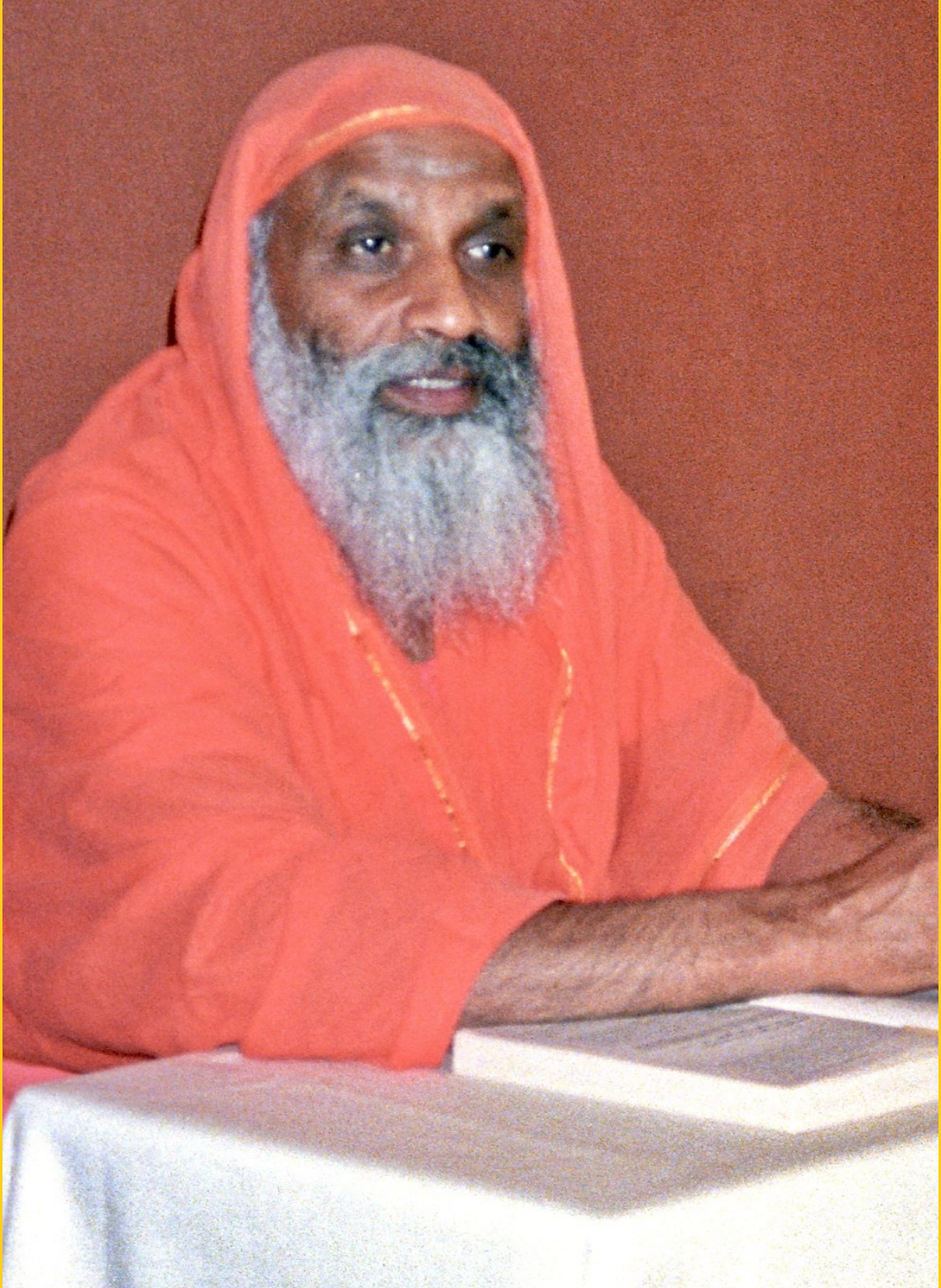




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This is the twenty eighth part of the serial article, continuation from Sep 2023 newsletter.

स्वप्ने स जीवः सुखदुःखभोक्ता
स्वमायया कल्पितजीवलोके ।
सुषुप्तिकाले सकले विलीने
तमोऽभिभूतः सुखरूपमेति ॥ १३ ॥

*svapne sa jīvaḥ sukhaduḥkhabhoktā
svamāyayā kalpitajīvaloke
susuptikāle sakale vilīne
tamo'bhibhūtaḥ sukharūpameti*

स्वप्ने - in dream सः जीवः - the very same person सुखदुःखभोक्ता - the experiencer of joys and sorrows स्वमायया - by his own projecting power कल्पितजीवलोके - his own created world सुषुप्तिकाले - in deep sleep सकले - the entire (projection) विलीने - when everything is merged तमः-अभिभूतः - having been overcome by darkness (of ignorance) सुखरूपम् - the nature of happiness एति - attains

The very same person experiences joys and sorrows in his personal dream world created by his own powers of projection. In the state of deep sleep, when everything is merged, being overcome by the darkness of ignorance, he attains the nature of happiness. (13)

This is a description of the dream experience. Like the waking state, the dream is also the result of past *karma* or action. When the past action that is the cause of the experience of the waking state fructifies, the experience of the waking state comes about. When the *karma* that is the cause of the dream arises, we experience the dream. Then the *karma* of the waking state arises again to wake us up. All the experiences that come and go are due to our past *karma* or action. The dream experience happens when all the senses and a part of the mind are resolved. The identification with the gross body is given up, while the identification with the subtle

body continues, even though not with the entire subtle body. Understand that in the dream, the body that the *jīva* possesses is not the gross body of the waking state. As the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad describes, the self makes the waking body unconscious and creates a dream body for himself. For gaining experience in any given realm, one should have the *upādhi* that is compatible with that realm. For example, if one goes to heaven, this gross body won't go there with him; it must be a body that is compatible with the objects in heaven, a body that does not decay.

The realm of the waking state is different from that of the dream state, in which the objects are subtle, and so we need a different kind of body to experience those subtle objects. That is why the self makes the waking body unconscious and creates a new body that can gain the experiences of the dream. The gross body, the organs of perception, the organs of action, and this earth are not present in the dream. The sun and moon that you see in the dream are created in the dream. The eyes and ears that you see in the dream are created in the dream. They are dream eyes and ears and not the eyes and ears of your waking. It is therefore possible that a person who is blind might see things in the dream. If a sighted person goes blind, it is quite possible that he is a sighted person in his dreams on account of past *saṁskāras*, through a different set of sense organs created in the dream. Just as *īśvara* has created this waking world through *māyā*, his power of projection, so also, the *jīva* creates the dream world through his own power of projection. What is the basis of dream projections? It is the *saṁskāras* or impressions left in the mind by previous experiences. It is said that dream experiences have their basis in the waking experiences, because each experience of the waking state leaves behind a certain *saṁskāra*.

