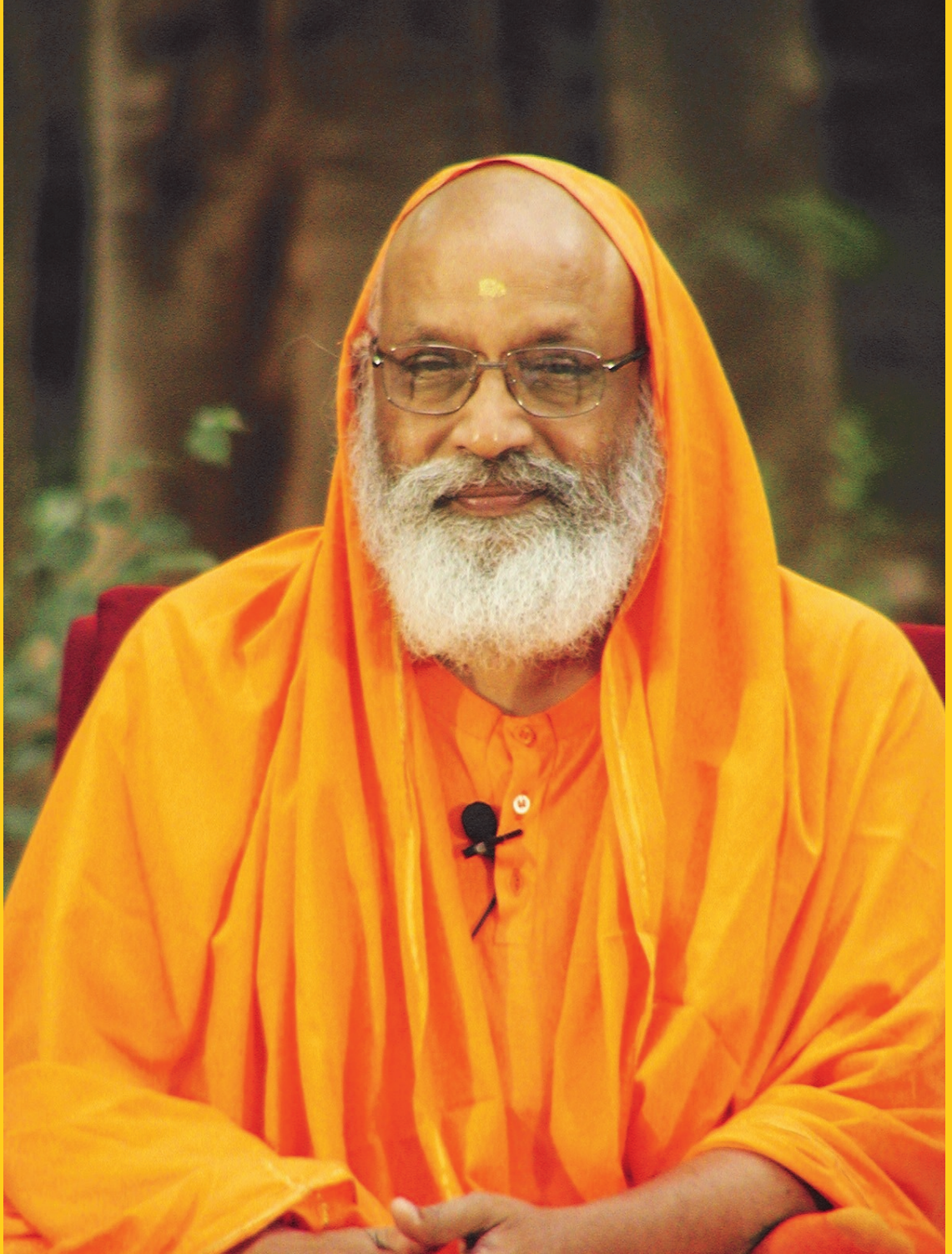




Arsha Vidya Newsletter

Rs. 15

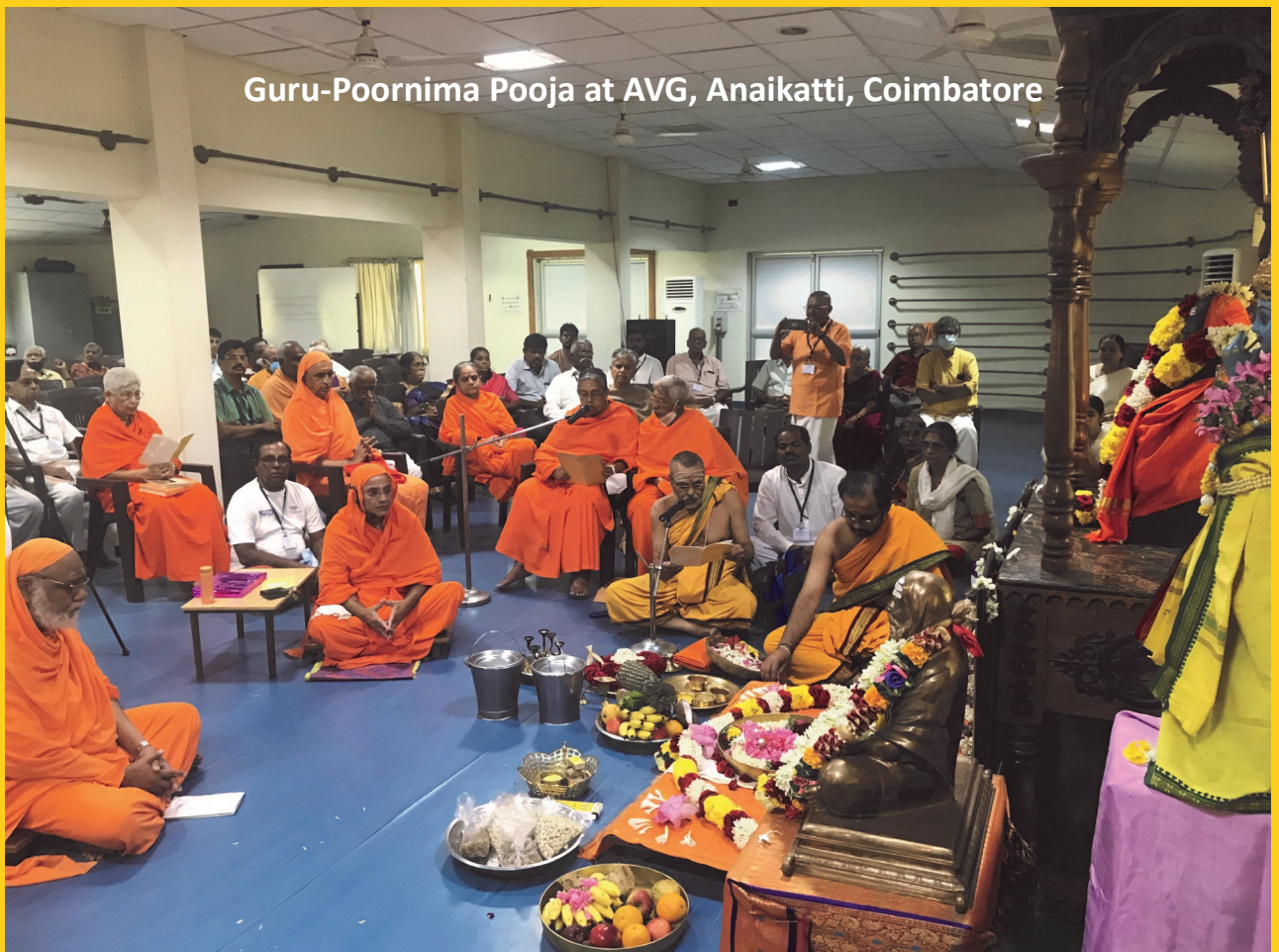


Vol. 23

July 2022

Issue 7

Guru-Poornima Retreat and Pooja at AVG, Anaikatti, Coimbatore



Arsha Vidya Pitham
Swami Dayananda Ashram

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

Board of Trustees:

Founder :

Brahmaleena Pujya Sri
Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Chairman Emeritus & Trustee:

Swami Suddhananda
Saraswati

Chairman & Managing Trustee
and Chief Acharya:

