.

While teaching, I may say things about what a person says. That is a different thing because it is *śāstra*. But some people dabble in the *śāstra* without any responsibility and we have to deal with those statements. They are modern *pūrva-pakṣas*, philosophical opponents and it is the teacher's job to respond. We deal only with the words they use, the philosophies that they propound. These have to be examined because somehow they have gone into your head. And if they have already gone into your head, then we have to remove them. That is my job and that is what I do. But you should definitely not say anything about the person's personal

life or lifestyle. That is his lookout. They are all adults and can take care of themselves. Therefore *na tu vṛthā vākyam samuccāryatām*; never, never talk about others' personal lives. This is one of the important things in a seeker's life.

I go one more step and say do not even use adjectives which have no meaning. Why use them? There is no need to say 'white milk,' for example, or 'good *sādhū*.' These adjectives are all unnecessary words. Do not use words that are redundant, like 'eternal immortal.' Eternal is enough, why immortal, infinite? Infinite is eternal, eternal is immortal, immortal is eternal, eternal is infinite. 'Eternal, immortal, infinite, supreme consciousness, at once divine, spiritual centre, sparks in your heart.' When used together like that, they are redundant. These are all words to be unfolded, not simply used.

MAINTAIN EQUANIMITY

Then, *audāsīnyam abhīpsyatām; āptum iṣyatām*, may you desire to achieve *audāsīnyam*, *udāsīnasya bhāvaḥ*. *Audāsīnyam* is having the attitude of *udāsīnaḥ*. *Udāsīnaḥ* means one who does not join this side or that side. This is not like the neutral policy of Switzerland, which is a neutrality in which there is some benefit. Being neutral, they get the benefit from all other countries, that is the whole idea. That is not the kind of neutrality we are talking about. Here you are neutral without exploiting neutrality.

Audāsīnya means that in your heart, emotionally, you do not join one side or the other. In any relative issue, there is no final say. If you analyse carefully, you will find that there is something right on both sides, so it is always a problem to say that a person is absolutely wrong. Generally, you have to go with those who are supposed to deal with issues and decide what is *dharma* and *adharma*. It is not always black and white. Sometimes, more than often, there is grey also. So a *mumukṣu* is one who does not join any groups. He or she maintains *samatvam*, equanimity. May you maintain *audāsīnya* towards any pleasant and unpleasant situations that might arise. As a *karma-yogī* you require *samatvam*, and that should be maintained all the way, even as a *sādhū*. Therefore the *karma-yogī* is also a *mumukṣu*, and should follow all this advice.

To Be continued...

This is the eighteenth part of the serial article, continuation from Nov 2022 newsletter.

Contemplation upon the self

The essence of the Upaniṣad has already been taught in the *mantras* up to this point. However, the truth being so subtle, there still remains in a student's mind a question about how one can gain abidance in this knowledge or even gain the knowledge. Indeed, gaining this extraordinary knowledge requires that one should constantly contemplate upon the self. The Upaniṣad unfolds the nature of the self upon which one must constantly deliberate. Some preparations are required for that deliberation, which is called meditation. That is described in the next *mantra*.

विविक्तदेशे च सुखासनस्थः

शुचिः समग्रीवशिरःशरीरः ।

अत्याश्रमस्थः सकलेन्द्रियाणि

निरुध्य भक्त्या स्वगुरुं प्रणम्य ॥ ५ ॥

viviktadeśe ca sukhāsanasthaḥ

śuciḥ samagrīvaśiraḥśarīraḥ

atyāśramasthaḥ sakalendriyāṇi

nirudhya bhaktyā svagurum praṇamya

विविक्तदेशे - in a secluded place च - and सुखासनस्थः - sitting in a comfortable posture शुचिः - clean समग्रीवशिरःशरीरः - with neck, head and body in alignment अत्याश्रमस्थः - with a mental attitude of renunciation सकलेन्द्रियाणि - all the senses निरुध्य - having withdrawn भक्त्या - with devotion स्वगुरुम् - to one's own teacher प्रणम्य - having bowed

(One should be) sitting in a secluded place, in a comfortable posture, with the neck, head and body in alignment, with a clean mind, in the attitude of renunciation, having withdrawn all the senses, and having bowed with devotion to one's teacher. (5)

This verse tells us that for meditation one should choose a place that is secluded and free from external disturbances. There are two kinds of disturbances, external and internal. To become free from external disturbances, choose a secluded place if you can find one. This is available in many homes in the United States. I don't know in how many homes in India you can find it. "Swamiji, in my house there is no seclusion at all; there is so much noise. Once people wake up in the morning, children start running around and..." Well, in that case, choose a time before other people wake up. At least then, you can enjoy some seclusion. There is nothing else you can do about all the noise around you. Simply choose a time before the noises start or choose a time after the noises have subsided. But it is necessary that there should be a place and a time where there is freedom from such external disturbances, because you do get disturbed by them. A time will come when you are not disturbed by what is happening around, but until then, you may have to manage. You certainly cannot expect to go to Times Square or the New Delhi Railway station and meditate, because the environment is going to impact you. So you have to seek out Saylorsburg or Rishikesh¹ or some place like that where you can enjoy the seclusion.

Meditation should be performed preferably while in a sitting posture. Sitting with legs folded is most preferable. Otherwise, you could be seated on a chair, but not walking or standing. Incidentally, this is discussed in the Brahmasūtra². There is a discussion on whether meditation should be performed only while sitting or in other postures as well. The conclusion is that meditation should be done only while sitting down. When one is standing, a part of the mind is preoccupied with keeping the body upright, lest one lose balance; while standing, there is a risk of falling. While lying down, it is possible that one may fall asleep, and, while walking or running, meditation is not possible because the movements of the body disturb the mind.

Sukhāsanasthaḥ means seated in a comfortable posture. What is required is a posture where the center of gravity is such that one does not have to make any effort

¹ Swamiji is referring to locations of ashrams and retreat centers where the atmosphere is calm.

² आसीनः सम्भवात् । *āsīnaḥ sambhavāt*. One should meditate while having a sitting posture since it is possible that way alone. (BS 4.1.7)

to remain in that posture, whether it is in the *padmāsana*, the lotus posture, while sitting with legs simply folded or while in the *vajrāsana* or any another posture that is comfortable. It is said that, if it becomes possible to remain seated in a particular posture for 48 minutes without movement, one has mastered that posture or *āsana*. That is called *āsana-siddhi*. Basically, what it means is that while meditating, the body must not draw our attention enough to cause distraction; it is best to choose a comfortable posture in which the body does not create any distraction.

