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Tattvāloka

THE SPLENDOUR OF TRUTH

The Paradox of Praise

**Nachiketas and the Quest
for Immortality**

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Tattvāloka

THE SPLENDOUR OF TRUTH



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

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Jagadguru Speaks...

The Way to Everlasting Peace

For the welfare of mankind, the *Sastras* have advised the path of *dharma*. But man being subject to the onslaught of passion and anger deflects himself to the path of *adharma* and suffers.

Bhagavan Sri Krishna says this precisely as:

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥
क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥

When a man seeks an object, thinking of it as good, an attachment for that object develops in him. That attachment kindles an excess desire to obtain it by all means.

If his effort is obstructed in some way, wrath develops in him. From wrath arises further delusion. This leads to forgetting what is right and what is wrong. Because man loses the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, he is completely ruined.

सर्वसंसारदोषाणां तृष्णैका दीर्घ दुःखदा ।

Of all the ills of the world, it is desire that gives lasting grief.



For the removal of *kama* (unbridled desire) and *krodha* (anger), one should always worship the Almighty with one-pointed devotion. Desire-driven passion and anger will not affect such a devotee of Bhagavan.

'*Paramatma* who brings about the creation of this

universe, maintains it and finally dissolves it in Himself, alone, is the Truth. He alone is to be worshipped for securing our welfare' - With this conviction if one worships Him wholeheartedly, no calamity will befall him.

Bhagavan states in the *Gita* -

अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ।

“Having come to this transient and unhappy world, worship Me.”

This is the only way to transcend the fleeting world. Hence, it is the duty of all to seek Him, become liberated from the cycle of repeated births and deaths, and attain everlasting peace and bliss with devotion.



The Paradox of Praise

The great philosopher-sage Sri Aurobindo had something beautiful to say about praise.

Why don't we feel the same way about criticism as we do about praise? It feels good when someone praises us, right? Is it because we are narcissistic or egotistic megalomaniacs that we cannot hear enough of our glories? Not quite.

In fact, it has hardly anything to do with the evolution of human thought. At least, not in the beginning. For, within moments of being hit with criticism, we are governed by our instincts. Our wisdom helps us in processing that criticism calmly, it aids us in being mindful about our response and so on. But, it does not

dictate our visceral reaction to any new information.

The truth is that we are almost hardwired to feel elated upon hearing our praise. Neuro-scientists have found that the same region in our brain lights up upon getting a compliment as it does when we receive a monetary reward.

That explains why numerous times we put social rewards above financial ones, for example, flashy products or headlines that will get you more attention. The issue with social validation, however, is the fickle nature of praise, or the paradox of praise.

Sri Aurobindo's Wisdom

The remarkable saint-philosopher Sri Aurobindo was once invited to an elite gathering where the host praised him profusely. Many in the crowd joined in too. Sri Aurobindo, however, did not seem pleased at all.

“I am rather worried,” he said upon inquiry. “How will I handle the situation when this praise will turn into criticism one day? That's because I was Aurobindo earlier. I am Aurobindo now. I'll be the same tomorrow too. But, the crowd won't be the same. It will be a different set of people who may or may not understand me. So the slightest of praise worries me.”

To earn praise, you have got to have something that the world cares about. You must be able to give something that the world places a certain value on.

Hearing right praise boosts your sense of self-worth but soon your brain wants more. Now, to earn more praise, you have to do more of what the world wants which is unlikely to align with your principles.

The more praise is heaped on you, the harder your brain aspires for more. It is never enough.

And the paradox is that to earn praise you may find yourself doing things that are not praiseworthy at all. You will be the same person but the crowd will change. And as they change, you will need to change to keep up with them. Glories will turn into *gaalis* (cussing). It is a vicious cycle.

Hence, it pays to never let any praise get to your head. Besides, no one praises us for who we truly are, but for the idealized image they have of us in their mind. The moment that image changes,

their praise will turn into criticism.

The good news is that if you learn to manage any kind of loss, you become better at handling criticism too (and *vice versa*, of course). Someone who takes a small monetary loss to heart will be equally devastated at the tiniest of criticism.

Krishna's Advice

No wonder, Krishna told Arjuna that a true *yogi* is someone who has conquered his mind, someone who has realized the ephemeral nature of this world, and the ever transient and elusive ways of all human emotions. Such a *yogi* remains unaffected by the changing colours of this life.

Krishna says in *Bhagavad Gita* (6-7) "*Jitātmanah praśāntasya paramātmā samāhitaḥ, śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣu tathā mānāpamānayoḥ.*"

The one who has conquered the mind, his consciousness is already merged in the Super-soul, for he has attained tranquillity. To such an individual, happiness and distress, heat and cold, honour and dishonour are all the same.

Conquering the mind does not mean that you will start loving criticism. It simply means that you will not crave social validation or praise, and I cannot even begin to tell you how liberating that is.

Truth be told, true contentment is impossible without being okay with where you are emotionally, intellectually, and financially. It is when you are in sync, in harmony with all three, do you truly feel that you have conquered your mind.

While an expression of gratitude by someone can be, and often is, genuine,

when they praise you unctuously, however, you may want to step back for a moment and reflect on the price you will pay to live up to that praise.

Any perfume is best sprayed in little quantities. The more you spray, the more desensitized you become towards its fragrance. It then loses its charm, its purpose.

Same is the paradox of praise, do not get used to it. Reflecting on the impermanent nature of everything around you goes a long way in building the mindfulness that nothing is worth clinging to.

Somewhere think of praise as charity. That is, best to give way more than you take. When someone does even a little good, compliment them, praise them to your heart's content.

And, when you are at the receiving end of praise, take very little. Don't just take it with a pinch of salt, take it no more than a pinch of salt.

This will lead to tremendous inner freedom.



Bliss of the Self – 19

The body is but a bubble in the
Ocean of Absolute Consciousness

The subtle difference between the manner in which a *jnani* and an *ajnani* view the body is brought out in verse 17 of *Forty Verses on Reality (Ulladu Narpadu)* of Sri Ramana Maharishi.

The verse says, “For those who have not realised, as well as for the Self-Realised *jnani*, the limitation, that is this body, is 'I'. For the unrealized *ajnani*, the awareness of 'I' is limited to the extent of the body. But to those who have recognised the nature of 'I AM' within the body, the 'I' will shine forth as boundless



awareness. This indeed is the difference between the two. Know this for certain.”

The significance of this verse has to be realized through deep enquiry. The statement that to both - the *ajnani* who has not become aware of the Self, and the *jnani* who has realised the Self - the body alone is the 'I', might sound contradictory to the teaching of Vedanta.

It's true significance should be analysed in this manner - for one who has not known the Self, the 'I' is restricted only to the body. What about the *jnani* who has clearly recognised the real nature of the Self? The 'I' will reveal itself as boundless, eternal, infinite, pure consciousness.

The space within the pot - the *ghatakasa* or pot-space - appears to be limited by the pot. But on enquiry, it will be revealed that space can never be limited inside the

pot, and that the pot itself is a mere appearance in infinite space. Even when the pot space is seen, the knower knows that it is nothing but infinite space.

In the same way, when the I-consciousness, *jiva bhava*, that pulsates as though it is within the body, is subjected to enquiry, it will reveal itself as not within the body, but as the eternal, infinite consciousness, and the body being only an appearance in it. Both the *jnani* and the *ajnani* say 'I'. The experience of *aham* (I) is common to both.

While to the question what this 'I' is, the *ajnani* responds in terms of a series of imagined identities such as name, caste, creed and status, while the *jnani* who has rejected all misapprehensions and has become consciousness itself, is constantly aware: 'I am the all-pervading Self'.

To quote the
Hastamalakeeyam (v.2):
*Nāham manuṣyo no cha
devayakṣo, No brāhmaṇa
kṣatriya vaiśya śūdraḥ |
No brahmachārī no grhī
vanastho Bhikṣur no chāham
nijabodharūpaḥ ||* 'I am not
a man or a *deva* or a *yakṣa*.
I am not a *brahmana* or of
any other caste. I am not a
brahmachari or of any other
order. I am the pure
consciousness that remains
when all these super-
impositions are removed.'

In deep sleep, there are no
distinctions felt such as
being a *brahmana*,
a *brahmachari* or a man or
woman and so on. It is when
the mind arises as the
individual 'I' that all these
distinctions appear. It is not
possible for anyone to say
that he did not exist in deep
sleep. The real-'I' is that
which remained as bliss
itself in the ego-less state of
deep sleep. It is the eternal,
ever-attained Self.

This world that arises in
the Self is in fact not apart
from the Self, like the waves
and bubbles that arise in the
ocean. Viewed from this
plane of consciousness, that
which appears as this mind
and body is the same as the
Self. What appears as
ornaments - chains and
bangles - is nothing but
gold. Yet the forms of the
chain and the bangle by
themselves are not gold.

Just as an ignorant one
considers the bangle as the
gold, the worldly person
considers the body as the
Self. But the *atmajnani*
(knower of the Self) knows
that this body is only a
bubble in the ocean of
absolute consciousness. Is
there any gain or loss for the
ocean whether a bubble
appears or disappears?

Maharishi's Advice

One day, a lady devotee
served certain special foods
only to Sri Ramana
Maharishi. Maharishi asked:

"Why have you served this only for me? Oh! You are showing your devotion to the Swami? You must see that the Swami is present in everyone. Do you think this body alone is 'Swami'? You must practice seeing the 'One' in everyone."

This sense of oneness is the eternal constant experience of a realized soul!

The *Ekatma Panchakam* reiterates, 'Contrary to the reality that this body remains within the Self, the *ajnani* regards the Self as residing within this inert body. This is like saying that the screen on which the pictures move lies within the picture!'

Known to the Knower

To enlighten one who thinks that he is only the body, the *Sastras* have this methodology to lead the attention from the known to the knower: "You are not the body, nor the *prana* nor the mind, nor the intellect nor

avidya. You are the 'seer' who illumines all these seen objects. When you reject all these one by one as 'not this - not this' (*vyatireka yukti*), the residue of pure experience that ultimately remains can neither be accepted nor rejected. The Self alone will shine forth, division-less, whole. Until then, continue this *vichara*."

In this *vyatireka marga* (path of negation), as the rejecter and the rejected, the seer and the seen, continue to remain separate, it cannot be considered a complete path. It is only a preliminary aid to realisation.

For the *jnani* who has seen that his real nature is eternal, pure, self-effulgent and ever-free, all that was rejected earlier now shines forth as his own Self. Just as sun rays are not different from the sun, he beholds clearly that the body and the world are but the rays of his own Self.

Here, the import of the *mahavakya - Sarvam khalvidam Brahma* (all this is verily *Brahman*) is experienced. He directly realizes that the world arises, remains and dissolves in *Brahman*, the Self, and that this does not cause any change in the eternal, pure, self-fulgent, ever-free awareness.

First the rope is seen as a snake, and later the misconception is removed and the rope is seen for what it is - however, all along, the rope itself has remained unchanged. This may be defined as *vastutantra jnanam*.

It cannot even be postulated that the rope was the substratum for the illusion of the snake. The illusion of the snake is only in the mind of the seer, not in the rope.

Similarly, the illusion of the world is in our mind and has not veiled the Self in the least.

The knowledge which is highlighted in this verse is the yardstick to identify a *jnani*. Normally, people get carried away by those exhibiting *siddhis* and external signs, and consider such persons as awakened ones. They gather around such *siddhas*.

These *siddhas* hold on to the 'I am the body' idea and consider the world as real. These *siddhis* of the *siddhas* mesmerize the spectators and strengthen the egos of the *siddhas* and make them miserable. "Both suffer as in the case of a water snake that has swallowed a huge frog," says Sri Ramakrishna.

