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THE SPLENDOUR OF TRUTH



**SAMATVA,
THE QUALITY OF
EQUANIMITY**

**Prayer to
Kalabhairava**

**Durva, the Powerful
Blade of Grass**

**The Riddle of
Swami Ayyappa**

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THE SPLENDOUR OF TRUTH



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तत्त्वं जिज्ञासमानानां लोकानां प्रीतिमावहन् । तत्त्वालोको विजयतां शारदादयया सदा ॥
May Tattvāloka always excel, by the grace of Sharada, delighting the seekers of Truth.

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Nothing is insignificant in God's creation

Cultivate Good Vasanas

The teachings contained in the *Sastras* are relevant for all times. *Sastras* principally guide man to desist from any wrong path and remain on the right track in life.

For example, the *Sastras* contain detailed explanation on *vasanas* and the ways to purify one's *vasanas*. *Vasanas* are the impressions left in the mind by actions done in the past. They prompt a man to engage in *karmas* (actions), which result in the man accumulating *punya* (merits) and *papa* (demerits), and he experiences their effect in the cycle of births and deaths.

The river of accumulated *vasanas* in the mind drag a person to engage in beneficial as well as harmful pathways. It is important to make effort to stop this and direct the flow only in one's beneficial path. The *Sastras* declare -

शुभाशुभाभ्यां मार्गाभ्यां वहन्ती वासनासरित् ।

पौरुषेण प्रयत्नेन योजनीया शुभे पथि ॥

When harmful instincts such as *kama* (unbridled desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (pride), and *matsarya* (jealousy), and bad thoughts such as the urge to take revenge arise, it is important to keep them under check and fill the mind with good thoughts.



Once a person internalises this *sadhana*, it would make his mind pure. Good thoughts alone ensure a man's progress in life and bring joy to him as well as to others.

The *Sastras* reiterate -

अस्य संसारदुःखस्य सर्वोपद्रवकारिणः ।
उपाय एक एवास्ति मनसः स्वस्य निग्रहः ॥

This means that only restraint of one's mind is the solution to the sorrows in worldly existence. Only a subdued mind can yield lasting peace.

We bless all to cultivate good *vasanas* by harbouring noble thoughts that would lead to engaging in noble deeds, and make one's life meritorious and meaningful.



Dear Sir,

In the article "*Sanatana Dharma for Better World Management*" (October 2023 issue), the author has rightly stated that if *dharma* guides the thoughts, words and deeds, there will be sustained good governance at state and national levels. I agree with his views.

We should teach the values of *sanatana dharma* to our children, such as '*satyam vada dharmam chara*' so that they gain philosophical and spiritual knowledge at a young age, and as they grow up they would take the right path to become good citizens of our nation.

Sankaran Mahadevan
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Dear Sir,

The article "*Keep Sycophants at Bay*" (November 2023) under the series 'Values for Management' was well presented.

Sometimes when an executive carries a low personal estimate of himself, despite his strengths, praise from someone could uplift his motivation.

However, in all other circumstances, as the author says rightly, in an environment that encourages sycophancy, bias, favouritism and nepotism become commonplace.

It was as early as 375 BCE , Chanakya had cautioned "Avoid him who talks sweetly before you but tries to ruin you behind your back, he is like a pitcher of poison laced on top with milk".

S. Sundar

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Dear Sir,

The article "*Our Dharma to prevent Aatma Hatya, Suicide*" (December 2023) is thought-provoking and inspiring. It refers rightly to the utmost necessity to consider the suicidal acts seriously on humanitarian grounds, without casually defining them as occurrences beyond expectation. We should actively work on suicide preventive actions.

Most suicidal acts are born out of a sense of failure, fear and helplessness, for which the root cause is an inflexible mind. Developing a flexible mind is a way to be happy with change, and prepared for any situation to meet any challenge boldly.

R. Pichumani

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Dear Sir,

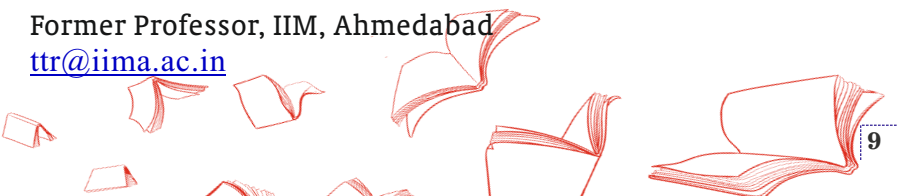
"*Keep Sycophants at Bay*" (November 2023) is a scholarly article.

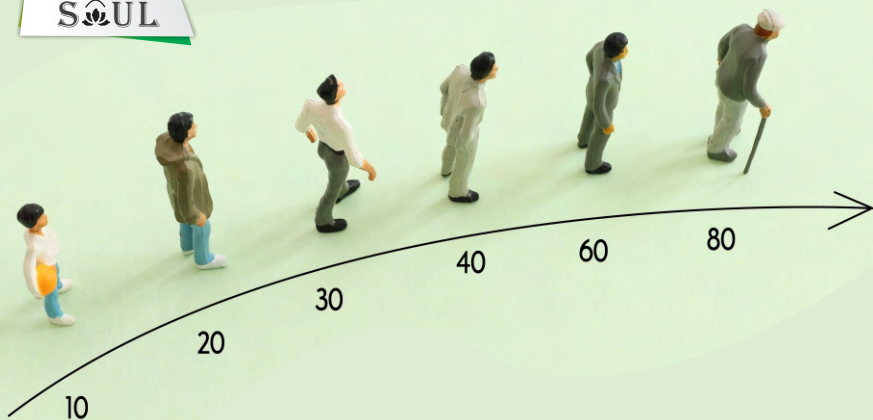
I must congratulate *Tattvāloka* for introducing the 'Values for Management' section.

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How Old Are You?

Maturity does not always come with age.
Sometimes, age shows up on its own.

It has been a pretty standard parenting strategy: tell the older children to be more compassionate towards the younger one(s), and tell the younger ones to be more respectful towards the older one(s). At any rate, everyone was told to grow up.

But what does it mean to grow up?

Does being mature mean that somehow you will deal with life differently to how you did when you were a kid? How do we ascertain how grown-up one is?

It turns out, the answer is rather simple. I came across this beautiful framework to do just that. It offers five reflections to determine how old you are when you

encounter the following situations:

When Someone Disagrees

Just close your eyes and think back to a time when someone disagreed with you. It could be a simple disagreement or a more profound ideological disagreement. It could be existential too.

When the other person disagreed with you, what did you do? How did you feel? What did you say?

When Someone Pokes Fun

Everyone enjoys laughing at a good joke except when it is on them. In such circumstances, only emotionally mature people, or those with high self-esteem, can take a joke well.

Back-handed compliments or sarcasm do not fall in the same category as poking fun, and you have every

right to shut up and shut out such people.

But how do you generally react when someone or a group of friends poke fun at you?

When You Want Attention

Look at the adoption of social media. Vanity, pride, attention, more attention, form the basis of its growth. Some want not just a lot of attention, but all of it. No one else should get as much as they do.

Many politicians fall in this category, and at the root of the desire for such attention is extreme insecurity.

A narcissist cannot handle a lack of attention.

How do you feel about yourself, others, and the world at large when you are not given the attention you feel you want?

When You are Confused

A lot of the time we are not in disagreement with anyone else but ourselves. Confusion is a form of inner conflict.

What do you do when you are confused about a certain course of action? Generally, grown-ups who were brought up in a loving and respectful environment handle confusion much better than those who were raised in an abusive or a deprecating one. In the face of an inner conflict, some become aggressive, many sulk and withdraw, while others are smothered by self-doubt.

The more emotionally weak one is, the more they will blame others for their confusion.

How do you tackle confusion?

When You do not Get What You Want

This is perhaps the most significant of all. We all have

seen a three-year old throw a tantrum without a care in the world when they are denied their toy, candy or whatever.

Is your response an infantile reaction when you do not get what you want, or is it a more mature one?

It helps to mention that, just because we are asking someone politely does not mean it turns our demand into a request. That is simply being passive aggressive.

In a true request, we will not kick up a storm if our request is turned down. So how do you react when you do not get what you want?

Framework to Assess

How well you carry yourself in the aforementioned five situations is a pretty accurate indication of how old you really are, and what sort of baggage you are carrying.

Most of us do not ever grow up. Many of us do not want to grow-up. And the rest of us are unaware that we are not grown-ups even though we more than look the part.

In case you wish to measure your or anyone

else's progress, here is a framework below for your convenience.

Feel free to rate on any scale you find meaningful.



| <i>How do I React When</i> | Today | Next Month | Next Year |
|----------------------------|-------|------------|-----------|
| Someone Disagrees with Me | | | |
| Someone Pokes Fun at Me | | | |
| I Want Attention | | | |
| I am Confused | | | |
| I don't Get What I Want | | | |



वीतराग-भय-क्रोधाः
 मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।
 बहवो ज्ञान-तपसा पूता
 मद्भावमागताः ॥

*Vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhāḥ
 man-mayā mām
 upāshritāḥ |
 Bahavo jñāna-tapasā
 pūtā mad-bhāvam
 āgatāḥ ||*

Bhagavad Gita (4-10)

The entire route for self-improvement along with the final goal is charted out in this *sloka*.

“Arjuna”, says Krishna, “don't think that I am telling you all this for you only”.

It is not one but many (*bahavah*) purified by the austerity of spiritual knowledge (*jñana-tapasa putah*), rid of all attachment, fear

Wisdom for Self-Improvement-28



and anger (*vitara-ga-bhaya-krodhah*), fully absorbed in nothing but Me (*manmayah*) and taking refuge in Me (*mam upashritah*) have attained to My nature of Being (*madbhavam agatah*).

Without renouncing attachment and its by-products, no self-improvement is possible.

Krishna has been repeatedly emphasizing the importance of *vita-raga-bhaya-krodhah*, for example, in *sloka* 2-64, where he also points out that if you are asked to eschew attachment, etc., it does not mean you are to go sit in a corner and do yogic meditation. No.

For, he adds in *sloka* 2-64, *vishayan-indriyaischaran*. This is a most significant emphasis in the *Gita*. You have to eschew *raga*, *bhaya*, *krodha* etc., but still be involved in your responsible activities without these bad adjuncts in your behaviour or character. This is the crux of the teaching of the entire *Gita*.

A note on '*madbhavam*' may be relevant.

The devotee attaining the 'status' of the *bhava* of God Himself, is described in the scriptures in four different ways: *salokyam* (being in the same world as His), *samipyam* (being near to Him in His

own world), *sarupyam* (be like Him in *rupa*), and *sayujyam* (be in oneness with Him).

These are obtained by intense *saguna upasana*. But what Sri Krishna means here is more than this. It is *moksham* itself. In that case does it mean You, as the Lord, O Krishna, take care of only those who appreciate and propitiate You?

Adi Sankara says the answer to the above question is the next *sloka*, which is famous for its catholicity of expression on behalf of *sanatana dharma* as its fundamental tenet as a universal religion.

It says, "According to the manner in which you approach me, I favour you in that very manner."

