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Tattvāloka

THE SPLENDOUR OF TRUTH



Founder His Holiness Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamigal
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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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Deputy Editor Dr. R. Vasumathi

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Suresh K. L. (+230 5253 4147), Muscat

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Direct Efforts to Remove Avidya

Sruti-vakyas (the Vedic statements) such as सत्यं ज्ञानम् अनन्तं ब्रह्म, (*Satyam, jnanam, anantam brahma*) and विज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म (*vijnanam, anandam brahma*) emphasise that *Brahman* is *sat-chit-ananda svarupa*, the ever-existing Reality.

Similarly, Vedic statements such as *Tat tvam asi* and *Aham brahmasmi* affirm the identity of *jiva* with *brahman* i.e. the *jiva's* essential nature is also the divine *sat-chit-ananda svarupa* only.

However, the *jiva* is unable to experience himself as *brahman*. This is because of *ajnana*. *Ajnana* or *avidya* is explained thus -

अनित्याशुचिदुः खानात्मसु नित्यशुचिसुखात्मख्यातिरविद्या ।

Avidya is considering the non-eternal, impure and misery-filled non-Self (body-senses-mind) to be the eternal, pure and joyous Self.

By the grace of a realised Guru, a *jiva* has to engage in *sravana* (hearing the import of the scriptures), *manana* (reflecting upon the Truth using logic) and *nididhyasana* (focussed contemplation on the Self). The *jiva* then



overcomes *ajnana* and realises his true nature as *sat-chit-ananda svarupa*.

The supreme philosopher-saint, Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada has lucidly explained -

आत्मा तु सततं प्राप्तोऽप्यप्राप्तवदविद्यया ।
तन्नाशे प्राप्तवद्भाति स्वकण्ठाभरणं यथा ॥

This realisation is akin to regaining apparently the missing ornament that was all along hanging from one's own neck.

Hence, all *sadhanas* of spiritual aspirants must be directed to remove the veil of *avidya* that not only covers the Truth, but also projects the unreal as real, and drives man to search for peace and joy in transitory worldly objects.

We bless all *sadhakas* to understand this and make their lives fruitful.



Dear Sir,

I thank the *Tattvāloka* team for publishing insightful articles and write-ups on a variety of topics, including Vedanta. I have been a consistent reader for more than 20 years and appreciate the informative articles.

Through careful study and comprehension of several articles, including *Jagadguru Speaks*, *Bliss of the Self*, *Wisdom for Self-Improvement*, *Call of Jagadguru*, *Values for Management*, and many others, one can successfully manage every kind of unpleasant emotion.

Every article is useful for a person interested in following and pursuing the path of spirituality and Vedic knowledge. The articles address and cover readers of all ages.

I pass on the articles to my family members and friends. I have recommended the subscription to this Vedic and spiritual magazine to my family and friends too.

In this spiritual world, *Tattvāloka* is a treasure for every reader. Offering my humble *pranams* at the lotus feet of Jagadguru Sri Mahasannidhanam and Sri Sannidhanam.

Prasanna H. Darog
pdarog@outlook.com

Dear Sir,

The article '*Wisdom for Self-Improvement*' (*Pearls from Bhagvad Gita*) in the August 2023 issue is divine.

To be one with Lord Almighty should be the supreme goal of all human beings. The Supreme Power is the ultimate master, shelter and friend. He is the origin and the end, and the final abode of all creatures. All our thoughts, words and actions should be pure and offered to God, and for those who fix their mind on Him, He promises to safeguard them and bless them with eternal peace of mind.

In every issue of *Tattvāloka*, the article '*Pearls from Gita*', leads us towards greater and greater steadfastness in spiritual knowledge.

Asmi Mehta

asmi_mehta@hotmail.com

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SOUL



FRUITS OF SADHANA FLOW FROM DIVINE GRACE

It is not wise to wait for the 'right' moment to commence penance and charity

S*adhana* is perhaps the highest expression of true love. Love is not just about having intense feelings for someone. In true love you make sacrifices, you watch out for each other and sometimes you do things not because you like them, but because you know the person you love does.

Sadhana is no different. It requires discipline, sacrifice, responsible freedom and selflessness. Above all, it needs intense feelings. It does not matter how small or big, arcane or mundane your *sadhana* may be, if it does not have devotion, expect no results.

Then again, no *sadhana* is possible without divine grace. Or for that matter, nothing else is either. So when you have the

opportunity to do *sadhana*, it is something to cherish and be grateful for.

As you progress on the path, your devotion, focus, stamina, your posture, everything improves. If you are disciplined and you are devoted, I can tell you with absolute conviction that your *sadhana* will never go waste. It will yield results at some point in time. It always does.

There are stories of amazing sages in our spiritual literature who have experienced unlimited divine grace. The divine grace is constantly flowing and it is up to you to tap into it.

When a stream is gushing vigorously, and you take a vessel to collect some of the running water, you have to

be careful at what point you enter the flow. The size of the pot and your placement vis-a-vis the flow of the stream will determine how much will spill out versus end up in the vessel.

Sadhana is the art and discipline of collecting that stream of grace in a vessel so you may use it to elevate your consciousness and quench the thirst of others in need.

When the results of *sadhana* manifest in your consciousness, no matter how hard a nut you might have been, the shell cracks open, you become mellow and develop feelings of love and compassion for those around you.

And such is the way of devotion as well, you need a pure heart. The purer the heart, the greater the intensity of devotion. Otherwise empty vessels make a lot of noise.

Seize the Present Moment

The other important thing worth remembering when you look at the lives of the amazing sages is that life does not always offer you a closure.

Often a lot of us think, first I am going to tick off these three items on my to-do list and then I will immerse myself in *bhakti* and devotion. Or first, I will pay off this debt and then I will do some charity. Or, I am going to take care of these personal issues and then I will embark on my spiritual journey.

But there is no guarantee that life is going to offer you the passage to walk to the end of your journey the way you envisage. Everybody wants their story to end beautifully. A movie can be amazing, but if it does not end nicely, you say, what was it all about?

Everybody thinks I am going to tick off these ten things and then when I grow older, be free from familial obligations and have more savings, I will enjoy and I will sit back and relax. That's when I will put my feet up. But *kala*, time, says I will drag you by your feet and take you away.

Never wait for that perfect moment in life, or take life for granted, or assume that such a moment will even arrive in your life. It is ignorant to wait for certain things to finish before you express your gratitude to the Universe, before you do penance and charity.

Lord Krishna says in *Bhagavad Gita* (18.5) the crucial aspects that are the bedrock of human purification, as

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं
कार्यमेव तत् ।

यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव
पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥

*Yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma
na tyājyaṁ kāryam eva tat,
Yajño dānaṁ tapaśḥ chaiva
pāvanāni manīṣhīṇām.*

O Kaunteya, one must never relinquish *yajna*, *tapas*, *sadhana* and *dana* because they purify you.

So if you think that one day you will grow old (become free) and that is when you will do the things that you have always wanted to do, it may be a little too optimistic, if not unrealistic altogether. For, there is no guarantee that you will not have afflictions, or diseases of the body or the mind. There is no guarantee that you will be able to run or walk or sit or that your loved ones will still be around.

The wise, therefore, seize the present moment and make the best use of it.

Your *sadhana* is going to be partially influenced by the

events beyond your control. But that is only partially. There is still a large chunk that is in your control. If you are going to wait, nobody can guarantee what is to come.

You have everything within you that you need to be happy. If you choose to throw that away and not use those assets, that would be a sorry choice, in my humble opinion.

And, it is very important to have the courage to applaud for yourself.

Most of us hold ourselves in much self-doubt, we demean ourselves, deprecate ourselves and downplay so many good things we have worked hard for. We think, Oh I don't deserve it.

But it would not happen if you did not deserve it, good or bad. Love yourself with the same intensity as you would love somebody you deeply love.

Om Swami





Wisdom for Self-Improvement-25

Beautiful *sloka*! Just in two lines it has summarised the entire teaching of Vedanta!

There are seven things which are in everyone's constitution, we know they are bad, but we seem to find it difficult to remove them.

Those are: *ahamkaram*: ego-sense; *balam*: strength, physical or otherwise; *darpam*: arrogance; *kāmam*: desire; *kródham*: anger; *parigraham*: possessive

अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पकामं
क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।
विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय
कल्पते ॥

*Ahankāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ
kāmaṁ krodhaṁ parigrahaṁ |
Vimuchya nirmamaḥ śhānto
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate ||*

Bhagavad Gita 18-53

sense coupled with eagerness to possess further.

The seventh one is the sense of 'I' and 'Mine'.

If only we can get rid of (*vimuchya*) these seven and be in *sattvic* peace (*santah*), then we are certainly cut out for being one with *brahman*.

Every scripture and *Upanishad* writes pages

after pages to tell you this only.

This 'becoming one with *brahman*' (*brahma-bhūya*) is only a self-revelation, like the tenth man in the famous story. It is not a becoming in the form of a change; it is discovering it oneself, for oneself by oneself -
Atmani Atmanā Atmānam paśyan (6- 20).

Words similar to *brahma-bhuya* used in the *Gita* are:

brāhmī sthiti (2-72) - here the emphasis is on the evolved status;

brahma-yoga (5-21) - here the emphasis is on the path;

brahma-nirvāna (5-24, 25) - here the focus is on the total independence of the state; and

brahma-samsparśam (96-28) - here the emphasis is on the imperceptible and irreversible (denoted by the addition of *sam* before

sparśam) touch that is realisation.

Further, *brahma-bhūyāya kalpate* is explained further in the next *sloka* (18-54). It talks of three things as the characteristic of a *brahmabhūta*; namely,

1. *Prasannatma* (one for whom there is nothing other than *Ātman*); 2. *Na śocati na kāṅkshati* (one who has no desire no regrets); and 3. *Samam sarveṣu bhuteṣu* (equanimous to everything).

These three define a *jīvanmukta*. No.2 defines no *manas*, and No.3 defines no *vāsanas*. And No.1 is already there to define him as a *brahmajñāni*.

Gītā sloka 6-32 defines a *jīvanmukta* the same way.

Prof. U. Krishnamurthy

profvk@yahoo.com





Sri Chandrasekhara

*The more I read about You My Master
Greater is my unworthiness I feel*

*How pristine and pure was Your life
How blessed was the glory of Your Feet*

*From where do I get the desire to reach You
Dirt and mud I am dreaming of something*

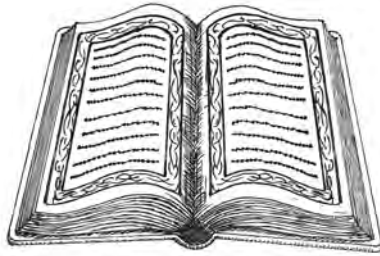
*Which water can ever make it clean
Mud is mud so it will forever remain*

*When the tears of my eyes do not dry
I ask why do You give me this desire*

*Asking a crippled to climb a mountain
You give me a wish impossible to fulfill*

*But compassion You are always with me
Showing that mud can also be made divine*

*You ask me to stay where I am with faith
One day You will enlighten my being and
Turn me into the dust of Your Holy Feet.*



Bliss of the Self

The shadowy impressions gathered and preserved by the mind hide the inner light of the Self

In the eleventh verse in 'Forty verses on Reality' (*Ulladu Narpadu*), Sri Ramana Maharishi defines ignorance as knowing all objects through the senses and the mind. When the Self, the substratum of 'knowing' and 'not knowing' is known, both knowledge and ignorance will come to an end.

