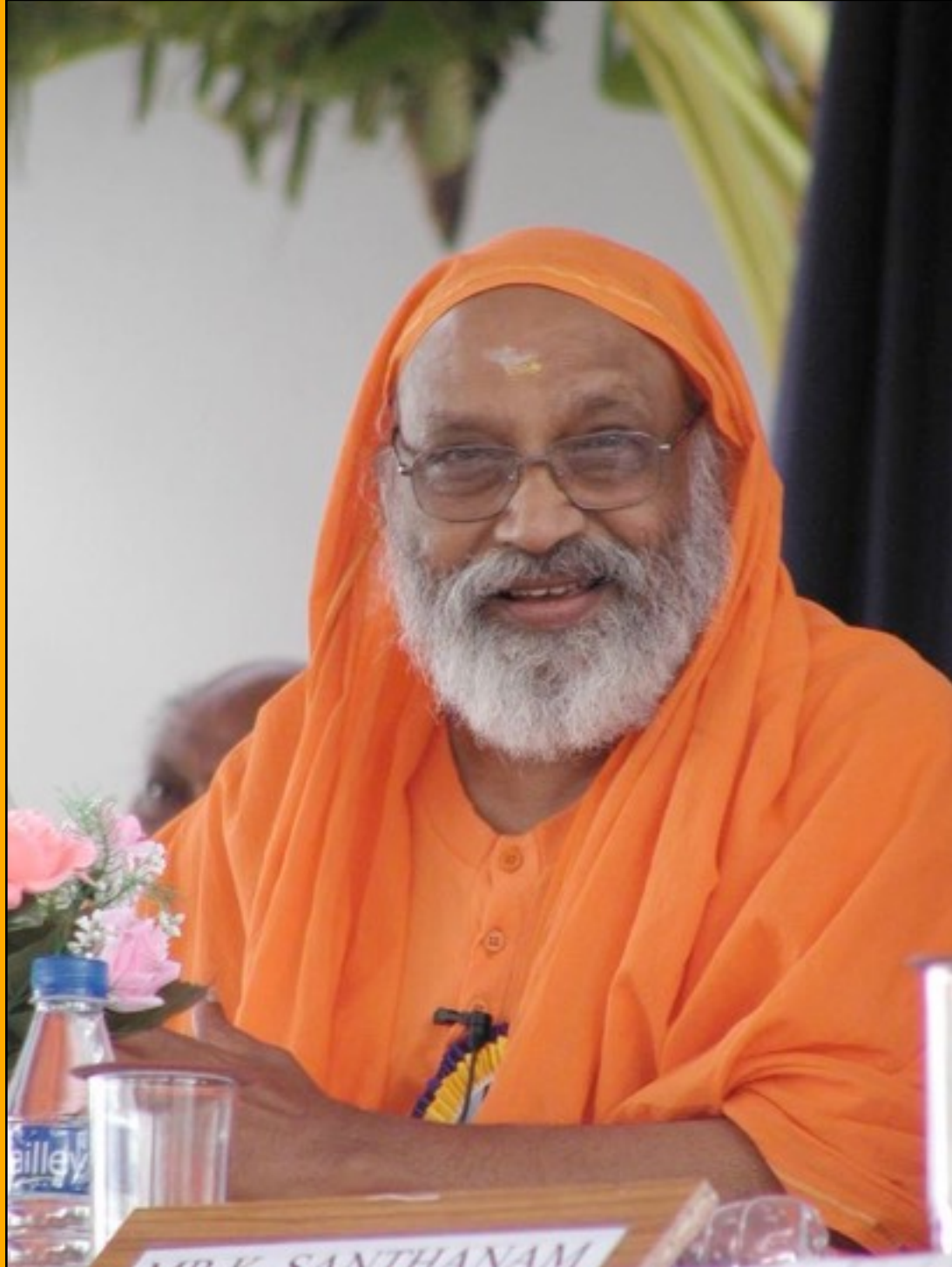




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Ātmānam ced vijānīyāt

PujyaSwamiji's transcribed talk

With the December 2019 issue, the article 'Sraddha-bhakti-jananayogad-avaihi' has been concluded. From this issue a new serial based on the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad Manta 4.4.12 is being started. This is the transcribed talk of Pujya Swamiji. --Editor

Introduction

Ātmānam ced vijānīyāt ayam asmīti pūruṣaḥ kim icchan kasya kāmāya śarīram anusañjvaret. This is a mantra from the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad.¹ Why should we inquire into this mantra?

In the vision of the *upaniṣads*, the self is to be understood because in its vision the self is the whole. It is obvious, the *upaniṣads* recognize the mistaken notion of the self on the part of the self-confused, self-judging human being. So, this misconstrued notion of the self will go only in the wake of knowledge. This knowledge has to be well ascertained so that there is no vagueness or doubt.

Even when one is corrected of one's mistake by another, there is no certainty that the corrected view is the truth. One mistake can be replaced by another. For some people everything seems to be right. Somehow, both the error and knowledge are integrated; it seems to be a synthetic approach. The synthesis is due to lack of clarity. Really speaking, there is no knowledge here. Everything becomes acceptable to some people.

Any school of thought is worth your consideration if it is consistent. However, you cannot say Vedanta is another school of thought. In academic institutions they will present what the different schools of thought say about *ātman*. One school of thought presents *ātman* as inert, another presents *ātman* as *śūnya*, zero, yet another presents *ātman* as flickers of consciousness, the fourth one considers *ātman* as *paramāṇu*, a particle, and the fifth one considers the very physical body as *ātman*. Then, they say that there is another school of thought called Vedanta, which says *ātman* is *pūrṇa*, whole. This is how academicians will present Vedanta as another school of thought. You have to nod your head for all of them. It is the academic approach. The vision of Vedanta is not subject to negation. Therefore it is not another school of thought.

1 Brhadāranyakopaniṣad 4.4.12.

The very fact that these contenders discuss the *ātman* variously, reveals that none of them are right, since they mutually negate each other. They are daring into an area where they have no access. *Ātman* is available for you only to commit an error. It is not available at all to correct the error. So, when there is clear knowledge about *ātman*, you will not nod your head for every school of thought. What is wrong is wrong. A *doṣa*, defect, should become very evident. A *paṇḍita-lakṣaṇa*, defining characteristic of a *pandit*, is *doṣa-darśana*, seeing only the mistakes. If you know a given language and if there is a mistake in somebody's writing, you can detect it as you read. It does not reveal a disposition of fault-finding, but only a capacity to know what is right. Fault-finding is not a proper disposition and swallowing everything is also not a good disposition to have in learning. If I advance fallacious reasoning, you should be able to understand the fallacy in the reasoning. It means you are alert. It does take such a mind to understand anything.

