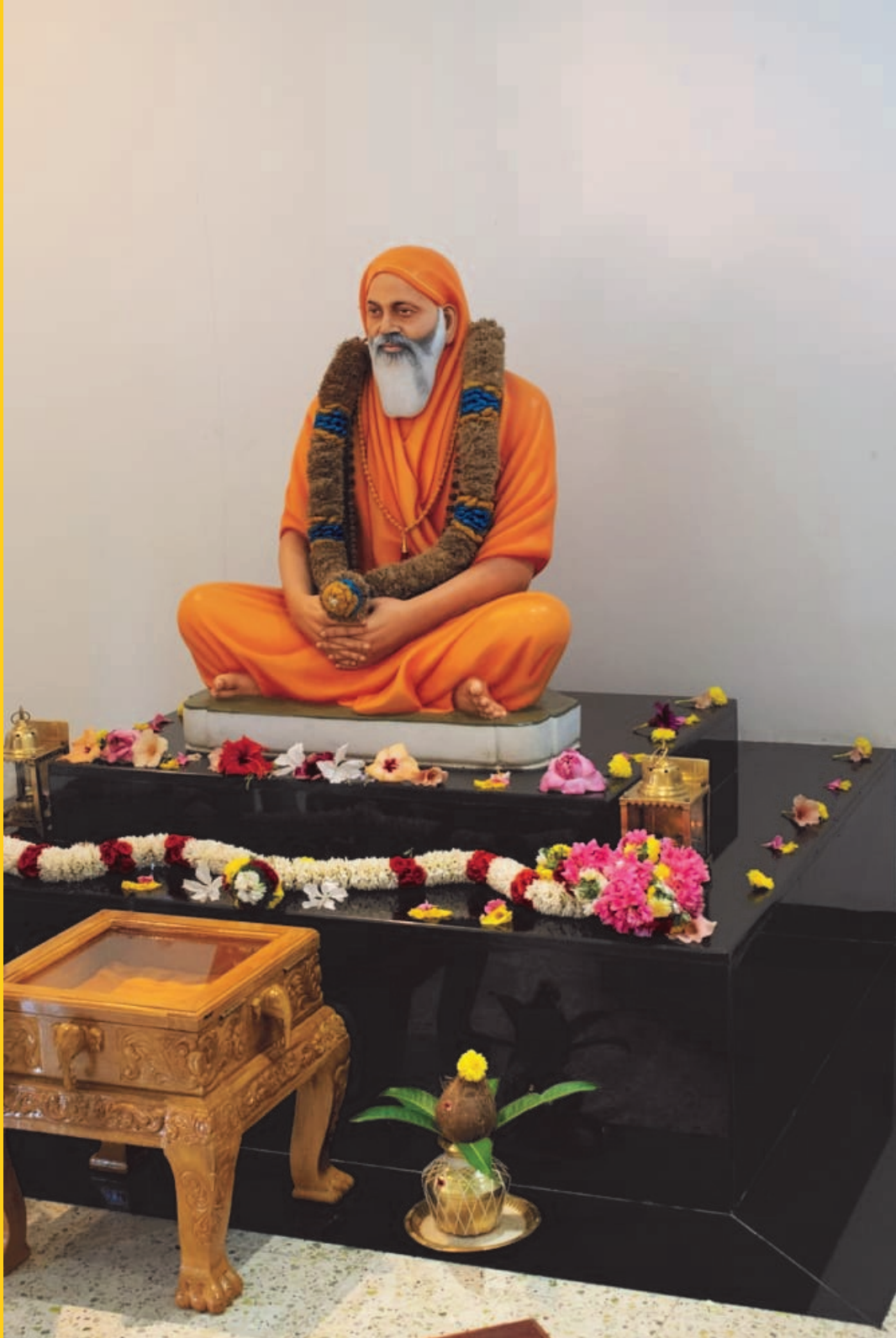




# *Arsha Vidya Newsletter*

Rs. 15



Vol. 22

September 2021

Issue 9





**Arsha Vidya Pitham**  
**Swami Dayananda Ashram**

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

**Board of Trustees:**

*Founder :*

**Brahmaleena Pujya Sri**  
**Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

*Chairman & Managing Trustee:*

**Swami Suddhananda**  
**Saraswati**

*Chief Acharya:*

**Swami Shivaprakshananda**  
**Saraswati**

*Trustees:*

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

**Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam**

72, Bharat Nagar  
Amaravathi Road, Nagpur  
Maharashtra 410 033  
Phone: 91-0712-2523768  
Email: brahmapra@gmail.com

**Board of Trustees**

*Founder:*

**Brahmaleena Pujya Sri Swami**  
**Dayananda Saraswati**

*President:*

**Rajashree Shrikant Jichkar**

*Secretary*

Madhav Babasaheb Solao

*Trustees:*

Ramesh Bhaurao Girde  
Avinash Narayanprasad Pande  
Madhav Chintaman Kinkhede  
Ramesh alias Nana Pandurang  
Gawande  
Rajendra Wamanrao Korde  
Swamini Brahmaprakashananda

**Arsha Vidya Gurukulam**

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

**Board of Trustees:**

*Founder :*

**Brahmaleena Pujya Sri**  
**Swami Dayananda**  
**Saraswati**

*President:*

**Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati**

*Vice Presidents:*

**Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati**  
**Swami Pratyagbodhanada**  
**Saraswati**

*Secretary:*

Swami Jnanananda Saraswati

*Asst. Secretary:*

Dr. Carol Whitfield

*Treasurer:*

Piyush shah

*Directors:*

Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati  
Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati  
Swami Pratyagbodhanada Saraswati  
Dr. Carol Whitfield,  
Piyush shah  
Dr.N.Balasubramaniam, Dr.Kamalesh  
Gosai, Anand gupta, Dr.Arun Puranic  
and Raghu Rao

*Associate Board of Directors:*

Dr.Soma Avva ,  
Dr.Ravindra Bathina  
Ajay chancani,  
Dr.Mahesh Desai  
Dr.T.A.Gopal,  
Dr.Urmila Gujarathi  
Dr.Haren Joshi ,  
Vijay Kapoor  
Dr.Prem Khilani,  
Sharath Pimlaskar  
Dr.V.Prathikanti,  
Dr.L.Mohan rao,  
Dr Bhagabat sahu,  
Rakesh Sharma,  
and Bhagubhai Tailor.