The *jīva* might not be able to fulfill some of his desires in the waking world, but he may be able to do that in the dreamworld; the unsatisfied desires could give rise to a dream. In the waking state, I am not allowed to eat sweets, let us say. The doctor has said, "Swamiji, sorry. You are already too sweet and, therefore, no

more sweets for you.” Generally, the hosts know this before hand, but Indian hosts feel that their meal is incomplete unless they serve sweets, so they prepare sweets anyway. There are six people sitting at the dining table, Swami is one of them, and there is a whole heap of sweets. The host says, “Swamiji, just one!” I say, “No, I can’t have it.” Whether I want to have it or not, at least my declared position is that I don’t eat sweets. So I watch everyone else have a wonderful time, while I am suppressing a desire within for sweets. I cannot fulfill this desire for eating sweets during the waking state, but when I go to sleep, you should see how many *rasagullās* I consume in my dream!

Strong impressions create the dream-world where the *jīva* expresses his *vāsanās* or *saṁskāras*. Unfortunately, we don’t have the freedom to create the dream-world of our choice; the dream-world just gets created. Please understand, the creation of the dream-world is not under our control, otherwise we would create the dream-world of our liking. The pillowcase says “Sweet Dreams,” but mostly, the dreams are not sweet. It is the impressions that are there, whether pleasant or painful, which will decide the nature of the dream. Therefore, even in the dream, the poor fellow is a *bhoktā*, an experiencer of pleasure and pain.

In the dream, the *jīva* is only a *bhoktā* or experiencer, and not a *kartā* or doer, as in his waking state. The dreamer appears to perform actions in dream, but that is governed by the *karma* that gave rise to the dream. There is no deliberate or pre-meditated action in a dream, and, therefore, the *jīva* does not earn any new *puṇya* or *pāpa*. He just exhausts the *karma* that was responsible for giving rise to the dream experience. Ultimately, he gets tired of that experience also and lets go of that.

The third experience is the state of deep sleep, *suṣupti*, where the identification with the subtle body is also given up. All that remains is identification with the causal body. Everything is resolved; everything is merged into the cause, ignorance. In deep sleep the whole personality merges into ignorance, which is the

cause of every projection in the first place. All identification with the gross body and subtle body being given up, the whole personality merges into the causal body, which is ignorance. In the waking and dream states, there is both a veiling and a projection, whereas, in deep sleep, there is no projection. There is just veiling, the cover of ignorance. In the sleep state, the person doesn't die. Nothing is destroyed; everything remains intact, except that it becomes unmanifest. There is no manifest world, like in the waking and dream states. Overpowered by *tamas*, ignorance, the *jīva* attains the state of *ānanda* or happiness. In fact, in the deep sleep state we merge into *brahman*. In deep sleep, there is nothing other than ignorance separating us from *brahman*. Therefore, in deep sleep, there is an experience of *ānanda*, total happiness; our true nature is experienced.

The strong identification with the body prevents us from experiencing our true nature in the waking and dream states. In the waking state, there are various notions and complexes created by the identification with the gross and the subtle bodies. They deprive us of the benefit of our true nature. When we look at a rope and conclude that it is a snake, what deprives us of the experience of the rope is only the notion that it is a snake. So also, in the waking and dream states, what deprives us of the experience of our true nature is the notion that we are the *jīva*, that one is so and so. All of this goes away in the deep sleep state. There is no awareness of the gross body, there is no awareness of the mind, and there is no awareness even of the ego, because there is no identification. Therefore, in the deep sleep state, the self becomes free from all identification and, hence, free from all complexes and all inhibiting factors that deprive him of the experience of his own self.

The individual experiences his true self, *ānanda*, in deep sleep, except that there is a blanket of ignorance or darkness of ignorance, which makes him unaware of it. In the state of deep sleep, we experience profound happiness all right, but the mind is totally merged in ignorance, and we are not aware of this experience of happiness. Were that not the case, if we were aware of the experience of *ānanda* in

the deep sleep state, nothing else would be required in life; all that we'd need to do is just fall asleep. If, during sleep, we were aware that we are of the nature of profound happiness or that we are experiencing profound happiness, it would be wonderful.

Unfortunately, in the state of deep sleep there is also total ignorance, and we are not aware of anything. When the person wakes up in the morning he says, "I slept well; I did not know anything."

The Upaniṣad briefly describes the waking, dream, and deep sleep states thus: In deep sleep there is only identification with the causal body, ignorance; in the dream there is identification with the subtle body and the causal body, and, in the waking state, there is identification with the subtle, causal, and gross bodies. In Vedānta, the 'waker' is called *viśva*. *Viśva* means whole, entire. The waker is called *viśva* because the complete personality is manifest in the waking state. The dreamer is called *taijasa*, the shining one, the illumined one or the effulgent one. *Tejas* means light. The entire dream world is a world of thought, which shines in one's awareness. The deep sleeper is called *prājña*, which means one who is essentially ignorant and also one who knows well; both meanings are given. *Prājña* is one who knows everything well, because the deep sleep is the causal state, the seed of the other two states and, therefore, in that sense, the sleeper knows everything.

There is a corresponding situation at the cosmic level. When the whole cosmos goes to sleep, it is called the state of dissolution, *pralaya*. The cosmic self is called *īśvara*. Consciousness identified with the totality of ignorance or *māyā* is called *īśvara*. Consciousness identified with the totality of subtle bodies is called *hiranyagarbha*. Consciousness identified with the totality of gross bodies is called *virāt*. Corresponding to *prājña* at the individual level is *īśvara* at the cosmic level; corresponding to *taijasa* at the individual level is *hiranyagarbha* at the cosmic level; and corresponding to *viśva* at the individual level is *virāt* at the cosmic level.

What makes the *jīva* wake up and what is his true nature?

That is said in the next *mantra*.

