



Arsha Vidya Newsletter

Rs. 15



Guru-pūrṇimā celebrations at AVG Anaikatti, Coimbatore



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**Arsha Vidya
Newsletter**

***In fearless voice we
proclaim***

***The Rishi's message
from all our house
tops***

***And bring the men of
different claim***

***To a fold of love
where oneness lasts***

GURU PURNIMA CELEBRATIONS

ON 5th JULY 2020, AT ARSHA VIDYA GURUKULAM,
ANAIKATTI

Gurupurnima celebrations used to be the one of the famous and grandly celebrated occasions at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti. This year due to the pandemic Covid-19 situation the function was organized with all safety measures like social distancing. Only students of the present 2 years course were allowed to participate. But it was a great pleasure to the regular visitors and associated people of Gurukulam who could not be there to participate and view the entire program online. The program started with the special abhisheka of adiguru Sri dakshinamurti in the temple. Then anujna puja at Gurutheertha was done and the puja articles were taken in a small procession towards the lecture hall where the altar of Sri Adishankaracharya and the Guru paduka of Pujya Swamiji was kept ready. The temple priests conducted a detailed puja along with Chief Acharya Swami Sadatmanandaji, Swami Prashantanandaji, Swamini Saradanandaji, Swamini Vedarthanandaji, Swami Vishwatmanandaji, Swami Jagadatmanandaji, Br.Sharanji, Br.Kumarji and students.

Swami Sadatmanandaji presented his anugraha bhashanam. Acharyaji's talk was very informative and the students were enthralled to listen about the significance of Gurupurnima.

Later Swami Jagadatmanandaji delivered a short talk in Tamil. Swamiji thanked the Acharyaji for giving importance for a Tamil talk and offered his respects to Pujya Swamiji and his Gurus at the opening of the talk. He highlighted about the *Gurumahima* referring a verse from *Tirumandiram*, "*Thelivu Guruvin Tirumeni kandal*" (Verse 27 / Tantra 1) which means,

"Clarity is seeing the sacred appearance of guru;
Clarity is saying the sacred name of guru;
Clarity is listening to the sacred words of guru;
Clarity is contemplating on the sacred form of guru."

Swamiji explained that the words of the verse have the implied meaning of *Shravanam*, *Mananam* and *Nididhyasanam* and one should contemplate the

MahAvAkya Upadesha and the teachings given by the Guru for clarity. He also referred a quote from Pujya Swamiji, once when a follower said to Pujya Swamiji that his talk was simple, to which Pujya Swamiji replied – *"I am not simple but clear."* Swami Jagatatmanandaji recalled a story of a pot told by Pujya Swamiji which is famous among his followers, which emphasized non-self- acceptance to be the fundamental problem.

The celebrations were concluded with the students offering their respects to Pujya Swamiji, Acharyaji and all teachers. Acharyaji blessed all the students with prasAdam.



Note: We could not publish the serial articles in this month newsletter due non availability of printing space.

- Editor

Guru-pūrṇimā Talk by Swami Sadatamananda

Today we are celebrating the day called *vyāsa pūrṇimā* , otherwise called *guru-pūrṇimā*. This day is called *vyāsa pūrṇimā* because today, *āṣāḍha māsa*, *śukla pakṣa*, *pūrṇimā* happened to be the birthday of Sri Veda Vyāsa . Sri Veda Vyāsa represents the entire tradition of *gurus*. Therefore his birthday is celebrated as *guru-pūrṇimā* as well. *Guru-pūrṇimā* means full moon day dedicated to *gurus*.

We are all familiar with the glory of Veda Vyāsa. His original name was Sri kṛṣṇa and he was also called Dvaipāyana – one who was born on an island. So he was called Sri kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana. He was also called Bādarāyaṇa because he stayed in the forest called Bādarāyaṇa . He got the title Veda Vyāsa because he compiled all the vedas which were scattered throughout the country and divided them into various branches, so that different families can protect and preserve the vedas.

विव्यास वेदान् यस्मात् तस्मात् व्यास इति स्मृतः

vivyaśa vedān yasmāt tasmāt vyāsa iti smṛtaḥ

He also composed 18 *purāṇās*. Therefore he has got the title *purāṇamuniḥ*. And he has written the *itihāsa grantha* called Mahābhārata consisting of 100,000 verses. He has written an important text called *brahma-sūtra* which is the book of analysis of the *upaniṣads*. He has also written the Vyāsa smṛti and the *bhāṣyam* on *yoga-sūtra* is attributed to him. Thus he has contributed so much to the vedic tradition. We are very indebted to him and therefore we express our gratitude to him on his birthday today.

He represents the entire *guru-paramparā*. There is a *ślokā* we chant on this day saluting our teachers, where Veda Vyāsa is presented as an important link of the lineage of teachers.

नारायणं पद्मभुवं वसिष्ठं शक्तिं च तत्पुत्रपराशरं च ।

व्यासं शुक्रं गौडपदं महान्तं गोविन्दयोगीन्द्रमथास्य शिष्यम् ।

श्रीशंकराचार्यमथास्य पद्मपादं च हस्तामलकं च शिष्यम् ।

तं तोटकं वार्तिककारमन्यानास्मत्गुरुन् सन्ततमानतोस्मि

*nārāyaṇam padmabhuvam vasiṣṭham śaktim ca tatputraparāśaram ca
vyāsam śukram gauḍapadam mahāntam govindayogīन्द्रamathāsya śiṣyam
śrīśaṅkarācāryamathāsya padmapādam ca hastāmalakam ca śiṣyam
tam toṭakam vārtikakāramanyānasmatgurun santatamānatosmi*

I salute the lineage of teachers starting from Lord Nārāyaṇa, Vasiṣṭha muni, his son śakti, Parāśaram muni, Vyāsa muni, his son śuka, great Gauḍapada ācārya, his student Govinda ācārya, his student Sri Śaṅkarācārya and his 4 disciples Padmapāda, Hastāmalaka, Toṭaka, Sureśvarācārya also called Vārtikakāra, and finally our own teacher. Since Sri Veda Vyāsa represents *guru-paramparā*, we express our gratitude to our gurus on this day. Gratitude is an important quality in life to remain happy. Gratitude is also important in developing devotion and *śraddha* in *guru*. Therefore we express our gratitude everyday and especially today to our teacher. We express our gratitude by doing *pūjā* to *gurus*, by chanting *stotras* glorifying *gurus*, making offering to *gurus*.

In some big maṭhas like Sringeri maṭha , today they worship *pañcaka-trayam*, three groups each consisting of five.

Sri kṛṣṇa pañcakam — In the center is invoked Bhagavān Sri kṛṣṇa , Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanatkumāra . On either side of *kṛṣṇa-pañcakam*, other two *pañcakams* are invoked .

Vyāsa pañcakam — On the right side are invoked Veda Vyāsa and his four disciples with whom he compiled and divided the vedas – Paila of *ṛg veda*, Vaiśampāyana of *yajur veda*, Jaimini of *sāma veda* and Sumantu of *atharva veda*.

Ācārya pañcakam – On the left side are invoked Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya and his 4 disciples - Sureśvarācārya, Toṭakācārya, Padmapādācārya and Hastāmalakācārya. Then *guru*, *parama-guru* and *parameṣṭhi-guru* are invoked. Like guru of Śaṅkarācārya is Govindapādācārya whose guru was Gauḍapādācārya who is called *parama-guru*. *Parama-guru's guru* is *parameṣṭhi-guru* , great grand guru. Also there are *parātpara-gurus*, *Gurus* earlier to them. All of them are remembered and worshipped today.

