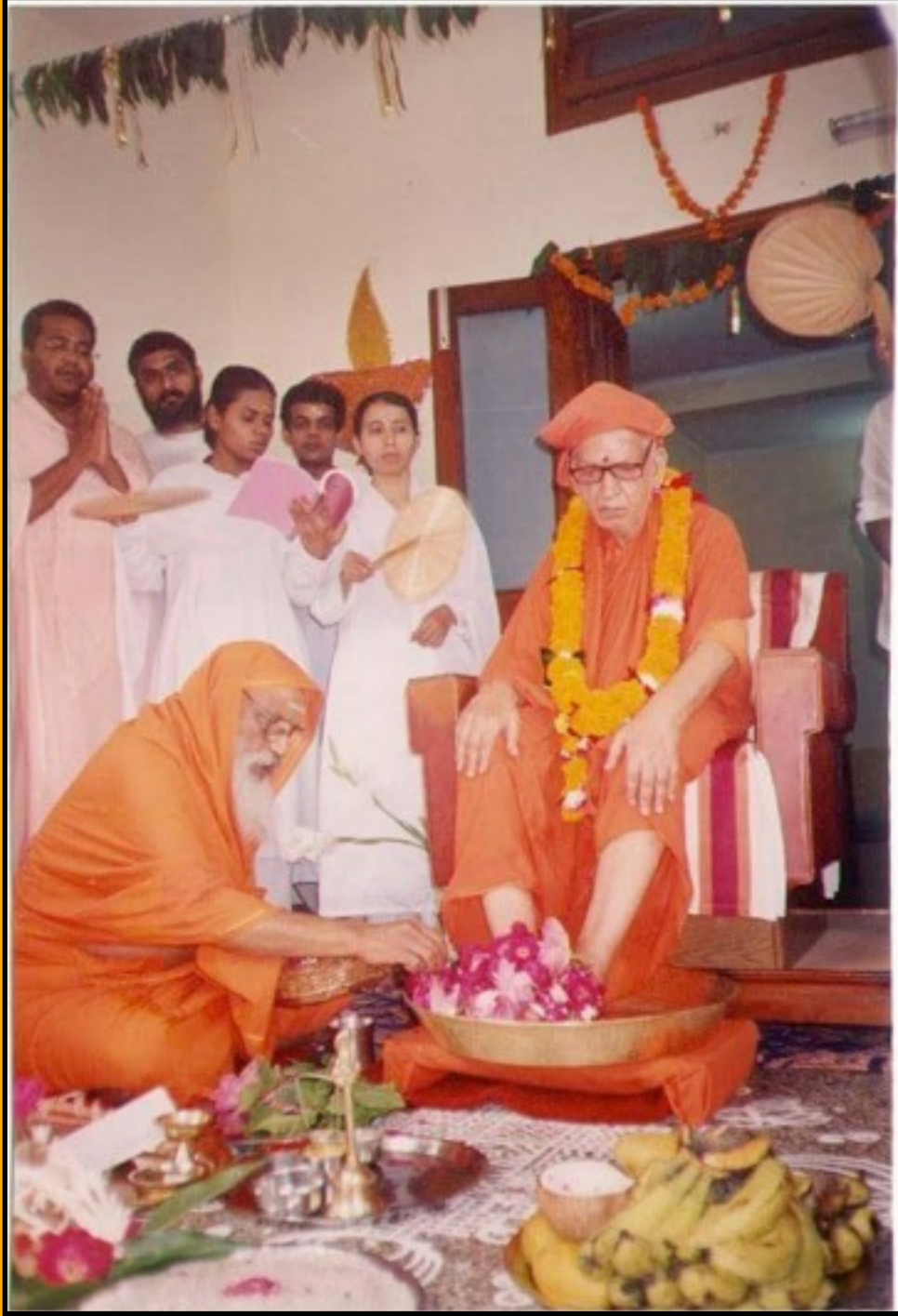




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Mundakopanishad

3.2.3

Śaṅkara gives a nice connection¹⁹⁰ to the following *mantra*. He says, if all the desires get fulfilled in one stroke, it is a big result. The effort, therefore, should be equally big. The rule¹⁹¹ is that more the effort, greater is the result. If one makes a small amount of effort, one gets only a small result. An infinite gain requires infinite effort. It is not so. There is no effort at all here. It is what this *mantra* says.

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यः
न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः
तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम् ॥ ३.२.३ ॥

nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyaḥ
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena.
yamevaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām. (3.2.3)

ayam-- this; *ātmā*-- self; *pravacanena* -- by (mere) recitation of Veda;
na -- not; *labhyaḥ* -- can be gained; *na* -- not;
medhayā -- by mere memory; *na* -- not;
bahunā śrutena -- by study of many disciplines of knowledge;
tena -- by that person; *eva* -- alone;
labhyaḥ -- it is gained; *yam* -- whom;
eṣaḥ -- this person; *vṛṇute* -- chooses to know;
tasya -- for that person; *ātmā* -- the self;
svām -- its own; *tanuṁ* -- nature; *vivṛṇute* -- reveals

The self neither gained by mere recitation of the Veda, nor by memory or study of many disciplines of knowledge (or by repeated listening to Vedānta without the right teacher). The person who chooses to know the self gains it. Then the self reveals its nature to that person.

Na ayam ātmā pravacanena labhyaḥ: this self cannot be gained by mere Vedic study. *Pravacana* does not mean discourse here. It means recitation of Veda.¹⁹² In *vedādhyāyana*, study of Vedas, one has to repeat the *mantras* in the way the teacher chants, and commit the whole thing to one's memory. 'One should study one's Veda'¹⁹³ --- it is a Vedic mandate. Just because one has followed this injunction, it does not mean that one will gain the *ātman*. One may be a Dvivedi, who has studied two Vedas, or Trivedi, who has studied three Vedas, or Caturvedi, one who has studied all four Vedas.

It does not make any dent in his self-ignorance. A Vedic Pandit may have physical lustre due to his chanting of *gāyatrī-mantra*, but he reveals his ignorance the moment he begins to talk on spirituality.

One should not, however, commit the mistake of concluding that '*pravacana*' is not important. Only when it is there it can be negated by the *śruti*. People do think that study of Veda is enough to gain *ātman*. The *śruti* negates this thinking and says that mere recitation of Veda is not adequate for gaining the knowledge of the self.

Again, *na medhayā labhyaḥ*: it is not gained by mere memory.¹⁹⁴ One can have a great memory. Memory is unlike a recorded tape, where the old material is erased when new things are recorded. Memory is cumulative in nature. A Vedic pandit has tremendous memory. Even a tape recorder may stop in the middle due to some technical problem, but once a Vedic pandit goes into the mode of chanting, he can go on for days, non-stop. He is able to recite the entire Veda, which is an accomplishment. People commit to memory huge texts like *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Pāṇini-sūtras*¹⁹⁵ and *Amarakośa*.¹⁹⁶ One gains the knowledge of any language only by *medhā*. One is able to repeat everything that one has learnt due to the power of memory. The power to remember is a glory. But mere *medhā* is not enough to gain *ātman*. Self-ignorance will continue to be there.

Further, *na bahunā śrutena*: not by becoming a great scholar. *Bahunā śrutena* means by the study of different disciplines of knowledge that may subserve the self-knowledge, but do not constitute self-knowledge. Etymologically, the word '*śruta*' comes from the Sanskrit root '*śru*' meaning 'to do *vicāra*, inquiry.' Inquiry into the Vedas based on *mīmāṃsā*, prescribed form of analysis, is helpful in gaining the key to opening the sentences of the Veda and understanding their meaning. But that alone will not help one get *mokṣa*.

The words '*bahunā śrutena*' can also mean listening to Vedanta without the right teacher. That listening will not help a person. One has to choose a proper teacher. Since the teacher unfolds the words of the scripture, choice of the teacher is very important. One should have *śraddhā* in the words of the teacher.