Swami Sakshatkritananda
Saraswati

Trustees:

Swami Parabrahmananda
Saraswati
Swami Santatmananda Saraswati
Sri M.G. Srinivasan
Sri Rajinikanth
Sri M. Rajalingam
Sri P.R. Venkatrama Raja
Sri M. Krishnan

Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam

72, Bharat Nagar
Amaravathi Road, Nagpur
Maharashtra 440 033
Phone: +91 98902 93641
Email: brahmapra@gmail.com

Board of Trustees

Founder:

Brahmaleena Pujya Sri Swami
Dayananda Saraswati

President:

Smt. Rajashree Shrikant Jichkar

Chief Acharya and Trustee:

Swamini Brahmaprakasananda

Secretary and Treasurer:

Sri Pramod L Jaiswal

Trustees:

Sri Ramesh Bhaurao Girde
Sri Avinash Narayanprasad Pande
Sri Madhav Chintaman Kinkhede
Sri Ramesh (Nana) P Gawande
Sri Rajendra Wamanrao Korde
Sri Yajnavalkya S Jichkar

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Institute of Vedanta and Sanskrit
P.O. Box No.1059
Saylorsburg, PA, 18353, USA
Tel: 570-992-2339
Fax: 570-992-7150
570-992-9617
Web Site :
http://www.arshavidhya.org
Books Dept:
http://books.arshavidhya.org

Board of Trustees:

Founder :

Brahmaleena Pujya Sri
Swami Dayananda
Saraswati

President:

Swami Vidadatmananda Saraswati

Vice President:

Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati

Secretary:

Swami Jnanananda Saraswati

Asst. Secretary:

Dr. Carol Whitfield

Treasurer:

Mr. Piyush shah

Members:

Dr. N.Balasubramaniam
Dr. Pramod Deshmukh
Dr. Kamalesh Gosai
Dr. Shiela Gujarati
Dr. Arun Puranik
Mr. Raghu Rao
Mr. K K Davey

Associate Members:

Dr.Soma Avva
Dr.Ravindra Bathina
Dr.Mahesh Desai
Dr.T.A.Gopal,
Dr.Urmila Gujarathi
Dr.Haren Joshi
Mr. Vijay kapoor
Dr.Prem Khilani
Mr. Sharath Pimlaskar
Dr.V.Prathikanti
Dr Bhagabat sahu
Mr. Rakesh Sharma
Mr. Bhagubhai Tailor

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Institute of Vedanta and Sanskrit
Sruti Seva Trust
Anaikatti P.O., Coimbatore 641108
Tel. 0422-2657001
Fax 91-0422-2657002
Web Site:
http://www.arshavidya.in
Email: office@arshavidya.in

Board of Trustees:

Founder:

Brahmaleena Pujya Sri
Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Paramount Trustee:

Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati
Swami Shankarananda Saraswati

Chairman:

Sri R. Santharam

Trustees:

Sri S. Pathy
Sri Ravi Sam
Sri R. Kannan
Sri Ravi Gupta
Sri Madhav Ramachandra Kini
Sri P.R. Venkatrama Raja
Sri Sanjay Jayavarthanavelu
Swami Jagadatmananda Saraswati

Secretary

Sri Ravi Venkataraman



Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

This is the seventeenth part of the serial article, continuation from June 2022 newsletter.

LOGIC ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

While you are analysing, however, do not enter into *dustarka*, wrong logic. Do not try to establish that *ātmā* is *jīva* just by *tarka*, reasoning. Instead, you should follow *śrutimatastarka*. *Śrutimatastarka* means *śrutimata-anukūla-tarka*, a reasoning that helps you understand what the *śruti* says. Do not be trapped by *dustarka*, which is pure reason and so on. Pure reason does not help here because the self is not an object of inference. The self is always self-evident, self-revealing and therefore it is not the subject matter of *pratyakṣa*, perception or *anumāna*, inference. You must see the fallacies in wrong arguments. Seeing the fallacy is what is called *mananam*, for which you must follow proper reasoning. Otherwise you will get lost somewhere in the jungle of reason.

That is the purpose of this *nyāya*, logic, and other related disciplines. Those days they did not have any other type of education for creating a capacity to reason properly. So they used to say that without the study of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, Vedānta is '*anyāya-Vedānta*.' *Anyāya* means without logic, in other words, confusion. But today it is not like that. When you go through school and study mathematics, physics and so on, you develop an intellectual discipline. Once you have an intellectual discipline, it becomes very clear to you when anyone says something that is wrong. That intellectual discipline is gained by proper thinking. In fact, it is better not to study Nyāya because it has a philosophy of its own, which is a problem. Physics does not have its own philosophy nor does chemistry, yet they give you intellectual acumen. People get lost in Nyāya because of its philosophy, they do not know what is right. They have some vision from the *śruti*, but it all gets lost in the jungle of these words and this reasoning.

Then afterwards, you do not know where you started, and you think that Vaiśeṣika says like this, Sāṅkhya says like this, Advaita says like this, and so on.

There is no *mumukṣā*, desire for *mokṣa*. Vedānta should be studied only by a *mumukṣu*, one who desires *mokṣa*. I used to wonder why the qualifications of a student include this *mumukṣutvam*.⁹⁰ Now I know why. It means that one should not study Vedānta academically. Only one who sees a problem will see the solution when it comes. If he does not see the problem, then there is no way he is going to see the solution. *Mumukṣutvam* must be there. Therefore, this reasoning should be used for seeing the fallacies in the contentions against what Vedānta unfolds. That is *śravaṇam* and *mananam*.

OVERCOMING SAṂSKĀRAS

It is very clear now and the person has no doubts whatsoever. This must be *jñāna-niṣṭhā*. Still the *niṣṭhā* has a problem. It does not come because there is a thinking habit, a *saṁskāra*. The habit is *dehe ātmabuddhiḥ*, of taking the body to be I, the self. Everybody needs to have this, of course. It is necessary for transacting business in the world, and that is not a problem. The problem, however, is the notion, 'I am as good as the body', *ātmani deha-buddhiḥ*. This means that if anything happens to the body, you become obsessed with it. Taking care of the body is fine, but if you have the notion that you are as good as the body, then all the fear, hurt etc., do not go away. This is the result of a *saṁskāra*. A lot of change has taken place cognitively, but there is still an emotional problem with its own background. You have to deal with that. If it is really a very serious problem, you have to resolve it through prayer and other means. But here we are talking about an average person who has some *saṁskāras*. *Ātmani deha-buddhiḥ* is something common, something that has been there for a long time. Therefore one has to do *nididhyāsanam*, contemplation, in order to eliminate the *viparītabuddhi*, this notion that I, the *ātmā*, am as good as the body-mind-sense complex. You take a word, such as *aham*, I, and see that *aham* is Brahman. See the meaning of the word. Contemplation on the implied meaning, *lakṣya* of all these words is called *śabdaanuviddha*⁹¹ or *dṛśya-*

⁹⁰ Desire for freedom, मोक्षो मे भूयादखे इति इच्छा

⁹¹ Contemplation in keeping with a word.

*anuviddha savikalpa-samādhi.*⁹² That is *nididhyāsanam*.

AVOID WRONG LOGIC

Dustarkāt suviramyatām; may you completely avoid all wrong logic. *Tarka* means *anumāna*, logic or reasoning. *Dustarka* is logic that has a semblance of reasoning. It is only *tarka-ābhāsa*, an appearance of logic. For example, a person adds cola to an alcoholic drink and consumes it. That combination gives him a kick. Then he adds the same cola to rum or whatever, and again gets tipsy. Next he adds cola to whiskey and again gets intoxicated. Therefore, what is common in all of them? Cola. So his conclusion is that cola gives him the kick. This is *dustarka*.

In another example regarding *mokṣa*, some use the expression, 'There are many paths to the temple.' So you can go right, you can go left, you can go by helicopter, you can go by car etc. There are many ways to reach the temple. It looks very simple and very convincing also. People also want different things, so you can choose your own path. They compare paths also. 'I follow this path, you follow that path,' and so on.

