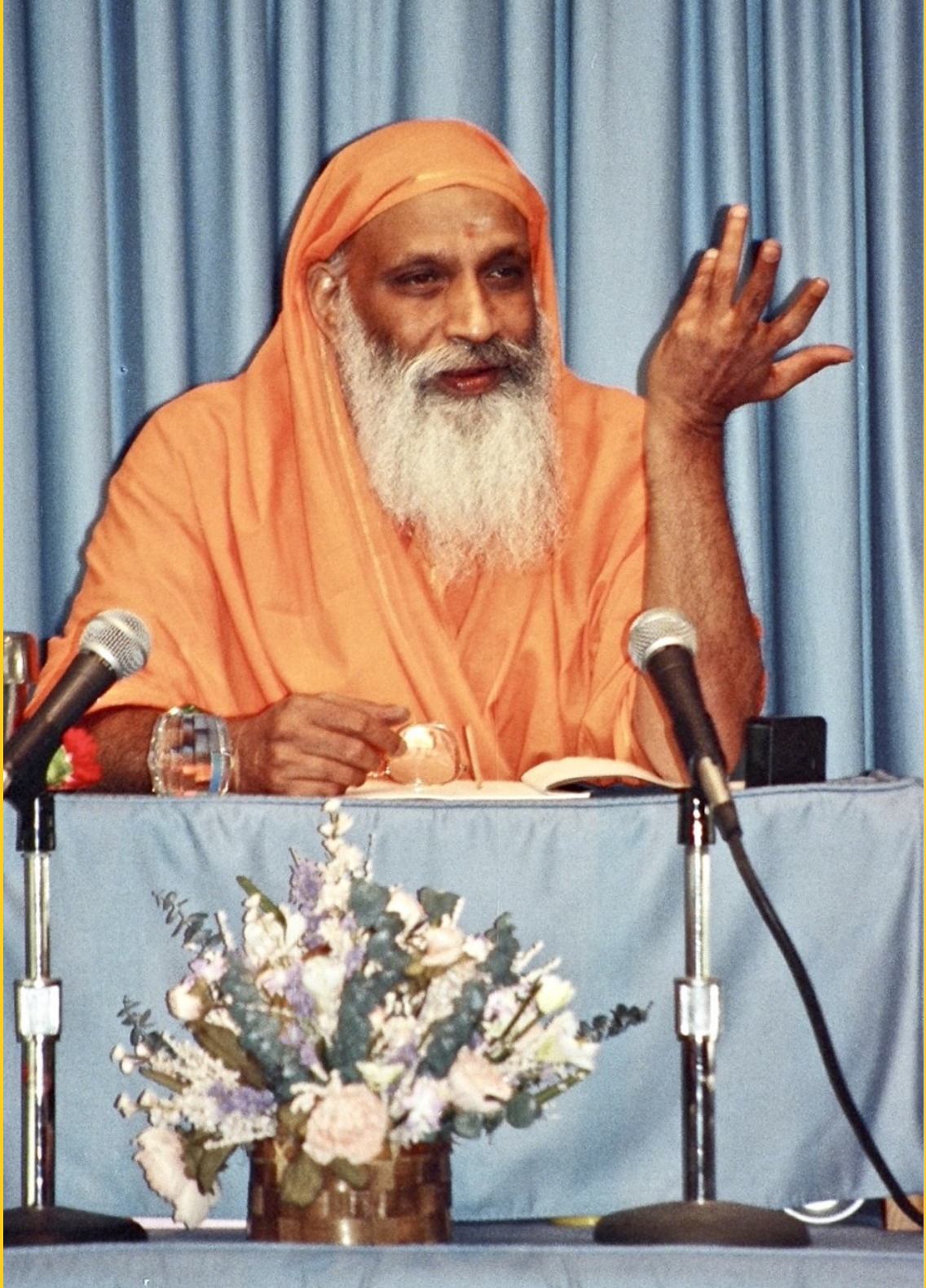




# *Arsha Vidya Newsletter*

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**Arsha Vidya Pitham  
Swami Dayananda Ashram**

Sri Gangadhareswar Trust  
Purani Jhadi, Rishikesh  
Pin 249 201, Uttarakhand  
Ph.0135-2431769  
Fax: 0135 2430769  
Website: [www.dayananda.org](http://www.dayananda.org)  
Email: [dayas1088@gmail.com](mailto:dayas1088@gmail.com)

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Phone: +91 98902 93641  
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P.O. Box No.1059  
Saylorsburg, PA, 18353, USA  
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Tel. 0422-2657001  
Fax 91-0422-2657002  
Web Site:  
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*This is the thirtieth part of the serial article, continuation from November 2023 newsletter.*

Our preoccupation with the experiences themselves and the details of the experiences tends to absorb all our attention, and what truly needs to be attended to escapes our attention. What we should be doing is paying more attention to the changeless thread that connects and informs all the changing experiences. The Buddha said that everything is momentary, *sarvaṃ kṣaṇikam*. Vedānta says that if you see things to be momentary, to change constantly, there must be a changeless entity with reference to which can you say there is change. There must be a point of reference against which you can measure the distance or change. Suppose you are indifferent to the changes, it is called having dispassion, *vairāgya*.

Why is *vairāgya* so important in gaining this knowledge? It is important because a *virakta* or dispassionate person is not bothered about what does not matter. What happens in any of the three states does not matter. Some people spend a long time thinking about and analyzing their dreams; their lives are centered around dreams. They have all kinds of experiences, good and bad, and they seek consultation to understand what these experiences might mean. Instead, the real value of the dream is that we can apply its lessons to develop a proper attitude toward the waking world. The experience of the dream helps us understand the reality of waking; just as we can be indifferent to the dream, knowing it to be *mithyā*, we can be indifferent to the waking state as also being *mithyā*.

The Upaniṣads describe the dream not so much to explain the details of the process or mechanism of dreams, as to explain the unreality of dreams. When you wake up from a dream, you know that it was just a projection, an appearance, and unreal. It is said that when the dream experience happens, the *jīva* is located in a very fine nerve, which is finer than even a strand of hair; that is where all the experiences of the dream take place. There is no room there for the mountains and trees that you see in the dream. One reason why the dream cannot be real is that

there is no room to accommodate the dream objects, and the second reason is that, when we dream, the dream takes place within ourselves, although, at that time, we think that the dream world is outside us. When we are experiencing a dream, we think that the trees and mountains are outside, that they are other than us. Yet, when we wake up, are they available for us to see, or do they merge back into us?

Before we began to dream, we alone were; when we wake up, again, we alone are. However, in between, there has been an entire dream-world. Where did the dream-world arise? It arose from us alone, because we alone were before the dream. Where does it merge? It merges into us alone, again because we alone remain after the dream. Therefore, in between, it is us and no one or nothing else. When we wake up we realize that the dream was within, and that the appearance of the dream as having been outside of us is false. The dream is a projection, it is *mithyā*. The dream illustrates the concept of *mithyā* very beautifully. The author of the Pañcadaśī<sup>1</sup> says that the appearance of an object that is nonexistent is *mithyā*, such as an elephant seen in a dream.