So we also today remember our guru, guru's guru and great grand-guru and we express our gratitude to all of them. Pujya Swamiji's guru's pictures are here at the altar. He started his vedantic study with Swami Chinmayanandaji. He also studied with Swami Pranavanandaji for a brief period from whom he got a lot of clarity on *pramāṇams*. He studied *brahma-sūtra bhāṣyam* with Swami Taranandaji at Kailash Ashram. Swamiji used to stay in a hut and everyday morning walk to class and study from Swami Taranandaji Maharaj. Such a wonderful mahatma! All of them are worshipped here today.

Swami Chinmayanandaji himself studied Vedanta under Swami Taponanda maharaj. He was initiated into *sannyāsa* by Swami Shivanandaji who was initiated into *sannyāsa* by Swami Vishwananda Saraswati. Taponandaji maharaj studied from various *gurus*. But he took formal *sannyāsa* from Swami Janardhana Giri of Kailash ashram whom he chose as his *guru*. Thus we remember today our *guru* and all their *gurus*.

Of course, we remember Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya who has written so many *bhāṣyams* and *stotrams*. The *paramparā* is expressed in this verse.

सदाशिवसमारम्भां शङ्कराचार्यमध्यमाम्
अस्मदाचार्यपर्यन्ताम् वन्दे गुरुपरम्पराम्
sadāśivasamārambhāṁ śaṅkarācāryamadhyamām
asmadācāryaparyantām vande guruparamparām

I salute the lineage of teachers starting with Lord Śiva with Śaṅkarācārya in the middle and upto my own teacher.

Always we remain indebted to our *guru-paramparā*. Whenever we are doing *namaskāra* or *pūjā* to our *guru*, we are not doing it only to a person but really we are doing *namaskāra* to the *guru-tattvam* or *guru-paramparā*. Because of that *namaskāra*, we get further commitment, more *śraddha* and more devotion to the pursuit of knowledge. This is one aspect of *guru-pūrṇimā*.

Today also marks the beginning of *cāturmāsya-vratam* of *sannyāsīs*. In olden days, *sannyāsīs* kept travelling. They would not stay more than 3 nights maximum in one place. But during monsoon, travelling was difficult. So before monsoon came, if the *sannyāsī* happens to pass by some village and if the people there are devoted and it will not be a burden to them, then the *sannyāsīs* may express a wish to stay there.

स्थाष्यामश्चतुरो मासानत्रैवासति बाधके
sthāṣyāmaścaturō māśānatraivāsati bādhake

We will stay here for 4 months, if it is not a disturbance.

Or the devotees themselves will request the *sannyāsī* or a swami to stay there and the people of that village or town will say-

निवसन्तु सुखेनात्र गमिष्यामः कृतार्थताम्।
यथाविहित शुश्रूषाम् करिष्यामो वयम् मुदा
nivasantu sukhenātra gamiṣyāmaḥ kṛtārthatām |
yathāvihita śuśrūṣām kariṣyāmo vayam mudā

Please stay here comfortably. We will be very grateful. As instructed, we will serve you.

What a beautiful way it is done! The swami does not thrust himself on them. It is up to the people to say yes or no and they on their side express that they are privileged to serve. Since it is rainy season, people will be relatively free, so the *sannyāsīs* will conduct classes on *upaniṣads*, *brahma-sūtra*, *purāṇā* depending on the capacity of the people. This was the tradition of *cāturmāsya-vratam*. But for *sannyāsīs* this became difficult, so they resorted to some *śruti vākya* - “*pakṣā vai māsaḥ*”, One fortnight is equal to one month. Therefore instead of 4 months they will stay for 2 months. Now a days also many *sannyāsīs* follow this. They don't cross the river at this time. Thus the *sannyāsīs* follow this *vrata*.

The third significance of *guru-pūrṇimā* is for non-*sannyāsīs*. During these four months some religious discipline is advised to be followed. From today we may choose to follow some *vrata*. *Vriyate iti vrata*, that which is chosen and followed is *vrata*.

Vrata is of two types - *tyāgarūpa vrata* in the form of dropping something or *grahaṇarūpa vrata* in the form of taking up some new practices. Either way it can be done.

Some examples for *tyāgarūpa vrata* - Some people are very fond of sweet. For 4 months or 2 months they give up that sweet. In *purāṇās*, it is said that the sweet which you gave up, you give to *brāhmaṇas*. Some people give up one fruit which they like or reduce one meal. This gives *punyam*. Or you observe *maunam* which is also a form of *tyāgarūpa vrata* because you are giving up the unnecessary talk. So something you give up for that period.

In modern times we have different forms of *tyāgarūpa vrata*. For four months or 2 months, one can stop watching a particular channel or serial or using anything to which a person is addicted or one can give up certain habits like eating junk food.

I remember in Bangalore we were conducting children's classes and I talked to them about this *vrata* and asked them to follow some *vrata*. One boy Akshaya was very fond of junk food. He got so inspired that he said- “Swamiji I will give up junk food for 2 months.” He really did it and afterwards he gave it up for good. Now every *guru-pūrṇimā* day he calls me and tells me- “Swamiji you told me about it and I gave it up. Now also I don't take it “. I was very impressed by how much determination this young boy of 12 years had to give up his addiction to junk food.

So you follow this *tyāgarūpa vrata* for 4 months or at least 2 months. But

make sure that it is not suppression. It is just to establish my mastery over the body-mind complex. One definition of *tapas* is – willful self-denial to establish mastery over my body-mind-sense complex. With this understanding, I drop something for sometime. This is one type of *vrata*m.

The second type of *vrata*m is *grahaṇarūpam vrata*m. You pick up something positive. Like we do some extra *japa* to whatever *japa* we do regularly. Or everyday chant *puruṣa suktam* in front of Lord *Viṣṇu*, which is very conducive for improving your intellect. Or do daily 108 times *parikrama* of a temple. While doing it we need to remember the Lord's names. Extra benefit of this is we will lose weight also. If 108 times is not possible, then we do at least 11 times daily morning and evening. If not possible twice, then do 11 times *pradakṣiṇa* once a day. This will help us to develop will power and also to invoke the grace of the Lord. Or do some other chanting like *Viṣṇu sahasra-nāmam* or *Lalitā sahasra-nāmam* or any other chanting. Or in *purāṇās* it is said that if one knows vedas and does vedic chanting in front of the Lord everyday for 4 months, it gives lot of *punyam*. That person will remain a scholar forever. Thus one should do something positive called *grahaṇarūpam vrata*m. You can do either *tyāgarūpam* or *grahaṇarūpam*. In fact, I suggest that one can do both of them – one variety of giving up something and one variety of adding something positive.

Many more *vrata*ms are mentioned in *śāstra* to get *punyam*, like sweeping or cleaning the floor of temple everyday or help prepare daily *candanam* or *naivedyam* or some extra religious discipline which will give *punyam* and strengthen your will power.

In selecting and following the *vrata*m, certain principles can be followed – It should be conducive to the setup you are in. Like if you take *vrata*m that you will chant loudly at 4 am in the morning. This will disturb the neighbors. So it is not a good *vrata*m. It should be a meaningful *vrata*m which will help create devotion or some positive *saṁskāra* in you.