In *haṭha-yoga*, the *āsana* or posture assumes great importance because the intent is to arouse the *kuṇḍalinī* or potential power in the body. There are various postures that are very important for that. Different postures activate different *cakras*, but that is a different thing. The Pātañjala Yoga Sūtra describes the posture of meditation as *sthira-sukham āsanam*³, that which is steady and comfortable. Gaining a steady posture requires much effort and hard labor in the beginning, but when perfected, the posture becomes steady and does not cause any trouble to the body. *Āsanam* also means the seat upon which one normally sits for meditation. One should not keep on changing the place of meditation or the cloth upon which one sits in meditation, or even the posture in which one sits. This way, the mind also gets used to the place and the surroundings.

Samagrīvaśīraḥśarīraḥ means keeping the body, neck, and head in alignment. *Sama* means in one line. Hold the trunk, neck and head in one straight line, as best as you can. If doing so causes pain, it need not be done. The idea is that the base should be broad so that the center of gravity is maintained; otherwise, one may slump. Therefore, it is recommended that one must sit erect. Keep the eyes lightly closed, as in not firmly closed, but not open either, because, if the eyes are open, movements are visible and the tendency of the mind is to follow what the eyes see. Sometimes, it is interesting to watch people in the audience during a lecture; when somebody gets up from his seat, you find many pairs of eyes following that person, as though escorting him all the way to the door! Even though the Swami is sitting here and talking, their attention goes to that person and then comes back. This is the nature of the mind; it is habitual, one may not even be aware that this is

³Pathaṇjali Yoga Sūtra 2.46

happening. Therefore, it is recommended that the eyes should be closed during meditation.

In the Bhagavad Gita⁴, Lord Kṛṣṇa says that one may focus the attention in the space between the eyebrows. There are certain techniques or methods given to us, so that we can steady our minds. It is said that if the pupils are steady, the mind will also become steady. If the mind is unsteady, the pupils will move around. Therefore, focusing at a point between the eyebrows is a way of steadying the pupils and steadying the mind. Some people get a headache in doing that, so one must only do whatever is comfortable. In the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita⁵, Lord Kṛṣṇa also recommends that attention be focused on the tip of the nose. Sometimes, one is asked to gaze at a flame, just to steady the mind. It is also said that holding the tongue such that it does not touch either the palate or the lower jaw will help steady the mind. These are some of the methods for focusing the attention, the idea being that the mind should become steady.

The next step is purification of the mind. The mind may sometimes have *rāgas* or attractions and *dveṣas*, aversions, because of which issues that have not been resolved may come up during meditation. For instance, there may be some resentment for some person, some hurt due to a situation, or some anger that is unresolved and stored in the mind. Such things have an uncanny knack of showing up during meditation, because this is a good occasion for them to draw our attention. Usually, our minds are so busy and occupied that we do not confront feelings, such as hurt, guilt or other issues. We don't like them and avoid them by keeping our minds busy. During meditation, however, the mind is not actively engaged in doing anything and so those feelings may have an opportunity to draw our attention. It is like a child knowing when the mother is busy and waiting for her to become available; as soon as she is done with her work and becomes free, the child starts pulling her sari or tapping her arm or doing something so as to draw her

⁴ BG 5.27

⁵ समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।

सम्प्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥

samaṁ kāyaśiṛogrīvaṁ dhārayannacalaṁ sthiraḥ

samprekṣya nāsikāgraṁ svaṁ diśaścānavalokayan (BG 6.13)

attention.

When hurts, guilt, and the like come up, we should resolve them through *pratipakṣa-bhāvanā*, deliberately taking the opposite position. Suppose we are angry at somebody, the *pratipakṣa-bhāvanā* is forgiveness. Genuine forgiveness will neutralize anger. For jealousy, the *pratipakṣa-bhāvanā* is trying to be happy in the achievement of that person. Thus, for every negative feeling there is a positive feeling, because every negative feeling arises from looking at a person or situation from a certain standpoint. In making the mind deliberately look at it from the opposite standpoint, that impulse can be neutralized. It is necessary to neutralize disturbing feelings or impulses in the mind, so that it becomes calm and *suchih*, pure, free from such impurities as anger, etc.

*Atyāśramasthaḥ*⁶ means remaining in the highest order viz., *sannyāsa*. At the time of meditation, one becomes a *sannyāsi*, a renunciate. Who is a renunciate? Pūjya Swamiji says that a renunciate is one who has no role to play. Normally, we keep playing different roles, such as that of a father, a mother, a son, a wife, an employee, and so on, because every situation demands that we respond in a suitable manner. But here is a situation where we have no role to play; we have no responsibility, no duty, and no accountability. We don't have to prove ourselves or achieve anything. We become free from all the demands that the world normally places upon us and those that we place upon ourselves. One is not a mother or father, one is not a son or daughter, and one is not a husband or wife. One is not a *brahmacarī* or student; neither is one a *gṛhastha*, householder, or a *vānaprastha*, a forest dweller or retiree. One is simply a *sannyāsi*.

What kind of *sannyāsi* is the individual at that time?

Sannyāsīs are of different categories. Here it means a *sannyāsi* who has no duties and responsibilities. At the time of meditation, one has no role to play. One who has no agenda, no ambition, and nothing to accomplish or achieve is a *sannyāsi*. If there are ambitions, one should not become a *sannyāsi*, but do what is required to fulfill those ambitions. But here, during meditation, one becomes a *sannyāsi*. One

⁶ आश्रमम् अतीत्य तिष्ठति इति अत्याश्रमस्थः । *āśramam atītya tiṣṭhati iti atyāśramasthaḥ*

has no claims, no demands, no competition, no agenda, and no ambition. There is nothing to be accomplished, at least for those 45 minutes. One gives up all roles at that time, and with that, also gives up all responsibilities, all commitments, all anxieties, and all worries, everything. The one who remains having transcended all the stages of life is *atyāśramasthaḥ*.

I know of one Swamiji, who used to give an orange cloth to everyone attending a Vedanta camp for a week or ten days. He would say that for the next 7-10 days they were all *sannyāsīs*. Even a married couple would wear the orange cloth and be renunciates for that period of time. People used to like that idea, because it had some effect on them. When they wore orange, they felt the spirit of renunciation and seemed to be impacted by that. It seemed to create a certain mood. Ideally, however, you should wear the orange cloth only if you are a renunciate.