पुनश्च जन्मान्तरकर्मयोगा-
त्स एव जीवः स्वपिति प्रबुद्धः ।
पुरत्रये क्रीडति यश्च जीव-
स्ततस्तु जातं सकलं विचित्रम् ।
आधारमानन्दमखण्डबोधं
यस्मिँल्लयं याति पुरत्रयं च ॥ १४ ॥

*punaśca janmāntarakarmayogātsa
eva jīvaḥ svapiti prabuddhaḥ
puratraye krīḍati yaśca jīvastatastu
jātaṁ sakalaṁ vicitram
ādhāramānandamakhaṇḍabodhaṁ
yasmin layaṁ yāti puratrayaṁ ca*

पुनः - again च - and जन्मान्तर-कर्मयोगात् - because of the deeds of past lives सः एव - the very same जीवः - *jīva* स्वपिति - (as though) dreams/sleeps प्रबुद्धः - awake पुरत्रये - in the three cities क्रीडति - sports यः - who च - and जीवः - *jīva* ततः - from whom तु - indeed जातम् - is born सकलम् - the entire विचित्रम् - varied आधारम् - substratum आनन्दम् - joy अखण्डबोधम् - unbroken consciousness यस्मिन् - in whom लयम् - dissolution याति - goes पुरत्रयम् च - and all the three cities

Again, because of his deeds of past lives, the very same *jīva* comes back to the dream or wakefulness. The *jīva*, who (thus) sports in the three cities, is the substratum, the indivisible consciousness and joy, from whom the entire varied diversity has sprung up and in whom alone all the three cities dissolve.(14)

To be continued...

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the twenty sixth part of the serial article, continuation from Sep 2023 newsletter.

तां तेन रुधिरौघेण वेदीं वीक्ष्य समुक्षिताम् । सहसाभिद्रुतो रामस्तानपश्यत् ततो दिवि ॥ १-३०-१३
तावापतन्तौ सहसा दृष्ट्वा राजीवलोचनः । लक्ष्मणं त्वभिसम्प्रेक्ष्य रामो वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ १-३०-१४
पश्य लक्ष्मण दुर्वृत्तान् राक्षसान् पिशिताशनान् । मानवास्त्रसमाधूताननिलेन यथा घनान् ॥ १-३०-१५
करिष्यामि न संदेहो नोत्सहे हन्तुमीदृशान् । इत्युक्त्वा वचनं रामश्चापे संधाय वेगवान् ॥ १-३०-१६
मानवं परमोदारमस्त्रं परमभास्वरम् । चिक्षेप परमक्रुद्धो मारीचोरसि राघवः ॥ १-३०-१७
स तेन परमास्त्रेण मानवेन समाहितः । संपूर्णं योजनशतं क्षिप्तः सागरसम्प्लवे ॥ १-३०-१८

tām tena rudhiraugheṇa vedīm vīkṣya samukṣitām |
sahasābhidruto rāmastānapaśyat tato divi || 1-30-13
tāvāpatantau sahasā dṛṣṭvā rājīvalocanaḥ |
lakṣmaṇaṁ tvabhisamprekṣya rāmo vacanamabravit || 1-30-14
paśya lakṣmaṇa durvṛttān rākṣasān piśitāśanān |
mānavāstrasamādhūtānanilena yathā ghanān || 1-30-15
kariṣyāmi na sandeho notsahe hantumīdṛśān |
ityuktvā vacanaṁ rāmaścāpe sandhāya vegavān || 1-30-16
mānavāṁ paramodāramastraṁ paramabhāsvaram |
cikṣepa paramakruddho mārīcorasi rāghavaḥ || 1-30-17
sa tena paramāstreṇa mānavena samāhitaḥ |
sampūrṇaṁ yojanaśataṁ kṣiptaḥ sāgarasamplave || 1-30-18

Then came the sign that the demons had come. Blood and meat were dropping into the ritual fire. Marica and Subahu, along with their unhappy friends had come. Rama, he of gleaming eyes, seeing the pollution of the sacred fire, called Lakshmana's attention to the actions of the *rākṣasas* whose behavior is always wrong, those meat-gobblers. "Watch as I take them out with my *mānavāstra*. Let's see what this arrow can do. They should be blown away into space as if clouds hit by a stiff breeze." The never-failing *mānavāstra* was drawn and released, and it

thumped into Marica's chest. Without being killed, Marica was carried away eight hundred miles where he was deposited in the ocean. This is the same Marica who, having been struck thus, will advise the *rākṣasa* king Ravana not to approach Rama in the Dandaka forest. Marica survived Rama's first arrow, and he had gained first hand experience of Rama's power. It was Rama's home run. The princely brothers finished off the rest of the *asuras* and sent them off. Never again did these demons dare to invade Vishvamisra's rituals.

अथ तां रजनीं तत्र कृतार्थौ रामलक्षणौ । १-३१-१

इमौ स्म मुनिशार्दूल किंकरौ समुपगतौ । आज्ञापय मुनिश्रेष्ठ शासनं करवाव किम् ॥ १-३१-४

एवमुक्ते तयोर्वाक्यं सर्व एव महर्षयः । विश्वामित्रं पुरस्कृत्य रामं वचनमब्रुवन् ॥ १-३१-५

मैथिलस्य नरश्रेष्ठ जनकस्य भविष्यति । यज्ञः परमधर्मिष्ठस्तत्र यास्यामहे वयम् ॥ १-३१-६

त्वं चैव नरशार्दूल सहास्माभिर्गमिष्यसि । अद्भुतं च धनूरत्नं तत्र त्वं द्रष्टुमर्हसि ॥ १-३१-७

तद्धि पूर्वं नरश्रेष्ठ दत्तं सदसि दैवतैः । अप्रमेयबलं घोरं मखे परमभास्वरम् ॥ १-३१-८

नास्य देवा न गन्धर्वा नासुरा न च राक्षसाः । कर्तुमारोपणं शक्ता न कथंचन मानुषाः ॥ १-३१-९

धनुषस्तस्य वीर्यं हि जिज्ञासन्तो महिक्षितः । न शेकुरारोपयितुं राजपुत्रा महाबलाः ॥ १-३१-१०