This is all silly, it is *dustarka*, *tarka-ābhāsa*. Because there is an example, reasoning is involved. Yet that reasoning is fallacious because I can give a counter example. One person says that *mokṣa* is achievable by many paths because it is a place to be reached, like the temple on the hill. This is clean logic. People talk like this. Whether they know the logic or not, they talk like this. But I say that *mokṣa* cannot be reached by many paths, like entry into the main shrine. There is only one door to enter into the shrine. Or, it is like knowing the colour of an object. How many ways do you have to know the colour of an object? Only one, so now that *tarka* is gone. If you are giving an example that uses fallacious logic, I can give you another example and an entirely different logic.

THE NATURE OF MOKṢA

Therefore the first question we have to ask is, what is the *svarūpa* of *mokṣa*?

⁹² Contemplation in keeping with an object.

Afterwards, we can think of the path. As the *svarūpa* of *mokṣa* is not understood, people create all kinds of silly logic. What is *mokṣa*? What do you mean by *mokṣa*? If that is very clear, you do not have many paths at all. If confusion is bondage, then resolution of the confusion is *mokṣa*. And how are you going to get that except by knowledge? If you say, 'I can get knowledge differently', that is also not possible, because no knowledge takes place without a means of knowledge. Therefore you require an appropriate means of knowledge. Any *tarka* will fall apart if it does not conform to what the *śruti* says. If what *śruti* says is true, then any *tarka* that leads you to conclude differently is not going to help.

One person says that the cause of the world is inert because the effect is insentient.⁹³ And he gives the example of a pot being insentient, as its cause, clay is inert. This is the logic of Sāṅkhya. So to counter this person, we also use the pot as an example. We say that a product requires an efficient cause precisely because it is an effect.⁹⁴ This therefore implies a *karṭṛ*, *cetana-karṭṛtvam*, conscious agent of action. Pot is a product, implying a conscious agent. Now this person's logic is finished.

The *tarka* we present is in keeping with what the *śruti* says: *so' kāmayata bahusyām-prajāyeyeti*.⁹⁵ It says *satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma*, not *satyaṁ jaḍam anantam*.⁹⁶ The *yukti*, logic, is there, and at the same time *śruti* is also there. This is called *śruti-sammatayukti* or *śruti-anukūla-yukti*, reasoning that is helpful in understanding what *śruti* says.

ASSIMILATING THE WORDS OF ŚRUTI

Therefore, *śrutimatāstarko'nusandhīyatām*; *śrutimatas-tarka* is called *śruti-anukūla-tarka*. You should that kind of *tarka* alone. May you pursue a *tarka* that is helpful. Anything other than what the *śruti* says is not going to help you anyway. What

⁹³ जगत्कारणं जडं प्रधानं कार्यस्य-अचेतनत्वात् घटवत् (Sāṅkhya school)

⁹⁴ यदखेकार्यं तदखेसकर्तृककार्यत्वात् घटवत्

⁹⁵ 'He desired, 'May I become many' (Taittirīyopaniṣad 2.6)

⁹⁶ Brahman is existence, consciousness, limitless, NOT existence, inert, limitless.

kind of *mokṣa* will you get from another *tarka*? That means you let all your reasoning help you assimilate what the *śruti* says. What is unfolded by the *śruti* here is to be understood by you without any doubt and therefore you must use reasoning. Reasoning is meant for assimilation, however, and not to prove anything. *Śruti* proves it, *śruti* unfolds it, but *tarka* is useful in eliminating all doubts. In this way, the *tarka* helps you assimilate the vision. This is what is called *śrutimatastarka*. This is *mananam*.

Let us take the example above and assume that the *jagat-kāraṇam*, the cause of the world, is inert. If so, then it is other than yourself. You know the world, the product is inert. Now if you go one step further, you conclude that the cause is also inert. Even if you could logically arrive at that, which is not possible, what do you get out of it? You remain the same individual. If the cause of the world is inert, then my mind-body-sense complex, everything, is born of the inert. That is why there is this kind of thinking also. *Jagat-kāraṇaṁ jaḍam* does not help you at all.

But suppose you say that the cause of the world is *brahma-caitanya*, Brahman which is consciousness. And that Brahman is *ekam*, one, and *advitīyam*, without a second. Then, you are released. Nothing else will stand up to argument or scrutiny anyway. In the *śruti*, we have a very clean arrangement. First, *ātmā* is to be seen, in other words, understood. That is the first *vākya*; *ātmā* is to be understood by you. For that you require a *pramāṇa*, which is why the verse says *śrutiśirovākyaṁ samākarṇyatām*.⁹⁷ Then, after using the *pramāṇa*, you have to exactly understand the *tātparya*, vision of the *śruti*. This means that analysis is involved in the *śravaṇam* itself. *Śravaṇam* includes not only what you get out of the *śruti*, but also analysis of the *śruti-vākyas*. Therefore *vākyārthaśca vicāryatām, śrutiśiraḥ pakṣaḥ samāśrīyatām*. That is the *tātparya-niścaya*, a clear understanding of the intended meaning.

With the help of the *ṣaḍlīṅgas*, the indicators involved in ascertaining the *tātparya*,

⁹⁷ Refer to Verse 2

you understand the meaning of the *śruti*. If that itself is enough for you, there is no problem. But generally, it is not enough. In that case, you have to assimilate this knowledge. For that, you should do *mananam*. Thus, in the Brahma-sūtras, the first chapter is called *samanvayaadhyāya* because it presents the *samanvaya*, the connection. All the Vedānta *vākyas* talk about *jagatkāraṇam brahma*, and that Brahman is yourself. This is the *tātparya* of the *śruti*.

With the various *sūtras*, this whole chapter of the Brahma-sūtra discusses how this is established. It discusses how all these topics are *param-brahma*, topic by topic. Each topic has a subject matter, a sentence that raises a doubt. Varieties of sentences are there. Some of the sentences are called *spaṣṭabrahma- liṅga-vākyas*, meaning they are very *spaṣṭa*, clear. *Liṅga*⁹⁸ means they are indications that help you to appreciate that *param-brahma* is the only subject matter of the sentence. Then there are sentences which are *aspaṣṭa-brahma-liṅga-vākyas*, meaning they have *liṅgas* which are not very clear. But no other meaning is possible and therefore Brahman is the only meaning for all of them. In this way, all the *śruti-vākyas* and even *smṛti-vākyas* are analysed in the first chapter. This is why it is called *samanvaya-adhyāya*.

Then the second chapter is called *avirodha-adhyāya*⁹⁹ because what is said by the *śruti* is not contradicted by perception or inference. Here, we again see the people who are outside the Vedas, as well as those who accept the Vedas as *pramāṇa*. Yet they arrive at something different because they give more importance to reasoning. These Vaiśeṣikas, Sāṅkhyas, Bauddhas, Jains, Bhedābheda-vādins, all of them are discussed. It is proved that they are wrong and what the *śruti* says alone is right. This is what they call *avirodha-adhyāya*. First *śravaṇam*, next *mananam*. Thereafter comes *upāsana-phalam*, the results of meditative practises and *nididhyāsanam*, contemplation and so on. So *nididhyāsanam* is also included here. The sentence *dustarkāt suvīramyatām śrutimatastarko' nusandhīyatām*¹⁰⁰ means that *mananam* is over.

To be continued...

⁹⁸ लिङ्गखेयते अनेन इति लिङ्गम्

⁹⁹ *avirodha* = non-contradiction.

¹⁰⁰ Refer to Verse 3

Kaivalyopaniṣad
Swami Viditatmananda Saraswati's transcribed talk

This is the fourteenth part of the serial article, continuation from June 2022 newsletter.

The significance of *tyāga*, renunciation

In the recognition that immortality, *sat-cit-ānanda*, is all we want, naturally, whatever makes us immortal becomes important. We recognize that mortality is the product of ignorance and not a reality. So “to become immortal” means to remove the ignorance that creates the notion or complex of mortality. That is how the knowledge becomes important. Then the means of knowledge, *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* become important. When the mind is free from every other pre-occupation, it becomes available for *śravaṇa* etc. Giving up all the preoccupations is called *tyāga*, renunciation. Renunciation is the letting go or the dropping off or the giving up of everything other than the self. That is the result of the recognition of what it is that we truly want.