Knowledge is not accommodative at all. You can accommodate an ignorant person, but you cannot accept and follow what he says on the subject matter about which he is ignorant. If a person is ignorant of a given thing, it does not mean he has committed a sin. There is nothing wrong in being ignorant. People think it is wrong to be ignorant or it is below one's dignity to be ignorant. That is not correct. When you are ignorant of something, it is better to own it. If someone knows, he or she happens to know. If someone does not know, well, he or she does not happen to know; that is all.

Knowledge does not accommodate opinions because it is always true to the object of knowledge. Knowledge cannot be other than its object; it has to be in the same form as the object of knowledge. You do not have any choice in this. A flower is always a flower. Again if it is a rose, it is a rose; if it is small, well, it is small. If it is a red flower it is so, and not violet. It is not available for understanding differently. Knowledge is always true to the nature of the object. It does not lend itself to your sweet choice; you have to know the object as it is. Such knowledge is called *niścaya-jñāna*, clear knowledge. Once it is clear knowledge, then you do not need to improve it.

However, we always improve our knowledge. This improvement or addition or amendment is in the field of *aparā vidyā*, knowledge pertaining to various objects. The knowledge by which the self is known is *parā vidyā*. Everything else that you relate yourself to, that you objectify, is *anātman*. Knowledge of *anātman* is called *aparā vidyā*. It has no end because there is always scope for improving it. One cell is good enough to keep generations going. Generations of scientists can spend their lifetime on a flower. There are things under study which open up new disciplines of knowledge. In these days of specialization, people in different disciplines work on one given thing.

You can keep on falsifying what another person said because it is always subject to revision. You will never run out of subject matter for Ph.Ds. All you have to do is simply falsify what another person discovered and you get your Ph.D.

You always know more from the position of what you already know. It is the peculiar status of knowledge. It is a wonder how we really know. You cannot understand anything more than you know. How did you get to know something first? It is always a wonder. You can never see more than you know. But you are able to reach a situation from where you can see something more. Again, having reached this point, you can always go one step further. So, there seems to be a progression in *aparā vidyā*. Therefore, *aparā vidyā* has no last word.

This is not so with reference to *parā vidyā*, self-knowledge. Self-knowledge cannot be improved upon. In fact self-knowledge alone can be called knowledge because what cannot be improved upon is knowledge. I define knowledge as *abādhita*, what cannot be negated, what cannot be improved upon. Then, there is only one thing that will pass as knowledge, and that is self-knowledge.

I will prove it.


Self-knowledge is definite knowledge. You have different opinions about this self, holding the self to be other than what it is. You say, “I am a *saṁsārin*.” ‘*Saṁsārin*’ is a technical word. *Saṁsārin* does not mean a person who has wife and children. If so, you are liberated if you do not have wife and children. The one who finds himself or herself struggling—bound, subject to birth and death, *kartr*, a doer, *bhoktr*, an experiencer of the fruits of action—is called a *saṁsārin*. How do you commit this mistake of taking yourself as a *saṁsārin*?

You can always commit a mistake about an object that is available, and is in front of you. For instance, you can commit a mistake with reference to a rope that is in front of you, available for your perception. Wherever there is a possibility of knowledge, there is a possibility of error. That means wherever there is access for a means of knowledge, there can be an error. When a rope is available for direct perception, you can commit a mistake. Due to varieties of reasons, you can take the rope for a snake. The rope appears as a snake for you, without itself undergoing any change. This is what we call a mistake.

Similarly, the self must be available for me to commit a mistake. If I extrapolate from the rope-snake example, which means the self should be an object for me. If the self is available for me, in front, as an object, then I can commit a mistake. But the self is not available in front of me because the self is ‘I’. How can ‘I’ commit a mistake?

That proves a point. Since, in the vision of the *śruti*, you have committed a mistake, you need to understand the whole situation differently. In order to commit a mistake the object need not be in front of you. Anything that is *prasiddha* or *siddha*, evident, ever present, is subject to an error. *Ātman*, the self, is evident. You cannot say the self is not evident. If you say, "I say that the self is not evident," then the one who says is the self, the 'I' which is self-evident. In this world there is only one thing that is self-evident and that is the self. Nothing else is self-evident.

.....to be continued



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Maha Sivaratri Puja

We welcome you to participate in the Maha Sivaratri Puja at the Gurukulam on Friday, February 21, 2020. We begin with the Nitya-Puja in the morning, which will be followed by Akhanda-nama-japa, Ekadasa-Rudrabhiseka Special Puja & Maha-arati in the evening.

PROGRAMME

<i>Nitya-Puja</i>	...	5-30 AM
<i>Akhanda-nama-japa</i>	...	8-00 AM to 1.00 PM
<i>Ekadasa-Rudrabhiseka</i>	...	4-00 PM
<i>Maha-arati</i>	...	7-30 PM
<i>Maha-Prasadam</i>	...	8-00 PM

*P.S. Please send your Puja Offering Rs.250/- to reach us on or before 20-02-2020. Use the form given below. Please make your Cheque or DD payable to Sruti Seva Trust, Coimbatore. Alternatively amount can be transferred for the credit of Sruti Seva Trust to Indian Overseas Bank, Chinnathadagam Branch, A/c. No. 064301000007129. IFS Code IOBA 0000643
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Book of Enlightening Laughters

Collection of Stories & Anecdotes From the Talks of Swami Dayananda Saraswati.
(Sri Swami Dayanandaji's lectures)

(007) NO GAME WITHOUT CHALLENGE

Imagine this great man who built a new stadium. He is a great sports lover. All his savings he spent on building this stadium. It is a very grand stadium. He wants to dedicate it to the town on a particular day. Even though he is a great lover of sports, he could not make it in any of the events. Now he wants to live through others and wants to fulfill all his ambitions by building this stadium. You cannot inaugurate the stadium without a minister. So the Minister of Sports comes and inaugurates it. On the inaugural day two national teams -- Mohan Bagun and East Bengal -- are playing a football match. All gates are open. There are no tickets today. The Stadium is full. People are enjoying the games. His own uncle from the village has come. He is sitting next to him.

Now the uncle becomes sad. He has never seen a football match before. The first time he is seeing one.

The donor asks his uncle, "Why are you not enjoying this game? Do you have any problem?"

"No."

"Are you not keeping well? Are you all right?"

"I am okay."

"Then why are you sad?"

"If you want to know I will tell you."

"Please do."

"I do not understand this. You have spent crores of rupees for the stadium. Is it not so?"

"Yes."

“You have also spent a lot of money for this inauguration function. Is it not?”

“Yes.”

“Then why did you become miserly at the end?”

“How am I miserly?”

“Look. There are 22 fellows there. You have given them one football. Why not 21 balls more?! What do you lose? All are running after one ball. If everyone has a ball all of them will be satisfied.”

