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Being Good

Eight Great
Qualities

DOUBT DESTROYS
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THE SPLENDOUR OF TRUTH

Founder His Holiness Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamigal Patron-in-Chief His Holiness Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji



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

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Jagadguru Speaks...

Isvara Is Beyond Love and Hatred

Bhagavan is the cause of the mysterious phenomenal creation, preservation and dissolution of this world.

He is All-knowing in general (*sarvajna* - knowing the essence of all creation) as well as All-knowing in particular (*sarvavit* - knowing every entity in creation). Consequently, Bhagavan is the dispenser of the fruits of all actions done by living beings, in appropriate and varying measure.

However some skeptics, holding on to unreasonable arguments say that Bhagavan too like any other human being has love and hatred. They reason that is so, is because according to them, Bhagavan creates an unjust world by making some people miserable and some others joyful. They even ascribe the false charges of pitilessness and extreme cruelty to the ever-merciful Bhagavan. This is a wrong conclusion based on mistaken understanding.

Bhagavan takes into account the *karmas* (sins and virtues) that an individual has engaged in. Creation, is observed to be unequal because it is brought about in conformity with the various *karmas* of the creatures that are born or about to be born. Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada has explained this very lucidly:

तदेव च ईश्वरस्य फ्लहेतुत्वम्, यत् स्वकर्मानुरूपाः प्रजाः सृजति ।

Bhagavan bestows results precisely in accordance with the past merits (noble acts or *punya*) and demerits (condemned

acts or *papa*) of individuals. The *smritis* also state emphatically that Bhagavan's dispensation of favour and disfavour is proportional to the specific merits or demerits of the various *karmas* done by each creature –

स्मृतिरपि प्राणिकर्मविशेषापेक्षमेवेश्वरस्यानुग्रहीतृत्वं निग्रहीतृत्वं च दर्शयति ।

All *karmas*, good or bad, will yield results, conditioned by time and space. Sometimes a good *karma* performed by an individual may not give immediate results. This will be the case if the good *karma* is obstructed in some manner by some newly fructified result of a bad *karma* done in the past. The fruition of the good *karma* will then occur at the earliest, from the concurrence of time and place.

Hence, blaming Bhagavan when encountering hardship is wrong. Justice and compassion find perfect consummation in him. No one can escape God's Law of *Karma*. No *karma* can fade by itself without yielding the corresponding results. It is said —

नाधर्मश्चरितो लोके सद्यः फलति गौरिव । शनैरावर्तमानस्तु कर्तुर्मूलानि कृन्तति ।।

That is - adharmic acts done (i.e. sins committed) do not give results instantly unlike a cow (that readily gives milk). These acts fructify gradually (like the wrong seeds sown in the ground) and in due course completely destroy the person who engaged in them.

Hence our *sastras* always exhort people to think good and do good so that good fruits can be reaped.

Since Bhagavan is the Supreme Force, attaining him (by doing good deeds) alone is the ultimate attainment.

We bless everyone to understand this and make their lives fruitful.

Dear Sir,

The article "The Dharma of Start Up" (Tattvãloka, June 2023) has come at a most opportune moment.

While Start Ups play a big supportive role in economic development, the author rightly introduces a note of caution, such as the burning ambition of many promoters for stellar growth and quick money, lack of planning and integrity in financial practices.

The reference to the parable of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa on greed, and Sri Krishna's advice in *Gita* on following *svadarma*, one's natural inclination and capability, are very apt.

S. Sundar srinivasan.sundar@rediffmail.com

Dear Sir,

The article "Atma Nivedanam" in the June 2023 issue was very instructive.

Vaishnavites, I understand, consider the performance of 'Prapatti' as the only means of liberation, other than Bhakti Yoga.

It will be useful if an article on '*Prapatti*' appears in a future issue of *Tattvãloka*.

N. Balasubrahmanyam sujabala2000@hotmail.com

Dear Sir,

I wish to congratulate and appreciate the sincere efforts of *Tattvãloka* magazine team for their untiring efforts in keeping the flame of *Santana Dharma* burning. The articles in each month's issue are like nectar to a thirsty devotee.

Let us hope and pray that this magazine reaches many more thousands of people who are all drowning in the material world amidst various distractions of digital devices and overload of unwanted information.

Usha Iyer ushaiver28@vahoo.com

Dear Sir,

The article 'Arguments' (June 2023) highlighting the significance of healthy debates is inspirational, informative and thought-provoking.

The author's quote of Buddha's saying that 'Admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie is actually the whole of holy life', is very apt, as healthy and healing conversations are vital for general wellbeing in the society.





It is not easy, but self-realisation is not possible without being good

ome to think of it, it is a philosophical question, but as most such questions do, it does have a bearing on our lives. What is more rewarding: a relentless material pursuit, or walking the path of inner peace?

While they are not mutually exclusive, we are

required to prioritise one over the other. Should we focus on being successful even if it means being ruthless and at the cost of our relationships (hopefully not our moral values and principles)? Or, should we settle for less and give greater preference to our family, passion, inner calling and so on?

In our tradition, many mothers are seen to take their children to a saint for blessings saying, "Please bless them so they grow up to be good human beings."

For them, this was the most important thing in life: to be good. Everything else works itself out one way or the other, they would say. As a saying goes, "It is nice to be important, but it is more important to be nice."

Understanding Goodness

To think that being good is the same as being soft is misunderstanding goodness. The way I see it, there are three core attributes of goodness:

Noble Intention

That my intention behind what I am about to do is not to hurt, harm or injure anybody is at the root of goodness. That, what I harbour in my heart is not jealousy, ill will or hate towards anyone.

Noble intention acts as a cleanser of your consciousness. That said, it is still the first step and is incomplete on its own, for real goodness is to help someone, to be of use to someone, not merely in thoughts but in action too.

Challenge comes when you want to do something positive, but your loved ones may not support you. Is your intention still noble if your actions are helping some but hurting others? That is the real difficulty behind being good.

It requires a choice to be made. In such an event, simply remember that the primary intent behind noble intention is to help someone in need. When we act out of love, without any malice or venom, with a view of furthering ourselves on the right path or directly helping the other person, our intention is noble in that case.

Altruism

Most of what we do is geared towards our own comforts and pleasures in life. Faster cars, bigger homes, latest gadgets, more investments and so on.

When we choose to put our selfish interests on the backburner and make a decision with a certain degree of selflessness, putting others first, we are being good.

There is a beautiful Sufi saying which, when translated, reads like this: It is no big deal that you can swim alone, show me if you can save someone who is drowning. Everyone is good with a good person, show me if you can do good to a bad person.

By being selfless, I am not suggesting that you help those who do not wish to be helped. By altruism, I mean that our first move with anyone should be to help them and not judge them, to empathise and not advise, to support and not rebuke.

We should at least extend our hand. If they refuse to take it, that is a different matter.

Prudence

Being good does not mean becoming a walkover.
Prudence is when you exercise your judgement with a bit of caution and do so pragmatically, that is with a dose of reality and practicality. Without prudence, goodness leans more towards ignorance than anything else.

You may have heard, "Never quit." Well, it is not always true because you cannot help someone if they do not want to be helped, for example.

Being good is also knowing when to quit and direct your energy on something where it would matter. Goodness without wisdom is often painful and rarely useful.

No doubt that for a believer, a higher energy grants everything. If you really think about it, however, there is always a medium which is usually another human being. And one way to connect with other human beings in this world is to be good.

The more good you are, the more lives you will touch. And the more you touch more lives (or touch a few lives more), the greater the number of beautiful memories in your consciousness.

These positive and kind memories come at your rescue every time you feel lonely or down.

After all, if you notice, you will discover that you feel lonely when you have drifted away in your world of memories.

Moments of togetherness, kindness, compassion make up happy memories.

Moments of arguments, misdemeanour, rage and abuse etc. are the building blocks of sad memories. The former make you warm inside, and the latter bitter.

The one who has understood and absorbed the inherent nature of goodness will never feel lonely.

A disciple asked his master, "How do I overcome this feeling of intense loneliness?"

"Never think anything is out of place," he replied.
"Everything in life is where it should be. When you accept that, you then have much to look forward to."

Gratifying Relationship

Give hope a chance. When you are good, you not only build a stronger bond with others, but you also make a deeper connection with

yourself. And in doing so, you enter into the finest relationship.

Wonder what that is? The most gratifying relationship is the relationship with peace. Which, I may add, is not possible without a lifelong subscription to goodness.

Being good is more rewarding in the longer run than anything else you can imagine. It pays and it pays big dividends. Goodness is the seed of genuine hope. Any kind act you do never goes unnoticed; one way or the other, Mother Nature will pay you back multi-fold. It always does.

When we are on this planet, we have a responsibility of propagating goodness for ourselves, our loved ones, the society and the world at large. The seed of greatness you carry in you, that divine light you wish to experience, it begins by stroking the fire

of goodness in you. When it rages, it consumes all negativity and self-interest.

Next time just notice the sky soon after it has rained. The beautiful blue sky empty of all clouds, ever serene and washed with unearthly newness.

That is what a good heart is like; carrying no traces of defeating and negative emotions towards yourself or others, it is tranquil in its own splendour.

Be good, be gentle.





