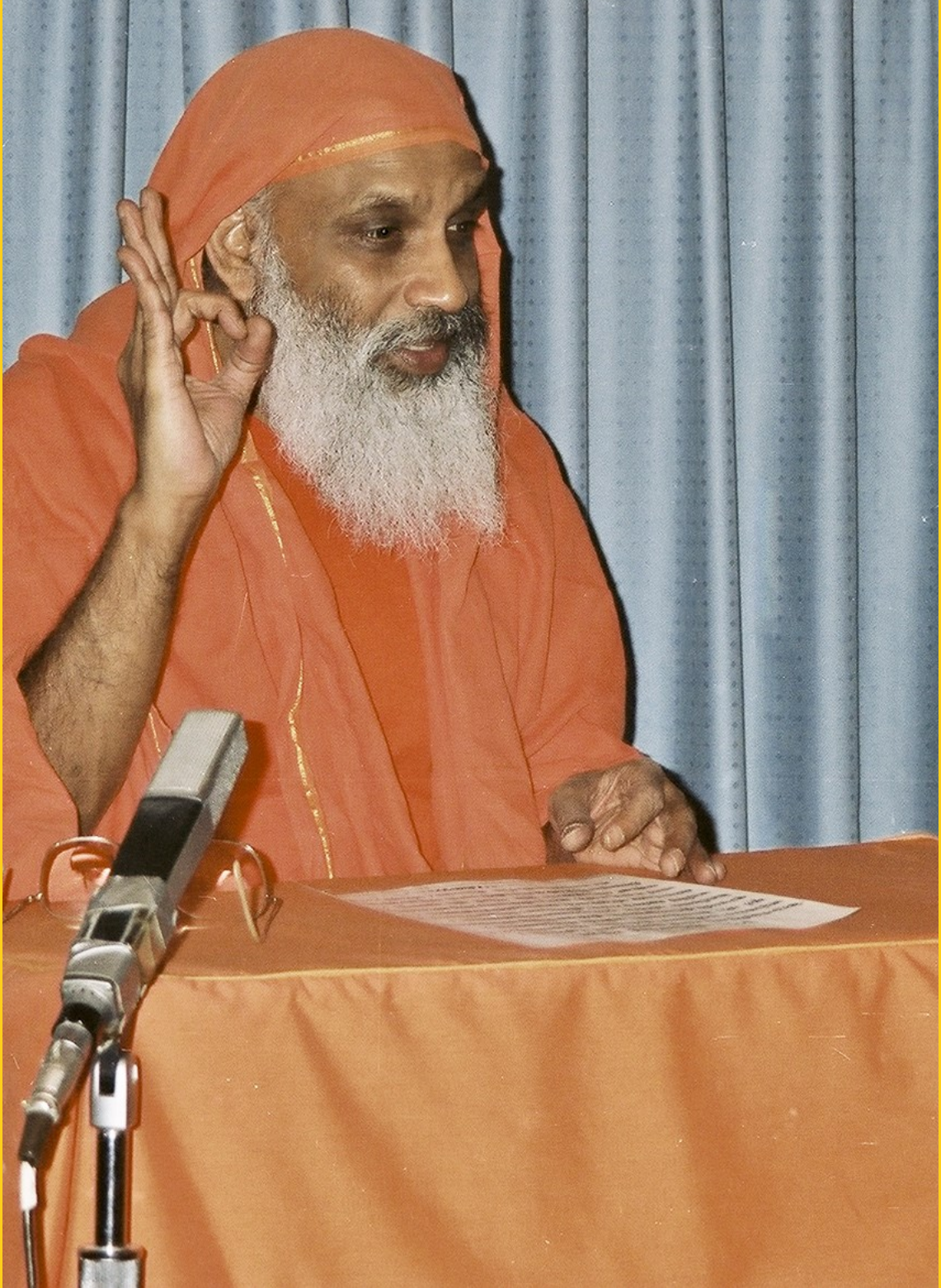




Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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Issue 9

108 feet statue of Sri Adi Shankaracharyaji at Omkareshwar, M.P, India



I feel Blessed and I am bathing in gushing flow of GuruKrupa - when I had the opportunity to partake in Poojas and unveiling of 108' Statue of Adi Shankaracharyaji at Omkareshwar.

Almost 1000 Cr Project was declared in 2017. Finally commissioned in Sep 21st 2023 in presence of 2000 Mahatmas.

It wouldn't have been possible without perseverance & Commitment of HH Swami Avadheshanandaji-Sri Shivaraj singhji (C.M of MP), other Acharyas, Chinamaya Mission and all those students - boys & Girls, Men & Women- who have volunteered as “शंकरदूत”-

My one of the most cherished project. I could witness the divine moment, finally 1st phase got over. Missing Param Pujya Sri Swamiji Sri Dayanandaji very much. May He keep showering his blessings on all of us for completion of such initiatives. - **Pujya Swami Sri Parmatmanandaji**

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This is the twenty seventh part of the serial article, continuation from Aug 2023 newsletter.

स एव मायापरिमोहितात्मा

शरीरमास्थाय करोति सर्वम् ।

स्त्रियन्नपानादिविचित्रभोगैः

स एव जाग्रत्परितृप्तिमेति ॥ १२ ॥

sa eva māyāparimohitātmā

śarīramāsthāya karoti sarvaṁ

striyannapānādīvicitrabhogaiḥ

sa eva jāgratparitrptimeti

सः - he एव - alone मायापरिमोहितात्मा - one who is very well deluded by *māyā* शरीरम् - body आस्थाय - identified with करोति - does सर्वम् - everything स्त्रि-अन्नपानादि-विचित्र-भोगैः - through varied objects of pleasure, such as woman, food, drink etc. सः एव - he alone जाग्रत् - waking state परितृप्तिम् - full gratification एति - obtains

The self alone, being very well deluded by *māyā*, is the one who, identified with the body, performs all the actions in the waking state and obtains full gratification through the varied objects of pleasure, such as woman, food, drink etc. (12)

It is natural for one to wonder why, if one is the limitless *brahman*, there is any sense of limitation at all. If one is, in truth, *ānanda*, happiness, why does one feel any sorrow? We are told that we are immortal, yet how is it that we feel like mortal beings? We are told that *brahman* is one, nondual, and limitless, yet how can a limited creation come out of the limitless *brahman*? If nonduality is the only reality, how is it that we experience duality? Why are we sorrowful? Why do we feel limited? The expectation is that the problem can be solved through reasoning. The fact, however, is that the problem cannot be solved through reasoning, because the problem is itself illegitimate. An illegitimate problem cannot be solved through legitimate argumentation, no matter how hard one tries. It can only be solved by recognizing that the problem is illegitimate.

We do feel that if we only had some satisfactory explanations as to why we feel limited even though we are of the nature of limitlessness itself, we could proceed further. Yet, as Gautama Buddha said, if an arrow is stuck in your back, don't waste time analyzing where the arrow came from, who shot the arrow, or what kind of poison it carries; just pull the arrow out and treat the wound. He did not entertain or encourage any of these analytical questions. Yet such questions do arise in our minds.

Vedānta says that the problem appears to be real entirely due to *māyā*. Why does the limitless feel limited? It is because of *māyā*. How does one appear to be many? It is due to *māyā*. How does the actionless self appear to be the agent of action? It is also due to *māyā*. How does one who is free seem to be bound? Again, it is because of *māyā*. What is *māyā*? *Māyā* is inexplicable or indefinable, *anirvacanīya*. It is inexplicable only in the sense that it neither *is* nor *is not*; it cannot be called *sat*, existing, or *asat*, nonexistant. Hence, nothing in the creation lends itself to being absolutely defined, because it is *anirvacanīya*.