Think of this! There is no fun or kick in it. A football match must have only one ball. Each one has a role to play. The centre forward has to move forward. The goal-keeper must stay put between the two posts. He cannot go for a walk on the sides. It is all well-defined. There is challenge in playing the roles. Then alone there is life.

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Editor.

2020 NewYear Talk by SwamiParamarthanandaji

First of all, I wish all of you a very happy healthy peaceful and prosperous new year 2020. You must be very curious to know what I am going to talk about. Today, I propose to explain one of the statements that I often repeat in my Vedanta classes. And that statement is that in a Vedic society, family is the basic unit. Whereas in a democratic society, the individual is the basic unit.



Thus, there is a very big paradigm shift with regard to the Vedic and democratic society. It has got far reaching consequences which are already experienced. Many of the changes are irreversible, but it is worth knowing, what is the basic vision. So when we say in the Vedic society, family is a basic unit, it means, Veda gives great importance to family life. It is the basic is the answer. And I want to share some thoughts with regard to this basic vision, and also why Veda considers family life as a very important thing.

According to the Vedic vision, the Vedic family is designed in such a way that it can fulfill all human aspirations. By human aspiration, I mean, all the human goals, which we call as *puruṣārtha* - *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. In modern language, they call it Maslow's hierarchy of human being. It is nothing but *puruṣārthas* only. While family life will help in the fulfillment of all the *puruṣārthas*, it will transform a human being also. To put in Swami Chinmayananda's language, transforming the animal-man into a man-man into a god-man. All these are possible, if we follow a Vedic life as envisioned by the Vedas.

In *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*, there is a section called *puruṣavida-brāhmaṇa*, first chapter 4th section. There, he talks about the first manifestation of Brahma as the creator of the rest of the universe. It says that, after Brahmaji arrived, he looked around, there was no one at all. There was no one for company. Therefore Brahmaji felt lonely and uncomfortable and he was looking for a partner.

स वै नैव रेमे तस्मादेकाकी न रमते Br.Up. 1.4.3

sa vai naiva reme tasmādekākī na ramate

Brahmaji was unhappy as an individual and therefore he looked around for a partner. Thereafter, he talks about how Brahmaji created Manu and Saharūpa and the details are given. The *upaniṣad* concludes in the section, that since, Brahmaji felt lonely, all the living beings including human beings will never be happy as single. So, the *upaniṣad* says

“*ātmaivedamagre āsīt*” ,

“*so kāmayata*” ,

“*jāyā me syāt*”

All the human beings also, having the genes of Brahmaji, they all uniformly want partners. Therefore desire for a partner and desire for getting progeny and desire for raising a family, the Veda says, it is an intrinsic desire of all living beings, including human beings. This is the fundamental universal aspiration or desire, which is called *artha-kāma-icchā*. *Kāma* means desire for a partner and *artha* means desire for wealth so that one can raise a family. Therefore family life fulfills the first fundamental and universal desire of a human being for *artha* and *kāma*. Only in family life, this *artha kāma* desire can be fulfilled.

Then Veda points out that if we use a family life, only for *artha* and *kāma*, we will prove that we are like all other animals. Because animals also get their mates and they also raise a family effectively.

So we also only get married and raise a family, we will prove ourselves to be an animal-man only. Therefore family life must be utilized to convert us from a mere animal-man to a man-man. Otherwise we will prove ourselves to be well dressed, sophisticated, smartphone wielding animals. That will be the only difference.

आहार-निद्रा-भय-मैतुनम् च सामान्यमेवतत् पशुभिर्नराणाम्
बुद्धिः तेषाम् अधिगो विशेषः बुद्ध्याहिना पशुभिर्समानाः

*āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-maitunam ca sāmānyamevatat paśubhirnarāṇām
buddhiḥ teṣām adhigo viśeṣaḥ buddhyāhinā paśubhirsamānāḥ*

Therefore family life is meant for *artha kāma*, alright, but it also must be utilized for raising our mind through *dharmic* activities. Therefore Veda prescribes several *dharmic* activities to bring about an internal transformation to develop values, to refine our mind, to remove our selfishness and to expand our mind to accommodate the entire cosmos and that is possible only by service. Therefore Veda prescribes varieties of religious and service activities for a *grhastha*. In addition to *artha* and *kāma* activities, many *dharmic* religious service activities are prescribed in the form of *pañca-mahā-yajña* which I have talked about very often. I don't want to get into that topic. Many religious activities are seeking the grace of god, grace of the rishis and grace of our ancestors, *deva-riṣi-pitṛ-pūjanam*. Many service activities are also prescribed in the form of *manuṣya-yajña* and *bhūta-yajña*. They are all to reduce our *ahaṅkāra*, our *mamakāra*, our *rāga*, our *dveṣa*, and to expand our mind.

Not only Veda prescribes all these activities as compulsory activities, Veda insists that they must be done by the family members together. It is very important that all these religious and service activities should be done by all the family members as a team. This is very important, because, only then, family will function as one team and one unit. Otherwise, each member will pursue his / her own activity and family will not exist as one unit. Different members will go out at different times and they will come in at different times and they eat taking from refrigerator at different times and they will never have one harmonious unity. The unity will be among the cooks, drivers and watchman. They will function as one unit. But family members will not have that harmony and cohesiveness. Then such a family may break up also. Therefore, for the sake of family unity, Veda said that all the *pūjas*, ritual and services should be done by all the family members to indicate that all these are called *yajña*.

The very definition of *yajña* is given as *pañktah-yajñah*. *Pañkta* means, every family *pūjas* should involve five members, *yajamāna*, *patnī*, *putra*, *daiva-vittam*, and *mānuṣa-vittam*. Man should be involved. Wife should not say “you do, I will go somewhere”. Wife should also join. Children should not go somewhere. They all should join. Thus, *yajamāna*, *patnī* and *putra* should go together. And of course, *daiva-vittam*, it should be guided by the scriptural knowledge. And *mānuṣa-vittam*, it should involve money also, for *dānam* etc,. Therefore, all the *dharmic* activities are called *yajña*. *Pañktam* means family should survive together as one cohesive unit. Because Veda was very much aware that family unity is not that easy. Because every member of the family has got his own her own personality, different ways of thinking and different *rāga-dveṣas*, therefore, bringing different minds with different personalities together is very difficult.

Gṛhasthāśrama can be compared to a delicately balanced coalition government. Family life also is exactly like a coalition government. If we are going to highlight the differences, there will be quarrels; there will be fights and the family will breakup. In a broken family, everyone suffers and the greatest suffering is for the upcoming children. *Gṛhasthāśrama* will require lot of adjustments. It may be very painful. But if *gṛhasthāśrama* should survive, that adjustment is required and however much pain is involved, a family must learn to put up with the pain remembering that family is required for *dharma-anuṣṭhānam*.