Wisdom for Self-Improvement – 22

Tattvãloka continues a series on the key slokas in Bhagavad Gita on the journey towards selfimprovement and attaining true knowledge.

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीः

ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।

मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त

आसीत मत्परः ॥

Praśhāntātmā vigata-bhīr brahmachāri-vrate sthitaḥ Manaḥ samyamya macchitto yukta āsīta mat-paraḥ

Bhagavad Gita 6-14

With a placid mind (prashantatma), free from fear (vigatabhih), firm in

the vow of a celibate (brahmacharivrate sthitah), and with the mind fixed on Me (matcittah) after controlling the thought-processes of the mind (manah samyamya) and having Me as the supreme goal (matparah), he should remain seated (asita), in spiritual communion with Me, i.e., with the lower consciousness absorbed in the higher peace (yuktah).

'Manah samyamya maccitto yukta asita matparah' - This should be our motto and slogan taught by the Gita for a daily permanent regimen! 'Manah samyamya' is elaborated in the note below

Thought control does not mean suppression of thought, but mastery of it. That is difficult, of course, a number of thoughts will certainly arise. But the beauty is, each thought also subsides when the next thought arises.

There is obviously a point or junction between the two thoughts. In that gap, there is 'no thought' at all. This period, when no thinking is transpiring, is called 'nirastamanana-akara' by Sage Vasishta in his teachings to Sri Rama (in Yoga Vasishta). This 'unthinkingness' is the real nature of the Self.

It means that the mind is not occupied with anything at the time; and therefore, there is no mind, only the Self!

In order to minimise the density of thoughts and increase the 'gap' between thoughts, Vedanta recommends the japa method of a mantra, where the real potency of the japa lies in the gap between two utterings of the chosen mantra or word. It is the gap that energises the dhyana.

With experience, the sages say, one can increase the gap. Even a gap of five seconds is supposed to be an achievement!

The longer we are with this 'unthinkingness', the more impurities will be eradicated, and the more lightness may be enjoyed! And that is the approximation to the 'yukta' stage.

The gap between two thoughts, when the mind is 'unthinking' should not be taken to mean that 'the mind is watching the real Self.'
There is only the SELF there.

Acharya Sadananda adds at this point: "It is Self + the mind without thoughts. Hence, chidabhasa is still there. Mind without thoughts also happens in the deep sleep state. Only difference is that there is awareness of the thoughtless mind. With the Vedantic knowledge, mind has to recognize the consciousness getting reflected in full in the thoughtless mind".

There is no activity of the mind. So there is no question of 'watching'. Nothing can be watching the SELF. The SELF is only one, nondual; there is no second thing.

So in that gap, you are the SELF, the universal Self. The instant your mind jumps to the next thought after the gap, you have come back to your individual (small) self, with all its material adjuncts.

Also the SELF is never an object, to be watched or realised. It is always the subject. The SELF is; that is all. In the gap we are talking about, if it is really the 'unthinking' gap, You Are It!!





Sri Chandrasekhara

Like a beggar seeking alms From a king or an emperor But once on meeting him Wishing to have everything

I too stand before You My Lord For a single glimpse of Yours But a moment after meeting You I simply cannot leave You at all.

I know I have nothing pure in me Yet I wish to reach You only Such powerful desire within Surely needs Your blessings.

For most compassionate You are Gracing each and everyone
No difference at all You show
Between a sinner and a pious one.

Everyone who seeks Your Feet
With all their heart and soul
You come down to uplift their life
Showering bliss that is only Yours.





Bliss of the Self – 10

Worship the divine in any form, but with the aim of Self-knowledge

n the eighth verse in his treatise 'Forty verses on Reality' (Ulladu Narpadu), Sri Ramana Maharishi advocates moving from worshipping God with names and forms to understanding the God in the tattva svarupa.

He says, by whatever name or form that nameless and formless supreme being is thought of and worshipped, it is verily a way to see that reality. Yet, establishing one's attention in one's own Self, losing one's individual 'I' in the reality, and becoming one with That, is indeed realisation.

A seeker who has fully accomplished and transcended both the realm of action and the realm of worship alone is competent to listen to Vedanta. Such a mature seeker will realise the Self by mere *sravana* (listening) from a competent guru.

Action with Detachment

Our bodies are fields filled with the seeds of prarabdha karma. It is impossible to terminate karma without going through it. However, if one performs actions with desire, he acquires more vasanas and falls back into the whirlpool of more complex karma.

'One karma leaves only after sowing the seed of another, and thus leads to unending samsara', declares the Upadesa Saram.

Hence karmayoga means performing one's obligatory actions with detachment, without any desire for their fruit, and as an offering to the Lord. Thereby the seeds of karma will gradually come to an end. New karma vasanas will not sprout and the mind will attain purity. In the pure mind will dawn the knowledge of the Self. This is the aim of karmayoga.

Generally, the seeker begins with devotion to a personal God with name and form according to his former spiritual tendencies. If the body is the field of action, the mind is the field of upasana - meditation.

Both action and meditation are based on the doer. They can be done, not done, or can be done wrongly. This applies to all worldly and Vedic karmas

The acts of worship are also like this. All these have to be performed by the seeker, strictly as instructed by his Guru. On the other hand, *jnana* is to be known or experienced.

A seeker whose 'body debt' (sarira runam) has ended through karma and whose mind is purged of its impurities through devout worship or meditation, will be able to focus his attention on the Self by listening to the meaning of the Mahavakyas.

By sravana itself, his attention (sraddha) will turn towards the Self. The mind of a mumukshu listening to the words of the Guru will go beyond their literal meaning and will become one with the implied meaning, the experiential-essence, and will get absorbed in it.

The name and form of the personal God is thus an anchorage for the soul, which has given up its hold on the world in its inner voyage. This is the flight from worship to wisdom.

'Visionary' Experiences

A seeker once had a vision of Siva as a result of intense worship. Carried away by the experience, he asked Sri Ramana Maharshi how to make it permanent.

Maharishi replied: "The visible Siva is not eternal. What appears and disappears is not the real Siva-svarupa. The real Siva-tattva is the consciousness that ever remains unchanged during, before, and after the appearance of the vision of Siva. It is the consciousness that ever remains unchanged as a witness to the mind, which is the Eye of the eye that had the vision."

Another devotee, living in Punjab, wished ardently for

Krishna darsan. Whenever he met any sadhu, he would prostrate before him, invite him to his house, and pray for Krishna darsan.

While he was thus pining for a vision of Krishna, a visiting sadhu advised him to go to the far-away Tiruvannamalai and meet Sri Ramana Maharshi. When, after some time he visited Ramanasramam and saw Maharishi, it was anger that this devotee felt; for, it was the same Ramana Maharshi who had come to his house and advised him to go to Tiruvannamalai!

When he told others that this same sannyasi had visited him earlier a thousand miles away and played the game of self-propagation, he was told that the Maharshi had never left Arunachala for fifty years!

Although astonished at this miracle, this devotee

initially felt no particular attraction towards the sage or the other visitors in the Ashram. However, as he started chanting the name of Krishna sitting on the slopes of the Arunachala hill, he became absorbed in it and began to have visions of Krishna. He lost himself in these visions of the Lord, and began to develop a sense of pride in having them.

He even entertained the thought of rushing to Maharishi and advising him "to pray for Krishna-darsan rather than simply sitting in silence!"

With this, he approached Ramana Maharishi who was sitting in great dignity and peace, absorbed in the bliss of the Self. There, while waiting for a chance to speak, the devotee found that his devotion for Krishna would not rise in his heart, however much he tried; instead, a pulsation, 'Who

am I?'... 'Who am I?' began to arise continuously within him.

The Maharishi explained to the intrigued devotee saying, that which appeared and disappeared was not the truth. "What is 'I' that knows that which appears, and always shines as the Knower of all knowledge? Pay attention to that. That is atmasvarupa," said the sage.

In later years, this devotee became a guiding light to many seekers. He had declared that the 'Hare Rama' mantra and meditation on the form of Krishna became the vehicle which took him to the presence of the sadguru.

Worship of a Form Purifies the Mind

Srimad Bhagavatam describes this under Kapilopadesa (3-28-35) as follows: 'When the Lord's form which was the aspirant's sole anchorage disappears, the mind with that Lord's beatific form, which is the basis for meditation, disappears on its own at a particular stage.

'At this stage, the mind that has developed detachment and dispassion towards other objects as a result of meditation attains *nirvana*, like the flame getting blown out devoid of fuel. In this state, without any hindrance, the flow of *sattva* and the other *gunas* subside, and uninterrupted Self-experience happens.'

Hence, worship of name and form purifies the mind to attain the right vision (sat-darsanam). The mind made sharp and single-pointed by concentration and meditation, flows inward very easily. Such a mind becomes qualified to grasp the pulsation of 'I'.

Sage Narada says in the Bhakti Sutra, 'atmaratya virodhena iti sandilyah'. That

is, worshipping the Lord with name and form, should not conflict with the delight in the Self.

In other words, the Lord's form that we worship, instead of leading us to the Self, the seer within, should not entice our mind towards the seen. Very often devotion (bhakti) in the world is seen as a movement away from the Self, turning it into one more worldly activity.