Prof. V. Krishnamurthy

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Bliss of the Self – 16

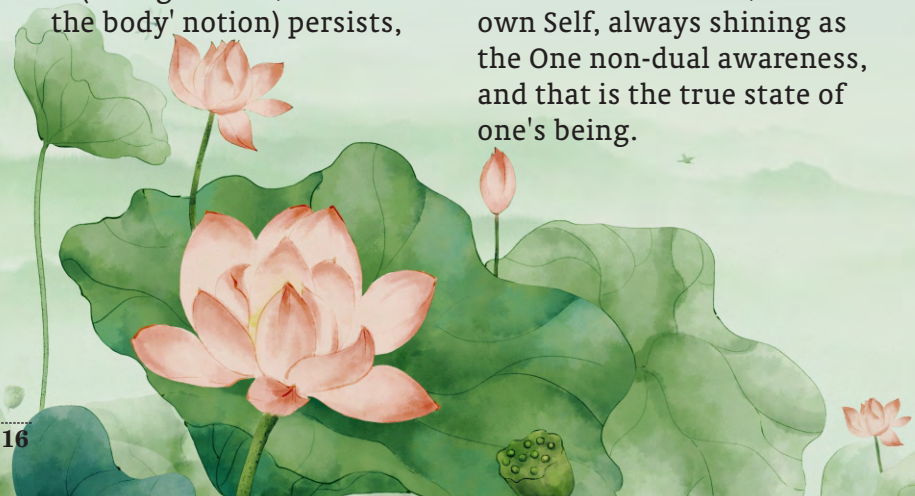
The secret path of enquiry lies in directing one's attention inwards and keenly observing the pulsation of 'I'

Sri Ramana Maharishi introduces the direct path of self-realisation, viz. the enquiry into the Self – 'Who am I', in the fourteenth verse of his work *'Forty verses on Reality'* (*Ulladu Narpadu*).

He says, if the first person 'I' (the ego-sense, or the 'I am the body' notion) persists,

the notions of second and third persons, namely, 'you' and 'he' also prevail.

If the truth of the first person, the ego-sense, is investigated within and is ended, the sense of both the second and third persons will similarly vanish. What remains is the 'I AM', one's own Self, always shining as the One non-dual awareness, and that is the true state of one's being.



The first person in the form of the 'I'-thought is that which sprouts up first, and pervades the second person and third person. Only after the 'I' arises, do the thoughts about 'you' and 'he' come up.

In deep sleep, when the 'I' subsides, the illusions of 'you', 'he' and 'the world' do not remain. So, it is obvious that the second and third persons that appear after the ego-'I' arises are objects born along with the subject-'I'. 'You', 'he', etc., appear as 'outside objects' (*drsya*) or the known, separate from the subject-'I' that arises as a particular individual, the knower (*drk*).

In *Arunachala Ashtakam*, Sri Ramana Maharishi makes a definitive statement that, if there arises no 'I'-thought, there will be no other thought.

In the same way, if we examine the *triputi* of *jiva*, *isvara* and *jagat*, *isvara* and

jagat appear only after the *jiva* appears. Individuality alone is the source of all illusions. The individual ego is the first sprout in the absolute existence. If, with subtle intellect, one enquires into the source of this primary offshoot, one will be able to feel its current.

Sri Maharishi calls this the 'I-current', the *dhara*. In the waking and dream states, the individual-'I' arises only by identifying itself with a body. The individual-'I' that is available in waking and dream states is the 'I' identified as 'I am a man', 'I am a *brahmin*', 'I am a family man', 'I am a *sanyasi*', and the like.

But in deep sleep, there is absolutely no identification for the individual-'I' as 'I am this', or 'I am that'; nor is there the sprout of the ego-'I'.

In the deep sleep state, the 'I' which is absolute bliss in its essence remains as simple 'existence'. It is the 'I'

limited by the body that sprouts forth as the ego. The experience of happiness or wholeness that everyone experiences devoid of any limitations (adjuncts or *upadhis*) during deep sleep is *prajnanam*, the Self or *Atman* which is pure consciousness.

In deep sleep, as the 'I' does not sprout forth as the ego, there are no thought modes like 'you', 'he', *jiva*, *jagat* or *isvara*. Since the ego arises in the waking and dream states, and subsides during deep sleep, it is not real.

Therefore, it is clear that this individual-'I' is not the true, unchanging I-consciousness, the Self. The individual-'I' is just the ego, or the *aham vritti*; only a wave that arises and sets.

That which shines forth as the bliss of existence even during deep sleep (in the absence of the body, mind or any identification that 'I am this' or 'I am that') is the real

Self, *aham-padartha* - the import of the 'I'.

Practising the Path

What is this secret path of enquiry, the quest, the *mahayoga*?

It lies in directing one's attention inwards and keenly observing the pulsation of 'I' - tracing the 'I'-thought to the source.

If our inner gaze is directed towards the sense of individuality that arises within as 'I', it will be observed that the ego or personality turns elusive and loses its foothold. If our power of attention (*sraddha sakti*), that normally gets scattered outwards, is directed towards this pulsation of 'I', this false ego will merge and vanish into its source or the heart.

As far as we know, nowhere else have we seen this path of enquiry revealed with such simplicity and clarity as

has been done by Sri Ramana. The scriptures of all religions talk about erasing the ego. However, for a seeker to actually accomplish the egoless state, nowhere else can one find such a clear process of inward quest. Sri Ramana Maharishi has said that this Direct Path alone can dissolve the limited ego into the *bhuma* or infinity.

That the ego ought to be erased and that one should uncover one's true nature has been taught in spiritual traditions from time immemorial. Just as science conducts research with material objects, there have been several such experiments in the spiritual field too with the mind, and various theories have been postulated to provide answers to the riddle.

This supreme knowledge of merging the ego in its source, into absolute consciousness or the *bhuma*

also has been talked about in scriptures, such as the *Yoga Vasishtha*. Being a secret science, however, the knowledge has only been transmitted through the *guru-sishya parampara*.

The tradition also proclaims that the power of grace which is *rahastarpana tarpita* - secretly transmitted - will function only if the knowledge is received directly from the Guru. It is this same secret that has been revealed by Sri Ramana Maharshi.

It may have been the need of the hour, a need felt by sincere seekers that prompted the Supreme to reveal this traditional secret to all. Though Sri Maharishi has brought the method out into the open, it is obvious that it will not function without proper devotion and sincerity in the seeker to invoke the grace of the Guru.

When the power of attention is focused on the

ego-'I' through the enquiry 'Who am I?' - all identifications such as 'I am this', 'I am that' dissolve in its source, the heart, wherein pure existence shines forth as the infinite. Here the eternal, conscious reality, the real Self alone shines resplendent as 'I-I'. That which shines forth as 'I-I' is the real Self. That is the real-'I'.

After the recognition of the Self as 'I AM', if one abides steadfast in this ego-less state, without any trace of limitation born of identification with body or mind, one gets established in *sahajamanishta* - natural abidance in the Self.

Story of Ribhu Gita

Sri Ramana Maharishi used to narrate the *puranic* story of Nidagha and the sage Ribhu to illustrate how a Master guides a seeker to realisation.

Nidagha was a very studious disciple of the sage

Ribhu. After completing the learning of Vedas, Ribhu wanted to impart the knowledge of the Self, *brahnavidya* also to the disciple. But as he was found not ripe enough for that, he was sent back to the world where he became the Guru of the king and led a comfortable life.

After many years, Ribhu went to his disciple disguised as an old village rustic. At that time the king, sitting on an elephant, was in a grand procession along with all his retinue. Nidagha was standing on the side of the road watching this.

Ribhu approached him and pretending, ignorance asked him:

Ribhu: Sir, what is happening here?

Nidagha: Can't you see? The king is in a procession along with his retinue.

R: Sir, I am a villager. So, I do not know such things. Please show me the king.

N: The person sitting majestically on the elephant's back is of course the king.

R: Sir, which is the elephant and which is the king?

N: You fool! (pointing) That is the elephant. It is below; the giant creature. The king is sitting above, on its back.

R: Wait, wait. See, I am a fool. Show me what is below and above.

Nidagha became frustrated and livid with anger to hear this. He made the old man bend down and sat on his back.

N: See, now I am above and you are below.

The great Master then asked him with telling effect. "Dear one! Tell me now, what is this 'I' and what is this 'you'?"

Nidagha, hearing that, was transfixed for a moment. His mind was riveted on the 'I' within. He was immersed in *samadhi* for some moments.

After that, he jumped from his Master's back and fell flat at the Master's feet shedding tears of remorse, gratitude and devotion and said. "O Lord! Out of ignorance I failed to recognize you. You embodiment of compassion! All these years I learnt so much, but ignored my own Self. By thy grace alone, now I have stumbled upon this precious treasure. Bless me so that I will be established in 'That'."

Pleased by this, the Sage taught him the *Ribhu Gita*.

Nochur Sri
Venkataraman



(Edited excerpts from the author's book 'Swatmasukhi')



Samatva, the Quality of Equanimity

Practice to take both defeat and victory in many situations in life.

Which, in your experience and observation, is easier to cope with, between Victory and Defeat, Winning and Losing, Gain and Loss?

Almost all humans relish victory, win and gain. Conversely, we are unhappy with defeat, losing and losses. Is this good for us? To some extent, these are natural, initial reactions. Some gain more perspective, quickly.

For that, we need to reflect on the possible effects of staying too long in either mood. Victory can give confidence, pride and reassurance. It can also lead

to arrogance, over-confidence, and eventual decline. Similarly, staying sad at defeat too long can lead to depression, anger, blaming, demotivation and more failures.

This was illustrated by two recent examples.

The first example is the previous Chandrayan I project of Indian Space Research Organisation. It was the world's first attempt at landing an instrument on the darker, south side of the moon. There were extensive media coverage of the preparations for launch, moving out of the earth's gravity, and entering moon's

gravity. It was going very well. The module landed on the moon.

But, alas, it faltered on the last, crucial step. The rover had a hard landing. It stopped. The ISRO team was crestfallen. The director was in tears. The Prime Minister met the team, hugged the leader, and encouraged them to take the lessons, try and succeed the next time. They did the second time. The rover has been sending valuable data.

The second example is from the Indian cricket team in the recently concluded World Cup Cricket event. The team won all their first ten matches, the only team to do so.

Then, they lost the final match to Australia. Not only the team, but the entire stadium, and, indeed, the whole country and the global Indian diaspora, were in gloom.

Here again, the Prime Minister met the team, shook hands with all the players, and encouraged them to take it in their stride and move forward.

How to take both defeat and victory, in many life situations? These are not new phenomena. They have been there for ages, in individual, family, community and national lives.

There are useful lessons in our scriptures. They are of eternal relevance. The key concept is from the *Bhagavad Gita*. It is the quality of *samatva*, equanimity. One of the verses describe this as *Samatva yoga uchhyate*. Balanced both in success and in defeat.

How to approach our work, whether in office, home or play? *Yogashtah kuru karmani, sangam tyaktva*. Perform work, staying in the state of yoga, renouncing attachment to the result.

As often, the right path appears harder to follow. But, if we don't follow the above path, we suffer the oscillations of temporary joys from victory, but longer and more traumatic spells of sadness from defeat.

Samatva, equanimity, will help us in not going overboard on every achievement, or sinking into a long depression on every defeat.

How can we implement this powerful insight of *samatva*? One, review your own past behaviour. Realise the mental oscillations you have experienced. Resolve to practice *samatva*, in future.

