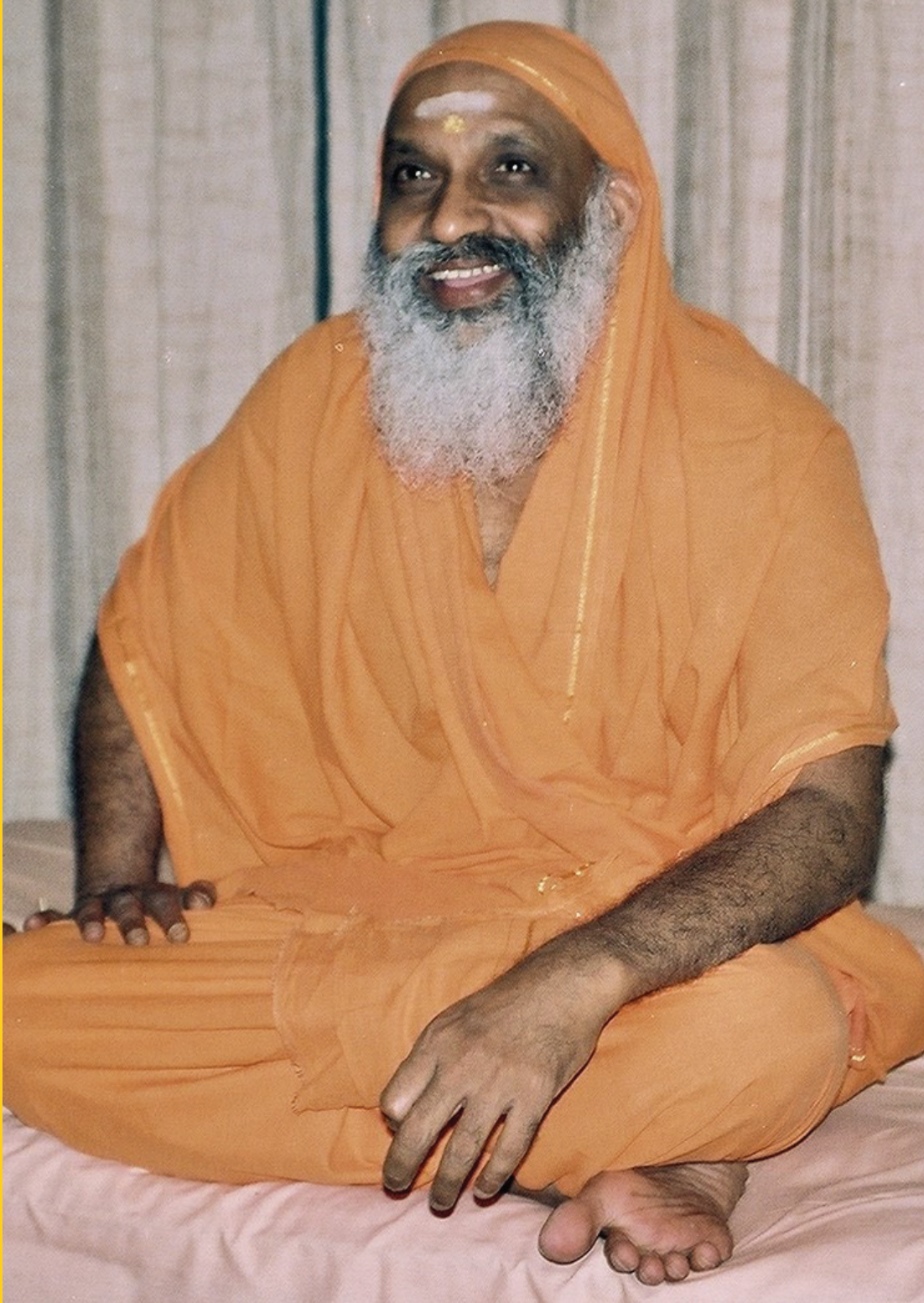




Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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Sannyasa Diksha



Sannyasa diksha was given by Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati to four students – (from left to right in above picture, excluding Swami Sakshatji in the centre) Swamini Tattvamayananda Saraswati (Brni Tilaka, Nagpur Gurukulam), Swamini Atmarupananda Saraswati (Arul Mani, Chennai), Swami Narayanananda Saraswati (Sri Sowmya Narayan, Madhurai), and Swamini Chidekarasananda Saraswati (Brni Nandana Chaitanya).

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Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

This is the twenty fourth part of the serial article, continuation from Jan 2023 newsletter.

SELF-IGNORANCE IS AN ORIENTATION

The difference between the correction of a onetime mistake and the correction of an orientation is obvious. A one-time correction is when you mistake the rope for a snake, but then you see the rope and the snake goes away. An orientation is when you do the wrong thing again and again. Suppose a light switch was in a room, on the right side of the door. Then it was changed to the left side. Now when you walk into the room, where will your hand go? To the right side because it takes time to change. Even after a year, you will still reach to the right side. This is what they call orientation. Correcting an orientation means changing something that you have been accustomed to doing over a period of time.

This is a problem with tennis players, for example. Even though they have good strokes, the grip is a problem, and they have to learn how to change it. It is the same thing in cricket. Changing any orientation is a problem, and it does not happen all at once. Even though there are orientation courses for three days, re-orientation does not really take place unless you subject yourself to a particular process for a length of time.

You have the orientation of taking *ātmā* to be the body, up to this point in your life. Then if you take the *pūrva-janma*, previous birth into account as well, this orientation is beginningless. Fortunately, this beginningless orientation is born of *aviveka*, lack of discrimination. Whereas *jñānam*, knowledge is born of *viveka*, discrimination. Therefore, wrong orientation does not require lifetimes for it to go. *Jñānam* is knowledge of the *vastu*, the reality of what is. The other is purely an orientation without the backing of knowledge. Without *jñānam*, you can practice *samādhi* etc. endlessly and nothing will happen.