The mind of the perceiver that perceives objects through the senses assumes the forms of those objects. The intellect gathers these received impressions, and

even in the absence of the objects, it continues to preserve them as memory under the guise of 'knowledge'. The subtle shadowy impressions gathered and preserved in this manner hide the inner light of the Self like a dark veil.

This is not true knowledge. This layer of *vāsanās* or inherent tendencies of the mind, that veils the light of the Self is actually ignorance.

The 'I' Consciousness

Only by the awareness of the Self, can this veiling be removed. The 'I'-consciousness alone is self-luminous (*swayamprakasa*). All that we see ranging from the ego-'I' to the entire visible world of creation -are all pictures seen with the light of the *chit*. When the senses, the mind and the 'I'-thought subside in the heart through enquiry, pure consciousness shines as 'I-I' (*aham-aham*).

This consciousness is the substratum. If a person abides as this Self, knowing and not knowing will both come to an end. Consciousness, that is neither knowledge nor ignorance, (*jñānavarjita ajñānahīna chit*) will glow in all its brilliance, as per *Upadesa Saram*.

From the Self which is pure intelligence, arises an inscrutable power as 'I', 'I'. This power, comes in contact with ignorance, and

transforms itself as the mind.

From the mind, with the power of sound, it manifests as space; with sound and touch, it manifests as air; with sound, touch and form, it manifests as fire; with sound, touch, form and taste, it manifests as water; and with sound, touch,, form, taste and smell, it expands as earth.

Thus, in this universe, which is a mixture of the five elements, the source of all manifestations is pure intelligence experienced as the consciousness-'I'. When this indefinable power deviates from consciousness and assumes the forms of objects, it becomes the mind.

The very nature of the mind is to create an illusion of objects other than the Self. This is called *vikalpa*. When the mind is directed towards the Self, it becomes *chit-sakti*. When the power of the Self,

the *ātma-sakti*, that has become the mind, gets purified through non-motivated actions and *bhakti*, that mind becomes refined and subtle.

At this stage, if one happens to get an intimation about the immeasurable that shines in the heart as 'I', I, a strange fascination arises from the depths to sink within. The purified mind, when it hears the words of the Guru, gets transformed at once into *chitsakti* and gets absorbed in its source. This meditative mind is called *pratyangmukha manas* (introverted or facing the Self).

When the mind transcends both knowledge and ignorance, it glides into the indivisible. This is the revelation of the immeasurable. The *Upanishads* call this the imperishable *aksara*. The *Mundaka Upanishad* defines *paravidya* as, *Yaya tadakṣaram adhigamyatē*, the knowledge by which that imperishable is known.

'*Ekam Aksharam*'

Once, a devotee approached Sri Ramana Maharishi with a new notebook and requested him to bless by writing something in it. The Maharishi remained silent, but the disciple repeatedly pleaded that just one *aksaram* (letter) from the sage would do.

The Maharishi then smilingly took the book, and wrote out a marvellous single-verse, *ēkam aksaram hr̥di niran̄taram bhāsatē swayam, likhyatē katham*, which means 'That imperishable, self-luminous One shines in the heart continually. How can one write it?'

From a young age we are taught that *vidyādanam sarvadanat pradanam*, knowledge is the greatest treasure that can be gained. Sri Ramana Maharishi, however, maintains that all our learning about the outside world is actually 'ignorance'.

Ajnāna' is thus defined as 'knowing the other without knowing the real nature of one's own Self'.

Let us see the example of mistaking a rope for a snake. Often in dim light a rope is mistaken for a snake. In pitch darkness, the rope itself is not seen. So the snake also is not seen. It is only in dim light that the rope is misapprehended as a snake.

Likewise, absolute ignorance will not do much harm, just as the rope is not seen in total darkness. What is harmful is the presence of the faint light of a little knowledge, in which one misapprehends the rope as the snake.

In deep sleep, one does not recognise the Self. In the waking state, not only is the Self not known, but also the non-Self, such as the ego, body, world and so on, are projected on it. This is similar to the experience of

'non-seeing' of the rope and the 'seeing' of the snake.

The Self remains changeless, incorruptible in the waking, dream, and deep sleep states. But because of the two aspects of ignorance -- *avarāṇa* (veiling) and *vikṣēpa* (projection), one does not recognise the experience.

The *āvaraṇa* brings about the darkness of 'not-knowing'; and *vikṣēpa* projects the knowing of the 'other'. Not seeing the rope is the result of *avāraṇa*. Mistaking the rope for a snake is due to *vikṣēpa*. While *āvāraṇa* occurs in deep sleep, both *avarāṇa* and *vikṣēpa* both occur in the waking and dream states.

Bhagavad Gita (6-21) declares '*sukhamatyantikam yattad buddhigrāhyam atīndriyam*'. An extremely subtle intelligence, the *śraddha sakti*, lies dormant in everyone. If attention, distilled by austerity, is

focused on this *sakti*, it will clearly manifest as transcendental-intelligence,, *samadhiprajna*.

That intellect gains the power to penetrate into the realm beyond the senses. That *buddhi* emblazoned by grace glides beyond the waking state and dream-state and peeps into the happiness inherent in deep sleep.

As *Viveka Chudamani* declares, the very nature of the substratum is *samadhi samadhina atyantasu-suksmavriyā*.

The experience of happiness in deep sleep comes from the heart, while the ignorance, “I did not know anything” comes from the intellect. Although happiness is attained, due to inattention or *aśraddha*, the experience is lost hold of while coming to the waking state. It is somewhat akin to falling down from heaven when one's fruits of good deeds run out.

Everyone constantly has the experience of the Self as 'I'. But this eternal experience has to be held in vision by the luminous eye of attention. Hence, Self-enquiry is inevitable. *Vichāra* is indeed the magnificent eye for seeing the truth. *Vichāra chāru lōchanam*, says *Yoga Vasistam*.

When the Master points to this experience by means of the intuitive reasoning, the seeker realizes that the Self is ever-attained.

He comes to know that there is nothing new to be attained, and that hitherto, he missed seeing this treasure within, only because of his inattention (*aśraddha*).

Nochur Sri
Venkataraman



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



A simple explanation of the difference between the two schools of philosophy

Advaita and Visishta Advaita

What is commonly associated with non-duality in Vedanta is formally known as *Kevala Advaita* or absolute non-duality, as codified by Adi Sankara.

There is another Vedantic system of non-duality called *Visishta Advaita* or qualified non-duality, as codified by Sri Ramanuja.

Subtle Difference

Both the schools of Vedanta assert the single all-pervading nature of the Divine, with one subtle difference.

Visishta Advaita sees the entire universe as the body of God and all the entities, animate and inanimate, as parts of God, much like limbs of a body.

Another good metaphor is to see that the multitudinous waves (individual beings) are part of one ocean (universal being or God).

So there is a part-whole relationship between the individual and the Supreme that brings about a true sense of devotion to the whole, not just as a transcendent reality but as the immanent truth of the entire universe.

Advaita goes beyond the part-whole relationship and sees that waves and the ocean are essentially made of the same substance--water.

This does not deny at the phenomenal level the part-whole relationship between the waves and the ocean, and hence fully reconcilable with *Visishtadvaita*. *Advaita* just makes the additional leap that what makes the part is the same as what makes the whole.

So stripped of all names and forms, the part and the whole are essentially the same, as captured succinctly in the *Upanishadic* statement *Tat Tvam Asi* (That Thou Art).

While the differences may seem too abstract, it does have practical implications.

The part-whole relationship emphasised by *Visishtadvaita* gives the philosophical basis for devotion, which may be the natural inclination of many in the spiritual journey. Equally important, the part-whole relationship is the utmost that words can truly explore in a positive sense.

Advaita can only be explored in the negative sense (*neti neti*), which is the essence of self-enquiry. A systematic exposition can only go as far as showing the superimposition and the subsequent negation (*adhyaropa apavada*), but

cannot capture 'that which is' in any positive terms.

True, non-duality or *advaita* is by definition beyond words. When speech arises even about non-duality, there is instantly a seeming separation, as the speaker is only a part of the whole. In silence alone is *advaita* truly realised. Using verbal analysis and study has every danger of landing one in dry intellectualism or second-hand spouting of oneness without any true clarity.

Because absolute *advaita* is not dependent on any conditioning, people from any culture with no exposure to any non-dual teachings of the *Upanishads* etc. arrive at the same truth.

Sri Ramana Maharshi never encouraged any discussion on the various systems of philosophy, including *advaita*, as it only activates the mind with its stored, second-hand knowledge. In

one of his verses, he captured this as follows:

“The world is true!” – “No, it is a false appearance!”; ‘The world is mind!’ – ‘No, it is not’. What avails of such talk? To leave the world along and know the Self, to go beyond all thought of *one* and *two*, this egoless condition is the common goal of all”.

In other words, simply being still within, by a clear recognition of the falsity of the ego, or total surrender, and therefore free of any identification with any thought movement, is the direct way.

Suresh Natarajan
sureshn13@gmail.com



Sanatana Dharma for Better World Management

The wise counsel embedded in *Sanatana Dharma* may appear impractical, but it is the best way.

Sanatana dharma, the timeless ethics, if practised with *sraddha*, commitment, can help at all levels, from the village to the world. It will help develop responsible individuals - to become better family members, workers, citizens and leaders.

Dharma is critical for the long-term survival and high performance of organisations, including government. If *dharma* guides the thoughts, words and deeds of politicians and administrators, there will be sustained good governance at state and national levels.



There are now four major challenges before humanity.

One, sustaining peace and avoiding a terrible new World War. Two, climate action to prevent catastrophes of floods, fires, cyclones, famines and pandemics. Third, achieving and maintaining inclusive growth for total human wellbeing and dignity. Four, establishing and preserving a global culture of ethics to support the above three endeavours.

First the challenge of world peace. Three decades ago, the outlook for world peace seemed bright, with the apparent ending of the cold war following the restructuring in the former Soviet Union. There was hope for reallocation of military budgets for faster development and reduction of poverty. This hope has been belied.

A new cold war has started. A new contest between

democracy and authoritarian models has surfaced. There is fear of a World War with unimaginable devastation.

How can we prevent this horror and maintain peace, by drawing upon *sanatana dharma*?

We recall the core value of *Santi*, peace. The *Santi Mantra* prays for peace in the entire cosmos, including earth, oceans, forests, and space. All nations and their leaders should work for regional and global peace.

Another value is *maitri*, friendliness. Those nations which have disputes with neighbours should settle them with *maitri bhava*, with give and take. Where there are civil wars and conflicts, all parties should realise that, in the long run, non-violence is the best for all parties.