The common minimum programme for a family is *dharma* and *mokṣa*. For the sake of *dharma* and for the sake of future *mokṣa*, we should be together as one unit and work together as one unit engaging in *dharmic* activities. It is the vision that is given by the Veda. If every family remembers this and keeps *dharma* and *mokṣa* as primary, then that family will complete one full term of *gṛhasthāśrama* life. In the process *gṛhastha* will get converted from animal-man to man-man. *Artha-kāma-pradhāna* to *dharma-pradhāna*.

What is the full term of *gṛhasthāśrama* ? According to Veda, the full term of *gṛhasthāśrama* means, raising the children to become healthy, responsible, well educated adult. In the Vedic society, getting the children married also was considered as part of *gṛhasthāśrama* term. Nowadays it is very difficult because the children do not belong to Vedic society, they belong to democratic society. So they have got their own philosophy. But really speaking, getting the children married also is considered as a duty of the *gṛhastha*. When that much is accomplished, then *gṛhasthāśrama* life is completed. Children are grown up and the *gṛhasthas* also have grown up to become the man-man, i.e., *dharma-pradhāna* human being.

Once *grhasthāśrama* is completed, Veda offers a very beautiful retirement programme for those who are interested to grow further. Because animal-man to man-man is not enough. Man-man to God-man is the ultimate growth. For that, Veda offers a comprehensive retirement scheme, in which one retires from professional life, retires from social life and retires from family life also. Life is dedicated for only spiritual enquiry and contemplation, *jñāna-yoga-pradhāna* life consisting of *śravaṇam*, *mananam* and *nididhyāsanam*. Varieties of schemes are offered by the Veda. *Vānaprasthāśrama* is one scheme; *sannyasāśrama* is another scheme.

Varieties of schemes are available for the *grhastha* to take to a retired life style. In this, husband and wife, the couple who have completed their duties, the couple decides to dedicate their lives for only spiritual *sādhana*. They don't look upon themselves as husband and wife. Husband wife relationship is deliberately ended. They look upon themselves as co-seekers in spiritual life. They change their infrastructure. Also they change to suit the pursuit of committed *śravaṇam mananam* and *nididhyāsanam*, without social distraction, professional distraction and family distractions. In short, self-enquiry and contemplation. This is an option given to the *grhasthas* who have completed their duties.

Once the couple decides to lead such a life, they have an option to stay with the children or to stay away from the children. Both options are given. Whatever option is chosen, the idea is that life should be dedicated for *mokṣa-puruṣārtha*, otherwise, spiritual *puruṣārtha*. Once this step is taken, the role of the parents and the role of children get reversed. Until now, parents served the children, helping them to grow. Now that the children are grown up, they have to serve the parents to pursue their spiritual life style. It means, children should cooperate with parents allowing them to get involved only in spiritual activities, not dragging them to any one of the worldly activities. Not only that, children have to provide all the support to the parents, nearby or far away. Whatever is the type of support, financial support or maintenance of the infrastructure, or all of them, the children take care of them and the family is dedicated to Vedantic study consisting of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *upaniṣad*. As a *grhastha*, they said no time Swamiji. But now as a retired *grhastha*, they should not complain, no time. Between two classes, they should revise also.

How to lead such a retired life? Lord Kṛṣṇa gives a beautiful guideline throughout the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु।

नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु॥ BG १३ - ९

asaktiranabhiṣvaṇagaḥ putradāragrḥādiṣu

nityam ca samacittatvamiṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu BG 13-9

Gradually get detached from the family, the children, the grand children including the spouse. Detachment is the norm. In the family of the children and grandchildren, so many events will happen. Don't get obsessed with all those events. Family obsession must be gradually dropped and with an equanimous mind, one should pursue *Vedānta-vicāra*.

मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी।

विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि॥ BG १३ - १०

mayi cānanyayogena bhaktiravyabhicāriṇī

viviktadeśasevitvamaratirjanasmsadi BG 13-10

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम्।

एतज्ज्ञनमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा॥ BG १३ - ११

adhyātmajñānanityattvam tatvajñānārthadarśanam

etajjñanamiti proktamajñānam yadato'nyathā BG 13-11

May you take more and more seclusion, more and more study, more and more contemplation. And gradually grow into your own highest nature called *brahman* or *ātma*. This is called *mokṣa* pursuit. In fact *mokṣa* is dropping self-ignorance, dropping self-misconception and dropping the sense of self limitation and discovering the highest nature, “*aham brahmāsmi*”. This spiritual *sādhana* must dominate the life of a retired *gṛhastha*.

Even though, *mokṣa* is the primary goal, there are so many other secondary benefits also, and the biggest practical benefit is the ability to confront old age. Confronting old age is not that easy. Lot of fear, lot of anxiety, lot of problems, degenerative issues will start appearing as the age advances. There will be death happening around. Old age disease and death are inevitable aspect of human life. When we are young, we are not aware, but after retirement, they all will share and if I could confront them, old age disease, death and separation, if I have to confront, spiritual knowledge is the biggest emotional immunity. Just as we wear a helmet or a seat belt to protect us from all types of accidents, to face old age and disease and death, we require an emotional helmet, an emotional seat belt to make the last part of the human journey.

If the spiritual teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *upaniṣad* are available, we can say

यत् यत् भव्यम् भवतु भगवन् पूर्वकर्माणुरूपम्

yat yat bhavyam bhavatu bhagavan pūrvakarmāṇurūpam

Oh Lord!, let anything happen according to the law of *karma*, I am not afraid of old age, I am not afraid of diseases, I am not afraid of death also, because I have discovered my higher *brahman* nature.

Bharṭṛhari, a great person, writes in his *vairāgya-śatakam*, how an enlightened person should die. When death is nearing, he says, we should invite all the *pañca bhūtas*, the five elements which have gifted us this human body. So the human body is a mixture of *pañca bhūtāni - ākāṣa, vāyu, agni, āpaḥ, pṛthivī*. This body has been gifted not for enjoying worldly pleasure, but meant for discovering our immortal nature. So, before we face the mortality of the body, we should have discovered our own immortality. And Bharṭṛhari says, oh elements, all of you come, now it is time for me to give this body back to you with a note of thanks, because I have utilized this body very well. Now, I know I am *brahman*, body may go away, but I will continue to exist as *brahman* eternally.

I am merging into *brahman* without worrying about death and the separation. This is from man-man to god-man.