The concept of *māyā* is a model. *Māyā* means illusion of magic. In Sanskrit, there is a saying, *yā mā sā māyā*, that which is not is *māyā*. The magician is called a *māyāvī* and his magic is called *māyā*. Like a magician, using the power of *māyā*, *īśvara* creates a world that is an appearance, that is not really there, but for those who are under the spell of *māyā*, the creation appears to be real. This is like the illusion that the magician creates. For example, he takes a piece of paper and makes it appear like a \$100 bill. There is no \$100 bill, but it appears to be there; the bill is *mithyā*. The cause is *māyā* or magic and the effect is *mithyā*, an appearance. The Vedāntin says that *īśvara's* creation is also *mithyā*, born of *māyā*.

"How is it that I feel limited?" In answer to this question, a Vedāntin will ask, "Who says you are limited?" "Why is there sorrow and grief?" The answer to this question is that there is truly no sorrow and truly no grief. As the teaching begins in the Gita, Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, *aśocyān anvaśocastvam*, you are grieving for something that does not deserve your grief, because there is no cause for grief at

all. The Vedāntin says that there is, in reality, no *saṁsāra*, even though it appears to be there. There is no bondage; it only appears to be there. There is no duality; it only appears to be there. There is no creation; it only appears to be there. And, there is no limited being; he only appears to be there.

To those who are under the spell of *māyā*, whatever is perceived does appear to be real. The dream-world appears to be real when one is under the spell of the dream; the pleasures and pains of the dream are very real at that time. Real tears are shed in the dream. When we wake up we realize that the dream was *mithyā*, but not at the time that we were dreaming. Hence, just because something appears to be real, it does not mean that it must be real. The entire *jagat* is *mithyā*, duality is *mithyā*, and limitation is *mithyā*; the cause of all of this is *māyā*.

What is *māyā*?

Māyā is ignorance. Ignorance has two powers, *āvaraṇa-śakti*, the power to veil, and *vikṣepa-śakti*, the power to project. For example, when we see a snake in the rope, two things are happening: One is that we do not know the rope as rope; the true nature of the rope is veiled. The other is that we see a snake where there is only a rope; a snake is projected on the rope. So there are two aspects involved; veiling and projecting. *Māyā* or ignorance creates this projection. We do not know who we truly are and, therefore, take ourselves to be limited. This is merely a projection arising from our ignorance. The limitless self is deluded by *māyā*. Just as a mind deluded by ignorance sees a snake in the rope, a mind deluded by *māyā* sees a limited *jīva* in the limitless *ātmā*.

We have a gross body, a subtle body, and a causal body. In the waking state, there is identification with all three bodies. The gross body functions because of the subtle body. Both the gross body and the subtle body are there because of the causal body, which is ignorance. Identification with the gross body can be there only when there is identification with the subtle body, and that can be there only because of the causal body. In short, in the waking state, there is identification with the causal, subtle, and gross bodies, the identification with the gross body being

predominant.

How identification becomes a burden

When there is identification, we forget the true self and become something that we are not. When we identify with the body, we say that we are human beings: One is a man or a woman, a father or a son, tall or short, dark or fair, handsome or ugly. All these complexes constitute *samsāra*. “Swamiji, but to feel that I am handsome is fine. Why is that *samsāra*? To say that I am ugly may be *samsāra*, but that I am handsome is wonderful.” Even to think that one is handsome or beautiful is a burden. As Pūjya Swamiji says, when a woman wins the title of Miss Universe, it means she is declared the most beautiful woman in the whole world, at least for that year. So you’d think that she would be convinced that she is the most beautiful woman and therefore has no need to wear makeup. However, while so far she was spending an hour and a half on makeup every day, upon being declared Miss Universe, she must spend two and a half hours on trying to look good to retain that title!

Even thinking that one is successful or that one is beautiful carries a burden of its own, because one then needs to retain the stature. When you are studying in school, say in the sixth grade, and happen to score the first rank across all the various classes in the grade, you should be happy if, the next year, you come first again, even if it is within your own class. Yet if that means that you only score second across all the classes, people start asking, “Is that all? Couldn’t you make it again this year?” In fact, when one was scoring the fifteenth rank, there was no problem. Now that he has scored the second rank, it is as though he has failed!!

Every complex carries its own burden, its own problem. Being king has its own problems, just as being a beggar also has its own problems. Both fellows cannot fall sleep; the king in his comfortable bed is not able to sleep because he is worried about his kingdom and the beggar is not able to sleep because he doesn’t know where his next meal will come from. So every role, every complex, is a burden. Whether it is a superiority complex or an inferiority complex, it is a burden. This

is indeed bondage.

Vicitra-bhogaiḥ means through the many varieties of objects of pleasure. It is through these that the *jīva* gains experiences in the waking state. In short, on account of *māyā* or ignorance and through projection and identification, the limitless self identifies with the personality and takes himself to be a small and limited person; this is the sense of limitation. He is busy fulfilling all his perceived needs. “I need to be happy,” is a perceived need. “I need to have a luxury car,” is a perceived need. Most needs are perceived needs. We project all kinds of needs and remain busy from morning until evening trying to fulfill those needs. Such is the story of the waking state.

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

svapne sa jīvaḥ sukhaduḥkhabhoktā
svamāyayā kalpitajīvaloke
suṣuptikāle sakale vilīne
tamo'bhībhūtaḥ 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)

To be continued...

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the twenty fifth part of the serial article, continuation from Aug 2023 newsletter.

तेषां निग्रहणे शक्तः स्वयं च कुशिकात्मजः । तव पुत्रहितार्थाय त्वामुपेत्याभियाचते ॥ १-२१-२१

इति मुनिवचनात् प्रसन्नचित्तो रघुवृषभश्च मुमोद पार्थिवाग्रयः ।

गमनमभिरुच राघवस्य प्रथितयशाः कुशिकात्मजाय बुध्या ॥ १-२१-२२

तथा वसिष्ठे ब्रुवति राजा दशरथः स्वयम् । प्रहृष्टवदनो राममाजुहाव सलक्ष्मणम् ॥ १-२२-१

teṣāṃ nigrahaṇe śaktaḥ svayaṃ ca kuśikātmajāḥ ।

tava putrahitārthāya tvāmupetyābhiyācate ॥ 1-21-21

iti munivacanāt prasannacitto raghuvṛṣabhaśca mumoda pārvhivāgryaḥ ।

gamanamabhiruroca rāghavasya prathitayaśāḥ kuśikātmajāya budhyā ॥ 1-21-22

tathā vasiṣṭhe bruvati rājā daśarathaḥ svayam ।

prahrṣṭavadano rāmamājuhāva salakṣmaṇam ॥ 1-22-1

By these words of Vasishtha, the great King Dasharatha, reassured, freed from concerns and sadness and confusion, regained his demeanor and his brilliance. Gradually his mind became resigned to sending Rama along with Vishvamitra. The king, realizing that he was being blessed, cheerfully called for Rama and Lakshmana. Tenderly, with great affection, the king smelled the head of his dear son. He told the boys what he wanted them to do, and then he and the whole assembly and even the *devatās* praised them and wished them well. The boys were committed to the care of Vishvamitra and they left the palace with him.