But those who worship the form of the Lord with the aim of Self-knowledge will never slip from the path. The indweller within will grant them vision appearing in the form of their personal deity, and also lead them to Self-knowledge in the form of an external Guru.



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



Paropakaram— Doing Good to Others

Among the many aspects and ways of *dharma*, paropakaram is an important one. It is an obvious case of *nishkama karma*, action without attachment to fruits.

here is a subhashita slokam on paropakaram which begins as Paropakaram vahanti nadyah, Paropakaram duhanti gayah. It says that rivers flow, cows give milk,

trees bear fruits for others, benefit. Similarly this body is also meant for helping others.

Helping others gives spiritual merit. *Manava seva*

is *Madhava seva*. Service to humans is service to God.

Annadanam is one of the highest gifts or charities. There is a bhojana mantra which says, annam brahma rasam Vishnu bhokta devo Janardana, bringing out the divinity of food. The essence of food is Vishnu. The enjoyer is Mahesvara. Knowing and meditating on this prevents any impurities in the food sticking to you.

Our Vedas have emphasized the importance of annam, food. Bahu annam kurvita: Produce more and more food. Annam na pramaditavyam. Food is not to be wasted.

There are thousands of selfless persons who work in several fields driven by a vision of doing public good. A good example is working in the area of helping farmers and communities, especially to turn lands degraded by conflicts into productive farmland.

There is a recent news that one such woman paropakari in the field of agriculture by name Heidi Kuhn has been chosen to be honoured by the World Food Prize Foundation with an equivalent of Nobel Prize for her selfless work around the world to turn lands destroyed by war and conflict into fertile farmland.

There are examples of qualified engineers offering free coaching classes to poor children, and professionals actively involved in dealing with environmental waste on a voluntary basis. We can seize the opportunity to understand, appreciate and learn from the outstanding contribution of such persons.

Many such people stand out as examples of sublimating personal suffering into service to society for *loka sangraha*, universal welfare. They inspire others to rise above *artha* and *kama*, and focus more on *dharma*.

You may know of some, or read about many such paropakaris. Even known a few personally. They are beacons. Let us follow their examples of paropakaram, in our areas of competence, starting in a small way and expanding.

As a personal action plan, first start young. Do whatever little *paropakaram* can be done. Do it now. Do not be *tamasic* and keep postponing.

Second, involve and guide the target beneficiaries. Let them learn to help themselves, in future.

Third, as you grow older and have more knowledge, skills and resources, increase the size of your involvement.

Fourth, focus on the local priorities in your town or city. Often, food is the first need. You can help with raising the productivity of land; harvesting; storage;

distribution, etc. Then come health, literacy, skills, environment, etc.

Fifth, try to draw your spouse and children into suitable bigger projects. They will not only contribute, but also learn. They may also become paropakaris on their own.

Sixth, you can join as a parttime volunteer in nongovernment organisations that are doing good work, and later associate with them on full-time basis. This can spur you to identify neglected areas and needs, and start your own nongovernment organisation, or become an advisor or mentor to any such organisation at national or even global level.

There is no end to the opportunities for paropakaram!







DEBITS AND CREDITS IN THE KARMIC ACCOUNT

There is an invisible accounting for everyone arising from every thought and action

to consider that our personal and business lives are governed by the principle of double entry book-keeping.

Those familiar with accounting would know the basic difference between cash-based book-keeping or what is known as Single-entry accounting, and the scientific way of recording of two sides of every transaction, known as Double-entry accounting. The former recognises only when there is a cash movement, not taking into account liabilities yet to mature.

Double entry way of accounting considers not only immediately settled transactions, but also those waiting in the wings to materialise. You reckon not only present transactions but future liabilities too.

Cash-based book-keeping is perhaps like living the life of a charvaka, or a materialistic person that our scriptures describe. A charvaka is just content to enjoy the present life with all its indulgences without any concern for future. He is scarcely concerned about the long term effect of present actions.

Double-entry book-keeping, on the other hand, reflects perhaps the approach of Vedanta, which urges everyone to be mindful of the consequence of every action based on cause and effect. It says there is always a relationship between two things, with one thing making something else to happen.

Every individual or business entity has thus an invisible current account of entries arising from his or its acts of punya or papa. All meritorious acts, or dharmic deeds, give rise to addition to the punya account, while every demeaning or adharmic action gives rise to

an entry under the head of papa. In the case of individuals, this accumulation gets carried over to future births to experience the impact.

This spiritual ledger showing accrued punya credits and papa liabilities becomes the basis for the karmic balance sheet of a business unit. Karma draws from the intent, deeds, and actions – positive actions bringing happiness and positive results in the future, while negative acts contributing to de-growth and eventual demise.

Feeling the Impact

How does one get a feel of the positive or negative balance in one's *karmic* account?

In the case of individuals, the accumulated balance of punya is experienced in the form of a comfortable and orderly life, and fulfillment of all dharmic desires.

Bhagavad Gita (14-9) explains that those with positive karmic balance exude an overwhelming sense of sattva, the quality of being stainless and luminous. Sattva in ascendancy bestows physical, intellectual and ethical pleasures.

On the other hand, a negative balance, or diminishing *karmic* credits, leads to the person being callous in his duties, wasting time without compunction, and squandering his wealth.

It is possible to 'sense' such an impact of *karmic* account in the case of business entities as well. Referred to as Corporate *Karma*, this is nothing but the collective consciousness of all employees from top to bottom, though the *karmic* balance is substantially accounted by the actions of top leadership and senior managers.

Businesses that carry positive balance in their *karmic* account experience a happy and vibrant work atmosphere where employees are enthusiastic, engaged and motivated to work harder, with a positive energy pervading the organisation. The firm experiences steady growth and profits.

On the other hand, firms with negative balance face unexpected impediments in progress and high employee attrition. There is a sense of disengagement at all levels despite apparent profitable working, along with an unflattering perception by stakeholders.

Remedial Action

The way to improve the *karmic* balance sheet for business firms is to realise that success is not limited to the profit figure. It is by creating a healthy corporate culture where the leadership shows tolerance, appre-

ciation, gratitude and optimism. It is by putting one's energy into the joy of working. It is by realising that true joy comes from living a purposeful and authentic life, while trusting that the rewards will come in their own perfect time.

Such good values create positivity and radiate in every aspect of working in the organisation.

A tangible way to improve a firm's *karmic* balance is through involvement in philanthropic initiatives. Good philanthropy takes many forms, from *adhoc* donations to pioneering social investments. It becomes effective when it involves the engagement of all employees.

The essence of gaining good credit to *karmic* account is by following the maxim, 'Just give more than you receive'. Our scriptures advise that the more one

gives, the more he will receive, because he keeps the abundance of the universe circulating. In fact, anything that is of value multiplies when it is given.

Gita expounds this vital aspect of giving in Shraddatraya Vibhaga Yoga (Chapter 17). It extols gift made by a person without expecting any favour or return, with an attitude that it is one's duty to give ('datavyam iti yad danam'). What is given expecting a return contribution, or any reciprocal benefit, is only a motivated investment.

Any act done with the intention of contributing to *loka sangraha*, or public welfare, has a direct effect of boosting the *karmic* balance.

Business entities need to keep a tab on their invisible positive *karmic* balance at every turn, and the top leadership should become sensitive about it. Where, for

example, a firm is caught in unexpected difficulties, or it faces flak for no apparent misdemeanour on its part, seniors usually scramble to find the reasons. Our scriptures quote such happenings arising from one's karmic influence.

Karmic balance is beyond the ethical audit that large corporate bodies undertake to make sure compliance with ethics-related requirements, which is often a technical box-ticking exercise.

Karmic account is an inexplicable phenomenon that can only be 'felt' by sensitive, righteous management keen on remaining on the dharmic path at all times.





The Mysterious Role of Mind



Spiritual quest lies in analysing our mind and its characteristics

wami Sivananda once said that the mind is a wall that separates man from God. You will have to break down the wall to attain the divine.

Spiritual masters say that the mind is a wonderful gift by which one has to seek and find God. It is a mysterious instrument, and one has to find one's own formula to deal with it advantageously.

Big Storehouse

The normal human mind has deeply embedded impressions and tendencies called vasanas that are full of tamas (inertia) and rajas (activity). It has a distaste for higher divine principle, and such a mind becomes a barrier, particularly in spiritual progress.

But a mind awakened by spiritual practices which is

full of sattva reflects the inherent divinity and becomes a link with the divine

The mind thus stands in between the physical aspect of human nature and the higher spiritual state, and it has the potential to become a block or a passage.

On our part, we should thank the Supreme Power for giving a precious human life with a versatile body-mind-intellect apparatus, and pray to Him to transform the mind from its dual nature into a purely positive factor to realise the lower and higher ends of life, referred to as dharma-artha-kama and moksha.

Conquering the Mind

The conquest of mind has been regarded as the greatest conquest by philosophers. Buddha once told his disciples that one who had conquered the mind had indeed conquered the world, and advised them to become light unto themselves - Atma deepo bhava.

This is a reflection of the dhyana sloka in Bhagavad Gita that exhorts us to light the lamp of knowledge. The prerequisite for this is controlling the mind through repeated practice and dispassion as stressed in the Gita.