**Arsha Vidya Gurukulam**

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

**Board of Trustees:**

*Founder:*

**Brahmaleena Pujya Sri**  
**Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

*Paramount Trustee:*

**Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati**  
**Swami Shankarananda Saraswati**

*Chairman:*

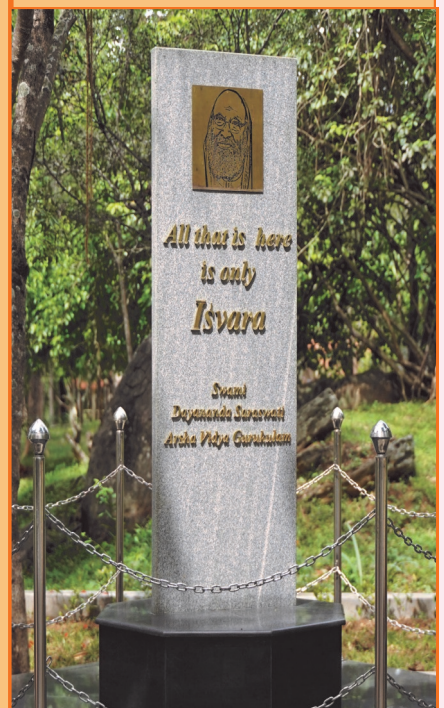
**R. Santharam**

*Trustees:*

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

*Secretary*

V.Sivaprasad



*This is the seventh part of the serial article, continuation from August 2021 newsletter.*

## THE LIMITS OF ŚRADDHĀ

If I hold up a piece of paper and say, 'This is a sheet of paper,' there is nothing to believe. But suppose I point to the paper and say, 'Look at this flower, this lovely rose.' How can you believe that? There is one miserable sheet of paper here, and I say, 'Look at this volume of the Mahābhārata,<sup>44</sup> the great magnum opus written by Vyāsa. How heavy it is!' How can you believe this? And then I say, 'If you have *śraddhā*, you will believe my words.' Not even an idiot has that kind of *śraddhā*. That kind of *śraddhā* is impossible because the situation does not call for *śraddhā*.

*Śraddhā* is necessary only when something is not available for direct perception. Suppose I say that you will go to heaven. Heaven is not available for direct perception, therefore you can have *śraddhā*. But here you directly see a sheet of paper, and I say this is the magnum opus called Mahābhārata, which runs into thousands of pages. If I were to say that this is a brief version of the Mahābhārata, a shortened version, that would be okay. There are texts that present the entire Mahābhārata in five verses. But no, I say that this is Vyāsa's original work and with commentary. You cannot believe that. One sheet of paper is not the Mahābhārata. This could be a sheet from the Mahābhārata, perhaps, just one page.

## IDENTITY OF JĪVA AND ĪŚVARA

Similarly, if you are told that you are a *jīva*, an individual, a part of Īśvara, like a page from the Mahābhārata, then you can believe that. This is why people accept such statements. Īśvara is *parokṣa*, not available to you perceptually. If there is a total Īśvara, then you must be only a part of it, which means that you can never be Īśvara. One *jīva* does not make Īśvara, just as one page does not make the Mahābhārata. And similarly, one poor little you does not make Īśvara.

---

<sup>44</sup> Mahābhārata is one of the great epics of ancient India, consisting of more than 100,000 verses.

Therefore, you can appreciate this idea, 'I am a part of Īśvara.' But you can never appreciate 'I am Īśvara,' and the *śāstra* says '*Tat tvam asi*.'<sup>45</sup> *Tat* is presented as *ja-gat-kāraṇam*, the cause of the entire world. When viewed as the cause of the world, Brahman is called Īśvara. Brahman which is the *sad-vastu*, is non-dual. Out of that Brahman, everything has come.<sup>46</sup> That is the *prakriyā*, the set-up. So if someone says, '*Tat tvam asi*, you are Brahman, you are that cause of the world,' you find that you are not the *kāraṇam*, the cause of anything. If you say that you are the cause, it is only from one standpoint. From another standpoint, you are also the *kārya*, the effect. In fact, on deeper analysis, you find you are only an effect all the time, and not the cause at all. Thus the physical body cannot be considered *kāraṇam*. Īśvara alone is *kāraṇam*, *jagatkāraṇam*. You say, 'I am not a *kāraṇam* at all, so how can I equate myself to Īśvara?'

## UNDERSTANDING THE EQUATION

Any equation is a matter for understanding. The identity between the two sides of an equation is not immediately evident. If it is evident, then you do not require an equation. In our present discussion, what you see is only you. You are told that you are Īśvara. You already have a very clear vision about yourself. Now, you have to negate that and appreciate that you are Īśvara, but without the qualifications of Īśvara. This is not *pramā*, knowledge, it is *bhrama*, error. It is like telling a poor beggar, 'You are a *mahārāja*, an emperor.' He will ask, 'What is this? What are you talking about?'

'*Mahārāja* means you are the ruler of this country!'

'You're saying I'm the ruler of this country? Do you know me?'

'Yes, I know you. You are a *mahārāja*.'

'I'm sorry, you are mistaken. I am a beggar.'

'No, no, *tat tvam asi*, you are a *mahārāja*.'

---

<sup>45</sup> 'That thou art' (Chāndogyopaniṣad 6.8.7)

<sup>46</sup> सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम् । तद्वैक आहुरसदेवेदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयं तस्मादसतः सजायत ॥ (Chāndogyopaniṣad 6.2.1)

Now suppose this person is convinced somehow and thinks, 'Yes, I am a *mahārāja*.' He feels like he is a *mahārāja*, even though he does not have money to change his costume. But inside, he feels he is *mahārāja*. This is the 'change within' that they talk about; 'Don't worry about the external paraphernalia. Real *mahārājas* are inside, they are not outside. Outside you may have everything but still you may feel a beggar after all. You are as good as you feel.' These are all the arguments.

So this person thinks he is a *mahārāja*. His stance changes, his gait changes, his whole demeanor changes, his way of talking changes, his language changes. He no longer says, 'I come.' He only says 'We come.' Everything changes. Then another beggar comes and asks him, 'Shall we go to the next village today to beg?' And the person answers, 'We don't beg. We are *mahārājas*.'

'What?'

'Don't you know I am *mahārāja*?'

'*Mahārāja*? What do you mean?'

'Don't you know I'm the ruler of this kingdom?'

'Which kingdom?'

'This whole kingdom.'

Then the other person understands. He calls another friend over to come and see the crazy guy. So you have to say he is just a crazy beggar, which is not a very kind statement.

Similarly, when someone says, 'I am Īśvara,' what does it mean? There is a contradiction. How can *jīva* be Īśvara? The Veda says very seriously that you are Brahman. It is not a passing reference, a leg-puller. Therefore, this statement has meaning. Like any equation, the meaning is not easily gained. It requires inquiry for understanding. Even a simple arithmetic equation, like five plus four is equal to ten minus one, has to be understood at its specific level with tremendous inquiry. For a child to understand this simple equation, a lot of thinking has to take place. Like a huge engine working, the whole mind has to churn its gears before the

child comes to know that this is true. No equation can be understood without understanding and inquiry. *Tat tvam asi* is such an equation, purely a matter for understanding. It is not an experience. 'I am Īśvara', is a clean understanding. Naturally, if this is the case, what should you do?

## EXAMINING YOUR EXPERIENCES

The answer is given in the fourth part of the verse, *brahmaikākṣaramarthyatām śrutiśirovākyaṁ samākarṇyatām*, is similar to the *vākya* that we find in Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad.<sup>47</sup> There it says that *parīkṣya lokān*, examining the experiences gained by doing actions and meditative practices, may the discriminative person discover *nirveda*, dispassion. *Mokṣa*, which is *nāsti akṛtaḥ*, not created, cannot be gained *kṛtena*, through action. Therefore, to gain the knowledge of Brahman, you must go with sacrificial twigs in hand to a teacher who is well-versed in scriptures and who has clear knowledge about Brahman.