The experience of deep sleep helps us understand *mokṣa* and is cited to explain *mokṣa*. In deep sleep, there is an experience of *ānanda* even without any external source of happiness being present. This shows that the self is of the nature of *ānanda*, which is experienced when all identification is consciously given up. There is only an awareness of one being *ānanda*, ever-free and ever-liberated. However, the difference between deep sleep and *mokṣa* is that there is the darkness of ignorance in one and the light of knowledge in the other.

Once it is clear that the dream is *mithyā*, an appearance of what is really not there, we can examine the waking state. In what way is the waking state different from a dream? Assume that I was talking to an audience in my dream, just as I am now. All of you were there in my dream, sitting here amidst all these beautiful trees and mountains, and I was sharing the teaching of the Kaivalya Upaniṣad with

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<sup>1</sup> Pañcadaśī 2.70

you. There was a similar setup of subject-object duality in the dream, just as there is now. So how is the waking state any different? You might say that dream-objects are fleeting, while the objects of the waking state are stable. However, from the standpoint of the reality, what is the setup in the dream? It is the subject and object setup. What is the setup during the waking hours? It is the same subject-object setup. If the whole dream-world is *mithyā*, the subject-object setup of the dream-world itself is also *mithyā*. Please understand this.

Wherever there is a subject and object setup, it is *mithyā*. The subject-object setup obtains in the waking state, as much as in the dream state, and so it is also *mithyā*. We can therefore say that just as the dream is *mithyā* the waking state is also *mithyā*, and let it go. Once it is understood as *mithyā*, it is possible to let go of it. As long as waking is thought to be real, it will persist as something real and hang on. That is why understanding *mithyā* is so important.

If the waking-world is understood as *mithyā*, it will not bother us any more. We cannot entertain likes or dislikes towards that which is *mithyā*. We cannot react to *mithyā*. We can only react to something real. For instance, if we are hungry and see an apple on the dining table, it attracts us. Our mouths water, because we love the apple. When we approach it and pick it up, only to discover that it is a waxen apple or a wooden apple, we put it back. Now that apple doesn't matter to us. Even if someone else takes it, it will not matter. Where, until then, we might have waited for a chance to grab and eat it before someone else did, now its being on the table doesn't evoke any reaction. In the knowledge of its being *mithyā*, there is no reaction. Only as long as it is real can anything cause attachment or aversion, or any other reaction.

Vedānta teaches that the entire waking world is *mithyā*. So we need not be bothered about it. Let it be where it is; let us be where we are. All emotional attachment for the world then goes away because all the objects are *mithyā*. How much need can there be for holding on to what ultimately is *mithyā*? One might remain an emotional person, but is not controlled by emotions any more. Once such clari-

ty is gained, the individual starts viewing the waking-world just as he or she would view the dream-world upon awakening from the dream.

As the Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra says, “The universe, like a city seen in a mirror, is within oneself. One sees the world as though it is created outside, while, all along, it remains in the substratum of the self, just as in a dream.”<sup>2</sup> When we wake up from a dream, we realize that the dream-world was a manifestation of ourselves and all duality had resolved into the self. Similarly, when we wake up to the reality of our true nature, we realize that all that exists is one consciousness. The one nondual self alone is manifest as the entire waking world. The entire variety of the universe has its origin in the self, the true nature of the *jīva* that sports in the three ‘cities’ of waking, dream, and deep sleep. Just as the dream-world arises from the self, so also, the waking world arises from the self. Therefore, the self, which sports or transmigrates from one state to the other state, is the substratum of all experiences or the substratum of the entire universe.

*Ādhāram*, substratum; *ānandam*, joy; *akhaṇḍabodham*, indivisible consciousness. What is the nature of the self? What is the nature of the ‘I’ that pervades all experiences and informs all experiences? It is the connecting thread; it is the substratum, the *ādhāra*, of all experiences. It is *ānanda*, wholeness and happiness, *akhaṇḍa*, undivided, and *bodham*, of the nature of knowledge. The ‘I’ is thus the undivided awareness, which is boundless, of the nature of *ānanda*, and the common denominator across every experience. Every experience is different from every other experience. The commonality of all experience is *asti bhāti priya, sat-cit-ānanda*. It shines as awareness and *akhaṇḍabodha*, undivided consciousness.

The objects of consciousness are divided, but consciousness itself is undivided, boundless. This consciousness is the true nature of the self, the common denomin-

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<sup>2</sup> विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं

पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरिवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया ।

*viśvaṁ darpaṇadr̥śyamānanagarītulyaṁ nijāntargataṁ*

*paśyannātmani māyayā bahirivodbhūtaṁ yathā nidrayā* (DS1)

ator, the undeniable and non-negatable substratum. Everything else is changing and, therefore, subject to being negated or displaced and excluded by everything else. It is like gold, which is not excluded by any ornament. Whatever is never excluded, denied or negated by every experience is *ādhāra*, *ānanda*, *akhaṇḍabodha*. From that alone do all the three worlds emerge and into that alone do all the three worlds merge. On what platform does the play of waking, dream, and deep sleep take place? It happens on the platform of the self that is the substratum, the undivided knowledge, *ānanda* or happiness.

Here the three states of experience are described with reference to the individual self. However, the Upaniṣad says, understand that you are not the individual self, you are the universal self. In what way is the individual self also the universal self?

The next *mantra* describes this:

एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।

खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी ॥ १५ ॥

*etasmājjāyate prāṇo manaḥ sarvendriyāṇi ca*  
*kham vāyurjyotirāpaḥ pṛthivī viśvasya dhāriṇī*

एतस्मात् - from this जायते - is born प्राणः - the life force मनः - the mind सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च - and all the organs खम् - space वायुः - air ज्योतिः - fire आपः - water पृथिवी - the earth विश्वस्य - of all धारिणी - support

From this is born the life force, the mind, all organs, space, air, fire, water, and the earth that supports all. (15)

This verse continues the biography of the *jīva*, the one that goes through the waking, dream, and deep sleep experiences. From him is born the cosmic *prāṇa*, the vital air, the cosmic mind, which knows and creates, all the sense organs, and the five elements of *ākāśa*, space, *vāyu*, air, *jyotiḥ*, fire or light, *āpaḥ*, the waters, and *pṛthivī*, earth. From the self that is *saccidānanda*, *ādhāra*, *ānanda*, and *akhaṇḍabodha*, the substratum, undivided happiness or wholeness and awareness, is born the entire universe beginning from *prāṇa* or *hiranyagarbha*. Another word for



*iranyagarbha* is *sūtrātmā*. *Sūtra* means the thread that connects everything, and *prāṇa* is the *sūtrātmā* because *prāṇa* is the *kriyā-śakti*, the cosmic energy pervading the entire universe of sentient and insentient beings, and responsible for the vitality and activity of the entire universe. *Manah* here stands for the cosmic mind, which is the totality of *jñāna-śakti*, the power of knowledge, and *icchā-śakti*, the power of will.

The entire universe is born from this self. Yet the poor *jīva* feels helpless all the time. He feels he has no control over anything. In the waking state, he feels helpless because of what the world does to him, beginning from the spouse to everybody else. In the dream also he is helpless, and, in deep sleep, he does not know what he experiences anyway. This helpless, hapless creature is the substratum of this whole universe! He is the self of the whole universe. From him is the universe beginning with *prāṇa* born, by him is it sustained, and unto him does it finally resolve. Therefore, the one who is the self of the three states of experience is in fact the self of the entire universe.