तद्धनुर्नरशार्दूल मैथिलस्य महात्मनः । तत्र द्रक्ष्यसि काकुत्स्थ यज्ञे च परमाद्भुतम् ॥ १-३१-११

atha tāṁ rajanīm tatra kṛtārthau rāmalakṣaṇau | 1-31-1

imau sma munisārdūla kiṅkarau samupagatau |

ājñāpaya munisreṣṭha śāsanam karavāva kim || 1-31-4

evamukte tayorvākyaṁ sarva eva maharṣayaḥ |

viśvāmitraṁ puraskṛtya rāmaṁ vacanamabruvan || 1-31-5

maithilasya naraśreṣṭha janakasya bhaviṣyati |

yajñāḥ paramadharmiṣṭhastatra yāsyāmahe vayam || 1-31-6

tvaṁ caiva naraśārdūla sahāsmābhirgamiṣyasi |

adbhutaṁ ca dhanūratnaṁ tatra tvaṁ draṣṭumarhasi || 1-31-7

taddhi pūrvaṁ naraśreṣṭha dattaṁ sadasi daivataiḥ |

aprameyabalaṁ ghoram makhe paramabhāsvaram || 1-31-8

nāsy devā na gandharvā nāsura na ca rākṣasāḥ |

kartumāropanam śaktā na kathañcana mānuṣāḥ || 1-31-9

dhanuṣastasya vīryam hi jijñāsanto mahikṣitaḥ |

na śekurāropayitum rājaputrā mahābalāḥ || 1-31-10

taddhanurnaraśārdūla maithilasya mahātmanaḥ |

tatra drakṣyasi kākutstha yajñe ca paramādbhutam || 1-31-11

Vishvamitra completed his *dikṣā*, and coming out from that he saw all that had happened. He was happy to see that what was to be done had been done. That night Rama and Lakshmana slept soundly. In the morning, Rama, thinking of going home, approached Vishvamitra, “We two who will do any job stand before you now. We are ready to do all you ask, to the fulfillment of your desire.”

Vishvamitra and the *mahārṣis* who were leaving the site of the ritual said to Rama, “Hey, we are going to Mithila, the royal city of King Janaka, for a great *yajña*. There we will see all the *devatās* at the end of the sacrifice. You should come along with us.” For these two youngsters the lions and tigers and *rākṣasas* had all been fun. A *yajña* might not be such an attraction.

To seal the deal, the *ṛṣis* said, “There is one thing that you will be interested in. There you two will see a great bow, a wondrous bow, a bow that is carried by an eight-wheeled cart, by a truck. It is truly a divine bow one must see to believe. The *yajña* will be great too.”

“Aha,” said the boys, “Let us go. We must see that bow.”

Off they went, across rivers and mountains, toward the city of Mithila. One morning they came to the river Ganga where they bathed in the holy mother of all waters. Then, having settled for a bit, Rama asked Vishvamitra the story of Ganga, the river that flows through the three worlds.

In the far North there stands the king of mountains, rich with jewels and minerals. Ganga is one of two daughters of Himavan, the deity of the great mountain. Her sister is Uma. The *devas*, seeing in Ganga the solution to their wishes, asked Himavan to give her to them. Himavan sent her forth as the mighty river

coursing through heaven, the earth, and that which is between them. His other daughter, Uma, bright and formidable with the fruit of severe *tapas*, was given to Lord Rudra, to Shiva. Ganga, being lifted into the sky by the gods, created space for all moving things and for the *devas* who spirited her away to heaven. In the heavens, in the form of Mandakini, she is the luminous Milky Way. On earth she is the sacred river that nourishes with knowledge and removes all impurity.

निष्पन्दास्तरवः सर्वे निलीना मृगपक्षिणः । नैशेन तमसा व्याप्ता दिशश्च रघुनन्दन ॥ १-३४-१५
शनैर्विसृज्यते संध्या नभो नेत्रैरिवावृतम् । नक्षत्रतारागहनं ज्योतिर्भिरवभासते ॥ १-३४-१६
उत्तिष्ठते च शीतांशुः शशी लोकतमोनुदः । ह्लादयन् प्राणिनां लोके मनांसि प्रभया स्वया ॥ १-३४-१७
नैशानि सर्वभूतानि प्रचरन्ति ततस्ततः । यक्षराक्षससंघाश्च रौद्राश्च पिशिताशनाः ॥ १-३४-१८
एवमुक्त्वा महातेजा विरराम महामुनिः । साधु साध्विति ते सर्वे मुनयो ह्यभ्यपूजयन् ॥ १-३४-१९
niṣpandāstaravaḥ sarve nilīnā mṛgapakṣiṇaḥ |
naiśena tamasā vyāptā diśaśca raghunandana || 1-34-15
śanairovisṛjyate sandhyā nabho netrairivāvṛtam |
nakṣatratārāgahanam jyotirbhiravabhāsate || 1-34-16
uttiṣṭhate ca śītāṁśuḥ śaśī lokatamonudah |
hlādayan prāṇināṁ loke manāṁsi prabhayā svayā || 1-34-17
naiśāni sarvabhūtāni pracaranti tatastataḥ |
yakṣarākṣasasaṅghāśca raudrāśca piśitāśanāḥ || 1-34-18
evamuktvā mahātejā virarāma mahāmuniḥ |
sādhu sādhviti te sarve munayo hyabhyapūjayan || 1-34-19

During one stopover the travelers spent in the forest, Vishvamitra spoke to them of the beauty of the forest night. He said, “The mighty trees stand as though sentinels in motionless meditation. The gentle animals and birds are quiet, each in his or her own place. All the forest-dwellers are absorbed in the closing silence. The four quarters are painted with the nighttime magic brush. Slowly the last part of the day moves away to the west. Starry constellations and planets shine like sparkling cat’s eyes. The moon, as though meant to dispel the darkness in the world, rises with cool glistening rays, pleasing people by bringing a certain emo-

tion to their hearts. It is good to know and embrace the darkness for what it is, for there one spends half of life. Even in darkness the light of knowledge shines for those who know the whole. Who is out walking the earth at night? The dark-light predators, lions and tigers, and the *rākṣasas* who are even worse beasts.” All in the entourage, after praising Vishvamitra’s description of the night, went to sleep.

Further along, the group came to a delightful woodsy spot about which Rama asked Vishvamitra. Vishvamitra told the story of the sage Gautama and his wife Ahalya who use to abide there. Vishvamitra said, “Lord Indra happened to come by that place and was fascinated by Ahalya. The daunting Indra assumed the form of Ahalya’s husband and courted her. Later, as Indra was leaving, the real Gautama happened to come back. The soap opera. Gautama knew what was up, and Ahalya did too. Gautama cursed his wife, saying, ‘You will remain here, invisible, until the feet of Rama come to this place. Only then can you again come back to me.’”