The wise, who have *viveka* or discrimination, recognize what they want in life. By the use of the word *tyāgena*, through renunciation, this verse tells us that their priorities are very clear to them. They recognize that there is no need to achieve the various ends, such as wealth, fame, name, prosperity, heaven, or anything else, because gaining them can neither add anything to the self nor take anything away from it. Therefore, the wise leave these ends where they are and also drop their pursuits of achieving these external ‘band-aids.’ It is like a person who is able to walk well not needing to hang on to crutches. Therefore, the wise give up all *karma*. *Karma* here means actions that are the means for achieving those ends that no longer have any meaning.

The verse says, *na karmaṇā*, not through action, *na prajayā*, or through progeny, *dhanena*, or through wealth, can one ever gain *amṛtatvam*, because all of them are but means to achieve limited ends. There are four recognized *puruṣārthas* or human pursuits - *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*, and *mokṣa*, of which these represent

dharma, *artha*, and *kāma*. Here *karma* means *dharma*, the Vedic rituals, which are the means of attaining heaven. *Prajā* or progeny is *kāma*, which stands for all the pleasures and sense gratifications that one is seeking. *Dhana* is *artha*, wealth and prosperity and name and fame. *Mokṣa*, liberation, is the fourth *puruṣārtha*. One's commitment to *mokṣa*, the fourth *puruṣārtha*, becomes firm and single pointed only when the commitment to the other three goes away. In the wake of this understanding, we recognize that wealth, security, entertainment or sense-gratification, even heaven, are not meaningful. We then become free from the need to achieve or attain them.

We are told that it is not through *dharma*, *artha*, or *kāma* that the wise attained immortality; it is *tyāgena*, by renouncing all three, that they attained immortality. As long as we believe that *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma* are important, the mind will be occupied with habitually thinking of those things even when we are trying to listen to Vedānta. If wealth, name, fame, prosperity, and heaven are valuable to us, they will surface in the mind now and then and draw our attention, "OK, now enough of this study. When are we going back to having fun?" We cannot enjoy focus or single-pointedness of mind.

Renunciation is the discovery of freedom from the need for those ends, so that the mind becomes free from any preoccupation with them. The mind is then totally available for the pursuit of knowledge. That is the idea of renunciation. Renunciation as a way of life is desirable in the sense that, at least in the Vedic tradition, it meant that the person has no other commitments. As Pūjya Swamiji would say, the *sannyāsī* is the only person who has no role to play. Otherwise, a person has many roles to play because there are many duties and commitments. As long as there are duties and commitments, one has to play roles; one has to do things that are required to be done, there is no question about it. Therefore, in the Vedic times, the teacher initiated the students into renunciation as a lifestyle to free their minds from guilt about not performing duties during the course of study. Otherwise, one would feel that one has failed to perform certain duties. When duties are

formally renounced, the mind becomes free from guilt and every other preoccupation and becomes available for study and contemplation.

How is immortality attained?

How did they attain immortality? Where is immortality?

The second part of the verse says, *yatayaḥ viśanti*, the *sannyāsīs* enter. Here entering implies discovering immortality as being one's own self. These sages and renunciates enter the cave of the heart and 'see' immortality. Seeing immortality means 'becoming' immortal or discovering oneself to be immortal, discovering oneself to be what one is seeking.

Pareṇa nākam means that which is beyond heaven. Heaven has always fascinated people living on earth, whether in the Vedic times or the present, because people are acutely conscious of the difficulties, pain, and conflicts on earth. There is birth and death, disease, old age, and conflicts. Humans want to be free of the pain, and heaven is the realm that is said to be free of all pain. There, we are told, there is no death or old age, no disease, no pain, and no problems. Heaven seems to be an ideal place where there is only pleasure and nothing else, and, therefore, one desires to be there.

Even if we were to suppose that there is indeed such a place, where one can enjoy the pleasures for a great length of time, the *śāstras* tell us that the pleasures in heaven last only as long as one's *punya-karmas* or virtuous deeds last. *Kṣīṇe punye martyalokaṁ viśanti*¹, they return to the world of mortals when their merits are exhausted. Just as you can stay in a five-star hotel only as long as you have money in your pocket, one can stay in heaven only as long as the money in the form of *punya-karma* or virtuous actions lasts. When that gets exhausted, one is out. When you enter a hotel, the bellman receives you and carries your bags and escorts you to your room. Everything is nice as long as you keep paying your bills. When they discover that you cannot pay the bills any more, you will be sent away unceremo-

¹ BG 9.21

niously. Even in heaven, there is only relative happiness; it is not absolute or unconditional happiness and there are always some conditions to be fulfilled.

Pareṇa nākam. Here, however, it is said that the sages enter what is even beyond heaven. It refers to unconditional happiness, happiness that is natural and uncreated, not happiness that is acquired from sources other than oneself. Happiness that is not created also does not die; it is timeless. Where is such timeless happiness located? *Nihitam guhāyām*, it obtains within their hearts, as the self. When it is said that the wise enter the caves of their own hearts, it means that the wise discover their own selves to be the immortality, the unconditional, timeless happiness that they are seeking.

Yad vibhrājate means that which shines. The self is consciousness, ever shining, ever evident, and of the nature of *ānanda* or wholeness. That it is *pareṇa nākam*, beyond heaven, means that it is a happiness that is not created or ever destroyed or attained, and which is naturally there, ever shining. Then why do we not experience it all the time? It is our ignorance and erroneous notions that deny us the experience of the one true self. It is not that one has to gain or achieve immortality from wherever it lies hidden, but that the immortality simply lies veiled behind the various notions born of ignorance. The wise become free of all the notions in the wake of the knowledge. Therefore the self, which is of the very nature of *ānanda*, appears shining in its total brilliance and the sages abide in it. The wise do not come to know immortality, *ānanda* or unconditional happiness as the self either through *karma* or other means, but through knowledge, which is attained through renunciation alone.

The next verse describes renunciates in greater detail.

To be continued...

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the thirteenth part of the serial article, continuation from June 2022 newsletter.

ततः शूर्पणखावाक्यादुद्युक्तान् सर्वराक्षसान् । खरं त्रिशिरसं चैव दूषणं चैव राक्षसम् ॥ १-१-४७
निजघान रणे रामस्तेषां चैव पदानुगान् । वने तस्मिन् निवसता जनस्थाननिवासिनाम् ॥ १-१-४८
रक्षसां निहतान्यासन् सहस्राणि चतुर्दश । ततो ज्ञातिवधं श्रुत्वा रावणः क्रोधमूर्च्छितः ॥ १-१-४९
सहायं वरयामास मारीचं नाम राक्षसम् । वार्यमाणः सुबहुशो मारीचेन स रावणः ॥ १-१-५०

tataḥ śūrpaṇakhāvākyaādudyuktān sarvarākṣasān |
kharaṁ triśīrasaṁ caiva dūṣaṇaṁ caiva rākṣasaṁ || 1-1-47
nijaghāna raṇe rāmasteṣāṁ caiva padānugān |
vane tasmin nivasatā janasthānanivāsinām || 1-1-48
rakṣasāṁ nihatānyāsan sahasrāṇi caturdaśa |
tato jñātivadhaṁ śrutvā rāvaṇaḥ krodhamūrcchitaḥ || 1-1-49
sahāyaṁ varayāmāsa mārīcaṁ nāma rākṣasaṁ |
vāryamāṇaḥ subahuśo mārīcena sa rāvaṇaḥ || 1-1-50

Because of the words of Shurpanakha, the roused *rākṣasas* rose up and attacked the two princes and Sita. They wanted to destroy Rama and Lakshmana. The great *rākṣasas* Kara and Trishirasam and Dushana, the threesome whom all feared and who were chief among the Dandaka *rākṣasas*, along with their followers, fought Rama, who was single-handed. In that battle, Rama destroyed all the evil-doers. There is nothing to weep over. As a king, Rama is supposed to provide a better peace in the cities as well as in the villages and in the forest. From Janasthana, where the *rākṣasas* lived, fourteen thousand demons came and were slain and lay there under Rama's feet.