We see the famous *mahā-vākya* or great statement, *tat tvam asi*, that thou art, being unfolded in these *mantras*. The *mahā-vākya* reveals the identity between the *jīva* and *brahman*. The *jīva* is indicated by the *tvam-pada* or the word 'you' or 'thou', *brahman* is indicated by the *tat-pada* or the word 'that,' and *asi*, which indicates 'are' or 'art,' indicates the identity between the two. The *tvam-padārtha* or 'you,' was described in the verses that examined the three states of experience. The *tat-padārtha* or the cause of the creation was described in the fifteenth verse, which we have just discussed. The next verse, the sixteenth, declares the fact that both of them are the same.

यत्परं ब्रह्म सर्वात्मा विश्वस्यायतनं महत् ।

सूक्ष्मात्सूक्ष्मतरं नित्यं तत्त्वमेव त्वमेव तत् ॥ १६ ॥

*yatparam brahma sarvātmā viśvasyāyatanam mahat*

*sūkṣmātsūkṣmataram nityam tattvameva tvameva tat*

*To be continued...*

**Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa**  
**As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

*This is the twenty eighth part of the serial article, continuation from Nov 2023 newsletter.*

भगवन् दृष्टवीर्यो मे रामो दशरथात्मजः । अत्यद्भुतमचिन्त्यं च अतर्कितमिदं मया ॥ १-६७-२१  
जनकानां कुले कीर्तिमाहरिष्यति मे सुता । सीता भर्तारमासाद्य रामं दशरथात्मजम् ॥ १-६७-२२  
मम सत्या प्रतिज्ञा सा वीर्यशुल्केति कौशिक । सीता प्राणैर्बहुमता देया रामाय मे सुता ॥ १-६७-२३  
भवतोऽनुमते ब्रह्मन् शीघ्रं गच्छन्तु मन्त्रिणः । मम कौशिक भद्रं ते अयोध्यां त्वरिता रथैः ॥ १-६७-२४  
राजानं प्रश्रितैर्वाक्यैरानयन्तु पुरं मम । प्रदानं वीर्यशुक्लायाः कथयन्तु च सर्वशः ॥ १-६७-२५  
मुनिगुप्तौ च काकुत्स्थौ कथयन्तु नृपाय वै । प्रीतियुक्तं तु राजानमानयन्तु सु शीघ्रगाः ॥ १-६७-२६  
कौशिकश्च तथेत्याह राजा चाभाष्य मन्त्रिणः । अयोध्यां प्रेषयामास धर्मात्मा कृतशासनान् ।  
यथावृत्तं समाख्यातुमानेतुं च नृपं तथा ॥ १-६७-२७

*bhagavan dr̥ṣṭavīryo me rāmo daśarathāatmajah |*  
*atyadbhutamacintyaṁ ca atarkitamidaṁ mayā || 1-67-21*  
*janakānāṁ kule kīrtimāhariṣyati me sutā |*  
*sītā bhartāramāsādyā rāmaṁ daśarathātmajam || 1-67-22*  
*mama satyā pratijñā sā vīryaśulketi kauśika |*  
*sītā prāṇairbahumatā deyā rāmāya me sutā || 1-67-23*  
*bhavato'numate brahman śīghraṁ gacchantu mantriṇaḥ |*  
*mama kauśika bhadraṁ te ayodhyāṁ tvaritā rathaiḥ || 1-67-24*  
*rājānaṁ praśritairvākyairānayaṁtu puraṁ mama |*  
*pradānaṁ vīryaśulkāyāḥ kathayantu ca sarvaśaḥ || 1-67-25*  
*muniguptau ca kākutsthau kathayantu nr̥pāya vai |*  
*prītiyuktaṁ tu rājānamānayaṁtu su śīghragāḥ || 1-67-26*  
*kauśikasca tathetyāha rājā cābhāṣya mantriṇaḥ |*  
*ayodhyāṁ preṣayāmāsa dharmātmā kṛtaśāsanān |*  
*yathāvṛttaṁ samākhyātumānetuṁ ca nr̥paṁ tathā || 1-67-27*

The *vīrya* of Rama, his prowess and endowment, were now clearly evident. There was no further question about the prince who had won the prize. No one could grasp wholly what had happened. Look at the boy and look at the size of Dhanus. What a wonder. Look at the people lying there in shock. Who could imagine all that was in this young hero. Janaka announced, “This boy, son of Dasha-

ratha, scion of the Raghu line, is to be taken as a husband by my Sita. He will bring my family great fame. Hey, Vishvamitra, the *pratijñā* I gave about he who could lift this bow is fulfilled now. My daughter who is more dear to me than my breath will be given to this god-like young man. O Vishvamitra, with your auspicious words of acceptance, my most swift ministers will be off to Ayodhya to speak with Dasharatha about what will be.”

Vishvamitra said, “Let it be. Go and bring Dasharatha, and let all this come to pass.”

जनकेन समादिष्टा दूतास्ते क्लान्तवाहनाः । त्रिरात्रमुषिता मार्गे तेऽयोध्यां प्राविशन् पुरीम् ॥ १-६८-१

*janakena samādiṣṭā dūtāste klāntavāhanāḥ ।*

*trirātramūṣitā mārge te'yodhyāṁ prāviśan purīm ॥ 1-68-1*

Traveling for three nights, the emissaries of King Janaka rode in chariots to Ayodhya. On arrival they informed King Dasharatha of all that had happened. The king was overjoyed. He consulted Vasishtha and asked what was proper. Vasishtha said, “Let us all go together, queens and brothers, ministers, sages, and any people who may want,” It was a free ticket for everyone. Thousands of people assembled in the caravan and headed off for Mithila.

ततः प्रभाते जनकः कृतकर्मा महर्षिभिः । उवाच वाक्यं वाक्यज्ञः शतानन्दम् पुरोहितम् ॥ १-७०-१

*tataḥ prabhāte janakaḥ kṛtakarmā maharṣibhiḥ ।*

*uvāca vākyaṁ vākyaññāḥ śatānandam purohitam ॥ 1-70-1*

Now, Janaka had a younger brother, and he had another daughter, Urmila. Janaka had decided to give that Urmila to Lakshmana in marriage. He thought there were two good matches in these boys from Ayodhya. The two families, equal or not, would now commingle. Uneven mixes bring about certain comparisons and complexes. One of the partners may not look upon someone coming from a family of lower status as his or her equal. Both families sought to maintain the *dharma* of their *kula*. This was the custom. Therefore the girls of Janaka's family were to be married into the family of Dasharatha by Vasishtha himself.

*Rṣis* and *sādhus* came in great number to watch the ritual. They had their own world and would talk of *śāstra et cetera*. Happily they began talking among themselves. They greeted the *mahārṣi* Vasishtha when he arrived, and shared the questions they had saved up for the *muni* - *brahmasūtra* and things like that. Actu-



ally, Brahmasutras came later. But they talked of *brahman* and of their *āśramas* and of their disciples. Vasishtha traced the lineage of the Solar dynasty, Rama's heritage. He told of the days when they held the *svayamvara*, a process whereby a princess herself selects her husband. All her suitors would gather for the keen occasion. The princess, such as Indumati, would come into the hall where all the kings and princes waited. She carried the garland that she would give to the chosen one. As she walked around the group, her friend eloquently told her the story and attributes of each of those who was there to court her. Kalidasa has a chapter on this in his "Raghuvamsha."