In that verse, the *upaniṣad* says *parīkṣya lokān*. You should first do *parīkṣā*, examination, of the *lokas*, your experiences. That which is experienced by you is called *loka*.<sup>48</sup> Any experience is going to be wanting. Examination of your experiences, is followed by *viveka*, discriminating discernment. What do you really seek, and what do you go after? What you are really seeking need not necessarily be what you go after. Understanding this fact is called *viveka*. From that is born *vairāgya* or *nirveda*, a dispassion born of *viveka*. You understand that all of these things you are after are not really going to help you fundamentally. The Upaniṣad says *nasti akṛtaḥ kṛtena*, that which is not created cannot be gained through action. That *vākya* says exactly what the nature of the *viveka* is. *Akṛta* means that which is not created. That which exists but is not created is called *nitya*. *Nitya* has not arisen, it is always there, and therefore it does not need to be created. If it does not require to be created, then where is the necessity for any other pursuit?

What you are really seeking is *nitya*, the limitless. But if you do not know that,

<sup>47</sup> परीक्ष्यलोकान् कर्मचितान्ब्राह्मणःनिर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतःकृतेन । तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुम् एव अभिगच्छेत् समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियंब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥

(Muṇḍakopaniṣad 1.2.12)

<sup>48</sup> लोक्वते अनुभूयते इति लोकः



then you go for *anitya*, the limited. Once you know what you are seeking is *nitya*, there is a sense of renunciation with reference to *karma*. *Karma-yoga* is okay, but *kāmya-karma* is not going to help you here because that which cannot be achieved by *karma* is not a result of *karma*. It is already *nitya*. It is *akṛta*, uncreated, already existent. A thing that is *akṛta* is already established. The technical word for it is *siddha*. Something that is *siddha* does not become *sādhya*, something to be accomplished. An existent object need not be created, since it is already existent. If an existent thing is not known by you, and it happens to be yourself, then the only way you can miss it is by ignorance. Therefore, for knowing that which is *nitya*, may you go to a teacher.

One must find a teacher, then go to him. How? The Upaniṣad says to approach the teacher *samitpāṇi*, with sticks in hand, as one who is ready to serve the teacher. May one go to the teacher with the right attitude, with *śraddhā*. In this *mantra* from Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, the teacher's qualification is also told; *śrotriyaṁ brahmaniṣṭham*. *Śrotriya* means one who is very well informed of the *śāstra*. If you hardly have any knowledge of *śāstra*, how can you understand whether the teacher knows *śāstra* or not? Anybody can pass as *śāstrajña* but a *śrotriya* can at least be recognised by another *śrotriya*. But even then, how do you know whether he is a *brahma-niṣṭha*, one who is firmly established in the knowledge? There is no way of knowing. So a *brahma-niṣṭha* can be taken as one who has no pursuit other than this knowledge. Therefore, a *sannyāsī* can be a *brahma-niṣṭha*. Even a *gṛhastha*, a householder who does not have any interest other than this pursuit of knowledge can be a *brahma-niṣṭha*.

In this verse of Sādhana-pañcakam, it also says *brahmaikākṣaramarthyatām*,<sup>49</sup> you have to ask for the knowledge. Otherwise, it will not be given. Then when the teaching starts, may one listen well to the *śrutiśirovākyas*.

---

<sup>49</sup> May you request from him the knowledge of the imperishable, nondual Brahman.

*To be continued...*



**Kaivalyopaniṣad**  
**Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati's transcribed talk**

*This is the fourth part of the serial article, continuation from August 2021 newsletter.*

**The seeking of human beings is endless**

On the first day of the course, Pūjya Swamiji pointed out that every human being has desires, so everyone is constantly doing something. Every action is a result of some desire, and the desires keep on arising in the mind, one after the other. Then we were told that there are two kinds of desires: natural desires and cultivated desires. For instance, hunger and thirst are natural desires, but the desire to eat only certain gourmet foods or the desire to drink only coca-cola to quench thirst are cultivated desires. As far as natural desires are concerned, there is always a solution for them, but in the case of cultivated desires, there may or may not be a solution. On the second day, Swamiji went over the reasons behind every desire. It became clear that the one desire behind all other desires is the longing to become free from desire itself, because every desire is an indication of a sense of lack or want.

Basically, all one wants is to become free of every lack, or free from every want. We want to become free from every manner of limitation. For example, a person with an injured leg may need the help of a cumbersome set of crutches to walk. After a while, he may feel happier in having a lighter set of crutches, but he still remains dependent upon them. His real desire is to not be limited by needing to use crutches at all. Similarly, all of us want to become limitless.

All right, then, what's the answer? What should we do? To become limitless, what actions must we perform? Every action being limited, whatever can be achieved as a result of action is bound to be limited. Therefore, however many such gains may be, the limited individual will continue to remain limited. This is how the second day's lecture ended. This got me thinking. On the one hand one wants to be limitless, and, on the other hand, nothing can make anyone truly limitless. There was great anxiety in my mind. The desire for being limitless is natural, and,

therefore, must have a solution, but where is the solution? There didn't seem to be any solution. Then, on the third day, we were told the story of the tenth man<sup>1</sup>. When I understood the story, where the tenth man was told, "You are the very tenth man that you are seeking," I realized that I already was that which I was seeking to be. It was a real eye-opener. That was a great miracle!

When one discerns this secret, one gains great comfort. As Pūjya Swamiji says, psychology cannot solve the human problem, and Vedānta does not accept the existence of the problem. This problem of sorrow cannot be solved by means other than seeing the sorrow to be a product of our own wrong notions. Regardless of whatever else we do to deal it, we can only get some kind of relief for a while, because the sorrow eventually returns. It is like the poor water buffalo that is bothered by the flies buzzing around its head all the time. The buffalo dips its head into the water to shake them off. The flies then go away and the buffalo gets some relief. But as soon as it raises its head out of the water, the flies reappear and begin to stick to its head again. Similarly, as soon as we come out of our short-termed relief, sorrow takes hold of us again.

### **We are the problem; we alone are the solution**

All that is to be done to address pain and sorrow is to discover that we are what we are seeking to be. All sorrow is the result of our perceptions of ourselves as being limited. There is no other cause for sorrow; no one else or nothing else in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Once ten young boys set off for a picnic. On their way they came across a river. All the boys swam across the river and reached the other bank. To make sure whether all the boys had reached safely, the leader started counting them all : one, two, three.... nine ! He counted again. Another boy also counted. Every time the count went upto nine only. So the boys concluded that the tenth boy was lost. They searched for the lost tenth boy for the whole day and not finding him, the boys started weeping. One old man passing by that place saw the boys weeping, asked them the reason for their weeping and realizing the situation the old man consoled the boys saying "Stop weeping, boys. The tenth boy is not lost. He is." "Really ? Where is he ?" The old man made the leader count the boys again, and as the leader completed counting the number nine, the old man told him, "You are the tenth boy that you are seeking." And the boy realized "I am the tenth boy I am seeking."

world can cause sorrow. Nothing else causes sorrow except our perceptions of being limited or lacking or wanting. Whenever we find ourselves lacking or wanting, we become sad, we become unhappy. Because there is no cause for sorrow in the world, it stands to reason that there is also no cause of happiness in the world. Of course, we can always label certain things and believe that they are the causes of happiness or sorrow. However, the one truth is that the only cause of happiness is finding oneself acceptable and the only cause of sorrow is finding oneself unacceptable.