Rama’s visit marked the end of the curse. At the end of Vishvamitra’s story, Gautama and Ahalya appeared before Rama and his fellow travelers. Rama’s presence reunited Gautama and Ahalya, and the young couple bowed to Lord Rama and blessed him and began again their journey together. Rama’s commitment to bring peace to the forest and the *ṛṣis* moved ahead toward fulfillment.

The beautiful city Mithila was ruled at that time by sage King Janaka, a *rājaṛṣi*. Even today in the Vedantic tradition, Janaka is cited as a wise man who engaged in the world. As a ruler he had all the attendant problems, at the same time he was a wise man. He is cited as an example of how wisdom does not stand opposed to *karma*, activity. Neither does activity produce wisdom nor does it destroy wisdom. Janaka’s daughter was Sita. The band of travelers having arrived, King Janaka was informed the *mahāṛṣi* Vishvamitra was there. When he came to greet the *ṛṣi*, the *yajña* had twelve more days to completion. “O Vishvamitra, my *yajña* is already successful because of your *darśana*.” The king then saw the brilliant boys and asked about them.

भगवन् स्वागतं तेऽस्तु किं करोमि तवानघ । भवानाज्ञापयतु मामाज्ञाप्यो भवता ह्यहम् ॥ १-६६-३

एवमुक्तः स धर्मात्मा जनकेन महात्मना । प्रत्युवाच मुनिश्रेष्ठो वाक्यं वाक्यविशारदः ॥ १-६६-४

पुत्रौ दशरथस्येमौ क्षत्रियौ लोकविश्रुतौ । द्रष्टुकामौ धनुःश्रेष्ठं यदेतत्त्वयि तिष्ठति ॥ १-६६-५

एतदœ दर्शय भद्रं ते कृतकामौ नृपात्मजौ । दर्शनादस्य धनुषो यथेष्टं प्रतियास्यतः ॥ १-६६-६

एवमुक्तस्तु जनकः प्रत्युवाच महामुनिम् । श्रूयतामस्य धनुषो यदर्थमिह तिष्ठति ॥ १-६६-७

bhagavan svāgataṁ te'stu kiṁ karomi tavānagha ।

bhavānājñāpayatu māmājñāpyo bhavatā hyaham ॥ 1-66-3

evamuktaḥ sa dharmātmā janakena mahātmanā ।

pratyuvāca munirśreṣṭho vākyaṁ vākyaaviśāradaḥ ॥ 1-66-4

putrau daśarathasyemau kṣatriyau lokaviśrutau ।

draṣṭukāmau dhanuḥśreṣṭhaṁ yadetattvayi tiṣṭhati ॥ 1-66-5

etad darśaya bhadraṁ te kṛtakāmau nṛpātmajau ।

darśanādasya dhanuṣo yatheṣṭaṁ pratiyāsyataḥ ॥ 1-66-6

evamuktastu janakaḥ pratyuvāca mahāmunim ।

śrūyatāmasya dhanuṣo yadarthamiha tiṣṭhati ॥ 1-66-7

“These are the sons of Dasharatha, by name Rama and Lakshmana, *kṣatriyas*,” explained Vishvamitra. “They came to me to protect my *vrata*. They took care of the evil Tataka and Marica and Subahu for me. They have accompanied me to your city. They would like to see the great bow. They are both fine archers, interested in this bow gained by the grace of Lord Shiva.” The great-soul Janaka, he who always knew whereof he spoke, welcomed the princes and the other sages and put himself at the service of Vishvamitra. In the boys he saw a possible match for his daughter. That was Vishvamitra’s idea too. Vishvamitra told Janaka of the growing and well-deserved fame of the bow skills of the princes of Ayodhya. King Janaka told the story of the great bow of Shiva.

“Once upon a time,” – it’s big story – “Daksha was performing a *yajña* and he purposefully avoided giving oblations to Lord Shiva, because Shiva was his son-in-law. Daksha’s daughter was Parvati, given in marriage to Lord Shiva. Daksha became very proud and thought, ‘After all he is only my son-in-law, who

does he think he is?’ Lord Shiva felt neglected and unhappy. In fact he was furious. Uninvited, he showed up at the ritual and wrecked the whole thing with his great bow Dhanus. The bow was left with the *devas* and then given to the people in my family. We worship it to this day. You know, I have a daughter. She was a find, a great find for me. Years ago I was plowing our fields, and just as the earth was turned from the blade, a baby was there in the furrow. This was a glorious baby, and I have brought her up since that time.”

There is one thing about Sita which is not in the Ramayana. When Sita was a girl, and she was playing with a ball, the ball wedged in a corner behind the great bow Dhanus. Sita walked over and lifted the bow and took the ball. Many kings have come and tried to lift Dhanus. She just lifted it, and King Janaka knew she was not an ordinary girl.

तदेतन्मुनिशार्दूल धनुः परमभास्वरम् ॥ १-६६-२५

रामलक्ष्मणयोश्चापि दर्शयिष्यामि सुव्रत । यद्यस्य धनुषो रामः कुर्यादारोपणं मुने ।

सुतामयोनिजां सीतां दद्यां दाशरथेरहम् ॥ १-६६-२६

tadetanmuniśārdūla dhanuḥ paramabhāsvaram || 1-66-25

rāmalakṣmaṇayoścāpi darśayisyāmi suvrata |

yadyasya dhanuṣo rāmaḥ kuryādāropanaṁ mune |

sutāmayonijāṁ sītāṁ dadyāṁ dāśaratheraham || 1-66-26

King Janaka continued, “I decided that whoever that girl married should be one who could handle that Dhanus. I made that *pratijñā*. Countless princes have come before and failed in the attempt.” In another story it is said that even Ravana came and tried with his twenty hands to lift it. He got wrapped up in it, and it took one thousand fellows to free one of his ten heads which had gotten trapped beneath the bow. Janaka went on, “The husband of my Sita, desired by many, must measure up to the bow. Wars have been waged over this, and I will definitely show it you boys.”

To be continued...

Mahābhārata
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the third part of the serial article, continuation from Sep 2023 newsletter.

The Early Days

Ganga said, “I am sorry you crossed me. I am going away.”

“All right, go, but tell me, why did you make me suffer?” he asked.