Even without *any siddhi*, the *jnani* who revels in himself, rejoices. A *jnani* who abides firmly in the *advaitic* experience will be least affected by fame or insult. Although one has become a great *siddha* and has attained name, fame and wealth, yet, if he has not

realized the truth, intense inner emptiness will haunt him all his life and he has to die in that pain.

Societal rules and customs have been made based on the assumption that the body is the Self and *avidya* is truth. Even rituals prescribed in the *karma kanda* of the Vedas are based on this false premise, superimposing divisions of caste and status (such as *brahmana* and *grhastha*) on the Self. Although body identification is inevitable for worldly affairs, it has no reality for the awakened one.

Practising Self-enquiry

Here a question may arise in the minds of seekers whether worldly affairs should be renounced for the pursuit of Self-enquiry.

It is not possible for anyone to completely renounce worldly affairs as long as the body exists. In the state of ignorance, neither is it

necessary to give up the Vedic disciplines retained as a spiritual practice.

It is enough to mentally renounce the priority for worldly affairs. Self-enquiry must be given priority. Whatever be the difficulty that might befall one's family, society, class or status, fame or power, due to one's devotion to truth, one has to endure that happily and consider these as favourable to the destruction of the ego.

If one develops this quality, it implies that he has internally renounced worldliness. This is the *sannyasa* upheld by Sri Ramana Maharishi.

Nochur Sri
Venkataraman



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

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं
 त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
 लिप्यते न स पापेन
 पद्म-पत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥

*Brahmaṇyādhāya karmāṇi
 saṅgaṁ tyaktvā
 karoti yaḥ |*

*Lipyate na sa papena
 padma-patrami-
 vāmbhasā ||*

Bhagavad Gita (5-10)

Reposing (or founding) all actions in *Brahman* (which is the same as dedicating them to *Brahman*) (*brahmani-adhaya karmani*), and by renouncing attachment (even to the fruit of *moksha*) (*sangam tyaktva*), he does not become polluted or stained by sin (*lipyate na sa papena*), just as a lotus leaf is not

Wisdom for Self-Improvement-31



tainted by water (*padma-patram-iva-ambhasa*).

One should trust, not only believe, that 'I work for the sake of God, as a servant for the master, without

attachment even to the fruit of liberation'. The great and only fruit of such work is purification of mind. This renouncing of attachment is to be done by *chetasa*, i.e. by mind only.

This is one of the most fundamental teachings of the *Gita*. The *sloka* 4.20 is also very clear on this. Such a person even if he is involved in action ('*karmanyabhi pravrrito api*') is not doing anything.

In fact, this is the major step outlined in *Gita* for self-improvement.

Swami Chinmayananda comments: "When the frequency of our thoughts upon the Lord becomes as high as the frequency with which we now remember the ego-idea, we shall come to realise the *Brahman*-ideal."

The phrase *padma-patram-iva-ambhasa* (meaning as a

lotus leaf is untouched by water) is very popular in literary circles. The lotus flower is often used in Sanskrit literature as an example of something that is born amidst the dirt, and rises above it while retaining its beautiful purity.

The lotus plant has large leaves that float atop the water surface in a lake. Lotus leaves are waterproof, and liquid poured on them does not soak through, but runs off.

The beauty of the lotus leaf is that, although the lotus owes its birth, growth, and sustenance to the water, the leaf does not permit itself to be wetted.

Prof U. Krishnamurthy

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Gurupada Pushpa-I

A set of verses by an ardent devotee seeking nothing but the eternal smaran of the holy feet of the Guru.

Take away this body, take away this mind so that I can serve you with no shackles, free like air.

Please don't make be the stone that you walk on, for it is rough on your feet. Please don't make me your *padukas*, for they are so hard on your toes.

Please don't make me the breeze that you breathe, for it carries dust; Please don't make me the water under your feet, for it can serve you only once.

Please turn me into gentle flowers that lie in your path, that can die and be born afresh every day to caress and protect your feet and serve you again and again, over and over....

[2]

Oh *Nirvikalpi*, how do you understand how heavy this mind is?

Oh *Nirakari*, how do you understand how heavy this body is?

Oh *Chidananda*, how do you understand how heavy this heart is?

This heaviness is sinking me, the rough tides called life are drowning me away, Oh Bhagawan, I am holding on to your feet. Save me or leave me, you are everything I have.

[3]

I am not beautiful, nor am I rich, I do not know what fame is, nor do I understand Vedas or even Sanskrit;

I am not intelligent, nor can I see properly, I am so trivial and fit for nothing;

Why are you compassionate towards me, I have nothing to give you, I can't even serve you;

I have neither lived an ideal life, nor has my life been worthy of narration.

Totakacharya served you, Prahlada was devoted to you, Kariraja was genuine towards you, I am fake and artificial; Why waste your grace on a disgrace like me?

All that I have for you are few tears which I am afraid are drying up too... I have nothing to give you, I can't even serve you.





Nachiketas and the Quest for Immortality

The greatest quest is not for earthly gains, but
for the eternal truth that lies within us

In the depths of our ancient wisdom lie the four Vedas, which are each divided into *Samhitas*, *Aranyakas*, *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads*.

Among the countless *Upanishads*, the *Katha*

Upanishad (or *Katopanishad*) stands out in its attempt to unveil the essence of our mythology through the setting of a story.

At its heart shines the tale of Nachiketas, a young boy with unwavering courage

and thirst for truth who embarks on a journey that pierces the veil between life and death.

Born to the sage Vajashravasa, a poor and pious *brahmin*, Nachiketas witnesses his father, consumed by the desire for heavenly pleasures, performing a grand *yajna*, offering away all his wealth. Yet, the offerings included old, infirm cows which are unfit to be offered in *yajna*.

Nachiketas senses this as hypocrisy, and confronts his father with a question that shatters the veneer of piety: "If you are giving away everything, Father, to whom will you offer me?"

Vajashravasa, consumed by shame and pride, blurts out a curse in the heat of the moment: "I offer you to Yama, the Lord of Death!"

Little does he know, this impulsive act sets in motion

a chain of events that will redefine Nachiketas's destiny.

Nachiketas's Resolve

Undeterred by fear, Nachiketas sets out on a perilous journey to the abode of Yama. Reaching the gates of the underworld, he finds himself waiting for three long days, a testament to his unwavering resolve. Finally, Yama returns, astonished to find a mortal child at his doorstep.

Impressed by the boy's courage and fuelled by the ancient duty owed to a *brahmin* guest, Yama grants Nachiketas three boons.

"Since thou, a venerable guest, hast stayed in my house without food for three nights, I make obeisance to thee, O young *brahmin*. May it be well with me. Therefore, in return, choose thou three gifts."

Nachiketas's first two boons, freeing his father

from guilt, and learning the intricacies of the sacred *yajna* or fire ritual, seem mundane compared to the fire burning in his heart.

For his final boon, Nachiketas asks the question that echoes through eternity: "What happens after death? What is the nature of the *Atman*, the eternal Self?"

This is the crux of the *Katha Upanishad*, the very essence of its philosophical quest.

Yama, initially reluctant to reveal such profound knowledge, tries to dissuade Nachiketas with promises of earthly pleasures. Yet, the young boy, having tasted the nectar of immortality, cannot be swayed. He stands firm, his desire for truth burning brighter than any worldly temptation.

Finally, Yama relents, and in a series of profound verses, unveils the secrets of the *Atman*.

He describes it as imperishable, unmoving, and beyond the grasp of death. He speaks of the unity between the individual Self and the universal *Brahman*, the ultimate reality that pervades all existence. The beauty of these adjectives seem pale in comparison to the hauntingly evocative verses in the *Upanishad*.

Go Within

Nachiketas, having received the key to immortality, returns to the world, not as a boy, but as a *jivanmukta*, a liberated soul who has attained enlightenment while still living. His journey becomes a beacon for all who seek the truth, a testament to the power of unwavering courage and the transformative power of knowledge.

The story of Nachiketas in the *Katha Upanishad* is more than just a captivating tale; it's a philosophical masterpiece crafted with

profound questions and timeless wisdom.

It reminds us that the greatest quest is not for earthly gains, but for the eternal truth that lies within. It beckons us to face our fears, challenge our assumptions, and embark on our own journey of self-discovery, fuelled by the unwavering flame of curiosity and the unyielding thirst for knowledge.

In the depths of our own Nachiketas-like journey lies the possibility of discovering the truth that sets us free, not just from the cycle of death and rebirth, but from the limitations of our own minds and the illusions of the world.

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Fixing the Gaze

There are many passages in the *Gita* in which it is stated that the fixing of the eyes at the tip of the nose or inwards and upwards, or between the eyebrows, characterises the methods of those who seek supreme bliss.

In his commentary, Sri Bhagavatpada says that it does not mean that by projecting his gaze to the end or putting his gaze in the middle of the eyebrows, a person attains liberation. These physical acts symbolise the withdrawal of the mind from external objects.

It is not the nose or the eyebrows that matter so much as the effect of the concentration of the physical gaze on the abstraction of thoughts and their deflection from outer concerns, so as to result in inner stability and peace.

Jagadguru Sri Vidhusekhara Mahaswamiji



 **Tattvaloka**
THE SPLENDOUR OF TRUTH

Offer Your *Pranams* to Sringeri Jagadgurus

Innumerable devotees of Sringeri Sharada Peetham gratefully recall the grace of the Jagadgurus at some stage or other in their lives.

They tend to soak in devotion remembering the *tapas sakti* of the Jagadgurus, and how the Acharyas' transformative powers brought out changes in their lives following fervent prayers.

Tattvāloka, the arm of Sringeri Sharada Peetham, now offers an opportunity to express this devotion through the pages of the magazine.

Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji provides an exclusive message to the readers of *Tattvāloka* every month.

On any important and auspicious occasion in your family, such as wedding, child birth, birthday, graduation, or any occasion that signifies happiness and boundless grace, you may choose to offer *pranam* to the Jagadgurus.

You can do this through *Tattvāloka*. We would publish your message of gratitude and the names of the family member(s) seeking the special blessing. This will appear as a full page feature below the Acharya performing the Chandramoulisvara Puja.

Just give a call to us at Mobile: 90251 75761 (Sri K.N.Sundararajan, General Manager), or send a message to info@tattvaloka.com, to know more about this new facility and the modest donation amount involved for this special thanksgiving.

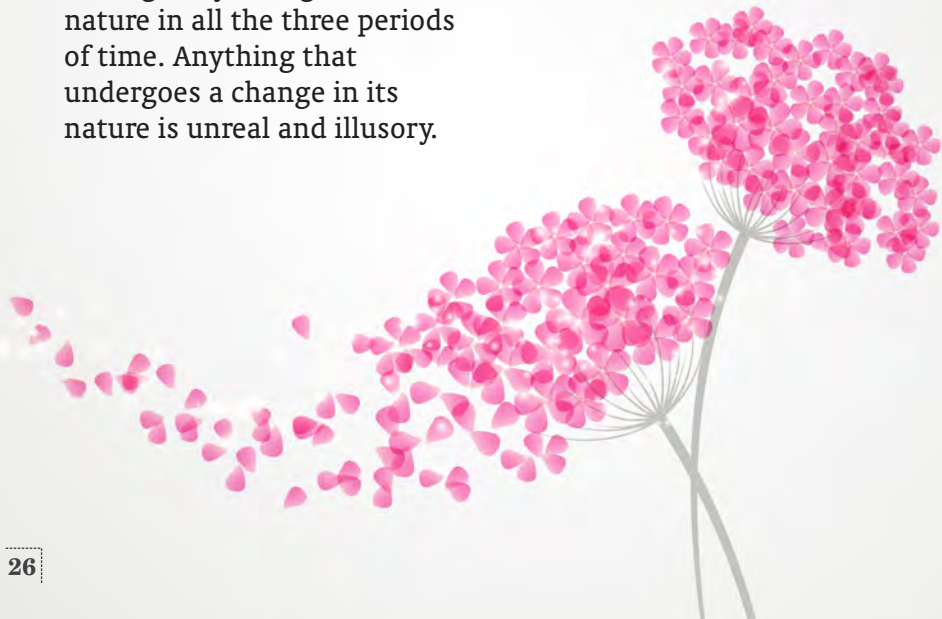
Guru's Grace – The Surest Way for a Happy and Fulfilling Life

Who Am I?