Self-non-acceptance is the cause of all sorrow; self-acceptance alone offers happiness. It is neither the enjoyment or lack of material and physical comforts nor any of the opposites of heat and cold, comfort and discomfort, honor and dishonor, or success and failure that can be said to be the cause of sorrow or happiness. Instead, it is when things somehow make us feel limited that, in triggering the sense of limitation, they become the cause of sorrow. If they cannot trigger that sense, they are rendered ineffective. If the many 'buttons' of self-non-acceptance are disconnected, it doesn't matter which ones are pushed because there would be no live buttons to push. In the description of the wise person, that is how he is said to be free from the impact of everything around him. The Gita<sup>2</sup> says that such a one as he is *vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ*, free of *rāga*, longing, *bhaya*, fear, and *krodha*, anger. The impulses of attachment, aversion, fear, and anger only arise on account of us finding ourselves limited. A wise person has discovered himself to be free from every limitation. Therefore, *duḥkheṣu*, in situations that are generally supposed to cause unhappiness or pain, *anudvīgnamanāḥ*, he is not perturbed at all. It is not be

---

<sup>2</sup> दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

*duḥkheṣvanudvīgnamanāḥ sukhēṣu vigataspr̥haḥ*  
*vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ sthitadhīrmunirucyate*

The one who is not affected by adversities, who is without yearning for pleasures, and is free from longing, fear, and anger is said to be a wise person whose knowledge is firm. (B.G. 2-56)

cause he is insensitive, but because all his 'buttons' are inactive and thus external situations cannot provoke him anymore.

### The wise person enjoys equanimity of mind

Lord Kṛṣṇa describes a wise person as being *samaduḥkhasukhaḥ*<sup>3</sup>, one who takes both *sukha* and *duḥkha* (pleasure and pain) in his stride. How is it possible to do so? *Svasthaḥ*, it is because he abides in the truth of himself as a free person; *mānāpamānayostulyaḥ*, because he maintains composure of mind in both *māna*, honor, and *apamāna*, dishonor, and, *tulyomitṛāripakṣayoḥ*, whether he is confronting friend or foe. *Tulyanindātmasaṁstutiḥ*, both censure and praise are the same to him, because nothing affects him or touches him. The self is never affected by any of these situations or conditions. Therefore, this knowledge removes all the sorrow and enables us to own up our true nature, which is limitlessness and happiness. That is called *mokṣa*, the cessation of all sorrow and true attainment of unsurpassed happiness.

The purpose of the teaching of the Upaniṣad is to remove all our erroneous notions or complexes about ourselves and reveal the true nature of the self. These notions start dropping off as we are exposed to more and more of the teachings.

---

<sup>3</sup> समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥

*samaduḥkhasukhaḥ svasthaḥ samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ*

*tulyapriyāpriyo dhīrastulyanindātmasaṁstutiḥ*

Alike in pleasure and pain, self-abiding, regarding a clod of earth, a stone and gold as of equal worth, the same toward agreeable and disagreeable objects, calm, and indifferent to praise and blame; (BG 14.24)

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥

*mānāpamānayostulyastulyo mitṛāripakṣayoḥ*

*sarvārambhaparitāgī guṇātītaḥ sa ucyate*

The same in honor and dishonor, the same toward friend and foe, habitually renouncing all actions—such a person is said to have transcended the *guṇas*. (BG 14.25)



That is how the bondage becomes loosened. Ultimately, when all the notions are destroyed, the bondage is also completely destroyed and we know the true nature of the self to be limitless.

The word *upaniṣad* primarily means self-knowledge, but the text expounding this knowledge is also called an *upaniṣad* in a secondary sense. The Kaivalya Upaniṣad is called an Upaniṣad in that sense.

### **Kaivalyopaniṣad**

The Kaivalyopaniṣad occurs in the Atharva Veda. All the Upaniṣads are part of the Vedas. Sometimes, people think that Vedānta is separate from the Vedas, but that is not so; it is just as one's head is included in one's body and so it is not necessary to say both "my body" and "my head." As we have seen earlier, Vedānta can be taken to be either the physical final section of the Vedas or the culmination of the knowledge of the Vedas.

There are four Vedas—the Ṛg Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sāma Veda, and the Atharva Veda—and each Veda contains several Upaniṣads. It is traditionally accepted that there are 108 Upaniṣads. Of these, ten are popularly called the major Upaniṣads. They are Īśa, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya, and Bṛhadāraṇyaka. The reason they are called the major Upaniṣads is that Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, a revered teacher in the Vedāntic lineage of teachers, has written extensive *bhāṣyas* or commentaries on them. Subsequently, other *ācāryas* have also written commentaries on these Upaniṣads. The Kaivalyopaniṣad is not one of these ten, but it is also a very beautiful text. Even though we don't have Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on it, we do have the commentary of another teacher, Śaṅkarānanda, who was the *guru* of Swami Vidyāraṇya <sup>4</sup>.

The Ṛg Veda contains the Aitareyopaniṣad. The Yajur Veda has two major rescensions or branches, called the Śukla Yajur Veda or White Yajur Veda, and the Kṛṣṇa

---

<sup>4</sup>Swami Vidyāraṇya is the author of the famous text, Pañcadaśī.

Yajur Veda or Black Yajur Veda. The Īśāvāsya and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣads are found in the Śukla Yajur Veda, and the Kaṭhopaniṣad and Taittirīyopaniṣad are found in the Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda. The Sāma Veda includes the Kenopaniṣad and the Chāndogyaopaniṣad. The Atharva Veda has the Kaivalyopaniṣad, the Praśnopaniṣad, the Muṇḍakopaniṣad, and the Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad.

The Kaivalyopaniṣad is a short Upaniṣad, consisting of only 24 *mantras*, but it is very beautiful and well suited for contemplation. It is prescribed that aspirants should memorize this Upaniṣad and recite it everyday. When we discuss the last *mantra* of this Upaniṣad we shall see how the recitation itself is healing and purifying.