If one cannot gain *ātman* through all these means, then how does one gain this *ātman*? *Yam eva eṣaḥ vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ*:¹⁹⁷ it is gained by that person who chooses it. *Eṣaḥ* refers to *akāmaḥ*, the one who is not interested in any other pursuit except the pursuit of *mokṣa*. *Ātman* becomes the object of his desire to know, so the desire for *ātman* does not even have the status of a desire. A thought has the status of a desire only if it is a source of action and result. But if it is a desire for the thing that one already has, it is not a desire; it is foolishness. Therefore, the desire for *ātman* means the desire for the knowledge of *ātman*. The idea here is that one has to choose to know.

The desire to be free is there in everyone. If one analyses one's desire for any object, at the back of the desire, there is a sense of incompleteness from which one wants to be free.

But that is not a desire to know, which is why a person desirous of freedom need not enquire into *ātman*, but can do varieties of things. So the conversion of a 'desire to be free' into the 'desire to know' itself is a great step. One sees this conversion in Arjuna when he prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa to teach him. For the person who chooses to know, *ātman* reveals its own *svarūpa*. By that very choice, *ātman* is gained by that person.¹⁹⁸ The *Brahmasūtra*, which analyses the various *mantras* of different *upaniṣads*, confirms this when it starts with the *sūtra*, '*athāto brahma-jijñāsā*, thereafter, therefore, (for the sake of *mokṣa*) let one desire to know Brahman,' meaning, let one enquire into Brahman. One has to enquire into the words revealing Brahman.

Tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām: for him *ātman* reveals itself. It has been revealing itself as 'I am,' but now it reveals as 'I am Brahman.' Śaṅkara says¹⁹⁹ here, for want of knowledge, *ātman* was not so far recognised in the *buddhi*. In the light of knowledge it comes to reveal itself as Brahman---like even for want of light an object like pot is not seen, and when the light is brought in, it comes to light.

When one chooses to know the self, one has to go to the teacher. Mere choice to know is not enough. If one chooses to know a subject matter like calculus, one has to place oneself in a situation where calculus is available for grasping. One, therefore, one goes to a school and places oneself in a situation where can grasp calculus from a teacher who knows. It means mere ears and eyes are not adequate to pick up the subject matter, but they are to be exposed to the source of knowledge. One will then gain the knowledge if one is ready for it. Similarly, when one exposes oneself to the teaching with the right attitude, *ātman* reveals itself. The *śāstra* becomes the mirror for seeing oneself. One who looks at the mirror alone can see, even though the mirror is available for all to see.

We can interpret the third line of the mantra in another way. *Yam eva eṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ*: this *ātman* will be gained only by him, whom the teacher chooses to teach, not by anybody else. Unless the person is ready, the teacher is not going to teach. The word 'eṣaḥ' refers to the teacher who knows the *ātman* and the word 'yam' refers to the disciple. In the previous interpretation 'eṣaḥ' referred to the seeker and 'yam' referred to the *ātman*.

This interpretation is given here because often a question is raised, "Why should one require a teacher? After all, the *pramāṇa* is only the *śāstra*. Even without the teacher one can study the *śāstra*." But the *pramāṇa* has to be handled by a teacher who has the knowledge of the methodology of communication. One gains this methodology only from a teacher who comes in the tradition of teaching Vedānta. Through self-study one will only pick up words like *satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma*, Brahman is eternal, consciousness and bliss, and then ask, "How can it be realised?" These words are unlike the words table, chair, big, small, young, old and so on, something that one knows. Each one of them has to be unfolded by negating their limited meaning. There is a *prakriyā*, method, involved in this. Hence, it is said that for him alone who has a proper teacher, this *ātman* reveals itself.

- 190 यद्येवं सर्वलाभात् परमः आत्मलाभः तल्लाभाय प्रवचनादय उपायाः बाहुल्येन कर्त्तव्या इति प्राप्ते इदमुच्यते । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)
- 191 अधिकस्य अधिकं फलम् ।
- 192 वेद-शास्त्राध्यायन-बाहुल्येन । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)
- 193 स्वाध्यायोऽध्येतव्यः ।
- 194 ग्रन्थार्थ-धारण-शक्त्या । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)
- 195 A work on Sanskrit Grammar.
- 196 A dictionary of synonyms.
- 197 यमेव परमात्मानमेव एष दिद्वान् वृणुते प्राप्तुम् इच्छति तेन वरणेन एषः परमात्मा लभ्यः नान्येन साधनान्तरेण । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)
- 198 तस्मादन्य-त्यागेन आत्मलाभ-प्रथनैव आत्म-लाभ-साधनमित्यर्थः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)
- 199 तनुं स्वात्म-तत्त्वं स्वरूपं विवृणुते प्रकाशयति प्रकाशे इव घटादिः विधायां सत्याम् आविर्भवतीत्यर्थः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)
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Editor.

Address to Youth (Sri Swami Dayanandaji's lectures)

Continued from previous issue....
Continuing to explain the sloka..

Udyamam sahasam dhairyam buddhi saktih parakramah
Shadete yatra vartante tatra devo sahayakrit.,

Parakrama.

In anything there always exists some obstacles. You must be alert and creative and take care of preventing /managing it. It is just the capacity to face something inimical to you, something which is obstructive. Face properly by equipping yourself well. Readiness to face obstacles is parakrama. Everything should be smooth and without challenge - you can't say so. In driving you will have obstructions. You should know how to drive. Suppose you learn driving and take your car to the market street. There is one peculiar situation. It is kaleidoscopic in character. There is a car in the front. A truck behind. An auto trying to overtake from the wrong side. A mami (Woman) just than crossing urgently. It is a peculiar situation. Can you say at that time "This was not taught to me by my driving teacher. It is a new situation. So I want to go back." Can you?

Life is like that. Every time there is a new spectrum. New configuration. Something new coming up. So you should have enough courage and creativity to manage to find your way out. Without challenge there is no fun.

Story of the old man accusing his cousin of being miserly because he provided only one ball for 22 players. What can he reply? There should be only one ball. There should be 22 players. Everyone should be after that one ball. If there are 22 balls, there is no fun. There is no game. There should be whistle now and then; some foul games; some shouting and thing like that. Each one should do a job. Some move on the sides. Some in the middle. One does not move and stand in between the two goal posts. Goal-keeper should not be sympathetic. Seeing those who are running all the time, if he also begins to run, Kalimulla will walk in as it happened in the Asian games.

So life also should be full of challenges. They are full of challenges. There is an obstruction and I am ready to face up to it. If you face it with a lively mind, then you are ready.

Udyamam + Parakrama

These six are in whom abide, where found in whom, for that person the lord also helps him. Then the lord is a helper. You cannot say when I have got all the six I will anyhow succeed, why should I ask for the help of the god? No sir, when the exam comes you may fall ill. Every time you go out there can happen anything. So, many people they do not return. They go to emergency ward. Ask those people, "Did you plan to come here?" He will beat you with all the traction; he will get up and beat you and then go and lie down. So you cannot ask because nobody plans to go to emergency ward. You cannot call it emergency ward if you plan it. But they end up there. So one more thing is there – 'prayer'. Because there is always something which make the difference between success and failure. And you have to take that factor into account also.

You don't leave anything to chance. You should never leave anything to chance. There is a chance factor. You take that chance factor also into account. We do not feel helpless to the chance. We control that chance factor also with prayer. There also we make an effort. Understand why prayer is? The prayer will take care of that chance factor and thereby success accrues. With the prayer when you do a thing, then lord is with you.

Mere prayer would not do. Mere effort also would not do. It may do or may not. We have to make both effort and prayer. When both are there, then you succeed. Even if there is no success it does not matter. Because we know we have done well. It does not matter, we can do it again. These things are to be taken care of. Then whatever comes we can take it.

On the topic of success. Any success, whether it is in the field of study or career, any pursuit that you undertake, you achieve success for which you require the 6 qualities udyama etc and the 7th one we can get i.e., deivam.

About deivam we will discuss. All religions or almost all of them talk about a god.

The popular religion have a concept of god and the concept is that there is a god who is in heaven and he is responsible for the creation of this world. He is a punisher and also he is someone who grants rewards.

Exactly like any boss who gives some rewards and who with holds those rewards if the person does not do well. There is what we see in the world. The same thing is extended to the god. He is believed as one who is a merciless punisher and also he is very benevolent if you keep singing in praise of him. That means their god can be flattered. Why a person can be flattered? Why a person gets flattered why? Suppose I say 'you are a human being'. Do you get flattered? Unless you have a doubt, you do not get flattered. Then when do you get flattered? When you have doubt when someone says you are brilliant, you ask, 'really!' Because you know you are not that brilliant. So when you are told that you are brilliant, you respond 'is it really! Thank you'.