Two, review periodically. You might have relapsed into oscillation! Correct it. Keep improving.

Three, share this success experience with your spouse. She/He may already have more *samatva*, than

you. Reinforce it.

Four, give this guidance to your older children, and extended family, who may face ups and downs in their careers.

Five, spread the concept and benefits of *samatva* among your colleagues and juniors, at your workplace.

Six, in all interactions, use your *samatva* to lift the other party. Don't let their turbulence pull you down.

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Genuine vs. Dubious Philanthropy

Charity should be selfless, humble, quiet and inconspicuous

Philanthropy refers to charitable acts or good works that help others or society as a whole. In the case of an organisation, it reflects the senior management's altruistic desire to improve human welfare. It is thus a

voluntary action for public good.

Philanthropy is vital as it has the power to accelerate the society's progress. By supporting causes that can promote real changes, philanthropy supplements



government's efforts, and it benefits society as a whole.

There used to be a debate whether business enterprises should engage in philanthropy at all. The famous economist Milton Friedman had opened the gauntlet a few decades ago,

arguing that the only 'social responsibility of business' is to make money, and not make any 'free distribution'.

He had said that charitable contributions should be made by shareholders and employees, and not by the corporation itself.

Mercifully, this line of thinking no longer carries muster.

Giving with Ostentation

Philanthropy can, however, be a venue for ostentation, and a forum for the management to flaunt its virtue. Most people have a passion for self-promotion after philanthropy. This passion often leads to self-obsession.

Philanthropy is often used as a form of public relations or advertising to promote a company's image or brand.

The term 'strategic philanthropy' is gaining ground, which means that there should be some connection, however vague or tenuous, between a charitable contribution and the company's business.

There is also the tendency of large donors to actively monitor the use of their charity funds. Some donors

route the philanthropy through special entities, which seek to exert influence on how the funds are disbursed, and whether their desired business objectives are met.

A recent book, "*The Bill Gates Problem: Reckoning with the Myths of a Good Billionaire*", describes how the charity for healthcare by the tech billionaire Bill Gates had imposed implicit strings on disbursement for certain medical implants to be sourced only from a set of pharma companies.

Glory of Giving

Philanthropy is inherently an act of judgment and faith in the pursuit of long-term goals. As such, there should be no room in the act of giving to link it to any self-seeking motive.

There are innumerable references in our scriptures about the glory of doing charity as selfless act.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says that a good, developed person is marked by his characteristic of *dana*, which is an indicator of his compassion.

In the *Anushasana Parva* of *Mahabharata*, there is mention of philanthropic projects funded by the wealthy as a noble form of giving, such as building drinking water tanks for people and livestock, lighting dark public spaces, planting public orchards to give fruits to strangers and shade to travellers.

In the *Bhagavad Gita sloka* 3.25 that begins as '*Saktāḥ karmanya vidvānso*', Sri Krishna says that wise people act without attachment for the sake of leading people on the right path as *loka saṅgraham chikīrṣuḥ*, meaning 'wishing the welfare of the world.'

Quiet Giving

Donation is a graceful act, and one should never

publicise his own charity. If we do so, the *Sastras* say that the merit of the action will go down, *dharmah ksharati kirtanath*.

It is important that business firms avoid philanthropic actions to become flashy events, and a forum for flamboyant corporate statements. It is even better to channel the giving towards local communities that may not fetch publicity. Wise managers call this as 'quiet giving'.

Quiet giving is a subtle approach to corporate philanthropy, but it is no less effective. By lending support by way of smaller-sized donations to grassroots community organizations, and local areas in which the firm's operations are centred, senior management would be lending authentic support to initiatives that benefit the people and communities.

This would also draw enthusiastic support from the employees by way of volunteering their services. It would thus help forge closer relations with the community, and in many ways allow the business firms' efforts to have an even more pronounced impact.

Colour of Funds

There are often ethical questions when business firms seek to make large charitable contributions out of funds generated through questionable practices.

Readers may be aware of the infamous Satyam scandal a decade ago, involving large scale falsification of accounts and fraud, while the firm's promoters were indulging in well-publicised philanthropy practices. A charitable foundation set by the family had channeled funds to benefit a large number of villages on healthcare and livelihood skills. Once the

scandal was unveiled, the promoters were accused of using the philanthropy to divert public attention.

More recently, following the demonetisation of high value currency notes, there were reports that some firms had chosen to disburse unaccounted funds to non-government organisations as charity to benefit the poor with the help of middlemen, who had collected high commission and arranged the money to turn from 'black' to 'white'.

One of the grand sinister programmes of corporate charity in US came to light a few years ago when the owners of a large pharmaceutical firm had gained huge profits by selling a harmful and addictive drug. The firm had actively marketed the drug as cure for pain management and generously incentivised a large number of medical practitioners. The overuse of

the drug had eventually claimed thousands of lives.

For decades, the owners of the firm were major philanthropic figures, offering large charity to several agencies, including funding prestigious universities around the world. Eventually, as the firm collapsed under legal pressure for its dubious practices, the owners were forced to pay huge compensation, and many beneficiaries faced the dilemma to return the charity received.

Our *Sastras* provide the guidelines for engaging in the right kind of philanthropy.

The *Skanda Purāṇa* states that from the wealth one has earned by rightful means, take out one-tenth, and as a matter of duty, give it away in charity, dedicating such charity “for the pleasure of God (*isvara priyarthameva*).”

The scriptures thus emphasise the purity of funds - *artha soucham* - from which any charitable objectives are carried out.

Bhagavad Gita classifies charity as proper or improper, superior or inferior, and elaborates the same in several verses in chapter 17.

When charity is offered gladly from one's heart to worthy recipients, at the proper time, and at the appropriate place, that kind of philanthropy falls in the mode of goodness. Where charity is given with reluctance, or with the hope of a return or in expectation of a reward, it is called *rajasic*, or in the mode of passion.

Genuine philanthropy is selfless, quiet, humble and inconspicuous.

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The Riddle of Swami Ayyappa



A story of deep faith and poetic genius of a well-known advaitin

Here is a true story from the inspiring life of Sri Appayya Dikshitar (1520-1593 AD), the saint-cum-scholar reverentially addressed as Dikshitendra. He was a great *yogi*, master logician and well-versed in Vedanta. Considered as an *avatar* of Lord Siva, Dikshitendra had performed many miracles in his life.

Although an *advaitin*, he fostered *siva upasana* with great distinction. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu too, seeing the oneness of all divine forms of the Supreme Power.

King's Patronage

Dikshitendra was patronised by the king of Vellore in honour of his great scholarship and poetic skills.

The king had in his court a staunch Vaishnava scholar

by name Thathacharya as his chief minister. While regarded as possessing poetical skills, Thathacharya had a distaste for Siva worship, and he had also developed intense jealousy towards Dikshitendra for the latter's closeness to the king.

Once the king invited both Dikshitendra and Thathacharya to accompany him to the consecration function (*kumbhabhishekam*) of a temple for Lord Ayyappa.

While going round the temple with the two great scholars, the king was puzzled to note that the standing idol of Sastha had the index finger on his nose – a posture indicating a mood of serious doubt. The king asked the priest why it was so.

The priest replied that the idol was very old, and that

he had heard from his predecessor that the *sthapati* (sculptor) who made the idol had a vision of Ayyappa Sastha in this deep contemplation of some aspect, and he had sculpted the idol in the same pose.

The *sthapati* was said to have mentioned at that time that, at some distant future, a great scholar would visit the temple and explain what was the Lord's doubt or contemplation about, whereupon the *vigraha* would take the finger off the nose, and show the normal posture as in all temples.

Two Explanations

Once the priest mentioned this traditional account at the temple, the king turned to Thathacharya with a look of seeking his explanation.

Thathacharya spontaneously came up with a verse as his explanation for Ayyappa's posture. The verse goes as, "*Vishno sutoham*

vidhinaa samoham dhanyas tatoham sura sevitoham! Tathapi bhutesa sutoham etair bhutairvrta chintayatiha Sasta".

It means, "I am the son of Lord Vishnu and blessed I am, worshipped by the Gods. Yet, I am the son of the Lord of the Demons (Lord Siva), and surrounded by a group of *bhutas* (demons), so thinks Sasta".

Thathacharya chose to refer Siva in the above verse as '*bhutesa*', the chief of *bhuta gana*, the group of spirits and demons. The *sloka* seemed to convey that Ayyappa was pensive why he was the son of the *bhutesa*.

The scriptures describe Siva as the chief of the *devas*, and also having lordship over the *bhutas*. Siva appoints Karthikeya as the lord of the army of *devas* (*deva sena*). He divides the army of *bhutas* into two, and keeps Ganesa as the head of one group of

bhuta gana. (Hence the adoration of Ganesa as *bhuta ganadi sevitam*). Siva brings the other group of *bhutas* under the control of Ayyappa, hence the popular adoration of Sasta as *bhutanatha*.

Sasta is revered as keeping control over the army of *bhutas*, the spirits that do not submit easily to any discipline. Ayyappa is traditionally worshipped as controller of unruly spirits and as the guardian deity. Consequently, Ayyappa is the *kula devata*, or family deity, for many people.

Solving the Riddle

Upon completing the *sloka* by Thathacharya, there was no effect on the posture of Sasta's idol.

The king then turned towards Dikshitendra who sang a verse with humility.

The verse reads as, “*Ambeti Gaureem aham ahvayami patnaya Pitur matara eva sarva kathannu Lakshmeem*

iti chintayantam Sastaram ide sakalarthasiddhyai.”

The verse means, "I call Gowri (Goddess Parvathi) mother, since the wife of the father is one's mother. But how am I to call Lakshmi the mother, and Lakshmi becoming mother's (Vishnu's) wife? May Sastha who is steeped in this thought give me all prosperity."

Puranas describe Ayyappa as Hariharasutan meaning the son of Harihara, or a fusion deity of Hari (Vishnu) and Hara (Siva). He is regarded as the offspring of Siva and Vishnu in the latter's manifestation as Mohini during *samudra manthan*, or the churning of the milky ocean.

The king and all those around then saw a miracle happen: the Sastha idol removed its index finger from its nose!

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Dhritarashtra's Anger

The immediate fallout of the emotion of anger is to affect one's faculty of judgment

Our scriptures describe in detail the six mortal enemies of man: *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha*

(attachment), *mada* (arrogance) and *matsarya* (jealousy). These enemies can take over our beings at the physical or mental level.

The most common enemy among the above happens to be anger. All of us succumb to this emotion at one time or another.

We experience bouts of anger for a range of reasons. Sometimes the emotion may be short lived, while at certain times it could take a while to simmer down. There are also instances of people experiencing deep rooted anger which metamorphoses into hate.

Any form of anger takes a toll on one's mind and body. Spiritual texts stress the vain nature of this emotion which drains one of his peace of mind. There are countless stories in *puranas* of angered characters who have lost their sense of judgment and have perpetrated heinous crimes in moments of rage.

We see in day to day life how even normally sane people become transformed

when they are in the grip of unrestrained anger, mouthing inappropriate language and resorting to unimaginable violence. It is said that irate people usually act in haste and repent in leisure.

Krishna's Ruse

The *Mahabharata* has several stories of vengeance and destruction associated with this emotion. Among them, the simmering anger of Dhritarashtra is perhaps the most fascinating.