Sakalendriyāṇi nirudhya means having restrained all the sense organs. It is necessary to disengage the sense organs from their activities. As far as the organs of action are concerned, such as the hands or legs, they can be restrained at will. One can also restrain speech. However, it is difficult to restrain the organs of perception. The eyes, of course, can be closed. Some people wear ear plugs so that no sound is heard. I remember one *brahmacārī*, who, when meditating in his room, used to get disturbed by the ticking sound of the clock. So he would wrap his clock in a blanket to smother its sound and put it as far away as possible. The interesting thing is that you normally don't even hear the sound of the clock, until you start meditating! Restraining the sense organs means withdrawing the sense organs from their preoccupations. The Kathopaniṣad⁷ says, "When the five organs of perception come to rest together with the mind, and the intellect too does not function, that state they call the highest." Keeping the senses steady is considered

⁷ यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।

बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टति तामाहुः परमां गतिम् ॥

yadā pañcāvatiṣṭhante jñānāni manasā saha

buddhiśca na viceṣṭati tāmāhuḥ paramāṁ gatim (Ka.Up. 2.3.10)

तां योगमिति मन्यन्ते स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणाम् ।

अप्रमत्तस्तदा भवति योगो हि प्रभवाप्ययौ ॥

tām yogamiti manyante sthirāmīndriyadhāraṇām

apramattastadā bhavati yogo hi prabhavāpyayau (Ka.Up. 2. 3.11)

to be *yoga*.

When the senses are calm, the whole personality becomes quiet and composed. Some deliberate restraint may be needed in the beginning, but it is not possible to keep on applying restraint. That is why purification of the mind is so important. Purity of mind implies that one is cheerful by oneself and happy with oneself, and, therefore, the mind has no reason to run out. That degree of peace with oneself is established when there is total self-acceptance, in which one is not fighting with oneself. We keep fighting with ourselves because we want to be different than we are; we don't like ourselves as we are, and are not happy with the way we are: "Why am I like this, why am I...?" Stop it. Let there be peace. We must establish a truce with ourselves. That is how the whole personality becomes composed and self-centered, or gains abidance in the self.

Svagurum bhaktyā praṇamya means saluting one's own teacher with devotion. Meditation is best done when there is also devotion in the mind. It is possible to evoke devotion in the heart, and that is why many different *devatās*, different forms and names, are given to us. For somebody, Rāma may invoke devotion; for somebody else, maybe Kṛṣṇa, or whoever. Anyone who inspires us also invokes our devotion. But a teacher is a *pratyakṣa-devatā*, perceptible god. One is the recipient of his grace, his kindness, his love, and his teaching. Hence, thinking of the teacher invokes the devotee in us easily. We remember and salute the teacher, so that our hearts are full of devotion.

To be continued...

"You may be mortal from the standpoint of the body. You may be blind or deaf from the stand-point of the senses. You may be restless from the stand-point of the mind and wanting in knowledge from the stand-point of intellect. But from the stand-point of "I" that is aware of the body, senses, emotions, knowledge, memories, ignorance, you are self-evident, being simple consciousness or awareness."

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the sixteenth part of the serial article, continuation from October 2022 newsletter.

सुग्रीवः शङ्कितश्चासीन्नित्यं वीर्येण राघवे ॥ १-१-६३

राघवप्रत्ययार्थं तु दुन्दुभेः कायमुत्तमम् । दर्शयामास सुग्रीवो महापर्वतसंनिभम् ॥ १-१-६४

उत्स्मयित्वा महाबाहुः प्रेक्ष्य चास्थि महाबलः । पादाङ्गुष्ठेन चिक्षेप सम्पूर्णं दशयोजनम् ॥ १-१-६५

बिभेद च पुनस्तालान् सप्तैकेन महेषुणा । गिरिं रसातलं चैव जनयन् प्रत्ययं तदा ॥ १-१-६६

ततः प्रीतमनास्तेन विश्वस्तः स महाकपिः । किष्किन्धां रामसहितो जगाम च गुहां तदा ॥ १-१-६७

तत्तोऽगर्जद्धरिवरः सुग्रीवो हेमपिङ्गलः । तेन नादेन महता निर्जगाम हरीश्वरः ॥ १-१-६८

अनुमान्य तदा तारां सुग्रीवेण समागतः । निजघान च तत्रैनं शरेणैकेन राघवः ॥ १-१-६९

sugrīvaḥ śaṅkitaścāsīnnityaṁ vīryeṇa rāghave || 1-1-63

rāghavapratyayārthaṁ tu dundubheḥ kāyamuttamam |

darśayāmāsa sugrīvo mahāparvatasannibham || 1-1-64

utsmayitvā mahābāhuḥ prekṣya cāsthi mahābalaḥ |

pādāṅguṣṭhena cikṣepa sampūrṇaṁ daśayojanam || 1-1-65

bibheda ca punastālān saptaikena maheṣuṇā |

giriṁ rasātalaṁ caiva janayan pratyayaṁ tadā || 1-1-66

tataḥ prītamanāstena viśvastaḥ sa mahākapiḥ |

kiṣkindhāṁ rāmasahito jagāma ca guhāṁ tadā || 1-1-67

tatto'garjaddharivarāḥ sugrīvo hemapiṅgalaḥ |

tena nādena mahatā nirjagāma harīśvaraḥ || 1-1-68

anumānya tadā tārāṁ sugrīveṇa samāgataḥ |

nijaghāna ca tatrainaṁ śareṇaikena rāghavaḥ || 1-1-69

When Rama made the *pratijñā* to take care of Vali, Sugriva reasonably doubted Rama's capacity to do damage to Vali. Even though Rama was strong, broad-shouldered and big-armed, Sugriva wondered whether Rama had the strength required. Sugriva, with his misgivings, decided to test Rama in order to determine the extent of Rama's strength. Dundubhi was the *rākṣasa* who had been killed by Vali when they two were in the cave. Once Vali had caught up with Dundubhi, he made short work of him. The body of this gigantic Dundubhi had not yet cleared, and the skeleton was there in the forest as a hillock. The skeleton

of Dundubhi was just lying there like a mountain. Sugriva showed Rama the skeleton of the fellow killed by Vali, that Rama might understand what he was in for if he faced Vali. Vali was not an ordinary fellow to be taken lightly.

Rama knew that Sugriva doubted his strength. One *yojana* is eight miles, a little more than eight. In order to demonstrate his strength, Rama, whose hands are mighty, a man of inner strength as well as physical strength, seeing the mountain-like skeleton, smiling, with his big toe flicked the entire bone pile ten *yojanas* distant. Rama gave rise to the knowledge in Sugriva about his strength and prowess. Rama decided that one nearly effortless act was not enough. Rama took one charmed arrow and pierced seven stout trees that were standing all in a row nearby. Beyond, the arrow pierced a hillock and disappeared into the earth. Where it stopped, who knows – perhaps in *rasatala*, that *loka* which is down below the earth. Now Sugriva knew that Rama was not just an ordinary human. Having gained confidence in Rama, and happy now because of their friendship and his great good fortune, this great monkey, Sugriva, along with Rama, went to Vali's palace in Kishkinda.