As a *gṛhastha*, I have *dharma, artha, and kāma*, but as a retired *gṛhastha* supported by children I pursue *mokṣa* and die as *sthitaprajña, a jñāni*. This is the Vedic vision. With the help of our own children hopefully, with Vedic society it all happens. In a democratic society, we don't know whether it will work. But this is how it should work. A Vedic family may not be possible now. But at least we can practice whatever is possible starting with *artha* and *kāma*, gradually shifting to *dharma* and finally going to *mokṣa*. It is the journey prescribed by the Veda.

On this auspicious New Year, let us pray to Lord Siddhi Vināyaka that we understand the goal of life and we also follow it. Before that we discover that we are none other than *brahman*. With these few words, I conclude my talk.



Transcribed by Smt. Anuradha and edited by students of Swamiji

New Year Talk by Swami Viditatmanandaji

Happy New Year 2020.

For the message of this New Year, we have selected the passage from *yogaśāstra*. A *sūtra* (aphorism) from *yogaśāstra* which says:

मैत्री-करुणा-मुदिता-उपेक्षाणां सुख-दुःख-पुण्य-पापविषयाणां भावनातः चित्तप्रसादः

maitrī-karuṇā-muditā-upekṣāṇāṃ sukha-duḥkha-puṇya-pāpaviṣayāṇāṃ bhāvanātaḥ cittaprasādaḥ.



How to attain cheerfulness of mind? How to keep our mind cheerful while interacting with different people in our day to day transactions? So, *yogaśāstra* identifies four kinds of people. People who are happy and successful. Then people who are unhappy and unsuccessful. People who are virtuous, abiding in dharma or virtuosity. People, who are sinful, who are impure in mind, having negative tendencies. These are four types of people that we come across in our day to day transactions. Each one of them can create disturbance in my mind. In fact, these people can only trigger what is already in my mind. The kind of tendencies that are stored in my mind will be triggered when I come across a given type of a person.

So, take the first person, who is happy. If I come across a happy and successful person, a person who is more successful and ahead of me in my opinion then usually it creates jealousy in me. Because it reminds me of what I could not accomplish and therefore I become jealous of that person. This jealousy is sign of grief or sorrow.

Here *yogasūtra* says *maitrī*. To a person who is better than me, more accomplished than me, seems happier than me, rather feeling jealous of that person we must create a *bhāvanā*, an attitude of friendliness. Why friendliness? Because if my dear friend is successful then I don't feel jealous. I will share the joy. *Yogaśāstra* says look upon this person as your dear friend. In that case you share the joy rather than feeling jealous of that person. Just turn around our mind, from looking upon that person as someone, different from me, unconnected to me, I look upon that person as dear to me. In this case, I congratulate that person, I will share the joy and my mind becomes happy.

Third is *puṇya*, which means *puṇyavān*. A person who is virtuous, who is recognized by a society as a virtuous person. When I come across this kind of people, then also I cannot stand before (accept) them. Because when I see virtue in that person, it reminds me of my short comings, what sins I am performing and what virtues I am missing. *kimaham sādhu nākaravam, kimaham pāpamakaravamiti*. Oh, how come I failed to perform that virtuous action and how come I performed that sinful action? This kind of guilt arises in my mind when I look at a virtuous person. It is amazing. Then says here, you may have *muditā*. Congratulate that person, be happy with that person. He is what he likes to be. I also like to be a virtuous person. We have value for virtues, I like these virtues. When I see a virtuous person then I feel happy about that person. Recognize that I like the virtues that person already possesses. I should get inspiration from that person, rather than condemning myself. An enthusiasm of becoming like that and that's how self-condemnation goes away. I have a positive attitude of growing, doing something better. That's how my mind becomes happy.

A fourth person is an evil minded person, who may be entertaining evil thoughts for me. He may hate me, dislike me, inimical to me, adversarial to me. My usual response is to retaliate. If he hates me then I also hate. If he wants to hurt me, I also want to hurt. These are one step impulsive responses. In each of these cases *yogaśāstra* says two-step response. Don't retaliate. Be indifferent to that person, leave him alone. Give that person a freedom to be what that person is. He hates me, alright that is his or her perspective. I don't need to identify with that person's view. The reason why I retaliate is I judge myself based on that person's view. When he hates me, I sometimes see myself as hate-able, which I don't want to be. Be indifferent. Don't identify with that person.

Don't judge yourself based on the view of that person. Let that person have his or her own views. We give the freedom to that person, what that person wants to be. I do not identify with those views, do not judge myself by those views. This way I maintain an objective distance between that person and myself, so that these tendencies of retaliation will not arise in me. Because a retaliating tendency also creates agitation in my mind naturally. So *upekṣā*.

Thus, *maitrī* is friendliness, sharing the joy with the person who is happy and successful. *Karuṇā* is sympathy for the person who is not successful, not looking down that person, not feeling proud, but be sympathetic and wishing him well. *Muditā*, I see a virtuous person I like to be.

Rather than pulling him down or criticize and pulling him down to my level so that I don't have to grow, I respect that person, recognize the accomplishments and virtues of that person and get inspiration from that person and get also an enthusiasm to become like that person. *Upekṣā*, I remain indifferent to that person who has negative tendencies towards me. Maintain an objective distance with that person, so that I am not affected by the negativities of that person.

In this way, *bhāvanātaḥ cittaprasādaḥ*. By deliberately maintaining these attitudes, the cheerfulness of mind can be maintained. So how to maintain cheerfulness of mind in our day to day life a very beautiful instruction is given by *yogaśāstra* which I want to share with you. I pray to Lord and our teachers that you are inspired to maintain these attitudes in your day to day life. First requirement is to be alert, as to what kind of thought is arising in my mind when I meet a certain person. When I find that the thought is negative then I should be ready to neutralize it by these stated attitudes. So, identifying a person, identifying a thought in my mind, neutralizing the thought and making my mind calm and cheerful. This is a process that ideally should go on constantly. In that sense our day to day transactions become means of our emotional maturity. An emotionally matured person is a cheerful person. So, in this way we make our transactions also *yoga* - a means of our spiritual growth. So may the Lord give you the insight, the strength and the discrimination to do this and may you enjoy this New Year 2020 happily and cheerfully.

Transcribed and edited by students of Swamiji

Satsang with Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Assimilating Vedanta

Question

Your presence is unequivocally divine. No matter what track my mind is on, as soon as you come, the movement slows down and the mind prepares for a major realignment. You bring a cheerful contentment reminiscent of the moments of secure contentment I felt in my childhood. It automatically clears whatever was there in the mind and opens my heart for growth.

Please share your vision of how we can make the most of our remaining time here to bring about a combined effect on the world similar to the effect of your divine presence on us.