Select a *vrata*m in keeping with your capacity, *samartho dharma ācaret* - You should be able to practice the *vrata*m without effecting the health. If you have sugar problem and you decide to semi-fast for 4 months, that is not a conducive *vrata*m. So don't take such *vrata*ms. Do it in keeping with your physical, mental and financial capacity. One good *vrata*m is giving food to *brāhmaṇas*. But you should have the financial capacity. If we are not having sufficient financial resources, then we need not take this *vrata*m. So our

vratam can be in keeping with our capacity. It is not that I feel so exhausted after *vratam*, that after that I cannot do anything.

Any *vratam* should not contradict with my main pursuit. Like if you say I cannot attend Vedanta class for 4 months because I have taken so many *vratams*. *Vratam* can be such that it should be conducive to my main pursuit. Like if you are studying Vedanta and you take *vratam* to chant *upaniṣad* or *suktams* daily, it will be helpful. Also one does not do *vratam* to show-off to others. Like I am doing this difficult *prajāpatya vratam*. In fact as far as possible, we do not talk to others about the *vratam* we are taking.

One more thing, by chance if we could not follow this *vratam* then we need not have any sense of guilt. We try our best to follow. Before you start your *vratam*, you declare in front of the lord –“O Lord, give me the strength to follow this *vratam* for 4 months or 2 months” as you decide. By chance some health issue or unforeseen travel happens, then without guilt you can let go.

Vratam is not meant for creating guilt. *Vratam* is meant for strengthening you, not weakening you. At the same time there should be no looseness or casual approach. There has to be alertness and there is prayerfulness, but without guilt. If we follow our *vratam* prayerfully, then it really helps as a *sādhaka*. Of course, for people whose life is already full of religious and other disciplines and they don't waste time for other things, then they need not take up any special *vratam*. But those who have some scope for improvement in their discipline, these *vratams* will be useful.

If you have already outgrown all these things, then you need not take gross *vratams* like giving up junk food, etc. You can take some subtle *vratams*. Like *satya vratam*, *ahiṃsā vratam*. For *cāturmāsa*, I will be very alert and extra careful for this particular value. If required have some provision for *prāyaścittam* in case you break the *vratam*. Or you can do *kṣānti vratam*. For 2 months I will accommodate everybody, not react. Or *anindā vratam*, I will avoid criticism and speak good about others or *aparigraha vratam*, not buy anything for 2 or 4 months.

In Chāndogya *upaniṣad* for *sāma upāsakas*, some *vratas* are talked about. It is a very beautiful description. In the second chapter, where *sāma upāsana*s are talked about, for different *sāma upāsakas*, different *vratams* are given.

Upāsana and *vratam* go together. For one type of *sāma upāsakas*, *vratam* given is - महामनाः स्यात् तद् व्रतम्, *mahāmanāḥ syāt tad vratam* - may one become broad-

minded.

महत् मनः यस्य सः महामनाः , *mahat manah yasya sah mahāmanāḥ* - Means not being a narrow minded person.

अयम् निजः परः वैति गणनालघुचेतसाम् उदारचरितानाम् तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

ayam nijah parah vaiti gaṇanālaghucetasām udāracaritānām tu vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam

“This is my own, This is not mine, he is outsider.” Such consideration is only of narrow-minded people. For broad-minded people, the whole world is his family.

We could see that in Pujya Swamiji . He did not have any such boundary that he will only help tamilians because he was born in Tamil Nadu. He helped anybody he saw. If he sees something happening in some part of the country, he was concerned about it and he wants to do something about it. Anywhere he was ready to help. He used to work for preserving ethnic cultures in different parts of the world. It was not that only his culture should be preserved. He wanted every culture to be preserved.

That is *mahāmanāḥ* – let me not have narrow consideration. Let us take this *vrata*m. Further it is described – how will you develop this *mahāmanāḥ* ? Sruti says –

तपन्तम् न निन्देत् , *tapantam na nindet tad vrata*m - when sun is scorching too much, do not criticize that why is it so hot.

वर्षन्तम् न निन्देत् , *varṣantam na nindet tad vrata*m - don't complain if it is raining.

ब्राह्मणाम् न निन्देत् , *brāhmaṇām na nindet tad vrata*m - don't criticize *brāhmaṇā* .

लोकान् न निन्देत् , *lokān na nindet tad vrata*m - don't criticize any place .

After doing all this, final *vrata*m is -

सर्वं अहम् अस्मि इति उपासीत तद् व्रतम् , *sarvaṁ aham asmi iti upāsita tad vrata*m

May you meditate that I am all. Let it be your *bhavanā* first. Afterwards it can become your understanding. This is the third significance of the day.

So on this day, we express our gratitude to all the *ācāryas* of our *paramparā*. We seek their blessings for the success in our pursuit and if possible and if required we take some *vrata*m to develop mastery and earn grace.

Om Tat Sat

** Transcribed and edited by students of Swamiji **

GURU PURNIMA AT ARSHA VIDYA PITHAM, RISHIKESH

Guru Purnima was celebrated at our Rishikesh ashram on 5th July 2020. The morning began with Vigneshwara puja and Vyasa puja performed at the adhishtanam of Pujya Sri Swamiji. Sri Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati, Acharya then began reading the sankalpa for all the donors who had contributed to the ashram, notwithstanding the economic setbacks caused by the pandemic Covid - 19.



This was followed by an elaborate ekadasha dravya abhishekam to Sri Dayanandeshwara by Sri Swami Sakshatkrtananda himself, in the presence of Sri Swami Suddhananda, Sri Swami Satsvarupananda, Sri Swami Aparokshananda, Sri Swami Parabrahmananda, Sri Swami Divyananda, Sri Swami Svasthananda and other Swamis and Swaminis. Abhishekam was followed by elaborate archana and upacharas.

The puja was followed by the chanting of Veda Mantras especially the sama mantra "setumstara" which Pujya Sri Swamiji always liked. Then followed the Dayananda Pancakam and singing of bhajans on Guru. It was a solemn atmosphere that everyone enjoyed. Prasadam was given to the senior Swamis and Sri Swami Sakshatkrtananda blessed the others by personally giving them prasadam.

Guru-pūrṇimā
Talk by Swami Paramarthananda
Saptabhūmikā

सदाशिवसमारम्भां शङ्कराचार्यमध्यमाम्
अस्मदाचार्यपर्यन्ताम् वन्दे गुरुपरम्पराम्
sadāśivasamārambhāṁ śaṅkarācāryamadhyamām
asmadācāryaparyantām vande guruparamparām

Today happens to be auspicious *guru-pūrṇimā* day which is very important for all spiritual seekers. For all the spiritual seekers, three factors are important - *īśvaraḥ*, *guruḥ* and *vedānta-śāstram*. Only by worshipping *īśvara* we will develop a desire for getting a *guru*, and we will succeed in getting a *guru* also. And *guru* is very important because, *guru* alone gives us the *śāstram*, the scriptures. The scriptures are the only means of self-knowledge and liberation which is the highest accomplishment possible in a human life. And the scriptures become a valid means of knowledge only when they are taught by a *guru*. Thus God gives *guru*, and *guru* gives the scriptural teaching and, the teachings give the knowledge and liberation.