“*Hari*” has two meanings. Lord Vishnu is called *harati*, *pāpāni harati*. He takes away your *pāpa*. A monkey is also called *harati*, *harati phalāni*. From your hand it will take your fruit. If you have a banana, in India you will know what it is. The monkey, very clever, will come and take it from your hand. *Bhagavān harati pāpāni*. Both are *hari*, all right. *Hari* has those two meanings.

Sugriva was the exalted among the Vanaras. Now he and Rama were going to deal with Vali. Sugriva, the Vanara who is yellowish, went to the royal cave where Vali lived and shouted for him to come out and fight. A fight was to take place between Sugriva and Vali. Due to the great noise that Sugriva made, Vali came out. When Vali came out, Tara also came out. Vali prepared to fight, but Tara said, “No, do not fight with Sugriva now. He knows better than to do this. He knows who you are; he would not challenge you. Calling you for a fight means he has some extra strength, he has befriended somebody, somebody to back him up. Do not pick up this fight now.” But Vali would not listen. In India, if the men are to go and fight, their women should wish them well and send them

off. They should not stand weeping and all that. The soldier has to convince his wife, and then he can go out. Tara stood there between Vali and Sugriva, and Vali convinced her that no matter who backed up Sugriva, nothing was going to happen to him.

Raghava stood behind a tree, because one cannot meet directly with Vali without half his strength going. Rama drew one arrow with which to slay Vali. At that time, there was a big conversation between Rama and Vali. Indeed Vali stops and holds Rama's arrow at his heart, not allowing it to go through him. Vali asks, "What is this arrow? From where does it come? Is it Lord Vishnu's *chakra*? No, it is an arrow. It is like lightning; no person could send this." He goes on and on talking about it. Then he finds Rama. "Rama! Rama did this? What for? Why should he do this to me? What did I do to him?" After some time and talking between them, Rama convinced Vali that what he had done to Sugriva was wrong. That was the reason for this arrow.

Rama said, "Otherwise, Vali, you are a great person, *pūjya*, to be respected." Vali accepted Rama's judgment and then went to *svarga*. He placed his own son, Angada, in Rama's care and told the boy to serve Rama. Vali was happy that he died at the hands of Rama. He was released from his monkey *śarīra*. That is the story, Vali had to die. Rama was shown how to distinguish between the two Vanaras who looked alike, and he slew Vali.

ततः सुग्रीववचनाद्धत्वा वालिनमाहवे । सुग्रीवमेव तद्राज्ये राघवः प्रत्यपादयत् ॥ १-१-७०

स च सर्वान् समानीय वानरान् वानरर्षभः । दिशः प्रस्थापयामास दिदृक्षुर्जनकात्मजाम् ॥ १-१-७१

tataḥ sugrīvavacanāddhatvā vālinamāhave |

sugrīvameva tadrājye rāghavaḥ pratyapādayat || 1-1-70

sa ca sarvān samānīya vānarān vānararṣabhaḥ |

diśaḥ prasthāpayāmāsa didṛkṣurjanakātmajāṃ || 1-1-71

In Vali's kingdom, in Kishkinda, Rama consecrated Sugriva as the king and returned Tara to him. Among a herd of cattle, the bull, *ṛsabha*, always stands out. From that we have the expression *puruṣarṣabha et cetera*. It means the exalted, the one who stands out. Here, the one who stands out among the monkeys, *vānararṣabha*, is Sugriva. Sugriva, now king, called together all his citizens, those citizens

with big tails. He instructed them to spread out all over and find out where Sita was. One batch of monkeys, Hanuman and some others, including Angada and Jambavan, searched toward Lanka, because they knew Ravana must be involved in this. On the way they met the other great eagle, Sampati, elder brother of Jata-yu. This Sampati was one who could see things that were far, far away. Sampati confirmed that he could see Sita there in Lanka. Hearing the words of the eagle-like Sampati, the troop headed south toward the seashore. On the southern border of India they stopped and talked about which of them should cross to Lanka.

Hanuman was of tremendous strength, but he did not know it. Therefore it is like Vedanta. In the tenth man story Hanuman sometimes takes the place of the tenth man. It was more than an eight hundred mile leap to Lanka. Jambavan said, "My problem is that I can leap, but I will go beyond this. I cannot be the one to go." Jambavan became a *guru* for Hanuman. Jambavan told him, "You have the strength. You are the only one who can do this. Just go and come back."

Thus Hanuman was told of his great capacity. Just as with *tattvamasi*: The truth is there but you have to be told by one who knows. Hanuman had to be told in order for him to realize his strength. He had the strength but he did not know. The words of Jambavan helped him discover his own strength. Having realized this, Hanuman went to Lanka. He found Sita, and he showed her the ring Rama had given him - Rama knew Hanuman alone could find her.

ततो गृध्रस्य वचनात् सम्पातेर्हनुमान् बली । शतयोजनविस्तीर्णं पुप्लुवे लवणार्णवम् ॥ १-१-७२

तत्र लङ्कां समासाद्य पुरीं रावणपालिताम् । ददर्श सीतां ध्यायन्तीमशोकवनिकां गताम् ॥ १-१-७३

tato grdhrasya vacanāt sampāterhanumān balī |

śatayojanavistīrṇa pupluve lavaṇārṇavam || 1-1-72

tatra laṅkāṁ samāsādyā purīm rāvaṇapālītām |

dadarśa sītāṁ dhyāyantīmaśokavanikāṁ gatām || 1-1-73

Hanuman sailed the entire eight hundred miles over the salty ocean. Reaching Lanka, overcoming all obstacles, he met Lankadevi, the guardian of Lanka city, the keeper of the city, a great *rākṣasī* who covered the city. She confidently rose up to thwart him, and in fact wanted to kill him. But Hanuman struck one

good blow, a blow the likes of which she said she had never received. She knew then that this was no ordinary being. It had taught her a lesson and reminded her of a story. As a result, Lankadevi told Hanuman that the other *rākṣasas* were there on the island, and she gave him her complete permission to go and do whatever he liked, a blank check. That is how he was able to quietly enter Lanka.