कलापिनौ धनुष्पाणी शोभयानौ दिशो दश । विश्वामित्रं महात्मानं त्रिशीर्षविव पन्नगौ ॥ १-२२-७

अनुजग्मतुरक्षुद्रौ पितामहमिवाश्विनौ अनुयातौ श्रीया दीप्तौ शोभयन्तावनिन्दतौ ॥ १-२२-८

अविप्रहतमैक्ष्वाकः पप्रच्छ मुनिपुंगवम् । अहो वनमिदं दुर्गं झल्लिकागणसंयुतम् ॥ १-२४-१३

भैरवैः श्वापदैः कीर्णं शकुनैर्दारुणारवैः । नानाप्रकारैः शकुनैर्वाश्यद्विभैरवस्वनैः ॥ १-२४-१४

सिंहव्याघ्रवराहैश्च वारणैश्चापि शोभितम् । धवाश्वकर्णककुभैर्बिल्वतिन्दुकपाटलैः ॥ १-२४-१५

संकीर्णं बदरीभिश्च किं न्विदं दारुणं वनम् । तमुवाच महातेजा विश्वामित्रो महामुनिः ॥ १-२४-१६

kalāpinau dhanuṣpāṇī śobhayānau diśo daśa ।

viśvāmitraṃ mahātmānaṃ triśīrṣaviva pannagau ॥ 1-22-7

anujagmaturakṣudrau pitāmahamivāśvinau

anuyātau śrīyā dīptau śobhayantāvanindatau ॥ 1-22-8

aviprahata maikṣvākaḥ papraccha munipuṅgavam |
aho vanamidaṁ durgam jhillikāgaṇasaṁyutam || 1-24-13
bhairavaiḥ śvāpadaiḥ kīrṇaṁ śakunairdāruṇāravaiḥ |
nānāprakāraiḥ śakunairoṽśyadbhirbhairavasvanaiḥ || 1-24-14
simhavyāghravārāhaiśca vāraṇaiścāpi śobhitam |
dhavāśvakarṇakakubhairbilvatindukapāṭalaiḥ || 1-24-15
saṁkīrṇaṁ badarībhiśca kiṁ nvidaṁ dāruṇaṁ vanam |
tamuṽāca mahātejā viśvāmitro mahāmuniḥ || 1-24-16

In the company of Lakshmana and Vishvamisra, Rama began his first journey to the forest. After a march of twelve miles, the group was deep in the wilderness around Ayodhya. Rama, still a boy, had not been to such a place. They had crossed the river Sarayu which has its source in the waters of Manasarovar, created from the mind of Brahma, at the foot of Mount Kailasa. Rama asked Vishvamisra question after question and stood wide-eyed taking in the wonder of the place. “*Aho vanam idam*” just like they say it in Tamil, “What a forest is this.” Dense and dark, bugs and crickets filling it with sounds, like our frogs, not a human being anywhere, frightening wild animals lurking somewhere, birds with stark calls that themselves seem able to kill, the roar of lions and tigers, snorts and snuffles of wild boar, trumpeting wild elephants, all of them beautifying the deep woods. The trees and shrubs and creepers and vines of various kinds, tall and short, smooth-barks and wrinkled and thorny, berried or not, reached far above into the sky everywhere. A winding animal path through the thick undergrowth at their feet. Rama asked, “Oh, Vishvamisra, what is the name of this forest?”

Vishvamisra told the boys, “This, the Karakavana, was once a place of people. It was fertile and abundant. But it has become the haunt of the *rākṣasī* Tataka and her son Marica. These are the two that disturb me. She even disturbed the great *muni* Agastya when he was here. She may have been beautiful at that time, but she was still a *rākṣasī*. It was Agastya who cursed her because she had tormented the people by exploiting her beauty and enchanting music. He just said, ‘Hey, that’s enough, you have had it.’ Losing her face and all her beauty, she regained her original gruesome *rākṣasī* form.” With this story, Vishvamisra prepared Rama for what was to come - the killing of Tataka. A *tātakā* is a woman, and killing a woman was considered against *dharma*. A *kṣatriya* would kill neither a woman nor a person who runs away from the battlefield. Neither will he kill one who

surrenders or one who has lost his weapons. These he should not kill. Rama knew all such *sāstra*, and he would not be ready or willing to kill a woman.

In the forest, Rama, as ever, was practicing with his bow and arrow. His practice made some noise, noise that reached Tataka. She knew there were humans about and she rushed to see. Vishvamitra said to the boys, “Do you hear that violent storm? That is her coming. Tataka is coming. You must kill her. Do not have any compunction - kill her. She is a female, but as a *rājā* you have certain duties. You must keep the people’s and the *sādhus*’ welfare in view and base your judgment of right and wrong upon the highest good. Anyone who tampers with the welfare of the people must be punished. Tataka cannot be destroyed by anyone else; you alone are capable of this deed.”

Rama had previously been blessed with two powerful *mantras* from Vishvamitra - *bala* and *atibala*. Rama had been chanting those *mantras*, and now the *mantras* would serve him. Those blessed with these *mantras* cannot become tired, they cannot suffer hunger or fever, they cannot be killed. Thus Rama was armed and morally prepared to face the *rākṣasī*. Vishvamitra had laid the groundwork for what had to be done.

Nevertheless, Rama was not fully ready for it. Rama was doubtful, “How can I kill this woman, *rākṣasī* or not? There will be those who say that I have killed a woman. Lakshmana, I have decided just to cut off her nose and hands and send her back, not kill her. With that she cannot do any harm.” Even as she came, great *māyāvī* that she was, there was a fierce wind that brought a blinding dust storm that blinded the boys for some time.

नृशंसमनृशंसं वा प्रजारक्षणाकारणात् । पातकं वा सदोषं वा कर्तव्यं रक्षता सदा ॥ १-२५-१८

राज्यभारनियुक्तानामेष धर्मः सनातनः । अधर्म्यां जहि काकुत्स्थधर्मो ह्यस्यां न विद्यते ॥ १-२५-१९

nṛśaṁsamanaṛśaṁsaṁ vā prajāraṁśaṇākāraṇāt ।

pātakaṁ vā sadoṣaṁ vā kartavyaṁ rakṣatā sadā ॥ 1-25-18

rājyabhāranīyuktānāmeṣa dharmah sanātanaḥ ।

adharmyāṁ jahi kākutsthadharmo hyasyāṁ na vidyate ॥ 1-25-19

“Didn’t I tell you?” said Vishvamitra. “She is not a woman, she is a *rākṣasī*. Wrong or not wrong, even if it is calamitous and full of *pāpa* in general, for the protection of the good people this job must be done. Those committed to rule a kingdom must know the ancient rule: When you are dealing with someone who

has no *dharma* you cannot follow any *dharma*. You have to dispose of her.” To send his point home, Vishvamitra told Rama of the times when Indra and other luminaries had to slay those in the form of women who were indeed *rākṣasīs*.

The unavoidable battle between Rama and Tataka began. Rama found himself caught in a rain of stones, boulders falling on and all around him. With his arrows and weapons and missiles he confidently stopped each and every one of the rocks as they fell from the sky. Again and again the hard rain started, and he quelled it every time. Then, near the end, as Tataka rushed at Rama and Lakshmana, Rama loosed an arrow which brought the demoness to the ground. It had been done: Tataka was slain. Above, far above, Indra and the gods nodded their heads and were pleased. They praised Rama and said, “Well done.” Having begun, Rama and Lakshmana and Vishvamitra proceeded to the *ṛṣi's āśrama*.