Then the great *rākṣasa* king with ten heads, Ravana, the ruler of Lanka, whose garden was watered by god Varuna, under whose control were even gods, who was the last word among *rākṣasas*, heard that his sister had been abused and had her nose cut. He also heard that a great many of his relatives had been destroyed. He grew angry and lost his *viveka*. He made up his mind to destroy Rama and Lakshmana. Ravana knew that he was not up against ordinary people, be-

cause it could not have been easy for an ordinary human to finish off all these *rākṣasas*. He decided he needed to use trickery. He knew, because Shurpanakha had told him, that there was this beautiful girl Sita there with Rama and Lakshmana. He wanted her, and he made up his mind to kidnap Sita. To fulfill his plan he wanted someone to help him. He called Marica. Marica was a *rākṣasa* who knew a lot of magic, black magic. Marica could assume different forms as he desired. Ravana approached *rākṣasa* Marica and asked for his help. Marica knew what Ravana was up against, and Marica, being wise to Rama, did not want to die. Marica advised Ravana to think twice before attacking Rama and Lakshmana, “Hey, Ravana, that *balavān* Rama is not an ordinary man. A fight will not be to your benefit. You cannot afford to have a quarrel with him; you will lose all your ten heads.” In various ways Ravana was slowed by Marica's arguments, even though Marica could not say no to his king, Ravana.

“Keep off this fellow. Don’t go anywhere near him. It is not good for you.” Marica wanted to save his own skin also. Again, Marica could not say no to Ravana, but he made every possible argument.

Nevertheless Ravana would not listen, because the time had come. That is what he said, “*kāla coditaḥ*.” Ravana is affected by time, and the time had come. What time? The time for Rama’s destruction. Some *karma* is involved in Ravana’s timing. It is said that something of Sita’s *karma* was involved. Ravana’s *viveka* does not work, because it has been lost in his anger, even when someone tells him what is right and wrong, even though no ordinary man could have taken care of these three chief *rākṣasas* as well as the fourteen thousand, even though all the reasons had been given, still nothing enters into Ravana. Time had come. On all ten of his heads it had been written: One day, Rama has to die. As though induced by time, by his own *prārabdha karma*, impelled, helpless, having not paid attention to the words of Marica, he was transfixed.

Marica had to follow him. Marica thought, “At least I will die at the hands of Rama.” Marica agreed to the plan to kidnap Sita. Together Ravana and Marica went to the *āśram* in *daṇḍakāranya* where Rama and Lakshmana lived. Ravana’s plan was that Marica would become a golden deer. As a golden deer, he should browse around the camp and draw the attention of Sita. He knew Sita

would ask for that irresistible, supple, golden deer. It is a thing of *māyā*; an undercurrent is there. It was a *māyā* deer. Fascinated by a deer that was not there, she would go for it. This is called *śobhanādhyāsa*, ascribing a false value. Ravana knew that Sita would fall for it. Rama and Lakshmana might object, but at the end of it they would have to yield. Because once a woman gets an idea into her head, it is very difficult to change her. That's what they think; I don't think so. Naturally Rama had to yield. He had to go out to catch the deer.

She wanted the deer alive. She wanted to pet that fascinating golden deer. She just could not resist. Lakshmana had told her that this did not look like a deer. Anything can happen in Dandaka, the place of *rākṣasas*. Lakshmana suggested they ignore it and not bother about it. Sita said no, she wanted the deer and she wanted it alive. Rama said okay, but he smelled some problem there. He told Lakshmana, "Stand here. Never leave Sita's side. There may be some trick here. Therefore you do not go out of this place." Lakshmana was told to take care of Sita. Rama had complete trust and confidence in Lakshmana. On Rama's word, Lakshmana would never move from that place. He would take care of Sita. Rama then took off after this deer.

The deer took off and dragged Rama away for some distance. Then Rama drew his bow and shot the deer. The deer fell down dying. This deer is that fellow Marica, that *rākṣasa*. That Marica called out, "Hey, Lakshmana. Hey, Sita!" He made it sound like Rama was calling. He imitated Rama's voice. This was according to Ravana's plan.

When Sita heard this, she immediately said to Lakshmana, "Hey, I think my lord is in trouble. I think he was hit or something. He told us not to move, but he is crying for help. Please go and help."

Lakshmana said, "No, I won't go. Rama told me that we should stay here."

Now, in a way, this is not the proper thing. It is like an old servant who just keeps doing the same thing even though he is told to do something else. But that is another long story. To tell a story I need not tell another story. But there is one story I can tell. Once this servant fellow burst in on his master, who was busy, and proclaimed, "Good news! A son is born to you."

The master of the house, who had been talking to some guests, scowled at

the disturbance from this fellow. The master sent the fellow away. Later he spoke to him and said, "When I am talking to my guests, have some sense. This is not the way you should announce that a son is born to me? You should bring a plate with some sugar and *candana*, all that, and respectfully say, 'Sir, here is some good news, a son is born to you.' That way it is beautiful. With such news you should always bring the plate of sugar and nicely tell what you have to say at the appropriate time. There is no reason for you to burst in like this and disrupt my guests."

The next day the house caught fire. The servant fellow prepared a plate of sugar and waited for a break in the conversation to calmly approach his master, "Sir, the house and the backyard are on fire."

Sita said, "No, it is not like that. Of course Rama told us to stay, but he was not in trouble when he said that. Don't you hear him calling our names? Who else knows our names? That deer does not know our names. Lakshmana, you must go see."

"I won't go," said the prince.

Then she began telling him things that he could not bear to hear at all, "Oh, you want Rama to die and then you can marry me. I'm not going to be your wife." Like this, she went on and on.

Lakshmana thought, "My god." Thoroughly conflicted, he agreed and said he would go find Rama. But Lakshmana knew nothing could happen to Rama. Thus there was this big argument between Lakshmana and Sita, and now he had to go. He drew a line on the ground and asked Sita not to cross the line, to remain there, and went after Rama.

Meanwhile, Rama knew it was Marica, because as the deer fell down, the *rākṣasa's* original form appeared. Then Rama knew some plot was there. He knew there was going to be some trouble. He rushed back toward the camp, and on the way he met Lakshmana. He said to Lakshmana, "Why are you here? Lakshmana!"

His brother said, "Well, she, uh, Sita wouldn't, wouldn't let me stay there. She heard your voice. She began saying things I could not stand. I had to come. What could I do?" They knew there was a problem and together they rushed back.

In the meantime, Ravana had come as a *sādhū*, as a *sannyāsī* he came. Ravana

knew that only as a *sannyāsī* could he create a trust in Sita. He came as a *sādhu*, came to Rama's hut, and asked for *bhikṣā*. "*Bhikṣān dehi*," give *bhikṣā*, give alms. A woman of the house must necessarily give. There is no question; whatever she has, she will give. A *sannyāsī* has come, he is a respectable person, you should give. She went inside, and whatever she had she brought and offered. She asked him to take *bhikṣā*, and when he stepped to cross the line Lakshmana had drawn, there was fire. The fire was Lakshmana's *tapas*, and Ravana could not cross. It was Lakshmana's will that there should be fire should anyone cross the line. It was like an alarm - you cross the line and you should see the fire immediately. Ravana remarked at the fire and said he could not come in.

Sita said, "I will come out." In her innocence, she went out. When she came out she crossed the border, and when you cross the border you have had it. She crossed the boundary. I forgot to tell you, Ravana had an airship, like a special helicopter. It is called a *puṣpaka*. It was a two-seater, capable of making great journeys through space. It required no fuel; with *mantraśakti* it worked. Ravana grabbed Sita and lifted her up off the ground and put her in the *puṣpaka* and took off. After a short distance he ran into a great devotee of Rama, a celestial bird, a divine eagle, Jatayu. The eagle Jatayu fought with Ravana, fought to save Sita. Ravana was forced to land the *puṣpaka* and fight. On the ground, Ravana fatally injured Jatayu. As the great eagle lay dying, Ravana remounted the sky with Sita and headed for Lanka. He took her to Lanka, the island to the south of India. It may be Ceylon, or it may be some other island. It was an island some miles away from South India, from Rameshvaram. He kept Sita there at his palace on the island.