### **Śāntipāṭha, the prayer of the Atharva Veda**

There is a *śāntipāṭha* or prayer that is specific to each of the Vedas, and that prayer is chanted before the study of any Upaniṣad of that particular Veda. The prayer that is associated with the Atharva Veda, which therefore applies to the Kaivalyopaniṣad, is as follows :

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः । भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।  
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाँसस्तनूभिः । व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ।  
स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः । स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।  
स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः । स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ।  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

*om bhadraṁ karṇebhiḥ śṛṇuyāma devāḥ*  
*bhadraṁ paśyemākṣabhiryajatrāḥ*  
*sthirairāṅgaistuṣṭuvāṁsastanūbhiḥ*  
*vyaśema devahitaṁ yadāyuh*  
*svasti na indro vṛddhaśravāḥ*  
*svasti naḥ pūṣā viśvavedāḥ*  
*svasti nastārṁkṣyo ariṣṭanemiḥ*  
*svasti no bṛhaspatirdadhātu*  
*om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ*

Om! Oh gods (shining ones), with our ears<sup>5</sup> may we hear what is auspicious. Oh gods (fit to be worshipped), with our eyes may we see what is auspicious. With firm limbs may we complete the full span of life allotted to us in service to gods and offering praise. May Indra, of great fame, be favorable to us. May the all-knowing Pūṣan (Lord Surya) be favorable to us. May Tārksya be favorable to us. May Bṛhaspati bestow all auspiciousness upon us. Om, Peace! Peace! Peace!

### **Both teacher and student invoke īśvara's grace**

This is a prayer for the well-being of everybody. It is traditionally chanted both by the teacher and the students and, therefore, all the verbs are in the plural. It is a prayer to *īśvara* in the form of various gods. In any prayer, there is recognition of the need for grace or blessing. We recognize that we are limited in many ways and that there are many things that are not within our control. This prayer is recited so that during the period of study or interaction between the teacher and student, the teacher is able to communicate the teaching effectively and the student is able to understand the intent with which it is conveyed and in the right manner. The teacher conveys a vision through the use of words and the students must therefore be attuned to the teacher's intent. Sometimes, the teacher may have to go beyond the derivative or commonly known meaning of words to convey the vision. In Vedānta, therefore, there is a distinction between the *vācyārtha* or literal meaning of words and the *lakṣyārtha* or implied meaning of the words. When the *vācyārtha* or literal meaning is not able to convey the intent of the teacher, there is a need to resort to the *lakṣyārtha* or implied meaning. However, what is most important is the *tātparya* or intended meaning, which the teacher wants to convey.

---

<sup>5</sup>Normally by the rules of grammar, the third person plural of *karṇam*, ear, would be *karṇaiḥ*, but here the Veda uses *karṇebhiḥ*; this is *chāndasa-prayoga*, or Vedic usage.

<sup>6</sup>In whichever instance the commonly known meaning of words is not adequate, the scriptures resort to conveying an implied meaning.

### **The three sources of disturbance**

If we analyze the factors that cause disturbance in our minds, based on the sources from which they arise, they can be classified into three categories: the *ādhyātmika*, the *ādhibhautika*, and the *ādhidaivika*. The *ādhyātmika* are factors that relate to one's own self, meaning that our own bodies and minds can disturb our frame of mind and come in the way of our understanding. The *ādhibhautika* are factors that relate to our environment in the form of the things and beings around us, including other people and animals, which can also come in the way of our serenity of mind. The *ādhidaivika* are factors that relate to the cosmic forces, such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and so on. Thus, to enjoy peace or serenity of mind, we require the combined grace of our own selves, of the environment, and of the cosmic forces.

### **The student must be attuned to the teacher's words**

The student must be attuned to the teacher so that he can appreciate the intent of the teacher's words. Even in the case of the Upaniṣad, since the teaching is in the

---

<sup>6</sup>Naiyāyikas, (logicians) say that words themselves convey the meaning. A Vedāntin says the meaning is not just contained within the words, but rather in the intent of the speaker who uses words. For instance, sometimes, a word can have more than one meaning. For example, the statement *saindhavam ānaya*, means please bring *saindhava*. Now *saindhava* means that which is born or produced in Sindhu. Sindhu again means the sea or it also refers to the country around the river Sindhu (Indus). In the first case, *saindhava* would mean salt produced in the ocean. In the second case, *saindhava* would mean a horse bred in the territory called Sindhu. So in the sentence "*saindhavam ānaya*" the context determines whether it means "Please bring salt" or "Please bring a horse." If a person uses this sentence while eating his meal, *saindhava* would mean salt. If a person ready to travel long distance utters this sentence, the word would mean horse. From this example it is clear that the word *saindhava* doesn't determine what the meaning is; it is the one who uses the word that determines what the meaning is.



form of the spoken word, the *tātparyā-niṣcaya* or ascertainment of intended meaning becomes important. When communication takes place in the form of the spoken word, the right environment, in terms of the proper frame of mind of both teacher and student, should prevail.

Understanding the Upaniṣad is not simple and the knowledge it gives is valuable and very rare. Therefore, we begin the study with a prayer. Oh gods, please bless us, so that we may hear what is auspicious through our ears. In the present context, it means, please bless us so that we are able to listen to the statements of the Upaniṣads, the nature of the self, the nature of *brahman*, or the nature of the truth.

*Yajatrāḥ*<sup>7</sup> is another word for *devatās*. Oh gods, please bless us so that we may see the auspicious with our eyes. What is auspicious? *Īśvara* is auspicious, and, as Vedānta teaches us, the whole universe is a manifestation of *īśvara*. We pray that with our eyes we may see *īśvara* everywhere. That *īśvara* alone pervades everything is a reality, but on account of our own likes and dislikes, our ignorance, our ego, and our sense of 'I' and 'mine' that causes all these likes and dislikes, we do not see what really is. Instead, we see things through the 'colored glasses' of our likes and dislikes. The prayer thus is, Oh gods, please bless us so that our minds become objective and we may perceive auspiciousness in whatever we see and hear auspiciousness in whatever we hear.

*Sthiraiḥ aṅgaiḥ* means with healthy limbs. With firm and healthy limbs of the body, *vyāseṣa yad devahitam āyuh*, may we enjoy the full span of life allotted to us by the Lord. May our actions be performed in the spirit of service or devotion or offering to *īśvara*. *Tuṣṭuvāṁsaḥ* is derived from the root *stu* in the sense of 'to praise,' so *tuṣṭuvāṁsaḥ* means praising or glorifying. *Tanūbhiḥ* means through the Vedas or through words. In glorifying or praising the Lord with our words and serving the Lord with our limbs, may we spend our days as granted by the Lord

---

<sup>7</sup> *Yajñaiḥ trāyante iti yajatrāḥ*, those who protect us by our performance of the *yajña*, or Vedic rituals, are called *yajatrāḥ*.

With our ears may we hear what is auspicious. With our eyes may we see what is auspicious. With our limbs, hands and legs, may we do what is auspicious. In our speech may we speak what is auspicious. Here the eyes and ears include all the organs of perception; what one experiences through the five organs of perception are sound, touch, form, taste, and smell. Oh gods, may we recognize the presence of *īśvara* through all the experiences at the level of the sense organs. With our organs of perception may we perceive *īśvara* and with our organs of action may we serve *īśvara*. May all our activities in life be centered upon *īśvara*.

When we go to a temple, we circumambulate, sometimes once, sometimes three times, or sometimes five. The idea is that *īśvara* is the center of our actions and prayers at the temple. Even though we cannot circumambulate the Lord all day, we can do so symbolically, by treating him as the center of all our activities.