“Shantanu, I will tell you the whole truth,” said Ganga. “I was a celestial, the goddess Ganga. You happened to come to Indra’s court, and I liked you. The other celestials found out; they could easily see what was between us. Therefore they sent me down. Now I am going to go back. You and I had a happy life. But these children that I have thrown away are also celestials. They were the Vasus, Ashtavasus, eight celestials who themselves had been cursed. They were cursed because they stole Vashistha’s Kamadhenu, the wish-yielding cow.” From ordinary cows you get milk, or a kick. But anything you wish from Kamadhenu, she will give you. Ganga continued, “In the stealing of the cow by the Ashtavasus, the main culprit was the eighth one. All eight were cursed, and I made a promise to them. I promised I would give birth to them here and I would release them immediately.” That would be the process by which the eight could return to their *loka*. Each child she threw into the river Ganga released a soul. Ganga went on, “But the eighth one was cursed to live a long life on earth, and I am going to leave him here with you. I will go, he will stay; call him Devavrata, or Gangeya.”

Devavrata was saved and raised by Shantanu. Devavrata is Bhishma. He grew up to be brilliant, a great archer, a master of every discipline, of all martial arts. By his spiritual penance he acquired a vast collection of powerful missiles that were suffused with the power and blessing of *devatas* like Indra and Agni and Varuna. Each *astra*, missile, would be sent from a bow as an arrow, but in flight each became a missile because of the chant, the incantation, the *mantra*, that Devavrata sent along with it. He would invoke the deity and the *astra* would

come to life with the specific capacity and strength originally imbued by its *deva*. In time, Bhishma, Devavrata, was made a crown prince.

When his wife Ganga went away, Shantanu became very lonely and love-lorn, weaker and weaker. He went to the forest, as was the wont of all the kings in those days, to take care of the forest and manage the imperial wealth and all the animals. They had elephant and deer and they did not want the population of carnivorous animals to get too many of them. To protect the animals, the kings would hunt those animals who preyed on others, the *himsakāḥ*. The royals did not have jeeps and guns. In those days it was dangerous business. Originally, for control of certain populations of animals royals hunted.

In the forest on a riverbank Shantanu picked up a fragrance. It was a celestial fragrance. Enchanted by the fragrance he followed it; he went after it to find its source. The source was a girl, Satyavati her name. On earth as a fisherman's daughter, she really was a celestial, another princess. She had grown up under the custody of a fisherman. She was a fisherman's daughter, and previously she carried a fishy smell. But by the grace of ṛṣi Parashara, Vyasa's father, she was given a celestial fragrance instead. This was no modern French perfume named Samsara; it came from her, and it was divine and fascinating. Of course Shantanu wanted to marry this girl. He introduced himself as the king of Hastinapura, scion of the Puru dynasty, and he sought her hand.

She said, "You should talk to my father, Nishada." So Shantanu went to the father with Satyavati. She rowed the boat on the way. Rowing the boat was her great joy.

Satyavati's father said, "This is a great honor. I should look upon it as my fortune that the king of Hastinapura seeks my daughter's hand. What more blessing could there be for me? When she was a child it was said that she would marry a great person. Now it is coming true. I also was told that the son of my girl would rule the kingdom, and I do not want that prediction to be untrue. I have lived with that idea. Therefore, Lord Shantanu, I want you to promise me that her

child alone will rule the kingdom.”

Shantanu was stunned. The apple of his eye, Devavrata, his son by Ganga, a stalwart, effulgent son, had already been named crown prince. Shantanu told the fisherman, “I am sorry, this just will not work out.” Shantanu left the forest, but the girl Satyawati would not leave his mind. He missed his appointments, he did not eat well and all his cheer was gone. Even to Devavrata he was indifferent.

Devavrata went to his father and asked what was wrong. His father tried to tell him nicely, “You know, something bothers me. I have you as my only son, and as kings and princes we are called upon to protect our kingdom, our honor, our dignity. In the process we create, sometimes, you know, enemies in the kingdom. Our prosperity can also create enemies. There will be battles. Even with your expertise in warfare it is a risk - suppose I lose you. That would be the end of our dynasty. Therefore I think I should have one more child.” That is what Shantanu said. From that, Devavrata had sensed something about his father's discomfort.

Out of his concern, Devavrata asked the elderly minister in his court, “Sir, why is my father not doing well? Do you know what afflicts him? Is there anything I can do?”

The minister replied, “I think he wants to marry somebody.”

Devavrata: “Is that all?”

“Yes.”

Devavrata said, “Who is that girl?” The minister said he did not know.

So this went around, you know. Devavrata asked the king's charioteer, because the charioteer knows everything, “Please tell me the truth. What’s happening?”

The charioteer just said the same thing the minister had plus a little more, “Your father is flat. He went to the forest; he met a girl; the girl’s father was willing to give the girl in marriage. But the father put one condition on the marriage.

The condition was that the girl's child should come to rule the kingdom. How can your father accept that? It is you he has already anointed."

Then Devavrata went straightaway to Nishada, the father of the girl, and asked him why Shantanu wanted to marry and why he should not and why there should be this condition. After listening to the fisherman, Devavrata promised Nishada, with the sun and all gods and elements as witness, he openly declared, that the child born of Satyawati would rule the kingdom. Devavrata abdicated his kingdom. He said, "I do not want the kingdom."

Nishada, really a very mean fellow, scratched his head and said, "You know what? You are a man of *dharma*. I trust you. I know you will not go against your words. But I am just not so sure about what will happen when you have your own sons. Your eldest will be a rightful heir to the throne, and he need not accept what you say. He will fight against my claim. Therefore I do not think this is a good proposition. I do not want it."

Devavrata said, "In that case, if that is the thing, I promise that I will not marry. All my lifetime I will be a *brahmacārī* and you need not worry about it. This is the frightening vow that Devavrata took like that. He was young and brash. That is why he was called Bhishma. *Bhīṣma* means frightening. He took the vow and all the gods exclaimed *bhīṣma bhīṣma*. Thus was born Bhishma, and the name Devavrata was completely forgotten. Devavrata, Gangeya, called Bhishma was as though born by that name. Then Bhishma took Satyawati in his chariot and took her to the royal court and gave her to his father Shantanu.

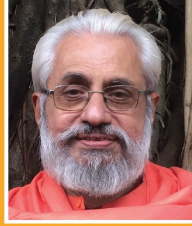
Shantanu was happy that he had ended up with Satyawati, and when he heard how it had come about, Shantanu was sad too. He was happy and he was sad, but Bhishma's firmness and cheerfulness neutralized his sadness and Shantanu lived with Satyawati happily.

To be continued...