"Here is a great king who is all the time in the battlefield," said the girl, introducing Indumati to one prospect. The princess knew this meant the fellow would never have time for her, always out jousting. She moved on. "Here is a fellow strong as an elephant." Indumati liked tall and thin. "Here is a king who has won many princesses."

"Ohhh." Said Indumati. She moved on.

The praise given is not entirely objective, and Indumati would get the message. You can see this in Kalidasa. Indumati is compared to a lighted lamp moving in a dark hallway. Each fellow the light nears has only his face and shoulders illuminated. All the other fellows are guarded, in darkness, because the garland may fall around the other's neck. The fellow in the beam of the attention poses and flirts and contorts his face to show his best side. None of that is missed by the choosy girl. The boys she has passed know their fate and slump in the darkness. Indumati had heard about this Aja, and when they came to him, she garlanded him for good. That Aja's son was Dasharatha.

कनीयानेष मे भ्राता अहं ज्येष्ठो महामुने । ददामि परमप्रीतो वध्वौ ते मुनिपुंगव ॥ १-७१-२०  
सीतां रामाय भद्रं ते ऊर्मिलां लक्ष्मणाय वै । वीर्यशुल्कां मम सुतां सीतां सुरसुतोपमाम् ॥ १-७१-२१  
द्वितीयामूर्मिलां चैव त्रिर्वदामि न संशयः । ददामि परमप्रीतो वध्वौ ते मुनिपुंगव ॥ १-७१-२२  
रामलक्ष्मणयो राजन् गोदानम् कारयस्व ह । पितृकार्यं च भद्रं ते ततो वैवाहिकं कुरु ॥ १-७१-२३  
मघा ह्यद्य महाबाहो तृतीयदिवसे प्रभो । फल्गुन्यामुत्तरे राजंस्तस्मिन् वैवाहिकं कुरु ।  
रामलक्ष्मणयोरर्थे दानं कार्यं सुखोदयम् ॥ १-७१-२४

*kanīyāneṣa me bhrātā ahaṁ jyeṣṭho mahāmune |*  
*dadāmi paramaprīto vadhvau te munipuṅgava || 1-71-20*  
*sītāṁ rāmāya bhadraṁ te ūrmilāṁ lakṣmaṇāya vai |*  
*vīryaśulkāṁ mama sutāṁ sītāṁ surasutopamām || 1-71-21*  
*dvitīyāmūrmilāṁ caiva trirvadāmi na saṁśayaḥ |*  
*dadāmi paramaprīto vadhvau te munipuṅgava || 1-71-22*  
*rāmalakṣmaṇayo rājan godānam kārayasva ha |*  
*pitṛkāryaṁ ca bhadraṁ te tato vaivāhikaṁ kuru || 1-71-23*  
*maghā hyadya mahābāho tṛtīyadivase prabho |*  
*phalgunyāmuttare rājastasmin vaivāhikaṁ kuru |*  
*rāmalakṣmaṇayorathe dānaṁ kāryaṁ sukhodayam || 1-71-24*

Then Janaka told the history of his family. Both Rama's and Sita's royal lines were renowned for their *dharma*. Janaka introduced his brother, ruler of the nearby kingdom, and the rest of his relatives. The brother proposed the marriage of his two princesses to the other two princes of Dasharatha, "With my heart and soul, free from any doubt, happily I give these girls to your boys. Cows in great number will be given away to deserving people, especially to the kings. The *vivāha*, the marriage, will be conducted according to the scriptures. Come, let us prepare. The auspicious day for marriage is three days from today. This is the good time. Phalguni is the constellation. Bhaga is the *adhiṣṭhāna*, presiding deity, excellent for marriage."

तमुक्तवन्तं वैदेहं विश्वामित्रो महामुनिः । उवाच वचनं वीरं वसिष्ठसहितो नृपम् ॥ १-७२-१  
 अचिन्त्यान्यप्रमेयाणि कुलानि नरपुंगव । इक्ष्वाकूणां विदेहानां नैषां तुल्योऽस्ति कश्चन ॥ १-७२-२  
 सदृशो धर्मसम्बन्धः सदृशो रूपसम्पदा । रामलक्ष्मणयो राजन् सीता चोर्मिलया सह ॥ १-७२-३  
 वक्तव्यं च नरश्रेष्ठ श्रूयतां वचनं मम । भ्राता यवीयान् धर्मज्ञ एष राजा कुशध्वजः ॥ १-७२-४  
 अस्य धर्मात्मनो राजन् रूपेणाप्रतिमं भुवि । सुताद्वयं नरश्रेष्ठ पत्न्यर्थं वरयामहे ॥ १-७२-५  
 भरतस्य कुमारस्य शत्रुघ्नस्य च धीमतः । वरये ते सुते राजंस्तयोरर्थे महात्मनोः ॥ १-७२-६  
 पुत्रा दशरथस्येमे रूपयौवनशालिनः । लोकपालसमाः सर्वे देवतुल्यपराक्रमाः ॥ १-७२-७  
 उभयोरपि राजेन्द्र सम्बन्धेनानुबध्यताम् । इक्ष्वाकुकुलमव्यग्रं भवतः पुण्यकर्मणः ॥ १-७२-८  
 विश्वामित्रवचः श्रुत्वा वसिष्ठस्य मते तदा । जनकः प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यमुवाच मुनिपुंगवौ ॥ १-७२-९  
 कुलं धन्यमिदं मन्ये येषां तौ मुनिपुंगवौ । सदृशं कुलसम्बन्धं यदाज्ञापयथः स्वयम् ॥ १-७२-१०  
 एवं भवतु भद्रं वः कुशध्वजसुते इमे । पत्न्यौ भजेतां सहितौ शत्रुघ्नभरतावुभौ ॥ १-७२-११

tamuktavantam vaideham viśvāmitro mahāmuniḥ |  
 uvāca vacanam vīram vasiṣṭhasahito nṛpam || 1-72-1  
 acintyānyaprameyāṇi kulāni narapuṅgava |  
 ikṣvākūnāṁ videhānāṁ naiṣāṁ tulyo'sti kaścana || 1-72-2  
 sadṛśo dharmasambandhaḥ sadṛśo rūpasampadā |  
 rāmalakṣmaṇayo rājan sītā cormilayā saha || 1-72-3  
 vaktavyam ca naraśreṣṭha śrūyatām vacanam mama |  
 bhrātā yavīyān dharmajña eṣa rājā kuśadhvajah || 1-72-4  
 asya dharmātmano rājan rūpeṇāpratimam bhuvī |  
 sutādvayam naraśreṣṭha patnyartham varayāmahe || 1-72-5  
 bharatasya kumārasya śatrughnasya ca dhīmataḥ |  
 varaye te sute rājāṁstayorathe mahātmanoḥ || 1-72-6  
 putrā daśarathasyame rūpayauvanaśālinaḥ |  
 lokapālasamāḥ sarve devatulyaparākramāḥ || 1-72-7  
 ubhayorapi rājendra sambandhenānubadhyatām |  
 ikṣvākukulamavyagram bhavataḥ puṇyakarmaṇaḥ || 1-72-8  
 viśvāmitravacaḥ śrutvā vasiṣṭhasya mate tadā |  
 janakaḥ prāñjalirvākyamuvāca munipuṅgavau || 1-72-9  
 kulam dhanyamidam manye yeṣāṁ tau munipuṅgavau |  
 sadṛśam kulasambandham yadājñāpayathaḥ svayam || 1-72-10  
 evam bhavatu bhadram vaḥ kuśadhvajasute ime |  
 patnyau bhajetām sahitaḥ śatrughnabharatāvubhau || 1-72-11

Vishvamitra, who was sitting next to Vasishta, said to Vaideha, King Janaka, "We have heard of the two families, those of unmeasured goodness and fame, families for whom there is no equal. This will be a wonderful match from the standpoints of *dharma* and physical beauty. Hey *rāja*, your younger brother has two lovely daughters. I want them to be married as well. Marry them to Bharata and Shatrughna, the valorous brothers of Rama and Lakshmana. These four sons of Dasharatha are the guardian angels of this world; they have the virtues of the *devas*. Know there is no greater gift, no greater *puṇya*, than to give your daughters."