Sita would not talk to him. Ravana wanted her to be his queen, or whatever it is a *rākṣasa* wants. Sita was not willing to do anything he wanted. Ravana thought she would change in time. He put her there in a park, under a tree. She sat there, and around her were *rākṣasīs*. They told Sita stories of how agreeable Ravana was, how great he was. That was their job. Daily they had to tell Sita how wonderful Ravana was, how gods served him. Sita had to be indoctrinated. Slowly she had to see the glories of Ravana - when he embraces you, twenty hands will be there. Sita would not listen to any of this, and she was stuck there.

When Rama and Lakshmana came back to the camp they found the hut empty. Rama knew something like this would happen. As they both feared, they found the hut empty. They had seen the omens all along the way. Rama, beside himself, began to search for Sita; he began crying for Sita. Only here is Rama depicted as but a simple man with great love and affection for his woman, for his wife. Two things are there. One is his own duty and his sense that he should not have gone off, in spite of what Sita asked. The second thing is that he had lost her. He could not help but think of her in another's hands and how she was going to suffer. Rama's mind, his whole body, seemed to have lost all their powers. He could not even think properly. He was pleading to the trees and birds, asking if they had seen Sita. He lost his balance for the time being.

To be continued...

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti, Coimbatore

Sponsorship Invited for the students of the 3 months Vedanta course in Tamil

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam is happy to announce that we have started 3-months Vedanta course in Tamil on 17th July, 2022 and ending on 15th October, 2022.

About 60 students have joined the Course.

The course is offered to the students free of cost. Generous donors are invited to sponsor the students to meet the expenses for conducting the course. Donors can choose any of the following options –

- For 10 students, for the entire course – Rs.3.00 lacs
- For 1 student, for the entire course, Rs.30,000/-
- For 1 student, for one month, Rs.10,000/-
- Any lump sum amount is also welcome

Donations can be made by cheque or Demand Draft in favour of “Sruti Seva Trust” or by bank transfer (details as given below).

- IFS Coode: IOBA0000643
- Bank Name: Indian Overseas Bank, Chinna Thadagam Branch
- Account No. 064301000007129 for the credit of SRUTI SEVA TRUST

For all foreign transfer, please contact AVG office at office@arshavidya.in ,
Phone: +91 9442624486

The Wholeness of You **by Swamini Saralananda**

This is the fourteenth part of the serial article, continuation from June 2022 newsletter.

Absolute And Relative Reality

What this verse intends to reveal is that absolutely everything can be seen, and understood, from two standpoints -the absolute and the relative. 'Is-Known-Dearness', facets are absolute and constant, in and through every object in the universe. Whereas the facets of 'names and form', are ever changing, they only appear to be as though real for some time. So, we can say that they have a relative reality – which means they only seem to be real, while they last.

The dream experience is a perfect example for this relative reality. When we wake up from a dream, we clearly see that the names and forms that appeared, were only figment-of-imagination appearances. This understanding of a relative reality gives us a profound hint that waking up to a better reality is possible. Thus, the ancient seers tell us that we have to wake up one more time. They teach that we are living in a three- dimensional dream, where we take all the five aspects as equally real.

This chapter is a short, subtle, cognitive chipping away at old 'normal' thinking, attempting to give a glimpse of the undiscovered reality of 'I'. We all will see at least a glimpse when we are ready to see. Perhaps reading this a few times over before going on would be helpful, just because it is such an unfamiliar way of looking at myself.

The Creation: Macrocosm...Microcosm

Every religious culture has its own explanation about the origins of the creation. In philosophical terms those explanations are said to be creation models. A model is not the actual thing, it is a way of looking at something in order to more readily understand what it represents so that we can relate to it. Serious problems arise when any set of believers insists that their model is actual, factual, and the only real truth. The creation model, in the ancient teachings of the Vedas, do not lay claim (nor have a need) to being scientifically factual by today's standards. Yet they do not go against scientific discoveries. We will look at enough of the whole model, to serve the purpose of this book. A vast amount will be left unsaid.

The topic here: 'macrocosm and microcosm' especially connects to the previous chapter and the following one. First, we attempted to get a glimpse into the essential nature of the individual. In the next chapter, we will look at what is God, (if there is one). Looking at the concepts of macrocosm and microcosm is only one abbreviated version of looking at, what could be the relationship between the individual and the cosmos.

Cosmos Means The Total

'Cosmos' a synonym for "orderly Universe", is to be understood as the total of all that exists as the creation. It is an all-inclusive orderly whole, this universe. Science has not yet found any boundaries or limits for it; therefore, it does not go against logic to say that it is 'Infinite'. So, this infinite creation is the 'Macrocosm', the total, the Whole. It is all that is 'out there and here, known and unknown, tangible and intangible. And it has to include me, since I am just one infinitesimal creature, inextricably connected to this earth. Just as an earth worm living in soil cannot be pulled out and live somewhere apart from its source, the earth, neither can the earth-human. We need to look more closely at this fact, in order to make a shift in our old ways of thinking.

It is something so deeply imbedded in our unconscious and conscious mind that, "there's a me and there's a world out there". Scientists for so long and still do study the universe as though they are objectively studying the cosmos as something other than themselves. But they have been forced to at least look at the 'observer effect', which points to how the one who observes a phenomenon is never totally, objectively outside of it (the Heisenberg principle)

'Microcosm', means a 'total' of the whole world in miniature. In our model here, it refers to the individual and implies that in my own body-mind complex, I am my own complete mini universe. It has a wholeness and a 'total' in its own right. I am one whole person with all my parts and it functions harmoniously working together for one sole purpose, to keep me alive.

What Is There Is Here

It can be sensibly said that "what is There is here, and what is here is There." i.e. whatever the macro is made of and how its functions will be the same for the micro in a mini version. For instance, think how, in distinct cycles for all the different regions, the earth moves into darkness, everything seems to go to sleep and in this

darkness, things are not seen (unless we bring in artificial light). So too, for myself, I go into the 'darkness of sleep' - thus both macro and micro, in definite cycles, have a dark time. Totally purposeful, is this cycle of day into night. There is an order about it, and it is an identical function for the macro and the micro.

What about the material stuff of the creation? This principle of "what is there is here" is the same. The Vedic model posits that the universe is made up of five great elements: Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth-which is all the minerals. (These we need not compare to the periodic table of chemistry, because we are only looking at a model which takes the broadest sweep). All we need to do, is ask ourselves whether or not this envisioning of these five basic elements can 'hold water' in so far as: can they indeed be taken as the raw material of the macro creation. They do logically seem to be that. And since I, the micro, is an inseparable part of the creation, are those five elements same for me? Does my body have space? Yes, sometimes more than I want. Does my body contain air? Of course, in every living cell. Does my body contain fire? Not to the same degree as flames but my body temperature is 98.6 warm; low grade as it may be, it is still a form of heat and any form of heat belongs to, that is to say, it is a quality of fire. Then, does my body contain water? About 80% of my body is water. If all the water were evaporated, there would just be four to six pounds of dry powdered minerals....and that is the earth of me. So, what is there is here. We say that the microcosm 'reflects', it takes after, the macrocosm. Being inseparably part and parcel of the macro, it would be strange if this were not so.

The Logic In This

In order to clearly understand the next chapter, we need to be able to accept this logic. I, the microcosm, am not separate from the Whole- macro-creation any more than a wave is separate from the ocean. If you could ask "Oh Ocean, how many waves do you have within you at any given time, do you prefer some better than others?" Ocean would laugh and say "all the waves are me; it is not that I 'have them'." There is no ocean which is a separate entity apart from water, waves, foams bubbles, currents.... all of these put together, make up the name and form 'Ocean' "so what is there to count?" None of the 'forms' it contains can be distinctly separated out to be counted. Uncountable indicates Infinite.

Science Proceeds By Taking Things Apart

Science often 'counts' for the sake of study; it takes apart a form or a phenomenon

and examines things in facets, parts and pieces. And this can often make them available for manipulation. When the atom was split, they were able to create an atom bomb. But back to the ocean, from its own standpoint it is only one whole phenomenon. The magical beauty of it is, that it can allow a dance of fluidly changing motions and forms within itself; currents, waves, foam, bubbles, spray.... but those do not make for any real divisions.