Victory is often an illusion. The costs of rebuilding a

nation are very high. The scars will not heal, even after many centuries. Apologies and reparations will be demanded.

If a country has been invaded, it could respond by *satyagraha*, peaceful resistance. Express love for the people of the invading country, while remaining firm on own sovereignty. A military counter-offensive will only hurt both parties even more. The *satyagraha* could mobilise global sympathy and support for a negotiated peace.

Climate Crisis

For pulling back from the climate crisis, the concept of *purusharthas*, life goals, can help 'responsible' consumption. Always put *dharma*, ethics, ahead of *artha* and *kama*, wealth and desires. What is the use of wealth if we leave an inhospitable earth for our children and grandchildren?

Another relevant guideline is *Ati sarvatra varjayet*, excess is to be avoided in any situation. This can motivate people to practise the motto, 'Reduce, Re-use, Recycle'.

We need to constantly remind ourselves about the *pancha runam*, the five debts, especially the *Bhuta runam*, the debt we owe to the natural elements and the environment for enabling our existence.

Inclusive growth is embedded in the *sanatana dharma* prayers, such as *Sarve janah sukhino bhavantu* and *Loka samastah sukhino bhavantu*, praying for universal wellbeing, letting all the people be comfortable and well.

The comforts, includes modest housing, good health, education, and livelihood, are not just for the elite. The leaders, ministers and serving

officials should be constantly monitoring and working for the welfare of all people.

Building and sustaining a global culture of *dharma* will be easier if people understood the concept and its utmost importance.

Dharayati iti dharma, that which upholds society is *dharma*. *Dharmo rakshati rakshitah*, when we protect *dharma*, in turn, *dharma* protects us.

Conversely, if we neglect and erode *dharma*, the

resulting *adharma* destroys us, sooner or later.

Even when established, *dharma* may erode due to the *tamas* and *rajas*, inaction or excess, of the rulers and people. It needs *samsthanam*, re-establishment.

The above wise counsel, embedded in *Sanatana Dharma*, may initially appear impractical. But it is the best way, may be, the only way.

Dr. M B Athreya
athreyamb@gmail.com





GUARD AGAINST YOUR REPUTATION RISK

It is vital to safeguard one's reputation through proactive steps, and not as crisis management

Reputation is the essence of life, whether personal or in business. Life is not worth living without good reputation and honour, says *Tirukkural*, which is the essence of ethical principles rendered two thousand

years ago, in cryptic two-line verses in Tamil.

Reputation is the fundamental instrument of social order, and it acts as a moral check to stay on the right path, providing a sense of direction.

Firms with strong positive reputation are able to attract the best talent, retain people, and even pay below market compensation, as they are perceived to provide more value. On the other hand, businesses considered as suffering from 'reputation deficit' find it hard to recruit the best people, and they become 'suspicious' in their acts.

As a saying goes, it takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, but only one bad one to lose it. Reputation risk is the risk that arises from an action, transaction, event, or decision that will reduce trust in a person or firm's integrity or competence. Any material lapse in standards of integrity, compliance, customer service or operating efficiency represents a potential reputation risk.

Most risk managers in business firms, however, do an inadequate job of

managing the risks to the firm's reputation. They tend to focus their energies on handling the threats to reputation that have already surfaced. This is not risk management, but crisis management - as a reactive approach to limit the damage. One needs to be sensitive about potential damage to reputation and take proactive measures.

Business enterprises in developed markets tend to assess reputation risk only in certain specific circumstances, such as while acquiring any business, or entering into new partnerships.

On the other hand, firms in emerging markets, such as ours, need to pay attention to guarding reputation risk in every normal operation, as the firms are vulnerable to any lapse in complying with the myriad local laws, and to negative media coverage or smear campaigns.

While there are many areas that could trigger reputation risk in a firm, two aspects warranting close leadership attention are briefly mentioned below.

Corrupt Practices

The risk of damaging one's reputation due to allegations of bribery or corrupt business practices is the foremost.

A bribe is an illegal act involving exchange of money or other consideration with the view to influencing the behaviour of any person or agency. Firms that seek to indulge in such practice to win contracts or expedite processes, while the leadership team looks the other way, tend to pay a heavy price to their reputation.

Charles Lee, a professor at Stanford's Graduate School of Business, found in his research study that firms perceived as 'clean' trade at bigger market premiums than those deemed corrupt,

revealing a clear correlation between ethical lapses and market value of companies.

Bhagavad Gita refers to corrupt practices as stemming from greed and obsession with results. *Aparigraha*, or non-grasping or non-greediness, is hailed as an essential virtue for everyone.

Our *Sastras* unequivocally mention the punishment to those indulging in bribery, both for giver as the one guilty of tempting the other person, and the taker for violating moral code. *Vishnu Purana* (2.6) says such persons run the risk of their souls being consigned to hell in head-inverted position (*adhomukha*).

In *Mahabharata* (*Virata Parva*), sage Dhaumya advises the Pandava brothers that “Commissioned to a task, one should never touch bribes, for, by any such appropriation, one becomes liable to fetters or death.”

Misconduct with Women

Another key factor that triggers reputation risk in a firm is misconduct with women employees and perception of their lack of safety at the workplace. In many published reports, women are now seen describing a range of mistreatment, including misogyny and sexual harassment.

According to a report titled 'Women in the Workplace' by the consulting firm McKinsey, there is evidence of 'toxic cultures' prevalent in many firms that exact a dreadful toll on women employees as victims.

There are reports of business firms taking initiatives to sensitise employees about gender issues, including offering 'diversity training', workshops and awareness programmes. It is crucial that the treatment of women does not get escalated into a reputation risk issue.

Our scriptural wisdom accords high value on proper behaviour towards women, and treating them well in every situation. *Manusmriti* (chapter 9) says that women “must particularly be guarded against evil inclinations, however trifling (they may appear); for, if they are not guarded, they will bring sorrow.”

The 35th Jagadguru of Sringeri Peetham, Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamiji, had once narrated an interesting episode when he was just twenty years of age and a junior under his illustrious guru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati.

Once, two *bairagis* (mendicants) living on the banks of the Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh, had come to Sringeri. One of them con-fided to Swamiji with some hesitation that while he was leading a life of renunciation, he was not free from sexual desire, with

bad thoughts troubling off and on.

A local *baba* had suggested to him to consume a little medicinal powder daily which would help counter his base instincts. While the medicine worked, the *bairagi* admitted that his muscular strength had come down and his chest became a little like that of a female. He had come seeking a solution from the Sringeri gurus.

The Swamiji advised them not use any medicine as no sexual instinct could be checked through it. He asked them to go to the temple of Sharadamba, spend half an hour gazing at the image of the Divine Mother with devotion and to pray to Her with faith to rid them of lust.

He added that the *Durga Saptasati* described that all women as the Divine Mother's forms. "Whenever you are tempted by the sight

of a woman or think of a female with desire, immediately think of the gracious Divine Mother. Feel that it is She who is in the form of all women. Also implore Her now and then from the bottom of your heart to free you from lust.'

The *bairagis* returned to Sringeri after about a year, with both of them looking healthy and muscular. They joyfully said, "Swamiji, your 'medicine' was very effective with no side effects!"

Risk Manager

Given the importance of guarding against the reputation risk, who in a business firm should be responsible for this function?

In response to a survey done by the *Economist Intelligence Unit* on the subject, an overwhelming number of executives had responded that it was the major responsibility of the chief executive.

As the one overseeing the firm's elaborate crisis-response system, the top executive is ultimately responsible for dealing with any events that could damage the company's reputation, and he needs to sensitise the senior management suitably.

Wise leaders would keep a careful eye on every factor that can dent the reputation of the firm. They would

remember the sagacious words of Abraham Lincoln, the past president of US, that character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. “The shadow is what we think of it; but the tree is the real thing.”

Good reputation in short is built on spotless character and self-management.

R. Krishnamurthy
rk@tattvaloka.com



Repairing Lost Reputation

Most people have experienced some form of reputational damage in their careers. There are innumerable instances of highly reputed leaders falling into the abyss of ignominy in a flash. It could be due to an unexpected public exposure of a well-guarded past misdemeanour, or any other myriad reason.


What happens when a person finds himself at the receiving end of some severe reputational damage? Can he ever recover?

Western psychologists advise several steps such as owning up your actions, confessing to the mistakes in a genuine way, remaining open to feedback, committing to improving oneself, volunteering for social work, and so on.

Our *sanatana dharma* condemns no person eternally for moral transgression. It considers that the dirtiest water can be brought back to its original pure state through distillation. The scriptures advocate genuine *prayaschitta*, or several ways of atonement.

Sri Krishna says in *Bhagavad Gita* (9.30) that even if a man of the most sinful conduct worships Me with undeviating devotion, he must be reckoned as righteous, for he has rightly resolved.

Take the Spiritual Plunge



The spiritual life is not just about knowing, but doing and being

When spiritual aspirants lament that they have not made significant progress despite practicing *sadhana* for several years, the realized guru hints that they

have not taken the spiritual plunge.

To a similar question put up by aspirants at different times, Swami Sivananda used to say that this is

because you have not given your whole mind to God. Swami Sivananda's prime disciple Swami Chidananda used to say, 'Be committed to the highest.'

Complacent *sadhana* is not good enough. *Sadhana* is a battle and it cannot be fought with complacency. Half measures would not yield the ultimate result until one takes a lion's leap at some point of time to bring about real transformation.

This is analogous to a chemical experiment. There is an inflection point in a chemical titration, where pH or electromotive force, changes drastically at the equivalence point to attain a plateau at a higher altitude. At the equivalence point, the analyte titrated is fully consumed, and with the addition of just a drop extra, only the titrant remains.

Likewise, the *jiva*/individual soul remains intact

until realisation occurs; beyond this point, only *atman/brahman* exists as the one and non-dual reality.

This steady journey acquires a self-imposed limitation at some stage. There is a usual reluctance to take a further plunge because the safety and security of the present position would go away and the seemingly bright future is not certain.

This is like the resistance shown by a learner in lifting the feet above the ground, and/or moving into deep waters while attempting to take a glide. He prefers to swim on the surface of the water.

The hesitation persists for years at times, limiting progress. In the spiritual journey, the lower mind saturated with worldly *samskara* refuses to yield completely to the higher discriminating mind.

The all-powerful *ahamkara*, the first product of ignorance continues to pervade the body-mind-intellect apparatus, and refuses to give up its cherished, acclaimed identity, separate from *Isvara* and its creation.

Like resistant microbes, it becomes immune to the efficacy of usual spiritual practices and refuses to die down. It is only by coming into contact with the philosopher's stone that iron becomes pure gold. The 'do or die' approach at the crucial stage of spiritual life brings a qualitative change that is all-inclusive.

In the famous Vedantic example of a rope mistaken as a snake, the hidden rope is real and the perceived snake is an illusion. One cannot behold two at the same time. The mind cannot perceive the world and God at the same time. Only the knowledge of the

substratum rope can eliminate the illusory snake. We cannot see the truth as long as our vision is clouded by afflictions such as likes, dislikes, and clinging to worldly objects.