The Pandavas and Krishna came to Hastinapura after the end of the Kurukshetra war to meet the blind king Dhritarashtra.

The king was constrained to extend civility to his nephews despite his personal sorrow over the killing of his beloved son Duryodhana and reservations about Pandavas' victory. The furious king hid his seething thoughts and hugged the Pandava princes one by one.

When it was Bheema's turn to be embraced, Krishna sensed the rage of the old man and quickly placed an iron image of Bheema in front of the fuming king.

The bereaved father gave the image a bear hug and unconsciously vented his latent unrestrained anger. He crushed the ferrous figure to powder while mourning over his dead sons who were killed by Bheema.

Almost immediately, the enraged king realised his blunder and broke down with remorse and shame. He realised that his angst had manifested itself as crude behaviour and became inconsolable. It took a while for Krishna and the Pandavas to console the king.

Bhagavad Gita portrays this kind of scenario in the famous *sloka* 2.63 that begins as '*krodhad bhavati sammohah*'.

The *sloka* says that anger leads to clouding of judgment, which results in bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, the intellect gets destroyed; and when the intellect is destroyed, one is ruined. The emotion of anger thus immediately affects the person's faculty of judgment.

It is therefore important to recognise the folly of fury, and work on it for the sake of one's health and the wellbeing of those around.

Inculcating virtues such as patience and tolerance, and the courage to follow the path of truth are vital steps to control anger. Side by side, regular practice of deep breathing will help one overcome this self-destructive emotion.

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PROF. V. KRISHNAMURTHY

AN ANTHOLOGY OF ESSAYS ON VEDANTA



MIND

Book Review:

*An Anthology of Essays on
Vedanta by Prof V.*

*Krishnamurthy, published by
Indic Academy, pages 316,
Price Rs.360. Available on
amazon.com*

of Oneness of the *advaitic* school by the author. In addition, there is a brief summary of talks on specialized topics such as *Mahavakya vichara*, *Brahmasutra bhashya*, and *Panchakosa Prakriya*, given by several erudite scholars at a special event.

The author, a highly experienced teacher since his early days as professor of Mathematics at BITS, Pilani, Prof. Krishnamurthy is well regarded for his deep knowledge and training from his early days in religious and spiritual

Here is a compilation on Vedanta with a touch of practical wisdom on leading a 'Vedantic way of life' by the practitioners in current times.

The book is a compendium of eight essays on key Vedanta topics such as idol worship, *jiva* and *jivatma*, *saguna brahman* and *nirguna brahman*, and the meaning

aspects. He has authored over a dozen books on Hinduism and related subjects, and given numerous *satsanghs* and discourses to Indian and foreign audiences.

The author has a knack of explaining concepts in a unique way by engaging with the modern minds in a direct and simple language.

For example, the article on 'The Advaitic School and the Message of Oneness' explains how '*maya*' is incorrectly translated by western thinkers as 'illusion', and he narrates how Sankara distinguishes three orders of reality, including the intermediate apparent reality of this phenomenal world.

The author makes an analogy of physical brain as an external hardware that processes the thoughts of the mind. He puts leading questions on how to self-investigate the software that

forms the source for all the vibrations in the mind.

There is an interesting framework on practicing non-duality in day-to-day lives, so that *advaita* does not remain as just a thought-concept but applied in this 'world of multiplicity'.

The author explains *kriyadvaita* or *advaita* in action, and *bhavadvaita* or *advaita* in attitude. In all facets of *sanatana dharma*, it is the attitude that matters. Quoting from *Gita* verses, he suggests the approach of *samadrishti*, or equanimous vision as a practical tool, by consciously cultivating the habit of ignoring or forgetting the negatives in any person.

Vedanta as per Age Level

Another interesting inclusion in the book is *Vedanta Sopanam* (meaning staircase), which is a selection of 27 *slokas* with meanings, to be assimilated

at different age levels, starting from a child of five till the mature age of eighty.

The *slokas* selected reflect a person's maturity level, as for example, a collection of just divine names in *Achytashtakam* for a child of five, a set of verses such as by Bhatruhari and *Hitopadesa* for age of 20 or earlier, a verse in *Chandogya Upanishad* or *Kapila Gita* in *Bhagavatam* for age forty, and so on.

As a person matures, the text or verse may not remain the same, but the objective changes. Thus, the final verses at age around eighty are the ones that relate to *nididhyasanam*, or contemplating the unity of self with Brahman.

The summaries of various miscellaneous talks at a Vedanta event included in the volume, may be of interest to knowledgeable practitioners. These include,

for example, the summary on *Ananda Mimamsa* based on the *bhashya* of *Taittiriya Upanishd*, the *Vichara* of *Aham Brahmasmi* as *Mahavakya*, and *Brahma-sutras*. The summaries are intended to provide a glimpse of the huge litany of Vedantic thought.

The section on 'Vedanta in Today's World' contains brief essays on contemporary topics such as 'Sadhana on the Path of Advaita' and the 'Logic of Advaita Vedanta'.

Instead of a lengthy list of topics along brief summary, a narrow selection with a detailed account of a few presentations by experts would have enhanced the value of the book.

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Kinhin and Sleep Meditation

Meditative walking is infusing a sense of awareness while placing every step

If you have never meditated while walking, I urge you to definitely give it a try. You will instantly feel a sense of calmness descending on you as your mind will go quiet and it will begin to focus on the present moment of observing your gait.

Kinhin is walking meditation. Zen gives you flexibility. You can do sitting, standing or walking meditation. You may do *chado*, the Zen tea ritual, or you could simply sit quietly.

Meditation Lying Down

Someone asked me the other day whether one could meditate lying down. Surely, you can. Having said that, the primary issue with medita-

ting lying down is that you fall asleep quiet easily.

Therefore, to slip into the lap of *nidra*, sleep, you could most certainly meditate while lying down. In fact, everybody would benefit by meditating while they are trying to sleep.

The principles of meditation remain the same: You listen to your breathing, inhalation and exhalation. It is a good way to fall asleep, and the quality of your sleep would also improve.

Personally, falling asleep is a four step process for me. The first thing I do is lie down on my head. Since my Himalayan days of meditation, as soon as I lie

down, immense sensations of extraordinary intensity began manifesting in my body, and most notably in my forehead.

These sensations build up to such proportions that I have no words to explain what happens at that time. After a while, I lie down on my left side for fifteen minutes, and then on my right for another fifteen minutes. Then I lie down on my tummy to have those sensations subside. This balances the subtle energies for me and I am able to slip into light sleep, then restful, but light.

It takes me one hour to fall asleep, and in that one hour I am pretty much meditating. Before that one-hour process for sleeping, I need one hour to wind down.

To sum up, I need two hours preparation—call this one of the side effects of intense meditation. There is something that is just flowing

through my whole body all the time. I constantly feel these waves of bliss exuding from the top of my head.

The sensations disappear when I fall asleep, and as soon as I wake, they are just as powerful in the first three to five seconds.

Practising *Kinhin*

Kinhin, on the other hand, is walking meditation. Think of it as mindful walking. For most of us, walking is an automatic act as there is no thinking required. The core idea of Zen is to infuse all our actions with a sense of awareness so nothing remains automatic anymore, so that we are conscious of every little thing in our lives.

If you can retain your meditative state while walking, you are practically meditating all the time.

When you do *Kinhin*, you will realize that though how we take walking for granted,

it is a beautiful act. Also, you will understand how mindfulness can play a role in the simple act of walking as much as any other activity.

When you get used to walking mindfully, it becomes natural for you. Generally, when we go for a stroll, we think about other things, and we are just walking because we are used to it.

The effects of mindful walking trickle down to all the other areas of your life. Your sitting meditation becomes better, your mind gets calmer, you become more mindful when eating, bathing and so on.

The way to practice *Kinhin* is to take one step at a time, and in that step, pay attention to your movements and shifting of weight.

Let us say I place my right step first. In that step, I am going to place my centre of

awareness on the shifting of body weight. When I lift my right foot, the weight shifts onto my left... here I am lifting my foot and I am going very slowly... Now, my weight is distributed between both legs, and I am going forward. Walk extremely slowly.

It's not rocket science. Just remember to walk extremely slowly and see how your weight is shifting.

Practices like *Zazen*, *Wall gazing*, *Kinhin* or any other will only take you so far. It is imperative to understand the core philosophy of Zen, and what better way than to turn to the words of Buddha himself found in a core Zen text: *Prajna Paramita Sutra*, also known as the *Heart Sutra*.

Om Swami



(Edited excerpts from the author's book 'Mind Full to Mindful')



Amla

The Versatile Fruit

Amla, the popular gooseberry, is probably the most used ingredient in Ayurvedic preparations. It is both a food and medicine. This small fruit, also known as *amalaki*, is stuffed with

innumerable health benefits that can ever be imagined.

Amla is so nutritious that it is recommended often as a dietary supplement. About a half a cup of *amla* (100 g) provides 300 mg of Vitamin C,

more than twice the daily recommended value for adults.

There are several references in our scriptures about *amla* and its benefits. In fact, *amla* literally means a nourishing mother. The tree is highly revered as it is associated with both Lord Vishnu and Siva.

Amla fruit has five of the six *rasas* – it is sour, sweet, bitter, astringent and pungent, with only saltiness missing.

Branches of *amla* tree wood are usually dropped into open wells to clear the water of microbes and sweeten it.

Miracle Fruit

This humble fruit regulates the body in numerous ways. It strengthens the central nervous system, aids the digestive system disorders such as acidity, acid reflux, ascites and hemorrhoids. It pacifies *kapha dosha* and supports the functioning of

the respiratory system.

It regulates the circulatory system by acting like a cardiac tonic and it is often indicated in bleeding disorders. It is used in the treatment of inflammatory diseases of female reproductive tract.

It relieves constipated bowels when taken regularly. Gooseberries act as a tonic in maintaining the vision, physical strength, complexion of skin, and eroticism.

It is widely used in the form of *rasayana chikitsa* or rejuvenation therapy. *Amalaki* is beneficial to patients with itching sensation, skin disorders, burning sensation within the channels of the body, anorexia etc.

During Vedic times, it is mentioned that *amla* was added to bathing water. Acharya Charaka has mentioned *amalaki* as the best among anti-aging herbs.

Amla Recipes

Amla chatpata is a combination made out of *amla* with spices like cinnamon, ginger and jaggery that comes in handy for use at home at any time.

A tasty product is *amla* pickle. It is done with a few fruits of *amla* slices mixed with a teaspoon of mustard oil along with little salt, curry leaves, green *chilli* and cumin seeds, to be served with food. This is also useful to improve the digestion strength.

There is a popular immunity booster recipe from *amla* for people of all ages, prepared at home.

Cut *amla* fruits into pieces, and crush them with the help of a mortar and pestle, or in a blender. Squeeze and extract the juice. Mix it with an equal quantity of *amla* powder and grind it. Add equal quantity of candy sugar, honey and a little less

quantity of ghee, mix well and store. Usually consumed before food, a dose of 10-20 grams is recommended for adults as health booster. (Those with diabetes condition are advised to eschew this preparation).

As a Dosh Balancer

Amla is *tridosha* pacifying. By the virtue of its sourness, it addresses the increased *vata*, and due to its cold potency and sweetish taste, it appeases the aggravated *pitta*. Any aggravated *kapha* condition of the consumer gets addressed by the dryness and astringent taste of the fruit.