To raise a girl is not easy for the parents. There is the cost and the responsibility, the years and the difficulties. She must be protected; it is a big problem. One day she is gifted to somebody and goes away and that is the end of it. Once I



was talking to somebody who was having some trouble with her daughter. I suggested she could admit the girl to the hostel at the college where the girl could stay for some time. But the mother said no, no. She insisted her daughter stay at home, because, as parents, she and her husband had only these few years with the girl, and as mother, she could not bear this sacrifice. Afterwards the girl would be gone, maybe to Europe or America, perhaps only to be seen at Thanksgiving. To give a girl properly in marriage is a considerable investment. You can see the toll that the process takes, and you can see the wealth that is given in this gift of a daughter.

“Let these two families be bound together,” said Vishvamitra.

एकाह्वा राजपुत्रीणां चतसृणां महामुने । पाणीन् गृह्णन्तु चत्वारो राजपुत्रा महाबलाः ॥ १-७२-१२  
उत्तरे दिवसे ब्रह्मन् फल्गुनीभ्यां मनीषिणः । वैवाहिकं प्रशंसन्ति भगो यत्र प्रजापतिः ॥ १-७२-१३  
स्वस्ति प्राप्नुहि भद्रं ते गमिष्यामः स्वमालयम् । श्राद्धकर्माणि विधिवद्विधास्य इति चाब्रवीत् ॥ १-७२-१९  
स सुतैः कृतगोदानैर्वृतः सन् नृपतिस्तदा । लोकपालैरिवाभाति वृतः सौम्यः प्रजापतिः ॥ १-७२-२५

*ekāhnā rājaputrīṇāṁ catasṛṇāṁ mahāmune |*  
*pāṇīn grhṇantu catvāro rājaputrā mahābalāḥ || 1-72-12*  
*uttare divase brahman phalgunībhyāṁ manīṣiṇaḥ |*  
*vaivāhikaṁ praśamsanti bhago yatra prajāpatiḥ || 1-72-13*  
*svasti prāpnuhi bhadraṁ te gamiṣyāmaḥ svamālayam |*  
*śrāddhakarmāṇi vidhivadvidhāsya iti cābravīt || 1-72-19*  
*sa sutaiḥ kṛtagodānairvṛtaḥ san nṛpatistadā |*  
*lokapālairivābhāti vṛtaḥ saumyaḥ prajāpatiḥ || 1-72-25*

For the family of the girl it is *kanyikāyaḥ dānam*, giving of the young daughter. For the boy's family it is *pānigrahaṇam*, receiving the hand, acceptance of the gift. In one day these four boys received the hands of these four girls. Dasharatha agreed, “*tathāstu.*” Sitting there with his four boys, Dasharatha looked like Brah-maji with his four heads. The initial rituals began. Following the *ṛṣis*, everyone went to the *yajñśālā* where the fire ritual ceremony took place in the presence of all who were there. There is no document, no camera; it is the *sākṣī* of the fire that is the witness of the marriage. With that, there is no question of breaking the marriage bond.

*To be continued...*

## Mahābhārata

### As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

*This is the fifth part of the serial article, continuation from November 2023 newsletter.*

Lord Shiva said, “Do not worry, you will remember everything. What happened and why it has all come down this way you will know. You will remember.” Amba was satisfied with Lord Shiva’s words, and she could not wait another day. She went where there was a large fire and she entered the fire. She killed herself.

Amba was born again as a girl in Drupada’s kingdom, in the same palace where the garland lay untouched on that pillar. Drupada had instructed everyone to stay away from a garland that no one could handle. No one knew what would happen to them if they touched it. Born as girl, Amba grew up there. What happened is one day she saw the garland and she took it and put it around her neck. Drupada was terrified when he came to know about this. But Amba remembered the whole Bhishma affair the minute she touched the *mālā*. She remembered her past. She knew exactly why she was born in Panchala and what was behind all of this. She knew exactly what she was going to do, and she assured Drupada that she would be all right.

After some time, she changed. There are two versions of this part of the story. One version says that as soon as she put on the *mālā* she became a male, a man. The other version says that she had asked celestial Drona to teach her archery and he had told her that he would teach no woman. She wanted to become a man, and whatever was needed for that to be done was done. She underwent a change of sex and became a male. What was once the reborn Amba became a boy named Shikhandi. He had that name because he wore just a pronounced tuft of hair on top, like a coconut thing, you know. Shikhandi waited for the day when he could destroy Bhishma. In the Mahabharata war, Shikhandi will be responsible for Bhishma’s fall. There was no way Bhishma would fight a woman, so the story goes this way. Bhishma would not even fight a woman turned man. He would fight no man with a feminine name. These three Bhishma would not fight, and Shikhandi knew that.

Under the tutelage of Drona, Shikhandi became a great archer. His skill was on par with Dhrstadyumna, Drupada's son, and others. Everybody knew the truth of Shikhandi's transformation. It was news known to everybody. Indeed Bhishma knew about this guy. Therefore in the great Mahabharata battle, when Bhishma was wreaking destruction on the Pandava army, which was being trampled by Duryodhana's army again and again, Duryodhana addressed Bhishma, "Bhishma, even though you are fighting for me, I feel your heart is with the Pandavas and that is why you are not absolutely destroying them. You are invincible. There is no match for you. There must be some reason why you have not destroyed all of them. The reason is that you love them." Duryodhana would taunt Bhishma like this even though Bhishma did fight on his side. Then after this particular day and conversation, Bhishma promised Duryodhana that he would see victory. The battle raged, and Bhishma was at the head of it. The whole Pandava army was devastated and demoralized by Bhishma's ferocious heart.

Sometimes it is necessary for us to go ahead and tell the story. During the night of Bhishma's glorious victories, the Pandava's met to discuss what they would face on the next day. They reckoned how to infuse some kind of courage in the ranks of their armies. Dharmaputra, Arjuna's oldest brother, described the only way, "We have to go to Bhishma and ask him how he can be defeated." The trust in Bhishma just amazes me, the trust in *dharma*. At night, while all in Kurukshetra were lying in their tents, Dharmaputra went to Bhishma, who was resting. Bhishma welcomed Dharmaputra and the other Pandavas who were there. Bhishma asked, "What can I do for you, Dharma? What can I do?" The Pandavas all stepped forward and did *namaskāra* to Bhishma. They spoke to Bhishma, "Look, our army is totally demoralized. We cannot really stand even one more day. There is no way we are going to win the war unless you get killed. You have to tell us how to kill you."