Dogged Resolve

Who can take the plunge? It is only the man of discrimination and dispassion who realises the unreal nature of manifested reality, and the substratum *atman/brahman* as the only true reality and source of infinite peace and bliss.

One has to think of the enormity of the spiritual task, and the inevitability of making sacrifice of all that is non-self, or *anatman*. It demands rigorous austerity, heroic endurance, and a dogged resolve to persevere till the end. This calls for complete surrender to the divine.

Swami Sivananda, an ideal medical practitioner, had

renounced a booming professional career, and took to a life of mendicant to practice intense austerities on the banks of Ganges to attain the vision of divine.

Buddha realised this, once he sat under the *bodhi* tree with deep unremitting resolve. Sri Ramana Maharshi persistently questioned within himself 'Who am I', until he found the answer to the mystery.

The spiritual life is the realisation of absolute truth, knowledge, and bliss. It is not just about knowing, but doing and being. It requires matching effort, and the dawn of divine grace would serve as a catalyst.

We may recall the verse in *Bhagavad Gita* (7.3) beginning '*manushyanam sahasreshu kaschit yatati siddhaye*,' meaning among thousands of men, scarcely one strives for perfection,

and of those who strive and succeed, scarcely one knows Me in truth.

The higher the ideal, the harder is the achievement of it. Pitfalls are too many in the path of divine perfection. The right attitude, the right understanding, the right adjustment, and the right application – these are said to be the fourfold indispensable virtues that lead the aspirant to the divinity.

Jayant B Dave
drjbdave@yahoo.co.in



(The author is President of Divine Life Society, Vadodara, and Adjunct Professor, L M College of Pharmacy, Ahmedabad.)



The magic of rice water as a simple and effective remedy is known to Ayurveda since ages

Health Benefits of Rice Water

From time immemorial, rice has been regarded in our country as symbolising fertility, wealth and good health. Cooked rice is known to balance the *vata* and *pitta* elements, as it can be combined with vegetables, pulses, and nuts to make it wholesome and nutritious.

Among the several varieties of rice, Ayurveda has preference for Navara rice, also known as *Shastika shali*, which literally means rice grown in sixty days. It is unpolished rice, and reddish brown in colour.

According to *Charaka Samhita*, the authentic

treatise on Ayurveda, *Shastika shali* variety of rice imparts instant energy and nourishment to the body and to all the *dhatu*s (tissue systems) like blood, bones, muscles, and reproductive tissue. It also balances all the three *doshas*, and is highly beneficial for people who are weak and undernourished.

Light and Heavy Rice

Cooked rice is called *anna* if it is boiled in 10 parts of water, and the supernatant thin portion is drained out to leave a solid portion.

If the rice is fried a little before cooking, it is good in throat disorders, anorexia,

disorders arising from imbalance in *kapha* and treatment of chronic indigestion.

If the water used for cooking rice is decanted several times by adding hot water each time, it becomes light for digestion and is recommended in urinary tract disorders, *vata* disorders, and anorexia as it is nutritive and diuretic in nature.

Boiled rice if taken without draining supernatant portion, is known as *apasruta oudana*. It is sweet, nutritious, but heavy to digest. It is recommended for emaciating disorders.

Rice that is kept overnight after steaming and used the next day is called as *adhyusitam*. It aggravates the tissues, worsens *kapha* and increases all the three *doshas* of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*.

Rice Combinations

When vegetables, tubers, oil or ghee, milk substances, or pulses are added to rice while cooking, it becomes a nutritive energizer that is good for the heart.

Black gram mixed cooked rice is heavy on digestion and it aggravates cough and dyspnea. Horse gram can also be taken in equal quantity with rice and cooked. It is particularly helpful in pacifying *kapha* and *vata*, and is beneficial in abdominal worms and breathlessness.

Pulses can be cooked along with rice but its property will depend on the pulse added. Though it can be regarded as an appetizer, it aggravates *vata* and *pitta*.

Yava or barley can substitute rice and it is recommended in gaseous tumours, fever, rhinitis and throat disorders. Millets are light, appetising and

carminative when cooked well. But it should not be taken in excess as it may increase *vata dosha*.

'Wonder Water'

We generally pay little attention to the water used to wash rice. The washed water is often discarded without second thought. There is rich Ayurvedic literature on rice water, and how it is beneficial to the body metabolism.

Rice water is a white thick fluid obtained from the water used to wash the rice before cooking or boiling the rice. It is known as *tandulodaka* in Ayurveda. It is rich in starch and contains various important antioxidants that are immensely beneficial for our health.

Here is a simple way to prepare rice water. Take 10 grams of raw rice in a bowl and wash it once, and then adding about 80 ml of water

in it, keep it closed in a vessel (preferably a mud pot) for two to six hours. Then, macerate the rice in the water for three minutes, strain it, and now it is ready to use.

This rice water can be stored for six to eight hours. It is best to make fresh rice water every day.

Rice water is one of the simplest remedies in Ayurveda. It has many therapeutic benefits for the body, as explained in *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*.

For women suffering from menstrual disorders (*leucorrhoea*), rice water gives amazing results. Since rice water is cool in nature, it can help in conditions of burning urination, diarrhoea, bleeding disorders, and heavy periods. Rice water also reduces burning sensation in palms and soles.

Rice water is laden with many minerals and vitamins that have astonishing results for the skin and hair. It has skin re-hydrating properties and it can be applied on the skin for its nutritive, moisturising benefits.

It contains a compound called inositol that promotes cell growth, delays the process of ageing and stimulates blood flow.

Rice water is used as an *anupana* or a supplemental drink in many Ayurvedic medicines. For instance, it is taken with medicines in the treatment of diarrhea where sandalwood paste is mixed with honey and consumed with *tandulodaka*.

In fact, on days when one feels drained and low on energy, rice water is a natural drink to boost one's energy levels.

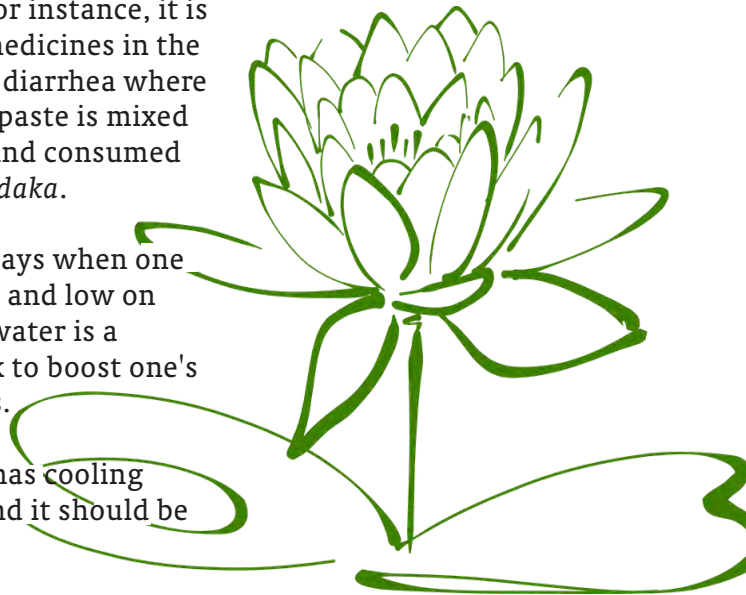
Rice water has cooling properties and it should be

avoided by people during cold weather, or by people prone to asthmatic conditions.

It is important to know the benefits of rice and the right way of cooking rice so that the benefits of this simple, essential carbohydrate are optimised.


Dr. Janardhan Hebbar

hebbar@easyayurveda.com



Your First Step in Zen

Zen meditation is a pleasant activity and it builds on your inner serenity



Mastering a certain meditation practice does not mean that one has awakened. History is replete with awakened beings in the form of philosophers, scientists, prophets and teachers who never sat down and meditated.

Having said that, in our extremely fast-paced and ever distracting world, meditation continues to be a long lasting and practical solution to get a better handle on one's thoughts and emotions.

When children start pre-school, all they are taught in the beginning is to sit properly and behave in a manner that is socially acceptable in the world. The scenario is not too different in Zen, which is more like a complete school, teaching you (by not teaching) to be at ease with yourself, others and your duty.

Sitting Meditation

The art of sitting meditation where you sit down in a comfortable posture and maintain a sense of quietude is called *Zazen*. *Zazen* was created from the Sanskrit word *dhyana* which means meditation, to be in a state of flow. *Dhyana* or *Zazen* should not be confused with *dharana*, which is concentration.

In *Zazen*, you never close your eyes. Meditative living ought to be a part of your world, that you see with your eyes.

In most forms of meditation, you close your eyes, because you want to reduce the sensory input from outside sources. But in Zen, the idea is that the meditation state must be an extension of normal life.

Therefore, if I am shutting out the external world to go into meditation, this is of little use to me, for it is while operating in the real world that I need the calmness and strength gained from my meditation.

Sitting Posture

In Zen, you sit cross-legged. That is the first element. Your back is straight, not stiff, and your neck slightly bent. Your gaze is normal and straight. You keep your eyes open, at the most your eyelids may be half closed as the mystical gaze of a Zen meditator.

Your teeth are slightly parted, barely touching each other. Your tongue is

touching your palate and your lips are gently joined. Hold a soft smile.

The idea is that your body should be so comfortable that you forget about it like a musician who has become one with his instrument. Your body should be resting in its natural state because Zen or meditation should be your most natural state. A comfortable but good posture allows you not to be distracted and to simply maintain your centre of awareness.

Your elbows should be in their natural posture, each forming an 'L'.

In my normal meditation, I just cross my hands over my lap and rest them loosely, so that my finger tips are almost touching the floor. If you have slightly shorter arms, you could rest them in your lap.

But in Zen it changes, palms facing upwards and

the tips of the thumbs together forming a small circle. Rest your hands in your lap and you are at your most comfortable.

The idea of this posture is to close all circuits, so the flow of energy is not being discharged. We always discharge energy with our limbs. You can feel that with static electricity.

I cannot emphasise enough how critical good posture is to meditation. For those who cannot sit on the floor, or those who cannot cross their legs, that is perfectly fine. You can still do plenty in Zen sitting on a chair.

However, you should keep your back straight. You can support your back, but keeping it straight is essential, because that is where the *pranic* energy, the subtlest form of energies, needs to flow.

If your back is stooped, you are more likely to doze off

than meditate. You will lose awareness. Your concentration and mindfulness will diminish if you bend your back and relax.

Count Your Breath

There is a simple mechanism in Zen to bring your centre of awareness to the present moment. Merely count your breath.

Even when not practising *Zazen*, just sit in a normal posture and listen to your breathing. It is a very effective way of being in the present moment.

Just listen to your breathing and you will automatically be in the present moment. Because your first and fundamental connection with life is breath. If you are breathing, you are alive. If you are not breathing, you are dead.

When you are angry or aggressive, your breathing is shallow. You breathe hard.

When you are calm, you breathe deep and slow. If you regulate your breathing, your mind will become regulated, and as you regulate your mind, your breathing will reflect it.