In the West, if you praise the clothes that someone wears, the person is very thankful to you. 'Thank you'. 'Oh! the one you are wearing is very beautiful'. 'Really! Thank you'.

What that has got to do with you. They think as though they praised you. But, of course they praised what you are wearing. The choice is theirs and it is their praise. If a person feels flattered, person is doubtful of what he was praised for. You can be polite and say thank you. If you feel flattered, in your image you have enough doubts and therefore you feel flattered when someone finds good about you.

'You are so beautiful'. 'Thank you'.

You have a doubt also about yourself. If God has got his own problem in his feel image to get flattered,... "O lord you are all knowing." "Thankyou".

He will not get flattered by your statement "you are all knowing". You do not really know 'what is all knowing'.

How much you know to know what is all knowing? With my limited knowledge as a human being, I can't even imagine what it is like to be omniscient. Therefore when you say all knowing, if there is one person whom you call god and that person will only smile because he knows you do not know what is all knowing and yet calling him omniscient. You do not know exactly what it is to be almighty. Also the powers we enjoy are very limited. With these limited powers we cannot imagine a person having all powers.

So if we praise lord as almighty and omniscient, he is not going to feel flattered. Therefore when we sing in praise of him, imagining that he is going to feel flattered and distribute some goodies to you, it is silly. So the concept of god is very funny, that he is sitting in vaikunta or kailasa. For worship and meditation etc. We have these concepts. Still to believe that literally it is all true is not really right. It does not have the backing of reasoning. So it is good to analyse them. You do in school and in home you see parents doing. Also doubts come which god I should worship, which one of them is god? So we have problems. We need to understand these topic very well. How to relate with god and how it is beneficial to you, all that we see later.

The human mind has a peculiar brain and that is, it always questions. Questioning is very natural in every human mind. Even in child the questioning capacity is manifest. First in the form of curiosity. You want to know what it is. Put it in to the mouth. That is the only way the child can find out, whether it is ok or not. 'What it is?' There is no real questioning here, but have a curiosity to know. At times their curiosity manifest in the form of home come. I know one boy who asks 'how come, when you say anything, how come meanings does come about?' 'How come it is hot ,cold?' and so on. He became a big thinker. He is choosing his phd. All the time he won asking 'how come?' He ended up doing research on some thesis. There is some thing common, that question 'hove come'

When you are seeing anything that is meaningfully created you appreciate one fact about this, that there is an intelligent being to create that meaningful thing. Anything you see, intelligently put together, I look upon it as naturally a creation. What is creation? Any thing that is intelligently put together to serve a given purpose or more than one purpose can be called creation.

At every stage we have to move without a despire. So I am going continuously. So a car is a creation. Your thirst is a creation. This house is a creation. So anything intelligent but together is a creation. Now all our creation is like that. Our intelligence or knowledge being limited, there is a progression in these year after year. The human minds had different problems and come up with questions. From stone-age downwards, we see different forms of creation. We trace certain progress. The progress reveals certain appreciation, better understanding of the situations.

The ford motor company has got a commercial which has been around for the last 2 or 3 years now. It is "Have you driven a ford". After a small pause, "Lately". This was 2 years ago. The later model beats all the models that they have produced before. So have you driven a Ford, lately. 1988 was not Ford as 1989 model. This goes on. That means in their own estimation about themselves that they produced cars better every year, in various aspects, like fuel efficiency. The commercial reveals that there is certain progress in their knowledge.

Human mind seems to be slow in the progress. Till model T, all cars were custom made in a garage. Then Ford who thought of an assembly line and you have every car like every other car. He hit everyone out of the market. If you watch up to model T, how they progressed, it is amazing that how slow the human mind progress. However one thing, whether it is bullock cart or horse carriage or it is a pneumatic tyre cars, or it is a new BMW, all these have been brought about by putting things together intelligently.

At any given time you have limited knowledge and you produce something intelligently in keeping with your intelligence. Therefore there is always a possibility for improvement. Why this is so? Because human knowledge is limited at any given time. Being limited, we can produce things which can be improved upon, in the wake of better knowledge. We can produce better products. That we see anything put together, is not something that is put together by themselves. The tyre does not get itself produced. Not the cars. They themselves do not put themselves together to make a car. So an intelligence being, other than these inert things is required. Each part is inserted in nature and each one of them are made and made to play a role in the car body politic. So in the scheme of car creation each part has got a role to play. Therefore the parts themselves do not manufacture themselves. Parts are designed by an intelligent being and they are all put together.

So we have to look upon a car as a creation. This house is a creation. The fan, the mike, everything that we are using is a creation intelligently made including your shirt. Suppose your shirt buttons one side and the other side has no button holes, or both sides are open. These are not intelligent creations. So when I look at any piece of creation I see there is some intelligence, there is a purpose to serve, the purpose for which that object is created.

Even the animals have certain powers, certain knowledge, instinctive knowledge to create things. A Weave bird creating a nest. It knows where to keep the nest hanging in a safe place; it can afford to fly. Even up there, there are a lot of dangers. In one end of the branch, where it is safe, they create the nest. It hangs it there. To hang it, there must be fastening. When they pick up things how they tie them together is an amazing thing. Suppose it makes without a door, it is silly. Outside it is all straw. But inside it is nice soft fibers like silk cotton or cotton. Anything soft my children should not get hurt. These straws are very hard. The mother bird seems to know how to build a nest. It knows what for it is doing. The whole purpose is very clear. Therefore that is also a creation. One who creates has an adequate knowledge to create and the skill to create.

Sometimes, you may know, but you do not have the adequate skill. Sometimes you have the skill, but you do not know. Like masons if they are told to do this way or that way, they will do but they do not know exactly how much steel must be there for this kind of a house, and how much must be the foundation and so on. All this requires knowledge, for which there is an architect. Everything is in paper. Ask the architect to go and make a wall. He will say I cannot. On paper he is wonderful. Actual job- someone else has to do. So skill is necessary, knowledge also is necessary. You may buy the skill or knowledge or both. But any creation requires both knowledge and skill. In this there is no dispute what-so-ever.

Swamiji! Where did you get this clock? If you ask and I say there is a place in Switzerland. Between the Alpain range, there is a valley. In the valley there are different types of clocks. You can see big and small and I picked up one from these. Will you believe in Swamiji's saying. You will not. And you should not accept it.

Just because a holly man say you cannot accept it ,if it something beyond your reason. What is unreasonable is not a matter of belief. It is something to be dismissed totally. That is the basic of thinking. Anything not reasonable cannot be believed. If it is something beyond my reasoning, I can believe. Because it is not illogical. Being beyond reasoning, it cannot be proved illogical.

Anything that is proved illogical is not a matter of belief. This is the basic approach to even god. This is very important to know whether you call god as father in heaven, or you call father or allah. You have to answer the question 'where was he before the creation of heaven? In hell? That is the only place left. God in hell created the heavens and got transferred to heaven and kept the hell for some of us. Anyway, the next question is 'who created the hell?' There is no answer. Father has to say, 'shut up!' Go and do your homework. There is the problem. This problem you can never solve. So when the question like these are asked, and they are not answered. Children have problems in relating to god. Not that they do not want to relate to god they know. Still there is a problem. They grow without getting answer to these questions.

That is the problem area, whenever they say 'you think of god'. Then they have to come up 'it is a matter to believe.' Do not question. He can be a great scientist. But in this area he is dumb. Because that area is anaesthetized. You do not question at all. It is a question to be understood, in fact. It is a valid question and answer can be found only when you understand the creation a little more.