अथ तां रजनीमुष्य विश्वामित्रो महायशः । प्रहस्य राघवं वाक्यमुवाच मधुरस्वरम् ॥ १-२७-१
परितुष्टोऽस्मि भद्रं ते राजपुत्र महायशः । प्रीत्या परमया युक्तो ददाम्यस्त्राणि सर्वशः ॥ १-२७-२
देवासुरगणान् वापि सगन्धर्वोरगान् भुवि । यैरमित्रान् प्रसह्याजौ वशीकृत्य जयिष्यसि ॥ १-२७-३

*atha tāṁ rajanīmuṣya viśvāmitro mahāyaśaḥ ।
prahasya rāghavaṁ vākyaṁuvāca madhurasvaram ॥ 1-27-1
parituṣṭo'smi bhadraṁ te rājaputra mahāyaśaḥ ।
prītyā paramayā yukto dadāmyastrāṇi sarvaśaḥ ॥ 1-27-2
devāsuraṅgāṇ vāpi sagandharvoragān bhuvi ।
yairamitrān prasahyājau vaśīkṛtya jayiṣyasi ॥ 1-27-3*

Peeking the boy's interest, Vishvamitra said to Rama, “O prince of great fame, use what I am going to give you to support your further accomplishment. I have for you these various arrows, each one an *āstra*.” A *śastra* is a weapon which remains in your hand when you fight, a sword *et cetera*. An *āstra* is something that you let loose from your hand; some of them come back like a boomerang, some of them get lost. All these *āstras* given by Vishvamitra are loaded by *mantra*. These *āstra* are mentioned in both Ramayana and Mahabharata. It seems as though they are very real; perhaps they had such things in those days. Each *āstra* has a *devatā*, a presiding deity. The warrior would invoke the deity with the *mantra*, whereby the *āstra* becomes as powerful as the very deity itself. Thus *brahmāstra* is the last word in weaponry. That was one of the ones that Rama was given by Vishvamitra, along with a number of other descriptively named and well-known arrows. Some

of them emit fire, like napalm bombs. Some of them shower water, *varuṇāstra*. If combatants shoot the fire arrow against the water arrow they neutralize each other. Warriors would do *tapas* and invoke the deities to gain the favor of use of the various *āstras*. But it was not just a matter of getting the *āstra*. It is not just the specific arrow, it is the *mantra* that turns any arrow into the potent *āstra*. A warrior must also have the presence of mind to employ the *mantra* in the heat of battle to gain its benefit.

In the Mahabharata, there is the story of Karna, a mighty fighter in Duryodhana's army. In fact there was no one the equal to Karna in archery. But Arjuna had an edge over Karna, because Karna was not able to get it together and remember the *mantras* that would empower his arrows. Of course this defect was due to a curse. At the right time to bow a special arrow, Karna's mind went blank. Nevertheless he was a great archer.

तानि दिव्यानि भद्रं ते ददाम्यस्त्राणि सर्वशः । दण्डचक्रं महदॐ दिव्यं तव दास्यामि राघव ॥ १-२७-४

धर्मचक्रं ततो वीर कालचक्रं तथैव च । विष्णुचक्रं तथात्युग्रमैन्द्रं चक्रं तथैव च ॥ १-२७-५

वज्रमस्त्रं नरश्रेष्ठ शैवं शूलवतं तथा । अस्त्रं ब्रह्मशिरश्चैव ऐषीकमपि राघव ॥ १-२७-६

ददामि ते महाबाहो ब्राह्ममस्त्रमनुत्तमम् । गदे द्वे चैव काकुत्स्थ मोदकी शिखरी शुभे ॥ १-२७-७

स्थितस्तु प्राङ्मुखो भूत्वा शुचिर्मुनिवरस्तदा । ददौ रामाय सुप्रीतो मंत्रग्राममनुत्तमम् ॥ १-२७-२२

सर्वसंग्रहणं येषां दैवतैरपि दुर्लभम् । तान्यस्त्राणि तदा विप्रो राघवाय न्यवेदयत् ॥ १-२७-२३

जपतस्तु मुनेस्तस्य विश्वामित्रस्य धीमतः । उपतस्थुर्महार्हाणि सर्वाण्यस्त्राणि राघवम् ॥ १-२७-२४

प्रतिगृह्य ततोऽस्त्राणि प्रहृष्टवदनः शुचिः । गच्छनेव च काकुत्स्थो विश्वामित्रमथाब्रवीत् ॥ १-२८-१

गृहीतास्त्रोऽस्मि भगवन् दुराधर्षः सुरैरपि । अस्त्राणां त्वहमिच्छामि संहारान् मुनिपुंगव ॥ १-२८-२

एवं ब्रुवति काकुत्स्थे विश्वामित्रो महातपाः । संहारान् व्याजहाराथ धृतिमान् सुव्रतः शुचिः ॥ १-२८-३

tāni divyāni bhadraṁ te dadāmyastrāṇi sarvaśaḥ |

daṇḍacakraṁ mahad divyaṁ tava dāsyāmi rāghava || 1-27-4

dharmacakraṁ tato vīra kālacakraṁ tathaiṣa ca |

viṣṇucakraṁ tathātyugramaindraṁ cakraṁ tathaiṣa ca || 1-27-5

vajramastrāṁ naraśreṣṭha śaivaṁ śūlavataṁ tathā |

astrāṁ brahmaśiraścaiva aiśīkamapi rāghava || 1-27-6

dadāmi te mahābāho brāhmamastramanuttamam |

gade dve caiva kākutstha modakī śikharī śubhe || 1-27-7

sthitastu prāṇmukho bhūtvā śucirmunivarastadā |
 dadau rāmāya suprito mantragrāmamanuttamam || 1-27-22
 sarvasaṅgrahaṇaṁ yeṣāṁ daivatairapi durlabham |
 tānyastrāṇi tadā vipro rāghavāya nyavedayat || 1-27-23
 japatastu munestasya viśvāmitrasya dhīmataḥ |
 upatasthurmahārṇāṇi sarvāṇyastrāṇi rāghavam || 1-27-24
 pratigrhya tato'strāṇi prahr̥ṣṭavadanaḥ śuciḥ |
 gacchaneva ca kākutstho viśvāmitramathābravīt || 1-28-1
 gr̥hītāstro'smi bhagavan durādharṣaḥ surairapi |
 astrāṇāṁ tvahamicchāmi saṁhārān munipuṅgava || 1-28-2
 evaṁ bruvati kākutsthe viśvāmitro mahātapāḥ |
 saṁhārān vyājahārātha dhṛtimān suvrataḥ śuciḥ || 1-28-3

Vishvamitra gave Rama a quiver of divine arrows, each one named after its deity or its capacity. Weapons of great variety he gave: the missiles *hayashiras* and *krauncha* and *mohana* and *kinkinī*, and spinning discs and javelins and the sword *nandana* and maces *modaki* and *śikarī*. Rama gathered the weapons, and as he did this, the deities of those weapons came and prostrated to him and offered themselves. Rama told them to go to their homes and be prepared to come to his side when he called for them. Taking off again, Rama proceeded to ask Vishvamitra for the specific instructions and *mantras* that applied to the various *āstras*. Rama wanted to be certain that he could get the most out of each, and that, for the arrows with that capacity, he would get the weapon back after its use. With the permission of Vishvamitra, Rama shared everything with Lakshmana. Can you imagine how pleased the boys were with these valuable weapons?

They reached the delightful *siddhāśrama* of Vishvamitra where Rama, curious as he was, continued to ask the *ṛṣi* about all he saw. Vishvamitra told a story. There was a great King Mahabali who performed a ritual that would render him even more powerful. This Mahabali was an *asura*, a sort of a demon, but not a *rākṣasa*. Mahabali had already been a problem for good people, and now he would be even more of a problem. He would become unconquerable. The *devas* went to Lord Vishnu and prayed, "O Lord, please help us. Take care of this Mahabali before he completes this ritual." To deal with Mahabali, Vishnu came to earth as a very short, young man, a *vāmana*, a dwarf and a Brahman, a *tejasvin*, a Lilliput. Overnight, Vishnu in the form of this *vāmana* established the *siddhāśrama*. He wait-

ed there until the *yāga* was complete. As the *dakṣiṇā* was being given to the *brāhmaṇas* at the *yāga*, the Lord in the form of a dwarf fell in at the end of the line. Mahabali received the holy boy and asked him what he might have come for. At the end of the ritual was the time when Mahabali was obliged to cater to the needs of the *brāhmaṇas*, otherwise the results of the ritual would not come forth and bless Mahabali. Mahabali was happy that the youthful Brahman had come, and he offered him jewels and cows, whatever he wanted.

The *vāmana* said, “Hey, *rājendra*, I cannot use money or gold or cattle; none of this would help a small fellow like me. What can I get out of those things? What I want is to possess the *bhūmi*, the piece of land, that I can measure with three footsteps. Please give me only this much.”

Mahabali, looking at the legs of the little fellow, was amused. Smiling, the exalted one among the *asuras* agreed to fulfill the wish of this Brahman. Just then, Shukra, the *guru* of Mahabali, who was there at the sacrifice, warned, “Be not deceived, great king, this *vāmana* that is standing here is none other than Lord Vishnu, he who could never really decline to this level. You do not know why he has come; some trick is here. This one who is not well understood by Brahmaji, by Shiva, by Indra, by yogis, by *devas*, by *asuras*, is that Vishnu who is here. You may not want to do what he asks.”

Among the *rākṣasas* there was a certain value structure, like a code among criminals, their own codes and rules. The *rākṣasas* have some kind of *dharma* with them. Mahabali said, “If Lord Vishnu has come here to receive something from me at the conclusion of my successful ritual, I will definitely give. Just that I was able to bring him down here is a great thing. At this point, I am not going to worry about what is going to come later. Let this be. Let this be the very fulfillment of my *yajña*.” Having said this, Mahabali offered water to the Brahman and said, “Whatever it might be, it is yours, not mine.”

Even when you offer into the fire you say that, “*agni svāhā*,” unto Agni is this oblation, “*na mama*,” it is not mine. You make it very clear. Otherwise Agni may feel indebted to you. You make it very clear that you do not expect anything back. It is like a legal language. You say both: it is yours and it is not mine. You say that with any money given to a pundit or a priest after a ritual. He will do all the chanting, and when it comes time he will ask you to say, “*na mama*.” Then it is clear. The giving is complete. The gift is over.

अथ विष्णुर्महातेजा आदियां समजायत । वामनं रूपमास्थाय वैरोचनिमुपागमत् १-२९-१९

त्रीन् पदानथ भिक्षित्वा प्रतिगृह्य च भोदिनीम् । आक्रम्य लोकांल्लोकार्थी सर्वलोकहिते रतः १-२९-२०

महेन्द्राय पुनः प्रादान्नियम्य बलिमोजसा । त्रैलोक्यं स महातेजाश्चक्रे शक्रवशं पुनः १-२९-२१

atha viṣṇurmahātejā ādiyāṁ samajāyata ।

vāmanam rūpamāsthāya vairocanimupāgamat ॥ 1-29-19

trīn padānatha bhikṣitvā pratigrhya ca bhodinīm ।

ākramya lokāṁllokārthī sarvalokahite rataḥ ॥ 1-29-20

mahendrāya punaḥ prādānniyamya balimojasā ।

trailokyam sa mahātejāścakre śakravaśam punaḥ ॥ 1-29-21

The giving of water begins the giving. Mahabali offered water to the Brahman dwarf. Even as the water touched the hand of that *vāmana*, that *vāmana* assumed the cosmic form, *viśvarupā*. Lord Vishnu encompasses all, he is all. The cosmic form of the Lord covered the three worlds. Then he took the three steps. One step covered the earth, the second covered the heavens, the third step had no place at all. Having taken two steps, Lord Vishnu asked Mahabali, “Hey what are you going to do now? I still have another step to take.”

Mahabali replied, “What can I do now? You have covered the whole; what more is there to give?”

The Lord said, “Still there is one place left that is yours.”

“Mine?” said the *asura* king, “Where is that?”

Then Lord Vishnu said, “It is your head. That little island is the one place in creation that is yours. All the rest is mine.” See behind the story. There is only one thing that is yours, this little island with a patch of hair or not on top. “That you can give me,” said Lord Vishnu.

Mahabali considered everything and said, “All right.” He bent down to the feet of the Lord. Receiving the touch of the feet of the Lord, Mahabali became a great *mahātmā*. Even today Mahabali is worshipped because of his submission of his *asura*, his *ahaṅkāra*. ‘*Sura*’ is one who is happy, one who is effulgent, knowledgeable, *na asura*. ‘*Bali*’ means offering, and that is the greatest *bali* anyone can give. Land, cows, gold, jewels - these are already the Lord’s. There is only one thing that you can give, and Mahabali gave it. Mahabali gave up that, the *ahaṅkāra*, and became one with the Lord.

After telling the story, Vishvamitra said to Rama, “The very *āśrama*, *siddhāśrama*, that was established by the *vāmana* is where we are now. It is my *āśrama* and now you can take it as yours.”

Amidst the *śiṣyas* and sages of the *āśrama* who had gathered to greet the returning *guru*, Rama asked, “Well, what’s next?”

एवमुक्तो महातेजा विश्वामित्रो महानृषिः । प्रविवेश तदा दीक्षां नियतो नियतेन्द्रियः ॥ १-२९-३०

कुमाराविव तां रात्रिमुषित्वा सुसमाहितौ । प्रभातकाले चोत्थाय पूर्वा संध्यामुपास्य च ॥ १-२९-३१

प्रशुची परमं जाप्यं समाप्य नियमेन च । हुताग्निहोत्रमासीनं विश्वमित्रमवन्दताम् ॥ १-२९-३२

evamukto mahātejā viśvāmitro mahānṛṣiḥ |

praviveśa tadā dīkṣāṁ niyato niyatendriyaḥ || 1-29-30

kumārāviva tāṁ rātrimuṣitvā susamāhitau |

prabhātakāle cotthāya pūrvāṁ sandhyāmupāsya ca || 1-29-31

prasucī paramaṁ jāpyaṁ samāpya niyamena ca |

hutāgnihotramāśīnaṁ viśvāmitramavandatām || 1-29-32

Vishvamitra said, “For six days I will take up this *dīkṣā*, you must be very alert, *rākṣasas* will come.” Having said this, Vishvamitra, *mahāmuni*, closing his eyes, went into the resolve, the *upāsanas* that he wanted to do. In the morning, according to *vidhi*, the princes bathed and prayed, worshipped certain *āstras* that required such, and prepared themselves. Day and night they were on guard without sleep.

अथ काले गते तस्मिन् षष्ठेऽहनि तथाऽऽगते । सौमित्रिमब्रवीदœ रामो यत्तो भव समाहितः ॥ १-३०-७

रामस्यैवं ब्रुवाणस्य त्वरितस्य युयुत्सया । प्रज्ज्वाल ततो वेदिः सोपाध्यायपुरोहिता ॥ १-३०-८

atha kāle gate tasmin ṣaṣṭhe'hani tathā''gate |

saumitrimabravīd rāmo yatto bhava samāhitaḥ || 1-30-7

rāmasyaivaṁ bruvāṇasya tvaritasya yuyutsayā |

prajajvāla tato vedīḥ sopādhyāyapurohitā || 1-30-8

Rama spoke to Lakshmana, “Be ever attentive. As ants or as antelopes, we do not know in which form they will come.” Vishvamitra’s nearby ritual fire glowed just as did Rama’s face.

To be continued...

Mahābhārata
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the second part of the serial article, continuation from Aug 2023 newsletter.

The Early Days

There was a person called Ugrashravas. He was born in the family of Suta. He is Sauti. He was well versed in the Puranas. He was the son of Lomaharshana. Ugrashravas went to a place in the Naimisha forest where a *sattrra* was going on. *Sattrra* means a huge ritual, many people sharing and eating, many major discourses going, all the Puranas being taught, *brahmavidyā* being taught, all disciplines are taught there. That is a *sattrra*, and this *sattrra*, this ritual, lasted for twelve years. They had enough *purāṇas* and all the things to keep going for those twelve years of study. Jupiter takes twelve years to come back to the same position. Saunaka, said to have taught ten thousand disciples, was the *kulapati* at the ritual. He had such a following. He taught them and maintained them also. That is a *kulapati*. *Rṣis* and *paṇḍitas*, all seers, were there. Ugrashravas walked in.

All of the *tapasvins* approached this effulgent one who had entered the sanctified place. The *paurāṇikas*, those with the knowledge of the past, were brilliant people, very big people. You could not miss them – there is a *tejas*. Everybody was interested in listening to stories. In those days there was no newspaper. Anyone who walked in was asked for news, what was happening here and there. Any visitor was a newscarryer, and especially a *paurāṇika* who arrived. Naturally they wanted to hear some stories from Ugrashravas. They surrounded him.

These *tapasvins* gathered for the ritual were all good people. All of them were ascetics, not ordinary fellows, but well-informed fellows, and they were worshipped by the people. Ugrashravas asked them about their pursuits, their efforts, their gains. *Tapas* can be for different things: *tapas* for *jñānam* and *tapas* for varieties of accomplishments. *Tapas* means any committed pursuit. It is an effort done to the exclusion of everything else; all other things subserve that one dominant pursuit. Understand the value here. They were all there for the sacrifice, all were interested in learning, and it was all *tapas*. Ugrashravas asked them about their *tapas*.

Ugrashravas, Laumaharshana, was given a seat. This was a usual form of recognition. He was offered a prime seat amongst those in the gathering who had

risen from their own seats to greet him. With humility he sat.

One *r̥ṣi* in the assembly requested, “From where have you come? What places were visited by you?”

Ugrashravas told the story of his having come from Janamejaya’s snake sacrifice. Janamejaya was the son of Parikshit, and he was performing a ritual where he wanted to destroy all the snakes in the world. That was the ritual, and it was initiated because Janamejaya’s father had died of a snakebite. That is another story which we will come to. The Mahabharata is all story after story. Ugrashravas answered the *r̥ṣi*, “I went to that *sattra*, the great snake sacrifice, and I tell you one thing. I heard something which I should tell you. I heard Vyasa's masterpiece, this *jāyam mahābhāratam*. I heard it narrated by Vaishampayana to Janamejaya. It was amazing.” Thus he praised what he had heard, and all the ears of all the people were turned and all in attendance spoke, “Won’t you tell us that? Tell us what Vyasa has composed.” Then Ugrashravas told the story; Mahabharata begins.

In both Ramayana and Mahabharata we find that the whole epic is first presented in a brief manner. Narada tells Valmiki the Ramayana in a concise summary. Then Valmiki expands that. He makes it a *kāvya*. So too here, the skeleton of this great epic, in a number of verses, is presented by the Sauti, by Ugrashravas, to all the *brāhmaṇas* who were there in the *sattra*. Ugrashravas tells of his going to the snake ritual of Janamejaya.

Parikshit, Janamejaya’s father, was a king. Janamejaya performed this ritual because of his anger, and because of his sorrow and his grief. Parikshit had gone to the forest, where he happened to see a sage, a *sādhu*, sitting there under a tree with his eyes closed. Parikshit called to him and tried to draw the attention of the *sādhu* but the fellow did not open his eyes. There was a dead snake nearby. Parikshit picked up the dead snake. Perhaps it was a silly thing to do. People do silly things, you know. Parikshit picked up the snake and just put it on the *sādhu* as if a garland. He wanted to garland the *mahātmā*. He put the dead snake there and he went away.

The son of the sage who had been garlanded with the snake came to know what had been done, and the son gave Parikshit a curse. The son, also a sage, cursed Parikshit to suffer a snakebite and to die within a week. Parikshit learned about this *śāpa*, this curse. You will find *śāpa* like this everywhere. There will be a curse, and the same fellow who curses will tell how to neutralize the curse. What

is given is given, but a means to neutralize what is given is also given. Out of anger he gives this curse – this and this will happen – and often the antidote is also given.

Parikshit knew he had little chance. He had only one week. He went to Shukha, a highly respected sage, the son of Vyasa. Parikshit said to Shukha, “I have only one week, and before that I want to get *mokṣa*.” In one week Parikshit wanted *mokṣa*, because that was all the time he had to live. Shukha laughed. Parikshit said, “Why are you laughing, I am going to die in a week?”

Shukha said, “Parikshit, you are sure that you will live one week. I myself cannot be sure of even that. That is what makes me laugh.” Then he narrated to Parikshit the story of Bhagavan, and that story is what we call Bhagavata Purana. He told him the Bhagavata. The Bhagavata story is of the Lord’s incarnation. What is the Lord’s incarnation? You are also the Lord’s incarnation. The Bhagavata is the story of *avatāra*. *Avatāra* is the assumption of a special form for accomplishing a given end, doing a given job. Most of the *avatāras* manifest for doing one job. Whereas *avatāras* like Rama and Krishna were not for one job. They were taken to set a pattern of life. That is different. That is why Rama-Krishna became very popular. Because a whole life is lived by Rama. He becomes an archetype. Rama is an archetype of *dharma*, an example for *dharma*. Similarly, Krishna is an archetype of *ānanda*. Therefore with Rama and Krishna we have two types of *avatāra*. Both Rama and Krishna go through the trials in life. They are not in any way different. Both face challenges, and there is a certain response to all those challenges. One is *dharma*-predominant, the other is *ānanda*-predominant, which in Krishna's case means mischief predominant and freedom predominant. Therefore there are these two types, the two extremely popular *avatāras*.

Even though Parikshit tried to set himself up in a place where snakes could not reach at all, in a comfortable palace in the midst of a lake, the snake sneaked in. Through a garland or something, the snake sneaked in and Parikshit died. His angry son Janamejaya promised to perform a *yajña* that would do away with all of the snakes. Look at this promise, it is just ridiculous. Janamejaya said, “I am going to destroy all of the snakes.” He initiated a ritual which invoked all these snakes to come. Among the snakes there was one *rājā* called Daksha; he was the *nāgarājā*. The summoned snakes came and, one-after-another, fell into the fire at the ritual. Daksha approached the fire and was about to enter when he was saved by a per-

son named Astika. In time, Janamejaya and his sacrifice were cooled off, and it was then that Vaisampayana, a disciple of Vyasa, told Janamejaya the entire story of the Mahabharata.

Sauti, Ugrashravas, is telling the *ṛṣis* that Vaishampaya narrates the Mahabharata to Janamejaya. We have to remember who started what. This introduction has a purpose. It presents briefly the whole Mahabharata. Afterwards, Janamejaya wants to know in detail all that happened and Vaishampayana tells the whole story. So we will start here, after the introductory summary - Vaishampayana spoke. I am skipping the brief version of the Mahabharata and going to where the real Mahabharata starts. Because vastness and profundity are there, there is no need for dilation that dilutes the topic. Dilation or making it too brief will make the interest go. It should be vast and profound all the way. It is not easy. That is why it is called Mahabharata.

Vyasa says, "Give me a minute, take a minute for yourself - listen. This entire description I am going to give in detail, this venerable story written by Krishnadvaipayana." Krishnadvaipayana is another name for Vyasa. "Because you have asked for it, please take the time to forget about everything else and just listen. There are only one hundred thousand verses. Both those who listen and those who make others listen to these verses will gain great results." *Dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa*: everything you will get here. Whatever you want you get here. Even one who reads for *artha* will end up in *mokṣa*. In this *itihāsa*, in this epic, all *puruṣārthas* are taught. Herein one's mind, *buddhi*, becomes committed to *mokṣa*, the ultimate truth, fulfillment.

The king who listens will become an emperor. All his enemies will fall at his feet in defeat. The people who have no children will have children when they listen. It will bring all that is good in this world to you. With *śraddhā* the king should listen along with his queen, and that will yield a great son, or a daughter, a princess, who will be capable of ruling the whole kingdom and of making it a place of the *śāstra*. If you want to know what is *dharma* - what is to be done, what is not to be done – this is the *dharmaśāstra* you have to study. If you want to know how to gain success in life, then too you should study this. You will get all the secrets of success: how to influence people, how to create problems in your conversations and what really accounts for success. All that you will find here. Vyasa, whose truly fathomless knowledge, whose *buddhi*, has no boundaries, will give you. If you

want *mokṣa*, it has got it, and not only in the Bhagavad Gita. There are portions of *mokṣaśāstra*, *vedānta*, all over.

Any *pāpa* that you have done, all that you will give up. When you read this, follow this, you will give up all that. Duryodhana, all his crippled deeds, will make you give up everything. When you read his lot and what all happened because of him, your heart goes to those who suffer, to Arjuna and Dharmaputra. Thereby you change: a change takes place. You develop an informed dislike, a disinterest, because Mahabharata is *satsaṅga*. That is why there is a length of time involved, because if you go on hearing it for a period of time you will change.

All those people who are in the righteous lineage are here, people who have never seen *doṣa*, a limitation, where there is virtue. It is like when someone has written a clean book and someone else just has to say something negative about it, even cite a minor omission. This is that criticizing *buddhi*, finding fault or limitation in others to make up for one's own shortcomings. In Mahabharata we see people who see the good qualities in others and do not cavil at those limitations. Please listen to the birth and the life of such people. Those who listen need no longer worry about pressure and stress. One will gain a good mind, and all psychosomatic problems will not be there. In this life itself there is no reason to live in fear, not to talk of going to some hell in some afterlife. Thus Vyasa places the whole *śāstra* in the Mahabharata to be told.

Hey, son of Parikshit, you wanted to know in detail. The entire story which will bring joy to your heart I am going to tell you. This is a sacred story, something otherwise unheard of, a story all kings listen to to gain *punya*, for gaining victory. For making your life, please listen to this story.

Every day, getting up in the morning, the *muni* Vyasa, the great *manaśīla*, saw the Mahabharata in its entirety. He saw in his mind how it was going to be. Then he began writing. Getting up in the morning he would complete all his routines, and then he would sit and write. With this he finished the whole thing in three years. With reference to all four *puruṣārthas*, for *punya* or wealth, for righteousness or growth for *mokṣa*, for any subject matter you take, what is said in Mahabharata is no different from what is said in the other sacred Vedic books. As to *dharmārthakāma mokṣa*, what is not mentioned here is not going to be found anywhere else. There is praise of the whole *śāstra*. Vaishampayana draws the attention of those listening, and then he proceeds to tell the story.

Sauti, Ugrashravas, tells that Janamejaya is listening as Vaishampayana relates the Mahabharata. In the founding Indian family of the universal monarch Bharata, there was a great king called Puru. Therefore the people after him are called Pauravas – in the same way, those who followed Kuru are called Kauravas. In the royal Paurava family, also called the Lunar dynasty, there was a king called Shantanu. Shantanu had a previous birth, and between births he visited a *loka* where there was a celestial girl Ganga. He wanted to marry Ganga, but he was of course a mortal. She liked this fellow, but she was a celestial. That she liked an ordinary mortal angered the *devas* so they demoted her to be a mortal for some time. Though they had cursed her, it was not without some good intention. They sent her down to the earth. That is the story. Whether it is true or not we do not know. It has its own beauty. She came down from another *loka* and Shantanu, reborn on earth as a king, happened to see this girl on the banks of River Ganga. He had what they call *deja vu*. He felt he knew this woman, and she of course knew who he was.

They talked to each other, and then there was a *vivāha*. What goes on now in the West is the same *gandharvavivāha*. That means the individuals themselves decide to marry. You do not take into account the antecedents. Only later you discover his father is some kind of scoundrel. It is a marriage based on romantic love. This is how Shantanu and Ganga decided to marry. There is nothing wrong in that *vivāha*, for it is allowed. Even today in India it is increasingly common. The alternative is the arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage the parents have the responsibility. That is why they are mortally afraid. That is why even when the marriage does not go well, the parents push to make it happen. They feel guilty otherwise. It is a problem; everything has its own problems. The arranged marriage can have problems, but in the arranged marriage at least you accept the person that you marry for what he or she is.

In the West you marry a person that you think you love. Later you may change your mind. You must have heard about *anima* and *animus*. A man falls in love with a woman and there is no big reason for this. That is called *anima*. He has a certain image that he picked up somewhere – somebody's nose, somebody's eyes. All put together, he has got a patchup. Every idiot has got one *anima*. The other participant has got *animus*. The guy falls in love with his own *anima*, not with the person. You have got your own idea, and you fall in love with your image. After some time you find that everything about the partner you picked, ex-

cept the nose, is out for you. So it becomes difficult. Then you have to understand the person, only then does it have a chance to work. You have to understand the person.

In arranged marriage at least you accept the person already as your life's partner. With that you can begin discovering the person, because you can love anything in this world, from a rat onwards. Love can be discovered for anything. You can discover love for the person, you understand, because you have already accepted. Therefore there is enough commitment to discover love for the person. There is an advantage in that, and you know what are the possible disadvantages also.

The *gandharvavivāha*, choosing themselves whom to marry, was one of the types of marriage in India at that time. It was done only by adults. *Svayamvara* was another type of marriage. *Svayamvara* was only among the royal clan; the princess had to choose. It was up to the girl. The princess decided to marry, and the news went around that on a particular day there would be *svayamvara*. She herself made the choice. The fellows, the suitors, even kings, all came, for they had heard about and perhaps even seen this princess. They were royally received, and they sat there in the assembly hall in two rows. This girl, the princess with a garland in hand, came there with her friend. To whomsoever she gave the garland, that fellow was chosen.

She would go down the rows, and you could see the fellows on each side stretch their necks and get ready. She passed all these fellows until finally one fellow got it. There was no conversation or anything between them; all these fellows were sitting there like dolls. Now, the princess' friend did tell her a bit about each of the boys. She tells about one fellow, "This champion has been in so many wars. He spends so much time in the battlefield of victory. He has so won many laurels..." The princess passes him; number one, he may die at any time. Number two, he obviously has no time for her at home. The friend describes the next person, "This boy loves music. He is an excellent chess player. He loves to stay at home." The princess passes him. Who wants some idiot you cannot stand home all the time? "This fellow is a great scholar. He spends all his time with books." She moves on. This is how it is. Dramatist Kalidasa tells that Indumati, at her *svayamvara*, is like a lamp walking into this dark corridor with the kings on both sides. As she walks, like a lamp she brightens the faces of the suitors nearby. The

shining one thinks he is going to get it, and all the other fellows are in darkness, because they are afraid that this fellow may get it. They are all gloomy, and certainly the fellows she has passed are gloomy. There is darkness on both sides, only the face of the fellow she faces is bright. Then she passes, and it plays out again. Kalidasa describes many things that happen during the princess' choice, all the preening and posing. That was the *svayamvara* that was there in those days. We will see it in the Mahabharata also.

There is another form of marriage called *rākṣasavivāha* that involved the *kṣatriya* class. A king could kidnap a girl and then challenge any other suitor, like that damsel in distress in the romantic stories in the West. If you want her hand, you challenge me. If you have the capacity, take her from me. It was all based on valor. Krishna picked up Rukmini like that. Krishna got the news that someone else was going to take off with Rukmini, so he got there first and kidnapped her and took her away. Afterwards the contenders were all chasing him, but they could not do anything because she wanted to marry Krishna. It was the ruling class who took part in these things. There were a number of types of marriages.

Shantanu and Ganga were married, and she began to bear children. As soon as she bore a child she would take it to the river Ganga and throw it into the Ganga. Before the marriage she had put a condition on the relationship. She had said, "Whatever I should do, you should not say anything against me. Do not cross me. Not a word. The day you say anything, I am gone. I will not be yours." It was all because she had come by a curse, and that is how she would go back. The day he questioned her would be the day she left him. Now, there was no reason for Shantanu to say anything, for Ganga was such a clean person. No problem. When this child was thrown into the river, he wanted to say something but he had to contain himself. If he said anything, not only would he lose the baby, he would lose her as well.

The first child was lost, then a second and a third and a fourth. The fifth and sixth babies met their end in the river. The seventh too was lost. When the eighth was born, Shantanu could no longer contain himself. He said to Ganga, "Are you a human being? Don't you have any sense of motherhood? You have a baby and you throw it away?"

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

To be continued...



Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Anaikatti, Coimbatore

The Board of Trustees of Sruti Seva Trust
Cordially invite you to the

33rd Anniversary Celebration of
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

On Sunday, 05th November, 2023
(10.00 AM - 12.30 PM)

Chief Guest

Sri. N.V. Nagasubramaniam

Chairman, Kothanda Ramar Temple Trust, Ram Nagar, Coimbatore

PROGRAMME

- ♦ *Guru Anujna Puja*
- ♦ *Guru Paduka Puja*
- ♦ *Inaugural Prayer*
- ♦ *"Gita Natyam" – Dance Performance by Smt. Pavithra Srinivasan"*
- ♦ *Welcome Address*
- ♦ *Gurukulam & SDJ Reports*
- ♦ *Anugrahashanam by*
Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati
Swami Jagadatmananda Saraswati
- ♦ *Keynote Address by Chief Guest*
Sri. N.V. Nagasubramaniam
- ♦ *Vote of Thanks*
- ♦ *Mahaprasadam (12:45 PM)*



Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

(Sruti Seva Trust), Anaikatti

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an AVG Anniversary Retreat with

Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati

On the Ten Shanti Mantra

from

Fri 3rd Nov to Sun 5th Nov, 2023

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With the blessings of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Paramarthananda, Swami Sakshatkritananda and Swami Sadatmananda, Arsha Avinash Foundation conducted a residential spiritual camp. The camp was held for two days on September 9, 2023 and September 10, 2023 at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti. 30 students from Coimbatore, Tirupur, Chennai and Bengaluru participated in the camp.

SWAMIJI'S ADDRESS: Swami Jagadatmananda addressed the campers. He explained the meaning of Sanatana Dharma. Sanatana Dharma is the eternal way of life based on moral values. It is beyond the limitations of place and time. Once we understand this, we can all live together in peace. He also spoke about the 20 values mentioned in Bhagavad Gita Chapter 13. He also explained what is jnana yoga. I am not the body, mind, sense complex. I am the atma, which is pure existence, pure consciousness and pure happiness.

KENOPANISAD: Smt Ponmani Avinashilingam taught the text Kenopanisad. Santi Pada asks for a healthy body and mind to pursue Vedanta study. The student asked which spiritual principle makes the insentient body and mind function. The Guru replied that it is atma which makes all the insentient organs function as sentient organs. One who knows Brahman as an object has not understood. One who knows Brahman as the subject has understood.

A story is narrated where the Devas were made powerless and humbled by an yaksha. Finally Umadevi imparts atma vidya to Indra. Due to the gain of atma vidya, Devas became more glorious.

VEDANTIC MEDITATION: Sri N. Avinashilingam conducted Vedantic Meditation sessions. The steps were objectifying the body, prana and mind, Ista devata upasana, mantra chanting, examining whether one has the required qualification for Vedanta study and finally owning up the truth of maha vakyas.

LAUGHING YOGA: Sri N. Avinashilingam also conducted Laughing Yoga sessions. Laughing Yoga is a pranayama exercise of voluntary laughter. It has many benefits including stress reduction, body relaxation, improved mood, increased oxygen supply to the body and improved immunity.

During satsang the doubts of campers were clarified.

Feedback received from the students:

The exposition of Kenopanisad by Smt. Ponmani Avinashilingam was lucid and clear especially with examples from day to day life. We liked the serene atmosphere of the Gurukulam, well organised programmes, the clean and tidy rooms and tasty food. - Dr. S. Bhagyalakshmi

I was able to own up the vision of Vedanta during the Vedantic meditation sessions. Thanks for the profound vision. - S. Bragannayaki

We all participated together in the Laughing Yoga sessions with enthusiasm. We all felt energetic and very happy. – T. Jayasree

Priceless teaching was imparted. Meditation was great. Food was amazing. Ashram environment was blissful. – Ram Madhavan

The camp was well organised. It was very good and informative. I enjoyed a lot. – Dr. N. Krithikaa

The camp was a concentrated package. It was sweet and brief. – A. Visalakshi

There was maximum utilisation of time in imparting the Vedantic knowledge. – K. Ananthanarayanan

I enjoyed the laughing yoga session. Kenopanisad class was very much interesting. Temple puja was soulful. The environment was peaceful and impressive. All arrangements were very good. – M. Bhavani

Report by N. Avinashilingam





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108 feet statue of Sri Adi Shankaracharyaji at Omkareshwar, M.P, India - Function