All these three are revered throughout the life of a spiritual seeker. Before the self-knowledge we worship the *guru* for getting self-knowledge and after the self-knowledge we worship as an expression of gratitude.

आजीवितं त्रयं सेव्यं वेदान्तो गुरुरीश्वरः ।

आदौ ज्ञानाप्तये पश्चात् कृतघ्नत्वनिवृत्तये ॥

ājīvitam trayam sevyam vedānto gururīśvaraḥ
ādau jñānāptaye paścāt kṛtaghnatvanivṛttaye

And *guru-pūrṇimā* is the day in which we express our respects for *guru*, and for the entire *guru-paramparā*. Vyāsācārya represents the *guru-paramparā*. Today is *vyāsa pūjā* day, called *vyāsa pūrṇimā* or *guru-pūrṇimā*. Orthodox *sannyāsīs* start their *cāturmāsya-vratam* during which they stay in one place and share the knowledge with other people.

In keeping with that tradition I would like to share some thoughts on *vedānta*. And today I would like to take up a topic called *sapta-bhūmikā*. Literally *sapta-bhūmikā* means seven levels, *bhūmikā* means level, floor or storey. Seven levels of spiritual progress or journey, is the meaning of *sapta-bhumikā*. This is considered to be part of *vedānta*, a methodology of teaching, *sapta-bhūmikā prakriyā*.

This topic of *sapta-bhūmikā* is primarily found in a voluminous work called *yoga-vāsiṣṭhaḥ*, a voluminous work consisting of about 28000 verses. Originally it seems there were 32000 verses, but only about 28000 verses are available with Sanskrit commentary. This is the primary source of *sapta-bhūmikā*. This topic found in *yoga-vāsiṣṭha*, has been extracted by a great *ācārya* named Vidyāraṇya Swami, and he has presented this topic, comprehensively in a structured manner in his famous work *jīvanmukti-viveka*.

Another *ācārya* who has dealt with this topic is the great Madhusūdana Saraswatī who came after Vidyāraṇya Swami. And he incorporated this topic in his famous *Gītā bhāṣyam* called *Gūḍhārtha dīpikā*. And especially in the 6th chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, he has given an exhaustive commentary dealing with this topic.

The author of *yoga-vāsiṣṭha* is supposed to be Vālmikī Maharṣiḥ who is the author of Rāmāyaṇam. It is a teaching that was given by Vasiṣṭha Maharṣi to Lord Rāma. Therefore, it is called *yoga-vāsiṣṭhaḥ*, supposed to have been written by Vālmiki Maharṣi. Many research scholars of east and west consider that this is a work which has been written after Ādi Śaṅkarācārya time.

Thus, the primary sources for this topic are Vidyāraṇya's *jīvanmukti-viveka* and Madhusūdana Saraswatī's *Gītā bhāṣyam* especially the 6th chapter. With this background, I will first mention the seven levels that are mentioned.

Seven levels are:

śubhecchā शुभेच्छा

vicāraṇā विचारणा

tanumānasā तनुमानसा

sattvāpattiḥ सत्त्वापत्तिः

asaṁsaktiḥ असंसक्तिः

padārthabhāvanī पदार्थभावनी or *bhāvinī* भाविनी

turyagā तुर्यगा or *turīyā* तुरीया

These are the seven *bhumikāḥ* or levels of the spiritual upward journey. Among these seven levels, the first four levels are well known levels and we have already learnt them in several *vedānta* works. The words are new, but the ideas are known.

The first level of *śubhecchā* means acquisition of 4-fold qualification through *karma-yoga* and *upāsana-yoga*. Gaining the qualification and desiring for

jñāna-yoga, - śubha icchā.

Then the second level of *vicāraṇā*, refers to *śravaṇam* and *mananam*. *Śravaṇam* is consistent and systematic study of vedantic scriptures for a length of time until we gain the knowledge. Through *mananam*, we remove all the doubts regarding the teaching.

श्रवणेन अज्ञाननिवृत्तिः मननेन संशयनिवृत्तिः

śravaṇena ajñānanivṛttiḥ mananena saṁśayanivṛttiḥ

Śravaṇam removes ignorance, and *mananam* removes doubt. These two put together is the second level, *vicāraṇā*.

Third level is *tanumānasā*, it is the practice of *nididhyāsanam*. *Nididhyāsanam* means *ātma-dhyānam* or meditating upon my own real self, as understood from *śravaṇam* and *mananam*. So *nididhyāsanam* is not for the knowledge. Also, it is not for removing the doubts. It is for removing our habitual thinking pattern about ourselves and the world, called *viparīta-bhāvanā* or *viparyaya*, *ahaṁkāra-mamakāra-rāga-dveṣa - duṣṭa-catuṣṭayam*. That habit will not go easily. By invoking my *brahma-svarūpam*, I get out of the *jīva-bhāva* ways of thinking. And by going through *śravaṇam*, *mananam* and *nididhyāsanam*, I have removed ignorance, doubt, and habitual tendencies. That means I have got firm self knowledge called *sthira-prajñā* or *jñāna-niṣṭhā*. *Śravaṇam* gives *jñānam*, *mananam* and *nididhyāsanam* give *niṣṭhā*. All these three put together gives *jñāna-niṣṭhā*.

The fourth level, *sattvāpattiḥ*, is *jñāna-niṣṭhā*. It is the result of *nididhyāsanam*. *Tanumānasā* leads to *satva-āpattiḥ*. The one who has reached the fourth level is *jñāna-niṣṭhah*, *sthira-prajñah* and therefore is liberated. He is a *jñānī*. He is *brahma-vit*. He is *muktaḥ*. And because of the older *prārabdha* continuing, the *jñānī* continues to hold the body or limb in the body for some time which is called *jīvanmuktiḥ*; he is called *jīvanmuktaḥ*; and when the *prārabdha* ends, the body falls. The *jñānī jīvanmuktaḥ* becomes *videhamuktaḥ*. *Videha-mukti* is a *jñānī* merging into *īśvara* from *vyāvahārika* angle, or merging into *Brahman* from *pāramārthika-dṛṣṭi*.

Thus, with the fourth level, the spiritual journey is really over, because one becomes *jñānī*, *jīvanmuktaḥ* and later *videhamuktaḥ*. Hence the first four stages, are known stages.

Then the natural question will be what is the role of the next three levels, known as *asaṁsaktiḥ*, *padārthabhāvanī* and *turyagā*. And *sapta-bhūmikā prakriyā* specializes on this topic only and introduces these three levels. Through

these three levels, the *sapta-bhūmikā prakriyā* introduces an optional project for a *jñānī*. He is a *jñānī jīvanmukta* because he has already come to fourth level. Fifth, sixth and seventh levels are an optional project for a *jīvanmukta-jñānī*. Some *jñānīs* take up this project, and some do not take up this project because it is optional. No book or *śāstram* can compel a *jñānī* to do something or not to do something. Because *jñānī* is beyond dos and don'ts. There is no *vidhi* or *niṣedha* for *jñānīs*. Some *jñānīs* take this up because of the inclinations due to their *prārabdha-karma* and *vāsanās*. Whereas some other *jñānīs* have a different type of *prārabdha-karma* and *vāsanās*, therefore they don't take up. It is purely because of their *prārabdha*.