Aarsha Vidya Foundation

Presents

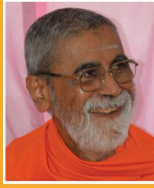
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Namaste and welcome to the sixth edition of the Vedic Wisdom Festival. It is a two-day virtual global festival with the theme of Vedic vision for a complete life. The topics range from Freedom in relationships to Understanding sacred spaces (kshetras) to Ayurvedic wisdom on seasonal foods and various other topics on Vedanta.

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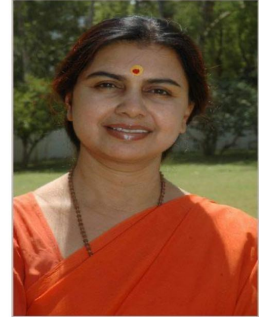


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In this retreat, Swamiji will be unfolding the mantras of the second chapter of Kathopanishad in which Lord Yama teaches his student Nachiketas, the knowledge that liberates one from all sense of lack.

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Pujya Swamiji Aradhana Celebrations at AVG Anaikatti

Today we are commemorating the 8th Samaradhana day of Pujya Swamiji. On this occasion I would like share some points of difference between the tithi (death anniversary) of ordinary people commemorated and the samaradhanam of Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Swamiji like wise people is commemorated.

In case of a person who has not attained wisdom when he leaves the body, then certain rituals are performed. Every year shraddham is done as per the prescription of sastra with the idea that the soul, the jiva who might be in pitr loka may get nourishment from the shraddha done.

But in the case of a wise person this is not applicable. So what we do today does not have any ritualistic significance. It has got spiritual significance. It is a day of getting inspiration and expressing our gratitude. Sastra says that - *tasya pranah na utkramnti, atra eva samaviliyante*. Of that (wise) person pranas will not rise up to other lokas. Here only all the pranas are resolved.

The gross body is merged into Virat, the sukhshma sarira is merged in Hiran-yagarbha and the remaining karana sarira is merged into Ishvara and consciousness continues to be brahman. So really speaking any ritualistic activities are not required.

But we are worshipping Pujya Swamiji as an altar of worship as the one who has become one with Ishvara. Pujya Swamiji has become Lord Dayanandeshwara for us. We are commemorating this day every year for getting inspiration from his life by remembering his qualities. Also by remembering the incidents which we ourselves have witnessed while interacting with him and many lessons learnt from them. To remember those incidents and to remember his glory, we are celebrating this Samaradhana Day. Samaradhana means worshipping very well. The day of worshipping puja Swamiji very well is called Samaradhana Day of puja swamiji. This day is otherwise called nirvana day as on this day Pujya Swamiji attained Videha mukti.

My co-speakers have already talked about Pujya Swamiji and we are running out of time and therefore I will not add anything to that. All of us are very blessed to have Pujya Swamiji in our life directly or indirectly.

We pray to Pujya Swamiji to shower his grace on us.

Swami Jagadatmanandaji gave welcome address. He mentioned great contributions of Pujya Swamij in spreading Arsha Paramapara. He also mentioned that Swami Prashantadmanandaji's Samadhi day also coincides on the same day.

Pujya Swamiji's disciples offered shraddhanjali on this occasion.

Swami Nityamuktanandaji said it is fortunate that we were associated with Pujya Swamiji as his disciple students. Being part of first batch of students at AVG Anaikatti, we watched in close quarter the total involvement of Swamiji in all activities of Ashram. What we are today is all because of his blessings and teaching.

Swamini Suddha Vidyanandaji recalled various experiences during class session and outside meetings with Swamiji. "How to live", Swamiji demonstrated by his own life-style. "Having come to me, you are re-deemed" is Swamiji's own words to her. Magnanimity of Swamiji was evident from his dealing with all sections of people with equal kindness and motherly love. Simplicity is another hall-mark of Swamij. "

tvameva mātā ca pitā tvameva tvameva sarvaṁ mama devadeva" verse heard by **Swami GaneshaSvarupaanandaji**, as per him, made complete sense to him after hearing from Pujya Swamiji. Search for truth culminated in his case with the teachings from Swamiji. In Pujya Swamiji's view 'core-personality' of any individual is just 'sat-svarupam'. It is likened to the vision of a sculpter, who transcends the mass of rock and enjoy at the beautiful Krishna vigraham, chiseling away unwanted portions of the rock. 'All I did in my course days was just to keep my eyes and ears exposed with open mind to Swamiji's unfoldment of vision of Vedanta' he said. It worked. All doubts vanished in no time.

Swami Jagadatmanandaji also presented a poem in Tamil in adoration of Pujya Swamiji.

Om tat Sat

August is a special month for two reasons; the first being the month that gave us our Guru Pujya Sri Swamiji whose birthday falls right in the middle of the month and the other being India's Independence Day 17 years later. But we'll come to that.

There was quite a buzz this month in the Ashram as before the release of his latest movie Jailer, Rajnikanth spent a few days in the Ashram and paid homage to Pujya Sri Swamiji. He mingled freely with the students and the residents of the Ashram and paid obeisance to Pujya Swamiji at the adisthana.

Not to be overshadowed, the Ganga paid us a visit overflowing its banks a few days prior to Pujya Sri Swamiji's jayanti and returned back to its banks though the levels remained substantially higher during the month.

Acharya Jaishankar organised for his students because last year our Acarya Swami Sakshatanandaji during the Arsha Vidya meet requested all of Swamiji's students to regularly conduct retreats in Rishikesh for their own students. Based on that we decided to have a retreat from last year. The retreat has a packed daily curriculum of two classes of Kaivalya UpaniSad and Bhagavad Gita Chapter 4 each and one class of Sadhana Panchakam are being taught. As part of the retreat they also conduct guided meditations in the morning and satsang for QnA in the night which means seven sessions everyday. This routine is based on what they were doing in the course with Pujya Sri Swamiji in Annaikatti during the second three year course there.

Talking about the facilities in Rishikesh at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Jai Shankar felt blessed as he was conducting classes in the satsang hall of Pujya Sri Swamiji which is located in the original place where Pujya Sri Swamiji's grass hut was located where he taught in the 1960s. The satsang hall located in Swamiji's kutia is a special place where so many memories are displayed through photographs as a permanent display here in the gallery. They have formed the Arsha Vidya Varshini Trust, an Ashram is being set up inspired and due to Pujya Sri Swamiji's wishes expressed originally in 1988 with a caveat that setting up an Ashram is like holding onto the Tiger's tail. Pujya Sri Swamiji expressed this wish again in 2015 when they went to meet him due to his failing health. Any donations will help bring this important facility to function quicker.