In the previous issue, the authority of the Guru's words and one's own to experience the state of practice remaining a mere witness were put forth. The spiritual aspirant further proceeds to approach the Truth through reasoning established in the Sastras.

Sastra defines Truth as: *Trikāla abādhyatvam satyam*. Reality or Truth is that which does not undergo any change in its nature in all the three periods of time. Anything that undergoes a change in its nature is unreal and illusory.

The three states - *jagrat*, *svapna* and *sushupti* are unreal as they keep changing and negate the existence of each other. So I, the witness



consciousness, never undergo any change in my nature and I am forever the same.

Declarations in Panchadasī

The 12th pontiff of Sringeri Peetham, Jagadguru Vidyaranya says in Panchadasī (1.7):

*Māsābdayugakalpeṣu
gatāgamyēṣvanekadhā |
Nodeti nāstametyekā
samvid eṣā svayamprabhā //*

Months, years, yugas and even kalpas may come and go - numberless avastha trayas may also come and go - but the Self-luminous witness-consciousness never has a beginning and never an end. I am therefore that self-luminous witness-consciousness.

Sri Sankara Bhagavadpada beautifully says in Brahmajnanavalli (v.16):

*Tāpatraya vinirmuktau
dehatraya vilakṣaṇaḥ |*

*Avasthātraya sākṣyasmi ca
aham eva ahamavyayaḥ ||*

I am free from the three types of pain (ādhidaivika, ādhibhautika, ādhyatmika). I am separate from the three bodies (sthula, sukshma and karana sariram). I am the witness of the three states (jagrat, svapna and sushupti). I am That. I am that irreducible, immortal and eternal sakshi, *Dr̥gdr̥ṣyau dvau padārthau stah paraspara vilakṣaṇau |*

*Dr̥gbrahma dr̥śyam māyeti
sarva Vedanta dīṇḍimaha ||*

There are only two things - the subject (dr̥g) and the object (dr̥shyam) - and they are contrary to each other. The subject is Brahman, the Reality and the objects a mere illusion.

I am that Real and ever present subject, the Brahman. *Aham sakṣī iti yo vidyāt vivichyaivam punaḥ*

*punaḥ | Sa eva muktaḥ sa
vidvān iti Vedānta
diṇḍimaḥ ||*

I am the witness-consciousness - when one is established in such a state by relentless enquiry, such a one is known as the liberated wise man. I am that witness-consciousness.

I am the *sakshi svarupa Atma*, the witness-consciousness, and it goes without saying that I am not this body, the *sthula sariram*, which is present only in the *jagrat avastha*. In *svapna avastha*, I, the subject, continue to exist, while the *sthula sariram* is not there.

Likewise, in the *svapna avastha*, the *sukshma sariram* is present. But when we move over to *sushupti*, the *sukshma sariram* also vanishes, but I, the subject, continue to exist.

And the *karana sariram* of the *sushupti* also I am not.

(There is the fourth state of *turiya* or *samadhi* where I, the subject, continue to exist, but the *karana sariram* of *sushupti* is absent). I know them as objects of knowledge in the respective *avasthas*. Then definitely I am not this body and the rest.

The *sthula*, *sukshma* and the *karana sariram* are nothing but the *annamaya (sthula)*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya* and *vijnanamaya koshas (sukshma)* and *anandamaya kosha (karana)*. I am not the three bodies, which only means that I am not the *pancha koshas*. They are objects to me—the subject and the witness.

Jagadguru Vidyananya, again in *Panchadasi*, says:

*Pancha koṣa parityāge |
sakṣibodhāvaseśataḥ*

*Svasvarūpam eva syāt
śūnyatvam tasya
durghaṭam ||*

When the *pancha koshas* are eliminated, the witnessing consciousness that remains is my own true nature and it is not a void. I am that witness-consciousness.

I am not the body. That means I am unaffected by birth, death, old age and diseases. These are problems of the body. I am just a witness to these seeming occurrences. I am not the *pranamaya kosha*. Hunger and thirst are then not my problems. They belong to the *pranamaya*.

I am not the mind. That means I am not affected by hatred and desires, joy and sorrow. The *pancha koshas* are mere objects of my knowledge. No amount of changes in them can bring about even an iota of change in me, who witnesses them.

Sri Bhagavadpada also says in *Svarupanusandhanam*:
*“Avasthātrayātītam
 advaitam ekam param*

*Brahma nityam tad eva
 aham asmi”.*

I am that *Param Brahman* alone, non-dual, one and beyond the three states of *jagrat, svapna* and *sushupti*.

Thus, *Sastra pramanam* also shows that I am the *sakshi svarupa Atma*. *Guru vakyam, Sastra pramanam* and my own experience point out to the same thing - I am none other than the *sakshi svarupa Atma*, the pure witness-consciousness.

The *avasthas* are mere illusions. Logic and reasoning also supports the conclusion.





Cooperate and also Compete!

A right blend of *sahayogitvam* and *pratiyogitvam* helps to enrich human resources at the macro level

You may have noticed that some people are basically cooperative, while some others are predominantly competitive. Why does this happen? It is a combination

of nature, nurture, and learning.

We have a natural tendency to both cooperate or compete. As we grow into adolescence, nurture plays a

more important influence. Such nurture can come from parents, elder siblings, relatives and teachers. As adults, some of us take the path of continuous, lifelong, active learning.

While some believe that being cooperative is always better, increasingly many feel that one should be competitive. Economic, technological, social and cultural growth creates good opportunities for contribution and career building. But, at every stage – school, college and workplace, the number of aspirants is always more than the available number of seats, jobs, or promotions. So, there is always competition.

How to resolve this apparent contradiction? The answer is that one should be both cooperative and competitive, in different contexts, as appropriate.

We have to develop the attitudes and skills of both *sahayogitvam*, cooperation; and *pratiyogitvam*, competition. From time to time, there may be some differences, and even conflicts. We should nevertheless try to ensure that the conflicts are constructive, not destructive.

Blueprint of Action

The following broad steps may be helpful to develop these two competencies together.

The initial responsibility rests with the parents. They should foster a home culture of strong mutual love, affection and support among their children.

Ramayana describes this aspect well. The mutual affection and care between the four brothers are exemplary. As a younger brother, Lakshmana first accompanied Rama on the

mission given by sage Visvamitra. Later, Rama readily agreed to *vanavasam* without argument so that his brother Bharata could be crowned king, as sought by Kaikeyi. Sumitra approves Lakshmana going with his elder brother to forest to be of service to him.

Bharata refuses to accept the crown and goes to the forest to beg Rama to come back and rule Ayodhya. When Lakshmana initially suspects that Bharata might be coming to attack Rama, Rama experiences no such fear. He pacifies Lakshmana, who later apologises. What a united family of strong individuals!

Next to parents, teachers have the responsibility and opportunity to foster both collaborative and competitive instincts. *Sahabhagivam* can be deepened by shared activities in studies, sports, and extra-curricular

activities. *Pratiyogitvam* can be built by various kinds of competition in the learning environment, such as competitive projects, sports, and music.

Each teacher should be a role model of both cooperation with other teachers, and at the same time excel in one's own teaching, and striving to get recognition at district, state and even national levels. The head teacher and teachers of various individual subjects can demonstrate active team work, by appreciating colleagues and reinforcing holistic learning.

Every leader and seniors at every level have a role in reinforcing both *sahabhagam* and *pratiyogam*. In business, the survival and growth of an enterprise depends on its ability to compete with other firms in the same industry. At the same time, the firms have to cooperate

with competitors on common industry issues, such as infrastructure and taxes.

Non-profit organisations too have to compete for donor support and talent, and also cooperate on common issues such as regulatory framework. All organisations have to strike the right balance between individual excellence, team work and total synergy.

Finally, each individual has the ultimate responsibility to develop one's own excellence in both competition and cooperation. All, will of course, not have the same mix of the two tendencies. Some will be stronger on *sahabhagivam*, while some others will display more of *pratiyogivam*. But both should avoid the extremes. This will lead to happier families and more effective organisations.

As a country, Bharat has to both cooperate and compete with other countries. With friendly countries we compete in each other's markets for products, services, investments, technology etc., and even with politically hostile countries, we have trade and investments.

As more and more citizens mature on these lines, we would have enriched human resources at the society level.

Padma Bhushan

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The Virtue of Containing Gossip at Work

The path to one's misery is to see the defects of others and magnify by speaking about them.

Gossip is malicious talk about someone beyond the person's hearing, whether by way of personal or professional, innocuous or slanderous.

Workplace gossip is part of any organization. While interactions between employees can signal an open, welcoming workplace,

when the exchanges make up negative gossip, it can lead to a toxic environment.

Often innocuous banter and conversations lead to personal comments, and even griping about seniors in the organisation. By straining relationships, gossip can become a liability to the office morale.

An environment where rumours thrive tends to be a hostile one, affecting positive, collaborative efforts.

Digital Gossip

Rumours are now routinely shared through digital channels. Corporate e-mail can be a dangerous method of spreading gossip, because messages are easily forwarded to unintended recipients.

People tend to use poor judgement when writing e-mails, often treating e-mail communications like oral conversations by including defamatory language, or an inflammatory tone. There is always a thin line between 'just venting' one's feelings, or sharing titillating tidbits, and damaging the work environment.

According to a research study, lower income people do not gossip more than their more well-to-do counterparts. This would mean that gossiping is more

a trait of the 'educated' minds.

The study shows that younger people are more likely to gossip negatively than their older counterparts. Extroverts gossip far more frequently than introverts.

Snowballing Effect

Bhavabhuti, the 8th-century scholar and the author of *Uttara Rama Charita*, says that gossip is a demon born of idle minds. He says that while those who are truly educated spend their time reading and imparting knowledge to others, people with idle minds and malicious intent gossip about others and they spread untruths.

Gossip can have a dangerous snowballing effect. When a person hears some juicy tidbit about someone else, he adds a bit of spice of his own. Those who hear may similarly

exaggerate and sensationalise till the tidbit becomes far more scandalous and shameful than when it originated.

There is a story about this snowballing effect of speaking negative about others.

A wealthy, noble man once invited all people in his village to his home for a mass feeding. The cooking for the huge crowd of people was done in a spacious and open area.

There was a snake pit nearby, and adjacent to the pit was a tree with eagles perched upon it. The eagles were lying in wait for the snakes to peep out of the pit. When a snake peeked outside, one of the eagles swooped down and grabbed it. In the fight, the snake released its venom, and a drop of it fell into the dish that was being prepared for the guests, unnoticed by the cooks.

The dish was served to all guests, and a few of them unfortunately died due to poisoning.

When those who died reached the kingdom of death, Lord Yama reviewed their stock of *punya* and *papa*, leading to the investigation on what caused their death, and whose fault it was.