Hanuman began to search for Sita. There are lengthy descriptions of the island, but for now, the story looks as though it moves from killing to killing. We will hear the descriptions. At first only the main events are told, but in between there are thousands of verses. Those verses talk about *dharma*. You will find these all blend very well. We will see that there are a lot of ideas and a good description of the city of Lanka, the flora and fauna, and the beautiful city itself. There Hanuman sees the glory of Ravana. To cross to Lanka, Hanuman, being one who could assume any form at will, had assumed a giant form. To enter Lanka, the island kingdom ruled by ten-headed Ravana, Hanuman assumed a simple monkey form, a form that he knew would not bother the *rākṣasas*. As a monkey, it was no problem to enter Ravana's palace. Within the palace Hanuman observed all that was there. Ravana's beautiful wife, Mandodari, and other queens, all the palatial fittings, gold and marble and fine woods and everything were all there. Hanuman also visited the house of Prahasta, one of Ravana's ministers. Hanuman explored the entire city but did not see Sita anywhere. This made him very sad, and he thought, "The only place I have not looked is the *aśokavana*." Ashokavana was a park-like place with ashoka trees, banyan trees, *ficus religiosa*. It was there he found Sita sitting, surrounded by *rākṣasīs*. She was wearing the same dress she had on when she was kidnapped. Eyes closed like an ascetic, she was meditating upon Rama.

निवेदयित्वाभिज्ञानं प्रवृत्तिं विनिवेद्य च । समाश्वास्य च वैदेहीं मर्दयामास तोरणम् ॥ १-१-७४

पञ्च सेनाग्रगान् हत्वा सप्त मन्त्रिसुतानपि । शूरमक्षं च निष्पिष्य ग्रहणं समुपागमत् ॥ १-१-७५

nivedayitvābhijñānaṁ pravṛttiṁ vinivedya ca |

samāśvāsya ca vaidehīm mardayāmāsa toraṇam || 1-1-74

pañca senāgragān hatvā sapta mantrisutānapi |

śūramakṣaṁ ca niṣpiṣya grahaṇaṁ samupāgamat || 1-1-75

Hanuman climbed into a nearby tree and approached Sita. Quietly, not letting the *rākṣasīs* hear, he began talking. Sita looked up and saw Hanuman sitting there. Hanuman revealed who he was, and he told her what was going on.

Sita, learning that this messenger had come from Rama, was very pleased. Hanuman assured her that the preparations were underway, they would bring her back, and Ravana was as good as finished. Hanuman confirmed the whole thing by giving Sita the ring Rama had entrusted to the great monkey. Hanuman gently assured her that soon she would be with her dearest. He soothed her and encouraged her. She, Vaidehi, the daughter of the kingdom of Videha, of Janaka, knew Hanuman meant business. Then, leaving her behind in the inner garden, he went to the outer gate and began the destruction of Lanka. Bringing down the outer gate, he wanted to get the attention of all the *rākṣasas* and declare to them what for he had come. After seeing Sita, Hanuman was furious and he initiated the fight, and the soldiers all came. He made short work of them. A second wave came, larger fellows, five commanders of army divisions, and they too fell. Then seven sons of various ministers were defeated. Then Akshakumara, a son of Ravana, a great fighter, charged and fell to Hanuman. Hanuman pulverized these foes. Ravana had heard news of a simple monkey disturbing things in Ashokavana, but when he heard about his son's fate, Ravana was worried. He knew this was no ordinary monkey.

Ravana sent Indrajit, another son, a fearless archer, a near equal to Arjuna of the Mahabharata, a great hero. Indrajit, also known as Meghanada, was a beautiful person, a man of great accomplishments. He had special powers, and special missiles, and he wielded the *brahmāstra*. An *āstra* is an arrow given by the creator Brahmaji himself. Indrajit, doing *tapas*, having invoked Brahmaji, received this arrow that would never miss its target. Indrajit drew an *āstra* named Mohanam, which would paralyze and bind any target. He wanted to capture this monkey fellow and take him to Ravana. Hanuman wanted to see Ravana. Therefore he allowed himself to be bound by this *āstra*. Hanuman himself had been blessed by Brahmaji and given the boon that were he ever in trouble due to any of the creator's own *āstras*, after a short time the power of the arrow would wane and Hanuman would not be injured or detained. Hanuman, knowing all this, allowed himself to fall to the *āstra*, to be bound and dragged to Ravana's court by the *rākṣasas*. Proudly Indrajit led the procession that dragged this troublesome monkey through the streets of Lanka. Even as they were going, Hanuman was freed. Still

he pretended to be bound. Patiently he tolerated the abuse of these fellows.

Ravana was there on his throne, and Hanuman wanted to have a seat, a seat higher than Ravana's. What did he do? He caused his tail to grow large and long, and he spiraled it below him round and round until it was higher than Ravana's throne, and he sat upon the top of it. Oh, Ravana, like a real monkey. This was Hanuman. Hanuman told Ravana that he had been sent by Rama, who was coming, and that Ravana had better hand over Sita or he was finished. Ravana said he was always prepared to fight; he cared not about this Rama or Lakshmana. These were but *mānuṣyas*, nothing to worry about. Hanuman was a *dūta*, a messenger, an ambassador, and thus he was not to be killed. But the *rākṣasas* decided to set fire to Hanuman's tail. Ravana ordered it to be done. They brought cloth to wrap the tail and to be lit on fire, not knowing that this great monkey was no longer bound by the power of the *āstra*. Then Hanuman caused his tail to grow and grow, and he charged off with his tail like a torch. The burning cloth fell off in flaming pieces as Hanuman ran from palace to palace and house to house. Hanuman himself was not burned, all cool inside, but the entire city of Lanka caught fire. Fire raged, but Sita's sanctuary in the ashoka grove was wonderfully saved. This was how Hanuman let Ravana know what the *rākṣasas* were in for from the monkeys. By Hanuman's rampage Ravana was filled with pride, ego, fear, anger, and a great inner conflict. Hanuman did all this.

To be continued...

“A value, any value, universal or situational, is a value for me only when I see the value of the value as valuable to me. Me-the comfortable me-is the source of my values. I fail to follow a universal value only when I do not clearly see its value for me. I make expedient situational choice only when I think such choices will make me feel good.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

RETREAT BY BRNI. NANDANA CHAITANYA AT JNANAPRAVAHA

RETREAT BY BRNI. NANDANA CHAITANYA AT JNANAPRAVAHA. Manjakkudi,
7-10 November 2022

Topic of discussion: Drk-drsya viveka

The group on all days attended the puja session at Dhyana Mandapam and enthusiastically chanted Sri Rudam, Purusa Suktam guided by Nandanaji.