Bhishma smiled at Dharmaputra's words and said, "Nobody can kill me, that is true. There is only one way. Do you know what that way is? Number one, only Arjuna can do something to me. He alone is equal to me. But alone, he cannot kill me. Neither can I kill him. But there is one thing he can do. You have Shikhandi, and I know who he is. Bring him. Shikhandi is born to kill me, and he will



be responsible for my death. He will be responsible, but he will not kill me either. Bring Shikhandi and station him right in front of my chariot. I will not fight him, and you all know why. Then Arjuna can do the deed.” Bhishma gave them the method to kill him. Bhishma was tired. He had lived a life of one continuous sacrifice. He was a Vasu, a *deva*, anyway, the eighth Vasu, and he had to go back.

Bhishma had cast his lot with Duryodhana, and that itself was a very heavy thing for him. He could not carry that heart. *Dharma* was on one side, and his own words and vows were on the other side. As a man of commitment to his vows, to his words, he had promised to protect the throne. That was extremely important to him. Whoever sat upon that throne he would protect. His whole life he had been protecting Hastinapura. Even though he knew that Duryodhana was wrong, Bhishma was with Duryodhana. Bhishma had advised Duryodhana to change course before the war, and during the war, even when Duryodhana had taunted him, Bhishma advised Duryodhana that he could not win this war. He told Duryodhana that he would bring the destruction of his own people because Krishna and Arjuna were there on the other side. He told Duryodhana, “*Dharma* is there. They have *dharma* with them, *yogeshvara*, Krishna.” Duryodhana would hear this again, and it would make him red with fury. Arjuna was a red flag for Duryodhana. Duryodhana would dismiss any praise of Arjuna. Duryodhana held that Karna was the greatest of all the people. This was in many ways true. Karna, born a Pandava but on Duryodhana's side, may have been the best, but still Arjuna had *dharma* with him. Karna had his own personal *dharma*. But Karna's life was cast along with *adharma*. To that extent he was stifled. He did not have the unfettered energy of one with *dharma*, and he always had problems. In the battlefield he would forget the right *mantra* to activate his weapons. Yet it is true that Karna was considered to be the best of that time, and Karna always assured Duryodhana that he would win the great war.

Bhishma always championed the Pandava cause. He wanted to avoid this war. Repeatedly he advised Duryodhana that it was not too late to call it off. But in time, Shikhandi was stationed before Bhishma's chariot. Then Bhishma gives up, out of arrows, and Arjuna sends the arrow. Bhishma was happy that the arrow had not come from Shikhandi. Bhishma pulled the shaft from his body and

saw it was shot from Arjuna's bow Gandiva. That made him happy. He said to Arjuna, "Hey, I am thirsty." Duryodhana and others tried to bring water for him, but he blew them off. He wanted Arjuna. He asked for a bed, and men scattered every which way for mattresses and sheets. But he dismissed all of them. He wanted Arjuna to prepare a bed for him. Arjuna prepared a bed of arrows with their points driven into the earth. Bhishma decided to die only when the sun was north of the equator. It was coming anyway, and he had the boon that he would die of his own choice of time. Whenever he wanted to die he would die. That was the story of Amba.

Ambika and Ambalika lived happily with their husband Vicitravirya, yet Vicitravirya suffered from a disease that no one could diagnose. The doctors were all brought to look into it but no one knew what to do for him. In time Vicitravirya passed away without children. Now, if there were no children the Kuru family comes to an end. There was nobody to maintain their ongoing responsibility for the whole country. Therefore Satyawati told Bhishma, "Bhishma, I want you to rule the kingdom. You enthrone yourself. I will make all the arrangements." Bhishma laughed. The same Satyawati had been responsible for his renouncing the kingdom and for making the vow that Bhishma would never marry. It had all been due to Satyawati alone. Now she herself wanted Bhishma to take the crown. His was a big laugh.

"Satyawati, what are you saying? I made a vow to your father and all the people, to all the elements and all the *devatas*," he said. She pleaded, but he said, "No way." What was going to happen to the family? Who would rule?

Bhishma said, "We must find some other means. We must look into the *dharmaśāstra*, into the minds of those who protect and practice *dharma*, to find out what is proper. We have to see where there are such precedents and what is proper in such situations." They consulted the *śāstra* and they sought people's counsel as to how to keep the lineage going. They came up with a plan.

Satyavati asked and then ordered Bhishma to take the throne and to marry the two sisters Ambika and Ambalika, but Bhishma would have none of it. Their inquiry gave a solution: whenever in the royal family there was such a break in the lineage, there were a few things they could do. They could invite an ascetic, a

*tapasvin*, someone highly learned, someone with no claim over the kingdom, someone with no attachments, to make the proper gesture, to give an offering. They thought the best person to do this was Vyasa himself. Vyasa was the son of Satyavati, but nobody knew he was her son. Satyavati had had a certain relationship with Parasara, and Vyasa was born of their union. Then Parasara returned Satyavati's virginity to her, and again she became an unmarried virgin. This was done as a boon from Parasara to Satyavati after Vyasa was born. Vyasa was to be born, and he had a mission to do. Parasara knew this.

Vyasa was to bring the Vedas together, and he was a great *tapasvin*. Certainly Satyavati knew who he was when she recommended him to come and take the action that would continue the Kuru line. Vyasa knew that Satyavati was his mother. This was not common knowledge, but it was known in certain circles. Vyasa was called and asked to give this blessing of progeny to Ambika and Ambalika. Ambika and Ambalika did not want the kind of union Satyavati instigated. They did not want to have to meet in this way with a matted-hair sage. But the deed was done. Because of her attitude, her reaction to the ascetic who fathered her child, Ambika's child Dhrtarashtra was born blind. Pandu was born with a pale color to Ambalika. The families had been told by Vyasa that the boy Dhrtarashtra would grow to be very strong but he would be born blind. Pandu was born with no handicap. A blind son cannot rule the kingdom. Satyavati was desperate about Dhrtarashtra's condition because she wanted the Kuru family to have a clear and undisputed heir and to continue uninterrupted.

Satyavati called again for Vyasa, and a servant-girl in the royal chamber was chosen to carry a child. That is why there was a third child, Vidura. Vidura was never really considered a *kṣatriya*, but Vyasa had said Vidura would be the wisest of the three sons. Vidura would be wisest, Pandu would be great and Dhrtarashtra would be strong and blind. Bhishma took up the job of raising the children, and that meant he did not give as much attention to ruling the kingdom. For some time, years and years, there had been no king at all. As a result, around Hastinapura, those rulers who had paid tribute to the Kurus had developed their own protective kingships. The empire that had been there was all gone.

*To be continued...*



# Arsha Vidya Sampradaya



**Sri Swami Atmatriptananda Ji has  
attained Mahasamadhi on  
19th December 2023**



विमुक्तश्च विमुच्यते *vimuktaśca vimucyate*

**OM Shantih Shantih Shantih**



### Experience of my students during their Jnanapravaha Retreat, 16-19 November 2023

The bus stopped at Manjakuddi and 26 students stepped out exhausted after a long journey but excited about the time ahead. Their excitement was completely justified. Students were asked to report to the hall at Jnanapravaha after freshening up. As the students entered the Jnanapravaha hall, they were all praises for the stay arrangements as the rooms were spic and span, very comfortable AC rooms, with clean bed linen and fresh towels, hot water and shower facility and a pantry where excellent tea and coffee were available. Each one was allocated a single, double or triple sharing room as per their preference.