The wealthy man was first summoned and he pleaded that his intention was noble to feed the people, not wishing for anyone to die, and he had no idea about the poison. He was released.

The cooks were summoned next. They said they did not even know about the poisonous drop, and had they known, they would surely have avoided serving it. They too were let go.

The birds were called next. They too pleaded innocence stating that they were

looking for snakes as food and they could not be blamed. The snake, summoned next, pleaded that it was only protecting itself from its predators by spewing the poison and, therefore, could not be blamed. It was also released.

The ones who ate the food were summoned next, and they too understandably pleaded innocence about consuming the poisoned food, and they were also let go. Since no one could be blamed for the incident, Lord Yama put the case on hold, to be decided at a later date.

Some days later, a stranger approached a few people in the same village, enquiring about the wealthy man's house as he needed some charity support.

One of the villagers directed him to the house, but telling him, "It is true that the wealthy man is *dharmic* and he will give you

money. But, make sure that you do not eat anything at his place". When the stranger asked the reason for this advice, the villager said, "Just a few days back, he invited many people to his home for a feast and served them poisoned food, and as a result of which many died". The other villagers nodded in agreement.

Seeing all this, Lord Yama concluded, "The *papa* of that incident must go only to these people for misrepresenting what actually happened and spreading false rumours."

Ethical Inputs and Internal Sessions

A gossip-free work environment is an ideal goal for any organisation, though human nature craves the exchange of information of entertaining nature.

Realising the dangers of malicious gossip, mature managers institute steps to

provide avenues for employees to air their feelings, and the right channels to access information internally. Many firms provide outlets such as complaint boxes to air concerns by employees, which helps to contain the environment to discuss any issues in dispute.

Wise managers also tend to operate an open door policy. Approachable superiors are a clear route to clarify information about the firm, and allowing for open conversations about grievances or other worries at work.

As part of team bonding exercises and internal training sessions, it is wise to include discussion on the ill-effects of gossiping, with lessons and messages drawn from our scriptures.

In *Mahabharata*, the patriarch Bhishma says that only fake people criticize others, or say bad things

about them behind their backs. Genuine and truthful persons always criticize others in front of good people.

Our scriptures clearly advise everyone to talk less, and not indulge in useless or long conversations. A very talkative person frequently gets carried away, and unintentionally says things that he had not planned to.

Bhagavad Gita offers guidelines on speaking (17.15): Speak words that do not agitate others, and are pleasing, truthful, and beneficial, '*anudvega-karam vākyaṃ satyaṃ priya-hitam cha yat*'.

The above two points on speech are litmus tests: Is it true? Is it beneficial? Gossip mongering would not be able stand this test.

R. Krishnamurthy

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|| *The real wealth is that which serves the cause of others* ||

Give the Gift of Knowledge

A Yoga guru said, "You will find, as you look back on your life, that the moments that stand out are the moments when you have done things for others."

No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

Give a donation of just Rs.5000

In our effort to broaden the readership of *Tattvāloka*, the magazine with impeccable quality and appeal for spiritually oriented persons, we aim to reach youth readers in schools and colleges.

Your donation of Rs.5000 will help *Tattvāloka* to offer free subscription for one year (12 monthly issues) to ten schools/college libraries.

You are welcome to suggest names of schools/colleges to receive the copies. *Tattvāloka* would supplement the names where necessary.

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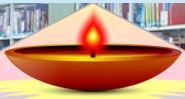


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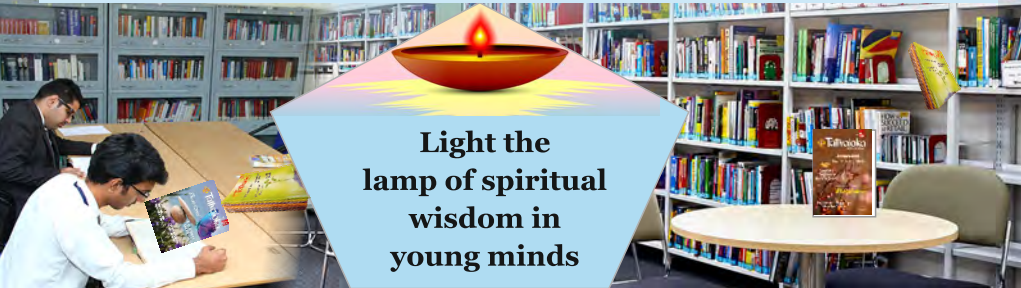
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Light the
lamp of spiritual
wisdom in
young minds





The Illusion of Suffering

Truly understanding the impermanence of everything around is a sign of the dawn of wisdom.

One of the greatest illusions—or even delusions—people have is of a life where they are comfortably sitting, relaxing and having no stress at all, just enjoying themselves. Everybody, at some point in time, dreams of a life like that, one with

no stress. The delusion is that somehow it could be a happy life, but nothing could be further from the truth.

A life where there are no challenges is unfulfilling. It is a very boring life, one not worth living, assuming it is even bearable. Pain is an

essential part of our spiritual progress. Whether our challenges are self-imposed or forced upon us, they make us work, think and appreciate the more desirable aspects of life.

For a seed to sprout, it has to push through the earth—it must go against gravity. The harder it pushes through the earth, the more against the gravity it can go. The taller it will grow, the more it will flourish.

This is why many rich people are very bored with their lives—especially those who inherit their wealth. There is little challenge or the joy of exhilaration upon accomplishing something after tremendous hard work. By no means am I saying that the lives of rich people are easy. It may be full, but not necessarily fulfilling. And when that is the case, we often search for a purpose.

What is the Struggle for?

When you have a quiet moment, please reflect on this. What is all this rushing about for? Really, what are we struggling for in life?

We tend to visualize ourselves in better homes with bigger bedrooms, bathrooms and gardens, better cars, and wearing more expensive clothes, shoes and jewellery. And having all kinds of stuff—more expensive things, newer models of things—all that we work very hard for and have absolutely no time to enjoy.

We have given ourselves no room to 'live'. We have filled our emptiness. The emptiness of life, not with beauty or bliss but discontentment. These are not just desires, hopes and expectations. The truth is we are fundamentally discontent with what we have. And if you are not content, you cannot be happy.

When you have the option in life to do more, which could be in the guise of progress, think to yourself, 'Is this really what I want to do?' because once you take a step forward, you are two steps away from going back to square one.

So before you think about this relentless pursuit of expansion and going here and there and building a business and making it bigger and grander, pause for a moment.

Bear in mind that growth is an illusion created predominantly by the western media. Or maybe it is the soul of capitalism. Over the last century, we have come to equate progress only with growth and expansion. If today I am making \$ 100 and next year I make another \$ 100, it is not good enough - I did not grow.

But that is not necessarily the best way to look at

things in life. Sometimes you have to decide what is most important for you. Ask yourself, do I need to be at peace, or do I need to grow?

Imagine watching a movie, but on mute. Even the most emotional scenes would appear funny to you because you cannot hear what the characters are saying, while they would seem animated, waving their arms about.

Similarly, when you are having an angry conversation, just record it. Now everybody has conversation and play it back later, you will see the ridiculousness of the whole episode. You will not believe that you could act in such a manner.

Of course, out of ego, you may still think the other person was wrong and that your point of view was justified, but the world appears funny to you nevertheless.

That is why in Zen, they give these anecdotes, cryptic stories or jokes, called *koans*, and you ponder over them, wondering what they are about.

Arguably, the most famous is a student asking his master how to gain enlightenment, and the master asked in return if he knew the sound of one hand clapping. This awakened him.

All thoughts and suggestions come from your mind. If your mind can guide you objectively and realistically, then you would come out of that emotion faster.

There is a common misconception people have about meditation - of any kind. People think that it will make you calm. There is some truth in this, but the act of meditation itself won't calm you. You have to be calm before you can meditate. Meditation is your

training to be calm afterwards, when you step out into the world. Otherwise, if you are just trying to be calm, there are a million other ways to do that.

This is the shorter route to detachment: Everything I hold dear - my wisdom, beauty, health is going to decay. Nothing is going to stay with me. I can cling to my money as much as I like. Nothing is however going to last.

This mindfulness of our world leads to the perfection of wisdom. An irreversible insight.

Om Swami 

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

The Concept of Mind in Ayurveda

Mind is the seat of pleasure as well as misery



The mind is recognized as the seat of health and happiness in all systems of medicine. Diseases of the mind can afflict the body and sometimes cause physical ailments, known as psychosomatic disorders.

Mind is an important and inevitable component in the sequence of gaining knowledge as it is a bridge between the sense organs and the soul.

The *Kathopanishad* likens the mind to the reins that control the horse in a chariot: The soul is a rider, the body the chariot, the intellect the charioteer and the mind is the rope which controls the horse. The sense organs are the horses and the sense objects are the pathways for those horses to move about.

The *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* says, "If the mind

is elsewhere, I do not see, I do not hear".

Mind is treated as the sixth sense organ with a control over the other five sense organs, taking a place higher than them (*sarvendriya param*). Sri Krishna says in *Bhagavad Gita* "Indriyanam manaschasmī", of the sense organs, I am the mind' (10.22).

The Substance of Mind

According to Ayurveda, mind has its own qualities and actions, and hence it qualifies to be a substance.

That which helps in obtaining the knowledge of something is called *mana*. That which has the capability to think is called *manas*: *manyate jnayate anena iti manah*. The mind performs all activities, though it is inert, with the soul as its stimulator and controller.

Unlike the five *jnanendriyas* (sense organs) and

karmendriyas (motor organs), where each sense organ or organ of action is related to a corresponding object, the mind is an *ubhayendriya* or dual organ, as it is both an organ of sense and action, and it is related to the objects of all the sense and functional organs.

Mind is also called as an extraordinary sense organ or *atindriya* as it is superior to the sense organs, with a specific identity beyond the scope of the sense organs.

The mind can think about many things (*chintya*), analyse good and bad of everything (*vicharya*), make guesses and inferences (*uhya*), focus on something (*dhyeya*), take a decision on the basis of discrimination between good and bad (*sankalpa*).

Mind connects sense organs with intellect. This helps to passing of

knowledge from sense organs to intellect, and then to soul. The mind which cannot be perceived by sense organs, can only be perceived by its actions.

Mind's action is determined by the quality of *Atma* (soul), such as action orientation, greed, hatred, and contentment. The qualities are in turn decided by one's *karma*, or good and bad deeds in the present and previous births.

Imbalance of *Doshas* and Mental Health

The three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* have an impact on the mind. *Sattva*, which is pureness, and as such it is not considered as a quality that contaminates the mind, while *rajas* and *tamas* are contaminants.

An imbalance of *doshas* (*rajas* and *tamas*) leads to mental disorders that may arise due to under or over-

utilization of mind. Not being in the habit of thinking or prone to instant action, not being in the habit of acquiring learning, are examples of under-utilisation of mind, while excessive thinking and over-analyzing are examples of over-utilising the mind. Regular and excessive thoughts about unwanted, weird things point out misutilisation of mind.

Vata and Mind

Where a person's *vata dosha* is normal, healthy and balanced, there is proper nerve signal conduction, neuro hormone production and carriage, and as a result, all things associated with the brain and mind work normally.

A person with normal or balanced level of *vata dosha* has good memory, understanding capacity, retaining and recollecting ability. His mind tends to be

calm, and his anger, talkativeness and such attributes are within normal level. Such a person generally displays a balanced reaction to mental stimulus, such as absence of confusion, anxiety, boredom, or excessive excitement.

Where an individual has a dominant *vata dosha*, his body type is known as *vata prakriti*. This natural elevation of *vata dosha* makes such people talkative, always anxious and jealous of others. Such persons make and lose friendships easily, and have difficulty in coming to firm decisions.