A brief introduction to the topic was rendered by Swami Shankaranandaji who was on a visit to Manjakkudi, followed by Swami Ramesvaranandaji about the venue, Jnanapraha, its facilities and the trust's activities. Sri.M.G.Srinivasan, Correspondent, SDET felicitated the acaryas.

Nandanaji held a brief first session on the topic Drk-drsya-viveka followed by a superb explanation of Purusa Suktam. After the lunch break Nandanaji engaged us in a lively discussion of Bhagavad Gita highlights and insights in the informal setting of the home stay living room. Evening coffee took us back to the second Drk-drsya-viveka session, while dinner was followed by a viewing of Pujya Swami Dayanandaji's talk videos.

The sessions continued this way for the three days of the retreat. The acarya was open to all questions of the participants and cleared the doubts. There were engaging discussions with the participants. Some of the participants were new to the study of Vedanta. They were made familiar to the topic and eased into the study. The Participants could also visit the Swami Dayananda Matriculation school, Swami Dayananda college and Goshala. They were thrilled with the opportunity to get to know the other socially relevant initiatives in and around Manjakkudi along with spiritual study.

That all participants were thrilled with their stay and study comes across in their testimonials...

"We are truly grateful for your wonderful and patient teaching, kindness and hospitality Nandanaji, you made all of us feel so welcome! I personally have really benefited a lot from the interactions, group discussions and informal learning! Very happy to have visited the birthplace of Pujya Swamiji."

"As Nandanaji said, we are now rasagullas soaked in Vedanta for three full days, we must take that forward! So much so, that the return journey was about the take-aways from the sessions."

"The uniqueness of the retreat was the format of questions, doubts being answered immediately at the end of the Drk drsya viveka sessions and in the discussion of the verses of Bhagavad Gita which helped greatly to clear the many doubts. There was divine grace in the whole retreat as the daily topics discussed in retreat were also further reinforced

with Pujya Swamiji's talks that were showcased from the archives.”

“Guided meditation for the day gave the right energy throughout the day. Different fragrant varieties of rice that was served during our meals gave us better knowledge of our traditional forms of rice. At the end of the retreat we feel we are each taking a piece of Manjakkudi back home with us.”

“We are indeed blessed to have been part of the short Vedantic retreat, the emphasis on Śravanam, Mananam and Nididhyāsanam, is my take-away in this spiritual journey.”

“For a beginner, the great philosophy was explained in simple language, and has induced greater interest! To have visited the punya bhumi, Manjakkudi, Pujya Swamiji’s birth place, and the temples are all a divine experience!”

“Hospitality, in terms of stay, food, facilities in the class rooms were all excellent! Warmth and love reflected everywhere! The beautiful dance by Aarthi still lingers in our minds... Sincere thanks to everyone who made all this possible!”

Om



“The expression of my life is just the expression of my well assimilated value structure. What I do is but an expression of what is valuable to me. Other people’s values I follow from time to time when it is convenient; but if these values of others have not been assimilated by me, they are simply obligatory values and do not reflect my value structure. They are more a source of conflict than a norm for behavior and are always susceptible to compromise.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/c/VedicWisdomFestival/videos>

In the fifth year of the Vedic Wisdom Festival organized by the Aarsha Vidya Foundation, Mumbai, spiritual masters over two full days shared the richness of Vedic Wisdom with 200 participants. The online festival had topics such as Bhagavad Gita – the essence of Vedic Wisdom, Yoga for Self-mastery, Ayurveda and Dinacharya (Daily Living), Temple Tradition and culture according to The power of Vishnu Sahasranama, Insights into traditional Indian music, Mahabharata and self-enquiry, Vedanta and entrepreneurship and much more. Vedic Wisdom Festival is a small way in trying to preserve and perpetuating this Vedic wisdom and sustain it.

As per the tradition the festival was inaugurated by Swami Brahmanidananda Saraswati, Founder and Trustee by lighting of the lamp. Mr. Suresh Balakrishna being the event moderator made sure that the audience imbibed and got the most from of all sessions.

Swami Brahmanidananda Saraswati, a traditional and contemporary teacher of Vedanta spoke on ‘Bhagavad Gita – the essence of Vedic Wisdom? The first portion, *purvabhaga* of the Veda gives some means to enhance our worldly actions so that our *Artha* and *Kama* pursuits become better with *Dharma*. But inspite of achieving *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama*, the human heart is still empty. This urge for fulfillment, freedom from the sense of limitation as a human being is called moksha. That is dealt in the last part, *uttarabhaga* of the Veda called the Upanishads. The Bhagavad Gita deals with the same subject matter. Sri Adi Shankaracharya introducing the Gita says there are two *margas* - *prvritti*, which is *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *nivritti* is *moksha*. What is presented in the Upanishad as one or two verses has been elaborated in the Gita. Over an hour on the auspicious occasion of Bhagavad Gita Jayanti he spoke how Bhagavad Gita is the essence of Vedic Wisdom.

As the festival was on Bhagavad Gita Jayanti, the 15th chapter of the Gita was chanted by SHINE children beautifully guided by their teacher, Sonali Ambasankar. The Purpose of SHINE - Spiritual Heritage of India for Next-gen Empowerment is to share the spiritual heritage of India for children (upto 13 years) which establishes the spiritual foundation of their growth and success.

Dr Parthasarathy R, a practicing Ayurveda Vaidya currently heading Swami Dayananda Jayavarthanavelu Ayurvedalaya (SDJ Ayurvedalaya) as a Director & Chief Medical Officer spoke on ‘Ayurveda and Dinacharya (Daily Living). He began by chanting a few shlokas from the Dinacharya chapter of the celebrated book, Ashtanga Hrdaya and said that Ayurveda is explained in such verses. Our ancestors were more connected to nature and followed everything precisely as mentioned in the shastra. Then over an hour, Dr Parthasarathy elaborately explained how a day starts, what happens during the day, how night unfolds, what are the different changes happening around us during the day and night. He took the audience deep into the subject and showed the simplicity of connecting to the na-

ture which gives more freedom to practice Ayurveda naturally.

The post lunch session of the festival was by an unforgettable video clip by Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati ji on 'The person and the role'.