.....to be continued

Quotes from Pujya Swamiji's Diary – 1968

January 1968 -

*** The New Year is born only as a fresh second as the old year went with a fresh second. To be alive to the fresh second, the now, is to celebrate in freshness the New Year made of fresh seconds.**

*** The Past was once present. The future shall again be a present. In 'time', is there any thing beyond present?**

*** To be with the past is to have company with the dead and to be with the future is to have company with the myth. To be in the now is indeed to be with the living.**

*** Time rolls on in a procession of fresh moments and the body ages. But the mind living with fresh moments is ever young.**

*** Time is a devourer only if you take yourself as the ageing body. It is no more so if you live in its content, the Eternal Now.**

Maha-Kumbhabhishekam at AVG

Held between 13th to 17th June 2018

Each days puja beginning with *Purvanga* pujas on the 13th July began with the *guru-anujna* - The blessings of Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati were invoked through Guru puja at Gurutirtha.



Some significant steps in the process are:

- 1) **Anujna** = seeking permission and blessings from the lord, brahmanas, to do the entire kumbhabhishekam successfully.
- 2) **Vaastu shanthi, pravesha bali and Rakshogna Homam** are done to eliminate the non-visible inauspiciousness of the land and requesting certain *devatas* to protect the land.



Anujna



VastuShanti and PreveshaBali

3) The growth of the sprouts indicates whether the karma is done well or not. For the sprouts to sprout the sowing the seed happens to be the major work, which is known as **Ankurarpanam**.

4) The ritual collection of soil from the mother earth for the sake of sowing the seeds is called as **Mrit-sangrahanam**. A beautiful image of *bhudevi* is drawn and carved on mother earth and the *mrt* (Soil) from her abdominal region is collected for the ritual.



Mrt-Sangrahanam



Agni-Sangrahanam

5) **Raksha Bandhanam**-Tying of the sacred thread in the hand of the priest who is going to perform the ritual is *Rakshabandanam*. To overcome the *Ashaucha* - Spiritual impurity because of the death or birth of the parental relations 2) Because the *kumbhabhisekam* is done for the welfare and progress of entire universe the *acharya* undergoes an intense *vrata* in various layers of body and mind.



6) **Kumbhalankaram** –The symbolic representation of the deity in a pot during the *kumbhabhisekam* is *kumbham*. *Kumbhalankaram* literally means decorating the *kumbham* or pot .The ritual involves the physical decorations and also techniques with the help of *mantras* to transform the pot into a vessel suitable to receive and sustain the deity during the pujas until *kubhabhishekam* is complete.

7) **Kalakarshanam** – is an act of calling the deity from the murtas (idols) in the Balalayam to the kumbham. Here the deity from the idols is transferred to the kumbham. The deity is present in the Kumbhas until the power is transferred to the murta in the alayam on the culmination of Kumbhabhishekam,



8) **Yaga-shala-archana** is a puja done to the deity in the *kumbha* and in the *agni* in the *yagashala* for all the *Parivara Devathas*. The pujas can be done for a span of 2 days to 27 days. In the Gurukulam four *kaala* pujas were done over a period of three days starting 15th evening and culminating on 17th morning.

There were two *yagashalas* - the *pradhana yagashala* near the Daksinamurti shrine with a total of 14 *yagna-kundas* (Nine for Sri Medaha Daksinamurti, one each for Jnana ganapati, Narmadesvara, Jananesvari and the Kalasas) and a second *Yagashala* near the *Kalayana Subrahmanya* shrine with a single *yagnakunda* for lord *Kalyanasubrahmanya* Swami. The *yaga shalas* were built with clay and unbaked bricks, painted and decorated elaborately. There were well planned platforms to receive and place the *kumbhas* imbued with the *shakti* of the deities.



9) **Ashtabandhanam**- After the completion of *yagashala* puja the fixing of the *murtas* on the *peetham* was done with *Asta-Bhandanam* (A special herbal material prescribed in agamas for binding the *murtha* to the *peetham*). The herbs are also supported by an additional silver or gold binding which are called *rajata* or *swarna bandhanam*. All the *murtas* in the *gurukulam* have been adorned with *rajata-bandhanam*.



10) **Kumbhabhishekam** –taking the deity from the *kumbha* to the *murta* (idol) is done on the completion day of the *yagashala* puja during the *kumbhabhishekam*. The *abhishekam* is done for both the *kalasa* on the *vimana* and the *murta* in the *garbhagrham*. This was done on the morning of 17th July simultaneously at all the temples which is called *sama-kala-kumbhabhishekam*.

11, **Mahabhishekam** was done for Lord Kalyana subrahmanaya Swami immediately after the *Kumbhabhishekam*. The *Mahabhishekam* for *Sri Medha Daksinamurti* was performed by Swami Omkarananda Mahaswamigal in an elaborate manner with about 700 *kalasas* in the evening on the 17th July.

11) **Mandalabhishekam**- on the 45th day of the *kumbhabhishekam* after performing special prescribed *manadals* puja on daily basis ,*sankabhishekam* and *kalasabhishekam* will be done .Being *mandalabhishekam* the *abhishekam* is grandly done with 108 conches (*shanka*). *Mandalabhishekam* is scheduled for 26th July, 2018.

Further photos of the various events of the Kumbhabhishekam can be seen in Wrapper2, 3 and 4.

Śrī Medhā Dakṣiṇāmūrti Jīrnoddhāra Kumbhābhiṣekam

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, PA

June 29, 30 & July 1, 2018

The jīrnoddhāra kumbhābhiṣekam of Śrī Medhā Dakṣiṇāmūrti Temple was performed at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania on Sunday, July 1, 2018. The jīrnoddhāra kumbhābhiṣekam was performed adhering to the rigor of all the religious rituals as per the Vedic tradition under the guidance of Pujya Swami Veditātmānanda Saraswati. The religious proceedings conducted for three days (June 29-30 and July 1st) were expertly coordinated by the temple priests, Śrī. Ravichandran and Śrī. Ganesan. About 14-16 learned priests from various parts of the U.S. assembled on all the three days to conduct

the ceremonies consisting of various śānti karmas and puṣṭi karmas. The catvāra kāla pūjās included Gaṇeśa pūjā, Dakṣiṇāmūrti mūla mantra japa, viśeṣa dravya homādayaḥ, jayādi homa, pūrṇāhuti, divyopacāra pūjā, and dīpārādhana. In addition, there were specific rituals such as ācārya/ṛtvik varaṇam, punyāhavācanam, agni-pratiṣṭhāpanam, yāgaśālā-vāstu-ārādhana, navagraha-devatā and dvārapālaka ārādhana, devatā anujñā, kalaśa-ākarṣaṇam, rakṣoghnahoma, mṛt-saṅgrahaṇam, ankurārpaṇam, yātrā dānam, sparśāhuti, and nāḍi-sandhānam. A succinct and adequate summary of each ritual was given by priest Sri. Kasiram Ramakrishna Dikshitar of Philadelphia. On the eve-

ning of the second day, the utsava mūrti was carried around the gurukulam premises in a procession to the accompaniment of live nādasvaram by vidwans from the Sri Bhakta Anjaneya Temple, Maryland. On the third day, devotees carried 72 kalaśas energized with the mantras to the temple for the abhiṣekam. At the prescribed muhūrtam of 10:45 AM, Swami Veditātmānanda Saraswati along with priest Śrī. Ravichandran went up on a crane to perform the kumbhābhiṣekam to the ālaya vimānam. The abhiṣekam to Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti and Lord Siddhi Vināyaka inside the temple was done at 11:15 AM. This was followed by the mahābhiṣekam to Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti with various dravyas and at the end with the waters from all the 72 kalaśas. A 15 min video of the prior three kumbhābhiṣekams (1990, 2002 & 2013) were shown as a 'walk down memory lane.' Pujya Swami Veditātmānanda Saraswati spoke on the significance of the kumbhābhiṣekam during the viśeṣa alaṅkāram. This was followed by mahā dīpārādhana, mantrapuṣpam, and āśirvādam. All the assembled devotees received the prasādam from Swami Veditātmānandaji and partook in the anna dānam.



The kumbhābhiṣekam was celebrated in a grand manner, thanks to many sponsors who came forward in a short notice to support the event. Notwithstanding another concurrent program at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, the entire kumbhābhiṣekam function was executed efficiently with love and attention by the Gurukulam staff under the leadership of Śrī. Suddhatma. Through the efforts of Śrī.Sahadev, Śrī. Suresh Venugopal and Śrī. Ram Raman, the entire three-day event was broadcast through live event streaming for the benefits of devotees who were not able to attend the function in person. Śrī. Kartik Patel and Śrī. Bala Prasanna captured the kumbhābhiṣekam celebration for posterity by their nonintrusive photography.