A highly elevated *vata* condition in a person can turn to be even toxic, to cause pathological disorder. Ayurveda considers such a condition as *vak sanga* where the person would tend to border on schizophrenia, leading to insanity.

Maintaining Mental Health

The three basic ways to treat conditions of mental disorders are through proper and skillful use of the intellect (*dhi*), seeding courage in one's mind (*dhairya*), and to make the person realise his self-worth (*atma vijnanam*).

Sattva is the supreme quality of mind cultivated through abstinence, ethical behaviour, control over sense organs and suppression of undesirable mental qualities, such as greed, fear, anger and vanity.

Ayurveda regards that certain personal discipline, such as proper duration and timely sleep, nutritious food, getting up early in the morning and spiritual practices such as *yoga* and *pranayama* empower the mind and pave way for maintaining good mental health.

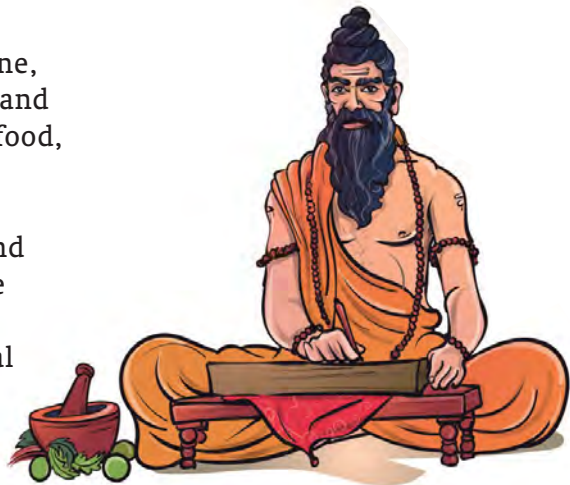
Ayurveda practitioners would suggest the ultimate solution as a holistic treatment to balance the *vata dosha* through diet and lifestyle changes.

It is wise to remember the sagely advice of Acharya Charaka that the one who has his mind under control does not contract any disease (*satvam vidheyam*).

Dr. Raghuram Y. S.
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Humble Pranams to
Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji,
Sri Vidhushekhara Bharathi Mahaswamiji

K S Shankarraman

An ardent Devotee



Sri Mahasannidhanam worshipping Sri Chandramoulisvara on Mahasivaratri



Sri Sannidhanam worshipping Sri Chandramoulisvara on Mahasivaratri

Mahasivaratri at Sringeri

A round up of key events at Sringeri

Mahasivaratri was observed at Sringeri with the traditional grandeur on March 8, 2024.

Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji offered worship at the ancient hilltop temple of Sri Malahanikaresvara at Isvaragiri. He first worshipped Sri Stambha Ganapati at the temple, and performed a special *puja* to Sri Malahanikaresvara with *phala-panchamrita abhisheka* and *Rudrabhisheka*, followed by a special *puja* to Goddess Bhavani. The Jagadguru was joined by Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Sannidhanam.

There was a night-long *puja* (spread over the four *yamas* on the Sivaratri night) at

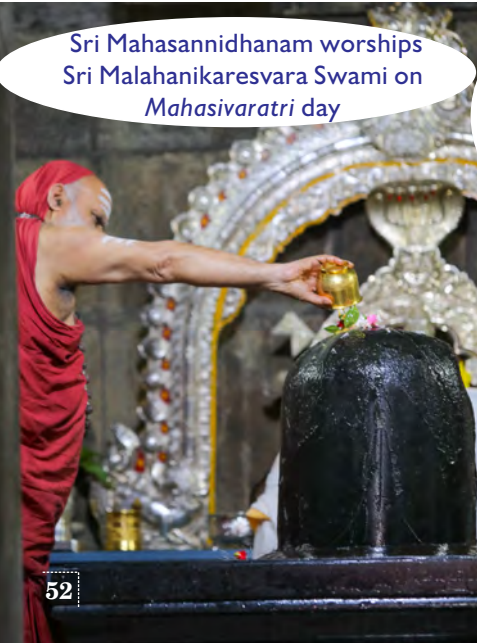
Gurunivas. Starting from 7:30 PM, Sri Mahasannidhanam performed the elaborate first *yama puja* to Sri Chandramoulisvara. Sri Sannidhanam then performed the Chandra-moulisvara *puja* during the subsequent three *yamas*, concluding the same the next morning (March 9) by 6:00 AM with *maha-mangalarti* in the divine presence of Sri Mahasannidhanam.

The next day, the Ubhaya Jagadgurus witnessed *mahamangalarati* at Sri Malahanikaresvara temple after a *Laksha Mallikarchana* had been performed. Sri Malahanikaresvara *Rathotsava* then took place with Sri Sannidhanam leading the procession.

Dolotsava in the divine presence of Ubhaya Jagadgurus during Mahasivaratri celebrations



Sri Mahasannidhanam worships Sri Malahanikaresvara Swami on Mahasivaratri day



Sri Sannidhanam worshipping Masige Sri Mahaganapati Temple near Sringeri



On March 11, in the presence of Sri Sannidhanam, the *puṇahuti* of the *Maharudra Yaga*, which commenced four days earlier, took place. There was *Sandhana Utsava* at the temple of Goddess Sharadamba, and *Teppotsava* in the evening.

Shrauta Maha Sammelan

A grand three-day event involving *agnihotris* and scholars well versed in the Veda *bhashyas* and *Sruti*-based grand Vedic rituals (*shrauta*) from various parts of the country, took part at Sringeri during March 14-16, 2024. The occasion was part of the *Suvarna Bharati Mahotsava*, the 50th year of *Sannyasa Sweekara* of Jagadguru Sri Mahasannidhanam.

As part of the *Sammelan*, three *Ishtis* (oblations to different deities) took place, namely *Ayushkameshti*, *Mrigareshti* and *Traidhata-viyeshti*. The *yajamana* (the person who sponsors and

performs the *ishtis*) was the 97-year old Vedabrahmasri Kuppa Ramagopala Vajapeyayaji (the *purvashrama* grandfather of Sri Sannidhanam), while Vedabrahmari Kuppa Sivasubrahmanya Avadhani (the *purvashrama* father of Sri Sannidhanam). Sri Gunturu Venkateshwara Somayaji officiated as the *Adhvaryus* (chief priest) in the *yaga*.

Both Sri Mahasannidhanam and Sri Sannidhanam graced the *Yagashala* on all the three days. All the *agnihotris* who attended the *Sammelan* were specially honoured on the concluding day.

There was a *Shrauta Sutra Sadas* as part of the *Sammelan* at which many distinguished scholars spoke on topics such as *Agnihotra Mantra Artha Vichara*, *Kathaka Mantra Artha Vichara* and the *Shrauta Sutras Parayana* of the Vedas and *Vedanga (Shadanga)* including *Kalpa Sutras* took place.



Sri Mahasannidhanam during the Mrigareshti performed during the Shrauta Maha Sammelan



Sri Sannidhanam with Veda bhashya scholars at the Shrauta Maha Sammelan

At the valedictory function, Sri Sannidhanam blessed the august audience with an *anugraha bhashanam* in chaste Sanskrit and explained the greatness of the *Veda Bhashya* penned by Jagadguru Sri Vidyaranya (the 12th Acharya of the Peetham). Sri Vidyaranya had paid homage at the start and end of the *bhashya* to Jagadguru Sri Vidyatirtha (the 10th Acharya of the Peetham).

In the invocatory verse, Sri Vidyaranya offers salutations to Jagadguru Sri Vidyatirtha hailing him as *Paramatma* from whom the Vedas and the entire cosmos emerge.

यस्य निश्चसितं वेदाः

यो वेदेभ्योऽखिलं जगत् ।

निर्ममि तमहं वन्दे

विद्यातीर्थमहेश्वरम् ॥

In the concluding verse, he again offers homage to Sri Vidyatirtha as one who dispels the darkness of ignorance from the hearts of men by throwing light on

the import of the Vedas, and by conferring the four *purusharthas* of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* -

वेदार्थस्य प्रकाशेन तमो

हार्दं निवारयन् ।

पुमर्थाश्चतुरो देयात्

विद्यातीर्थमहेश्वरः ॥

Sri Sannidhanam also explained the uniqueness of the Chaturmurti Vidyeshwara temple located at Simhagiri near Sringeri.

The Jagadguru expressed joy that the *agnihotris* who have attained proficiency in performing these *Shrauta Karmas* after undergoing traditional *Sastric* education from childhood, could participate in the *Sammelan*. He also announced to the delight of the assembled scholars that this would be an annual event going forward.

Mysore Royal Scion at Sringeri

The royal scion of Mysore, His Highness Sri Yaduveera



Sri Mahasannidhanam performing puja on Durgamba Rathotsava day



Sringeri Mutt CEO Sri P A Murali and Chief Advisor Sri V R Gowrishankar at the inauguration of Sringeri Balaji Mandir at Unakoti in Tripura

Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, visited Sringeri on March 9 and 10.

After having *darsan* of Goddess Sharadamba, he had *darsan* of Sri Sannidhanam and attended the Chandra-moulisvara *puja* performed by Sri Mahasannidhanam. He also visited the Sri Sankara Advaita Research Centre and perused the manuscripts and archives.

Sri Wadiyar also participated in the Malahanikaesvara *Rathotsava* that was conducted in the presence of Jagadguru Sri Sannidhanam.

Sringeri Balaji Mandir in Tripura

With the blessings of the Sringeri Jagadgurus, a new and magnificent Sringeri Balaji Mandir built in the South Indian style and having shrines for Sri Balaji, Sri Sharadamba and Sri Adi Sankaracharya was inaugurated with the *Prana Pratishtha* done by priests

from Sringeri in the Unakoti district in Tripura. The temple is located on the banks of the river Manu.

Sringeri Mutt CEO Sri P A Murali and Chief Advisor Sri V R Gowrishankar attended the event that was graced by a number of distinguished dignitaries including Nagaland Governor His Excellency Sri La. Ganesan, Hon. Chief Minister of Tripura Prof Dr Manik Saha and his cabinet ministers, Social Welfare and Labour Minister Sri Tinku Roy and Fisheries and SC Welfare Minister Sri Sudhangshu Das.

Expressing joy on the occasion that was attended by thousands of devotees, Chief Minister Sri Manik Saha said that the temple would play a great role in spreading the spiritual thought and culture of *sanatana dharma* among the people, and he wholeheartedly thanked the Sringeri Sharada Peetham

for establishing the temple in Tripura.

Sri Abhishek Chandra IAS, Special Secretary, Government of Tripura, who was instrumental in the envisioning of the temple and the district collector of Unakoti district in 2013 when the foundation for the temple was laid, participated in the *Kumbhabhisheka* ceremonies.

Since 2022, considering the need for quality education in the region, Sringeri Math is also running a school named “Sri Sringeri Sharada Vidya Mandir” adjacent to the temple complex.

Durgamba Rathotsava

The annual *Durgamba Rathotsava*, took place at Sringeri on March 17, 2024 at the temple of Goddess Durgamba, with Sri Sannidhanam leading the procession, with a large assembly of devotees witnessing the event.

Earlier, Sri Mahasannidhanam performed an elaborate *puja* at the temple at noon amidst chanting of Veda *mantras* by the *pandits* of Sringeri Mutt.

Sharadamba Maharathotsava

Earlier, the annual *Sharadamba Maharathotsava* took place on February 27, 2024 when the *Utsava Murti* of Goddess Sharadamba was taken along the main streets of Sringeri in a decorated *Ratha*. Jagadguru Sri Sannidhanam led the procession amidst Vedic chants.