The second part of the prayer, *svasti na indro vṛddhaśravāḥ*, means, may Indra, of great fame, be auspicious to us. Indra is the king of all the gods, the most famous and the most powerful. According to the Vedic scriptures there is a presiding deity for every function of the human body. Indra is the presiding deity of one's arms, and, therefore, he is the god of the strength with which we perform various actions. May we enjoy the blessing of Indra. The first part of the prayer says, "May we perform auspicious actions." One needs the grace of Indra to perform auspicious actions because he is the presiding deity of action or *karma*. May Indra bless us so that actions we perform with our hands are auspicious and of the nature of service to *īśvara*.

*Svasti naḥ pūṣā viśvavedāḥ*. Another *devatā* in this prayer is Pūṣan, the nourisher. This is one of the many names of Sūrya, the sun god. The sun is the nourisher of the universe because the rains are made possible only by the sun; the heat of the sun transforms water into clouds, which then come down as rain. It is the sun that is responsible for the rain from which comes the food that sustains and nourishes life. Pūṣan is therefore the nourisher. Oh nourisher, oh sun god, may you shower auspiciousness upon us; may you be favorable to us. The Sun god is also the pre-

siding deity of the eyes, because only when the sun illumines objects can the eyes see colors and forms. By the grace of the sun may we see what is auspicious.

*Svasti naḥ tārksyaḥ ariṣṭanemiḥ.* Tārksya is a name of the eagle-god Garuḍa, who is the vehicle of Lord Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa. *Ariṣṭanemi* means one whose flight cannot be obstructed. May this Tārksya, Garuḍa, be auspicious and favorable to us so that there are no obstacles in our pursuit of knowledge. This prayer is offered in reference to the study of *brahma-vidyā*. We want the words of the teacher to carry their meaning to us. Garuḍa, the eagle, is the vehicle of Nārāyaṇa, meaning that Lord Nārāyaṇa comes to us riding on Garuḍa. So also, *brahman* comes to us, as though 'riding' on the words of the teacher. Just as there are no obstructions to the movement of Garuḍa, so also, let there be no obstruction in our learning. May it be such that we may listen to the words of the teacher and understand them.

*Svasti naḥ bṛhaspatiḥ dadhātu.* Bṛhaspati is the preceptor of the gods. He represents great intelligence and is the presiding deity of intelligence and speech. We seek the grace of Bṛhaspati so that we are blessed with intelligence and our speech functions properly. By the grace of Bṛhaspati, may we be inspired with right thoughts and words so that we can praise the gods and perform right actions.

This is a prayer that seeks the grace of all the presiding deities. A few of them are mentioned here, but the idea is that, by the grace of all the gods, may the entire body-senses-mind-intellect complex be favorable to us. We require the favor of the body, the mind, and the personality; only then is learning and gaining this knowledge possible. If the mind does not favor us, we have great difficulty in applying ourselves to the study. The serenity of one's mind and that of the entire personality is possible only when all the presiding deities are favorable to the person. We are thus seeking the favor of the deities, so that all the resources available to us function properly and we may learn. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhagavad Gita that the mind can be either a friend or an enemy <sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>8</sup>BG 6.5

We want the mind to be our friend; we don't want it to create obstacles in our path. We want the mind to always be available to us.

*Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ.* Let there be peace, peace, peace. May there be no obstacle to the peace of the mind stemming from the factors relating to the individual personality, from those relating to the elemental forces, and those controlled by the cosmic forces.

The prayer is for gaining a mind that is composed, conducive, and fit for learning from or listening to the teacher.

*To be continued...*



## Arsha Vidya Gurukulam Coimbatore - Anaikatti

is happy to announce a residential retreat VE21-02 on

**Brhadaranyaka Upanishad** (overview)

by Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati  
(Chief Acharya - Arsha Gurukulam, Chennai)



**Chandogya Upanishad** (overview)

by Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati  
(Chief Acharya - Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti)



**From December 26th 2021  
to January 1st 2022**

You can register through our website  
[www.arshavidya.in](http://www.arshavidya.in)

Please contact for more information

● Mobile 9442646701 ● Landline 04222657001

\*Please note:

- The retreat includes meditation and satsang
- Participation only by prior registration





**Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa**  
**As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

*This is the third part of the serial article, continuation from August 2021 newsletter.*

*(continuation of the dialogue between the robber and Sage Naradha:)*

“What is improper action? I have never heard about that.” queries the robber.

Narada replies, “Improper action is that which catches you if not now, later. It is always credited to your account. You are the one who performs the wrong action, and every action produces a result. The result of good action is *punya*. Wrong actions produce *pāpa*. For all the wrong actions you have done, you have definitely piled up a big bundle of *pāpa*. I tell you. You are going to pay for it.”

Narada convinced the robber. Narada was a great fellow. He showed the robber that either in this life or in another he would have to pay for his wrong actions. He would not get away with it.

The robber pondered a bit and said, “I might have piled up this *pāpa*, but it isn’t just me. There are three others at home who share in this. They have been getting what they need from this money. They have been living with bad *karma* too. They should share the bad *karma*. I alone should not incur this bad *karma*. I think I will end up with only one fourth of this *pāpa*.”

“You will not end up with a fourth, sir.” says Narada, “You will have the whole bundle. According to the law, they will not share it. Neither will they share this bad *karma* by their choice.”

“Oh, no, my parents are very loving, and my wife gives everything to me. They will definitely share.” says the robber.

“Okay,” says Narada, “I will be here. You take my bag. That way you can be sure I will stay here, and you go and talk to them. See what they say about sharing this bad *karma*.”

Innocent as he was, this robber fellow goes and asks his father, “Dad, you know that I have been bringing money to our home.”

"I know."

"Well, I've met this old man on the road, a *sādhu*, and he says that I have been incurring bad *karma*." says the robber.

"I told you that as well." says his father.

The robber asks, "Okay, I've been incurring bad *karma*, won't you share this bad *karma* with me?"

The father knew the laws of *karma*, and he believed in them. "Why should I share in it? I am an old man; you are supposed to take care of me. You should do that by earning an honest living. You should follow legitimate means. If you follow improper means to protect me and prolong my life, it is your responsibility and your bad *karma*. I have enough of a load myself. Why should I add to the bad *karma* I have already incurred? Each one carries his own bad *karma* and his own virtues."

The robber went to his mother and asked her what she thought about this. She said, "Well, son, that is true. Of course I would like to share everything with you, but this one thing, you know... . If I could take on this bad *karma*, I would be too old to do anything to neutralize it. This is not the time to gather new bad *karma*. This is time to repeat the Lord's name and wait for what is to come. You know the problems I have here at the tag end of my life. How can I carry more bad *karma*? Son, you have to change your ways. I will tell you how to neutralize these wrong actions that you have done. There are ways to do it." She was very affectionate, but at the same time she did not take a bit of it.

The robber went to his wife and asked her, "What is your share? Will you go fifty-fifty with me? My parents say they are too old, but you are young enough. We can figure this out."