As the one whole microcosm of myself, it is the same in the sense, that all my limbs and senses and functions, every cell of my body, exists as one whole being. It gets disassembled into parts for the sake of analysis and manipulation. It all started with Newtonian Laws that science gave itself over to the orientation of measuring, and disassembling everything as though the universe is one big giant machine that can be taken apart and put back together perhaps differently. They took the body as though it were something like a clock with all its functioning bits and pieces. It was thought that when we take it apart, we can fix any of the pieces then put it all back together again. This has much truth to it and it is a mechanistic view; and to a degree that is incredibly useful. Our medical system operates based mainly on this understanding. A heart specialist, a dermatologist, a podiatrist, a urologist.....we all know.

How We Come To Wholistic

There is a lot of brilliance to be seen here in terms of scientific advances, like even the 'wonder' (facetiously) of the atom bomb. These days a reaction to this mechanistic view has been the entire "Wholistic" movement. It seeks to come back to a better sense of one interconnected wholeness within oneself and how we are inter-related and inter-dependent with regard to the macro. The wholistic movement at the macro level we can say is the 'green movement'. The attempt is to give priority to seeing the One interconnected Wholeness of the Cosmos.

The Vedic Vision Has Always Been 'Wholistic'

Since before recorded time, the Vedic vision has always held to this as the basic reality. This is why subjects such as astrology were taken seriously as a 'science'. They understood that, whatever was happening in the Macro, at the time of the birth of the micro, would have a definite connection. They devised a mathematical system by which they could discern certain influences that the larger universe would have on the individual. A 'science' of astrology was based on statistical analysis over an unimaginably long period of time. It was never a subjectively

'mystical' mysterious practice. Even if it cannot be scientifically proven to be valid as an exact science in the 'modern' world, there are still so many people, especially in India, who give it a lot of credence. Especially so when an astrologer is considered well learned.

The Western industrial orientation seeks to make everything useful to serve our needs and wants, which in itself is not bad. But when it overlooks the interconnectedness and oneness of everything, we can see negative consequences, like hoarding resources, over pricing, etc. etc. The thinking has been influenced by the conclusion that all living beings and the rest of the cosmos are separate. Even parts of the body are singled out for separate specific treatment. Whenever we see ourselves as separate from the whole world, then life becomes a grabber game of competition.

Out Of Sync With The Universe

Even if we were not brought up in the West, there is still enough heavy conditioning around, that it's "me against the world, god(s) are in the heaven and what is there is definitely not here", forever separate. And so, we feel: "I am only this much here and life is something out there happening to me." This is the opposite of feeling in flow with the universe, knowing that I am in it and it is in me. This is opposite to an understanding that I am supported by it and I am grateful and want to live in harmony with the universal laws. Even to recycle, is to be in harmony with the laws.

Suppose a wave can take itself out, jumping on to the shore to stand apart and complain, "Look at how this ocean slaps me around up and down". The reality of the wave is that it is dancing in and out, one with the oceanic flow. The 'separation' is only in words, a form has a name 'wave' attached to it but this can never mean there is any division. The ocean is nothing but water, and the wave is also nothing but water; and water is only one; the wave flows in and out changing its mass and form while never apart from its source, the ocean. So too, the individual is in flow within the cosmic rhythm of life and when I understand that and choose to live in harmony with it, I need not live my life defending myself from all sides, like a ninja.

To be continued...

GURU PUJA: Guru Purnima was celebrated in accordance with the time honoured tradition on July 13, 2022 at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti. Puja Swamiji's padukas at Gurutirtha were reverentially worshipped. The padukas were carried in a procession from Gurutirtha to the lecture hall. At the lecture hall, elaborate shodasa puja was performed. Astotarasatanamavali on Guru, Guru Stotram and Sri Dayananda panchakam were chanted. Bhajans on Guru were performed.

ANUGRAHA BHASHANAM: Swami Sadatmananda delivered the anugraha bhashanam. Today is the birthday of Veda Vyaasa. Veda Vyaasa is a great acharya of the parampara (tradition of teachers). This tradition begins with the Lord. *Narayanam, Padmabhuvam, Vashishtam, Shaktimca tat putra Parasharanca, Vyaasam, Sukam....*

The body of vedas was there among various families. As Kaliyuga started, Krishna dvai-payana in order to protect and preserve the vedas compiled and divided the branches of Vedas into 4 with the help of his 4 shishyas - Paila (Rig veda), Vaishampayana (Yajur veda), Jaimini (Sama veda) and Sumanthu (Aatharva veda). Otherwise we would have lost all the vedas. Since he compiled the vedas he is called Veda Vyaasa. He also wrote Mahabharata which contains Bhagavad Gita. Thanks to Veda Vyaasa we got the teaching of the Bhagavat Gita because Arjuna heard it, but he did not continue the guru shishya parampara but Veda Vyasa complied in Mahabharata so we have Bhagavad Gita. Veda Vyaasa also wrote Brahma Sutra. These three texts are called prasthanatraya to understand atma to be limitless Brahman. He was so versatile that he further wrote 18 Puranas and contributed to every field of spiritual pursuit. It is said *vyaasotchishtam jagat sarvam* - Everything is touched by Veda Vyaasa. Thanks to the contribution of Veda Vyaasa, the vedas are preserved till today. Therefore we express our gratitude to Veda Vyaasa. He was always available to his mother. He promised to be by her side whenever she remembered him and he kept that promise. One great thing about Veda Vyaasa is that he offers his help, but did not insist or expect anything. He helped the Pandavas in any way he could. He is one of the sapta chiranjeevis along with Bali, Hanuman, Vibhishana, Kripa and Parashurama. Today on Vyaasa Purnima, we express our gratefulness to Veda Vyaasa for all the blessings he has showered upon us. This is one significance of this day.

The other significance of this day is that this day is also called Guru purnima day. It is the day dedicated to all gurus in our life. This is the day to express our gratitude to the gurus by doing puja, by offering what we can, by chanting stotras and have mental acknowledgement of what we have received. As Puja Swamiji says –“*Gratitude is a sign of maturity*”. This is very clearly seen in Puja Swamiji's life.

The more gratitude we have towards the teacher, more intimate the teaching will be to you.

Ungratefulness is considered to be a dosha. May we be alert that we are never ungrateful to our teacher. May we always see the guru's contribution in our life.

Real guru in Vedanta is one who is ***mahavakyopadeshakarta***- the teacher of jiva-isvara aikyam. That is one main definition of guru in vedantic context. In Prasnotaramalika , there are questions and answers. One question is- *kahguruH? adhigatatattvaH, shishyahitAyaudyuktaH satatam* - one who knows the reality of jiva-jagat and Isvara and one who is always ready and interested in the well-being of shishya by giving upadesa and guiding the disciple at every juncture.

There is a text called Guru Gita in which talks of various types of guru –

suucaka guru – One who teaches vyakarana, nyayasastra, etc.

vaacaka guru- One who teaches dharma sastra. One who teaches values and duties.

bodhaka guru – One who gives mantra diskha like Om namahsivaya....

nishida guru – One who teaches black magic, tantra.

vihita guru- One who shows limitations of worldly pursuit

kaarana guru or Sad guru or parama guru- one who is cause for removing the bondage of samsara by giving the teaching of tat tvam asi.

Today we express our gratitude and offer namaskaras to all gurus, but the main one is the Sad guru. This is the second significance of the day.

The third significance of the day is that for sannyasi's catur masya vratam starts today. During the rainy season due to flooding, the sannyasis or parivrajakas cannot travel. So they take a vratam to stay in one place at the request of the villagers and conduct satsang. Now we have a 50% discount to this based on a saying- *pakshovai masah*. So for 2 months they stay in one place and take a vratam not to cross the river and go anywhere else.

Fourth significance is that for 4 months, people take a vratam from ekadasi day called *devashayani* when Vishnu has shayanam for 4 months. If one is leading a life following sama, dama and regularly does sravanam, mananam and nidhidyasanam and leads a disciplined life, then one need not take vratam. Vratam is meant for those who are not able to lead a life in compliance with sama -damadi talked about. For them mainly vratams are talked about.