As part of the celebrations, a *Shatachandi Yaga* was conducted commencing on February 28 near the Sharadamba temple. The *puṇahuti* of the *Yaga* took place in the divine presence of Sri Sannidhanam on February 28. There was also a *Teppotsava* of Goddess Sharadamba in the presence of Sri Sannidhanam the same evening.



Sri Sannidhanam leading the Durgamba Rathotsava



Sri Sannidhanam performing puja at Sri Gayatri Tapobhoomi Temple in Tadas



Sri Sannidhanam leading the Sri Sharadamba Maharathotsava



Sri Sannidhanam at the Ganapati shrine in Kodachadri Hill



Sri Sannidhanam at Kodachadri Hill in front of Sri Sankaracharya temple

Sri Sannidhanam performs Kumbhabhishekas

On February 28, Sri Sannidhanam performed the *Kumbhabhisheka* of Sri Ganapati temple at Masige in Sringeri.

Next day, he graced Kocchar near Sringeri, and performed *punah pratishtha Kumbhabhisheka* at the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swami temple.

In his *anugraha bhashanam*, Sri Sannidhanam explained the greatness of Bhagavan Lakshmi Narasimha, drawing reference to the verse from *Lakshmi Narasimha Pancharathnam* of Sri Adi Sankaracharya;

चेतोभृङ्ग भ्रमसि वृथा
भवमरुभूमौ विरसायां
भज भज लक्ष्मीनरसिंहानघपद-
सरसिजमकरन्दम्

In this verse, Sri Bhagavatpada has compared the mind to a bee that hovers from flower to flower and sucks honey. However, if the bee goes to an arid

desert, there is no choice of finding any flower despite intense search, and it would be a futile attempt.

With this allegory, Sri Sankaracharya points out that the mind, like the bee, seeks to find happiness in objects of the world. Such happiness is elusive as permanent joy eludes a man who attempts to find happiness hankering after worldly objects.

The Acharya says that there is one flower, a lotus, that can bestow upon us this eternal happiness (*amritatva*), and that is the sacred lotus feet of Bhagavan.

Sri Sannidhanam recalled that the 15th Acharya of Sringeri Peetham, Jagadguru Sri Purushottama Bharati Mahaswamiji had graced this place (Kochhar) in the early 15th century, showing the deep association between the Peetham and the place.



Sri Malahanikaresvara *Rathotsava* with Sri Sannidhanam leading the procession



Sri Sannidhanam performing *puja* of Hattiangadi Sri Siddhivinayaka Temple



Sri Sannidhanam gracing the *Teppotsava* of Sri Bhavani Malahanikaresvara Swami

On March 3, Sri Sannidhanam performed *Bhumi Puja* of Sri Shankara Bharati Sabha Bhavana at Narasimharajapura, and also the *punah prathishtha Kumbhabhisheka* of Sri Gayatri temple.

On March 4, Sri Sannidhanam graced the *puṇahuti* of the *Sahasra Narikela Mahaganapati Mahayagna* conducted at Sri Prasanna Siddhivinayaka temple at Devangi, Thirthahalli. He also performed *Kumbhabhisheka* of Sri Udbhava Balamuri Ganapati.

On March 6, the Jagadguru performed the *punah prathishtha Brahmakalasha Kumbhabhisheka* and conducted the *Brahma Rathotsava* of Sri Siddhivinayaka temple at Karanagiri, Hosanagara.

On March 7, Sri Sannidhanam performed *punah prathishtha Mahakumbhabhisheka* of Sri Shanta Mallikarjuna Swami Temple at Hulugaru near

Sringeri. Among those who attended the event were Sri Bhimeshwara Joshi, Dharmakarta of Horanadu Annapurnesvari temple, and Sri Yogiraj Arun, the sculptor of the *vigrahas* of Sri Rama at Ayodhya and Sri Adi Sankaracharya at Kedarnath.

On March 13, Sri Sannidhanam performed *Brahmakalasha Kumbhabhisheka* of the newly constructed Sri Siddhivinayaka temple at Hattiangadi in Kundapura Taluk.

Sri Sannidhanam's Brief Vijaya Yatra

Starting on a weeklong *yatra* inside Karnataka on February 17, Sri Sannidhanam arrived at Subrahmanya Sabha, Kodiyalbail, Mangalore and graced the *Navachandi Purnahuti*.

After visiting Sri Venkatramana Temple in Dongarakeri, he arrived at the Sringeri Sankara Mutt in Kotekar, Mangalore.



Sri Sannidhanam performing puja at Devangi Sri Prasanna Siddhivinayaka Temple, Thirthahalli

Sri Sannidhanam performing puja at Narasimharajapura Sri Gayathri Devi Kumbhabhisheka



Sri Sannidhanam presides over the sadas of scholars of Veda bhashya

The following day, Sri Sannidhanam graced the Centenary Building of Karnataka Bank and blessed the management and staff of the bank.



On February 19, the Jagadguru performed the *Kumbhabhisheka* of *Nagadevata* at Sri Adi Subrahmanya Swami temple. He also had *darsan* at Sri Chittari Brahmalingeshwara Swami temple at Halladi-Harkadi in Kundapura Taluk.

At Kollur

Arriving at the famous *kshetra* at Kollur pervaded by the divine presence of Goddess Mookambika, the Jagadguru was accorded a splendid reception with *purnakumbha* by the members of the temple administration, and he had *darsan* at the shrine after reaching there in a grand procession.

On February 20, Sri Sannidhanam had *darsan* of Sri Parvatesvara, Goddess Parvati and Sri Adi Shankaracharya at the temple in Kodachadri, and then ascended the Kodachadri hill.

At the top of the hill, he performed an elaborate *puja* at the temple of Sri Adi Sankaracharya.

After the *puja*, Sri Sannidhanam blessed the assembled devotees with an *anugraha bhashanam* recounting the achievements of Sri Adi Sankara who rejuvenated *sanatana dharma* and spread



Sri Sannidhanam giving *anugraha bhashanam* on the occasion of Srinivasa Kalyanotsava at Kodi, Kundapur



Sri Sannidhanam blessing devotees with an *anugraha bhashanam* at Kollur Sri Mookambika Temple



Jagadguru Sri Sannidhanam with VRL Group Chairman Sri Vijay Sankeshwar and family after the Pratishtha Kumbhabhisheka of Palikoppa Anandeshwara temple near Hubballi

the *upanishadic* philosophy of *advaita*. Sri Sannidhanam compared *sanatana dharma* to a garland and *advaita siddhanta* to the thread that joins the various *sampradayas* or traditions that are akin to flowers.

Sri Sannidhanam mentioned that Sri Adi Sankara was the reason for the presence of the *murti* of the Bhagavan in the Badrinath *kshetra*. While visiting the *kshetra*, the Jagadguru noticed that the *murti* was not in the temple, and on enquiry, he learnt that the *nastikas* had come to the *kshetra* and displaced the *murti*.

The Acharya divined the location of the *murti* and fetched it from the nearby waterbody, and consecrated it back again in the sanctum. This has been mentioned in the *Skanda Purana* in the *Badari Mahatmyam*, where Isvara tells Lord Subrahmanya that Isvara

would himself incarnate on earth as a *sannyasi*:

ततोऽहं यतिरूपेण
तीर्थन्निारदसंज्ञकात् ।
उद्धृत्य स्थापयिष्यामि
हरिं लोकहितेच्छया ॥

Sri Sannidhanam pointed out that during his *Vijaya Yatras*, Sri Adi Sankara had travelled extensively, and had come to this sacred, but not easily accessible, Kodachadri hill, was engaged in *tapas*, and had the vision of Goddess Mookambika.

While returning down the hill, Sri Sannidhanam performed *puja* at the Ganapati temple cave and had *darsan* at Sri Siddeshwara Huliraya temple.

In the evening, in the divine presence of Sri Sannidhanam, Sri Srinivasa Kalyanotsava was celebrated in Kodi, Kundapura.

On February 21, Sri Sannidhanam performed a special *puja* at the Kollur Sri Mookambika temple.

Following that, in the *Sabha* that was held in the *prakara* of the temple, a citation was read out in honour of Sri Sannidhanam that also detailed the longstanding relationship between the Sringeri Jagadguru Mahasamsthnam and the Kollur Mookambika temple.

In his *anugraha bhashanam*, Sri Sannidhanam recalled how Sri Bhagavatpada had reinstated worship rituals and other festivities in the regions. At Kollur, the Jagadguru had revived the sanctity of the Goddess and worshipped her.

In the *Madhaviya Shankara Digvijaya*, there is an instance mentioned where Bhagavatpada, during his travel to Kollur, had spotted a couple lamenting over the

premature death of their only child. Overcome by grief, Bhagavatpada prays to the Supreme and the boy is restored back to life.

Sri Sannidhanam recalled how the revered Jagadgurus in the Sringeri *parampara* had graced Kollur several times and offered special worship to the Goddess. Sri Mahasannidhanam had graced this place many times since 1985, performed the *Brahma-Kalasabhisheka* here, and in the year 2005 dedicated a golden *Ratha* to the Goddess. Earlier, Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha and Jagadguru Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Mahaswamigal had graced the place.

Returning from Kollur, Sri Sannidhanam arrived at Palikoppa, Hubballi to a devout welcome led by Sri Vijay Sankeshwar, Chairman of VRL Logistics and his team. He performed the *Pratishtha Kumbhabhisheka*

of the newly constructed temple complex at Palikoppa. The temple was constructed by the family of the above business group who also offered the same to Sringeri Mutt.

On February 23, *purnahutis* of *Maharudra Homa* and *Nava Chandi Homa* took place at Anandeshwara temple, Palikoppa in the presence of Sri Sannidhanam.

The New Administrator at Sringeri Peetham

The previous month's issue of *Tattvāloka* had carried a brief report that on January 25, 2024, Sri P A Murali was appointed as the new CEO and Administrator of Sringeri Mutt, and Sri V R Gowrishankar would continue to serve the Mutt as Chief Advisor.

Sri P A Murali, the son of Smt. Gomathi and Sri P V Ananthasubramaniam, was brought up in a family whose *kulaguru* is the Sringeri Jagadguru. His grandfather, Sri R Venkateswara Iyer, a lawyer from Tirunelveli had organised the camp of the



35th Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamiji in Pathai in Tamil Nadu in 1957. Sri Murali's father-in-law, Sri

Venkateswaran was an ardent devotee of the 35th Jagadguru, and he was blessed to receive *sannyasa* under the guidance of the Sringeri Jagadguru.

Sri Murali grew up with natural devotion to the Sringeri Jagadgurus. A commerce graduate of AM Jain College, Chennai, he moved to Bengaluru in 1978 and became a chartered accountant. With over three decades of professional experience in various corporate roles including executive positions, Sri Murali brings a unique blend of professional acumen and deep commitment to Sringeri Mutt.

After ending his professional career in 2015, Sri Murali has been actively involved in various *dharmic* activities of Sringeri Peetham, and was serving Sri Sannidhanam during his various *Vijaya Yatras*.

In 2022, as part of the 70th birth-year celebrations of Sri Mahasannidhanam, Sri Murali was awarded the '*Bharati Tirtha Puraskara*' by Jagadguru Sri Sannidhanam. During the *Sharada Sharan Navaratri Mahotsava* in 2023, he was honoured with the title '*Guru Seva Nirata*' by Sri Mahasannidhanam for his dedicated *Guru seva*.

Felicitations of Sri Gowrishankar

On February 12, 2024, a public event was held to honour Sri Gowrishankar for his exemplary service as the CEO of the Mutt for 38 years from 1986 until 2024.