Our scriptures proclaim that man is a spiritual entity (atma) with a gross physical body, a subtle body comprising vital, mental, and intellectual parts, and a subtler (causal) body that is the source of mind and mechanism of thought process.

The mind is one of the cosmic principles that became projected as a

phenomenal universe, and the human mind is an individualised nucleus of the cosmic universal mind.

It becomes a medium to express all impressions accumulated deep within, through experiences over several births. Mind precedes the birth of human body, and it cannot be equated with the brain. Mind and body belong to different planes, and they are related only so long as the body lasts.

The body is a receptacle through which the mind manifests in the form of thoughts, and feelings through different centres in the brain. The objective of these perceptions should indeed be not just to deal with the phenomenal world outside, but to dive deep within and evolve.

Mind is a supra-physical aspect of the human

individual, subtler to the body, but grosser to the spirit (soul). Mind is a subtler matter that is intangible, invisible, and incomprehensible, and it pervades the whole body.

The mind-stuff has three characteristics: it has always the tendency to move outward, away from the centre; it readily objectifies itself, and it is ever restless in a state of fluctuation.

Each human mind is unique and the seeker has to carry out a study of one's own mind to cleanse it from various afflictions. As the mind is cleansed, many new and higher aspects of one's own self emerge that usually remain latent.

In the waking state, the mind is located in the astral body in the centre corresponding to the physical space between eyebrows (ajna chakra); in deep sleep state, it is located

in the astral body in the centre corresponding to heart (anahata chakra); and in the dream state, it is located in the astral body in the centre corresponding to neck in the physical body (visuddhi chakra).

Dual Role

The mind plays a mysterious dual role, and it is both at the giving and receiving end. It is both the initiator of the activity and the recipient of all experiences.

First, an idea arises in the mind, it transforms into thought, then intellect which is the determining faculty, decides and gives order through ego to the body senses, the sensory stimulation going to the brain as a perception. The ego then presents it to the intellect which makes a meaning out of perception, and formulates it into a concept. This is experienced either as a like or a dislike,

and the mind stores it as a dormant seed deep within.

Our scriptures describe the process of perception and knowledge beyond mind and intellect, attributing to an entity as a thinker beyond thought.

All experiences are deemed to be an educative process that truly brings inner transformation, taking one closer to one's true self beyond all adjuncts.

Our thoughts, feelings, sentiments, and emotions of the present are thus building blocks of the future. Choosing the right type through our life is a process of spiritual unfoldment and evolution.

We are in a state of selfforgetfulness of submerged awareness. One can come out of this state of 'selfdementia' through the righteous use of physical body and the mind instrument gifted by God, so as to proceed to a state of self-awareness.

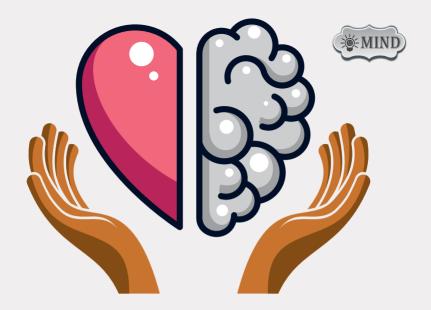
The mind is the key and the body is subservient to it. This is a Yoga pathway practice.

Vedanta teaches the other extreme of renouncing the body and the mind apparatus at a certain point of spiritual practice, with the true self characterised by pure consciousness and bliss becoming self-revealing.

Both are however complementary pathways.



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Emotional Vs. Ethical Quotient

Emotions can impede judgement by making one's response unethical or partial

any of us face tricky situations when we are expected to take sides, and cornered into a moral conflict, or *dharma sankat*.

In most such situations, we tend to support the loved ones or the loyal ones, as the case may be. We may have done the square thing, guided by the emotional quotient of our hearts, but whether we have done justice according to the ethical code of conduct may remain a question that can be debated upon.

People usually consider emotional, social, or economic

parameters while taking a stand. Truth takes a backseat while loyalty becomes the dominating factor.

Epical Characters

Srimad Ramayana describes the art of applying discretion when faced with such a dilemma in life.

Kumbhakarna and Vibheeshana were brothers of Ravana, and both were of the opinion that Ravana had committed a blunder in abducting Sita. They did not appreciate the fact that he kept her captive in the hope that she would yield to his desires someday.

Kumbhakarna did not endorse the behavior of his brother. All the same, he decided to support him and face Rama's arrows, no matter what the consequences, based solely on his fraternal loyalty.

Vibheeshana, on the other hand, pleaded with Ravana

and argued vehemently with him to give up Sita. When all his attempts were of no avail, and he was abused by Ravana as a traitor, he simply went over to Rama's camp and swore allegiance to him in the name of Truth.

While this might appear heartless and inconsiderate to a logical mind, a little introspection will reveal that by standing for truth and *dharma*, he had no ulterior motive and was only concerned about the welfare of people at large in Lanka.

The Mahabharata describes a similar dilemma of Karna. He was fully conscious of the nefarious intent of Duryodhana towards his cousins and his violation of moral code of conduct. Yet he chose to be led by his emotions and stood by his disreputable friend in the Kurukshetra war.

On the other hand, the epic describes how Vikarna,

the blood brother of the Kaurava prince, strongly objected to the unethical act of violating the honour of Draupadi in the open court. Yuyutsu, the half-brother of Duryodhana, chose to swear allegiance to the Pandavas as his conscience did not permit him to endorse the devious path of Duryodhana.

Loyalty and Dharma

It is important to carefully distinguish between the two virtues of loyalty and dharma in situations involving decision-making. Loyalty is certainly an important trait. One should never forget the favours and kindness received from another, however, it cannot be at the cost of Truth.

There can be situations when loyalty can do more harm than good.

A research study on this factor in group behaviour

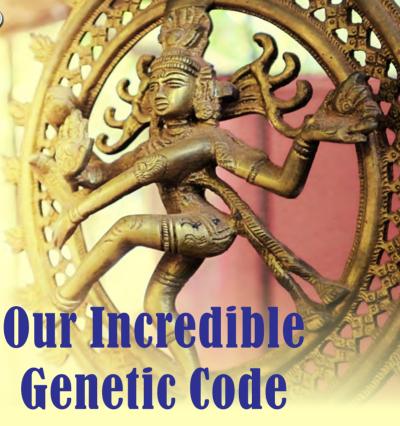
showed that loyalty can be a driver of good behaviour, but when competition among groups is high, it can lead us to behave unethically as winning at any cost becomes a priority. At such times ethical behaviour takes a back seat.

If a loved one is found swerving from the path of truth, it becomes obligatory to throw light on the issue at hand, and reiterate the basis of justice. If Truth prevails, well and good. If not, one certainly has the option to move away from the path of misplaced loyalty.

Following the *dharmic* code of conduct will certainly have a positive ripple effect on our society at large.







Science is beginning to endorse that we carry in our genes the natural law as proclaimed in the Vedic texts

he Vedas describe God as 'anor aniyan mahato mahiyan', meaning He is greater than the greatest, and smaller than the smallest. God exists everywhere and manifests

Himself as both the infinitesimal and the Infinite

This reference to the origin of life from the smallest atom finds echo in the Vedic

hymn Purusha Suktam which declares that life on the earth has evolved from fundamental energy. The physical basis of life is a cell.

The building block of the Creation is atom and the building block of the living beings is DNA, which is the abbreviated form of De-oxyribonucleic acid. Rg Veda (10-90) declares that the Creation has evolved from the single unified force, the fundamental energy under the laws of thermodynamics.

DNA is the molecule (polymer) that carries genetic or hereditary information for the development and functioning of any organism. Human DNA consists of about 3 billion bases, and more than 99 percent of those bases are the same in all people.

DNA is made of two linked strands that wind around each other to resemble a twisted ladder - a shape known as a double helix. It is a long, threadlike macromolecule, made up of a large number of smaller molecules called nucleotides.

The information in DNA is stored as a code made up of four chemical bases: adenine (A), guanine (G), cytosine (C), and thymine (T). The order, or sequence, of these bases determines the information available for building and maintaining an organism, similar to the way in which letters of the alphabet appear in a certain order to form words and sentences.

DNA and Natural Law

Science is beginning to discover that DNA as a microscopic physical structure contains within it the holistic value of natural law. Each of the specific areas of the physiology is created and regulated by a specific set of genes within the DNA.

There are interesting studies to determine the

correlation between a set of genes with its corresponding aspect of Veda and the Vedic literature. For example, Sama Veda corresponds to the sensory systems in the body, and these sensory systems are structured and maintained by a specific set of genes within the DNA.

Likewise, there are other packages of intelligence that lead to the creation of other systems in the body, such as the processing systems corresponding to the *Yajur Veda*, or the motor systems, muscles, and motor neurons, which correspond to *Atharva Veda*.

All are present in DNA, encoded in a specific set of triplets that lead to the creation of those specific aspects of the physiology.

The strands of DNA were termed as *Tvashta* and *Vivasvat* in Vedas. *Rg Veda* mentions that this double helix coiled serpent cannot be destroyed, as it gives rise to all life in living creatures.

DNA contains the entire knowledge of structure and function of the physiology. The nucleus, the cell organelles, and the cell membranes represent the values of *Rishi*, *Devata*, and the *Chandas* referred to in the Vedic literature. The organization of DNA and its coding system follows the same sequential evolution of natural law.