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि

sadrśaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛterjñānavānapi

To understand this project we should have some background knowledge. Before becoming a *jñānī*, in the fourth level, as a *sādhaka*, the *jñānī* had practiced *śravaṇam*, *mananam* and *nididhyāsanam*. And as a *sādhaka* he practiced *nididhyāsanam* which is called *ātma-dhyānam*, *svarūpa-dhyānam*. The purpose of *nididhyāsanam* was to remove the habitual tendency, that “I am a *jīva*”, “I am *kartā*, *bhoktā*”, etc. So *viparītabhāvanā-nivṛttiḥ*, removal of obstacles, was the purpose. And that purpose has been already served, by going through the level three and by coming to the fourth level.

Now the *sapta-bhūmikā prakriyā* introduces the same *ātma-dhyānam* once again. For the *jñānī* in the fourth level, the same *ātma-dhyānam* is reintroduced, but, for a different purpose. And what is the purpose? By practicing *ātma-dhyānam*, the meditator can experience, great spiritual joy or happiness, because the meditation involves invoking my own *ānanda-svarūpa*. And when I am invoking my *ānanda-svarūpa*, my real nature of *ānanda*, the very invocation of my nature gives me a great joyous experience. So *svarūpa-ānanda dhyānam* can give *ānanda anubhava* at the time of meditation which is called special spiritual habit. It is different from all sense pleasures. It doesn't come under *viśayānandaḥ*, because in this no sense object is involved. I am dwelling on my own nature. Therefore, it is a *viśeṣa-ānandaḥ* called *jīvanmukti-viśeṣa-ānandaḥ*, *jīvanmukti-vilakṣaṇa-ānandaḥ*, *jīvanmukti-ānanda-atīśayaḥ*, which is an experiential joy. It is *vyāvahārika-ānandaḥ* which is available only during meditation. Therefore, it is *pratibimba-ānandaḥ* only. Because *viśeṣa-ānanda* is always *pratibimba-ānandaḥ*, and the *bimba-ānandaḥ* is always *nirviśeṣa ānanda*.

A *jñānī* can choose to enjoy this spiritual *ānanda*. It will not become bondage for him because his desire is always a non binding desire. And this *viśeṣa-ānanda* cannot be an obstacle for becoming a *jñānī*, as already he is a *jñānī*. It is a harmless pursuit of internal mental joy by invoking my higher nature.

अहमन्नम् अहमन्नम् अहमन्नम् ।

ahamannam ahamannam ahamannam

हा^३वु हा^३वु हा^३वु ।

hā³vu hā³vu hā³vu

So this is the project given by *sapta-bhūmikā prakriyā* for a *jīvanmukta-jñānī*, for experiencing spiritual joy through deep *ātma-dhyānam*, leading to absorption.

If a person selects this object, what are the steps to be followed by that person to succeed in this project? These steps are comprehensively given by Vidyāraṇya in *jīvanmukti-viveka* and by Madhusūdana Saraswati in his *Gītā bhāṣyam*.

Four steps are mentioned for enjoying this spiritual happiness. First step is, *jīvanmukta-jñānī* should become a *sannyāsī* if he or she is not a *sannyāsī* already. If he is already *sannyāsī*, a *vividiṣā -sannyāsī* he has nothing to do. Otherwise the first step is, this *jīvanmukta-jñānī*, if he or she is a *gr̥hastha*, should take up *sannyāsa*. Only then one can drop all the external worldly transactions, so that quality time and quality mind are available for engaging in deep meditation for a long time. Thus, all the external disturbances and obstacles are blocked by dropping all the worldly transactions.

The second step that is mentioned is *yoga-abhyāsaḥ*, especially the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga-abhyāsa* developing an expertise in the practice of the eight steps of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. Patañjali Maharṣi's *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* is specially designed for deep meditation leading to *dhyāna-samādhi*. One should become a *yogī*, an expert in *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*.

The third step is *vāsanā-kṣayaḥ*. Even if one blocks, the external disturbances by dropping all the worldly transactions, internal disturbances can come from one's own mind and registered memories. So much is there in the subconscious; these *vāsanās* keep on producing thoughts especially when one sits in meditation. These *vāsanās* produce internal blocks. One should take care of all these *vāsanās* which are responsible for disturbing or extroverted thoughts.

Vāsanā-kṣayaḥ is a big topic with several divisions of *vāsanās*. First they divide them into *śuddha* and *aśuddha* or *śuddha* and *malina*. Then *malina-vāsanā* is divided into three, *deha-vāsanā śāstra-vāsanā* and *loka-vāsanā*. Then the *deha-vāsanā* is sub divided into three, *śāstra-vāsanā* is sub divided into three, and so on. Huge topic, dealing with varieties of *vāsanā* which will obstruct one's deep meditation. Hence this *vāsanā-kṣaya* has to be diligently practiced by replacing *aśuddha-vāsanā* by *śuddha-vāsanā*. In due course, *śuddha-vāsanā* also will fade away. Thus, *vāsanā* obstructions will weaken. This is third step. Each step is really tough.

The fourth step is *mano-nāśaḥ*. For the special project given by *sapta-bhūmikā prakriyā* for a *jīvanmukta-jñānī*, for experiencing the special spiritual joy of meditation, this step is mentioned. *Mano-nāśaḥ* means *mano-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*, stopping or blocking all the thoughts related to the *anātmā*. Because the aim is *ātma-dhyānam*, the *anātmā* thoughts should not come and obstruct. One should develop the skill of removing all the *anātmā* thoughts, so that he or she can get absorbed in *ātma-dhyānam*.

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत्
ātmasamsthāṁ manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcidapi cintayet

These are the four steps: *sannyāsaḥ*, *yogā-bhyāsaḥ*, *vāsanā-kṣayaḥ* and *mano-nāśaḥ*. And if one goes through these steps and engage oneself in deep *ātma-dhyānam*, he or she can enjoy and soak in one's own higher nature.

And the *pramāṇam* for the special spiritual joy, according to *sapta-bhūmikā prakriyā*, is the bhagavad-gītā verses of the sixth chapter. That is why Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī chose the sixth chapter to elaborately deal with this subject, especially the verses from 20 to 28.

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।
यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥
yatroparamate cittāṁ niruddhaṁ yogasevayā
yatra caivātmanātmānaṁ paśyannātmāni tuṣyati BG 6-20

yogasevayā niruddhaṁ manaḥ, when all *anātmā-vṛttis* are removed, he can enjoy his own *ānanda*, reflected in the meditative mind. He enjoys his own *ānanda*, *svarūpa-ānanda* reflected in the meditative mind which is calm and satvic. Clearer the mind, finer the reflection, and greater the intensity of experiential *ānanda*,

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद् बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।
sukhamātyantikaṁ yattad buddhigrāhyamatīndriyam BG 6-21

That limitless *ānanda* which is beyond the sense organs and which is grasped by the intellect ...

And later,

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।

उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥

praśāntamanasaṁ hyenaṁ yoginaṁ sukhāmuttamam

upaiti śāntarajasaṁ brahmabhūtamakalmaṣam

BG 6-27

Supreme *ānanda* comes indeed to this *yogī* who is free from impurities, whose agitations have subsided, whose mind is totally tranquil, (and) who has become *Brahman*.