Answer

Insulin secretion, which maintains the sugar level in the body, is produced and regulated by the pancreas. In one form of diabetes the pancreas doesn't produce insulin properly, and then one has to take the insulin from outside. In a second type of diabetes, there is nothing wrong with the pancreas; the insulin is produced, but the cells are not able to make use of the insulin. This is where the Ayurvedic medicines can help. Thus, you need not take insulin, but you try to process the insulin. Insulin is there but the assimilation doesn't take place. This second type of diabetes is similar to the position of a Vedanta student. Vedanta is there, but the assimilation doesn't take place. What is required to assimilate Vedanta? This is something that I have a lot of experience in understanding. As a seeker, I had experience and as a teacher I have experience, which is more rewarding.

What is it that inhibits the assimilation of Vedanta? My students have enlightened me on how to make it work. I work with the students; I watch them; I help them out; I listen to them; no matter what mistakes they commit, I remain non-judgmental. I know that Vedanta works. It works in a two-fold manner: I can let in only that much as I can let out and the love for *ātmā* must be there.

In the Upanishads you have stories, *ākhyāyikās*, where the father talks to the son or the husband talks to his wife etc. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.5.6), the teacher, Yājñavalkya, says "*ātmanastu kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ bhavati*" to his wife, Maitreyī, whom he loves. He talks responsibly and gives the best for the beloved. What he teaches Maitreyī is *hitam* (what is good for her) even though he is leaving. This *kāmaḥ* is a very beautiful word. *Kāmaḥ* can be the object of desire, or you can take it as a desire. The object is desired because of some fascination. It is the meaning of words like '*priya*', '*iṣṭa*', '*rāga*'. Their common meaning is 'something that is pleasing'. *Ātmā* is the most loveable; therefore, *ātmā* is *ānanda svarūpa*, essential nature of Happiness or Fullness. *Ānanda svarūpa* is *ātmā*; therefore, *ātmā* is the most loveable. It is said in both ways.

This is given in the *sampradāya*, tradition. It's okay, but my argument is this: whatever evokes the pleased self, I love. With the *sampradāya*'s argument, one can raise objections like some people are willing to give up their lives for another. Then, they have to say that giving up something for the sake of the other is what pleases the person. Thus, they go all around to get back to *ātmā* being the most loveable.

Vedanta doesn't work unless you love yourself. And unless you clear the *kaṣāya*, the unconscious inhibitions, which denies self love so you loathe yourself, you can't love yourself. Therefore, you start with self care. Self care begins with what one considers their self to be. One woman asked me for products for the skin containing natural ingredients. For her, self care starts with skin care. Then, you go to health care, then yoga, then mental health care through therapy etc., then "*ātmā vā are dṛṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyaḥ mantavyaḥ nididhyāsitaḥ maitreyī*." The self, my dear Maitreyī, should indeed be known – should be heard of, reflected on and meditated upon. I work with the most beloved, the self, *ātmā*!

First care for yourself, and then you will understand yourself. Self care is equal to self love. Self love is as good as you have love for others. Running away from the world will not work. The more you run away from the world, the more you run away from yourself. Swami Chinmayanandaji once told me, "The more you want to run away, the more you need to be here." He said this thinking of what was good for me, not because he wanted me to do some work. He didn't put his self interest in advising others. Never. It took years for me to understand that and I worked and worked. I never stopped.

Now, nothing works in my body anymore. My left eye doesn't work. My throat is gone. I cannot lift anything. Nothing works, but nothing stops. I cause despair to all the doctors! They should marvel, but instead of marveling, they despair. Now every day is a grace. As long as my head works, I can continue to work.

In these few months you have to learn how to work in the society. Make use of how to exhaust yourself until you give everything. The more you give, the more you love. The more you love yourself, the more you understand what is going on. This is the intake of medicine to energize the system. Then, your clarity increases.

The work involves both sharing this knowledge and doing things that will open up the heart. Seva and care involves whatever you can do to your own people. Those who are from other countries should go back and share these attitudes, if not these forms. Attitudes can be shared; forms need not be. Here there is an attitude towards money; money is Lakṣmi *devī*. You can share that attitude. Make them recognize that *Īśvara* is everything.

There is a story that after completing the *Brahmasūtras*, Sage Vyāsa felt sad. Nārada came and told him to write the *Bhāgavatam*. Vyāsa felt sad after writing the *Brahmasūtras* and after writing the *Bhāgavatam* he was okay! This is not true. The *Bhāgavatam* was written by a pundit, not by Vyāsa, but that's what they say. Similarly, first I taught Vedanta and then I started the AIM for Seva! So we have a volunteer movement. It is a great avenue to work for. In the process we grow and understand, and make people benefit. It all has to do with love for the *ātmā*.

A yogi by *aṣṭāṅga yoga* gets *ānanda-anubhava* and reaches a state of *laya*, absorption. A musician can also reach such a state, and can transfer it to those listeners who know music. Therefore, music is superior to yoga. Thus, a musician can cause a thousand people to reach a state of *laya*. Similarly, *seva* has the capacity to bring *laya*. If you can make a person feel happy, you can make the person grow spiritually. You have to make the person feel cared, not scared. One who does *seva* is happy.

You can learn in this period (of six months), by seeing how the infrastructure is set up, how to go about the *seva* work. You can do *seva* on your own, but we have a movement already in place in which you can learn

and make use of the structure. *Śāstra* is important. It is a blessing¹.

¹ Pujya Swamiji's satsang with students in the final phase of a three-year Vedanta course at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Coimbatore, 21 December 2004. Reproduced from the notes of Brni. Lasa, supplemented with Swamini Karunananda's notes.

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ATMAJNANA – ITS NATURE

Swami Shuddhabodhananda Saraswati (Mumbai) is teaching Mandukya Upanishad and Karika with Shankara bhashya since April 2018. LIVE Teaching is available on YouTube and Facebook. These classes are on every Sunday 05:25 P.M. to 06:25 P.M.

In the course of teaching the most import mantra 7 from Mandukya which contains unfoldment of *atma* in a unique way was being taught around April, 2019. The said *mantra* ends with a conclusion and exhortation '*sa atma, sa vijneyah*' (That is *atma*. Its *vijnana* has to be gained). A prominent question arises as to what is meant by '*vijneyah*' or *vijnana*? Bhashyakara has not commented on this word. Considering a lot of ambiguity and confusion regarding the exact nature (*svarupa*) of *atmajnana* or *Brahmajnana* this topic was discussed at a very great length. Vedanta is very precise about the goal to be accomplished and the means (*sadhana*) to be taken to. Beating around the bush cannot help. To ascertain the nature of *atmajnana* a lot of questions needs to be answered on the guidelines of *shastra*. In view of the importance of the topic Sri Swamiji discussed them in detail with thorough scriptural corroboration in 15 sessions. Below this, quite a number of these questions are given. They will give an idea about thoroughness of analysis (*mimamsa*) adopted during the teaching. The analytical teaching will have answers to these questions at one place or other though not serially. In some cases the questions are not expressly asked though they are implied therein.