Here, however, *jñānam*, knowledge has already happened. The student has under-

stood the reality very well, through *śravaṇam* and *mananam*. Things have become very clear to him or her. Thus *nididhyāsanam* is not a new means of knowledge. Meditation or contemplation does not lead you to knowledge at all. They only focus your attention on what you already know. Logically speaking, *nididhyāsanam* does not really work. In fact, it is impossible and is only 'as though.' That is why the *śruti* says *dhyāyati iva, lelāyati iva*.¹²⁴ *Nididhyāsanam* helps the person by allowing him to see the whole thing. You must have that kind of familiarity with *pūrṇa-ātmā*. For example, when I say 'pot', you appreciate the pot. In that same way, when I say *pūrṇa-ātmā*, you should be able to appreciate what *pūrṇa-ātmā* is. It should become very clear to you.

ABILITY TO BE WITH YOURSELF

As we have seen, this *nididhyāsanam* is done only after *śravaṇam* and *mananam* and takes some time. Therefore, *ekānte sukhamāsyatām*; may you sit in a posture that is comfortable, withdrawing your mind from everything else. *Ekānta* means you are the limit for a place, in other words no one else is there. In a situation where you are *ekānte*, alone, *sukhena āsyatām*, may the body be placed in a comfortable posture. This is *ekānte sukhamāsyatām*.

Ekānta also indicates a certain preparation, otherwise *ekānta* will feel frightening and lonely. That *ekānta* itself implies that there should be a certain maturity, an ability to be with yourself. Even if there are a hundred people sitting there in the morning meditation, do you feel that so many people are around you? You have to say, 'No'. Because if you say, 'Yes', that means your meditation is upon the other people. Even though there are many people around you, your mind is elsewhere. Your mind is committed to what you are doing. Actually, the truth is that you are always *ekānta*. The reason why you experience this *ekānta* in meditation, in spite of all the people around, is because everybody is doing the same thing. Suppose one person is reading, one person is chanting, another person is hammering a nail or fixing up varieties of things, with a lot of noise and so on. Then

¹²⁴ *dhyāyati iva* = as though meditating; *lelāyati iva* = as though quivering

चड ॥ उभौ लोकावनुसंचरति ध्यायतीव लेलायतीव यन्महादब्रान्नयाकखपानश्चिद 4.3.7)

an other person is doing yoga *āsanas* and when he stretches, his feet touch you. And yet another person is sleeping. You may think that at least he does not disturb anyone. No, when he starts snoring, it definitely disturbs. Therefore you find that when all the people are doing one thing or another, then naturally there is no *ekānta*, there is only *anekānta*. As long as everyone is doing the same thing, it is *ekānta*. Therefore you do not require to go somewhere else, as long as others are pursuing the same thing. That becomes *ekānta*.

BRING THE MIND TO THE LIMITLESS

Paratare cetah samādhīyatām; may the mind be brought to *paratara*, that which is *param*, limitless. This is a reference to *paraṁ-brahma*, *paramātmāni*. As we saw, there are two ways of doing this, *śabda-anuviddha-savikalpa* and *dṛśya-anuviddha-savikalpa*. The first of these we have already discussed. In the second, *dṛśya-anuviddha-savikalpa*, you chant *om* or some other chant. You hear *om*, there is awareness of *om*, and that awareness itself is exactly what you are. It is invariable. It has no limitation. It is not *deśa-kāla-paricchinna*, bound by time and space. So this appreciation is there. This means there is no ignorance of the fact that consciousness is not bound by time and space. That is what is called *samādhāna* or *dṛśya-anuviddha-savikalpa*. Any object perceived by you through a sense organ is called *dṛśya*. *Dṛśya* means not only what is seen, but also what is heard, smelt, and so on. And it is not only external, *dṛśya* can also mean inside.

Antahkaraṇa-vṛtti, a mind modification, is also *dṛśya*. Thus you are the *dṛk*, seer with reference to *dṛśya* inside and with reference to *dṛśya* outside. So the attention is towards the *sākṣī*, witness. Being *sākṣī*, which is self-revealing, it is not difficult to be what you are. Your attention is not towards the witnessed. It is withdrawn from the witnessed object. This is what they call 'witness appreciation.' When you withdraw your attention from the witnessed, you are already the self-revealing witness, known as *dṛśya-anuviddha-savikalpa*. No matter what object you confront, it does not mean anything because you withdraw your attention from the object. Even if you hear someone sneezing, it is not a problem. So you can meditate on a *dṛśya*, object of perception, or a *śabda*, word or even a *rūpa*, form which means that you can also meditate with eyes open. *Dṛśya*

really means *rūpa*. So *rūpa* is *drśya* and *śabda* is *drśya*. Even *sparsa*, *rasa*, and *gandha*¹²⁵ are *drśya*, so you can practice all of them. This is what is called *drśya-anuviddha-savikalpa-samādhiḥ*. *Samādhiḥ* means meditation, contemplation. It is *savikalpa*, differentiated, because there is a person who is doing all of this with reference to an object. The knower-knowledge-known is there, but attention is withdrawn from the *jñeyam*, the object, to the self. And the self is self-revealing.

This contemplation with *śabda-anuviddha-savikalpa* and *drśya-anuviddha-savikalpa* is possible only because you have done *śravaṇam* and *mananam*. Otherwise it is only a practice of looking at this or looking at that. So until *śravaṇam-mananam* is done, we practice only *dhyānam*. *Dhyānam* at least helps you to enjoy a certain composure and also to get grace through surrender to *Īśvara*. All these things are very beautiful. Therefore, first *dhyānam* and then *nididhyāsanam*. But the latter is only after doing *śravaṇam* and *mananam*.

SEEING YOURSELF AS FULLNESS

Pūrṇātmā susamīkṣyatām; may you see the truth of the self as *pūrṇa-ātmā*, fullness. To achieve this *paratara cetah samādhiḥ*, the author says *pūrṇātmā susamīkṣyatām*.¹²⁶ *Samīkṣā* means seeing as it is unfolded by the *śāstra*. *Pūrṇa-ātmā* means any known object is non-separate from you. The knowledge is also non-separate from you. And the knower is yourself. *Jñātr-jñāna-jñeyam*, knower-knowledge-known, all three of them are one and the same, you alone. In this manner, may the *pūrṇa-ātmā* that is unfolded by the *śāstra* and which is completely freed from all doubts through *mananam*, be recognised again with the help of the words of the *śāstra*. In this way, *pūrṇa-ātmā* is seen to be the 'I'. So *pūrṇa-ātmā* is non-separate from you. This *pūrṇa-ātmā* is indeed *param-brahma*. May you recognize this *brahmātmā*, the limitlessness of the *ātmā*. You are the same *caitanya-ātmā*, *sat-cit-ātmā* alone, both with the world and without the world. Without the world you are *sat-cit-ātmā*. Even when any *vṛtti*, thought, is there, the *caitanyam* is your-