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।

सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शम् अत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥

yuñjannevaṁ sadātmānaṁ yogī vigatakalmaṣaḥ

sukhena brahmasaṁsparśam atyantam sukhamāśnute

BG 6-28

Thus constantly engaging the mind (in meditation), the purified *yogī* effortlessly attains the limitless *ānanda* which belongs to *Brahman*.

These are all the experiential versions for joy available for a *jīvanmukta* if he chooses to sit in meditation and enjoy, not if he is engaged in worldly *vyavahāra*. And a person who practices this and experiences this joy will progress. This progress is presented in the last three levels, which are - *asaṁsaktiḥ*, *padārthabhāvanī*, and *turyagā*. These are the deeper and silent, and of course greater experiential joy.

One who reaches the fifth level of *asaṁsaktiḥ* is given the title *brahmavid-varaḥ*. One who reaches the fourth level is *brahmavid*, and who reaches the fifth level *brahmavid-varaḥ*. When he comes to sixth level of *padārthabhāvanī*, he is called *brahmavid-varīyān*, when he reaches the seventh level of *turyagā* he is called *brahmavid-varīṣṭhaḥ*.

How does one differentiate? That is also mentioned. This *brahmavid-varaḥ*, who has reached *asaṁsaktiḥ* is able to remain in meditation and *samādhi* for a long time and enjoy the spiritual *ānanda*. He can afford to do that since he has dropped all the worldly *vyavahāra*. He will come out of *samādhi* and get engaged in minimum activities required for survival like bathing eating etc, and he wakes up out of *samādhi* by himself. This *svataḥ vyutthānam* makes him *varaḥ*.

Whereas in the sixth level, he is so much lost in meditation and *ānanda* ex-

perience that he does not of his own accord come out of meditation, *svataḥ vyutthānam nāsti*. Others will have to assist him to come out and make him to engage himself in doing whatever *vyavahāra*. He will be doing minimum *vyavahāra*, assisted and woken up by others, *parataḥ vyuttānam*. *Vyuttāna* means coming out of meditation, *svataḥ* means voluntarily, *parataḥ* means assisted by others.

In the seventh stage, he never comes out of meditation or *samādhi* by himself. If others try to bring him to *vyavahāra*, he is completely absorbed and lost in meditation. Even if they do something to his body like bathing, he will be completely oblivious of all these things. This person is *brahmavid-variṣṭhaḥ*, in the seventh stage of *turyagā*.

For all practical purposes, his connection with the world is completely broken. Neither the world can contact him. Nor he can contact the world. There is no difference between the seventh stage of this *sapta-bhūmikā* and *videhamukti*. Because from the seventh stage he smoothly goes to *videhamukti*, without anyone knowing.

So this is the project of experiencing the joy of *ātmā* meditation. But, even though we talk about four types (*brahmavid*, *brahmavid-varaḥ*, *brahmavid-varīyān*, *brahmavid-variṣṭhaḥ*), there is no gradation of *ātmā-jñānam*. In the sense of fulfilment there is no gradation because it is centered on the *brahma-svarūpam* which is common to all. *Jñānam* and *pūrṇatvam* will be uniform for all because it is not dependent on the degree of happiness that is experienced at the mental level. The degree of happiness experienced at the mental level has no influence on the fact that I am *nityamuktam brahma*. Essentially there is no gradation, but superficially there is a difference caused by this pursuit. Also the success in this pursuit also depends on both *prārabdha* and effort taken by this *jīvanmukta-jñānī*. And *sapta-bhūmikā prakriyā* is special only in introducing this special project of *dhyāna-ānandaḥ*.

This *prakriyā* has been talked about by another great author, Nīścaladāsa who has written the famous text, *vicārasāgara*. In the seventh chapter of this book, he briefly but brilliantly discusses this *prakriyā* and reconciles this *prakriyā* with the *prasthāna-traya-bhāṣyaṁ* of Śaṅkarācārya. He says a *jñānī* can choose this project or not choose this project. That will depend upon the inclination of a *jñānī*.

This is the *sapta-bhūmikā prakriyā* of *yogavāsiṣṭha*, of *jīvanmuktiviveka* and of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's *gītā-bhāṣyaṁ*. It is worth knowing, whether we

choose to practice it or not. With this I would like to complete my *guru-pūrṇimā* talk.

ओं पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

om pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyate |

pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate ||

om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

*** Transcribed and edited by students of Swamiji ***



Guru-pūrṇimā Talk by Swami Veditatmananda

Hari Om, today is *guru-pūrṇimā*, well the *guru* himself can be compared with *pūrṇimā*, the *pūrṇacandrā*. *Pūrṇimā* is the full moon night. When the moon shines in its all glory and this full moon on one hand removes all the darkness and on the other hand, also imparts joy, pleasure and happiness. The sun also removes darkness, but then sun creates heat and thereby creates pain, sufferings and *tāpa*. The moon also removes the darkness and we have all the joy or happiness.

The saints have sung the glory of the *gurus*. Today, I will share with you, the glory that is sung by a saint. It just happens that here we have completed a text called Advaita Makaranda. This is composed by a sage called Laksmidhara Kavi, upon which is written the *ṭikā* or commentary by another great sage, Swayamprakasa Yathi. So, Swayamprakasa Yathi has completed his *ṭikā* or commentary and concludes it saluting his *guru* and describes his *guru*. Why am I sharing this with you? That is because the description can very well apply to our *guru* also.

The name of the *guru* of Swayamprakasa Yathi, was Kaivalyānanda , Kaivalyānanda yogīndra. So Kaivalyānanda must be the name of his *guru*. He is called *yogīndra*, the most exalted among the *yogīs*.

श्रीकैवल्यानन्दयोगीन्द्र पादपद्मद्वन्द्वे निःस्रवन्मोक्षसारे

शुद्धैर्हम्सैः सेविते सुप्रसन्ने मच्चेतोऽर्थी भृङ्गलीलां विधत्ताम्

śrīkaivalyānandayogīndra pādapadmadvande niḥsravanmokṣasāre

śuddhairhamsaiḥ sevite suprasanne macceto'rthī bhṛṅgalīlām vidhattām

Śrīkaivalyānanda yogīndra pādapadmadvande

Pāda-padma-dvande - the two feet of my *guru* Śrī Kaivalyānanda Yogīndra are like padma, are like the lotus. The pair of the lotuses is in the form of the two delicate feet of my *guru* Śrī Kaivalyānanda Yogīndra .

niḥsravanmokṣasāre - (oozing) from the blooming lotus feet of the *guru*, honey of *mokṣa* is oozing out.

śuddhairhamsaiḥ sevite - These pair of lotuses, *sevite*, are all the time served by, enjoyed by *śuddhairhamsaiḥ*, by the pure minded *hamsa* or the swan. *Hamsa* also means *parama-hamsa*, the *sannyāsīs*. They are called just as *hamsas*. Just as the swan is supposed to separate milk from water, so also,

parama-hamsa, the wise person separates self from non-self.

śuddhairhamsaiḥ, these pure hamsas, swan or the swan enjoying a pure intellect. They always enjoy this lotus, pair of lotuses in the form of feet of teacher.