Swamini Satyavrtananda Saraswati, disciple of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Swami Paramarthananda Saraswati has studied Sanskrit, Nyaya, Mimamsa, Sankya and yoga under Vedic scholars. Speaking on Yoga for Self-mastery she said that Yoga is that discipline by practicing which one becomes qualified to know *jivatma paramatma aikyam*. Patanjali Maharishi gave ashtanga yoga to remove the impurities of the mind. He gave Paninian Mahabhashya, a commentary of Panini sutras by learning which one gets *Vaak shuddhi*, purity in one's speech. He contributed to Ayurveda also through which one can remove the impurities of the body. Quoting the Yoga Vasishta, Lord Rama once asked sage Vasishta, what disease is. She then elaborately explained what sage Vasishta unfolded to Rama on health and how illness develops and Jnana yoga is the only remedy to come out of the cycle of birth and death. Quoting the Bhagavad Gita she gave some practical tips for health and wellbeing.

M.R.Ravi Vaidyanaat Sivachariar, a scholar in Veda-Agama Shastra and Saiva Agama spoke on Temple tradition and culture from the agama shastra. Ours is a land of temples and it constitutes heritage because our culture rests upon the stable base of the temple and is a traditional centre fostering the growth of the civilization. Temple is a sanctified, holy and consecrated place. He started with how a formal temple has been classified by agama shastra or any ancient text. It is to ensure an easy and simple way to realise the divine aspect and make our life an instrument of divine. He spoke about the uniqueness of a Hindu temple, its construction, and ways of worship. Our experience of visiting a temple will never be the same again.

Swamini Brahmaprajnananda, the co-founder of the Vedic Wisdom festival and a Vedanta teacher spoke on 'The power of Vishnu Sahasranama'. As Sri Bheeshma lay dying on the battlefield, Yudhishtira asked him 'What is the ultimate goal and knowing and worshipping whom, human beings would gain auspiciousness, be free from sorrow? Chanting what can the jiva get freedom from bondage of samsara, cycle of birth and death?' In response, Sri Bheeshma gave him (and us) the powerful Vishnu Sahasranama (a thousand names of Vishnu). By worshipping the Lord with bhakti, meditating on him, praising him, bowing to him, the worshipper goes beyond all sorrow. How I relate to the world depends a lot on what I understand the world to be. I find that I am in harmony with the world when I know what it is about and Vishnu Sahasranama helps us to appreciate that this jagat is really Bhagavan. The human heart that longs for connection is at peace when we chant. We connect. We are fulfilled.

Sraboni Chaudhuri, a Sangeet Visharad and a Suramani is one of the leading exponents of thumri and gazal. She learns Vedanta from Swami Brahmanandananda. She enthralled the audience through the music and lyrics of saints and mystics like Meerabai, Sant Kabir,

Surdas and Brahmanand whose contribution to the bhakti movement has been immense. She sang and spoke about how the traditional Indian music forms have been expressions of divinity and devotion.

Expressing our devotion to Ísvara is an important part of understanding Vedic wisdom. Puja is one of the most beautiful ways to invoke the devotee in oneself and establish a relationship with Isvara, the Lord. Puja is called *kayikaṃ karma*, an action involving one's limbs. It also includes speech and mental action in the form of chanting and thinking of the Lord. Sonali Ambasankar navigated the audience through a simple *panchopacara puja*, 5-step puja to understand the what, why and the how of a puja.

Mr. Suresh Balakrishnan spoke about setting up a gurukulam in Mumbai as per the wishes of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Aarsha Vidya Foundation is a not-for-profit foundation that shares the timeless teachings from the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads and carrying forward the Advaita Vedanta Parampara. AVF wishes to set up a Gurukulam – a centre for learning Advaita Vedanta in the outskirts of Mumbai. The foundation has bought 3 acres of land, 80 kms outside Mumbai on the Kalyan-Murbad road (2 ½ hours from the GPO & airport). The purpose is to offer regular 3-year intensive, residential course for full time students who can over time become teachers to carry forward the tradition, conduct Vedanta & spiritual camps and retreats to help people to learn, conduct Spiritual heritage camps for students and children to equip them to face modern challenges of life.

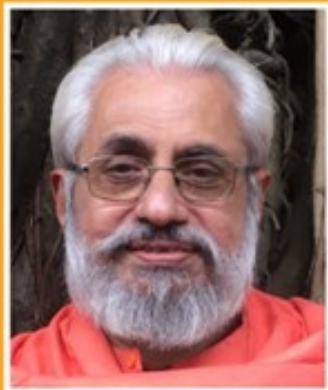
Swamiji Sarvananda, disciple of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati, studied and taught many years at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Coimbatore. He conducts online classes and residential camps on Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Sanskrit and Yogasutras. He spoke about Mahabharata and Self-Enquiry. The other name for Mahabharata is 'Jaya' meaning victory because one reading and learning from the Mahabharata emerges victorious. Victory can be either worldly or in a spiritual sense. Every story in the Mahabharata conveys certain message. So the idea has to be to find out the message. Swamiji helped the audience us to understand how to look into the Mahabharata with primarily this intention and also get an idea of what the Mahabharata offers us including telling some stories.

Ravi Sam is a famous Industrialist and Entrepreneur, representative in many industrial bodies. He administers a Veda Pathashala in a serene gurukulam environment with 50 students in the age group of 7 to 15 years focusing on the propagation of Vedic culture and adopts the traditional Guru-shishya teaching style. As a passionate philanthropist, he continues to inspire people across society and remains a strong source of inspiration for the next generation. An astute student of Vedanta spoke to the audience about how he balances daily life and Vedanta. He said one thing that really hit him was when Swamiji said "Easy. All nama-rupa-s are Isvara, Ravi". He said that the very fact that one has an intense desire to learn and put in the necessary effort will definitely make time to learn the shastra, even with a busy lifestyle, when one is able to prioritize things. He spoke fondly of

Pujya Swamiji and the audience could feel his love and respect to him.

The event ended with a vote of thanks.

- Report by Rashmi Kaikini



Swami Brahmadevananda
Saraswati
Festival Founder



Swamini
Brahmaprajnananda
Festival Founder



Ravi Sam



Swamini
Satyavratnanda



Dr Parthasarathy



Sraboni
Chaudhuri



Swami
Sarvananda



M. R. Ravi Vaidyanath
Sivachariar

Reality Check

I start with a long illustration received from a friend encouraging the benefits of positive thinking and avoiding negativities in these difficult times. I have followed that illustration with my understanding from sastra Read on.

What's important while eating, taste or the stone in the bite

A great thought

*In a restaurant, one well-known chef cooked very tasty pulav using high quality rice. As soon as the pulav was ready, its aroma spread all over. Everyone's mouth started watering. *Now they were all eager to taste the pulav. About a hundred people were served the pulav.*

Just when every one was about to take the first bite & put it in their mouth, the chef came and said that there is a small stone in the pulav. As it was of the same color and size of the rice grain, he couldn't find it. He said as it may come in anybody's plate he would want them to be careful while eating & the stone might injure them if it comes in between the teeth.