Yogic scriptures state that the breath of a true *yogi*, one who is mindful at all times, cannot be felt from more than a distance of two fingers from his or her face.

Note how any time you are angry, feeling aggressive or very passionate, your breath can be felt more than an arm's length away. Some people, medically fit, even normally breathe as if a bull is charging towards them. You can hear them breathe from miles away. But when you are calm, you cannot even hear your own breathing, it is so gentle and calm.

Breathe deeply and gently whenever you can, and don't hold your breath for too

long. Make sure you are not holding your breath till you go red in the face— don't hold your breath till you exhale with a sigh of relief.

Just as you should never eat to your full satisfaction, only hold your breath so that when you begin your exhalation, it is done very gently. We must never let go of gentleness. Under all circumstances, be gentle, be kind. Breathe gently, breathe kindly, eat gently, drink kindly, sleep gently, and wake up kindly. Bathe gently. Talk kindly.

Do everything gently, and you will be amazed by the kind of positive impact it has on you, just be gentle. You can say what needs to be said without being harsh or shooting or being too excited. It is possible to communicate effectively in a gentle way.

With each inhalation, imagine that you are

inhaling positivity. Loving kindness, compassion, happiness, joy and bliss. With each exhalation, you are releasing negativity, baggage, depressing feelings and suppressed emotions.

Keep your head and back straight. Feel the inhalation, continue the count. In the few seconds that you hold your breath, all these positive emotions are spreading throughout your body. And you are exhaling negative feelings, emptying yourself of everything that holds you back—everything that makes you angry.

It takes a certain calm to practice *Zazen* and practicing it makes you calmer.

Om Swami



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



Sri Mahasannidhanam performing
Vara Siddhi Vinayaka Vrata



Sri Sannidhanam performing
Vara Siddhi Vinayaka Vrata

Sri Mahaganapati is the Paramatma Svarupa

A round up of key events at Sringeri

Vinayaka Chaturthi was observed with great festivity at Sringeri on September, 18, 2023. Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahasannidhanam and Sri Vidushekhara Bharati Sannidhanam performed special *pujas* to Mahaganapati at noon.

In a special benedictory message, Sri Sannidhanam observed that, every year during the month of *Bhadrapada*, worship of Sri Ganesa has to be performed with *sraddha* and *bhakti*, with the understanding that, no matter the modernity of the era we live in, the fruition of the endeavours we undertake is not within our control, and

we need the grace of Bhagavan to make the endeavours successful.

Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankara had explained that Bhagavan blesses all those who seek him without any discrimination, just as the fire provides warmth to all those who seek it.

It has been the experience of many that, by offering worship to Mahaganapati first, one is able to ward off all obstacles and accomplish the task in hand. If Mahaganapati is worshipped as the *paramatma svarupa* (the embodiment of Supreme), he would bestow upon us everything, including prosperity,

knowledge and the final liberation.

The Vedic hymn, *Sri Ganapati Atharvasirsha*, says:

त्वमेव केवलं कर्ताऽसि, त्वमेव केवलं
धर्ताऽसि, त्वमेव केवलं हर्ताऽसि

- referring to Mahaganapati as the instrumental cause (निमित्त-कारण) of the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world. Likewise, the statements in the hymn -

सर्वं जगदिदं त्वत्तो जायते, सर्वं
जगदिदं त्वत्तस्तिष्ठति, सर्वं जगदिदं
त्वयि लयमेष्यति

- point out that the world stems out of Mahaganapati, exists in Him, and then dissolves into Him.

This points to the fact that Mahaganapati is the material cause (उपादान-कारण) of the world. This *Upanishadic* fact is delineated in the *Brahmasutras* as प्रकृतिश्च प्रतिज्ञाद्वान्तानुपरोधात्. *Bhagavatpada* has also

expounded this aspect of *Paramatma* as the cause - अभिन्न-निमित्तोपादानत्व.

Sri Sannidhanam pointed out that at Sringeri, Mahaganapati is worshipped in the forms of Ratna-garbha Ganapati (handed down from Sri Adi Sankara and worshipped daily by the Sringeri Acharyas), Sri Vidya Ganapati in the Vidyasankara temple, Stambha Ganapati in the Malahanikaesvara temple in Ishvaragiri, Torana Ganapati (located on the door-frame in the exclusive temple), and as Sakti Ganapati in Sharadamba temple. In addition, He is also worshipped as the Sabha Ganapati in the annual *Mahaganapati Vakyartha Vidvat Sabha*.

In the afternoon, at around 4:30 PM, the *Mahaganapati Vakyartha Vidvat Sabha* for the ensuing year commenced under the



Sri Mahasannidhanam and Jagadguru Sri Sannidhanam with the elephants after Gajalakshmi Puja



Sri Sannidhanam releasing the annual Sadvidya Journal



Sri Sannidhanam blessing the faculty and students of Sri Sadvidya Sanjeevini Samskrita Mahapathashala



Sri Sannidhanam blessing Chennai devotees with Anugraha Bhashanam

presidentship of Sri Sannidhanam. The Acharya commenced the proceedings with a *Vakyartha* in the *Nyaya Sastra*. The prestigious Sabha attended by *Sastra* scholars from all over India would end on September 30.

The Annual Day of Sringeri Veda Pathasala

The 129th *Varshikotsava* of Sri Sadvidya Sanjeevini Samskrita Mahapathashala at Sringeri was celebrated on August 22, 2023. Sri Sannidhanam graced the event which began with a Sabha organised at Guru Nivas.

Vidvan Vinayaka Udupa, the Principal of the *Pathasala*, presented the annual report. Renowned Vidvan Devadatta Govinda Patil (founder of Shree Vidhya Pathshala, Goa) was the chief guest and distributed prizes to the students who took part in various competitions.

Students who won the Sanskrit and Kannada oratorical competitions spoke in front of the Jagadguru and received blessings. Various endowments established by devotees were awarded to the senior faculty and students of the *Pathasala*.

Sri Sannidhanam then released the 19th edition of *Sadvidya*, the annual souvenir of the *Pathasala* containing articles in Sanskrit and Kannada penned by scholars, students and the alumni.

Sri Sannidhanam in his *anugraha bhashanam* in Sanskrit said, “The *Upanishads* themselves state the limitation of wealth – *अमृतत्वस्य तु नाशास्ति वित्तेन* – immortality cannot be attained by worldly wealth. There is, however, the *daivi sampat* - the wealth of divine qualities - that help in securing *moksha* -

दैवी सम्पद्धिमोक्षाय. The study of the Vedas and Sastras help us in developing such qualities.

“Likewise, Maharshi Gautama in his *Dharma sutras* explains the 8 *Atma-gunas*, namely दया (compassion), क्षान्ति (forbearance), अनसूय (absence of envy), शौच (purity), मङ्गल (adhering to what is worthy and giving up worthless pursuits), अकार्पण्य (remaining calm without being swayed by misery), and अस्पृहा (remaining contented without hankering over objects of the senses).

He further explains 40 *samskaras*. The sage mentions that a person may have acquired all the *Samskaras*, but he will not be supremely benefitted if he does not possess the eight *Atma-gunas*.

In *Bhagavad Gita*, those aspects that are described as *sattvika* refer to divine qualities. Such qualities are

also described in the *Neeti Sastra* as वाञ्छा सज्जनसङ्गतौ (desire to be in noble company), परगुणे प्रीतिः (expressing appreciation when observing a noble quality in others), गुरौ नम्रता (reverence to the Guru), विद्यायां व्यसनम् (commitment to acquiring knowledge), स्वयोषिति रतिः (remaining steadfast in love towards one's own spouse), लोकापवादाद् भयम् (fear of deviating from social norms), भक्तिः शूलिनि (devotion to God), शक्तिरात्मदमने (power or self-control), संसर्गमुक्तिः खलैः (staying away from the wicked), and प्राणाघातान्निवृत्तिः (abstinence from killing).

“Hence, if a student develops these divine qualities while also acquiring knowledge, then worldly prosperity will also follow,” Sri Sannidhanam said.

In the evening, a cultural programme was held with the students enacting a Sanskrit drama (*Krishna*

Sri Sannidhanam blessing the students of the Pathashala who enacted the Samskrita and Kannada plays



Sringeri Pathashala Vidyarthi enact Krishna Dautyam, the famous Samskrita drama



Sri Sannidhanam blessing the faculty and students of the Central Sanskrit University



Sri Sannidhanam inaugurating the Samskritotsava at the local Central Sanskrit University



Dautyam) and Kannada drama (*Bhoo-kailasa*).

Sanskritotsava

Sri Sannidhanam blessed the *Sanskritotsava* organised at Guru Nivas on September 1, 2023 by the Rajiv Gandhi Campus of the Central Sanskrit University as a seven-day long event. He released *Vakyartha Bharati*, containing a summary of various *Sastraic* discourses conducted in the campus.

In his *anugraha bhashanam* in Sanskrit, Sri Sannidhanam said that all the requisite knowledge required to fulfil the purpose of man's life are contained in our scriptures. He added that the purpose of *Sanskritotsava* is twofold - to introduce Sanskrit to those unfamiliar with the language, and to delve deeper into the nuances of the language for those who already know the language.

Sri Sannidhanam blessed the assembled students to

sincerely study the language and imbibe the knowledge as well as culture and tradition of our *Dharma*.

Varamahalakshmi Vrata

Sri Mahasannidhanam observed *Varamahalakshmi vrata* and worshipped Goddess *Varamahalakshmi* with a detailed *puja* in the evening of August 25, 2023. As part of the *Vrata Puja*, the Jagadguru invoked the Goddess in a *kalasha*. After he performed the *Mahamangalarati*, *Suvasini Puja* was performed.

Tread the Path of Dharma

During the current *chaturmasya* period, it is the practice for many groups of devotees and communities to come to Sringeri to have *darsan* of the Jagadgurus and perform *bhiksha vandanam*.

For a large congregation of devotees descending from Chennai for performing *bhisha vandanam*, Sri

Sannidhanam blessed them with an *anugraha bhashanam* on September 2, 2023.

The Swamiji recalled the four-month long *Vijaya Yatra* of Sri Mahasannidhanam and the observance of *Chaturmasyam* and celebration of *Navaratri* at Chennai in the year 2012.

He said that “It is knowledge that defines a Guru, who out of compassion instructs the disciple and removes his ignorance. When caught in a dilemma in life, the Guru has to be approached with humility and instruction has to be sought. This is what Arjuna did by calling himself a disciple, and beseeching Sri Krishna to instruct him -

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्.

“People actually seek happiness that will be everlasting. This is what the *Sastras* describe as *Sat-Chit-Ananda* - the Self that

pervades all and is in essence the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. Sri Adi Sankara taught the path to realise the state of this permanent happiness. As only a few are qualified to directly tread the path, Bhagavatpada advocated the path of *Dharma* as described in the *sastras*. Engaging in *dharmic* activity, including *puja* and *japa*, will ensure that the demerits or sins that we have accumulated in the past are reduced.