The pathway to the Jnanapravaha facility is green and beautiful and covered with betel nut, turmeric, Brahmi trees which lent an air of auspiciousness and many other flowers and trees including the Parijat tree. The serene and positive atmosphere welcomed the students. The hall has modern facilities and there is Pujya Swamiji, in a smiling form, blessing the occupants and with his blessing they feel his presence everywhere. We commenced the introductory session, explaining the schedule for the next three days.

As part of the programme, every day morning chanting the Sri Rudram, Swami Ramesvaranandaji and I, were joined by some of the senior students who are trained in Vedic chanting and also special invitees (students of Swami Brahmavidanandaji.). Thus each day started on an energetic and positive note. In the words of a student "the words and the chants kept echoing in my mind throughout the day."

I also introduced students to the Dayananda Pancakam so that my students have a more detailed understanding of my Guru, Pujya Swamiji Dayananda Saraswati and his outstanding qualities, his compassionate, benevolent and anandamaya nature, his deep study and research of the shastras and his efforts in spreading knowledge of Vedanta by training so many acaryas, Swamis, etc and creating an appropriate infrastructure to allow study of Vedanta continue in future including long term courses.

Next day we sat in the garden near the Sri Dakshinamurti form and understood word by word explanation, and also gave a detailed understanding of Dhyana Shloka of Sri Dakshinamurthi Stotram. With this I am happy that the students would now be well informed of the Guru Parampara.

Students were also explained the word by word meaning of various prayers to be said on waking up, studying, bathing, starting Vedanta classes and also for the overall well being of the entire society. Students gave feedback that with the detailed explanations their understanding of Sarvatmabhava and Brahman has got further reinforced and strengthened.

Students were also taught how to read the Pancangam and informed of the phala of the listening / reading the pancangam.

Swami Ramesvaranandaji taught the students the Pratahsmaranam and shared the deep wisdom of the stotram with the students .

Students visited the vast farms maintained by the Trust and learned that more than 225 varieties of rice, including some very ancient varieties were organically grown there and some varieties were also exported. Efforts made to collect the samples from all over the country were explained to the students and they were inspired by the dedication. Students visited the Gaushala with about 80 cows and also learnt about the probable relocation of the gaushala due to the water consumption requirements, etc. Students also visited the school run by the Educational Trust and the AIM for Seva Girls Hostel at Sembangudi. At the school they were amazed by the scale (the school had students from around 16 nearby villages), the well-kept buildings and grounds, the dedication of the teachers and the magnanimity of the trustees and key donor and the philosophy of Vedanta that was applied by the school authorities in allowing free entry to all students irrespective of the marks secured by them. The students visited the girls' hostel and spent time listening to the girls chanting and playing games with the girls and clicking pictures with them. All the girls were smiling and happy, which was a pleasure to see. The students made donations of clothes, towels, bedsheets, caps, bags etc in kind and also on the spot collected INR 1.25 lakhs and handed the same over to the authorities at the hostel.

All in all, the students had a wonderful experience in serene surroundings, comfortable rooms, tasty sattvic food, listening to Sri Rudram daily and charging themselves, learning more about the Guru Parampara and Sri Dakshinamurthi stotram and other prayers, spending time at the farm, gaushala, school and hostel. It was a blissful stay for them and as they boarded the bus to commence the return journey to the airport, everyone was asking – when do we come back here again?

**- Report by Acharya Falguniben**





## Jnanapravaha, Manjakkudi, Retreat report December 2023

Advaita Bharati conducted a retreat at Jnanapravaha, Manjakkudi from Dec 1st, 2023 to Dec 3rd, 2023. Founder and Acharya of Advaita Bharati, Smt. Suryapriyaji taught Aitareya Upanishad to about 45 vidyarthees who had come to Manjakkudi from all around the world, mostly from Chennai. The day before the camp, on Nov 30th, 2023, there was a Satsang by Acharyaji for the lecturers and teachers of Swami Dayananda college and school on the topic, "Leading a meaningful life". This was a good learning session followed by a very interesting Q&A session.

The retreat was blessed and inaugurated by Swami Ramesvaranandaji and Acharya Shri. Rangaji. Swamiji as always left the students contemplating about the importance of learning vedanta. He also gave a brief about AVRPT and its activities and about Jnanapravaha. Swamiji along with Acharya Shri. Rangaji, Shri. Srinivasan ji and Acharya Smt. Suryapriya ji lit the traditional lamp. Shri. Srinivasanji - Respected Trustee of Swami Dayananda Saraswati Educational Trust also shared his insights with the students during the event. The inauguration event started and ended with Pujya Swamiji's wonderful compositions. This was followed by a Satsang by Acharya Rangaji, as an introduction to studying the Upanishad.

On the second day of the camp Acharya ji and her students performed Dakshinamurthy Puja and on the third day they had a meditation session guided by Acharya ji.

The completion of the Upanishad was followed by the Samarop function. Acharyaji and her students performed puja to the Guru parampara and went on with the samarop function which is a gesture to thank the sampradaya for giving them the greatest knowledge. The entire Upanishad was summarised by the students with parts being assigned on the spot. This was a unique way of presenting it as visioned by our Acharyaji and it was enjoyed by all. Swamiji graced the event by being present during the summary session. The students performed puja to their Guru and received her blessings for continued sastra patanam.

- Report by Swami Rameshvarananda





**Arshabodhini conducted their 7th camp at Jnana Pravaha, Manjakkudi from 7th December to 10th December 2023.** Even though they are regular visitors of the facilities, this time the 50 vidhyārthis that attended the camp were all new comers, many below the age of 40.

In this camp named "Yoga Pravaha", Guru Lavanyaji taught the 3rd Chapter of Gita, Karma Yoga. Her teaching was concise, clear and simple, enabling the vidhyārthis to take in the complete essence of the teaching.

The camp started with the inauguration function, where HH Swami Rameshvaranandaji, Sri Srinivasanji and Sri Rajagopalanji spoke a few words welcoming the new vidhyārthis. Swamiji, in his anugraha bhāshanam, gave a deep insight into the subject along with his experiences with His Guru, Pujya Swamiji.

Swamiji was also kind enough to have a question and answer session with the vidhyārthis, which was very well received by the vidhyārthis.

Apart from the classes, the vidhyārthis also had other satsang sessions. In a separate satsang, Jananiji, sishya of Guru Lavanyaji, gave a satsang, on the topic, "Role of Guru and Shastras in one's life". Another sishya, Saathvikaji, concluded the camp with a summary of the 3rd Chapter.

On the last day, during the feedback session, the vidhyārthis expressed their gratitude not only to the Guru but also the facility and the organisers, which enabled a smooth learning for them. They were all very happy with the comfort and luxury of the camp facilities. Then, pooja was performed by the vidhyārthis to their Guru Lavanyaji. Swamiji, was again kind enough to grace the occasion and honoured both Ramji and Guru Lavanyaji.