His wife, like his parents, was very religious. She was religious enough to not accept it, to say nothing of being afraid. She said, "Why should I accept that - it is yours? I am your wife; whatever you bring home I do not question. How you produce them I do not question. Even if I did question, you would not listen to

me. You bring it home, and then I cook the food. I feed your parents and I feed you, and afterwards I take whatever is left over. That is what I do every day. I am a faithful wife, and I have not done any action which your parents would say is wrong. Neither can you say that I escaped from my duties at any time. This is my life. I am doing my job. How you earn your food, the means you adopt to support us is your concern. I have heard about what you do. Once or twice I have told you what I think. But you would not listen. Now I just keep quiet. Why should I share this bad *karma*? I cannot share this. I have my own bad *karma*. I want to make my own life.”

The robber was really beaten. He felt, “My God, I thought they were dear to me. But none of them will share this bad *karma*. Why should I work for them?” He became very dejected, even dispassionate, and he went back to Narada waiting on the road. Narada knew he would come back.

“Hey, what happened?”

The robber was sad and furious, “I asked these people, and what you said was correct. None of them will share. Now, please tell me, is there a way to get rid of this bad *karma*? I have gathered it, how can I get rid of it? What is the method to get rid of it?”

Narada told him to sit, and he gave him *upadeśa* of a *mantra*. He gave him this name *rāma* and asked him to repeat it. But he put it the other way. He told the robber to say *ma rā, ma rā*. It became *rāma, rāma* as it was repeated. It is called *tara-kamantra*: *marāmarāmarāmarāmarā*. He had him repeat this *tarakamantra*, a *mantra* which helps you cross - cross all the bad *karma*. He told him to go on repeating it.

“How long should I go on repeating it?”

“Don’t bother about that. Just go on repeating. You will find that some help will come to you. Everything will come to you.” said Narada.

The robber sat under a tree and began the repetition. He closed his eyes and forgot about everything. That is what the story says. He went on for days, without even eating. There were ants where he sat. In time, an ant hill grew up around

him, all around him. You could not even see him; all that was there was the anthill with the *mantra* from within.

Sage Narada came back and heard the sound - *marāmarāmarā*. There was no person there. An anthill is called *valmika*. Narada looked around and wondered aloud, “Where is this fellow?” He searched and discovered that the sound emanated from the holes in the anthill. He cleared away the soil of the anthill and found the fellow sitting there - *marāmarāmarāmarā*... . Narada woke him up and told him, “Everything is okay. You are blessed now.” The fellow became a *sādhu*. He went and studied and became an informed person. He became known as Valmiki.

Then, after some time, Valmiki again happens to meet Narada. He asks him a question, and this is how the Ramayana begins.

*To be continued...*

“The vision of *Vēdānta* is not so much in presenting a cause-effect relationship between Brahman and the world (*jagat*) as it is in unfolding the *jagat* as non-separate from Brahman. This *sarvātma -bhāva*, a recognition of oneself as the whole, is the vision, *tātparya*, of *Vēdānta*.”

“The word *ānanda* is meant to draw the attention of the seeker to oneself as the source of all *ānanda*. That means the seeker is limitlessness, fullness, which is experienced as happiness in a conducive state of mind. The recognition of this fact removes the error of seeing oneself as unhappy, ignorant and mortal.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

## **The Wholeness of You** **by Swamini Saralananda**

*This is the fourth part of the serial article, continuation from August 2021 newsletter.*

### **Something I Need To Know**

When the full self is appreciated as myself then a profoundly free person is there, one for whom there is no sense of lack. This is the one who has recognized the fact of this greater identity. For all of us, that is the ultimate real Self to be 'gained'. And it doesn't happen one day, a coming into being of something new, like a lottery, it is simply the relaxing into a natural recognition of the full self. It is to be had by the one who is willing to surrender his identification to the original ignorance and false sense of self.

Until all of this has been explored and understood, we continue suffering in the ocean of ups and downs, coming up to breathe the air, feeling safe for a moment until the next wave of longing hits and we feel we are holding our breath till the next happy 'fix' comes. Getting out of the ocean is what we really want, to be able to relax on the safe shores of peace and fulfillment. We need to get exhausted of living a ninja life of competition. The only way out is to turn in-ward to find out that all the joy and peace that we want waits for us within ourselves. It is not easy to find happiness within oneself but it is impossible to find it anywhere else.

This is the quest of self-inquiry, self-discovery, the wholeness of you. It is a spiritual seeking in its utmost. It is what this book is about; discovering ourselves to be the closest, dearest, most beloved Being and that Being is wholeness itself.

### **Understanding Self Ignorance**

Self-ignorance is something 'very special', so unique, unlike any other ignorance. The ancient wise men of India, 'seers', teachers of the Upanishads, had a lot to say about it. In the teaching it is said that this particular ignorance is the only problem we have in life. They had done a lot of analysis of ignorance because to be free of it, is liberation from the sense of limitation and consequent suffering.

### **Different Kinds Of Ignorance**

Four types of ignorance are spoken of, the first being a blanket ignorance which is 'blissful' because that is when I don't know that I don't know, it doesn't bother me....and yet the only time we can say that ignorance is bliss is when we are in deep sleep. There



are no dreams, just one long “I know nothing....”. Therefore, my limitations and everyday afflictions are not ‘there’. I am free from all pain, “the blind is no longer blind in sleep”. It levels us all to one same state of being, the beggar and the king are no different in deep sleep. Of course, the minute we awake we pick up all our roles, vulnerabilities and troubles.

The second kind of ignorance is ignorance of specific things like my ignorance of black holes and foreign languages. This kind of ignorance is endless and it will always be so. And the third kind of ignorance is what we can call ‘half-knowledge’ like when a medical student has only finished half his program; he knows something but it is incomplete and so he can make a lot of complex mistakes if he practices medicine with his half-baked training. This is a dangerous kind of ignorance such as can happen with a ‘quack’ plastic surgeon out there.

Self-ignorance is the fourth type which is identified as being unlike any other, it is the ignorance of taking myself wrongly. This ignorance is in the form of a spell, and under a spell we are helpless because we don’t know we are under a spell. It’s like someone who is having a bad drug experience, he has lost himself and is totally out of touch with reality. And this spell which totally conceals the real me, is a creative ignorance. How is it creative?

### **The Spell Of Self-Ignorance**

In Vedanta, a famous metaphor is used to perfectly describe how we are caught under a creative spell and live in this world with a mistaken identity. Then we needlessly suffer. The metaphor is the ‘rope-snake’ story and it shows exactly how creatively the spell works.

A man is walking along a foot path in the semidarkness of evening dusk. He spots an object on the ground, something coiled up, he immediately jumps back, “Snake !!”. As he jumps aside to avoid it he happens to prick his toe on a thorn. Without enough light to see the snake or the thorn bush clearly, he immediately thinks that the snake has bitten him. He is trembling with so much fear that he could actually die of a heart attack. Then along comes another man, who just that morning passed by that way and had seen this ‘snake’; he had seen that it was a good piece of rope and wanted to remember where it was so that on the way home he could pick it up. Seeing the other man so frightened he asked what was wrong. The man told him, “Look there, that snake has bitten me, please see if you know if it is poisonous, I think I am dying “. The second man, smiling, reaches

down and picks up the 'snake' and the stricken man is amazed at this courage. But then, as the 'brave' man lifts the snake up and brings it closer to the 'bitten' man, he sees that this 'dangerous' rope caused all the trouble. He is incredibly relieved but at the same time he feels foolish even while his heart palpitations are still thumping. He says, "But how come my toe was bitten?" Then the seer-wise-man of the moment finds the thorn bush just there near their feet. The mistake is totally resolved.