The two helices of DNA are a mirror image of each other. One of the two is called the template strand, and the other, the coding strand.

The coding strand is a 'silent witness'. It does not participate in the formation of the molecules (known as Messenger RNA molecules) which carry the genetic information needed to make proteins.

Thus, coding strand simply maintains the memory of the sequence intact. Vedic researches compare its role to the *purusha* which is a silent witness, while the actions take place as part of *prakriti*.

Since the entire physiology is constructed on the basis of the architectural design of DNA and the information that is available within it, it is evident that even our emotional and intellectual reactions to situations and circumstances are guided by the intelligence available in our DNA.

It is as though everything is strung together as DNA in a seamless manner. It is useful to recall Sri Krishna's declaration in *Bhagavad Gita* (7-7) that everything in Nature is strung on Me, as rows of gems in a string ('mayi sarvam idam protam sutre manigana iva'). The Lord is indeed the Sutratman, the string-like supporter of everything.

We should, therefore, be able to correlate that set of genes with its corresponding aspect of Veda and the Vedic literature. Since the genes are made of sequences of triplets within the DNA, we should be able to correlate the various aspects of Vedas with these sequences of triplets.

It is relevant that DNA as known to us was first isolated by the Swiss physician Friedrich Miescher in 1869. Its double helix structure was first revealed by the American biologist James Watson and English physicist Francis Crick in 1953, which remains the acceptable structure till date. Watson's inspiration to research on the gene was the physicist Erwin Schrodinger, who had a lifelong interest in Vedanta and Vedic texts.

The above analysis is largely based on 'Apaurusheya Bhashya', an erudite and research based

work of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who is well-known for his Transcendental Meditation techniques.

Scientific research is yet to advance to the stage where we can comprehend the precise correlation between the structures and functions in the physiology and the different genes in DNA. But the available evidence clearly points out that all the Vedic components, and the forty branches of Vedic studies, are encoded in our DNA.

As we delve deeper in this mystery, we feel a sense of

awe and respect for our rishis who had single-mindedly did tapas to discover the riddles of Nature, and importantly, the connection between the individual soul and the cosmic mind.



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The Only Reality

Existence or Consciousness is the only reality.

 $Consciousness \ plus \ waking, \ we \ call \ waking.$

Consciousness plus sleep, we call sleep.

Consciousness plus dream, we call dream.

Consciousness is the screen on which all the pictures come and go.

The screen is real, the pictures are mere shadows on it.

--Sri Ramana Maharishi



Meditation in a Nutshell

A right balance of mental exertion and relaxation is vital to reap the goal of meditation

If I were to sum up the art of meditation in one sentence, it would be, "Exert when relaxed and relax when exerted."

Treat your mind with love, care and patience. It is through your mind alone that you reach a state of no-mind.

To be mindful, alert, determined, disciplined, you need a sharp mind. You need to tame it with love, compassion, firmness and discipline at the same time. You need to know when to pull up your mind, and when to pacify it.

This comes with practice and experience. This is the art of alternating

between mental exertion and relaxation.

When it comes to the practice of meditation, this is the only thing you have to keep in mind. While meditating, when you feel restless or jittery, practice mental relaxation.

Mental relaxation can be practiced by stopping your meditation and just breathing deeply. You could listen to the rhythm of your breath, or settle your gaze at a distant point.

Restlessness is caused by excessive thinking or mental exertion. Sometimes when you try too hard, you may be exerting more than necessary. It is critical to stop exerting at that time by not trying to renew your concentration. Instead, just stop and breathe.

When your concentration is crisp, your mindfulness fresh and your alertness alive, you experience the best meditation, but after a while, it gets tiring for the brain. It often means that rather than letting your mind settle in its natural state, you may have been exerting. You do not need to paddle a bike that is going downhill. You just need to know when to apply the brakes.

When your mind is tired from exerting or resting, it leads to loss of clarity. At that time, the mind not only starts drifting away, but also is unable to detect laziness, sluggishness, loss of vigilance or any other defect. It essentially falls into a slumber and mindfulness is lost. The moment you become aware, practice mental exertion.

Mental exertion

Mental exertion is basically the act of renewing your vigour and focus. You can visualize a bright light, joyous tweeting of the birds on a warm winter day, gentle breeze, blue sky, anything to lift your mood.

Mental exertion and relaxation is like driving a car on a highway. You do not step on the accelerator once your car has reached a desirable speed. You keep your foot there just in case or you may gently press if your speed drops, but mostly you just keep a certain pressure to maintain your speed. You are alert to press the brake as soon as you need to.

In meditation, you do not keep exerting once you have reached the right equilibrium. You keep yourself alert to press the brakes when you need to.

With practice, you learn to be in the 'cruise mode'

without undue exertion or relaxation. This is the science of meditation, the art of balancing between mental exertion and relaxation.

Remember, meditation is about discovering your natural state of peace and bliss. To be in the natural state, you have to be natural, it is effortless.

This effortlessness, however, comes after a great deal of practice.
Concentration is not an intense effort. Once you have established your concentration during your meditation, you simply have to maintain it.

It takes great practice to artfully maintain a balance between exerting and relaxing. If you are mindful and alert and if you carefully alternate between exertion and relaxation, *samadhi*, 'The ultimate realisation, equipoise or insight' – is imminent. I promise you that much.

Just like a river's natural course is to merge in the sea, mind's natural course is to merge in the supreme consciousness. I say this from my experience.

The Alternative

Finally, is it necessary that you go through the rigours of meditation to experience supreme detachment? Not really.

There is another way as Patanajali Yoga Sutras put it, İśvara pranidhānātavā (Sutra 72). This means fluctuations of the consciousness may be restrained by meditating on God and total surrender to him.

If you believe in God, you may still reach a state of supreme detachment by developing a personal relationship with god and by surrendering to His will.

Edited excerpts from 'A Million Thoughts' by Om Swami. Published by the author. Available at Amazon.com. Price Rs.399.



SALT IN THE FOOD AND AYURVEDA

Ayurveda describes the injurious effects of salt and its viable alternatives

alt is an indispensable part of our culinary. Whether the dishes are sweet or sour, salt makes the diet complete.

Salt gives the right taste to the food and generates interest to consume it. More importantly, salt aids in our body's digestion and cleansing activities.

In Charaka Samhita, the foundational text on Ayurveda, Acharya Charaka alerts about the restriction on the use of salt. He says

excessive use of salt causes malaise, laxity, and debility in the body.

He says salt affects the stability of *ojas*, which is the vital energy that nourishes all tissues and is responsible for the optimal functioning of body, mind and spirit.

People who consume excessive salt get low on stamina, as their muscle tone gets destabilised. This brings down their tolerance level to physical or climatic challenges. We notice barren

lands with saline soil having trees or plants with stunted growth. Similarly, individuals who consume excessive salt age faster with wrinkles on the skin, greying of hair, and baldness.

Excessive use should mean excess quantity of salt in diet, such as salt-based recipes like pickles, and using salt more frequently over every meal daily, across days and seasons.

While common salt added to food is bad for health, there are food resources that have a naturally occurring salt taste in them. An example is a spinach variety, called *Wild Purslane* (known as *pasalai keerai* in Tamil). Such salty food sources are good for cleansing pathways in the body and they improve the appetite.

Risks of Overuse

According to Ayurveda, rakta (blood) is the prime dhatu impacted by the

overuse of salt in the diet.

Raktadhatu is responsible for longevity, skin colour, and nourishment of muscle tissues.

Salt provokes pitta in association with raktadhatu (which is a seat of pitta dosha). This leads to a cascade of events at the tissues, srotas (channels), and eventually the mind.

It can worsen itches and discharges in skin diseases. An increase of blood pressure, loss of potency in the blood vessels, and damage to kidneys are other negative effects of excessive salt usage.

Among the six tastes, salt being an essential diet component, even use of normal quantity can accumulate over a period of time in the body (unnoticed by the consumer) leading to long-term health implications.

The pitta imbalance created by excessive salt affects the mind, attentuating krodha (anger), mental agitation and irritability, all termed as indriya dourbalya, or lack of strength in sense organs. This gives rise to lower will power.

Bhagavad Gita, while describing three kinds of food as part of Sraddhatraya Vibhaga Yoga (chapter 17), mentions that salty foods are liked by people dominated by rajasic tendencies.

As salty food impairs elevated levels of spirituality in practitioners, yogis and spiritual masters avoid salt, or minimise its usage as their dharma acharana, or following a disciplined life.

A better alternative to common salt, which comprises 40 per cent of the chemical soldium, is rock salt, or the Himalayan pink salt, popularly known as saindha namak (saindhava lavana). It is mined naturally, and not processed as common salt.

Rock salt has many positives contrary to common salt. It is highly valued in Ayurveda as it is good for the heart, improves eye health, and balances all three bio-energies or tridosha (vata, pitta and kapha).

Rock salt does not cause heartburn, while aiding in clearing the bowel and in the reduction of chest congestion due to phlegm.