At the event, held in the divine presence of Sri Sannidhanam, Sri P A Murali spoke highly of the exemplary service rendered by Sri Gowrishankar over a long period with total



dedication and selflessness. He stated that Sri Gowrishankar had overcome many seemingly insurmountable challenges when managing the demands of his responsibility, and contributed towards several social causes under the auspices of the Sringeri Mutt.

Various senior devotees then spoke in different languages sharing their experiences with Sri Gowrishankar who guided and aided them in

their service to the Sringeri Jagadgurus.

A Kannada citation from the *sevakas* of Sringeri Mutt in honour of Sri Gowrishankar was then read out, which recalled the century-long association of the ancestors of Sri Gowrishankar with the Mutt, his great qualities of enthusiasm, honesty, courage, sharp intellect, efficiency, eloquence, and timely decision-making, and the several improvements

that he brought to the administrative setup during his tenure.

Sri Gowrishankar in an emotional address thanked all the devotees and officials of the Mutt and attributed all the achievements to the blessings and guidance of the Sringeri Jagadgurus. He recalled the influence of Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswamigal upon him as well as his divine interactions with the 35th Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamigal, Sri Mahasannidhanam and Sri Sannidhanam.

He ended his address saying, “I don't know what *janma* I will have in future, but as stated by my father, if I have another *janma*, it has to be a human birth, and I have to be an ardent devotee of the Jagadguru of Sringeri Sharada Peetham.”

Sri Sannidhanam in his *anugraha bhashanam* recalled

how Sri Gowrishankar has been a remarkable *sishya* who has had the fortune of serving the Jagadgurus with firm conviction from a young age of 32.

He has carried out the *sankalpa* of the Sringeri Jagadgurus towards conducting various *dharmaic* activities, and envisioned and executed many projects that have had a positive impact on society. He has been travelling and toiling relentlessly, well past the usual retirement age of 60. His continued availability in the capacity of Chief Advisor would be helpful to Sri Murali in his role as the new Administrator.

Sri Sannidhanam then personally blessed Sri Gowrishankar with a gold chain and shawl, and blessed his family members including his wife Smt. Geeta, and children Sri Abhinava Chandra and Kum. Chinmayi Sharada.



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

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



THE DIVINE NAMES OF SRI KRISHNA – 17

67. मुष्टिकासुरचाणूरमल्लयुद्ध
विशारदाय नमः ।

Muṣṭikāsurasuracāṇūramallayudha viśāradāya namaḥ |

Salutations to Sri Krishna, the able wrestler who could match Mushtikasura and Chanura in wrestling.

The eighth child of Devaki was a girl, and as was his wont, Kamsa set out to kill her. The infant, however revealed herself as Devi Maya and warned him that Narayana had indeed manifested on earth to kill him. It was more than a matter of coincidence that all Kamsa's comrades who had tried to kill Nanda's son lost their lives in Krishna's hands. Eventually, sage Narada arrived in Mathura to confirm that Nanda's son was indeed Devaki and Vasudeva's eighth child Krishna, who would soon kill him.

Kamsa sent his henchman Kesi to kill Krishna.

Apprehending Kesi's annihilation, he also drew a backup plan to decimate the Yadava brothers, Krishna and Balarama.

Nanda and all the vassal kings were to be invited to Mathura under the ruse of a bow sacrifice. A behemoth rogue elephant, Kuvayana, would be stationed at the entrance and the mahout or trainer would incite the animal to kill the brothers. If the brothers escaped death, they would be invited to participate in a series of wrestling matches with the mighty Bhoja wrestlers Chanura, Mushti, Kuta and others.

Kesi was indeed killed by Krishna, Nanda and his gopas were invited to Mathura.

Kamsa's consternation was heightened when his sinister plan involving the elephant went awry, as Krishna killed the elephant along with the mahout.

The young boys were then invited to combat with the muscular and belligerent wrestlers of Kamsa. The audience murmured their dissent as it was an *adharmic* contest between unequals. But Krishna's power prevailed, and Kamsa lost his champions.

68) संसारवैरिणे नमः ।

Samsāravairiṇe namaḥ ।

Salutations to the remover of *samsara* (cycle of births and deaths).

Krishna's enlightening philosophical song to Arjuna is enshrined in the *Bhagavad Gita*, which explains the nature of the *Atman*, *Jiva* and *Prakriti* with its three *gunas*, and the paths of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* to attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Krishna imparted the knowledge of one's true nature to worthy disciples

and as the *Bhagavatam* (12.29.49) says:

भवभयमपहन्तुं ज्ञानविज्ञानसारं
निगमकृदुपजह्ने भृङ्गवद् वेदसारम्
(*Bhavabhayamapahanturñ
jñānavijñānasāram
nigamakṛdupajahre
bhṛṅgavad vedasāram*).

meaning, Vishnu, the author of Vedas, extracted the nectar of knowledge and realisation like a bee, and gave the essence of Vedas to put an end to the rebirth of his devotees.

Krishna also expounded the *Uddhava Gita*, which is the epitome of merging with the Divine through total love and surrender, to his ardent devotee Uddhava.

Gopi Gita, the song of the *gopis* that expresses the longing of the individual soul to merge with the divine as described in the *Bhagavatam*, and *Bhramara Gita*, also from *Bhagavatam*, describing how Uddhava

delivered the message of Krishna to the *gopis* about the eternal *smaran* of the divine, stress the point that steadfast devotion to Bhagavan is the pathway to liberation, notwithstanding one's learning.

69. कंसारये नमः ।

Kaṁsāraye namaḥ |

Salutations to Kamsa's enemy, Krishna.

Overburdened by the actions of cruel and unrighteous kings, Mother Earth appealed to Brahma for recourse. Brahma stated that Bhagavan Vishnu would manifest as the son of Vasudeva in the Yadu clan and Adishesha, the serpent guard of Vishnu, would appear as his elder brother Balarama to relieve her from atrocities.

Kamsa was the son of Ugrasena, the ruler of Mathura, and Devaki's cousin. As soon as Devaki's

wedding with Vasudeva was solemnised, Kamsa offered to drive the newly wedded couple to the bridegroom's abode. No sooner he took the reins of the chariot, than an arial voice was heard saying that Kamsa would be killed by the eighth child of Devaki and Vasudeva.

Immediately, Kamsa's love and affection for his sister turned into intense hatred born out of fear and he even drew out his sword to kill her. The desperate groom Vasudeva intervened and prevented the heinous act by promising to hand over Devaki's sons to Kamsa soon after their birth.

Kamsa imprisoned his father Ugrasena and proclaimed himself as the ruler of Surasena kingdom. He also imprisoned Vasudeva and Devaki and killed every child born to them. When six sons of Devaki had died, Bhagavan manifested through his

partial power in the form of Ananta in her womb. Bhagavan wielded the power of his *yogamaya* and transferred the foetus to Rohini, another wife of Vasudeva, staying in Gokula. Krishna's elder brother Balarama was thus born.

Krishna also commanded his *yogic* powers to be born to Yasoda and Nanda when Devaki gave birth to Krishna in the prison. Soon after Krishna's birth, in obedience to Bhagavan's command, Vasudeva took his new born baby to Gokula and brought back *Yogamaya*, born there as Yasoda and Nanda's girl child.

Kamsa rushed to the prison on hearing about the birth of Devaki's eighth child and paid no attention to her entreaties to spare the girl child. However, *Yogamaya* manifested in her divine form and announced to Kamsa that he would meet his end at the hands of the eighth child born elsewhere.

Kamsa began to live in constant fear, and from time to time, sent *asuras* to kill infants born around the same time as Devaki's child. The *asuras* invariably met their end in little Krishna's hands.

While Kamsa was eventually killed by Krishna, *Bhagavatam* describes how Kamsa was indeed blessed due to his constant thought of Krishna, though out of fear - while drinking, eating, talking, walking and sleeping. He was therefore blessed to attain the state known as *Sarupya* (to have close identity with the divine).

In fact, attaining oneness with the divine through hatred of the divinity is a form of *yoga*, known as *Sambhrama yoga*. The *asura* king, Hiranyakashipu, who was once cursed to be born on earth, practised this *yoga* and reached Bhagavan in a short span of time.



The *Taraka* mantra to get All round Benefits

Shri Rama Raksha Stotram is a devotional hymn praying for the grace of Lord Rama. The *stotram* is attributed to sage Visvamitra.

When sage Vasishtha, the *kulaguru* or family preceptor of the Raghu dynasty was asked to name the heir to king Dasaratha's throne, he named him Rama - a befitting appellation to the one who had a pleasing disposition towards everyone. *Rama* is derived from the verb *ramu*, meaning to please. *Ramayati*, *rama eva Ramah*. Rama does not merely please, he makes everyone rejoice.



Rama nama is referred to as the '*taraka mantra*' -

its soulful repetition is considered the very cure for *samsara*, the cycle of birth and death. The *nama* is in fact derived from the roots of the two great *mantras*, the *Ashtakshara mantra* (*Namo Narayanaya*) and the *Panchakshara mantra* (*Nama Sivaya*).

Endowed with all the characteristics of *samudrika lakshnam* listed for a monarch, Rama had beautiful eyes and his countenance was as pleasing as his

disposition. He is hailed as *Raghuvamsha tilaka*, the most distinguished king in the dynasty.

Here is the *sloka*:

लोकाभिरामं रणरङ्गधीरं
राजीवनेत्रं रघुवंशनाथम् ।
कारुण्यरूपं करुणाकरं तं
श्रीरामचन्द्रं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

Lokābhirāmaṃ
raṇaraṅgadhīraṃ
Rājīvanetraṃ
raghuvamśanātham |
Kāruṇyarūpaṃ
karuṇākaraṃ taṃ
Śrīrāmacandraṃ
śaraṇaṃ prapadye ||

I seek refuge in Rama, who is pleasing to all the people, who is courageous in battle, whose eyes are like blue lotuses, he is the leader of Raghu dynasty, and an embodiment of compassion towards all beings.

The epic *Ramayana* describes how Rama's

compassion knew no bounds. His willingness to let go of Indra's son with a minor punishment for his grave offence of harming Sita, and his giving a last opportunity to the embattled Ravana to surrender Sita by sending his emissary Hanuman to avert the war, are examples of Rama's magnanimity and compassion.

Rama is indeed a *dhira* (one who is determined to achieve his goal). All odds were against him in the battle (*rana*) with Ravana. Banished to the forest, he was without any army, allies or the royal insignia including even a chariot. Nonetheless, undeterred, he capitalised on the motivated *vanara* army and emerged as the victor.

Millions of people believe that by chanting this *sloka*, one gets rid of any malefic influence of the *Navagrahas*.

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IDLE PLEASURE VS. FARSIGHTEDNESS

Planning for the future in the face of uncertainties
is a mark of wisdom

In the days of yore, there was a small kingdom in Central India, which practised a strange system of governance. The residents of the kingdom chose their ruler to rule for a period of five years only, after which they chose a new ruler for the next five years. This practice was repeated every five years.

On a chosen auspicious day at the end of every five year period, prominent citizens used to gather near the gate to the kingdom, awaiting the first visitor to visit the kingdom on the chosen day.

They would check for some auspicious signs at the time, and if everything was found to be well, they would

welcome the visitor and invite him to rule their kingdom for five years.

However, they would also tell the visitor about a condition that he would have to accept along with the kingship.

The condition was that the new king would rule the kingdom only for a period of five years, at the end of which he would be taken across the vast river bordering the kingdom to a huge forest having only wilderness and wild animals, and would be left there on his own. During the five years of rulership, he would, however, be given a free hand to rule the kingdom as he wished without any interference from anyone.