śuddhairhamsaiḥ sevite, pādapadmadvande

This *pādapadmadvande*, this pair of lotuses, *sevite*, is always served by, always contemplated by, always meditated upon by the *śuddhairhamsaiḥ*, the swans, the sages enjoying their very feet of discrimination. They always meditate upon this pair of lotuses in the form of my teacher. Then what do you want?

macceto'rthī bhṛṅgalīlām vidhattām

Maccetaḥ arthī - My mind, which is desirous, *arthī*. What does my mind desire? It desires *mokṣa*. Look at this. The feet of my teacher, the lotuses, from that the *mokṣasāre* is oozing constantly. So my mind assumes the state of *bhṛṅga* or *bhramara* or bumble bee. You know *bhramara*, the bumble bee, the large black bee. That bee always goes to the lotus. It is the connoisseur of the *rasa* or the honey in that lotus. *Bhramara* will not go to any other flower. It only enjoys the honey oozing from the full bloomed lotus.

Oh my mind! we also become a *bhṛṅga* we also become a bumble bee and constantly enjoy the *rasa*, the *ānanda*, the *mokṣasāre* constantly oozing from the full bloomed lotuses of the two feet of my teacher, Śrī Kaivalyānanda Yogīndra.

Oh mind! constantly meditate upon the lotus feet of the teacher. So meditation upon the lotus feet of the teacher also is prescribed as a means of knowledge. Because feet are those that support, they are the *adhiṣṭāṇam* and this knowledge upon which the teacher of course is sustained. There, where the knowledge and all the great qualities of the teacher, all of them ultimately are all concentrated in the feet of the teacher. He, here instructs, urges his mind to constantly meditate upon the lotus feet of the teacher. The feet are beautiful, like lotus, the full bloomed lotus. They are fragrant, they are sweet, oozing the *rasa*, oozing the very *rasa* of the knowledge, the liberation.

So, here, this great sage Swayamprakasa Yathi prescribes the meditation upon the lotus feet of the teacher as a means of enjoying the *rasa*, the es-

sence of *mokṣa*, of liberation, of knowledge and he is very practical. Rather than my trying to extract the *rasa* or the joy from statements of Vedanta, instead of that, why not I go where the *rasa* is readily available? That is the lotus feet of my teacher from which the essence, *rasa*, sad of *mokṣa* is constantly oozing. So I can easily part take of that oh mind! meditate upon the two lotus feet of the teacher.

So this is what we also pray today, on the day of *guru-pūrṇimā* that our mind may meditate upon the lotus feet of the teacher. We did *pāda-pūja* today. That is why we talked about the *pāda*, the feet, the lotus feet and *pāda-pūja* is of course, worshipping the feet, meditating upon the feet, because the feet of the teacher represents all that the teacher stands for, the fame, the liberation, the joy the love. All these *rasa*, the essence, is oozing out constantly, thereby it is easier way rather than my trying to extract all the *rasa* from all the scriptures. It is easy for me to get it by meditating upon the feet of the teacher.

And what is the nature of meditation? Like a *bhṛṅga*, like a bumble bee you can see he is meditating upon totally focused upon the honey or *rasa* as in which is coming out, which is extracting from the lotus. And so also the mind may be totally focused upon the lotus feet. You will find from there the *rasa*, the sap, the joy of knowledge and liberation is oozing. You drink it. Enjoy the *rasa*. So, today also I pray to our great teacher to help us all to meditate upon his feet, to meditate upon him. We are all lazy. We are trying to do what all he did. We already have a short cut, by simply meditating upon him, thinking about him, his glories, his greatness, his knowledge, his compassion, his light heartedness, his freedom, his joy. We imbibe those things so that we also become that. With that prayer, I conclude. Hari Om.



Starting on Shankara Jayanti 28th April 2020, Advaita Academy organized a one month festival of oneness online, celebrating the life, works and teachings of Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya. In a total of 112 talks and 22 performances many teachers from Arsha Vidya across the world were invited to speak. **The speakers and their topics** in the order of presentation were:

1. Swamini Svatmavidyananda - How Not To Grieve
2. Swami Sadatmananda - A verse from Vivekachudamani
3. Swami Brahmanandananda - Adi Shankaracharya - Traditional and Contemporary
4. Swamini Satyavratanaanda - The Best among Yogis: Adi Shankaracharya's Vision
5. Swamini Brahmaprajnananda - What modern Vedanta can learn from Adi Shankaracharya
6. Sri. Bede Draper - Swami Dayananda, a living embodiment of the Shankara teaching tradition
7. Sri. Pulluri Srinivas - Tattvabodha
8. Swami Brahmanandananda - Brahman satyam and Jagat mithya
9. Swamini Brahmaprajnananda- Guru Ashtakam
10. Dr Jayakumar Ammangudi - Is Adi Shankara Relevant Today?
11. Swamini Satyavratanaanda - Introduction to Dakshinamurthy Stotram
12. Br. Sharan - प्रकरण-ग्रन्थः of Shankara Bhagavadpada, an introduction
13. Sri. Jaishankar Narayanan - Understanding Cause and Effect in the light of Shankara's Ghata Bhashya
14. Jane Cleary - Discovering Vedanta's Relevance in Today's World
15. Swamini Svatmavidyananda - A Taste of Mundaka
16. Dr. Sukavanam Krishnan - Why Globally Celebrate Shankara?
17. Vijay Kapoor - Sankara's Disciples
18. Swamini Satyavratanaanda - Introduction to Dakshinamurthy Stotram
19. Sri Shankara Hrudayam(Tamizh) by Swami Omkarananda
20. Sri.Kalyankumar - Is Shankara a revolutionary or conformist?
21. Swamini Pramananda - Introduction to Vaidyanatha Ashtakam
22. Br Suryanarayana - Adi Shankara for the Youth
23. Sri.Jonas Masetti - A Brazilian's Insight into the Heart of Shankara's Parampara
24. Swami Paramatmananda Saraswati - Challenges & Solutions to Sanatana Dharma - Vision of Adi Shankaracharya

Other disciple-students

1. Andre Vas - Relevance of Shankara to a Western Seeker and Why Shankara enjoys a significant role today. (studies with Neema Majmudar)
2. Dhyana Eva - Shankara and Maneesha Panchakam (German Talk) (Studied with Pujya Swamiji and Swamini Atmaprakashananda)
3. Smt. Sonali Ambasankar - Shankara Bhasyam on the Bhagavad Gita (studies with Swamini Brahmaprajnananda and Swami Brahmanandananda)

Performances – Nirguna Bhajanavali: a musical tribute to Shankara's Oneness by Smt. Chitra Rajan, Advaita in Performance by Rukmini Vijayakuma

Self-knowledge: The Only Antidote to Grief by Swami Viditatmananda Saraswati

Continuation from the previous month (June 2020)

Self-acceptance is crucial to the pursuit of self-knowledge

We cannot explain why certain things happen to us or why we are what we are. Each of us is born with a unique set of talents. Let us be happy with our talents, with what we can contribute. Let us respect ourselves and respect our place in the scheme of things. Every individual's contribution is important. If we do not judge ourselves by *karma-phala*, we can develop inner harmony. For that we must learn to enjoy what we are doing.

We must also learn to seek approval from ourselves, not from someone else. Our non-acceptance of ourselves is a very big problem. It is the reason that we seek the approval of others. Within reasonable limits, this is alright. However, others have their own agenda and we may not get the appreciation we seek from them. Therefore, we must learn to accept ourselves and acknowledge our place in the scheme of things. We may feel that our contributions are insignificant, but the scheme is indeed incomplete without us. This is not a matter of pride but a matter of recognition. Recognize your role in the scheme of things. Recognize your opportunity to contribute. Your duty is to become as good a contributor as you can be. You have to put your best effort into what you are doing and learn to enjoy what you are doing.