The questions are :

What is an experience? ; What is meant by the word experiential? ; What is the knowledge? ; Is there any relation between experience and knowledge? ; Is there a rule that an experience can never be the knowledge? ; Or is there a rule that the knowledge can never be experiential? ; Or is it that in some cases the knowledge is experiential and in the other cases it not experiential? ; If so, what is the criterion?

What is a *pramana* (the means of knowledge?) ; Is there a rule that because *pramana* gives the knowledge, it can never be experiential? ; Is *pramana* independent or does it depend on some *saamagris* (pre-requisite?) ; Is Vedanta an independent means of knowledge? ; Or are there any other independent *pramanas*? ; Is a *pramana* infallible always in imparting the knowledge? ; Or does the *pramana* fail at times? ; If *pramana* fails, when is it so? ; What is *svatahpraamaanyam* ?

What is *pratyaksha* ? ; What is *paroksha*? ; What is *aparoksha*? ; What is the *aparoksha* entity? ; What is *aparoksha-jnana* ? ; Can the understanding of *shastra* be *aparoksha-jnana* ?

What is the distinction between *paroksha-jnana* and *aparoksha-jnana*? ; What is *aparokshanubhuti* ? ; What is *atmanubhava/Brahmanubhava* ? ; What are the implications of *atma* being *anubhava-svarupa* or self experiencing principle? ; Is there any distinction between *anubhava-svarupa atma* and *jnapti-svarupa atma* or self-evident knowledge principle *atma*? ; Are *sat, chit, anand* three distinct entities or it is one and the same entity/*atma*?; What is *triputi*? ; What entity enables them to come into existence? ; Is *triputi* an indispensable factor of experience or there can be experiences independent of *triputi*?

What is the meaning of the word mystic? ; Is Vedanta mystical? ; Can the knowledge of *atma* in its real nature be gained without being aware of it at least for a while? ; If one has to be aware of *atma* in its real nature in which state of mind it is possible? ; What is *Brahmasakshatkara*? ; Is *Brahmasakshatkara* a mere understanding of Vedantic scriptures? ; What is the *prajna* in *sthitaprajna* described in Bhagavadgita? ; What is *chittaprasada*?

What is the *prapancha-pravilapana*? ; When *mithatva* can be ascertained? ; Is the *darshana* of *satya-adhithana* necessary for *mithya-nischaya* ? ; Has *samadhi* any relevance in Vedanta? ; When can one be face to face as it were with *atma* in its real nature like seeing our face in the mirror? Is it possible? If yes, when or in which state of mind? What is *vivek-prajnasamadhi* ? What is *andha-samadhi*? What is the distinction between *vivek-prajnasamadhi* and *andha-samadhi*? Does *Bhagavadgita* speak of *Samadhi* ? Does *bhashyakara* Shankaracharya highlight the role of *samadhi* in Vedantic pursuit? ; What is *shodhita tvam* or 'I' in its real nature? ; When do *maha-vakyas* operate? ;What is the pre-requisite for *maha-vakyas* to operate? ;What is the *apavada* of *adhyasta prapancha* ? ; What is *moksha*? ; Is there freedom from birth and death in *moksha*?

Is *atmajnana* referred to in the *Paatanjala Yogasutras* ? ; Is there any alternate means to *Paatanjala ashtangayoga*? ; What us *aparayattabodha* ? ; What is *yogi pratyaksha* ? ; What sage Vasishtha says about the nature of *atmajnana*? ; Do the Upanishads speak of seven stages of *atmajnana* called *sapta-jnanabhumi*? ; Do the intensity or quality of *atmajnana* differ in different *lokas*? ; Which is the best *loka* to get the *atmajnana* from practical stand point?; Does the *chaitanya* nature, self-experiencing principle nature or self-evident knowledge principle *atma* cease to be there at any time and whereby self-experiencing experience of *atma* stops?

Does the self evident *anubhava-svarupa* or *jnapti-svarupa atma* depend on the presence or absence of *upadhi*? ; Is the *nitya Brahma nanda* experiential? ; Can the entity *ananta* / limitless be distinct from *paramananda/Brahmananda* Brahman? ; Has *Bhashyakara* Shankaracharya pinpointed where exactly *atma* in its real nature can be known? ; What is meant by *atma vijneyah* in the seventh mantra of *Mandukuopanishad*?

All such topics were discussed to ascertain the exact nature of *atmajnana-brahmajnana* with thorough corroboration of Vedanta *shastra*. All Samskrit passages were thoroughly explained in English. A thorough clarity regarding the nature of *atmajnana-brahmajnana* is essential pre-requisite of Vedantic pursuit. For the benefit of serious *mumukshus* and Vedantic teachers a set of 16 edited videos of this teaching is uploaded on YouTube (with the first one as a prelude).

Tune to :

YouTube :

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXdkWrxk_jfyHUZvkkDCLdw

(Atmajnana Its Nature by Swami Shuddhabodhananda Saraswati)

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[Report by Raghunandan Bangalorekar]

Valedictory function of 108 days Vedanta course at AVG, Anaikatti

On Dec 18th 2019, a valedictory function was organized to formally mark the conclusion of the 108 day Vedanta course. The lecture hall was decorated with garlands of flowers, and the path to the lecture hall was laden with exquisite *koLams*. A small but emotionally charged *pooja* was performed to Pujya Swamiji's *moorti*, with an *archana*, to start the final proceedings. Suguna ji, as the Master of Ceremonies then took over, to smoothly conduct the program which involved thanksgiving by various students, followed by *anugraha bhaashaNam* by both Acharya Sadatmananda ji, and Swami Veditatmananda ji.



Both Swamis urged the graduating students to concentrate on the values in daily life which is the *saadhana* necessary for transformation and acquiring *adhikaaritam* for *moksha*. Acharya ji started by quoting *manushyatvam, mumukshutvam, mahaapurusha samshrayaha.....* He emphasized the value of values, our commitment to them, introspection, prayer to *ishwara*, as well as the importance of *satsangha*. Acharya ji also reiterated that we ought not to make judgments on ourselves based on physical, emotional, financial, and social conditions. *shaashtra* is *pramaaNam* to know what/who I am, not our feelings, as Pujya Swamiji used to say. He later focussed on the instructions of Shikshavalli from Taittiriya Upanishad, let there not be carelessness about our *shaashtra* study, let it be a part of our routine. We students had chanted this section of the Upanishad at the beginning of the program, as part of our showcase of what we had learnt from Swamini Ammas in the chanting class ('*satyam vada, dharmam chara*' etc), finally, he emphasized the quality of gratitude towards our *Arsha sampradaaya*, our *gurus*, and their teachings.