The Trader King

On one such auspicious day, as the citizens were eagerly awaiting the appointment of the latest ruler, a merchant from a far off land stopped

by at the kingdom, while he was on a journey to sell his wares.

He saw a big crowd approaching him, and soon had an elderly man who was the minister of the kingdom welcoming him with a garland, and announcing to him the offer of the rulership and the condition attached to it.

The merchant was asked whether he was willing to accept it. The bewildered merchant thought for a while, but the offer of rulership of a kingdom was so attractive that he accepted it happily.

He was crowned king and he enjoyed the five-year period which flew by quickly. At the end of the period, he was taken by a boatman to cross the river and reach the forest. The poor merchant perished in the wild forest after the five years of pleasure.

Next, the citizens found a traveller who was on a journey of exploration on the appointed auspicious day. He too happily accepted the rulership of the land.

After three years of enjoyment, he slowly began experiencing anxiety on what awaited him at the end of five years. In the last year of his rulership, his anxiety made him weak and sleepless. He became sick and unhealthy. At the end of the five years, he was also taken and left in the forest to meet his fate.

The Wise King

Then, the citizens found a wise man who entered their gate on the auspicious day. They made the offer of rulership with the same condition.

The wise man gave it a little thought and then accepted it. He ruled the kingdom well, and under his rulership, the kingdom

flourished and prospered. At the end of the five year period, the citizens were sad that he would have to leave. They came in large numbers to bid a teary farewell to him.

The wise man, however, looked very calm and exuded peace and confidence. He thanked the citizens of the kingdom for the rich experience and the opportunity.

He cheerfully got into the boat waiting to take him to the forest, and singing merrily on the way to the forest. The boatman was surprised to see him in such high spirits, as every previous king had gone to the forest with fear, sadness and anxiety.

The boatman asked the wise man how he could be so cheerful while going to a dark fate in a wild forest. The wise man told him that

the wild forest was no longer there. During the five years of his rule, he had not spent his time idly in vain pleasures. Instead, he had thought ahead and planned for the future.

He had made numerous trips to the forest, and arranged for the wilderness to be removed. He had constructed a well laid out town there, and ensured that many people had settled down in the newly developed region. All they needed was a wise and efficient ruler to manage the administration of the new kingdom, and the wise man was now on his way to take up the new role.

The boatman was astonished to hear this account of farsightedness, planning and the execution of a brilliant plan. As the boat neared the shore, he saw the new settlers waiting to welcome their new king.

Thus, we see how careful planning and resourcefulness can help a person to achieve his goals smoothly, instead of frittering away time in luxury and aimless life.

नाभिषेको न संस्कारः

सिंहस्य क्रियते वने ।

विक्रमार्जितसत्त्वस्य

स्वयमेव मृगेंद्रता ॥

Nābhiśéko na samskāraha

simhasya kriyate vané |

Vikramārjita satvasya

svayaméva mrugéndratā ||

There is no official coronation ceremony held to declare that the lion is the king of the jungle. He becomes the king by his own attributes and heroism.

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Say it in Sanskrit



Here is a revision exercise based on some of the concepts learnt so far.

Fill in the blanks with the relevant *tumun*, *tvā*, *ktavatu* *pratyayas* and future tense usages to complete the following story.

The following verbs may be used for the purpose:

Gam (gacch), gr̥h, krīḍ, dr̥ṣ (paś), rakṣ, sam with gr̥h vaca, mā with nis, cint, paṭh, hā with vi, āp with pra.

कदाचित् रामुः इति कश्चित् अलसः बालो आसीत् ।

Kadācit Rāmu iti kaścit alasaḥ bālo āsīt |

Once there was a lazy boy called Ramu.

एकदा सः विद्यालयं नागच्छत् ।

Ekadā saḥ vidyālayam nāgacchat |

Once, he did not go to school.

1. किंतु मातुः सकाशात् अपूपानि _____ उद्यानम् अगच्छत् ।

Kiṃtu mātuḥ sakāśāt apūpāni _____ udyānam agacchat |

Instead, after taking some *vadas* from his mother, he went to the garden to play.

2. तत्र सः एकं कुक्कुरं _____ तं _____ आहूतवान् ।

Tatra saḥ ekam kukkuraṃ _____ taṃ _____ āhūtavān |

He saw a dog there and called him to play.

3. सः कुक्कुरः अहं मम प्रभोः गृहं _____ गच्छामि ।

अतः अहं _____ न _____ इत्यवदत् ।

Saḥ kukkuraḥ 'ahaṃ mama prabhoḥ gr̥ham _____ gacchāmi | Ataḥ ahaṃ _____ na _____ ityavadat |

The dog said, 'I am going to guard my master's house. So I will not come to play'.

4. एवं _____ सः कुक्कुरः अगच्छत् ।
Evam _____ saḥ kukkuraḥ agacchat |
 Saying so, the dog went.
5. ततः रामुः एकां पिपीलिकां _____ तां _____ आह्वयत् ।
Tataḥ rāmuḥ ekāṁ pipīlikāṁ _____
tām _____ āhvayat |
 Then Ramu, seeing an ant, called her to play.
6. सा 'अहं मम परिवारार्थं आहारं _____ गच्छामि
 त्वया सह _____ न _____' इत्यवदत् ।
Ahaṁ mama parivārārthaṁ āhāraṁ _____ gacchāmi
tvayā saha _____ na _____ ityavadat |
 She said 'I am going to collect food for my family,
 so I will come to play with you'.
7. किञ्चित् दूरं _____ रामुः एकं चटकं _____ तम् आह्वयत् ।
Kimcit dūraṁ _____ rāmuḥ ekam caṭakam _____
tam āhvayat |
 He went some distance and seeing a sparrow
 called him.
8. चटकोऽपि हे रामो शीघ्रमेव वर्षाकालः _____ ।
 अतः अहं नीडं _____ गच्छामि इत्यवदत् ।
Caṭako'pi He rāmo śīghrameva varṣākālah _____ |
Ataḥ ahaṁ nīḍaṁ _____ gacchāmi ityavadat |
 The sparrow said 'It will be rainy season soon.

So I am going to build a nest.'

9. रामुः सर्वेऽपि स्वकार्ये निरताः सन्ति इति ____ । अहमपि कालविलम्बं विना विद्यालयं ____ इति निर्णयं ____ । आलस्यं ____ परीक्षां उत्तरितुं परिश्रमेण पठन् सः उन्नतं स्थानं ____ ।

Rāmuḥ sarve'pi svakārye niratāḥ santi iti. ____ Ahamapi kālavilambarṁ vinā vidyālayaṁ ____ इति निर्णयं ____ । आलस्यं ____ परीक्षां उत्तरितुं परिश्रमेण पठन् सः उन्नतं स्थानं ____ ।

Ramu thought that everyone was busy with their own work. He decided 'Going to school without delay, I will also study.' Giving up his laziness and studying hard to pass exams, he got a good rank.

Answers: 1. gr̥hītvā, krīḍitum; 2. dṛṣtvā, krīḍitum; 3. rakṣitum; krīḍitum, āgamiṣyāmi 4. Uktvā; 5. dṛṣtvā, krīḍitum; 6. saṁgr̥hītvā, krīḍitum, āgamiṣyāmi; 7. gatvā, dṛṣtavā; 8. bhaviṣyati, nirmātum; 9. cintitavān. gatvā, paṭhiṣyāmi kṛtavān. vihāya, uttartum, paṭhan, prāptavān.

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The Story of Ashvakra

A story of how humility coupled with knowledge can be the best weapon against adversities.

Here is a story from the *Chandogya Upanishad* about sage Aruni and his illustrious disciple.

Sage Aruni was running a *Veda patashala*, and Kahoḍa

was one of his bright students, along with Aruni's daughter Sujata.

After his studies were over, upon the request of his guru, Kahoḍa married the guru's daughter. They continued to

live in the guru's *ashram* where Kahoda himself became a teacher.

Once Sujata, who was pregnant and expecting the baby, sat next to Kahoda while he was teaching. The little one in the womb listened attentively to the teachings. On one occasion, Kahoda made a mistake in the correct intonation of a Vedic *mantra*, and immediately the unborn child made a sound correcting him. All students were shocked to hear this, and in a fit of anger, Kahoda cursed the child to be born deformed.

Sage Aruni was in the kingdom of king Janaka, who was a phenomenal ruler and a true seeker.

Once a scholar named Varuni submitted to the king that he wanted to have a debate with the scholars in Janaka's kingdom to test their learnings. He made a unique condition that

whoever was defeated in the debate would become his slave, and accept any punishment meted out by him.

Many learned scholars came to participate in the debate, but all of them had lost and became his slaves. Varuni would take them to the river and drown them.

Proud of his knowledge, Kahoda too went to Janaka's court for the debate, but sadly he too lost to Varuni, and was drowned in the river.

Soon, Kahoda's son was born, physically deformed according to his father's curse – his feet, hands, knees, chest and neck were bent. As he grew up, other children made fun of him and called him Ashtavakra, the one with eight deformities.

Sage Aruni, however, sincerely taught Ashtavakra all branches of learning, and the bright boy learned quickly and became an expert.

When he was twelve years of age, Ashtavakra asked his mother about his father whom he had never seen. She told him about his debate with Varuni, and Ashtavakra felt sad to hear the account. He took the blessings of Aruni and his mother, and left for Janaka's court to challenge Varuni to avenge his father's death.

Many people came to witness the sight of a debate by a deformed young boy, who had the audacity to challenge such a great scholar.

The debate went on for a long time, and ultimately Varuni was defeated, and he gracefully accepted it. When Varuni asked Ashtavakra what he wanted, the young boy asked Varuni to bring back to life all the defeated and drowned scholars.

Varuni accepted and took Janaka and Ashtavakra to the river bank, and called out the

names of the drowned scholars one by one. All of them emerged from the river, including Kahoda.

Ashtavakra paid his respects to his father, who fondly embraced him and freed him from the curse of his deformed body. The boy was cured of all the deformities.

Varuni then revealed that he was the son of Varuna (the deity presiding the element of water and waterbodies), and that his father had been conducting a big *yagna* for twelve years under water for which he needed many learned scholars.

That is why he had drowned all the defeated scholars so that they could assist Varuna in the *yagna* in the water world. Now that the *yagna* was over, he was happy to return the scholars to their families.

While everyone was overjoyed, Janaka asked

Ashtavakra how he managed to defeat such a great scholar.

Ashtavakra replied that one of the most important learnings from his Guru Aruni was that one should remain humble at all times. Only humility had the power of making knowledge effective. Probably Varuni had some pride in him, whereas the humility of Ashtavakra had turned the tables in his favour.

This episode from the *puranas* stresses the moral of

upholding one's humility at all times.

It also shows how Ashtavakra bore all the teasing for his deformities stoically without allowing himself to get dissipated so as to pursue his objective of learning. By remaining focussed on learning, he had emerged as a great guru over time.

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Fruits of Actions

While we fully accept happiness, we question why God also gives us sorrows and difficulties.

Adi Sankara explains in his *bhashya* that God is only the *sadharana karana*, and he explains with a simile - *Ishwarastu parjanyaivat drashtavyaha*. That is, God should be viewed like rain water, which nourishes all seeds.

Water will nourish any seed, without making any distinction based on the nature of the seed, regardless of whether it is a fruit-bearing tree or a poisonous one. Therefore, it is our responsibility to plant the right seed, in order to obtain the desired fruit. Water will only nourish the seed that we plant. It will not change the seed itself.

--Jagadguru Sri Vidhusekhara Bharati Swamiji



Humble Pranams to
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