For those with *vata* imbalance that usually manifests with symptoms such as gas trouble and joint pain, *amla* can be taken along with sesame oil (gingelly oil), a teaspoon of *amla* powder with tsp of sesame oil. If one do not like the taste of sesame oil, a paste of *amla* powder and

sesame oil can be prepared and swallowed with warm water.

In order to manage *pitta* imbalance that can cause digestion problems, or skin-related issues, *amla* is taken along with ghee (clarified butter) – a teaspoon each of *amla churna* and ghee, followed by a glass of warm water. This is usually administered in the afternoons, when the *pitta* imbalance is dominant. Another way to consume *amla* powder for *pitta* is to take it along with jaggery.

For *kapha* imbalance that usually manifest as obesity and respiratory conditions, *amla churna* is taken along with honey. Remember *amalaki* with honey causes weight loss, so it is good for obese persons. Morning times are the best to take this recipe.

Amla powder with cinnamon and turmeric is

also good for respiratory health, while *amla* with ghee and turmeric is good for allergic rhinitis and hives.

Amla being rich in nutrients and antioxidants, is useful in weight loss, as mentioned above. In order to gain weight, a teaspoon of *amla* powder is mixed with a teaspoon of ghee and gulped with a cup of lukewarm water.

As readers may know, *amla* is the main ingredient in making the Ayurvedic preparation *Chyavanprash*, which has wide ranging health benefits.

The advantages that one can derive from this fruit is thus immense. The most outstanding characteristic is that the benefits can be derived without any side effects.

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Sri Sannidhanam giving *anugraha bhashanam* during the Rama Samrajya Pattabhisheka event



Sri Swaminatha Sivachariaar of Sivapuram Veda Sivagama Pathasala having *darshan* of Sri Sannidhanam



Sri Rama Samrajya Pattabhisheka

A round up of key events at Sringeri

Sri Panduranga Namasankeertana Mandali of Bengaluru hosted the *Sri Rama Samrajya Pattabhisheka* event at Sringeri during November 23 - December 3, 2023, when 108 devout individuals performed the *parayana* of the entire *Srimad Valmiki Ramayana*. The event included several *dharmic* activities such as *Chaturveda parayana*, *Sri Rama Taraka Homa*, *Sri Sita Rama Kalyanotsava*, *Sri Rama Pattabhisheka*, 10008 *Suvasini Puja*, and discourses by *vidvans*.

Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekara Bharati Sannidhanam graced

the event with his presence and delivered an insightful *anugraha bhashanam*. He stated that this divine event was taking place at Sringeri, the *tapo-bhumi* of Maharshi Rishyashringa who performed the *Putrakameshti Yaga* for king Dasaratha resulting in the birth of Sri Ramachandra.

Everything happens due to the divine will. It is said - *तेन विना तृणमपि न चलति* - even a blade of grass cannot move without the grace and resolve of Bhagavan.

To worship Bhagavan and receive divine grace are the

twin prime aspects of our *sanatana dharma*. Some people who do not believe in the existence of Bhagavan may question the relevance of worship. It must be understood that a person is a *nastika* (non-believer) because of his committing certain sins in the past. However, mere disbelief does not render Bhagavan non-existent.

In one of his texts, Sri Udayanacharya, the great philosopher of *Nyaya darsana*, has described the grandeur of Bhagavan. Having logically proved Bhagavan's existence, he concludes the text stating that some ignorant people might still question Bhagavan's existence, and "O Bhagavan! You only should protect them." Such a prayer is a testimony to the eminence of our culture which prays for everyone's welfare, including *nastikas* -
लोकाः समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु.

Everyone must allot some daily time for divine worship. During such worship, it is important not to get distracted by gadgets such as mobile phones, with the firm conviction that during one's worship, Bhagavan would take care of all worldly things. Engage in worship with this attitude and teach the same to the younger generation.

We should remember that the *Sastras* state that the uncontrolled mind is the primary reason for man to remain trapped in *samsara*. *Bhagavad Gita* highlights how the sense organs pull the mind away from focus -

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः

Work with Diligence

Sramikotsava is the annual event organised by the civil workers (*sramikas*) of the Sringeri region. This year the event was organised on November 16, 2023.



Sri Mahasannidhanam performing *abhisheka* on Sri Vidyashankara Aradhana day



Sri Sannidhanam adorning *Rajata Kavacha* to Sri Venkataramana Swami at Anegunda



Sri Sannidhanam leading the Vidyashankara Rathotsava



Sri Sannidhanam offers worship to Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swami at Narasimhapura Agrahara

As part of the event, *Sahasra Modaka Ganapati Homa* was performed at Sringeri, with Sri Sannidhanam gracing its *puṇahuti*. This was followed by a programme where all the assembled *sramikas* paid respects to the Jagadguru.

In his *anugraha bhashanam*, Sri Sannidhanam expressed joy that civil workers hailing from various parts of Sringeri Taluk and representing various groups were participating in the event. He conveyed the message contained in *Bhagavad Gita*: “Whatever work you do, you must toil and exert effort. Then I will bestow upon you the desired outcome, at the right time”.

The Jagadguru added that one who does not work hard does not have the right to seek or experience favourable outcomes. When we see a beautiful construction, we must remember that it is the

outcome of the hard labour and toil of several workers.

Vidyashankara Aradhana

The 690th *aradhana* of the 10th Acharya of Sringeri Peetham, Jagadguru Sri Vidyatirtha Mahaswamigal was observed reverentially on November 19, 2023 (*Kartika Sukla Saptami*). Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahasannidhanam performed the *aradhana puja* at noon in the sanctum sanctorum of the magnificent Sri Vidyashankara temple built over the *jeeva samadhi* location of the 10th Acharya. Sri Sannidhanam was present during the *Mahamangalarati*.

Sri Sannidhanam released the 14th volume of the Kannada translation of *Krishna Yajur Veda Sayana Bhashya* on the occasion.

The following day, Sri Vidyashankara Rathotsava with the *utsava murti* of the deity on the chariot took

place, with the Jagadgurus leading the procession. As part of the celebrations, a *Maharudra* was conducted over a five-day period, and Sri Sannidhanam graced the *puṇahuti* on November 21. The Vidyashankara *Teppotsava* also took place the same evening in the divine presence of Sri Sannidhanam.

Guru Traya Samsmaranam

Coinciding with the Vidyashankara *Aradhana*, a special three-day programme titled “*Guru Traya Samsmaranam*” was convened during October 30 – November 1.

The objective was to underscore the duty of every *astika* to express gratitude to Jagadguru Sri Vidyatirtha, Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha and Jagadguru Sri Vidyaranya, the 10th, 11th and 12th Acharyas of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham. These revered sages had

devoted their lives to the wellbeing of the world.

The programme featured special discourses from eminent people and *anugraha bhashanam*s by Sri Sannidhanam. A detailed report of the event will be carried in a forthcoming issue of *Tattvaloka*.

At Anegunda

On November 22, 2023, Sri Sannidhanam graced the *puṇahuti* of *Maharudra Yaga* conducted in the premises of Venugopalakrishna and Gangadharesvara Swami temple at Anegunda in the Koppal district, near Sringeri.

Sri Sannidhanam offered a *silver kavacha* to Sri Venkataramana Swami at the local temple, a silver crown to Bhagavan Sri Gopala-krishna, and inaugurated the *Sri Krishna Yagasala*.

Blessing the devotees with an *anugraha bhashanam*, Sri Sannidhanam lauded the

residents of the Anegunda Agrahara for their devotion and long-standing association with the Sringeri Sharada Peetham.

Ksheerabdhi Dvadasi

Ksheerabdhi Dvadasi, marking the *Prabodhotsava* of Lord Vishnu, was celebrated on November 24, 2023. *Dhatri Homa* was performed at the Lakshmi Narasimha temple in Narasimhapura Agrahara.

After gracing the *purnahuti* of the *Dhatri Homa*, Sri Sannidhanam offered a special *puja* to Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swami and offered a *Rajata* (silver) *kavacha*. The same evening, *deepotsavas* took place at the temples of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swami, Sri Adi Sankaracharya and Sri Vidyananya in Vidyananyapura.

Later that night, Sri Sannidhanam graced the *deepotsava* that took place at the Tulasi shrine facing

the temple of Sri Janardana Swami near Sri Vidyashankara Temple.

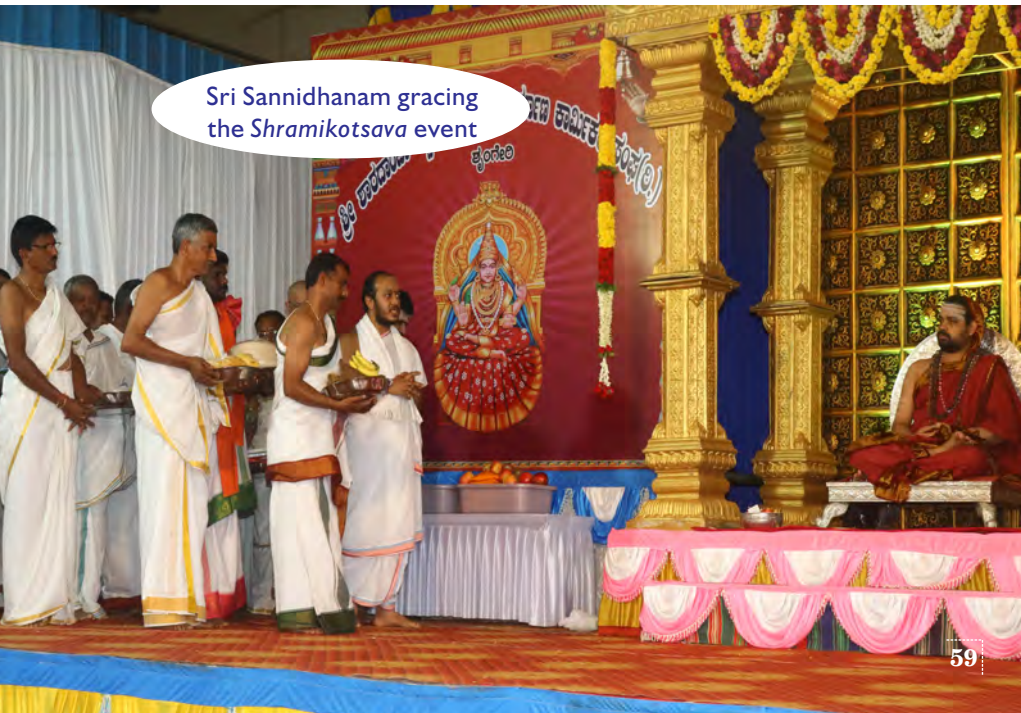
New Living Quarters of Sringeri Pathasala

On November 24, 2023, the Jagadgurus inaugurated '*Vidyatirtha Vilasa*', the new living quarters for the students of Sri Sadvidya Sanjeevini Samskrita Mahapathashala in Narasimha Vana. Earlier, the Jagadgurus graced the *purnahutis* of the *Ganapati Homa* and *Gayatri Homa* (performed with 24,000 *ahutis*) in the new premises. Following the inauguration, Sri Sannidhanam conducted the afternoon *Chandramaulisvara Puja* in the premises.