“There is no definitive answer to the question how long one must engage in *dharma*. This is because only *Isvara* knows how much sin a person has accumulated. This is the reason that whenever we engage in any *dharmic* activity, the *sastras* advocate taking the *sankalpa* (resolution) at the beginning with the statement, “मम उपात्त-समस्त-दुरित-क्षय-द्वारा” – meaning that “the objective

of the particular *dharmic* activity was to reduce the storehouse of my sins.”

“Further, when such activity is done without an eye for securing specific results, it leads to purity of the mind. Bhagavan Sri Krishna states this as - कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते - you only have the authority over the action.”

Hence, while engaging in worldly affairs, one should remember these teachings and live accordingly to make his life purposeful, and pass on the aspects of *sraddha* in *dharma* and Guru to the next generation.”

Krishna Janmashtami

Sri Krishna Jayanti Mahotsava was celebrated with devotion at Sringeri on September 6, 2023.

A special *puja* to Sri Krishna was performed by Sri Mahasannidhanam beginning at around 10:30 PM. Lord Krishna was

propitiated with *phala-panchamrita-abhisheka* accompanied by the sonorous chanting of Vedic *mantras* from the *Yajurveda* and *Rigveda* by scholars of the Mutt. Sri Mahasannidhanam performed *archana* with the *Krishna Ashtottara Satanama* and *Sri Vishnu Sahasranama*.

After *mahamangalarati*, the Jagadguru performed *parayana* of the 3rd *adhyaya* of the 10th *Skandha* of *Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana*, which describes the *avatara* of the Lord. Sri Sannidhanam was present during the *Mahamangalarti* and the *Parayana*.

Narayaneeya Archanam

A special *puja* was performed to Lord Krishna with *tulasi archana* accompanied by chant of *Sriman Narayaneeyam* and *Vishnu Sahasranamavali* on Sep 7, 2023 as part of the Krishna Janmashtami



Sri Mahasannidhanam performing
Vara Mahalakshmi Vrata



Sri Mahasannidhanam reciting
Srimad Bhagavatam on Krishna
Janmashtami

*Mangalarati after Narayaneeya-archanam
on the day following Krishna Janmashtami*



*The commencement of the
annual Mahaganapati Vakyartha
Vidvat Sabha*



celebrations. The chanting took place for the welfare of all mankind.

Sriman Narayaneeyam authored by the renowned 16th century scholar, Melpathur Sri Narayana Bhattatiri of Kerala, is a condensation of Bhagavan Veda Vyasa's *Srimad Bhagavata Mahapuranam* that runs to 18,000 verses.

Bhattatiri dedicates *Narayaneeyam* consisting of 100 *dasakas* and 1034 verses at the lotus feet of his *ishta devata*, Lord Krishna in the form of Guruvayurappan, and prays for a quick recovery from the disease that had afflicted him. In doing so, he gives an excellent and devout portrayal of Lord Krishna's life, and also explains the *advaitic* teaching as depicted in *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

As part of *the Narayaneeya-Archanam*, 10 *namas* from the *Vishnu Sahasranamavali*

were chanted along with chanting every *dasaka* of *Sriman Narayaneeyam* during the *archana*.

Maharudra Yaga at SVBF Canada

Sringeri Vidya Bharati Foundation of Canada, an international affiliate of the Sringeri Mutt, organised a *Maharudra Yaga* at the Sharadamba temple premises in Toronto on September 9, 2023. Sri Sannidhanam graced the event via a live video conference call with an *anugraha sandesa* in Hindi.

While referring to the greatness of the *sanatana dharma* tradition, Sri Sannidhanam mentioned about the portion of the Veda titled *Rudra-prasna* which invokes the grace of Lord Siva, who is called *Asutoshha* (one who is pleased very quickly). Sri Sannidhanam pointed out that the various animals including the *vahanas* (the

vehicles or mounts) associated with Siva and other deities teach us an important lesson.

The *vahanas* of Siva, Parvati, Ganesa and Subrahmanya are the bull, lion, mouse, and peacock respectively. We also note that the snake is worn as an ornament by Siva. In the world, we see enmity, or a predator-prey relationship, between snake and mouse, peacock and snake, lion and bull etc. However, in the divine presence of the family of Siva, we note that all these beings live in peace and friendship.

Likewise, man must realise the greatness of association with Bhagavan, live in peace and amity and help the needy.

Vedanta Retreats

With the blessings of the Ubhaya Jagadgurus, two four-day residential Vedanta

retreats were conducted in Sringeri during August 26-29, 2023 (retreat in English language) and September 9-12 (retreat in Tamil language), by a social media community called '*Aham Brahmaasmi*'. Lectures on various topics in Vedanta were delivered by scholars rooted in the traditional *advaita parampara*.

Addressing the participants of one of two groups, Sri Sannidhanam mentioned that man is blessed with an intellect that helps him to enquire, analyse and arrive at conclusions. This faculty has to be put to use to regulate one's life towards the goal of Vedantic enquiry.

Sri Adi Sankaracharya states that “knowledge is that which quietens the senses, knowledge is that which is defined as useful in the *Upanishads*, and those who have clear conviction about the reality of *Brahman*

are the fortunate ones. The rest remain deluded and lead their lives without purpose.”

तज्ज्ञानं प्रशमकरं यदिन्द्रियाणां
तज्ज्ञेयं यदुपनिषत्सु निश्चितार्थम् ।
ते धन्या भुवि परमार्थनिश्चितेहाः
शेषास्तु भ्रमनिलये परिभ्रमन्तः ॥१॥

Addressing the other group of participants, Sri Sannidhanam pointed out that certain aspects of Vedanta (which is the concluding portion of the Vedas) are not mentioned at the beginning of Vedas. This is because understanding *advaita* requires certain pre-requisites.

At the beginning and middle of the Vedic course, we are instructed on *karma* and *upasana*, which help us to acquire the qualifications for understanding the *tattva* explained in Vedanta.

“Only after *tattva-sakshatkara* will a state be reached where the *jnani* - the

knower of the Self or *Atman* - has identified himself as the self of all, and has nothing to do - यत्र तु सर्वमात्मैवाभूत् तत् केन कं पश्येत् .

“The word 'ब्रह्म' is etymologically derived from a verb that signifies 'वृद्धि' meaning enormous nature. It indicates that *Brahman* is all-pervasive. While we understand in a worldly sense that space or *akasa* is all-pervasive, *paramatma* or *Brahman* pervades *akasa* also, as indicated by the etymological meaning of the word *Brahman*.”

Sravana Somavara Pujas

On the auspicious *Somavaras* (Mondays) during the month of *Sravan* (August-Sept), special *pujas* were performed by Sri Sannidhanam to Lord Chandramoulisvara at noon.



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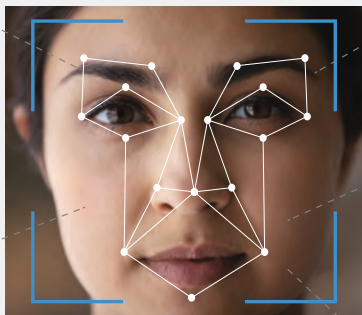


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THE NECTAR OF DEVOTION

The following is an exposition by Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahasvamigal, the 35th pontiff of the Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham. The Swamiji's lucid messages bear the stamp of his direct experience of the Truth, mastery of yoga, and his erudition in the *Sastras*.

People have a natural capacity to love. Affection requires an object and when that object is God, it gets the appellation *bhakti* or devotion.

Narada defines *bhakti* as extreme love of God. He who attains such devotion no longer longs for anything and is ever fully satiated and happy.

While attachment to wife, wealth, etc., causes bondage, attachment to God liberates. A sense object sometimes gives joy and sometimes sorrow. It is not always available and has several faults.

On the other hand, God is ever captivating, constantly available and totally free from blemishes. Further,

what or who can be as loveable as God who is the repository of all good qualities? So bewitching are His glories that even sages who have realized the Truth and have nothing to achieve go into raptures on thinking of Him.

The Lord's mercy extends to all. Did not Rama tell Sugriva when the latter voiced concern about accepting Vibhishana, "To anyone who seeks refuge in Me but once, saying, 'I am Yours', I grant fearlessness"? A sincere devotee has no cause for any worry, for he has surrendered his body and mind to God and left everything in God's hands.

God is Just

While it is said that a true devotee is in God's loving care, it would be wrong to infer that a devotee ought not to have any hardship. The Lord is, after all, not only most compassionate but also perfectly just. If a

person had committed major transgressions in earlier births, allowing him to go scot-free, without any punishment in the form of suffering, would be a travesty of justice.

A judge who refuses to penalise murderers on the ground of kindness would be doing a great disservice to society. He can, of course, take mitigating circumstances and repentance into consideration to reduce the punishment awarded to a person found guilty of a crime.

Likewise, God, being just, does award punishment even to devotees, but, being kind, reduces the penalty to the extent possible. Just because a mother scolds her child, does it mean that she does not dearly love her offspring?

God is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent and an ocean of mercy.

Hence, there is just nothing that the devotee has to make known to God which is not already known to Him. It is well known that people feel happy when they obtain what they desire, and unhappy when they do not. So, he who attunes his will to that of God can never have any reason for dissatisfaction.

God, being most loveable, there is no reason why anyone cannot cultivate devotion. By associating with and thinking in positive terms about a person, another develops a liking for him.

Likewise, devotion to God can be developed by repeatedly thinking of God and His glories. To think of Him is not difficult, for one can mentally keep chanting His name and dedicate all actions and thoughts to Him.

The company of holy devotees is highly helpful in

developing devotion, while bad company produces the opposite effect and turns one's mind away from God and towards sense objects.

At first, when a person tries to fix his mind on God, he may not find his mind cooperative and he may not derive much joy in doing so. There is no reason, however, for despair.

The budding devotee can change the situation to his advantage by giving God a detailed report of the antics of his mind. What difficulty is there in mentally telling God, "My mind refuses to think of You. See the way it rebels!" Such a conversation with God is itself a way of thinking of Him.

Even when a person is able to briefly fix his mind on God, he experiences peace. This is because, at least for that short duration, he is free from concerns and is like a baby in the arms of its

mother. The sense of peace and joy comes rather easily in the presence of great devotees.

Gita's Advice

In a verse in *Sivanandalahari*, Sankara has portrayed the stages in the growth of devotion.

In the first stage, the devotee somehow approaches God, just as the seed of the *ankola* tree manages to get to the tree and attach itself to the trunk. Thereafter, the effect of grace, which was there even earlier, begins to be clearly felt. God holds on to the devotee, just as a magnet attracts and holds a needle. The devotee feels the pull of God.

In the third stage, the devotee and God are close to each other like a man and his chaste wife. The love is strongly mutual.

Next, just as a creeper adds to the beauty of a tree, the

devotee adds, as it were, to God's glory. Indeed, devotees like Prahlada were ornaments of God. In the final stage, the devotee merges with God just as a river flows into and becomes one with the ocean.

Krishna has compassionately taught how devotees of different capabilities should practise devotion in *Bhagavad Gita*. A mature aspirant is advised to fix his mind and intellect on God as the Cosmic Person; every-thing is viewed as a part of God's body, which is the universe.