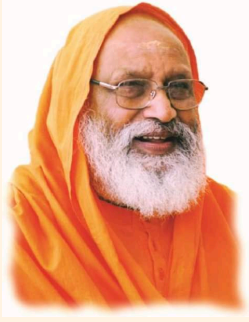
Swami Veditatmananda ji said that he was happy to note that the students seemed to have developed a great bond with the Acharya, and had also learnt a lot in spite of the discipline which could usually cause rebelliousness in most people. He congratulated Acharya ji, especially for making the students recognize that this was for their benefit. To fill up Pujya Swamiji's shoes is not at all an easy task, yet Acharyaji has managed to perform the role demanded of him well, said Swami ji admiringly. Swami ji also dwelt on how students are moulded by their teachers, and hence it is essential that we studied from one teacher for a length of time to ensure proper tuning, understanding of the teaching style, for developing a good relationship, and to make our learning more fruitful. Swami ji stressed on the aspect of *svaadhyaya*, and repeating what we study to firm up our learning.

In the end, all the students of the 108 day course as well as the 3 day camp lined up respectfully to receive the blessings from Acharya ji, Swami Veditatmananda ji, all the teachers of Sanskrit and Chanting, and also to receive *prasaada* in the form of books by Pujya Swami ji on Karma Yoga and Vishnu Sahasranamam. To get an idea of all that we covered in these 3 ½ months Karan Bhatt, one of the speakers at the valedictory, listed out the data: 149 classes of Bhagavad Geeta, 68 classes of Tattvabodha, 73 Meditation classes, All the temple prayers/ *mantras*, the entire Bhagavad Geeta chanting, along with 13 different *stotrams*, 82 Satsang classes where we learnt 8 different texts, and 90 classes of Sanskrit in 3 different levels, where students of the first level for example, learnt the samskrutam alphabet from scratch, and reached the 10th chapter of the Infant Reader, in such a short span!

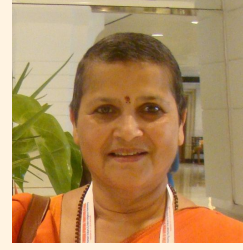
All in all it was a very overwhelming experience, which left many a student teary eyed, and emotionally choked, yet with a determination to imbibe the teachings.



-Report by Kavita



**4th Swami Dayananda Saraswati Memorial Lectures
10th Indological Conference
Organised by Arsha Vidya Vikas Kendra
6th-8th February 2010
Venue- Swami Dayananda Ashram
Rishikesh - 249 201, Uttarakhand**



Speakers

1. Narayani Ganesh
2. Prof. Anuradha Chaudry
3. Prof. Priya Vaidya
4. Er. Partha Bandopadhyay
5. Architect Rupa Bhaty
6. Raghava Krishna A
7. Atmaprajananda Saraswati
8. Sraddhalu Ranade
9. Sanghamitra Mohanty
10. Sachidananda Saraswati
11. R S Vaidyanathan
12. Dr. Bhavana K R

Odissi Dance Recitals

by Dr. Ileana Citaristi
(Padma Shri & SNA Awardee) and Troupe



Convener and Conference Director - Atmaprajananda Saraswati

New Year Puja and Talk at AVG

Swami Shankaranandaji's excerpts



Our way is to start Newyear is with a prayer.

Best prayer is May I have the capacity to accept what comes my way with peace and serene. May I have the capacity not to resist whatever comes to me in my life. May I accept what comes gladly and then exercise my freedom to respond in the most appropriate way. Human being's freedom lies in its ability to respond in the appropriate way, not in changing the situation. Situations come, Situations go. What I make of it is what makes the difference. So that is what makes our whole tradition different.

We begin with a prayer because we know there are several hidden variables in life. What unfolds tomorrow we do not know.

We grow as mature being and once that maturity is there, there is nothing more to be done in life because we are able to live with contentment.

Swami Sadatmanandaji's excerpts

At the outset, I wish you all a very Happy New Year 2020. New year celebration is ..as can be seen as a gesture of welcoming Ishwara who is in the form of kalah -time principle-Kala Devatha. And this kala is generally divided into three parts-past present and future. There is a matured way of handling all three kalas .Past to be used for learning. We learn from the Past. Present we use to express our gratitude to the God for what is given and Future we are ready to welcome.



And we pray to Ishwara "May we have this prayerfulness in the heart and readiness to do what is to be done. Then with open arms we can welcome this new year 2020. I wish you a very very happy new year 2020.

Swami Jagatmanandaji's excerpts (Tamil speech translated in English)

I wish all of you who have come to have dharshan of Lord Dakshinamurti and Pujya Swamiji, a bright, prosperous, healthy and wealthy Newyear. Every one expected a calamity might struck around the last week of 2019 because of six planets are getting aligned in straight line. Nothing of that sort really happened. This dhanur rasi is Guru's own house. Any planets entering here will be under the control of Guru and hence nothing adverse will come. Similarly we also under the blessings of Dakshinamurti and Pujya Swamiji will never come under any adverse situation.



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Arsha Vidya Pitham

Swami Dayananda Ashram, Swami Dayananda Nagar, RISHIKESH: 249137

We are pleased to announce the commencement of a long term residential course in Vedanta, Sanskrit and allied subjects for a period of three years, likely to start on 26th October 2020. This will be preceded by a one month course from 5th August to 3rd September, 2020.

- Separate application forms for the one month and long term course are appended. Those who wish to join the long term course have to go through the one month course while those who wish to join the one month course need not necessarily join the long term course.
- The last date for submission of application is 30th April, 2020. Those selected for the one month course will be intimated by the end of May 2020.
- Accomodation will be on shared basis for the one month course.
- Those who join the one month course and wish to continue for the long term course will not have direct entry but will go through the selection process.
- The teaching is offered free of any cost. However, the ashram is run on voluntary donations. So voluntary donations are welcome.
- Foreigners applying for the one month course may come on a visitor's visa. Once selected for the long term course, process for student's visa will be initiated.

Qualifications for joining the one month/three year course

- Graduates who know to read/write /speak good English.
- Students below the age of 40 years (subject to exceptions) and bachelors will be preferred for three year course.
- The climate in Rishikesh is extremely hot summers and extremely cold winters. Students must have the capacity to endure the same.
- A daily routine for students to follow is enclosed along with application forms for one month and three year courses along with the syllabus.
- All classes will be compulsory.

other details are available in the website. The address is www.dayananda.org

Completed application forms with a PP size photograph may be sent to avp3year2020@gmail.com. For any further details you may write to us at the same address.

RISHIKESH

SWAMI SAKSHATKRTANANDA SARASWATI, CHIEF ACARYA



Cow Puja



Cow Puja



Cow Puja



Surya Narayana Puja



Surya Narayana Puja



Surya Narayana Puja