In a special Sabha organised in the evening, a *Srimukham* blessed by Sri Mahasannidhanam was read out declaring the conferment of the title '*Dharmika Pravara*' upon Sri Planjery Shankara Narayanan in recognition of



Sri Ravishankar of the 'Art of Living' having darsan of Sringeri Jagadgurus



Sri Sannidhanam gracing the Shramikotsava event



Sri Sannidhanam blessing Vidwan Sri ST Nagaraj on releasing the 'Krishna Yajur Veda Bhashya' book



Sri Mahasannidhanam at the commencement of Vedaghosha on Sri Vidyasankara Rathotsava day

his significant contributions towards the construction of the new building and various *dharmaic* activities of the Mutt.

In his *anugraha bhashanam*, Sri Sannidhanam recalled how around 130 years ago, when our *sanatana vaidika dharma* was affected due to colonial influence, the 33rd Jagadguru of the Peetham, Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Mahaswamigal, set up the *Mahapathasala*. Ever since, several thousand students have had the opportunity to study the Vedas and *Sastras* at this prestigious institution.

The inauguration of the new building is part of the events taking place during the 50th year of our Guru's *Sannyasa Sveekara*.

The Jagadguru said, “The new *Bhavan* bears the name of the Peetham's 10th Acharya, Jagadguru Sri Vidya

Tirtha Mahaswamigal, by whose grace we understand the purport of the Vedas. Jagadguru Sri Vidyaranya Mahaswamigal, the 12th Acharya of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham, who authored the *Veda bhashyas* (commentaries for the Vedas), commences the same with the following verse:

यस्य निश्चसितं वेदाः यो
वेदेश्योऽखिलं जगत् ।
निर्ममे तमहं वन्दे विद्यातीर्थमहेश्वरम् ॥

The verse is a prayer to his Guru, Jagadguru Sri Vidya Tirtha Mahaswamiji, glorifying him as the very personification of *Paramatma* by stating that his very breath was the Vedas. Indeed, the *Upanishads* describe the *Paramatma* as the one whose breath is the Vedas: अस्य महतो भूतस्य निश्चसितम् एतत्.

Jagadguru Sri Vidyaranya concludes his *Bhashyas* with another prayer to Jagadguru Sri Vidya Tirtha Maha-



Sri Sannidhanam performs arati to the murti of Sri Varaha Swami at the start of Tungabhadra Arati

Teppotsava of Sri Adi Sankaracharya



swamigal beseeching him to reveal the purport of the supreme Vedas leading to the destruction of ignorance and attainment of the *Parama Purshartha (moksha)*:

वेदार्थस्य प्रकाशेन तमो हार्दै निवारयन् ।
पुमर्थाश्चतुरो देयात् विद्यातीर्थमहेश्वरः ॥

Jagadguru Sri Vidya Tirtha's first disciple was Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha, the 11th Acharya of the Peetham. Similarly, our revered *Paramaguru*, Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha was the 35th Acharya of the Peetham, and his disciple is our revered Guru, Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji, the current and 36th Acharya of the Peetham.

There is a verse on our revered Guru: अज्ञानां जावी
तीर्थं विद्यातीर्थं विवेकिनाम् ।
सर्वेषां सुखदं तीर्थं भारतीतीर्थमाश्रये ॥

This verse appears in the Sringeri Guru *parampara stotra* and was composed back in the day to honour the 11th Acharya of the

Peetham. Since our revered Guru also has the same qualities and the same eminence, it has been the practice amongst disciples to chant this *sloka* with respect to him as well.

The ability to know what is right and wrong is called 'viveka'. In order to become *vivekis* - persons endowed with this power of discrimination, we must engage in *vidya-abhyasa* (the pursuit of knowledge). We have to be receptive to the 'Tirtha' (sacred reservoir) of 'Vidya' (knowledge). Only then will our lives become purposeful. Hence knowledge must be pursued with *sraddha* (dedication and faith) and single-pointed focus.”

Tungabhadra Arati

During November 23 - 27, the Tungabhadra *Arati* culminating in *Laksha Deepotsava* was celebrated at Sringeri with grandeur.

Tungabhadra Arati
being performed



Jwala Torana at the
start of Kartika Laksha
Deepotsava



Every evening, during the *Mahotsava*, *Teppotsavas* of major deities in the precincts of the Sringeri Mutt took place, with seven *ritviks* performing *shodashopachara puja* on the northern banks to the river Goddess. At 7 pm every day, Sri Sannidhanam arrived and offered *Pushparchana* and *Mangalarati* to the beautiful *murtis* of Goddess Sharadamba, Goddess Tungabhadra and Sri Varaha Swami placed on the southern bank of the river in *Narasimha Vanam*.

Immediately afterward, the *Teppotsava* commenced with the decorated boat carrying the deity, and the *Tungabhadra Arati* by the seven *ritviks* took place with the Jagadgurus witnessing from the southern bank.

On the first evening of the *Mahotsava* (Nov. 23) the *Teppotsava* of Sri Janardana Swami took place, followed by the *Teppotsava* of Sri Uma Maheshwara Swami the next

evening. This was followed by the *Teppotsava* of Sri Adi Sankaracharya on Nov 25, and of Goddess Sharadamba the next day.

On November 27 which was the auspicious day of *Kartika Purnima*, *Laksha Bilvarchana* was performed to Lord Malahanikaresvara, and earlier *Rudra homa* and *Pancha Brahma homa*. *Laksha Deepotsava* was held with Sri Sannidhanam lighting the ceremonial lamp in front of the Malahanikaresvara temple. Devotees lit numerous *deepas* along the path from the temple to the Sringeri *Rajagopuram*, and within the sacred precincts of the Mutt.

The *utsava murtis* of Goddess Bhavani and Malahanikaresvara were carried in a procession led by Sri Sannidhanam to Sri Sharadamba temple, and the *murtis* along with the *murtis* of Goddess Sharadamba, Sri Adi Sankara and Sri



The Jagadgurus gracing the *purnahuti* of the *Homa* conducted on inauguration of the new *Vidyatirtha Vilasa* building



Sri Sannidhanam blessing Sri Planjery Shankaranarayanan with the title '*Dharmika Pravara*'



Sri Sannidhanam lights the lamp in the form of Srichakra Meru as part of Kartika Laksha Deepotsava



Teppotsavas of Sri Sharadamba, Sri Bhavani Malahanikaesvara, Sri Vidyasankara and Sri Adi Sankara

Vidyashankara were placed in the boat. Sri Sannidhanam crossed the river in the same boat and arrived at the southern bank, where *Mahamangalarati* and *Teppotsava* of all the *utsava murtis* took place along with *Tungabhadra Arati*.

Rudra Ghanam at Isvaragiri

On November 30 which is the sacred *Ardra Nakshatra* day, the *sannidhi* of Sri Malahanikaresvara Swami at Isvaragiri hillock resonated with the chanting of the *Ghana Parayana* of *Sri Rudra Prasna* and *Chamaka Prasna* from the Krishna Yajur Veda. A group of ten *Ganapatis* dedicatedly performed this *parayana* in the presence of Sri Sannidhanam.

On December 11, *Laksha Bhasmarchana* (*abhisheka* with sacred ash or *vibhuti*) for Sri Malahanikaresvara Swami took place, with the enchanting verses of *Siva Sahasranama* filling the air.

With the *sivalinga* immersed in holy ash, many assembled devotees overwhelmed with devotion perceived a striking resemblance between the deity Sri Malahanikaresvara and the *sivalinga* worshipped as Sri Kedaresvara at the distant Kedarnath Kshetra in Himalayas.

The *bhasmar-chana vibhuti* was distributed as *prasada* to the *bhaktas*.

Kumbhabhisheka of Sri Uma Mahesvara Temple

On November 29, 2023, Sri Sannidhanam performed the *Kumbhabhisheka* of Uma Mahesvara temple at Honnetalu in Tirthahalli Taluk of Karnataka, offering prayers for the wellbeing of all.

In his *anugraha bhashanam* on the occasion, Sri Sannidhanam mentioned how Sri Adi Sankara had described in one of his *bhashyas* that Bhagavan was akin to fire. Fire is ever ready to provide warmth and relieve us from the cold. However, if we do



Sri Sannidhanam performs Kumbhabhisheka of Sri Uma Mahesvara at Honnetalu



Sri Sannidhanam offering worship to Sri Mahaganapati at Kanchi Nagara in Sringeri



Sri Sannidhanam engrossed in japa during the Kartika Somavara Puja

not go near it, we will get no relief. It does not matter who approaches the fire, whether a wealthy or an ordinary person, a scholar or illiterate, human or animal, the fire does not discriminate. Bhagavan is like fire, ever ready to bless all who approach Him.

The *Sastras* propound various paths to attain Bhagavan - offering worship to the *murtis* in temples, doing *homa*, performing *mantra japa*, reading Bhagavan's *charitra*, contemplating upon Bhagavan, undertaking pilgrimage to *kshetras*, and so on. If none of these is possible, even just chanting the holy names of Bhagavan bestows immense welfare.

We must realise that if we are doing well and happy, it is on account of the *dharma* performed in the past. We must continue to adhere to *dharma* and live amicably in order to continue to lead a happy and peaceful life.

Kartika Somavara Pujas

Sri Sannidhanam performed *Kartika Somavara Pujas* on the four Mondays during the auspicious month of *Kartika* to Sri Chandramoulisvara in the afternoon amidst Vedic chants.

On December 10, 2023, the Pradosha Sangha of Samskrita Mahapathasala conducted the *Mahapradosha* at the Sakti Ganapati shrine in the Sharadamba temple. There were *Panchamrita abhisheka*, *Sata Rudraabhisheka*, a hundred times *parayana* of the sacred *Ganapati Atharva Sirsha*, *Sahasra Modaka Ganapati Homa*, *Ashtadravya Ganapati Homa* and *Rudra Homa*. Sri Sannidhanam was present during the *puṇahuti* of the *homas*.

Abhinava Bharati Satsang

Eye surgeon Dr A G Ramesh along with fellow doctors and members of the Abhinava Bharati Satsang, a spiritual wing of Abhinavas Eye Clinic at Adyar, Chennai,

had *darsan* of the Jagad-gurus on December 14 – 15. The devoted group of professionals is known to conduct regular free eye camps for poor sections of society in and around Sringeri.

Blessing the group with a brief *anugraha bhashanam*, Sri Sannidhanam mentioned how *Satsanga* or association with the noble is important.

He mentioned that a *murti* in any temple was earlier just a stone or rock, but sculpted and consecrated as per scriptural injunctions. Following the consecration, it is regarded as possessing the sanctity of Bhagavan Himself. A poet has given an interesting description as to why temple *murtis* are regarded as Bhagavan -

न द्विषन्ति न याचन्ते परनिन्दां
न कुर्वन्ति ।
अनाहूता न चायान्ति
तेनास्मानोऽपि देवताः ॥

The *murti* displays no hatred towards anyone, and is accessible to one and all.

The *murti* does not seek anything from anyone, does not reproach or trouble anyone, and it remains at its consecrated place and does not go anywhere uninvited.

A noble person has no hatred towards anyone, does not seek any favour from anyone. He does not criticise or interfere in matters which do not concern him. A *satpurusha* thus comes to be regarded as divine, commanding respect and reverence. Association with such *satpurushas* would instil in us such divine qualities. This is why *satsanga* is extremely essential.