¹²⁵ *sparsa* = touch, *rasa* = taste; *gandha* = smell

¹²⁶ सुष्ठु सम्यक्त्वे ईक्ष्यतांसुसमीक्ष्यताम्

self and in the *vr̥tti* there is an object. This object is also non-separate from the *caitanyam* and the *sadātmā*. Because *pūrṇa-ātmā* is the limitless self, it becomes the *adhiṣṭhānam*, the basis, the truth of the *jagat*, world. Any *jagat* that you confront is the *adhiṣṭhānam* itself, which is you.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD AS MITHYĀ

In this way, *jagadidaṁ tadbādhitaṁ dṛśyatām*; may you see the entire *jagat* as *bādhitaṁ*, sublated, negated. Negation or sublation is removal of the *satyabuddhi*, the idea that something is real. For example, when you see the pot, there is a perception, a pot perception, 'This is a pot.' If the pot is destroyed, then you have eliminated the pot from your vision. But here, you do not need to remove the pot from your vision at all. Instead, you remove the pot by the appreciation of clay. Before the pot came into existence, it was clay. Even now it is clay. In this way, the pot is sublated by your appreciation of the clay. *Bādhita* means it does not have a reality of its own.

Seeing the pot itself, you sublimate the pot because it has no independent existence. Similarly, seeing the *jagat*, you sublimate it. The world is nothing but yourself. In the first example, clay is separate from you and pot is also separate from you. When seeing the *jagat*, you see that, 'The clay, the pot, everything is myself.' If that is understood properly, then anything you confront is *bādhita*. Now you can understand why you need not be afraid of the world.

There are those who say *duḥkha-ātmakaṁ jagat*, the world is full of pain. Therefore you should go and sit under the Bodhi tree. But the Bodhi tree is also *jagat*. They say the world is *mithyā*, but full of pain because they do not acknowledge *satyam*. However, with the vision of *brahmātmā*, the *jagat* is sublated by the *brahma-buddhi*, which means that you do not need to have a special situation for contemplation. What a beautiful thing. So there is no condemnation of anything. Even New York City is okay. You can do this sublation right in the middle of Manhattan, *jagadidaṁ tadbādhitaṁ dṛśyatām*.

To be continued...

Kaivalyopaniṣad
Swami Vidadatmananda Saraswati's transcribed talk

This is the twentieth part of the serial article, continuation from Jan 2023 newsletter.

Meditation upon the meditator

The object of contemplation is the self that is *viśada*, clear, free from any kind of impurity. Like a pool of clear water that is free from any impurities, the self is free from the impurities of likes and dislikes; we are that self. All likes and dislikes belong to the mind and are but states of mind. Presently, because of our habitual identification with the mind, we get disturbed when likes or dislikes arise in the mind and brand ourselves as 'likers' or 'dislikers.' For instance, anger may arise in the mind and yet, on account of identification with the mind, we say, "I am angry." But that is not right. As Ādi Śaṅkarācārya says, *na me dveṣarāgau na me lobhamohau mado naiva me naiva mātস্যabhāvaḥ*, aversion and attachment do not belong to me and neither do greed and delusion or pride and jealousy; they are not mine."

A distance must be created between the self and the impurities. Actually, the distance does already exist; we don't have to create it. In reality, the self is never one with the mind. It transcends the mind, illumines the mind, and is the witness of the mind. It is on account of our identification that we erase the distance that exists. For example, when we watch a movie, we become so identified with whatever is happening that we become one with it. In reality, we are merely spectators. All the motions and movements take place on the screen, but our identification with it is such that we experience the same feelings as do the hero or the heroine in the movie. Therefore, even while there is clearly a distance, because we are neither the movie nor the actors, but merely spectators, totally unconcerned and unconnected, we feel connected on account of the identification. That is a false connection. Similarly, there is no connection between *ātmā* and *anātmā*, the self and the mind. Yet, on account of identification, it appears as though there is a connection and the self has become as small as the mind. That is the reason why, if there

is an impurity in the mind, we assume that we are impure, and if there is anger, we conclude that we are angry.

Through this form of meditation, we recognize that all impurities are in the mind. We are not the mind and we are none of these impurities. We are not the anger or the jealousy; we are that by which they are illuminated, we are that by which we become aware of them. The one who is aware is always different from that of which he is aware. That which illumines is always different from that which is illumined. Anger, jealousy, and the like are but different states of mind. The self simply illumines them, while remaining unconnected and ever pure.

Viśokam means free from grief. Grief belongs to the mind. It is not our nature; neither is sadness. It is the mind that is agitated, sad, and sorrowful. Are we not aware of sadness? The fact that we are aware of sadness shows that sadness belongs to the mind. That we become aware of the mind shows that we are clearly distinct from the mind. Therefore, the self is merely the illuminator of the sadness and is itself neither the sadness nor the grief. The attributes or characteristics of the self are described further. The self is *achintyam*, *avyaktam*, and *anantarūpam*. This is description of ourselves, not of someone else. Hence, this is the meditation upon the meditator.

***Upāsanā* is meditation upon the Lord with attributes**

Meditation can be said to be of two kinds. The first kind is meditation upon something that is different from oneself, and the second kind is meditation upon oneself.

Meditating upon something or someone different from ourselves involves mental visualization. When we meditate upon Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti, for example, we visualize the form of the Lord. There are various *vigrahas* or forms given to us to help us meditate. We can meditate either upon the form that is Dakṣiṇāmūrti or upon that which is represented in that particular form. For example, the four arms represent the Lord's all-pervasiveness, and the weapons represent the Lord's omnipotence. In either case, we deliberately entertain a continuous flow of thought of the same nature, *sajātīya-vṛttipravāha*.