¹Report prepared by Dr. V. Swaminathan of Bridgewater, New Jersey.

Swami Veditātmānanda Saraswati's address:

The kumbhābhiṣekam rituals infuse life into the mūrti such that what was a piece of stone or a metal before becomes an altar of worship after the process. This the beauty of Hindu dharma. Hindus are ridiculed as 'idol worshippers'. We worship a mūrti which has become an altar through a series of meaningful rituals. This is, in fact, a distinguishing feature of the vaidika dharma. The word 'hindu' is a foreign word for us. Our dharma is a vaidika dharma. Sanātana dharma is also an accurate description. The altar helps us to develop a personal relationship with Īśvara. We have the concept of an iṣṭa devatā, a chosen deity, a form for which we have reverence. Every devatā is a manifestation of Īśvara. Hindus are also ridiculed for worshipping too many devatās. Unfortunately, these criticisms reach our children and they are confused. Regrettably, Hindus are ill informed and/or misinformed. Not knowing or wrongly knowing the tenets of the sanātana dharma, we get influenced and/or perplexed by the accusations of the Hindu religion. This is a tragedy. The sanātana dharma is, in fact, the most ancient, exalted and sophisticated tradition. The preparation of the altar, as evidenced in the kumbhābhiṣekam, shows the refinement in relating to Īśvara, who in the words of pūjya Swāmi Dayānanda, is both the maker and material of the creation. Īśvara indeed manifests as the universe. It is easy to think that the omniscient, omnipotent Īśvara is separate from us and resides somewhere else. This notion only justifies our insignificance and the division between the worshipped and the worshipper. The devotee, separate from Īśvara, willingly accepts his/her smallness and limitations as the reality and subsequently makes no attempt to overcome that limitation. Even if one goes to paradise, one remains limited only.

The vaidika dharma teaches that the maker and the material of the universe is one non-dual reality. As pūjya Swāmiji eloquently says, "we not only worship one Īśvara, we worship only Īśvara. What is, is Īśvara." In other words, every thing in the creation, including the body-mind-sense complex of the individual, is Īśvara. Īśvara is not in some place else. One has to grow to the point to recognize that one is non separate from Īśvara. The Vedas give us this challenge to own up to our reality. One may ask if one is non separate from Īśvara, then who is worshipping whom. That 'I am non separate from Īśvara,' is not a reality for me right now. We accept our current notion of who we perceive ourselves to be. The worshipper is ignorant of his/her reality and takes oneself to be limited and relates to the limitless at an altar. One has to slowly grow out of the limitations to recognize and own up to the limitless self. Appropriate means are given to us to reach this goal. We begin from where we are. The Vedas recognize every type of adhikārī who has to ultimately gain the maturity to free oneself from the sense of limitations.

The worship of Īśvara is identifying with Īśvara. With the human mind neither the omniscient and omnipotent Īśvara nor the Īśvara who transcends all the qualities can be visualized. The Śivamahimnastotram says, "katividhaguṇaḥ kasya viśayaḥ I pade tvarvācīne patati na manaḥ kasya na vacaḥ II - How many qualities does He possess? By whom can He be perceived? Yet, whose mind and speech do not turn to the (saguṇa) form (arvācīna) taken by Him?" One can relate to Īśvara in any of the incarnate form. We have many forms of Īśvara coming down to us traditionally over the millennia. Of course, one can invoke Īśvara in any form as Pūjya Swāmiji said that even a milestone on the road side can be an altar. Nevertheless, we are given many forms that are visualized by the minds of the rīṣis and that have been time tested. Every form is special, having its own method of worship (rituals), alaṅkāra (dress), naivedyam (offering) etc.

²A summary of Swāmiji's talk is given here.

Another usual criticism that is lodged against Hinduism is that the methods of worship are varied and consist of many rituals. People are allergic to the word 'ritual.' A ritual is nothing but a systematic way of performing an action. Even a simple thing like making coffee in the Indian style, is a serious ritual, consisting of many critical steps. Any one travels by air can appreciate the umpteen number of steps that have to be executed sequentially before boarding the plane! One must recognize that one cannot carry out any action without a ritual. A ritual associated with worship is also the same thing, an action at the level of the physical body, speech and mind. It prescribes a methodical way of relating to Īśvara and gives us a structure for expressing our devotion. A religious ritual requires a form that goes with the spirit of worship.

Such nuances in the worship are in fact, the glories of the vaidika dharma. We should consider ourselves to be most fortunate to be born in this tradition. We are given the opportunity and choice to identify with Īśvara and discover our limitless nature. The more worship offered to the deity, the more powerful it becomes. We benefit from that worship. To be a witness to the kumbhābhiṣekam rituals and listen to the mantras is a great privilege. I was present at the first kumbhābhiṣekam in 1990 and was not here during the 2002 and 2013 kumbhābhiṣekams. I consider it my privilege to be present at this jīrnoddhāra kumbhābhiṣekam.

Pūjya Swāmiji considered that the pūjā, either at one's home or at a temple, is the most effective way to invoke the devotee in oneself. In the presence of the Lord, who is limitless and all compassion, one feels accepted and secure. Notwithstanding one's blemishes one can be oneself without a façade in the presence of the Lord. One can be a simple and humble person without feeling judged. All our Gods are smiling, welcoming the devotees. We must count our blessings that we belong to the tradition of the vaidika dharma which is rich and sophisticated. We have a powerful altar here in the form of Śrī Medhā Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Let us draw the grace and be blessed with medhā and prajñā.

Om tat sat.

Quotes from Pujya Swamiji's Diary – 1968

February 1968 -

- * Look back, and when you do so, you are in the now. Look ahead, and while doing so, again you are in the now. Look at, aren't you in the now ? 'Now' is the soul of time in which you have your soul.**
- * Teather not the soul with the chords of past and future and then say "I am not free". Snap them there in which you have your soul.**
- * Is there a there? And when such a there is known, is it here or there?**
- * When you reach above, it becomes a 'here', and when you go below, it too becomes a 'here'. And when you are here, it is here. If that is so, can you escape from here?**

Freedom

Camp by Swami Sadatmanandaji at Anaikatti asram from March 2018

Series of five talks on the topic of freedom continued from May 2018 issue

In the earlier talks we saw that the fundamental bondage is in the form of sense of limitation which is experienced by us more vividly in the form of self non-acceptance or sense of helplessness or dependence on the world to be happy, peaceful and secure.

All three of them are there, but different people will feel each one of these in different degrees. Some people will feel helplessness more and some will experience dependence more. Behind all of them there is a sense of limitation centered on I. This sense of limitation which is the fundamental bondage is a notion, a mistake. A mistake is missing the fact and taking something else to be the fact. That can be corrected only by right knowledge. Right knowledge is attained by appropriate means of knowledge. In the case of self-knowledge, the appropriate means of knowledge is in the form of Vedanta.

This Vedanta is giving the vision of the self in 3 stages -

i) ***tvam padartha vicarah*** - analysis of the individual. That is done with the help of *drk- drsya viveka* (seer-seen discrimination). With the help of this *viveka* I arrive at the understanding that I am not this BMC (Body Mind Complex), I am consciousness. This is what *sastra* reveals. This consciousness is not limited by this body, senses and the mind (BMC). This consciousness is one and the same in all. Like space in one body is not different from space in another body. Similarly, there is only one consciousness.

The implication of this understanding - that I am consciousness free from the limitations of the body, mind complex- is that I am free from birth, death, sadness or any emotion. I am the illuminator of all emotions and not subject to any emotions. And the activities that are happening in the BMC are not possible without me consciousness. But I, the consciousness is not the doer. I am free from doer-ship.

Like the sun is blessing all the activities of all people. But does not have doership with regard to the activities of all people. Similarly, I consciousness is blessing the body, blessing the senses and the mind. But I consciousness am not the doer. Also, I am free from *bhoktrtvam*, experiencership. I am not subject to any hurt or any elation. By understanding myself to be consciousness I release myself from doership (*kartrtvam*) and experiencership (*bhoktrtvam*) This is a big relief. And when I remain in this understanding, then I am free from any guilt or hurt. As long as *kartrtvam* is there, there will be guilt because we will always feel I should have done this or should not have done that- *kim aham sadhu na akarvam, kim aham papam akaravam iti*.