The flavor of the pulav is good.... the taste is also great but now the fun of eating has gone. Everyone was like forcefully swallowing one bite after other without paying attention to the taste while eating. The more they became aware, there was no talk, no gossip among them. All were quite & silent. Before the start of the meal it was fun to be together. Now even though they were together, one by one, they fell into a trance. Everyone ate until the end. Even the last bite was taken carefully.

After completing the meal everyone sighed relief for not getting the stone. They washed their hands. Just then, someone noticed that no one got the stone

Then they called the chef & asked him 'you had said that one of us will get the stone while eating!

The chef said 'I had removed most of the stones, but if there was one left by mistake, I wanted to warn you'

They started looking at each other. There was no discussion about the very delicious pulav. Everyone was exhausted after the meal, because the ease of eating had gone. They had found it was so hard to eat !!

Due to this pandemic at present, our condition has become like the stone in the pulav. It is not possible to say who will get this stone.

Ease of living is gone. Even the helping hand which comes forward, we think will get Corona? Milkman, vegetable vendor, grocer,... while buying every necessities of life, we are worrying what will come with it & this is how we are living our lives!

Earlier when one sneezed, we said 'God Bless' But now we think whether nature has pulled out our file or what...? No one knows how many days this will continue.

But it is a humble request not to let your happy life become useless like the delicious pulav. Don't read negative news, posts. Read motivating posts, information, books. Cultivate hobbies and buy happiness in kilos & tonnes just from yourself!

To follow up on this nice story, I add something more and in my understanding more profound.

Positive thinking is good, But can't carry the day for long, especially in such prolonged pandemic times. There has to be something genuinely more profound as the truth of life, these fears cannot be eliminated by merely hypnotizing ourselves with positive thinking. That can help tide over the fears temporarily.

But fundamentally one has to understand that the self-aware being we are is the same self-aware universe. This I would say a pratijna statement by sastra, a statement meaning oneness is the truth of life, the reality check. I try to expand this truth below.

There are no objects, or things, or events. There are only sensations and perceptions based on application of thought process on the sensations both within and without, together is mirage of life. Every event in life is captured in a frame by the light of (truth) consciousness through the lens (sastra refers to this cidaakasa in an individual) wherein this light of consciousness reflects in an individual captured as scenes through sensations obstructed by opaque material, (man, material, etc) called objects on the screen of mind, time and space. Every scene from every individual (all jivas including animals and all other living beings, bacteria, virus, inclusive) is etched on the screen in different time and place and the collective scenes a mixture of the lighted obstruction mixed with perceptions, concepts, memories and emotions superimposing, like even in all film rolls after film rolls that are run through in a movie and all of us (jivas) watch the perennial movie janma after janma, means birth after birth. The truth is, there is only being (one light of consciousness) running through all, there are no things, time or space; the movie is that of the creator, ishvara whose truth also is the same light of consciousness. He is called ishvara as he displays the all-knowledge, the same light of consciousness. The power of all-knowledge allows all transactions in life - feeling, thinking, doing as though - instead of just being. Being is oneness, there is no division and hence nothing to fear. This understanding is not self-hypnosis and hence can stay with us. To go further, once we understand that the reality of 'I' and Ishvara is the same being, how do we go about life? First in case of a movie scenario, we walk out, forget the movie world and step into the so-called real world and start doing our normal activities. But here the so-called real world is falsified meaning it is as real it seems, it keeps changing moment to moment and is only a

construct, sastra calls it citta spandanam, spin of the mind, the world we transact is a combination of citta spandanam of all beings at all times, "Samsāraḥ svapnatulyo hi"(ātmabodha-4). But we continue with our transactions with the understanding at the back of the mind we, collectively, all beings keep spinning further, but thank God, the ni-yati, order of Ishvara keeps the spin in order. The order includes Rudram and Sambhavam, meaning unpleasant and pleasant due to our own spinning. Now with this understanding, let us not distort the spin further. Let us transact with ishvara arpana buddhi, all actions unto Him, and prasada buddhi, do everything as per dharma, (commonly understood values, like 'do unto others as I would like others do unto me') as arpanam to Ishvara and take the results as prasada. The understanding of 'I' the being is one with 'Ishvara the being' gives us the cushion that we have no stakes in our transactions other than looking at this world as Ishvara's sannidhanam. Everything including our body is the temple. Living life like this, continuing with further listening to Vedanta from the acaryas will strengthen our understanding and give us shantam, shivam, sundaram, oneness with Ishvara. That is not self-hypnotisation, but oneness with reality.

To continue, one important quote from Vedanta Dindima, a text by Adi Shankara -When one sees a flower, seeing is the only truth the oneness in which both seer and seen are. The seer and seen are divisions created by the mind, then naming, differentiating all other divisions follow. They are all empirical whereas oneness in seeing is the truth, 'sampashyataam muktih' - means, 'oneness in seeing is clear seeing and that is freedom.' when we see a movie, the light and the screen appear as images and the scenes and the story appear real. It is not the light and screen play a trick on us, they are inanimate. It is not the mind and senses take the scenes as real, they are also inanimate. It is 'I' the being lights up the 'vrttigataam I - the I thought' the movement in consciousness called 'ego - the operating I thought", which is kshanikam, changing moment to moment, hence fictitious, this ego makes the story of life appear real by naming, differentiating, labelling, relating, etc. The ego and its objects called life(movie) the whole thing is empirical, you transact so it is real. Empirical because it is reproduced day in and day out by all jivas, so it is referred to as empirically true. But the reality is just being, just seeing, just hearing..... All knowledge by the means of knowledge and the understanding, 'I the being is Ishvara, the being.' is the only reality, everything else is empirical. Transact with the empirical, do not distort the spin, remain the being.

Om tat sat

- Swami Ramesvarananda Saraswati, Jnanapravaha, Manjakudi

Dayananda Anugraha Fund

The Dayananda Anugraha Fund was established in 2016 to provide financial grants to direct and indirect disciples of Pujya Swami Dayananda who are in need of such support.

Primary grants (first priority) are given for living, medical, dental, and other necessary personal expenses.

Secondary grants (second priority, depending on availability of funds) are given for expenses related to travel and teaching and ashram/residence improvements.

Any disciple in our parampara who is in need of support is invited to visit www.dayanandafund.org or email - dayanandafund@arshabodha.org

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