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The Historic Kashmir Yatra of Sringeri Jagadguru

A round up of key events at Sringeri

of Sri Bharati
Tirtha
Mahaswamiji, Jagadguru Sri
Vidhushekhara Bharati
Mahaswamiji undertook a 3day Vijaya Yatra to Jammu
and Kashmir and performed
the Pratishtha
Kumbhabhisheka of Sri
Sharada temple at Teetwal.

Departing from Sringeri on June 4, Sri Sannidhanam arrived at the Srinagar airport to a reverential reception. The Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Sri Manoj Sinha, had darsan of Sri Sannidhanam.

The Jagadguru then arrived by a copter at Tangdhar in

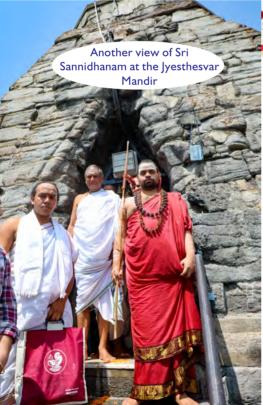
Kupwara district, and was accorded a devout welcome by the Kupwara district authorities and the members of Save Sharada Committee led by Sri Ravinder Pandita. Sri Sannidhanam then arrived at Teetwal, about 170 km from Srinagar and located alongside the Line of Control, and performed Yantra Pratishtha at the Sharada temple. Later he performed Sri Chandramoulisvara Puja at Tangdhar.

The following morning (June 5), Sri Sannidhanam performed the *Pratishtha Kumbhabhisheka* of Sri Sharada at the temple. He then graced the Sabha













organised on the occasion with an anugraha bhashanam explaining the connection between Sringeri and Kashmir, as well as the greatness of Sri Sharada, the divinity of knowledge. Sri Sannidhanam commended the government authorities and the Army personnel for making various arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Kumbhabhishekam.

On the occasion, Sri VR Gowrishankar, the Administrator and CEO of Sringeri Mutt, explained how the entire temple project at Teetwal had been completed in about nine months under miraculous circumstances. The granite stone structures for the temple had been transported from faraway Bangalore to Teetwal in 18 trucks, and the entire stonework in the temple was completed by the artisans within four months. He also explained how the beautiful

panchaloha murti of Sharadamba adorning the temple was prepared in a record time at Sringeri.

Sri Gowrishankar especially thanked key government officials, including the Deputy Commissioner of the region, for the high level of support, including laying a concrete road in front of the temple, and making arrangement for a ghat to be built at the river Kishanganga flowing alongside the temple.

Speaking on the occasion, Sri N. Venkataraman, Additional Solicitor General, Government of India, who had unobtrusively provided vital liaison for the Jagaduguru's visit, recounted how the Jagadguru had barely given nine days' notice for the *Kumbhabhishekam* to take place. To those expressing doubts about this seemingly impossible timeline, the Acharya had said that it was "Mother



Sharada's will. No one can change it. It will happen; just put in all efforts." Such is the power of the Jagadgurus of Sringeri parampara, who are all tapasvis.

Shri Venkataraman shared the feeling of gratitude and a sense of personal protection expressed by the families of the army officers following the Acharya's visit and the historic *Kumbhabhishekam*. After watching the Chandramoulisvara *puja* the previous night, the spouses of some army officers had expressed this emotional feeling, saying that Lord Siva would come to protect their lives henceforth in the Valley.

In his anugraha bhashanam on the historic occasion, Sri Sannidhanam drew reference to Sri Krishna's words of advice to Arjuna in Bhagavad Gita to just remain as an instrument, as everything happens according to the divine will, "nimitta matram bhava savyasachin,"

O Arjuna! You just become an instrument.

The Sastras state that Bhagavan has two forms: saguna svarupa and nirguna svarupa. While the latter is devoid of form and attributes, and verily the Parabrahma, when that formless sat-chit-ananda takes up a form to bless the devotees, it is referred to as saguna svarupa.

In Kashmir, until sometime back, Devi was of the form of a murti in the Sarvajna Peetham. Later, for a few years, she adorned the region in the nirguna form. And now, once again, it is Devi's divine will that she would grace the region in saguna svarupa, manifesting in the form of the beautiful murti in the temple just consecrated.

The sanctity of Devi Sharadamba predominates both in Kashmir and Sringeri. There is a special and intimate bond that







exists between the Sringeri Sharada Peetham and Kashmir Sarvajna Peetham. Kashmir is the abode of Maharishi Kashyapa's tapas, while Sringeri is the place where sage Kashyapa's son, Maharishi Vibhandaka, and his grandson, Maharishi Rishyashringa, had performed tapas.

Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada had ascended the Sarvajna Peetham in Kashmir, and consecrated the presiding deity of Kashmir region at Sringeri as Mother Sharadamba.

Sri Sannidhanam expressed happiness at the extent of assistance and arrangements made by the Central Government, the local state government and the army authorities, far surpassing the Sringeri Mutt's expectations, with no difficulties faced at any stage.

He left a suggestion that the authorities should now

plan to make good arrangements for the large number of devotees expected to travel to Teetwal, with guest houses and other facilities, and offered the assistance of Sri Sringeri Peetham in such developmental activities.

After having darsan at the famous Kheer Bhavani temple at Kupwara, Sri Sannidhanam returned to Srinagar and performed the Chandramoulisvara Puja.

Next day (June 6), Sri Sannidhanam visited the Sri Sankaracharya Hill in Srinagar and offered an elaborate *puja* to the Sivalinga adored as Sri Jyesthesvara.

In his anugraha bhashanam, the Jagadguru praised the army personnel for their mindset to make the supreme sacrifice of laying down their own lives for the safety of others. Calling for overall inclusive development of the



Kashmir valley, Sri Sannidhanam stressed the importance of youth to become nation builders and responsible citizens.

Accepting the invitation of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Sri Manoj Sinha, Sri Sannidhanam also graced the Raj Bhavan in Srinagar, before returning to Sringeri the same evening, thus completing a historic Kashmir Yatra.

Aradhana of the 32nd Jagadguru

The 144th Aradhana of the 32nd Acharya, Jagadguru Sri Vriddha Nrisimha Bharati Mahaswamigal was observed with reverence on May 21, 2023 at Sringeri. Sri Mahasannidhanam performed Aradhana Puja at the adhishthanam shrine of His Parapara Guru, with Sri Sannidhanam being present for the Mahamangalarati.

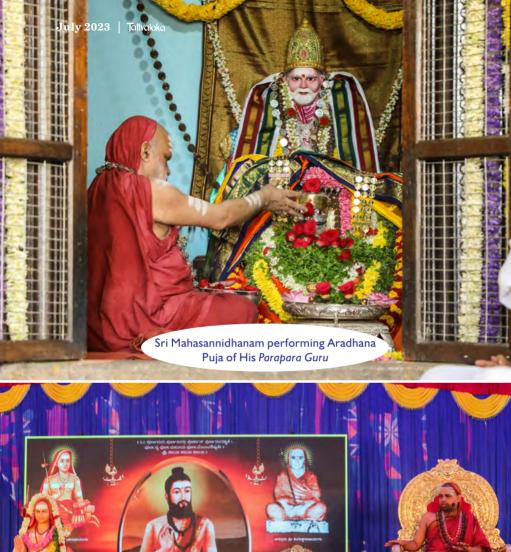
At the end of the puja, Sri Narasimha Bharati Padashtakam, composed by his successor Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Mahaswamigal, was chanted.

Varshikotsava of Sanskrit University Campus

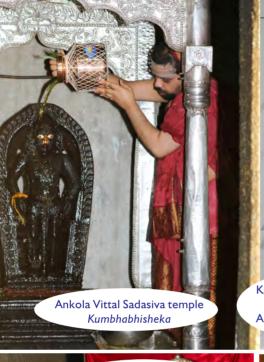
On May 13, Sri
Sannidhanam graced the
31st Varshikotsava of the
Sringeri-based Rajiv Gandhi
Campus of the Central
Sanskrit University.

While the Director of the Campus, Prof. Ch. Narasimha Murti welcomed the Jagadguru with Purnakumbha, the chief guest of the day Prof. G S R Krishna Murty, Vice-Chancellor of Tirupati-based National Sanskrit University, addressed the students. Gold medals were awarded to successful candidates in the University examinations.

In his Sanskrit anugraha bhashanam, Sri Sannidhanam stressed the need to engage in the study













of Sastras for one's own wellbeing. He commended the students for engaging in Srimad Ramayana Parayanam which would help cultivate good samskaras.

Shukla Yajur Veda Sammelan

During May 13-14, a Sukla Yajur Veda Kanva Sakha Sammelan was organised in the premises of Sringeri Mutt. The two-day event organised by the Sukla Yajur Veda Mahamandala at Kolar and the Karnataka Brahmana Sabha with support from Sringeri Mutt, was attended by thousands of people.

Sri Sannidhanam blessed the huge gathering and highlighted the importance of the Vedas, the need to adhere to *Dharma* and live in harmony.

The Fortnight-long *Yatra* by Jagadguru

Tattvãloka had covered in the last issue about Sri Sannidhanam's fortnightlong Vijay Yatra in Karnataka beginning April 27, 2023. Following is a remaining account of the places visited by the Jagadguru and the activities undertaken.