To the aspirant who is unable to view everything as related to God, Krishna teaches repeated fixation of the mind on some chosen form of God. Suppose a person is unable to meditate thus, he is instructed to be intent on works for the Lord. The devotee should engage himself in hearing about God, glorifying Him, worshipping His idol, etc.

Finally, even if the aspirant is unable to be absorbed in such tasks, there is an easier option that is available to him. The Lord says that the aspirant should, with regulated mind, dedicate all his actions to Him and give up desire for the results of all the acts. Normally, a person acts motivated by longing for the results. Such functioning is productive of bondage.

The spiritual aspirant, motivated by his love of God, acts for the sake of God, without attachment to the results. The devotee offers the fruits of actions to God, and acts with the feeling, “I do this for God”. He views success and failure with equanimity; here, success includes acquisition of mental purity.

Acting as he does for the sake of God, the devotee abstains from misdeeds. He acts with firmness and enthusiasm. Treating the

scriptures as the directives of God, he faithfully carries out the scripturally-prescribed duties that are pertinent to him.

Thus, detachment from the fruits of actions does not imply inefficiency or negligence. On the contrary, the devotee's performance is superior to that of a worldly man; unlike the latter, the former is not bogged down by anxiety, frustration, etc.

The Lord proclaims, “Fix your mind on Me. Be My devotee. Worship Me. Prostrate before Me. Conducting yourself in this fashion, offering all ends, means and needs to Me, you shall come to Me alone. Truly do I promise thus to you, for you are dear to Me.”

Who indeed would not want to surrender himself to God who is so very loving and loveable!

Source: 'Multifaceted Jivanmukta'

Great Disciples



the Government Science College, Bangalore.

He took up a complete study of Vedanta Sastra over several years under Sri VS Ramachandra Sastri of Bangalore (who was hailed as '*Panditaraja*'). Sri Subbaramaiya was impressed by the activities of Sri Ramakrishna Mutt.

Veda Brahmasri D. S. Subbaramaiya an *aparoksha jnani* was blessed and guided by consecutive Jagadgurus of Sringeri, starting with the 34th pontiff Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswamigal.

Earlier Sri Subbaramaiya was involved in research in physics under Sir C V Raman at the Indian Institute of Science, followed by serving as a professor of physics at

He wrote a great commentary on Adi Sankara's *Sri Dakshinamurti stotra* in English, in accordance with the direction of the 35th Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamigal. The highly scholarly book, of 1300 pages, was published in two volumes by the Sringeri Peetham.

This book, with quotes from many texts of Vedanta, is considered an invaluable source for the study of Vedanta.



The Divine Names of Sri Krishna – 11



The 108 auspicious names of Krishna contained in Sri Krishna Ashtottara Satanamavali represent the collection of Krishna'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 Krishna.

38) योगिने नमः ।
Yogine namaḥ ।

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna who is endowed with divine glories.

The 30th *nama*, *yoginām pataye namaḥ* portrays Krishna as the one who leads *yogis* to liberation. This *nama* depicts Bhagavan as the abode of divine opulence.

There is an instance in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (10.17) where Arjuna addresses Krishna as *Yogī*. Sri Madhusudana Sarasvati explains the term *yogaḥ* as the possession of enormous power arising from indescribable glories.

This includes qualities that render him as the All-knowing and All-powerful One (*sarvajñatva-*

sarvaśaktitvādi-lakṣaṇam-aiśvaryam).

39) कोटिसूर्यसमप्रभाय नमः ।
*Koṭisūrya-sama-prabhāya
namaḥ |*

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna whose effulgence is similar to that of a crore suns (or immeasurable).

Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada while explaining the *nāma*, *Bhānu* in the *Muṇḍako-paṇiṣad* (1.1.9) says: 'When he shines, all shine after him'.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* also says (15.12) 'Know that the splendour of the sun, radiance of the moon, brilliance of the fire all come from me'.

There are *nāmas* in *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* such as *mahātejah*, *diptamūrtiḥ*, and *dyutimān* to emphasise that Bhagavan is endowed with great radiance.

40) इलापतये नमः ।
Ilāpataye namaḥ |

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna who is the lord of the Earth.

Sri Vishnu is always worshipped with his consorts *Bhūdevī* and *Śrīdevī* – mother earth and Mahalakshmi.

Ilā is another name to denote the earth. During the *Varaha avatāra*, Mahavishnu saved the earth, considered an *amśa* or part of Lakshmi, from Hiranyaksha.

41) परंज्योतिषे नमः ।
Paramjyotiṣe namaḥ |

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna who is the Supreme Effulgence.

This is another *nama* to eulogise the *tejas* of Bhagavan which is indescribable.

The *paramjyoti* is also invoked while describing

Mahavishnu's *Sudarsana Chakra*, the ultimate weapon shaped like a wheel with flaming spokes. The famous *Sudarsana mantra* means "Oh *Sudarsana*, the great flame, as refulgent as hundred thousand suns, lead me from the darkness of ignorance and guide me towards Sri Vishnu's path".

42) यादवेन्द्राय नमः ।
Yādavendrāya namaḥ |

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna who is the leader of Yadavas.

43) यदुद्धहाय नमः ।
Yaddūdvahāya namaḥ |

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna who leads the Yadu clan forward.

Sri Krishna was born in the *Chandravamśa* and the lineage can be traced to king Yayati whose eldest son was Yadu. There were subsequent clans born in the succeeding

generations of Yayati, *Bhajamāna vamśa* being one such clan. King Bhajamana had a son named Surasena who had ten sons and five daughters. The eldest son was Vasudeva who was Krishna's father.

Krishna, who spent his childhood with his foster parents Nanda and Yasoda, moved to Mathura from Brindavana to fulfil his duties towards the *Vr̥ṣnis*. He ensured that all the wealth of those who had fled Mathura for fear of Kamsa were returned to them.

Kamsa's father-in-law Jarāsandha had harboured enmity towards Krishna, and he had tormented those kings who were aligned to Krishna.

The announcement of *Rājasūya yaga* by Yudhishtira gave an opportunity to Krishna and the Pandava brothers Arjuna and Bhima to challenge

Jarāsandha, and eventually kill him and release about twenty thousand kings held captive by him.

Jarāsandha had earlier attacked Mathura seventeen times. When he paired with Kalyavana, another powerful king, Krishna stealthily moved all the Yadavas to safety from Mathura to the new capital Dwaraka.

Sage Suka reveals to king Parikshit that Sri Krishna's unsurpassing power and glories acted as a talisman protecting the race of Yadus. The Yadu race increased in huge numbers, dividing itself into one hundred and fifty family clans to become invincible.

Krishna is acclaimed as *Yaduśreṣṭhaḥ*, the best among the Yadus in the *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* (705) and as *Yadukulatilakaḥ* in several literary texts and music compositions.

44) वनमालिने नमः ।
Vanamāline namaḥ |

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna who is adorned with the *Vanamala*.

Vanamala, also known as *Vaijayantī mala*, literally means the garland of victory. It is as much a part of Krishna's person as his flute and the peacock feather on his hair.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam describes (10.21.5) Krishna's bewitching splendour, wearing this *mala*. It says, wearing a peacock-feather ornament upon his head, blue *karnikara* flowers on his ears, a yellow garment as brilliant as gold, and the *vaijayanti* garland, Krishna exhibited his transcendental form as the greatest of dancers as he entered the forest of Vrindavan, beautifying it with his footprints.

Mahabharata mentions that the *mala* that Krishna wore

was made of never-wilting lotuses.

There is a deeper philosophical import for this special necklace of Krishna.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (12.10.11) portrays the *tattva* of Mahavishnu by enumerating the significance of Bhagavan's form: स्वमायां वनमालाख्यां नानागुणमयीं दधत् (*svamāyāṃ vanamālākhyāṃ nānāguṇamayīṃ dadhat*).

It says the *vanamālā* represents Bhagavan's *māyā* comprising of the three *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

There is a reference to this divine garland in the *Viṣṇu Sahasranama* in the line 'nimiṣo nimiṣa sragvī vachaspati...., and the *nama*, "Om Sragvine namaha". *Sragvī* means adorned with the *vaijayantī* garland of Vishnu.

In his commentary on the hymn, Adi Sankara mentions *vaijayantī* as the garland made of the *Pancha tattvas*, the five elements of creation. The five gems in the *Vaijayantī mālā*, viz. ruby, emerald, sapphire, pearl and diamond represent the *pancha bhutas*, the five elements.

Ruby (known as *manikyam* in Sanskrit) is red in colour and represents the fire (*agni*) element. Earth (*prithvī*) is green, represented by emerald (*maragatam*).

The blue sky, standing for the air element, is indicated by sapphire, while water (*āpa* in Sanskrit) is white and indicated by pearl. The vast space (*akāśa*) with glittering stars scattered in the cosmos is represented by diamond (*vajra*).



“I am Just an Instrument”

जपो जल्पः शिल्पं सकलमपि मुद्राविरचना

गतिः प्रादक्षिण्य-क्रमणमशनाद्याहुति-विधिः ।

प्रणामःसंवेशः सुखमखिलमात्मार्पण-दृशा

सपर्या-पर्यायस्तव भवतु यन्मे विलसितम् ॥

Japo jalpaḥ śilpaṁ sakalamapi mudrāviraṇā

gatiḥ prādakṣiṇyakramaṇamaśanādyāhutivīdhiḥ |

Praṇāmassaṁveśassukhamakhilamātmārpaṇadṛśā

saparyāparyāyastava bhavatu yanme vilasitam ||

This beautiful *sloka* appears in *Soundaryalahari* (*sloka* 27), the great work of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada, where every verse imparts wisdom, courage or success. It is a powerful prayer to express the devotion, and praise the beauty of Devi Maha Tripura Sundari.

The Acharya says “Whatever I speak are your *mantra japa*.

The movement of my hands are my *mudras* for you. Whenever and wherever I walk, they are my circumambulations for you. Whatever I eat and drink are oblations for you. Whenever I lie down, they are my prostrations for you. Whatever I enjoy, such enjoyments are surrendering myself to you. Thus, whatever actions I do, they are meant for you as your worship”.

This is an easy way of worship, and there cannot be anything better!

Once you know that it is by Her grace you are talking, you would not waste it on gossiping or discussing any disgusting material. When you are aware that the hands and feet are working because of Her, you would stop using them for doing wrong things, or visiting to non-graceful places. When you become aware that what you eat or drink are offerings to the divine, you would think twice about putting in your mouth any unclean or unhealthy item.

Gradually, in due time, this conviction would spread to one's mental activities too. In other words, the egoistic thought of 'I am planning this or that' will give way to the thought 'Let Her get this done, if She wishes'. Once we transfer the responsibilities to the Divine Mother, the

impact of the mind will slowly disappear.

This verse is thus the essence of surrender to the divine mother. One can attain her only if we surrender to Her.