We may not be as important as someone else in the scheme of things. But we are important, nevertheless. We are all created by *Īśvara*. We are given this body-mind complex and the power to know, the power to will, and the power to act. Then why not accept the judgment of *Īśvara* who has placed us in this scheme of things? Accept it gracefully. Our disposition of mind, attitude towards ourselves, and acceptance of ourselves is far more important than the *karma* we perform. We have to consciously evolve to adopt that vision.

We have to become simple or undemanding and live in harmony with ourselves without inner conflict and without any kind of angularities, twists, or turns in the mind. *Dharma* is the means to gain the pleased self, and the goal must be to achieve a tranquil mind. We have to let go of the benefits that appear to come by compromising the values. Some self-sacrifice is initially involved when we decide never to compromise the values.

Self-knowledge is the only antidote to grief

There is only one source of consistent happiness, and it is the knowledge of the

self. Inert objects cannot give us happiness. Whenever we are enjoying something, we imagine that we are enjoying an object. However, that object is only serving to facilitate the manifestation of the happiness which is our own nature. The satisfaction that we derive upon doing something good out of free will is the real happiness of the self.

Don't judge an action by its outcome. Judge it by the nature of the action itself. This will make every action an occasion for us to entertain the right attitude and act in accordance with *dharma*. Every action is an opportunity for us to contribute. Every action is an opportunity for us to recognize our place in the scheme of things.

It is not that outcome is unimportant to us. That is also important, but we should not allow the outcome to dictate or compromise our attitudes or values. It is the spirit of *karma-yoga* and our attitude that should dictate how we act, not the outcome. We gracefully accept the outcome for what it is. We have trust in the law of *karma*, in the scheme of things, in *Īśvara*.

As you sow, so you reap. Any *karma* always gives rise to *karma-phala*. We may even have to confront failure. The *karma-phala* may be different than what we expected, but our reward may come in a different form or come later. Wealth, fame, power, and pleasure are not the only things that matter in our lives. There are many other sources of happiness, such as family, friends, or relationships. We should aspire to do the best that we can do on all these fronts. Trust in *Īśvara* and in the fairness of things, and the reward will come in many different ways.

Performing one's duty is the first step to become free from grief or ignorance. The first phase in acquiring knowledge or giving up ignorance lies in performing one's *karma* and living life appropriately in the spirit of *karma-yoga*. Emotional maturity has to be cultivated. It does not happen automatically. We have to have the necessary attitude and deliberately practice the right values, such as compassion and forgiveness, to gain emotional maturity and leisure of mind. This alone will help us grow to be in harmony with our true nature.

Freewill, when used properly, is a great blessing. It is important to begin the process of gaining emotional maturity, self-purification, and greater self-comfort; the more comfortable you are with yourself, the less misery and grief there will be in your life. Even the present corona virus lockdown can be a blessing for such a person. When sufficient comfort is developed within oneself, the mind is objective enough to see the nature of the self. Such a mind becomes cooperative and contemplative.

What happens when the problem of grief is addressed? The Bhagavad Gītā speaks of one who has crossed over grief through self-knowledge in several

places. He is described as *svasthaḥ*, composed and self-abiding¹⁷; he abides in goodness, or love. He gains satisfaction in himself and even when alone by himself¹⁸. Such a one as he is totally free from misery. When all desires have left him, as they must also leave us, the wise person lives out the rest of his lifetime as an enlightened being. He moves about doing whatever he needs to do without any longing and enjoys peace, happiness, and total freedom¹⁹.

The knower of the self indeed crosses over or transcends grief.

¹⁷ Bhagavad Gītā, 14-24

¹⁸ *ātmanyevātmanā tuṣṭaḥ*, Bhagavad Gītā, 2-55

¹⁹ Bhagavad Gītā, 2-71

Om tat sat



Swami Sarvabhutananda Saraswati alias C Venkataraman founded GASCO in 1971. He was fondly called as Swamiji after he took sannyasa in 2002. He was guide and philosopher for many around the globe in the pursuit of happiness. He was humble and jovial person with noble qualities. He attained maha-samadhi at his home on 28th June at 7:30 am.

Swamiji attended courses in Anaikatti and Rishikesh.

SMT. MEERABAI SHANMUGAM

D.O.B - 19.09.1930 D.O.D - 30.06.2020

Meeting H H. Pujya swami Dayananda Saraswati was life changing and dominated her life entirely. Swamiji guided her into the depths of the rich lore of universal proportions of Sanathana Dharma.



After completion of the course she followed her guru's advice and took regular classes in Hyderabad and Chengelpet. She celebrated Gurupoornima with Great Devotion every year. She and her husband had always been an ardent contributor for the needy people.

She was taking care of two temples, one in Hyderabad and one in Padalam in Tamilnadu.

To show her devotion and gratefulness to her guru she has written a book about Pujya swamiji in Tamil titled Engurunathar and another book illarathil aanandam.

She was one lady who was always on the move and kept herself busy. She believed in holistic approach to life.

She met all Swamiji's and Swamini's and knew most of Pujya Swamiji's devotees who have fond memories of her and she was known as Meera Amma among one and all.



ARSHA VIDYA PITHAM
Rishikesh
Cordially invites you to the
FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ARADHANA CELEBRATIONS
OF
PUJYA SRI SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI
SEPTEMBER 22-23, 2020
at
Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh
22-09-2020, Tuesday

Gita Bhasya Parayana Two sessions : AM: 08.30 to 11.30 & PM 4.00 to 6.00

23-09-2020, Wednesday

Mahabhisheka & Puja in the Ashishthanam 08:30 to 11:00 AM

Release of Pujya Sri Swamiji's Book on "Dakshinamurti Stotram" 11.15 AM

Sadhus Bhandara - 11:45 AM

Mahaprasadam - 12:30 Noon

Arsha Vidya Newsletter

Annual Subscription: Rs. 180 /-

Published by: V. Sivaprasad

Trustee, Sruti Seva Trust, Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641 108

Edited by:

Ramachandran S.N (+91 94879 11949)

Printed by: B. Rajkumar

Rasi Graphics private Limited

40, Peters Road, Chennai 600 014 ; Phone - (044) 28132970

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Pūjā Invitation

90th Jayanti Celebration of
Pūjya Śrī Svāmī Dayānanda
Sarasvatī on Saturday, 15th
August 2020

We cordially invite you to participate in the arcanā live streamed through YouTube and receive the blessings of Īśvarā and the Guru. Please register through our website and email.

Mēdhā Dakṣiṇāmūrti Mūlamantrajapa-arcanā

- Mūlamantrajapārcanā & Dīpārādhana - 09.30 am to 12.30 pm
- Mahāprasādam - 12.45pm

Donations can be transferred for the credit of SRUTI SEVA TRUST to Indian Overseas Bank, Chinnathadagam Branch, A/c. No: 064301000007129. IFS Code IOBA0000643. Please register for participation before 13th August 2020.

Removal of desires is neither possible nor necessary. That I desire is not a problem. The desire becomes a problem when I come under its spell.

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Guru-pūrṇimā celebrations AT ARSHA VIDYA PITHAM, RISHIKESH