Sri Sannidhanam arrived at Ankola on May 1, 2023 had darsan at the Arya Durga temple and the Vitthal Sadasiva temple.

Next day, the Jagadguru had darsan at many local and nearby temples, such as Sri Bindumadhava Swami temple, Bhavikere Nagadevata temple, Keni Sri Mahasati temple of Uttara Kannada Jilla Bant Samaj and Sri Sankaranarayana temple in Kenkanakeri.

On May 3, 2023, Sri Sannidhanam performed Kumbhabhisheka of Sri Vitthal Sadasiva temple along with an elaborate puja and abhisheka.

Arriving in Karwar after visiting several villages and











their temples en route, Sri Sannidhanam graced the Karwara Sringeri Sankara Mutt, and inaugurated the "Sri Bharati Tirtha Sabhabhavana".

On May 4, the Jagadguru graced a small beach village Majali, which is home to a poor fishermen community called Ambika Samaja. The Jagadguru performed Kumbhabhisheka of Sri Kandrinatha Swami and graced the Guruvandana Sabha, and returned to Karwar to grace the purnahuti of Rudra Homa performed in the Sringeri Sankara Mutt. The day being Narasimha Jayanti, Sri Sannidhanam performed an elaborate Puja to Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swami.

The following day, the Jagadguru performed Kumbhabhisheka at Sri Siddhivinayaka temple, and graced the Chandi Homa Purnahuti in Sringeri Sankara Mutt.

On May 6, the Jagadguru had darsan at Kalarudresvara temple, Katyayani Banesvara Panchapurusha temple, Sri Sajjesvara temple and Kadawada Devati temple. The Jagdguru graced Sri Padmapushpa Veda Vedanta Samskrita Gurukulam and inaugurated a yagashala, and graced the Goshala.

On May 7th, Sri Sannidhanam performed the Kumbhabhisheka at Sri Sankaracharya temple in the Daivajna Mutt premises at the town of Karki.

The next places of visit were Bhatkala, Kumbhashi and Badakere, during which Sri Sannidhanam performed Kumbhabhisheka of Sri Durga Paramesvari temple of Devadiga Samaja,

At Bandar, Sri Sannidhanam graced the fishing dock at the invitation of the large fishermen community and was taken in a large



Hole Narasipura Chaturbhuja Pattabhirama Kumbhabhisheka Sabha Yedatore Mutt decorated fishing vessel into the deep sea, where he performed a *puja* to the King of the Oceans (*Samudraraja*) praying for the welfare of all. It is worth noting that local fishermen were extremely grateful to Sri Mahasannidhanam who had saved the lives of some fishermen at the same place few years ago in a miraculous fashion.

After visiting the town of Kumbhasi, Sri Sannidhanam had darsan at Kundesvara Swami temple and Sri Mahakali temple at Kundapura and arrived at Vaidika Dharmika Bhavana to a reverential welcome.

On the evening of May 10, the Jagadguru arrived at the famous Sri Annapurnesvari temple at Horanadu. He dedicated a new Ratha for the temple, performed Samrajya Pattabhisheka and Mahakumbhabhisheka to Goddess Sri Annapurnesvari on the occasion of Golden jubilee of Punah Pratishtha.

In his anugraha bhashanam, Sri Sannidhanam stressed the importance of following Sampradaya while worshipping and conducting rituals at temples and explained the greatness of Jaganmata as extolled in the Lalita Sahasranama.

Sri Sannidhanam
performed Kumbhabhisheka
to Sri Chaturbhuja
Pattabhirama Swami and Sri
Nilakantesvara Swami at
Yadathore on May 12.
Speaking on the occasion,
the Acharya extolled Lord
Rama, quoting from Sri
Bhagavatpada's
Ramabhujanga Stotra -

शलापि त्वदङ्घ्रिक्षमासङ्गिरेणु प्रसादाद्धि चैतन्यामाधत्त राम । नरस्त्वत्पदद्वन्द्वसेवाविधानात् सुचैतन्यमेतीति किं

चित्रमत्र ।।१६।।

"O Rama, When a speck of dust from Your sacred feet can bless a stone to get a life (removing Ahalya's curse







with the touch of feet), what can be said about your blessing a devotee who does your seva to get blessed with *Brahma Jnana* and thereby getting liberated from this samsara."

In the evening, the Jagadguru had darsan at Sri Sankaracharya Sannidhi and returned to Sringeri having completed a fortnight long Vijaya Yatra.

Kumbhabhishekas at Haranahalli and Tarikere

On May 22, Sri Sannidhanam graced Anegunda, offered *puja* in the local temple of Sri Venugopala Swami, and inaugurated a new hall titled Harihara Sadana.

Next day, Sri Sannidhanam graced Haranahalli and performed the *Pratishtha Kumbhabhisheka* of Sri Sita Lakshmana Hanumat Sameta Ramachandra Swami at Yelavare village. *En route* to Tarikere in the evening, he visited Bukkambudi and had *darsan* at Sri Chennakesava Swami temple.

On May 25, the Jagadguru performed the *Pratishtha Kumbhabhisheka* of Sri Subrahmanyesvara Swami at Tarikere and dedicated a new *Gopuram*.





The following is the continuation of an exposition from the last issue by Jagadguru \$rī Abhinava Vidvātīrtha Mahāsvāmiaal, the

Srī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmigal, the 35th pontiff of the Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham.

The Swamiji's explanations consistently bore the stamp of His direct experience of the Truth, his complete mastery of yoga, and his unparalleled erudition in the Sāstrās.

Stages of Devotion

Madhusudana Saraswatī, the famous author of Advaita-siddhi, was a great devotee of Krishna. His being an Advaitin par excellence did not in any way stand in his way of composing soul-stirring verses on Krishna.

He has spoken of three stages of devotion. The first stage is the one where the devotee feels "I am Yours" with regard to God. In other words, the devotee dedicates himself to God. A special characteristic of a true servant of God is that he longs for nothing from God

in return for his devotion and service.

Here the following instance comes to mind.

To prove Prahlada's view that God is present everywhere and also in a pillar pointed at by Hiraṇyakasipu, the Lord emerged from the pillar in the form of Narasimha. Lord Narasimha slew Hiraṇyakasipu but continued to be very fierce. The devas were afraid of approaching Him and so was Goddess Laksmi.

Hence, Prahlada, who was but a young boy, was asked to pacify the Lord. Prahlada consented and fearlessly walking up to the Lord, who was seething with fury, prostrated before Him.

Immediately, the Lord calmed down and moved by compassion, he rose from the throne he was occupying and placed his hand on the

boy's head. Being pleased with his devotee, the Lord asked Prahlada to seek a boon. Promptly, Prahlada replied that he desired nothing from the Lord.

There is a scintillating verse in the *Bhagavatam* wherein we have Prahlada telling the Lord, "He who desires anything from God is a trader and not a servant of God."

The story brings out two aspects. One is that a true servant of God knows no refuge other than God. This is why Prahlada felt no fear in approaching Lord Narasimha. The second aspect is that the true servant of God desires nothing from God. In fact, he does not even pray for moksha.

In a verse in the Sivanandalahari, Adi Sankara tells the Lord: "Tell me why you are not redeeming me from this wretched worldly state. If the answer be that it

pleases you that I should wallow thus, then I have achieved all that has to be achieved." When God is pleased what else is there to long for?

'He is Mine'

The second stage of devotion spoken of is the feeling "He is mine" with regard to God. Here the devotee is positively concerned about ensuring God's welfare. It is not as though God is in need of the devotee's care. In spite of this, He allows Himself to be even controlled by the devotee on account of the devotee's love.

The Bhagavatam contains the explicit declaration of Bhagavan, "I am subservient to My devotee like one under the control of another."

Yashoda's love for Krishna is an illustration of devotion of the form, "He is mine." To her, Krishna was her darling child and not the Lord.

Krishna seems to have relished her motherly love so much that he deliberately withdrew from her the awareness that he was none other than the Supreme. Though omnipotent, He even allowed himself to be tied to a mortar by Yashoda.

The third stage of devotion is the feeling "I am He" with regard to God. In other words, the *advaitic* realisation is the highest stage of devotion.

A reason is that while others are willing to brook at least some minute separation from God, a devotee of this class cannot bear even that. When can separation be totally obliterated? Obviously when one realises that one is not different from the Supreme.

In the *Gita*, Krishna himself indicates that the knower of the Truth is not different from him.

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The Divine Names of Sri Krishna-8

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

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

26) त्रिभङ्गिने नमः । Tribhaṅgine namaḥ |

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna who is bent at three places - the neck, waist and knee while playing the flute.

The poise with which Krishna holds the flute captivates one's heart, with his leg positioned either with the right or left foot in front, with a sligthly bent knee and waist and a graceful tilt of his neck. In this pose, Venugopala evokes a sense of rhythmic fluidity and youthful energy.

At the same time, the padasvastika that he portrays where his legs are crossed, positioning of feet with one leg firmly grounded and the other slightly bent resting on the tip of the toes, represents divine serenity.

27) मधुराकृतये नमः । Madhurākṛtaye namaḥ| I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna whose form is sweet

Sri Krishna's form as
Balakrishna, a toddler
holding butter, as Gopala
playing the flute to lure
all of Brindavana,
Radhakrishna sporting
with the gopis, all have a
magical charm that enchant
the beholder.