And it could have happened the other way, that the man could have taken the coiled object to be a rope, reached down to pick it up but it was a poisonous snake; all due to the 'covering' of the semi-darkness of dusk; like a spell.

It was not the man's fault that he took the rope as a snake; the chance for that to happen is just another one of the endless possibilities in the creation. It did have some sense to it because he did not take the rope as a tiger or a thief. In the same way that the man was under the spell of an immediate mistake due to lack of enough light, the teachings reveal that we are similarly caught. We are not able to see ourselves as we are due to this creative original ignorance. 'Creative' because like how it 'created' a snake out of a rope, we take on and live with mistaken identity.

### **Self-Ignorance, In-born, Natural For All**

This ignorance is an inborn, natural phenomenon; we wouldn't choose it, yet it is the profound error of our life that needs to be corrected. Just as how we once naturally took the earth as flat, later with better knowledge, we made the necessary shift in our understanding.

The teaching says that we are asleep to what the enlightened ones are awake to and we are awake where they are asleep. They saw the trick of the mistake then came to know themselves to be full and complete, and so, liberated beings. But we are asleep even to the possibility. And in the world of our karma drama, the sorrow-go-round of doing and getting and losing, here they are not engaged.

The darkness of the ignorance covers us like a veil and who we really are is 'seen' yet missed. When this knowledge is missing, since nature abhors a vacuum, something will come to fill in the blank. The man in the story doesn't see the object and say, "Well, that could be a snake or maybe something else, I'll wait to see it in a better light." No, immediately, without question, the perceived object is creatively taken for something it is not, and that something is frightening. Similarly, we would never say, "I don't know who I am and let's just leave it at that because ignorance is bliss but only in sleep."

First, the darkness of ignorance covers the chance for me to see myself as I am. We can call that a “veiling power” of ignorance, and it allows a second creative power to make the unknown self into something it is not. We can call that the ‘projecting power’ of ignorance. This is a spell where we have no clue of what’s happening. Like even the rope ‘becomes’ a snake, we ‘become’ an ever-wanting being that suffers a lot of fear, confusion and anguish.

We fear that we may not be able to get what we think we need and want; then whatever we do get, we fear we will lose. Fear, discontent and insecurity runs our lives and we don’t understand why. Not knowing the truth of any better self, we are caught in our own web-site of endless drama, acting out so many parts as a false self and suffer needlessly.

### **How I Pay For This Ignorance In Daily Life**

We can bring this closer to home with a realistically possible example: A young woman, newly married, has to drive to the airport for her boss; she is supposed to deliver a packet to someone who is taking off on a flight. As she is leaving she notices some incoming passengers and she spots her husband standing there with a flower garland in hand (this is in Hawaii); he is waiting to meet someone. He does not see her and she stands back, to watch what’s going on because he had not mentioned that anyone was coming to visit. She soon begins to feel insecure and then she sees a very attractive young woman walk straight up to her husband and embrace him and he gives her the garland with some kind of a kiss, (yah, what kind of snake is it?). Her heart drops into her stomach which is now churning with fear. Not wanting to be seen she leaves as the other two are walking off hand in hand. She thinks: Could this be an old girl friend of his or maybe a co-worker?? She can’t leave the blank space open; she’s not secure and trusting enough to walk up to her husband to find out who this person is. So instead, she goes home and curls up in a ball on their bed and sobs uncontrollably. (What agony !!) Then the phone rings. She swallows hard and picks up the phone. “Honey, I have a big surprise for you, my sister Carol, the one who’s been working overseas for so long and couldn’t come for our wedding, she’s just arrived here, I’m bringing her home. I couldn’t call earlier because I had a hard time leaving the office and I just had just enough time to get to the airport.”

The young wife’s pillow is totally soaked with her tears, but she’s now immediately ‘high’ in her relief. At the same time, she’s feeling foolish and shameful for not trusting her husband; he didn’t deserve that. She filled in the blank against herself and fell into agony. What a useless hour spent crying her eyes out.

## **Where the Wise Ones Are Awake**

This kind of mistake is what the wise ones say we need to be released from; it is the only 'bondage'. It keeps us in the shackles of error, limitations and pain.

To recognize this pain as bondage caused by our ignorance, is the first step onto a spiritual path to liberation. We need to be awake enough to the realities of life, to know that we cannot gain ultimate contentment by piling up our winnings in this grabber game of life. It is all based on a false sense of reality.

Ignorance about ourselves is an infinite loss because the teachings are there to tell us that our infinite self is what we are here on earth to discover and own. Ignorance of an Infinite self is an Infinite loss. Not only is it the profoundest loss of all but it is exhausting and painful to live and stay in the delusion of taking myself, things and people for other than what they are. Living from the stand point of a false identity and therefore projecting a mistaken reality, our priorities are merely trivial pursuits. They are way off course from the meaningful life I deserve to have.

## **Why Is This Ignorance There?**

Some will always ask: "Why does this happen, why are we born ignorant of ourselves?" "Asking Why?" won't bring an answer, all we can say is that it just is, it happens that the mind can be and is tricked in this way. All we can do is analyze "the what" of it, and knowing what it is, then I can find out how to get free. Un-enlightened, we take ourselves as "I am only this much, this imperfect aging body, this forgetful mind, agitated because of still so many things to do and get." But the wise teachers and mystics in all cultures tell us we are living a miserably small life. They point to and try to convince us of something totally opposite. If we accept this as at least a possibility, it can put us on the right track of the most meaningful spiritual quest. Otherwise, all that is left to me is to stay on a sorrow-go-round, with a little bit of 'merry' here and there, just enough to keep me on this ridiculously tedious ride. I will look in the direction of the possibility of my free, infinite self when, (and pardon the cliché), I am really sick and tired of being sick and tired of my life as it is.

*To be continued...*

# **ARSHA GURUKULAM, SOMANGALAM**

is happy to announce a retreat on

## **" VISION OF VEDANTA " THROUGH TEN MANTRAS FROM UPANISADS**

**by SWAMINI VIDYANANDA SARASWATI**

at Jnanapravaha, MANJAKKUDI,  
birthplace of Paramapujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati

**Date of retreat:  
18/10/2021 to 23/10/2021**

Suggested donation Rs. 10000/- per person  
inclusive of stay in AC rooms, food and other facilities.

Those who are interested may kindly contact **Swami Rameshwarananda** on  
**9500777910**

### ***Arsha Vidya Newsletter***

Annual Subscription: Rs. 180 /-

***Published by: V. Sivaprasad***

Trustee, Sruti Seva Trust, Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641 108

***Edited by:***

**Ramachandran S.N (+91 94879 11949)**

***Printed by: B. Rajkumar***

**Rasi Graphics private Limited**

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







Date of Publication : 28th of every month  
Posted at : 1Patrika Chennai, Egmore RMS

RNI NO: TNENG/2000/2250  
REGISTERED REGN. NO. CB/122/2021-23