In Vedānta, the mental worship of the Lord, called *upāsanā*, is recommended as a preparation for the pursuit of selfknowledge. *Upāsanā* means maintaining a flow of thought upon the Lord possessed of attributes, *saguṇa-brahma*. This form of worship is performed with the help of a form and name or certain attributes of the Lord; whatever one is comfortable with, whatever one enjoys, and whatever invokes devotion is valid. In the Vedic times, the *omkāra* or *praṇava* was prescribed for such *upāsanās*. *Om* is the name of the Lord and a *mantra* as well. Today, however, we can do *upāsanā* with whichever name we wish. It can be Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, *om namaḥ śivāya*, *śrī rāma jaya rāma jaya jaya rāma* or any other *mantra*. A *mantra* is simply a sacred passage or chant. One can also visualize a form and perform mental *pūjā*, such as visualizing offering the Lord a bath, followed by offering flowers and various other such offerings. This is also an effective way of worship.

Worship has the effect of healing and purifying the mind and helps in becoming attuned to the Lord. *Upāsanā* is a process of tuning up. *Karma-yoga* is also a process of becoming attuned to the Lord, but *karma-yoga* involves external action. *Upāsanā* or mental worship is a stage subsequent to that; what one did earlier through physical action is subsequently done through *bhāvanā*, worshipful thoughts in the mind. We prefer meditation where God is involved, because it has the added advantage of devotion, which is purifying and healing. Not only is meditation or worship an aid to concentration, but it is also an aid to the purification of the mind.

The second kind of meditation is meditation upon oneself. This is different from *upāsanā*, in which the duality between the meditator and that which is meditated upon is maintained. When meditating upon the self, we seek to remove the duality. This meditation is, therefore, more subtle; we seek to drop even the role of the meditator. In the first type of meditation, every other role is dropped and the role of meditator alone is assumed. In meditating upon one's own self, even the role of meditator is dropped. Therefore, every word that is used in this verse indicates the self that is formless, without attributes or qualities.

The only one thing in the world that is formless and free from attributes is the self; everything else has a form and attributes. The self that illumines all the forms and attributes is itself free from names, forms, and attributes.

Meditation upon the self is not an experience

Meditation upon the self does not involve any visualization. In this meditation, there is only the seeing of what is, not the visualizing of something that is not. It is not that we visualize ourselves to be free from sadness, because it is neither possible nor necessary to visualize the true nature of oneself; it is *acintya*, unthinkable, inasmuch as we cannot become the object of our own thoughts. While meditating upon the self, we should not attempt to feel or visualize or experience, because that causes or creates a duality. In trying to experience, one automatically assumes the role of 'experiencer' and creates a distance between the self and that which one seeks to experience. Therefore, inasmuch as it does not involve the duality of the 'experiencer' and the 'experienced,' it is said that self-knowledge is not an experience. Yet many people like to use the word experience in the sense of having intimate knowledge; it is all right, as long as it is understood that the self is *acintya*, not a thought. The self is beyond thought. 'I' is not a state of mind; as the illuminator of all thought, it is the very illuminator of the states of the mind.

How is it that one cannot be an object of one's own thought? It is so on account of the 'I' or the self being *avyakta*, unmanifest. *Vyakta* means manifest. *Avyakta* is unmanifest. The manifest is that which can become the object of sense perception. Whatever can be heard, touched, seen, tasted, and smelled is *vyakta*. The *avyakta* or the unmanifest, the self, is naturally, therefore, not an object that may be experienced by the sense organs, because it is the illuminator of the very sense organs. For example, we cannot see our own eyes through a telescope, because it is the eyes that are looking through the telescope. So also, the various sense organs are like various telescopes, through which we perceive various objects. In being the one that perceives through the sense organs, one cannot become the object of his or her own perception. What this means is that we should drop any attempt to

perceive ourselves or visualize ourselves. One must understand that visualizing the self cannot be done, because whatever one sees or visualizes is bound to be different from the self.

Anantarūpam means one that is of infinite or countless forms. On the one hand the self is formless, as we will be told later, and, on the other hand, it has countless forms. Is that not contradictory? In reality, however, it is on account of association with countless names that the self appears to have countless forms, just as gold, which is essentially formless, assumes the forms of various ornaments.

Śivam. One is *śiva*, auspicious, ever pure. *Śiva* means Lord Śiva. *Śiva* also means the auspicious, that which is good. Lord Śiva is shown seated in the midst of ghosts and goblins in a cremation ground, but aloof from them. He represents goodness in the midst of all evil and impurity, the goodness or purity that cannot be tainted by impurities. The wise person knows, 'I am *śiva*.' Each one of these words releases us from one complex or the other.

Praśāntam means ever tranquil. There is no disturbance, no distraction in the essential 'I.' All disturbances belong in the mind, while the 'I,' the illuminator of the mind, is *praśānta*, ever tranquil, ever silent. *Amṛtam* means immortal. *Amṛta* also means ambrosia. Ambrosia gives joy or happiness, hence, *amṛta* means *ānanda*. We are immortal or *ānanda*, of the nature of happiness. Each one of these aspects of the self helps address a particular state of mind. When we feel unhappy, we must remember, '*amṛto'smi*,' 'I am immortal, I am ambrosia, I am *ānanda*.'

Brahmayonim. *Yoni* means the cause, the source. So *brahmayoni* can either mean the *yonī* or cause of Brahman or the *saguṇabrahma*, or mean *brahman* that is the *yonī* or cause of everything. Hence, as the self, one is the cause of Brahman or *saguṇabrahma*, or one is *brahman* that is the *yonī*, the cause of all the beings.

The source of all the beings is *brahman*; such is the nature of one's self. Consciousness, as the source of all the beings, is that from which all the beings emerge. It is both the source of all the beings and the source of our thoughts, because the world is not different from our thoughts; what the world is at any time is nothing other

than our thoughts. What we are watching is actually thought, which reflects the external world. Consciousness, from where the thought emerges, where the thought abides, and into which the thought merges back, is the source of all thoughts. What there is before each thought arises and during each thought is consciousness, and what remains after each thought merges and before the next thought arises is also consciousness.

We have seen how thoughts emerge from consciousness and merge back into consciousness, and, therefore, a thought is nothing but consciousness. Because thoughts correspond one-to-one with the objects of the world, consciousness must be understood as the source of the universe. The very universe emerges from consciousness, remains in consciousness, and merges back into consciousness. Therefore, one recognizes the self as the consciousness that is the very source of the entire universe. When we recognize that we are the very source of the universe, the oneness between ourselves and the universe is established. That alone helps erase the thoughts of duality.

Ādi-madhya-anta-vihīnam means devoid of beginning, middle, and end. The 'I' has no beginning or birth. It is of the nature of consciousness, which illumines all the changes taking place in time, even birth and death. It is, therefore, unaffected by time. When there is no birth, there is no question of other modifications such as growth, decay, disease, and death. One is devoid of all changes and modifications. One is changeless, immovable, ever the same.

Ekam is one. The changeless consciousness that is the 'I,' is indeed one, nondual. Duality exists at the level of names and forms and in the body-sense-mind complexes, but not in the self that manifests through them. The Muṇḍakopaniṣad explains the unity obtaining in the diversity with the example of fire and sparks, "As from a fire fully ablaze, fly off in their thousands, sparks that are akin to the fire, so also, O good looking one, from the imperishable, originate different kinds of beings and they merge again into It." It appears as though the fire is divided into many sparks, because each spark looks different from the others, but they are only

caused to look separate from one another by the carbon particles that fly off the wood as it burns. On account of association with these particles, fire seems to be divided into many, but from the standpoint of fire, which is nothing but heat and light, there is no division. The essence of every spark is heat and light, which is also the essence of fire.

It is not a form that is called fire, but the principle of heat and light, which is formless and indivisible. Similarly, the self that is consciousness is formless and indivisible, but it appears as though it is divided into many 'sparks' of consciousness, each *jīva* or living being representing one spark. It is the division in names and forms, in the body-sense-mind complexes, the *upādhi*, that creates this appearance of separateness or 'manyness' in consciousness.

Vibhum means all-pervasive. Consciousness is all pervasive. Just as space is all pervasive and accommodates all objects within it, so also, consciousness is all pervasive. The divisions of time, space, and object obtain within consciousness, are sustained by consciousness, and are illumined by consciousness. Nothing whatsoever is apart from consciousness, the self. *Cit* means consciousness. The self is consciousness. The 'I' is self-effulgent; everything other than the 'I' can shine only when illumined by consciousness. The objects of the world are illumined by the organs of perception, which are illumined by the mind, which is itself illumined by consciousness, the self-shining witness and the very self.

Ānandam mean happiness or fullness. The self is of the nature of happiness. Whenever we experience happiness, we may feel that its source is some object that we were experiencing, but the fact of the matter is that an inert thing cannot give happiness. Even as it appears to fulfill a desire, an object only makes the mind inward-directed, upon which the mind experiences the self. The self is consciousness, and that alone is the source of all happiness. An object thus becomes an apparent reason or pretext that causes the happiness, which is the self, to manifest. That happiness is always shining, only, the experience of it is obstructed by the cloud of desire or grief. Any desirable object becomes a cause that makes this cloud clear mo-

mentarily, causing the sun that is the self to shine through, which is then experienced as happiness. This experience, however, turns out to be fleeting, because another desire or grief arises soon after, leaving one in search of happiness again. The experience of happiness becomes abiding only when, in the wake of knowledge, the mind abides in the self. One then discovers that one is happiness that is uncreated and boundless. Boundless happiness is *ānanda* which is the self. We are that *ānanda*, wholeness.

Arūpum means formless. Just as space appears to assume the form of any enclosure, such as a pot or a room, so also, the self appears to assume the forms of each of the various *upādhis*, body-sense-mind complexes. The forms belong to the *upādhis*, whereas, the self manifesting through them is formless. We are truly *arūpa*, formless.

Adbhutam means a wonder. It is a wonder that while we think we are mortal, we are, in fact, immortal, while we think we are ignorant, we are of the nature of knowledge, and while we think we are limited, we are the limitless happiness itself, a happiness that is self-shining and effortless. Indeed, we are independent and free, quite contrary to what we have been taking ourselves to be all the while. That is the greatest wonder of all.

The sixth *mantra* has been a meditation upon *brahman* or the self without attributes. The seventh *mantra* describes the meditation upon *saguṇa-brahma* or *brahman* with a form and attributes. Since the mind is accustomed to dwelling in the realm of names, forms, and attributes, meditation upon the formless may not be easy at first. That is why the Vedic culture gives us many names and forms, which become stepping stones for ultimately seeing that which is beyond all names and forms. This *mantra* is a typical meditation of the first kind of *upāsana*, where the meditator and the object of the meditation are different. It is a meditation upon *saguṇa-brahma* in the form of Lord Śiva.

To be continued...

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa

As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the eighteenth part of the serial article, continuation from Jan 2023 newsletter.

Hanuman was asked to come and fight in the great Mahabharata battle. He said he could not fight, but he said he would come and sit there and watch. He sat on the top of Arjuna's chariot and watched the battle. The ferocious war between members of one family is described in the other epic's tens of thousands of verses. Hanuman was actually bored. Sitting there, he nearly fell asleep. He had seen the fight between Rama and Ravana, and nothing could compare. The battle between Rama and Ravana is exactly like the battle between Rama and Ravana. There is no comparison for it. Sky is sky, ocean is ocean, *brahman* is *brahman*, Rama-Ravana is Rama-Ravana. Hanuman thought of Kumbhakarna, Ravana's brother. When one of Kumbhakarna's hands was severed by Lakshmana, it fell down and took out hundreds of the battling monkeys. Just the one hand falling down slew hundreds. It was like a mountain landslide. This was the magnitude of the Rama-Ravana battle. They would pull trees as big as redwoods out of the ground and fight with each other. This was the *yuddha* that Hanuman had seen. Watching the combatants shoot arrows at each other, Hanuman did not consider war in the Mahabharata to be *yuddha*. Only when Abhimanyu, Arjuna's son, fought was there a flicker that got to Hanuman, something that was like a *yuddha*. Or when Arjuna and Bhishma fought it was like a *yuddha*. But only a short while these lasted. Hanuman would open his eyes and say, "Not bad." There was only one Rama-Ravana *yuddha*.

The slaying of ten-headed Ravana was not easy. Every time Rama turned to pay attention to a second head the one he had just dealt with came up again. They cropped up again and again. Arrow after arrow with the same result, and the fellow did not die. Again and again the mighty *rākṣasa* came back. Underneath all is Vedanta. Rama was slaying these heads which are exactly like desires. You remove one desire and in its place something else comes up. But that is not the only way to live. In fact the well-lived life is elsewhere; it has a cause. The cause is in the heart. Ravana's life is in the heart. For that, Rama had to use *brahmāstra*, and *brahmāstra* is *tattvamasī*. *Āstra* means that which goes from you is *āstra*. The teaching *tattvamasī* always goes from the teacher; it goes and strikes the heart. Then all the heads, this Ravana, are slain. There is no other way of eliminating this hydra-

headed, this *ahaṅkāra*. The Sita Rama got back, that Sita stands for peace. In-between, that Ravana will fight with you with all his minions. Kumbhakarna is *tamas*, and like this, in the form of *rākṣasas*, all these different kinds of *rajas* and *tamas*, your *rāgas* and *dveṣas*, will fight. They will fight to allow your self-image and your incomplete psyche to have their way with you. But that might not be the way to live. All the descriptions of the fight are to make them real. They are as real as the opportunity to learn and grow from what they represent. This is the trick. The Ramayana will lead you to yourself.

Tamas is dullness *et cetera*. Kumbhakarna was a fellow who used to sleep six months of the year. He did not bother to get up every day and shave. His life was like that. Still, we will see he did have a big shave when he did get up. Kumbhakarna size is like Vali size, hillock size. There is this story about Kumbhakarna. He woke up once with a six-month beard and he wanted a shave. He called all the normal-sized fellows together to lend a hand. It was a big job that took everyone's help. Each fellow took part. One fellow was there shaving one side of the mustache it seems - sitting there on Kumbhakarna's lip and then shaving. Just then Kumbhakarna sneezed. As the big guy took in his sneeze-breath, the razor went inside. It seems the razor went in. As a result, the shaving fellow was left without his tool, and he did not know what to do.

Kumbhakarna eyed him and said, "What are you doing? Are you just going to sit there?"

The fellow said, "Sir, the razor went inside."

"It went inside," remarked Kumbhakarna, "Well go and fetch it."

The fellow went inside, and he crossed valleys and mountains and things like that, and all strange things he saw. He searched all over but he could not find the razor. He got tired and he sat there on a rock on one of the hills. Sitting there resting, he noticed some other fellows approaching. They asked, "Hey, who are you? How did you come here?"

He said, "Well, I was shaving and then I lost the razor and I began searching for it. What are you doing here?"

"We have been searching for some ghosts that were seen to have come in here, but we have not found them. Now you should just find your way out and get a new razor and start over."

Swamiji's story tells you how big this Kumbhakarna was. Kumbhakarna and his six-months sleep stand for *tamas*. Ravana stands for *ahaṅkāra*, *rajas et cetera*. Kumbhakarna and all the other *rākṣasa* fellows are to be managed and destroyed. Then the *ahaṅkāra* can be killed by the *brahmāstra*. Sita stands for *śānti*, peace, *ānanda* that is the *ātmā*. A mind that is enlightened is *sītā*. *Ātmā* is wedded to the mind but gets separated from the *sītā*. Sita is isolated somewhere because of the ocean between Sita and the *ātmā*, Rama. The ocean that is there is *ajñānam mohamāraṇam*, the ocean of ignorance and error that has to be crossed. In the story, that was crossed, and Ravana was met and destroyed, and Sita got back. This is the story behind the story.

There is wonderful verse written by Sadashiva, one of the wise men in South India in just the last century. He sings of Ravana and Kumbhakarna as *rāgas* and *dveṣas* and calls Rama the one who makes you cross the ocean of ignorance and error. It is Rama who is married to Sita, to *śānti*, and who is ruler of the kingdom called the heart, Ayodhya, which is limitless, which cannot be won over by anybody. "He dances, he revels, in my heart." Who dances? *Ātmā* – Rama. Because of whose knowledge the wise men are given back the limitless kingdom. That is Rama. His body is *sacchidānanda*. That is what gives you Sita. A *rākṣasa* is not going to leave a woman like Sita alone. All the people had mixed feelings when she returned. Rama could not read well all that was in their minds. He was shy to take her back after she had been in the hands of the *rākṣasa*. In order to prove that Sita could not be touched by Ravana or by any other, Rama had the demonstration done. It was a show and nothing else. Rama had no doubt about Sita's purity.

तामुवाच ततो रामः परुषं जनसंसदि । अमृष्यमाणा सा सीता विवेश ज्वलनं सती ॥ १-१-८२

ततोऽग्निवचनात् सीतां ज्ञात्वा विगतकल्मषाम् । कर्मणा तेन महता त्रैलोक्यं सचराचरम् ॥ १-१-८३

सदेवर्षिगणं तुष्टं राघवस्य महात्मनः ॥ बभौ रामः सम्प्रहृष्टः पूजितः सर्वदैवतैः ॥ १-१-८४

tāmuvāca tato rāmaḥ paruṣaṁ janasaṁsadi |

amṛṣyamāṇā sā sītā viveśa jvalanaṁ satī || 1-1-82

tato'gnivacanāt sītāṁ jñātvā vigatakalmaṣām |

karmaṇā tena mahatā trailokyam sacarācaram || 1-1-83

sadevarṣigaṇaṁ tuṣṭaṁ rāghavasya mahātmanaḥ ||

babhau rāmaḥ sampurahṣṭaḥ pūjitaḥ sarvadaivataiḥ || 1-1-84

Before all the people that were around, for their sake and not because he doubted her, Rama spoke harsh words to Sita, expressing the doubts of the others. Because of this, Sita, the one who was always one with her *pati*, Lord Rama, being one who could not stand those word from Rama, entered the fire, only to re-emerge. Everyone knew that she would come back again. Agni, the fire, did not burn Sita. In fact *agni*, the *devatā*, came forth holding Sita in his hands and gave her to Rama. All who were there heard the words of Agni declaring her virtue. Knowing Sita's nature, she who is free from any blemish, Rama became very happy because the others were convinced.

Having fully accomplished the job that he was to accomplish, Rama was worshipped by all the *devatās*. He had eliminated all the *rākṣasas* everywhere, and he had given them better *janmas*, better births, better *upādhis*, in fact. By him the great *karyakarma* which no other could do was done. All the moving and unmoving living beings, trees and plants and animals, were released. They were freed from the troublesome *rākṣasas* who intimidated them and ate them. The *ṛṣis* and *devas*, until now terrorized by the *rākṣasas*, could again live and visit in Dandaka forest without the threat of the demons. All three worlds were joyful due to the great action of the Raghava. Thereby, again, *dharma* was established. Rama came for that job; he was meant for that. He did his job. Sita and all the others were only accomplices for his job. This had been the negative part of it. What has to be negated has been done. The positive part had to come now. What has to be positively established is yet to come. Rama goes back and rules the kingdom in such a way that it is an example for any kingdom at any time.

अभिषिच्य च लङ्कायां राक्षसेन्द्रं विभीषणम् । कृतकृत्यस्तदा रामो विज्वरः प्रमुमोद ह ॥ १-१-८५

देवताभ्यो वरं प्राप्य समुत्थाप्य च वानरान् । अयोध्यां प्रस्थितो रामः पुष्पकेण सुहृद्वृतः ॥ १-१-८६

भरद्वाजाश्रमं गत्वा रामः सत्यपराक्रमः । भरतस्यान्तिके रामो हनूमन्तं व्यसर्जयत् ॥ १-१-८७

पुनराख्यायिकां जल्पन् सुग्रीवसहितस्तदा । पुष्पकं तत् समारूढ्य नन्दिग्रामं ययौ तदा ॥ १-१-८८

नन्दिग्रामे जटां हित्वा भ्रातृभिः सहितोऽनघः । रामः सीतामनुप्राप्य राज्यं पुनरवाप्तवान् ॥ १-१-८९

abhiṣicya ca laṅkāyāṁ rākṣasendraṁ vibhīṣaṇam ।

kṛtakṛtyastadā rāmo vijvaraḥ pramumoda ha ॥ 1-1-85

devatābhyo varaṁ prāpya samutthāpya ca vānarān ।

ayodhyāṁ prasthito rāmaḥ puṣpakeṇa suhṛdvṛtaḥ ॥ 1-1-86

bharadvājāsramam gatvā rāmaḥ satyaparākramah |
bharatasyāntike rāmo hanūmantaṁ vyasarjayat || 1-1-87
punarākhyāyikāṁ jalpan sugrīvasahitastadā |
puṣpakam tat samārūhya nandigrāmaṁ yayau tadā || 1-1-88
nandigrāme jaṭām hitvā bhrātṛbhiḥ sahito'naghaḥ |
rāmaḥ sītāmanuprāpya rājyaṁ punaravāptavān || 1-1-89

The island Lanka had been left without a king and had to be properly reestablished. Ravana's brother Vibhishana had surrendered to Rama just before the war. Vibhishana in fact had advised Ravana to befriend Rama, to give back Si-ta, and not to fight. Vibhishana told his cruel brother not to wrong Rama. He told Ravana that what he was doing was wrong. He told Ravana to admit his mistake and to put himself at Rama's great mercy. He told him there was no other way out. Though Vibhishana was born in the family of the *rākṣasas*, he was a different kind of person. Even though he grew up as a *rākṣasa*, he was a *sādhu*. Ravana's reaction was to condemn Vibhishana and accuse him of being a coward. Ravana thus rebuked his brother, and thereafter Vibhishana went and surrendered to Rama. It is another very beautiful scene. There were rumors in Rama's camp that this Vibhishana should not be trusted and should not be given sanctuary. Many thought he was a spy who came to destroy Rama's troops. Everybody objected to Rama's accepting Vibhishana. But Rama said, "He has come to me for refuge and I will not reject him. Even if his intent is to undermine all of our efforts, still I will not reject him, for he has asked that I be his *śaraṇam*. He has come to me seeking my feet, and I am not going to deny him." Thus Rama accepted Vibhishana. Vibhishana became an integral part of Rama's victory.

After Ravana's death, Rama enthroned Vibhishana in Lanka in Ravana's place. All the terrible *rākṣasas* were gone, and all the *rākṣasīs* and lesser demons became normal under the rule of Vibhishana, king of *rākṣasas*. The coronation and the enthronement ritual were done. All Rama had to do in the forest was done. Half of Rama's life was over. Kaikeyi, Mandara, Shurpanakha, Marica, Hanuman: they were all *nimittas*, means for Rama to achieve this particular end. Now it is over, the negation is done, no longer is there anxiety over the course to be taken. Indeed, Rama became all happiness. Receiving all blessings and certain boons from the *devatās*, Rama gave back the lives to all the Vanaras who had died at the hands of Kumbhakarna and the other monsters.



Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha

(The voice of collective consciousness)

Blessed Swamiji/Swaminiji,

20, February 2023

Namaste ! The next Acharya Sabha is slated on 2nd and 3rd April 2023 at the following venue:-

Sri Sivananda Ashram , Opp: ISRO, Jodhpur Tekra, Satellite Road, AHMEDABAD 380 015

All Sanyasi disciples of Param Pujya Swamiji (Sri Dayanandji) are invited. As per tradition, devotee and Brahmchari may not register.

Those who wish to attend may send their details like NAME, CONTACT NO, ADDRESS, COLOR PHOTO to acharyasabha.2023@gmail.com . It is also requested to send attached form duly filled with relevant information as early as possible.

I request you to block these dates. I shall send detailed program in due course of time. I request you to reach Ahmedabad on 1st evening or 2nd early morning and plan return journey on 3rd April after 7 PM.