When asked about Ashrams in the day of internet connectivity, he replied that often we don't see the faces of the participants so we don't know whether they are understanding what we teach. Also on social media you get the number of views but don't know who they are - there is no substitute for direct teaching with the student present.

On Pujya Sri Swamiji's jayanti a special puja was held in the adhisthana where Acarya Swami Sakshatkritanandaji performed abhishek followed by all the students attending the six month course paid homage to Pujya Sri Swamiji by performing milk abhishekam.

During the month some of the students put together an Onam Special Cultural program inspired by Priya Krishnamurthy who also sang beautifully as part of the program but the

highlight by far was the demonstration of Kalaripayattu with Arjun mesmerizing the audience wielding a stick which Pujya Sri Swamiji learnt as a child to do and has often mentioned himself. Beautiful pookalams or flower arrangements were made by the students in the lecture hall, temple and adhisthana. In the afternoon the Swamis and Swaminis were served lunch on banana leaves with some traditional items as part of the festivities. The celebrations ended with a unique Thiruvathurakali group dance performances first by the women; then the men ending with the women joining in the men in revelry. Acharya Swami Sakshatkritananda ended the evening with his blessings and expressing joy and delight at the performances and said he was encouraged to have more such cultural programs in the future.

During the month study of the Mundaka Upanishad was completed and the study of Kathopanishad commenced. Gita classes continued online as Swamini Svratnavidyananda is currently visiting the USA. Chanting classes by Swamini Vimuktananda and Gopalji for Rudram continued. Yoga classes by Arpan and Mohan were conducted in the evening and morning respectively.



Adhishthana Puja on
15-8-2023



Sri. Rajnikant's visit to
Swami Dayananda Ashram



Onam decoration



Floods in Ganga when waters
touched the temple gate.

If August saw a deluge by the Ganga, September saw a deluge of visitors to attend Swami Sakshatkirtanandaji's class on Chapter 18 of the Upadesa Sahasri series which commenced last year around the same time. A packed lecture hall heard a spell binding rendition of the first sixty verses of this remarkable work. The last two days Swamiji did a summing up of the sixty verses - considering the audience was varied from informed listeners to students of the six months course to first timers the summing up was itself a lesson towards understanding this sacred and essential text. The 8 day retreat was a huge success with people from all over India; a student group from Japan also attended.

Before that the Ashram witnessed Janmashtami celebrations with a dance and song recitals by the students decorating the lecture hall with flowers and rangolis.

On 17th September we were blessed by a talk by Prof K Ramasubramanian of IIT (Mumbai) Vedic Mathematics, who spoke at length on 22 critical analysis of Vedanta prakriyas and though the talk was very technical in nature there was enough material to capture the interest of casual listeners.

Swaminis and Swamis belonging to Swami Dayananda parampara gathered for their annual arsha vidya teachers meet. Amongst the concerns were the lack of three year courses being conducted to keep the flow of new teachers of Vedanta, membership of the forum, collective response of the teachers to the upheavals in the society and so on.

As usual aradhana celebrations took place in grand scale with flower decorations and 108 litres of milk abhisheka in which all visitors participated. After the grand-puja the sashus and sadhvis were presented with gifts of dhotis, books and so on.

A highlight after the celebrations concluded is a sahasra sankhabhisheka conducted by Kamakshidass Swamigal of Avinashi Adhinam who was at the time two months short of his 100th year birthday. His energy levels humility and dedication are an inspiration to us all.

The month ended with Swami Paramatmanandaji conducting a well attended camp sponsored by the Madhya Pradesh government but more of that in the next month newsletter.

Photos in the cover page #32 and #31

Manjakudi Camp Report (Aug 19 – 22nd 2023)

We express our gratitude for the opportunity to be part of a Vedanta camp conducted by Amma Sumatmananda swamini at punya kshetram Manjakkudi , the birth place of Poojya Swamiji on topics of Bhaja Govindam and Phala Shruti of Vishnu Sahasranamam .We were welcomed warmly by Swami Rameshvaranandaji who guided us in many ways and also took one Satsang on ‘Relevance of Vedanta in daily life’. Every nook and corner of this serene village is resonating with the vibration of Pujya Swamiji’s presence. The atmosphere with lush green and colourful flowers in the garden around Jnana Pravaha with the Dakshinamurthy's beautiful Sculpture is a visual treat. From 6 am picking up parijatha flowers around as pradakshina of Jnanapravaha hall, chanting pratahsmarami and Gurustothram before meditation was really uplifting. Followed by sessions on profound and intense verses of Bhaja Govindam in the Jnana pravaha hall in front of Swamiji’s statue, Bhaja Govindam is an intense wake up call and urges one to seek Govinda as the Atmatattvam and disentangle from worldly pursuits. Pujya Swamiji calls this a ‘conversion text’, one that converts a seeker of finite ends to a mumukshu and eventually to a Jignasu.. Shankaracharya describes extreme life situations , hitting us with a hammer upon our foolishness of seeking permanent happiness and security in finite artha kama pursuits. The study of Bhaja Govindam inspires one to take up Study of Gita and Upanishads to negate the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘my’ and to understand our real self. The ninth sloka of Bajagovindam stresses the importance of Satsanga.

Satsangatve nissangatvam

Nissangatve nirmohatvam

Nirmohatve nischalatattvam

Nischalatattve jeevanmuktih

“Through the company of the good, there arises non-attachment. Through non-attachment there arises freedom from delusion. through freedom from delusion there arises steadfastness, through steadfastness, there arises liberation in life.”

May we attach ourselves with Govinda more and to gradually detach from anatma pulls. Camps like this help us to recharge ourselves with such contemplations , to prioritise bringing Ishvara into our role plays and divinise our day to day routines.

Praying we should continue to be गुरुचरणाम्बुज निर्भर भक्त, (Gurucaranaambhuja nirbhara bhaktaH) and to get this nitya anitya viveka.

Om tat sat.

- Report by student Sudha Ramanathan

Photos in cover page #2



Dayananda Anugraha Fund

Supporting the disciples of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati

A permanently endowed fund established in 2017 to provide financial support to current and future generations of teachers and students in the Arsha Vidya Sampradaya.

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For further information or to apply for grant, please see www.DayanandaFund.org

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Arsha Vidya Meet - 22nd September 2023 at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh



Honouring Kamakshidasa Swamigal of Ayinashi Adhinam



Aradhana day puja - 15 Aug 2023 at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh