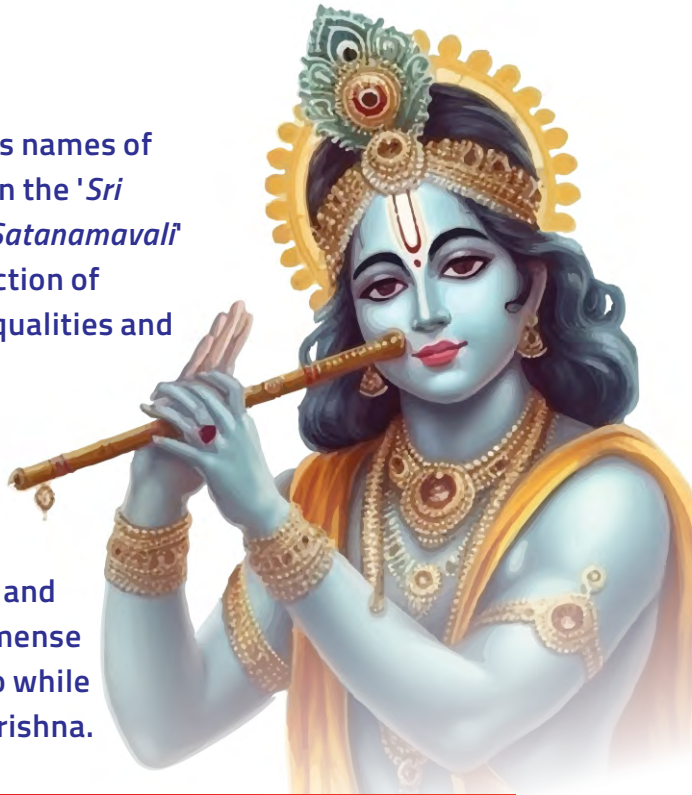
Sivagama Pathashala Students at Sringeri

The students and faculty of *Sivapuram Veda Sivagama Pathashala* at Mayavaram in Tamil Nadu led by Sri Swaminatha Sivachariar had *darsan* of the Sringeri Jagadgurus on December 11, 2023 and received blessings.



The 108 auspicious names of Krishna contained in the '*Sri Krishna Ashtottara Satanamavali*' represent the collection of Bhagavan's divine qualities and the accounts of his incarnation.

Millions of devout people chant the *Satanamavali* daily, and they testify the immense benefits of doing so while meditating on Sri Krishna.



THE DIVINE NAMES OF SRI KRISHNA – 14

54. मथुरानाथाय नमः ।

Mathurānāthāya namaḥ ।

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna who is the protector of Mathura.

Sri Krishna manifested on the earth when the atrocities of rulers like Kamsa, Sisupala and Jarasandha became unbearable. Kamsa had gone to the extent of imprisoning his father Ugrasena due to his lust for power. However, happiness eluded him as he was in constant fear of Devaki's eighth son who was to kill him.

Sage Narada's affirmation that Krishna was indeed Vishnu's *avatara* prompted Kamsa to invite Krishna and the Yadus to Mathura under the ruse of a wrestling match. Eventually, Kamsa and his accomplices were killed and Ugrasena, Vasudeva and Devaki were released along with many other chieftains.

Krishna installed his maternal uncle Ugrasena as the king of Mathura and restored the lost wealth of all the members of the Yadu clan, who had fled Mathura for fear of Kamsa.

Jarasandha, Kamsa's father in law, swore to avenge Kamsa's death and besieged Mathura seventeen times. At every instance, his huge army was routed by Krishna and Balarama. It was during this time that Kalyavana, an ally of Jarasandha attacked Mathura, and Krishna, in an effort to protect the denizens of Mathura, discreetly built the beautiful city Dwaraka in an island, with the help of the celestial architect Visvakarma.

Krishna shifted the inhabitants of Mathura to Dwaraka through his *yogic* powers to save them from the enemy's onslaught.

Mathuranatha is a befitting title to which only Krishna

can lay claim, as he kept all dangers in abeyance and protected Mathura.

55. द्वारकानायकाय नमः ।

Dvārakānāyakāya namaḥ |

I pay obeisance to the hero of Dwaraka.

Krishna ruled from the magnificent city of Dwaraka, which was also known as Kusasthali for many years.

It was in Dwaraka that Krishna married Rukmini. Bhishmaka, the righteous ruler of Vidarbha, had proposed that his daughter Rukmini be married to Krishna and ever since she came to know of this, she gave her heart to Krishna. But Bhishmaka's powerful son Rukmi wanted her to be married to Sisupala, the Chedi king, though he was not an equal match.

Rukmini expressed her determination to marry only

Krishna through a *brahmin* and suggested that Krishna should come to the Parvati temple where she would be offering prayers the day before the wedding. Krishna left immediately with the *brahmin*, and Balarama followed him with the Yadu army.

Krishna lifted Rukmini on to the chariot and even as Jarasandha and others watched, drove her away to Dwaraka where the grand royal wedding took place. Dwaraka remained the hub of activities from where Krishna held counsel with all the kings.

56. बलिने नमः ।

Baline namaḥ |

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna of immense strength.

It is no wonder that Krishna who was Mahavishnu's *avatara* on

earth possessed incredible strength.

As an infant, he pushed the cart under which his mother Yashoda had placed him with his tiny legs, and broke it apart into pieces when Sakatasura tried to kill him. Similarly, the lifting of Govardhana with his tiny little finger made the *gopas* realise that this child had immeasurable, incredible strength.

After Krishna settled down in Dwaraka, the Yadu clan grew in great numbers. When war became a certainty, Yudhishtira and Duryodhana went to Krishna to seek alliance.

The huge Yadu army and its artillery attracted Duryodhana, and he requested Krishna to send his huge force to support the Kauravas. Yudhishtira, however, opted to seek Krishna's counsel and his mere presence at the battle.

Krishna's wise counsel and grace was so powerful that victory was theirs in the end. His indomitable physical, intellectual, and *yogic* powers protected the Pandavas and *gopas* at all times.

57. वृन्दावनान्तसञ्चारिणे नमः

*Vṛndāvanāntasancāriṇe
namaḥ |*

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna who moves in the forest of Brindavana.

The *Padma Purana* mentions that on the eighth day after new moon (*sukla paksha*), in the month of *Krittika*, Krishna was finally given permission to enter the forest of Brindavana with Balarama and the *gopas*, to graze the cows. It is celebrated to this day as *Gopashtami*.

According to the *Bhagavata Purana*, Krishna was a *pauganda* (a boy between the age of five and nine) at

that time. It was autumn, cool and pleasant as Madhava entered the forest. Sage Vyasa aptly uses the epithet Madhava (consort of Lakshmi) here as Krishna brings as much joy as the other *madhava* (the spring season).

The forest captivated Krishna with its gentle breeze, the fragrant flowers in bloom, the trees laden with fruits, the sweet music of the birds and bees and the pure, sweet water of the river.

A very happy Krishna drew Balarama's attention to the enchanting atmosphere and said that it appeared as if the trees were touching Balarama's feet, asking him to rid them of some sin which the trees might have committed previously.

The birds and bees seemed to be singing Balarama's praise and the sages in the forest.

Balarama accepted all the tributes with a smile as it was not his brother's wont to be emotional.

Krishna called back to cuckoos and danced with the peacocks and the Adipurusha humbly gave the credit to his elder brother by saying, "Fortunate indeed is this Brindavana and these lovely spots which have been sanctified by the fact that you have trod on them."



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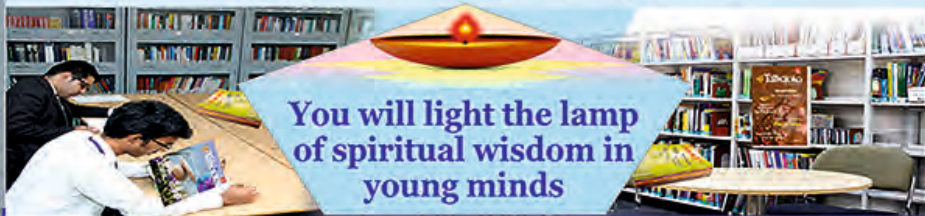
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॥ इश्वर ॥
of the month

Funtastick

Prayer to Kalabhairava

Kalabhairava is considered the most fearsome and powerful form of Lord Siva.

In Sanskrit, *Kala* means time, and *Bhairava* means the terrifying one. Scriptures depict Kalabhairava as a fierce warrior adorned with a garland of skulls, who is so terrifying that even *Kala*, the God of Death, is fearful of him.

Kalabhairava is the Lord of Time, and he takes care of the maintenance of *dharma*, or the order in the universe, and protects against all evil and negative forces. Siva is revered as the destroyer of time, or *Mahakaal*.

Among the many temples for Kalabhairava, the one in Kashi (Varanasi) is the most famous. Kalabhairva here is acclaimed to have driven away the demonic elements from Kashi, and he stands to protect the holy city.

This Kalabhairava temple is so powerful that a pilgrimage to Kashi, known as *mokshapuri* or the city of

liberation, is considered complete only when one visits the Kalabhairava shrine. The visitors get a black thread from the priests in the temple, which devotees piously wear on their wrist with the belief that it acts as a charm to protect from dangers.

देवराजसेव्यमान
पावनांघ्रिपङ्कजं
व्यालयज्ञसूत्रम् इन्दुशेखरं
कृपाकरम् ।
नारदादियोगिवृन्दवन्दितं दिगम्बरं
काशिकापुरादिनाथ
कालभैरवं भजे ॥

*Devarājasevyamāna
pāvanāṅghripaṅkajam
Vyālayajñasūtram
induśekhkharam kṛpākaram ।*

*Nāraddadiyogivrndavan-
ditam digambaram
Kāśikāpurādinātha
kālabhairavam bhaje ॥*

Adi Sankara's *Kalabhairava Ashtakam*, consisting of eight verses, is a profound composition, extolling the virtues of Kalabhairava. Here is a prayer verse of profound benefit.

“I worship Kalabhairava who dwells in Kashi, whose lotus feet are worshipped by Indra, who wears a snake as his sacred thread (*yajnopavitam*), who wears the crescent moon on his head, who is an ocean of mercy, worshipped by sages like Narada, and whose clothing comprises of the directions.”

The rhythmic beauty of the composition lends itself to easy chanting. The hymn chanted sincerely takes the devotee close to Siva, and for the *kaal* (time) to be on his side.

Readers familiar with Sringeri Peetham would know that in Sringeri, as in Kashi, Kalabhairava is one among the four guardian

deities believed to protect the town.

In most Siva temples, the Kalabhairava *sannidhi* is on the north-east corner, which attracts large number of devotees especially on the eighth day of waning moon every month (*ashtami* of *Krishna paksha*).

Again, among all *ashtamis*, the one in the month of *Margashirsha* (*Margazhi*) from mid-December to mid-January) is considered the most important one.

Devotees also believe that Kalabhairava erases the sins of his worshippers and relieves them of the effects of malefic planets of *Rahu*, *Ketu* and *Saturn*.