Similarly, as long as *bhoktrtvam* is there, there will be hurt. But when I discover this vision, both guilt and hurt are not there, I don't take credit for any action nor do I take discredit for it. Somebody praises me, I don't feel flattered. Somebody criticises me, I don't feel depressed. My *upadhi* is like that, it invites both praise and criticism. Thro' this *upadhi* the *papam* or *punyam* of listener is exhausted. But our problem is when right thing happens, I want to take the credit. But when wrong thing happens, I don't want to take the blame.

There is double standard. (As one swamiji said - *mitta mitta gup gup, kadva kadva thu thu*. Sweet I swallow, but bitter I spit it out.) Hence you are not able to abide in the wisdom. With reference to both praise and criticism you are objective. This is how the upadhi is. Like some gadgets, they work sometimes and sometimes they don't. Similarly upadhis have limitation not me. Thus there is no kartrtvam and bhoktrtvam.

The problem is:- somebody shouts at you. You feel I have been shouted at for no reason. The person has his reasons to shout which you don't see. The benefit of Vedanta is you become objective about everything including the condition of your body and your mind. If something does not occur to your mind, you say alright today it did not come. No guilt. This is the implication of understanding I am consciousness. There is no irresponsibility. Whatever needs to be done, whatever needs to be corrected, it will be done. Infact, it will be done better because earlier your subjectivity inhibited corrections and now those inhibiting factors are not there. So the person becomes free from guilt and hurt even while interacting with the world.. This is the first topic- *tvam padartha vicarah*.

ii) **Tat padartha vicarah** – it is the analysis of the meaning of the word 'tat' in the great sentence '*tat tvam asi*'. In this topic, we discuss creation. Vedanta says the world is a creation and its material and efficient cause is brahman or Isvara. Since it is the material cause, Isvara pervades the world. There is nothing else apart from it.

If we analyse the status of effect and cause, we find that the effect does not have existence apart from cause. For example, pot the effect depends upon clay to exist. In this particular paradigm, clay is independent and pot is dependent upon clay for existence. Therefore, clay is satyam (real) and pot is mithya (unreal). Chandogya upanishad says- *mrthika ityeva satyam*. Similarly, the world is a product and therefore the world is mithya and brahman, the cause is satyam. Therefore we have the popular statement- *brahma satyam, jagat mithya*. But many people have some wrong ideas about mithya. They have allergy to the word mithya.

They say- How can this beautiful world be mithya?

Our answer is – Even beautiful things can be mithya. Like not only a horrible movie is mithya, but a beautiful movie is also equally mithya. So something to be mithya, it need not be ugly. So mithya is an ontological term which is revealing the status in terms of reality and not in terms of goodness or badness. It is not a value judgement. Mithya does not mean it is beautiful or disgusting or ugly. Mithya only means that it does not have an independent existence. Whether beautiful or not, if it is an effect it is mithya. Sometimes people feel that if it is mithya, it should not come to our experience. That is not correct. For that we have another world- *tuccham*- that which does not come to our experience or totally non-existent - like rabbits horn, flowers grown in the sky, barren women's child – all these never come to our experience. But mithya is that which comes to our experience. Infact, sastra goes one step further. Whatever comes to your experience is mithya. Availability for experience and being mithya are not opposite. Something can be mithya, still it can come to our experience. Many people ask- "Swamiji, if something is mithya, how come we are able to use it?"

We must know that utility does not decide reality. Like the currency in your pocket is mithya because it does not have intrinsic value. Govt. can decide tomorrow that the Rs 2000 note has no value. We can easily understand it is mithya. Better example is share index. It has no reality. But people get an heartache, when the stocks crash. Really share index is useful to indicate economy, but it is not real. So unreality and utility are not contradictory. So the world is mithya and brahman is satyam.

Question can be asked- swamiji what is the use of knowing that the world is mithya?

Earlier I was eating roti which I thought was real. Now I am eating the same roti which I understand to be mithya in a mithya plate. So knowing something is mithya seems to be only an academic information.

Answer is- Vedanta does not reveal anything which is not useful. Vedanta is going to reveal that brahman which is satyam as yourself. Brahman is satyam means I am satyam and everything is mithya. This is an important understanding because when I understand and abide in it, this mithya jagat cannot effect satya atma. Like mithya mirage water does not affect desert land. Mithya people, situations cannot effect me who is sadatma. This is the implication. Whatever happens does not affect my purnatvam. That is the importance of knowing the world is mithya. When we say mithya, we don't create a disconnect between mithya jagat and satya atma. Because when we analyse the two we find that where mithya is, satyam is very much there. Like clay is where pot is. Similarly, satyam is available where mithya is. So when we say - jagat is mithya, brahman is satyam what we mean is - brahman alone is appearing in the form of this jagat. Many people not understanding vedanta properly say that Vedanta is making people impractical, unrealistic. That is not so. Infact vedanti's are the most practical people. They don't get carried away by superfluous things. They always stay focussed on what is valuable at that level. Thus Vedanta reveals this important understanding that jagat is mithya and brahman is satyam. So the second teaching is that jagat is not separate from brahman. And what is this brahman? Brahma is existence- *sad brahma*.

iii) The third part of the teaching is – aikyam between tat and tvam.

sad brahman is chit atma- existence brahman is the self which is consciousness. *Sad eva chit chit eva sat* - Existence is consciousness and consciousness is existence. There is only one existence, consciousness and that I am. Sad brahman is chit atma. The two are equated. There is aikyam between tat and tvam. The final teaching is :- there is only one reality which is appearing as individual jivatma and the same consciousness is available as parmatma Isvarah. But in consciousness there is no division of jivatma or parmatma. There is only eka atma. *"I am that consciousness which is the truth behind the individual jiva and the total called Isvara"*. In Vedanta, jiva does not merge into Isvara. The vision is :- there is one non-dual reality which is called consciousness and that is what I am. In me there is no jivatvam or Isvaratvam. I am the truth of both. I am divisionless whole, I am limitless atma. When I have this vision, the sense of limitation is dismissed. The sense of limitation is there because you have limited yourself to be as good as the body is, as good as the mind is. Therefore, you felt limited. Like a rich king who identifies with a beggar in his dream and therefore feels helpless. Similarly, I am limitless brahman but because of ignorance I thought myself to be this limited jiva and therefore there was sense of limitation. But in reality I am free from all limitation. This vision makes me completely free. This is called absolute freedom.

How is it absolute? Because when I own up this freedom, I don't have to work for any other freedom like freedom from relationship, freedom from household things, etc. You don't have to run away from anything. The house is brahman, the householders are brahman. I alone am appearing in the form of all house members and activities. Nothing is away from me. So you don't have to seek for any freedom once you own up this freedom. Somebody shouts. Then one who is shouting and one who is shouted at, both are my manifestation only. I am playing a double role.

Once I have owned up this freedom, I can manifest in this body because the limitations of the body, of the mind of the senses do not bother me. It is something like – when I know I am rich, I don't mind playing the role of a beggar. My playing the role of a beggar does make me a beggar. Thus, having owned up this freedom, I don't get bothered by the limitation of the body or the mind. The so-called binding factors do not bind me anymore. Like Pujya Swamiji said- *"When you are free inside, even if you are put in a jail, you remain free"*. He gave this example- some Haridwar mahatmas who did an agitation against cow slaughter were put in the jail. Afterwards they were released and when they came back to Haridwar, the mahatmas said- *"Inside the jail, there is a good arrangement of food. We don't have to go out for bhiksha."* When you are free at the spiritual level, the bondage is no longer there centred on you, nothing can bind you. That is why it is called absolute freedom having gained which you don't have to seek any other freedom.

Another reason why it is absolute is - Until I discover this freedom, any other freedom will not make me completely free. However much political freedom, social, financial freedom I have.... still I will continue to feel bound. When I own up this freedom, when it is no more a statement for me, but it is a fact for me, then nothing can bind me. This is absolute freedom. This absolute freedom is by the vision revealed by Vedanta. This vision can be attained by listening to Vedanta from a competent teacher. Listening to vedanta from a competent teacher for attaining this vision about myself is called the sadhana of sravanam. When listening you should allow the teacher to unfold the vision. You remain like a canvas the painter is painting on. Sometimes because of the impact of teacher's conviction, doubts don't come while listening to the teacher. But after listening to the teacher when you are free of the impact of the teacher's conviction, there may be some doubts of your own. Then these doubts are resolved by using reasoning by the sadhana called mananam (deliberation). After sravanam and mananam, I have the conviction which is not shaken by any logic. Even guru cannot shake you - *gurunA api na vicAlyte*.

Sometimes people give this majority-argument. Since many more people are convinced about dvaita and fewer people are convinced about advaita (even among them, at heart many are dvaitis because when everything is okay, they are advaitin and when something goes wrong, they are dvaitin.), so most of the people seem to be convinced of following dvaita buddhi. In every class, very few people will confidently say- *"I am non-dual brahman. I am the truth of every jiva and Isvara as well"*.

What we feel is- *"How can I be the truth of jagat karta Isvara? Bhagavan will punish me."* Therefore, very few people have conviction about advaita. How can you say advaita is the reality?

If sravanam and mananam have been done well, then you will not be shaken. It gives you this conviction.

But even if one is well convinced that I am limitless brahman, the truth of everything, one problem continues to remain - that of habitual error. This is there because before coming to Vedanta I was thinking myself to be a small person good for nothing. Now you tell me that I am brahman. But the old habit does not go away so easily. Like for example, the light switch in your room was on the left side. You yourself shift it to the right side. You have no doubt about it. But still when you enter into that dark room, your hand will automatically go to the left side. Here the problem is not of ignorance or doubt, but of habitual errors. I came to Vedanta just recently, but before coming to Vedanta I have been thinking myself to be a karta, bhokta, a small person, a victim. This conclusion has been there from time beginningless. There is no beginning since when I thought myself to be this limited jiva. So for anaadi-kala I have taken myself to be this limited jiva. Now this new knowledge has come which is right knowledge, but because of habit, this type of error may continue for some time. That is called habitual error.

How can we neutralise this error?

By repeatedly bringing to my mind this vision I have received through sravanam and mananam that I am limitless brahman ever free, immortal, unborn. I keep on seeing this again and again. Whenever some reaction happens I catch myself. Reaction was because I considered myself to be someone who was shouted at. That is a mistake, smile at it. Learn to smile at your own mistake and spend time to keep bringing this teaching back to your mind. It is not brain washing because you are repeating that teaching of which you are convinced now. If not convinced and simply repeating then it is called ahangrah upasana. But when you have conviction, free of doubt, but there is only habitual error which you are neutralising by creating right new habits as it were. So old habit is neutralised by right new habit. When conviction is there and habitual error is not there, then there is abidance in the wisdom spontaneously.

This abidance is called jnana nishta – abidance in wisdom Or *nishta sahita jnanam* - wisdom with abidance. Once this is there, no bondage is there. Earlier also it was not there. But now you know it is not there. The whole world is a non-stop celebration. *nandati nandati nandateva....* Everything is a manifestation of my glory. If somebody sleeps well, you think how well I am sleeping. You don't have jealousy. Everything is your own glory. And all potential which are there in this body, mind complex is expressed without inhibition and is available for all.

Therefore, jnana nishta will be expressed in the form of spontaneous compassion, spontaneous love. Real love is possible when you don't have any axe to grind. Generally, in the name of love, there is tendency to control. Here love is without control, without agenda. Why do I control? Because I am feeling insecure. I am imposing some security on them and I think if I don't control this person or situation, it will go out of my circle of influence, then my security will go away. When insecurity is not there, you don't have the need to control. (Like a man thinks I don't deserve her, but I am lucky to have her as my wife. So there is need to control for fear that she may leave him. But if insecurity is not there, then man thinks I deserve her, she will not leave me because we are both fortunate to have each other. Then no insecurity, no tendency to control. This is in relative sense). Whereas if this wisdom is there, nothing can make me insecure.

All are my manifestation so I know all. This is freedom which is expressed in the form of effortless, compassion, love. But this freedom can be obtained only when I have received the vision effectively. Receiving the wisdom effectively will be possible only if the sadhana of sravanam, mananam and nidhidyasanam are done effectively. These three sadhanas together are called jnana yoga. Effective jnana yoga leads to vision with abidance which gives me freedom. Jnana yoga can be effectively pursued only when I have some relative freedom. To attain absolute freedom through the vision, I need to have relative freedom. And relative freedom is required at four levels. To pursue jnana yoga effectively, I require relative freedom at physical level, mental level, intellectual level and even at spiritual level.

i) Freedom at **physical level** means the body should be relatively free from disease.

There should be no health issue which stops me from doing sravanam, mananam and nidhidyasanam. Health issues should not make me immobile or there is so much pain that concentration is not possible. Sravanam, etc is possible only in a sound mind. Sound mind is possible in a sound body. So body should be relatively free from sickness.

How to get the fitness of the body? Bhagavad Gita tells us how to make our body fit for yoga.

**yuktAhAra vihArasya yuktaceshtasya karmasu /
yuktasvapnAvabodhasya yogo bhavati dukhahA / BG ch 6sl 17**

Four things are talked about-

i) Food discipline in terms of quality, quantity and frequency. Food should be such that it is conducive to spiritual pursuit. Very spicy food which creates tamo guna (lethargy), food which makes me restless should be regulated. And also we follow certain religious disciplines regarding eating. One should not eat while studying scriptures. Purity should be maintained while studying sastra.

- To be continued



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Āyurveda - MOTHER-CARE

(Ancient Indian System of Medicine)

Compiled by Swami Shuddhabodhanand Saraswati

Āyurveda (ancient Indian system of medicine) makes clear the high value put on the expectant mother-care and well-being of children. Before trying to know what Āyurveda has said about the need of expectant mother-care, it will not be out of place to remind ourselves how advanced this system of medical science was until it was subdued by certain section of vested interests. After the long foreign rule in India, majority of us have a wrong notion that Āyurveda is a primitive system of medicines with some herbs and ashes (*bhasmas*). Modern medicos sneer at it. Yet, a slow awareness is growing nowadays about the genuineness of Āyurveda.

Āyurveda is an ancient medical system which originates in the Vedas with 'Dhanvantari' as the first physician and Āśvinīkumārās (twins) as the first surgeons. It is interesting to note here that Āśvinīkumārās had done successfully head transplants between the sage Dadhyañ Muni and a horse twice (*Br.U.2-5-16 and 17*). Dhanvantari taught it to sages and thereafter it continued in oral tradition from the teacher to the taught.

Historically this tradition is traced to 5000 BCE. The great two luminaries whose texts called *Samhitās* (compendiums) are followed now are Charaka and Sushruta (circa - 6th century BCE). These texts are further enlarged by their disciples. Both *Samhitās* discuss the eight branches of Āyurvedic medicine. Deep knowledge of anatomy, etiology, embryology, digestion, metabolism, genetics and immunity is also found in many texts. Charaka and Sushruta have presented this medical science in a very organised manner. But in addition to emphasizing therapeutics, Sushruta also discusses surgery, which Charaka barely mentions. Sushruta is considered as the father of Indian surgery and also the father of plastic surgery and Cosmetic surgery. Surgeons in his times conducted surgeries such as caesareans, cataract, artificial limbs, fractures, urinary stones, plastic surgery and even brain surgery. Usage of anaesthesia was well-known in ancient India. Over 125 surgical equipments were used. The technique of forehead flap rhinoplasty (repairing the disfigured nose with a flap of skin from the forehead) that Sushruta used to reconstruct noses is practised almost unchanged in technique to this day. Sushruta *Samhitā* details about 650 drugs of animal, plant and mineral origin. In addition, it describes more than 300 kinds of operations that call for 42 different surgical processes and 121 different types of instruments. In keeping with the Āyurvedic philosophy of preserving life and preventing the infirmity of old age, he extols the benefits of clean living, pure thinking, good habits, regular exercises, special diets and drug preparations. It is worth noting here that Āyurveda treats the diseases taking into account the entire body as one composite whole entity than the linear method of modern medical science like repairing a motor car part by part independently.