Vratams can be *grahana rupa* i.e., taking up a positive thing to do or *tyaga rupa* i.e., giving up something. Like you can take a *grahana rupa* vratam that I will chant purushasuk-tam every day for 4 months in front of Vishnu. One who does this will become vidvan and his buddhi will be very sharp. Or with a fruit in hand do 108 pradakshinas of Vishnu temple. Or I will chant Vishnu sahasranama Or chant Dakshinamurti stotram for 4 months. The vratam should be of something one is not already doing. Also if one organizes dance and music during this period, one will become a Gandharva. *Tyaga rupa* Vratam need not

be just giving up sweets or some item, but it can be giving up cell phone or TV watching. The idea is that the vratam should help to make you disciplined. If not 4 months, you should follow it for 2 months.

The purpose of any vratam is to help you to develop mastery. To have the feeling-“Yes. I can do it”. But while following the vratam, we should have sincerity. But there should be no guilt if we fail to follow it properly. Before we start the vratam, we can pray to the Lord that give me the alertness and strength to follow this vratam. But by chance we could not do it one day like we forget to chant Vishnu sahasranama, then we need not have guilt. We chant it twice another day if possible. In our life as far as possible, in whichever way possible we avoid guilt because guilt weakens you. So you follow both types of vratam with sincerity, but without guilt and without being judgmental. There can be some subtler vratam one can take. During these 4 months I will be more alert to the value of ahimsa or arjavan. Take any one or two values and follow it. I will see myself as a manifestation of Isvara and thereby not looking down upon myself. This also can be a vratam.

Thus this is a day to express our gratitude to Veda Vyaasa, to all our acaryas of the parampara and to follow a vratam. We pray that may our life be one of sadhana-catustaya-sampattih, of sravanam, mananam and nidhidyasanam leading to discovery of myself.

ANUGRAHA BHASHANAM: Swamini Brahmaleenananda told that now we can buy a book online. Imagine in those days they had to copy by hand every copy of the book. Gurus dedicated their whole life for preserving the knowledge and passing it to the next generation. We should support those teaching and the institutions that teach. It is Rishi Yagna or Brahma Yagna.

ANUGRAHA BHASHANAM: Swami Jagadatmananda: Due to the grace of the Gurus we are able to understand who am I. Your spiritual search will end at Anaikatti. Sastra for emphasis will restate some teachings. Guru Gita in Sanskrit and Thirumandiram in Tamil give the same message: We should meditate on Guru’s form. We should worship Guru’s feet. We should revere the Guru’s words as mantra. We will gain moksha due to Guru’s grace.

BOOK RELEASE: Swami Sadatmananda released the book titled **SRIGURUPADAPU-JAVIDHANAM**. The book contains the mantras in Devanagiri Script with English transliteration. It also has English translation of SriGuruStotram, SriGuruPadapuja and GuruAstotra satanamavalih.

The students offered Guru Vandanam and Guru Dakshina to the Acharyas in the Gurukulam and received their blessings.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

Photos in the wrapper page #31 and #2

GURU PURNIMA RETREAT AT ANAIKATTI, COIMBATORE

Guru Purnima Retreat was held at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti from July 10, 2022 to July 13, 2022. Swami Sadatmananda taught Manisha Panchakam and Swami Jagadatmananda taught selected verses from Guru Gita. 80 persons mostly from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana attended the retreat. One family of five from Coimbatore, consisting of three generations attended. The campers also took part in the Guru Purnima puja at the Gurukulam on July 13, 2022. A summary of the classes is presented.

MANISHA PANCHAKAM: Manisha Panchakam means a vision with conviction presented in a group of five verses. This text is written by Sankaracharya. Manisha Panchakam is an expository text which presents the vision of prasatna trayam.

There is an incident in the life of Sankaracharya. When Sankaracharya was going to Kasi, on the way a Chandala came before him. Sankaracharya told, 'Go away'. Lord Shiva had come in the disguise of a Chandala. The Chandala asked, "What do you want to move, the body which is annamaya or the atma? As both bodies are annamaya, it need not move. As atma is one all pervasive consciousness it cannot move." Sankaracharya understood that the Chandala was none other than Lord Shiva and worshipped him.

The first verse is an explanation of 'Prajnanam Brahma' maha vakya. I am the consciousness which is invariably present in all the three states of experience. It is present as a witness in all bodies from Brahmaji to an ant. There is no difference in consciousness.. If anyone has this knowledge, whether he is Brahmana or chandala, he deserves to be my Guru.

The second verse is an explanation of 'Aham Brahmasmi' maha vakya. I am the adistanam Brahman on which the whole world is superimposed. The world being an effect, does not exist apart from the cause Brahman. The whole world is an expansion on consciousness alone. The whole world is projected by me with the help of maya. I am the sakshi of the body and mind. I am ever pure.

The third verse is an explanation of 'Tat Tvam Asi' maha vakya. Live a life of karma yoga doing right action with right attitude. Meditate on Isvara with the aid of astanga yoga. Composure of mind gives the desire to know about the self. Through sravanam, mananam and nididhyasanam get firm knowledge of Brahman. You will have jivan mukti and videha mukti.

The fourth verse is an explanation of 'Ayam atma Brahma'. Consciousness is very well recognised in the mind as 'I am' by animals, human beings and celestials. Only due to

sun, clouds are seen. But clouds seem to cover the sun. Only due to consciousness or Brahman, the body, mind and senses are illumined. But they seem to cover Brahman for an ignorant person. But for the wise person Brahman is evident and his mind is fulfilled.

The fifth verse explains the nature of ananda and gives the benefit of self knowledge. I am free from limitations of time, space and object. My nature is ananda. All experiential happiness is a small manifestation of my ananda svarupa, even for Indra. A wise person is fulfilled having owned up this ananda in a quiet mind. His mind is absorbed in nitya svarupa sukam. He is not a knower of Brahman. But he is Brahman. He is worshipped by Indra and other devatas. Such a person is a Guru.

O Shiva! As body, I am your servant. As jiva, I am your amsa. As atma, I am you. This is my well ascertained knowledge from scriptures.

GURU GITA: Guru Gita means song of the Guru. This appears in Skanda Purana written by Vyasacharya. There are 272 verses in this. This is a dialogue between Lord Shiva and Parvati. This dialogue was narrated by Suta Maharishi to his disciples. In the camp selected 31 verses were taught.

The disciples requested Suta Maharishi to teach them the secret of secrets. Maharishi told that Parvati asked the same question to Lord Shiva. The Lord replied that Parvati was para Brahman and she asked for benefit of the humanity. The student should serve the Guru and remove papam. Then he would be eligible for this knowledge.

Atma jnanam can be obtained with guru bakthi. Worship the Guru with your thought, word and deeds. Do sastanga namaskara to the Guru. Guru is the formless self who has crossed the three gunas. Contemplation on Guru is contemplation on Lord Shiva. Worship of Guru is worship of Lord Shiva. We should meditate on Guru's form. We should worship Guru's feet. We should revere the Guru's words as mantra. We will gain moksha due to Guru's grace.

Guru can bless me with material prosperity. Guru is an embodiment of knowledge. He always dwells on Tat Tvam Asi maha vakyam. He teaches maha vakyam to disciples. The disciples gain moksha. Atma jnanam is Guru's prasada.

The curse from Muni, Snake or Devatas can be removed by the Guru. Guru protects the disciples from the fear of death. For the one who worships the Guru, all papams are removed and all wants are removed. Devotion makes the disciples ripe. Lord Shiva concluded the teaching and told Parvati was always dear to him.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

Photo in the wrapper page #2

Dayananda Anugraha Fund

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

Primary grants (first priority, depending on availability of funds) are given for living, medical, dental, and other necessary personal expenses.

Secondary grants (second priority) are given for expenses related to travel and teaching, as well as ashram/residence improvements.

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

Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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

Tamil Vedanta course inauguration at AVG Anaikatti - 17th July 2022



Guru-Poornima Pooja (2022) at AVG, Anaikatti, Coimbatore