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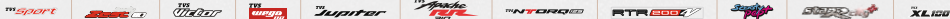
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The Sly Fox



There lived a fox in a forest. He was always roaming around looking for food. He had no friends as he was known to be cunning and scheming, and no one trusted him.

The lazy fox always tried to get food by cunning ways, and his own pack had rejected him.

So, the fox decided to move to a new place, make new friends, and a new beginning. So he moved to the outskirts of a village where he happily found many farms breeding chicken and livestock, which could be his easy prey.

As he started living comfortably in the village, he noticed a donkey in the area, whom the fox thought of making friends with. Soon the two became good friends and spent happy hours together.

One day, the fox saw an old tiger slinking in the edge of

the forest near the village. The fox understood that the tiger was too weak to hunt in the forest, and so had come looking for a few chickens in the village.

The donkey became frightened on seeing the tiger, but the fox reassured the donkey that he would speak to the tiger.

The cunning fox went up to the tiger, and told him, “Can you see the donkey there? If you promise not to harm me, I promise to trick the foolish donkey into entering a deep pit from which he cannot get out. You can then feast on the donkey “.

The fox's scheme was that after the tiger had feasted, he would get a good share of the remains of the donkey. His greed and cunning led him thus to betray his friend!

The tiger agreed to the scheme, and the fox went up

to his friend donkey and told him that he had arranged with the tiger not to harm them. He added that while the tiger had assured not to hurt us, let us find a safe place to hide until the tiger was gone.

Thus, the fox led the donkey into a deep pit and trapped him.

He told the donkey that he would return after checking whether the tiger had gone, and then bring him out of the pit.

Now the fox went to the tiger and showed him the deep pit where the donkey remained trapped. The tiger was delighted, but the tiger thought that he should not let the fox slip away, as he was too old to hunt.

Since the donkey was anyway safely trapped in the pit, the tiger decided to eat the fox first, and go to the donkey later.

Thus, the cunning fox, who did not hesitate to betray a friend, met with his own fate.

Here is a nice *Subhashitam* verse to explain the above moral:

दुर्जनः प्रियवादीति नैतद्
विश्वासकारणम् ।

मधु तिष्ठति जिह्वाग्रे हृदये
तु हलाहलम् ॥

*durjanaḥ priyavādīti
naitad viśvāsakāraṇam |
madhutiṣṭhati jivhāgre
hṛdaye tu halāhalam ||*

Never believe a wicked person even if he is talking sweet and in your favour. There is honey at the tip of his tongue but poison in his heart.

Anuradha Sundara Raman

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Say it in Sanskrit



Fill up the blanks below.

1. अध्यापकः कक्षायां _____ संशयान् अपाकरोति ।

Adhyāpakaḥ kakṣāyām _____ saṁśayān apākaroti |

The teacher removes the doubts of students in the class.

2. _____ अधस्तात् वयम् उपविशामः ।

_____ adhastāt vayam upaviśāmaḥ |

We sit under the shade of the tree.

3. माता _____ स्निह्यति ।

Mātā _____ snihyati |

The mother is affectionate towards the two children.

4. कपयः _____ चरन्ति ।

Kapayaḥ _____ caranti |

The monkeys move about on the trees.

5. शिबिः _____ नृपतिषु प्रसिद्धः ॥

Śibiḥ _____ nṛpatiṣu prasiddhaḥ ||

Sibi is well known among merciful rulers

Answers: 1. *śiṣyāṇām*; 2. *Taroḥ*; 3. *śiśvoḥ*;
4. *taruṣu*; 5. *dayāluṣu*

We have already touched upon some adjectives and their rules in one of our previous lessons. Adjectives as a rule follow the noun in number and gender, and the interrogatives for adjectives are *kīdr̥ṣaḥ*, *kīdr̥ṣī* and *kīdr̥ṣam* for masculine, feminine and neuter genders. They can be declined like nouns in all cases.

Adjectives can also be derived from abstract nouns. For example, the first person, singular of some adjectives that indicate possession of a quality are shown below. The possessive adjectives can be declined in all cases, numbers and genders.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| सुखम् <i>sukham</i> | happiness | सुखी <i>sukhī</i> | happy (person) |
| दुःखम् <i>duḥkham</i> | sadness | दुःखी <i>duḥkhī</i> | sad (person) |
| दानम् <i>dānam</i> | charity | दानी <i>dānī</i> | charitable (person) |
| गुणः <i>guṇaḥ</i> | virtue | गुणी <i>guṇī</i> | virtuous (person) |

The plural of these masculine words will be *sukhinaḥ*, *dukhinaḥ* and so on.

As in other languages, spellings are very important in *Sanskritam*. A slight error in spelling will change the meaning completely.

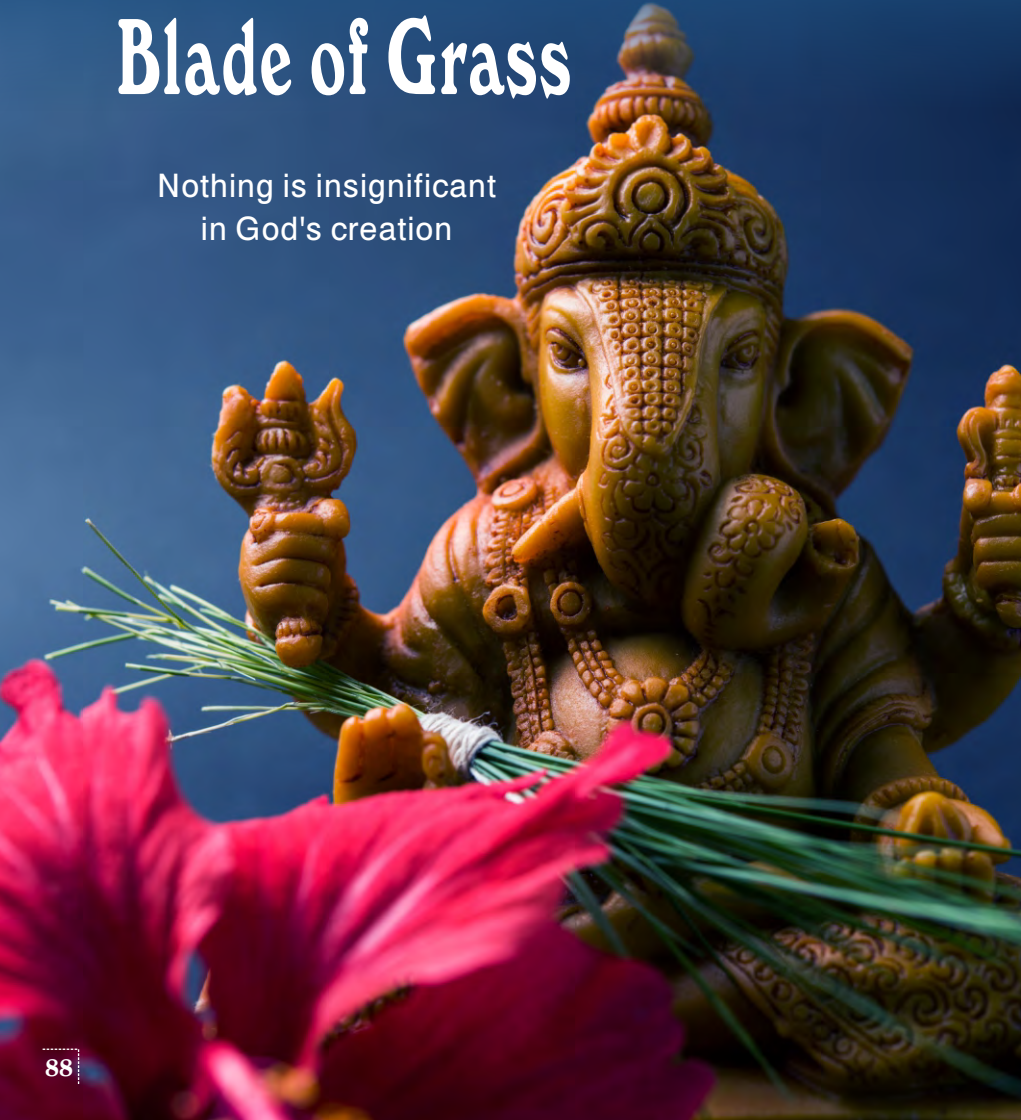
A few such words to illustrate this important aspect are given below:

| जलं सूरः | जालं अङ्कः | कुलं अङ्गं | कूलं | सुतः | सूतः | सुरः |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Jalaṁ sūraḥ</i> | <i>jālaṁ aṅkaḥ</i> | <i>kulaṁ aṅgaṁ</i> | <i>kūlaṁ</i> | <i>sutaḥ</i> | <i>sūtaḥ</i> | <i>suraḥ</i> |
| Water sun | net number | clan limb | shore | son | charioteer | celestial |



Durva, the Powerful Blade of Grass

Nothing is insignificant
in God's creation



The humble, yet popular, *durva* grass that we all use in *pujas* and rituals has a special significance. There is a *puranic* story describing its glory, connecting it to Ganesha, the popular God. As you know, no *puja* to Ganesha is deemed complete without offering the *durva* grass.

Once upon a time, there lived a powerful *asura* known as Anasura. He had obtained a unique boon from the creator, Lord Brahma, that whenever he wished, his breath and mouth would emit fire, especially when he faces any opponent.

Armed with this powerful boon, the wicked *asura* went around all worlds, creating havoc. He claimed everything he saw as his own, and if anyone opposed him, he simply burnt him down with his fiery breath.

The celestial beings feared him a lot, but none could do

anything to him. Finally, the exasperated *devas* approached their Guru, Brihaspati for help. He advised them to pray fervently to Lord Ganesha for solution.

The kind Lord appeared before the *devas* and promised to put an end to his menace.

Ganesha then approached Anasura, and demanded a combat with him. The proud and haughty *asura* heavily breathed out fire from his nostrils, and spat out huge flames from his mouth, but they had no effect on Ganesha.

In great anger, he rushed at Ganesha to overpower him physically. Immediately Ganesha grew huge and immeasurably in size, and amazing to look at. He caught hold of Anasura and simply swallowed him up as a tiny morsel of food. Everyone in the universe

was delighted and offered their prostrations to the Lord.

Ganesha, however, experienced a burning sensation in his stomach, created by the fire of Anasura. Realising this discomfort of the Lord, the king of the *devas*, Indra placed the moon on his head to impart a cooling effect. The creator Brahma asked his mind-born daughters, Riddhi and Siddhi, to fan Ganesha from both sides to relieve the heat in his stomach.

Ganesha's father, the great Lord Siva, tied a huge snake around Ganesha's belly to provide a really cooling effect to the stomach, and Vishnu offered cooling lotus flowers.

While the fire continued to rage in Ganesha's belly, a few sages, led by Rishi Kashyapa, visited Ganesha. They had collected *durva* grass to perform a *yagna*, and they offered a bundle of 21 blades

of *durva* to Ganesha with devotion and humility.

The *durva* grass immediately doused the fire in the belly of the Lord. Pleased with the act, Ganesha declared that whoever worshipped him with devotion and offered *durva* grass during the worship would obtain his blessings.

Thus, this humble grass obtained an elevated status and began to be considered as sacred to Lord Ganesha.

There is also a moral in this story: Nothing is useless. Even insignificant things, such as a blade of grass, can prove helpful and effective, and work wonders when it is used with devotion and humility.

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