- Report by Swami Rameshvarananda



**Shri Uday Acharya conducted a Vedanta retreat camp at Manjakkudi in December from 12th to 16th.** The participants were from Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Chennai. Acharyaji took meditation classes and Chandogya Upanishad Chapter 6 in the mornings and Naasadiya Suktam from Rigveda in the afternoon. Other sessions included group activities, cultural quiz, discussions and satsang. Chandogya Upanishad has a father son dialogue about the source and process of creation that begins with Fire, Water and Earth, and how all of creation is rooted in the Self. Many illustrations are provided to clarify the concepts including clay-pot, gold-ornaments, mirror and reflection, salt crystals - salt water, banyan seed and tree, etc. The process of dissolution involves everything going back to the origin for which illustrations like river and sea, nectar drops and honey, and waking-deep sleep are cited. Both ignorant and knower get merged with the Self, but the layperson remains ignorant and bound whereas the knower is liberated. The importance of a teacher is pointed out through the story of the kidnapped person from Gandhara who was tied, blindfolded and left in the forest without a clue as to how to return to Gandhara. He is ultimately successful when he is directed by a forester and follows directions and reaches his destination. The example of the heated axe where the lying thief is burnt and the truly innocent person is unscarred illustrates the result of self knowledge which liberates the knower from birth and death. The Naasadiya suktam from Rigveda speaks of Maya as darkness that covers the darkness represented by Brahman. The devas and others know not the source of creation as they were born later. A question is put as to whether the creator knew the actual process of creation, implying that the process of creation is apparent and not real.

Participants also visited the Vedic Pathashala managed by Swami Dayananda Educational Trust and witnessed the students chant the Taittiriya Upanishad and Vykanasa Agama. The participants came away impressed and contributed to the breakfast cum lunch bhiksha for one day. The concluding day saw the dignitaries like Sheela Balaji, Swami Rameshvarananda, and Pujya Swamiji's brothers Sreenivasan and Dharmarajan participating as honoured guests. The dignitaries handed over mementos to all participants and honoured both Kalpana and Uday Acharya with shawls.

The campers were impressed with the facilities available in Manjakkudi including lecture hall, dining hall, and accommodation that match the best of Western standards. The staff were extremely cordial and went out of the way to make us comfortable. After the valedictory function, when the time had come for departing, saying goodbye was most difficult. All good times come to an end, but the memories of the wonderful time will remain etched in everyone's mind. Pujya Swamiji and his ancestral village will remain in our hearts for ever.

- Report by

Swami Rameshvarananda



## Vedanta Camp at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh

From the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 2023, the Acarya Paulo Abreu Vieira, the founder of Centro Arsha Vidya in Portugal, conducted a Vedanta camp where he taught the students selected verses from the Bhagavad Gita, imparting the both the knowledge of karmayoga as well as the vision of oneness.

The group had the blessings of Swami ji Sakshakrtananda in the form of his presence and also in the form of two Vedanta classes, the first taking place at the beginning of the camp and the second at the end. Swami ji spoke about the history of the Dayananda Ashram and also about the greatness of Pujya Swami Dayananda. Then he taught the students that the self is different from all the roles that we play in life, imparting in a brilliant way the knowledge that consciousness is always untouched by the problems and frictions that are part of playing roles.

The students had also the opportunity of attending Yoga classes since the group had two Yoga teachers, Sónia Monteiro and Sónia Vilela, both Portuguese.

This was an opportunity to all the students, some from Portugal and others from Brasil, to experience in firsthand the life style in a Vedanta ashram. They all enjoyed and were enriched by the experience and the teaching.





The legacy of Pujya Swamiji influence and impact extends far and wide, surpassing much further than my initial awareness. While I believed I was familiar with most of the various projects and initiatives Swamiji spearheaded, yet I continue to discover far-reaching influence that Pujya Swamiji had.

One such project that came to my attention is the HINDU MANDIR EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE based in the USA. This vibrant institution plays a pivotal role in uniting executives from Hindu temples across North America and the Caribbean, fostering mutual support and networking opportunities. With the blessings of Pujya Swamiji, it has evolved into one of the most significant Hindu institutions in America.

During the recent 16th Hindu Mandir Executive Conference in New Jersey, USA, my keynote speech emphasized the imperative of protecting, sustaining, and fortifying Hinduism by empowering Hindu institutions in America. This empowerment enables Hindus residing in the United States to collaborate on various areas of concern and also to educate non-Hindus about our dharma (faith) and values.

This institution along with many others continue to flourish to this day all due to Pujya Swamiji's blessings and foresight.

- Report by Swami Svatmanada





## Family Retreat at Arsha Vidya Pitham, Rishikesh



ARSHA VIDYA PITHAM

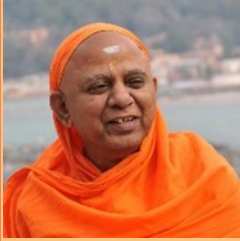
### Family Retreat

#### Children Camp along with Parents



**Arsha Vidya Pitham** is organising a 'Family Retreat' at **Swami Dayananda Ashram**, Rishikesh, India. **This is a Children retreat** but **compulsorily accompanied** by parents / guardians, and sessions will be conducted separately for Children as well as for Parents / Guardians simultaneously.

#### Main Acharya:



Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati  
Assisted by volunteers of Arsha  
Vidya Sampradaya

#### Camp Coordinator:

Pulluri Srinivas



#### Focus of the Retreat

- This retreat initiates the process of assimilation of certain important values and healthy attitudes.
- Explore towards Pujas, Meditation, Yogasanas, Chanting, Stories, Sanskrit and Yogic games, etc.,



**Date:** Monday, 6th – Sunday, 12th May, 2024

Note: The participants will arrive on 5th and leave on 13th, 2024

**Eligibility:** Age of the child should be between 12 to 15 years only

**For further details and registrations:** Please visit the below given website

[dayananda.org/family-retreat/](http://dayananda.org/family-retreat/)

**Last date of Registration:** 29<sup>th</sup> February, 2024

Camp Coordinator can be reached on WhatsApp - +91 9486819637



# GANGA YOGA RETREAT

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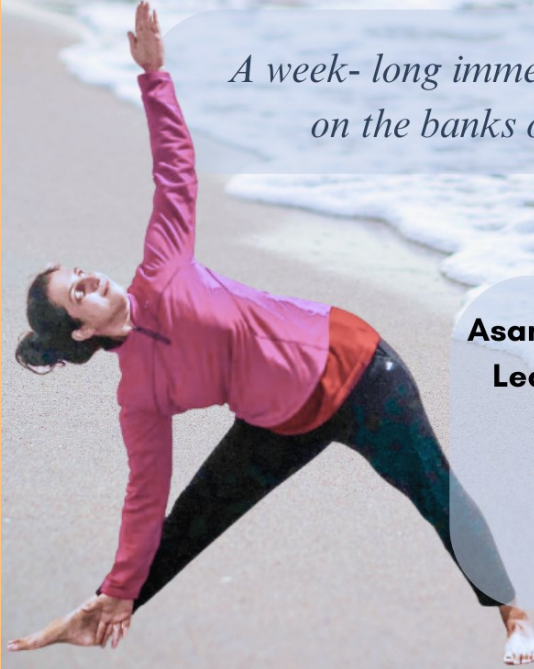
**Led by Ishwarya Chaitanya**

and

**Patanjali Yoga Sutras**

**Led by Swamini**

**Svatmavidyanandaji**



**For more details visit [www.kulahouseofyoga.com](http://www.kulahouseofyoga.com)**

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