Namaste

Prayers and Wishes

(Swami ParmatmanandaSaraswati)

Chairman

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Convener

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Patron

H.H. Swami Gurusharanananda Ji

Founder Convener

H.H. Swami Dayananda Saraswati Ji

PHOTO

HINDU DHARMA ACHARYA'S MEET APRIL 02-03 2023

1	NAME	
2	ADDRESS& OTHER DETAILS	ADDRESS: CONTACT NO.: EMAIL ID (IF AVAILABLE):
3	NEXT PERSON TO BE CONTACTED	ADDRESS: CONTACT NO.: EMAIL ID (IF AVAILABLE):
4	ARRIVAL	ARRIVAL MODE:
		DATE & TIME:
5	DEPARTURE	DEPARTURE MODE:
		DATE & TIME:
6	WILL YOU AVAIL ACCOMODATION PROVIDED BY ACHARYA SABHA?	YES / NO
7	SPECIAL REQUIRMENT (IF ANY)	
A	FOOD	1.TEA/COFFEE/MILK 2.WITH SUGAR/WITHOUT SUGAR 3.DIABETIC: YES/NO 4.CHOLESTROL: YES/NO 5. BLOOD PRESSURE: YES/NO 6. ANY OTHER:
B	ACCOMODATION	1. OSTEOARTHRITIC: YES/NO 2. TOILETS: INDIAN/WESTERN 3. ANY OTHER:
C	ANY OTHER ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS	

MAHASHIVARATRI 2023 REPORT

Mahashivaratri celebrations at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh were elaborately conducted this year. Sannyasa diksha was given by Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati to four students - Swamini Tattvamayananda Saraswati (Brni Tilaka, Nagpur Gurukulam), Swamini Atmarupananda Saraswati (Arul Mani, Chennai), Swami Narayanananda Saraswati (Sri Sowmya Narayan, Madhurai), and Swamini Chidekarasananda Saraswati (Brni Nandana Chaitanya).

The purvanga rituals were conducted on the previous day (17th February) and were done by the son of the regular Pandit, since the regular pandit passed away last year, having done these rituals since 1982 (see pic on the side).



As usual, Sri Swami Jagatatmananda Saraswati brought 21 Vedic priests from the south, headed by Sri Ravi Shastri, in order to perform the Rudra japa and homa on Mahashivaratri day. At 12 noon, abhishekam to Sri Swami Dayanandeshvara was done with the kalasha waters.

The continuous Om Namah Shivaya chanting started at 9am on Shivaratri morning and ended with Pujya Swamiji's chanting for 3 minutes at 4pm on the same day. All students and devotees participated with enthusiasm and dedication in the chanting.

On Shivaratri day, the Bhandara was given by the Baluja family from Delhi, in memory of their mother, Shanta Baluja, and also Sri VS Saravanan from Chennai on the occasion of Rudra japa and homa. The menu for the bhandara was in keeping with upavasa, fasting rules.



The main function of elaborate puja for Lord Sri Gangadareshvara started at 5pm in the evening and ended at 11.45pm at night. A hundred and twenty five litres of milk was offered during the abhishekam. Sri Rudram was chanted 11 times during the period of abhishekam of 11 dravyas, materials.

Following the abhishekam, an elaborate, very beautiful alankara was done.



Smt Revati Ramachandran of Kalakshetra, Chennai, performed Nritya Upacara on the song Bho Shambo of Pujya Swamiji.



On the whole, the entire Mahashivaratri function was jam-packed with activities and will remain in the hearts of devotees for a long time to come!

- Report by Swamini Chidekarasananda

Photo on cover page #2

A pan India, registered charitable trust, AIM for Seva's work over the last two decades has revolved around educating and empowering children from rural and tribal India via its flagship programme, Chatralayam or Free Student Hostel.



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7TH SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI MEMORIAL LECTURES

(13TH ARSHAVIDYA INDOLOGICAL CONFERENCE)

Organised by Arsha Vidya Vikas Kendra



4th-5th March 2023

His Holiness Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati Ji (1930-2015) (Padma Bhushan 2016) had touched the lives of many scholars, intellectuals and freethinkers in India and abroad with his unfoldment of the Vedanta and allied scriptures/literature. AVVK being a small link in continuing that parampara is organising 13th National Conference (7th Swami Dayananda Saraswati Memorial Lectures) at national level in Bhubaneswar, on various Indological topics, inviting scholars to participate.

Topics

1) Vedas, 2) Vedangas, 3) Upanishads, 4) Buddhism, 5) Sanskrit Literature, 6) Epics - Ramayana and Mahabharata, 7) Bhagavadgita, 8) Women in India 9) Puranas, 10) Dharmasastras, 11) Indian Philosophical Systems, 12) Essential of Vedanta, 13) Vedanta and some Contemporary Issues, 14) Vaishnavism 15) Aurobindo Philosophy, 16) Ethics and Values, 17) Corporate Ethics, 18) Indian Hymnology, 19) Prakrit Literature, 20) Bhakti Movement, 21) Religious/Philosophical Literature, 22) Indian Temple-architecture, 23) Yoga and Ayurveda

Participation details

Faculties of the Universities, Research Scholars, Independent Researchers, Scholars, and Authors are invited to participate in the Conference.

Submission of Abstract

Abstracts not exceeding 500 words along with Registration Form may be sent by email only to atmaprajna@gmail.com to reach by **15th February, 2023**.

Submission of Final Paper

The final paper in around 3,000 words (around ten A4 pages) may be sent by **28th February 2023** by email to atmaprajna@gmail.com. The hard copy should be delivered personally in the venue of the Conference in Panthanivas, Bhubaneswar.

Venue of the Conference

Panthanivas

(Odisha Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.)
Lewis Road, Bhubaneswar - 751 014, Odisha
0674-2432515, 0674-2432314

Director of the Conference

Swamini Atmaprajnananda Saraswati

Founder Acarya, Arsha Vidya Vikas Kendra

e-mail - atmaprajna@gmail.com

website - www.arshavidya.net



**Arsha Vidya
Gurukulam**
(Sruti Seva Trust)
Anaikatti

*is pleased to announce
a residential retreat with*
Swamini Brahmaleenananda Saraswati
on Advaita Makaranda
by
Lakshmidhara Kavi
from

8th Apr – 15th Apr 2023

Guided Meditations and Q&A sessions are part of the retreat

For more details & to register, kindly visit

<https://arshavidya.in/camps-retreats/>

For any queries, kindly contact the office through phone or
email

Email : office@arshavidya.in

Phone : +91-9442646701 , +91-422-2657001



RESIDENTIAL VEDANTA CAMP

at

**ARSHA VIDYA GURUKULAM,
ANAIKATTI, COIMBATORE**

on

Adi Shankara's LAGHU VAKYA VRITTI
by Swamini Sumatmananda,
disciple of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati
From March 4th - 7th 2023

Camp Schedule (daily)

- ♦ Meditation
- ♦ 3 Vedanta classes
- ♦ Bhajans and
- ♦ Night Satsangs

For more details pls contact - sumatmananda@gmail.com

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

Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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