Such a dedication of everything at the feet of the Lord is what is prescribed in *Bhagavad Gita* in the famous sloka, “*Yat karoshi yad ashnasi yaj juhoshi...mad arpanam* (9.27).

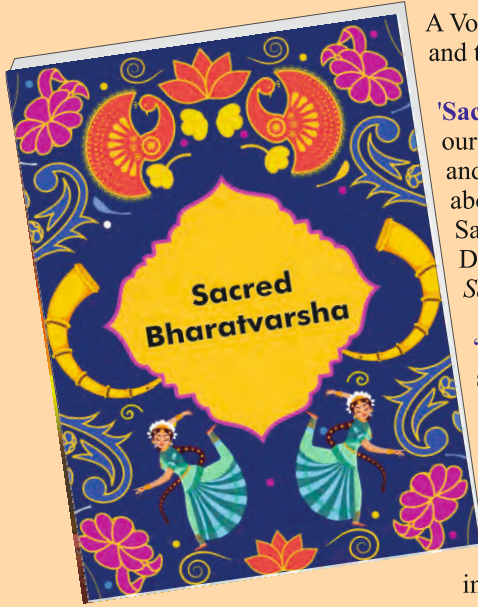
In essence, the body does what it does because it is being made to so by the *jiva* within it; so also what all this *jiva* does is because it is being made to do so by the Supreme *Jiva-Sakti* behind it, and that is the Mother Goddess.

Prof V. Krishnamurthy
profvk@yahoo.com



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Beware of Selfish Motives

There lived a lion in a forest in a huge cave. In the same cave, there also lived a tiny mouse in a small hole.

This mouse harassed the lion in several ways. Often she scampered around, and nibbled away at the lion's luxurious mane of hair. She also ran all over the lion and played on him when he was asleep, thus disturbing him regularly.

The lion was vexed with such pranks and often tried to catch the little mouse, which was too nimble to run into her little hole.

The harassed lion was at his wit's end to handle this pest of a mouse. One day he hit upon a solution: Get a cat which was fond of mice and excelled in catching them.

So he decided to get a cat to live with him and protect him from this little pest. He soon found a cat who was

willing to live with him in his cave. The lion promised to look after the cat well, and got the cat several treats as incentive to come along.

The cat was quite happy with the attention poured on him, and started enjoying the stay with the lion.

The little mouse in the meantime got scared to venture out of her hole upon the arrival of the cat, though it grew very hungry for want of food.

One day the mouse decided to step out quietly in search of food, but was quickly pounced upon and caught by the cat. He enjoyed this little meal earned by him, and continued to live in the cave with the lion.

After a few days, the lion noticed that he could no longer hear the scraping and scampering sounds of the mouse. He thought that the mouse must have moved

away from the cave after the arrival of the cat.

The lion was now able to live in peace, and realised that he no longer required the services of the cat. He began to ignore the cat who had grown used to getting treats and attention from the lion.

The cat was dismayed at the sudden indifference of the lion. One day he told the lion that he was very hungry, and asked for the regular food that the lion had promised to give him in return for his staying with the lion in the cave.

The lion angrily told him to go and find his own food, and not disturb him any longer. The cat left the cave as a wiser animal, realising that the lion's need for him had ended with his killing of the mouse.

This story teaches us that people attach value to a person only as long as there

is some benefit to draw from the person. Understanding this, one must not read too much into any relationship, and thus avoid heartbreaks.

Here is the *subhashitam* to explain the above:

कार्यार्थी भजते लोकः यावत्कार्यं
न सिध्यति ।
उत्तीर्णे च परे परे नौकायाः
किं प्रयोजनम् ॥

*Kāryārthī bhajate lokaha
yāvatkāryam na sidhyati |
Uttīrne ca pare pāre
naukāyāhā kim prayojanam ||*

A person who wants to get some work done from another person praises him till the work is pending. (After the work is done, he does not need that person).

As they say, once you cross a river, what is the need for a boat or a bridge?

Anuradha Sundara Raman
anuradha113@yahoo.co.in



Charity without Pride



Here is a beautiful story from *Mahabharata* to drive a message on the attitude that should go along with a person's charitable disposition.

As the eldest of the Pandava brothers, Yudhishtira was made the ruler of Hastinapura after winning

the Mahabharata war. He was a wise, just and compassionate king. He performed a lot of charities. Every day, he gave away gold and silver to the poor, and arranged for free food for the needy.

After doing such acts every single day, Yudhishtira gradually started getting a

little proud about his charity and hospitality.

Sri Krishna noticed the same and decided to correct this attitude.

One day he asked Yudhishtira to accompany him on a journey to complete an important task, and they both set out. After travelling a long distance, they reached the nether world (*patala loka*) ruled by king Mahabali.

Mahabali was extremely charitable by nature, and was renowned in all the worlds as the king who gave away everything to Lord Vishnu in the latter's *Vamana avatara*.

As soon as they reached *patala loka*, Yudhishtira felt very thirsty. Sri Krishna took him to the nearest house, and requested the lady of the house to give some water.

The lady brought a golden vessel full of water.

Yudhishtira drank the water, thanked her, and returned the vessel to her.

The lady looked shocked and refused to take the vessel back. She told Yudhishtira that in their country, they never took back anything that was once given away. Now Yudhishtira was shocked and told her that it was a precious vessel made of gold. The lady said that it was indeed so, but she could not take back what she had already given away.

Yudhishtira was amazed at hearing this, and noticed everyone in that country behaved the same way.

Sri Krishna, watching all this with a gentle smile on his lips, then led Yudhishtira to King Mahabali's palace, where they were received warmly. Sri Krishna told Mahabali about Yudhishtira's just rule in Hastinapura, and his famed

charity of feeding at least five hundred people daily.

Mahabali however looked askance at this description and closed his ears with his hands. A surprised Yudhishtira asked Mahabali about the reason for his strange reaction, as Yudhishtira was in fact quite proud about his own charitable nature.

Mahabali replied that he was shocked to hear about Yudhishtira feeding around five hundred people daily, because this meant that there were so many poor and needy people in Yudhishtira's kingdom. On the other hand, Mahabali had to search for people to accept charity in his kingdom, and he rarely ever found anyone willing to accept charity.

This showed that Yudhishtira's rule was not good enough to remove poverty, and Mahabali said

his gesture of closing his ears was meant to convey that he did not wish to hear about such a poor governance.

Yudhishtira was stunned into silence with his pride completely removed. He realised that how wrong he was about his charity and pride, and he resolved to work better to ensure that his subjects lived better lives and became self-reliant.

This story from the epic is to convey that one should be watchful about anything he is proud of, as there is the likelihood of someone to be better at the same skill or the area of work. It is also far better to help a person stand on his feet than to hand out charity to him.

Anuradha Sundara Raman
anuradha113@yahoo.co.in





Say it in Sanskrit

A small test to revise the *ktavatu pratyayas* that we learnt from last month's issue.

1. निर्दिष्टसमये रयिल्यानं मुम्बैनगरं _____ ।

Nirdiṣṭasamaye rayilyānaṁ mumbainagaraṁ _____ ।

The train reached Mumbai on time.

2. कृषीवलाः क्षेत्रे बीजानि _____ ।

Kṛṣīavalāḥ kṣetre bījāni _____ ।

The farmers sowed the seeds in the field.

3. विश्वामित्रमहर्षिः रामलक्ष्मणाभ्यां सह मिथिलानगरं _____ ।

*Viśvāmitramaharṣiḥ rāmalakṣmaṇābhyāṁ
saha mithilānagaraṁ _____ ।*

Sage Visvamitra entered Mithila with Rama
and Lakshmana.

4. राक्षसीनां मध्ये सीता बहूनि सङ्कटानि _____ ।

Rākṣasīnām madhye sītā bahūni saṅkaṭāni _____ ।

Sita bore many difficulties in the midst of Rakshasis.

5. अशोकवने सीता मारुतिं _____।

Aśokavane Sītā mārutiṃ _____।

Sita saw Maruti in Asokavana.

4. सीतलवने; 5. इववती

Answers: 1. शरवतः; 2. वनवतः; 3. शरवतः; 4. सीतलवने; 5. इववती

You may like to enjoy the conversation below between two friends.

कमला - अयि ललिते ! आगामिनि मासे नवरात्रिमहोत्सवः भविष्यति किल।

Kamalā - Ayi lalite ! āgāmini māse navarātri-mahotsavaḥ

bhaviṣyati kila |

Dear Lalita! We will be celebrating Navaratri in the coming month?

ललिता - आं प्रिये । अहं बन्धुभिः सह शृङ्गेरीं गमिष्यामि ।

Lalitā - Ām priye | ahaṃ bandhubhiḥ saha

śṛṅgerīṃ gamiṣyāmi |

Yes dear! I will be going to Sringeri with my relatives.

कमला - तत्र शारदाम्बायाः अत्यद्भुतमन्दिरमस्तीति जानामिः ।

Kamalā - Tatra Śāradāmbāyāḥ atyadbhutamandiramastīti

jānāmi |

I am aware that there is a beautiful Sharadamba temple there.

ललिता - सत्यम् । महता कोलाहलेन शरन्नवरात्रिमहोत्सवः तत्र प्रचलति ।

Lalitā - Satyam | Mahatā kolāhalena śarannavarātri

mahotsavaḥ tatra pracalati |

The Navaratri Mahotsava is celebrated in a grand manner over there.

कमला - काश्मीरदेशे शारदाम्बायाः प्राणप्रतिष्ठा ज्येष्ठमासे जगद्गुरु श्री विधुशेखरमहास्वामिभिः कृता इत्यपि श्रुतवती ।

Kamalā - Kāśmīradeśe Śāradāmbāyāḥ prāṇapraṭiṣṭhā Jyēṣṭhamāse Jagadguru Śrī Vidhusekharamahāsvāmibhiḥ kṛtā ityapi śrutvatī |

I also heard that the consecration of Saradamba was done by Jagadguru Sri Vidhusekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji in the month of June (Jyeshtha) in Kashmir.

ललिता - आम् । यद्यपि शारदादेव्याः सर्वज्ञपीठं पाकिस्थानदेशेऽस्ति तथापि तत्समीपे टीट्वाल्देशे अम्बा अधुना लब्धप्रतिष्ठा विलसति ।

Lalitā - Ām | Yadyapi Śāradādevyāḥ sarvajñapīṭham pākisthandeśe asti tathāpi tatsamīpe ṭīṭvāldēse ambā adhunā labdhapraṭiṣṭhā vilasati |

Yes. Even though Sharadambal's Sarvajnapeetham is in Pakistan, she shines forth close to that place at Teetwal.

कमला - आश्चर्यकरः विषयः । नमस्ते शारदादेवि काश्मीरपुरवासिनीति अस्माकं दैनन्दिनी प्रार्थना देव्या स्वीकृता ।

Kamalā - Āścaryakaraḥ viṣayaḥ | Namaste Śāradādevi kāśmīrapuravāsīnīti asmākaṁ dainandinī prārthanā devyā svīkṛtā |

It is amazing! Our daily prayer 'I bow to you, Sharadamba, who resides in Kashmir' has been accepted by Devi.



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