Both these Āyurvedic texts were translated into Arabic and later in Persian in the eighth century. That made Āyurveda spread far beyond India. Chickenpox inoculation has its origin in India. The procedure of rhinoplasty was observed in India by a British surgeon in 1793. He published it in London the following year. That changed the course of plastic surgery in Europe.

Charaka describes the need of expectant mother-care at length. He says: It is indispensable that the expectant mother has to observe certain restrictions during the pregnancy. Her food and other habits have to be regulated so as to be conducive to the nourishment and the growth of the foetus. Otherwise it can have adverse effect on the foetus in terms of some incompleteness or sickness. Similarly, at a certain stage of pregnancy the mother gets some intense cravings. Their fulfillment has a bearing on the healthy growth of the foetus. At times the causes of such cravings can be mental in nature. Just as her health has to be kept in good condition, so also she should be kept cheerful all along. This is very necessary from the standpoint of both the mother and the foetus. Lack of such conditions has an adverse effect on the healthy growth of the foetus (*Charaka Śāstrīra*, 3-23).

At times the cravings of the expectant mother can be prohibitive in terms of demanding verily the restricted food etc. In such case she should be handled very tactfully without hurting her by harsh words or scolding. Lovingly she should be dissuaded from such a desire. If, in spite of persuasion from different angles if she cannot be convinced, she should be referred to the Vaidya (Āyurvedic Doctor). The *Vaidya* should fulfill her desire partly by simultaneously counteracting the adverse effects on her and the foetus through the nullifying medication. But the cravings should not be denied. Defects arising from the faulty diet of a pregnant lady and the non-appeasement of her cravings produce different types of defects in the foetus. If there are drawbacks in the conditions necessary for the foetus to grow or if they are totally contrary, the foetus gets destroyed in the beginning itself or gets aborted without remaining for a long period. This is why the *śruti* exhorts the husband to take special care of his wife during the pregnancy (*Ai.U.2-3*).

Quotes from Pujya Swamiji's Diary – 1968

March 1968 -

* From there you moved, which was once a 'here' and 'there' when you reach, it shall be a 'here'. Can you ever move from 'here'?

* Will there be a 'there' without past and future ? Is there a 'here' without now ? Now is here, and here is now.

* The 'I am' in you is now and here. But the 'I am so-and-so' is from somewhere with a past.

* To be is to have my being in here and now. To cease to be is to have our being beyond here and now.

Hope sustains the World

by Melkote Ramaswamy

As I came home from the hospital after being treated for a possible infection, I began to reflect on life's twists and turns. What came immediately was Hope. I realized amidst all problems one faces, Hope is the beacon, the driving force—one that never deviates from its mission of sustaining a positive attitude. Hope—we all need—driving force of life. On second thought, Hope is a product of Faith—a belief in the goodness of things and that we are not alone in our journey and we have help everywhere just by seeking. One can easily make a connection between, Hope and Faith, and likewise to prayer. Prayer is ongoing and does not wait for an answer right away.

Come to think of it, the world is built on Hope—individuals and nations project their future on the basis of Hope. But one has to be realistic in entertaining hope to avoid disappointment.

Hope by the way is a result of our unconsciously acknowledging our helplessness in controlling things and recognizing there is a higher power that guides our destinies. Hope is what we need when we have exhausted our best efforts. There are very few that don't believe in God in some form or the other. Even atheists cannot dispute the role of conservation laws in controlling the world.

Hope and prayer go hand in hand. Prayer is a deliberate action and every action yields a result—not necessarily immediately, but in its own course—sort of delayed action medicines. This is nothing but the law of causality in action.

Religion with its solid framework of ethical values refines us, makes us humble, makes us aware of life beyond what we see. It turns us toward God—in whatever form you wish to imagine, creates an anchor endowed with the quality of sustaining hope. The Hindu tradition permits its devotees a great choice of worship—God can be formless or with form, with attributes or without attributes, even in the form of sound (Om),

Hope, Faith, Prayer and God are intimately connected and in some sense sustain the universe. Let us be grateful for that.

Melkote Ramaswamy is a physicist, writer, speaker and author of An Immigrant celebrates America (University of Indianapolis Press 2007) and is an active member of Hindu Temple of Central Indiana. He has attended Vedanta camps at Arshavidya Gurukulam. He can be contacted at (email: melramaswamy@gmail.com)

Dear Arsha Vidya teacher,

We are very happy to share that our website www.arshasampradaya.org is ready to welcome you and all Arsha Vidya teachers worldwide with your details.

The formal launch of the website will take place in Rishikesh on 22nd September 2018 as a part of Pujya Swami Dayananda ji's punya tithi events.

The purpose of this hub is:

1. To make available the teaching of Advaita Vedanta across the world by sharing the contact details, activities, projects, links to websites of hundreds of Arsha Vidya teachers. These teachers directly taught by Pujya Swami Dayananda ji or his direct disciples uphold the tradition and teach in many languages and in many countries.
2. To share information for greater synergy and collaboration for greater impact in society as one Arsha Vidya family.

The following are the steps to register and be a part of the one stop, virtual hub:

1. By August 2018, you will receive an email from admin@arshasampradaya.org with a username and a password. This link can only be used once to log in and will lead you to a page where you can set your password. It expires after one day and nothing will happen if it's not used. Please ensure that only one or two people have access to these details.
2. Once you log in there will be a user guide for the website which is self explanatory and will explain simply the different fields and steps involved in entering the data and saving it.
3. The data entered will be reviewed by the Admin and then published. This will take anywhere from one – two weeks. You will be alerted when your page is published and you can share it.
4. We will try to contact all Arsha Vidya teachers on our database which is still getting updated. Please alert us if a particular Arsha Vidya teacher has not been contacted so that we may do so at the earliest.
5. For any queries, kindly contact admin@arshasampradaya.org, brahmaprajna@arshasampradaya.org or bindu@arshasampradaya.org

With best wishes and prayers,

AVS Working Committee.

Inviting applications for Assistant Managers at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti, Coimbatore

Looking for people to assist the General Manager to run the Gurukulam and to take responsibility for different functional areas in the administration of the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam like Office administration, Housing, kitchen, dining hall, stores, facilities, event-management etc. Those who have a value for being here and consider offering services at the Gurukulam a privilege will be given preference.

Inviting applications from honest, motivated, committed persons with reasonable education, inter-personal skills, communication skills preferably in both English and Tamil and with at least a few years of relevant experience. Experience in facilities management in a guesthouse or the hospitality industry will be most relevant. It is expected that people would be willing to take up different roles assigned based on the need of the hour. Knowledge of email, excel and word desirable. Husband and wife teams may also apply. Food and accommodation provided in the Gurukulam. A compensation package commensurate with suitability for the jobs will be offered.

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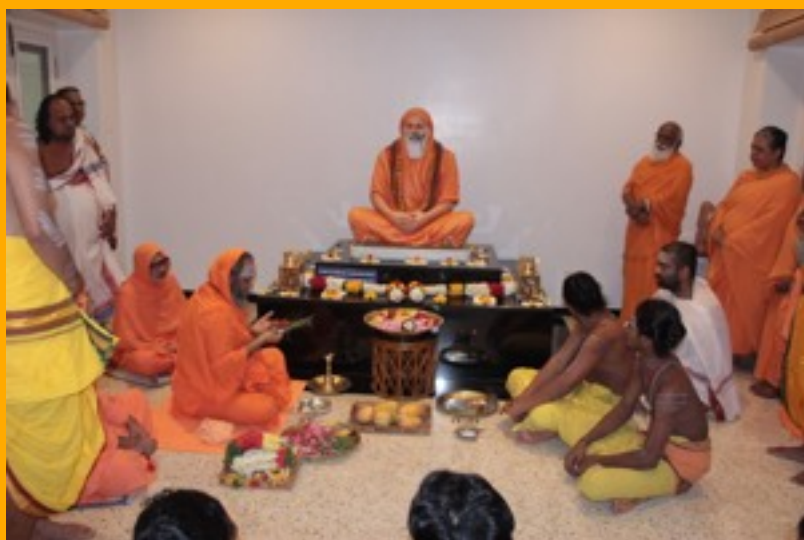
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