It is not just his form but his qualities of playfulness, compassion, sensitivity as a protector and benefactor that add to his charm.

Sri Vallabhacharya has beautifully portrayed how anything associated with Sri Krishna takes on his sweetness and beauty, in his composition Madhu-rāṣṭakam. This devotional octet declares as a refrain in every sloka, 'Madhu-rādhipater akhilam madhuram', declaring that his caritam (conduct) is sweet, karaṇam (action) is

sweet, and so is his *leela* or sport.

The hymn adds that even the river Yamuna, the stick that Krishna carries, and the dust from his feet bring joy due to their association with the 'Madhuradhipati'.

28) शुकवागमृताब्धीन्दवे नमः । Śukavāg-amṛtābdhīndave namah |

I pay obeisance to Sri Krishna who is the moon to the nectarine ocean of sage Suka's composition Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.

It is well known that the moon's gravitaional pull influences the ocean and causes rising tides in the expansive ocean. This *nāma* compares the words of sage Suka to an ocean of nectar (amṛta), the ambrosia that liberates one from the clutches of samsāra.

Though the sage Suka was always absorbed in the

formless, unmanifested, all pervading Brahman, he took delight in describing the manifested form of Sri Hari and his leelas, which were imparted to him as Srimad Bhāgavatam by his father sage Vyasa.

Sage Vyasa himself had received the *Bhagavatam* in a succinct form comprising of just four *slokas* from sage Narada. With his intuitive vision and erudition, Vyasa had expanded it to 18,000 *slokas* and 12 *skandas* (chapters). Sage Suka gave a mellifluous recitation of the *Bhagavatam* to the great devotee king Parikshit over seven days, culminating in the latter's *moksa*.

Vyasacharya declares in Srimad Bhāgavatam (I.1.3):

निगमकल्पतोरोर्गलितं फलं शुकमुखादमृतद्रवसंयुतम् । पिबत भागवतं रसमालयं मुहुरहो रसिका भुवि भावुकाः ।। Nigama kalpatoror
galitam phalam
śukamukhādamṛtadravasamyutam |
Pibata Bhāgavatam
rasamālayam muhuraho
rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ | |

O Devotees, who have a taste for divine joy, drink the nectar of supreme bliss as *Srimad Bhagavatam* again and again, which is the yield of the wish-fulfilling tree Veda that was dropped on earth from the mouth of the parrot-like sage Suka.

Scriptures describe that Srimad Bhagavatam was again recounted by sage Suta who was present at a sacrificial congregation at the request of sages led by Saunaka in Naimisaranya.

Analysing the purpose of human life, sage Suta said that knowers of truth had declared that *Brahman* is one without a second, and the one reality is variously called

as Paramatman or Bhagavan. The means to attain this supreme truth is through the process of listening to, singing the praise of, meditating on and worshipping Sri Hari.

This removes the dross of impurities accumulated in the mind, followed by predominance of *sattva* or purity. The lure of worldly things recedes, knowledge and detachment are reinforced, leading to the dawn of knowledge.

Eventually, the knots in the heart are broken, all doubts resolved and all fruitive actions cease when *Isvara* is beheld within (*Srimad Bhagavatam* I. 2.21):

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः । क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि दृष्ट एवात्मनीश्वरे ।।

Bhidyate hṛdayagranthiśchidyante sarvasaṁśayāḥ | Kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi dṛṣṭa evātmanīśvare ||

29) गोविन्दाय नमः । Govindāya namaḥ |

I pay obeisance to Govinda.

As readers know, this nama occurs in the Vishnu Sahasranama. Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada has explained the nama Govinda, interpreting the root, 'go' to mean earth, cattle and Vedas amongst the many meanings.

When the earth was once lost after the great deluge, it was Bhagavan Vishnu who plunged into the ocean in the form of a Varaha, a mighty boar, and brought her up from beneath. For restoring the mother Earth (go), he is acclaimed as Govinda, Lord of the Earth, as mentioned in the Śānti Parva (342.70) of Mahabhārata:

नष्टां वै धरणीं
पूर्वमिवन्दद्यद्गुहागताम् ।
गोविन्द इति तेनाहं
देवैर्वाग्भिरभिष्टुतः ।।

Naṣṭāṁ vai dharaṇīṁ pūrvamavindadyadguhāgatam | Govinda iti tenāhaṁ devairvāgbhira bhiṣṭutaḥ ||

Indra declared Krishna to be Govinda, the leader of all beings on earth, not just the cattle and cowherds denoted by the word 'go'. Krishna was consecrated as Govinda after he saved *gopas* from the torrential rains caused by Indra, by lifting up the mountain Govardhana to shelter them.

'Go' also means the senses, which cannot function without the presence of Vishnu, hence he is Govinda.





The Guide for Spiritual and Temporal Living

A brief summary of the *anugraha bhashanam* rendered by Sri Sannidhanam on the recent Sankara Jayanti day at Sringeri

n this auspicious Sri Sankara Jayanti day, people who have had exposure to the teachings Bhagavatpada should renew their faith and dedication to follow them, and those who do not know much about the Jagadguru's teachings must strive to know them and lead their lives accordingly.

Sri Adi Sankara has left behind several profound texts for the benefit of humanity. Amongst them, the *Prashnottara Ratnamalika* is a universal text that contains deep insights relevant for everyone. It consists of a set of about 180 questions, which at first glance, may seem ordinary. But when the answers are supplied, the depth of Acharya's thought becomes evident to help people lead a *dharmic* and purposeful life.

In one of the questions, Bhagavatpada asks -कश्च भगवान्? - Who is Bhagavan? And he answers it as शङ्करनारायणात्मा एक: The single supreme divinity that is manifest as both Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu.

Truly Blind

Another question is को ५ न्ध: Who is blind? The naive answer is one who cannot see. However, Bhagavatpada states अकार्यरत: Not merely one who engages in a deed that is prohibited, but repeatedly keeps doing it.

We do see people in the world who in spite of knowing that a deed is wrong, keep engaging in doing the same. Such a person is truly blind, though not physically.

Bhagavatpada has thus covered in this work a wide gamut of simple morals to deep philosophical tenets on the Vedanta tattva.

These questions and answers are akin to those found in the famous Yaksha Prasna contained in the Aranya Parva of Mahabharata. Only the truly wise, such as Bhishma, Vidura and Yudhishthira, were capable of answering the questions of the Yaksha.

Aim of Life

Another question that the Jagadguru poses in

Prashnottara Ratnamalika is कुत्र यत्नो विधेय: Towards securing what must man exert effort? He provides the answer, विद्याभ्यासे सदौषधे दाने, towards acquiring knowledge, ensuring at the same time that we remain healthy and engage in charitable acts.

The first object of interest is acquiring knowledge - be it worldly knowledge or the highest *Atma Vidya* (knowledge of the Self), every aspect of knowledge benefits us.

Atma Vidya is specially important, as explained by Lord Krishna in Srimad Bhagavad Gita, अध्यात्मविद्या विद्यानाम् - that fetches the highest good, moksha. Just as the waters of a huge water body gives all its benefits to accrue to small water bodies such as ponds and wells, Atma Vidya provides the highest benefit that is inclusive of all the

benefits that one may get from other kinds of knowledge.

The word शरीर actually means कार्यकरणसङ्घात: - कार्य refers to the physical body, करण refers to the indriyas - the subtle faculties or organs of action (karmendriya) and knowledge (jnanendriya). Hence 'sharira' refers to the body along with the subtle sense organs.

As the body-sense-complex has to be kept healthy to engage in any useful act, Bhagavatpada opines that man should first exert efforts towards maintaining a healthy body and mind.

Let us see the word दाने. Generally, we say that what we possess is ours, and those that we have offered to another is not ours.

However, the Sastras point out that what has been offered to others truly belongs to the donor! This is because the act of charity gets transformed as dharma - a beneficial result that will fructify at the appropriate time owing to the meritorious deed of charity. This dharma gets added to a subtle bank account of the donor, and will accompany him even after his death.

Likewise, acts that harm others get transformed into adharma - a result that arises out of a prohibited act that will fructify at the appropriate time and bring about suffering.

Thus, dharma becomes the cause of our happiness by ensuring we get all the objects and possessions that are required for our benefit. This is why Bhagavatpada states that it is essential for us to exert ourselves towards engaging in charity.

Such *upadesas* are universal and applicable to people at

all times and all places, hence we refer to Bhagavatpada as the Jagadguru.

When such is the importance of a simple text as *Prashnottara Ratnamalika*, what do we need to say about other texts penned by Bhagavatpada?

Misunderstanding

There is often a misunderstanding about a famous teaching of Bhagavatpada: जीव ब्रह्मीव नापर:, that the jivatma and Brahman are non-different from each other.

Some people misunderstand this statement and say that Bhagavatpada has equated a human being and Bhagavan, who is the object of our worship. When the worshipper and worshipped are identical, then how can worship be offered?

We must realise that the jivatma and Brahman are

non-different. However *jivatma* and Bhagavan are not non-different.

We have to realise that the saguna svarupa (the Supreme with attributes such as form, name etc.) is Bhagavan, while Brahman refers to the nirguna svarupa, the Supreme without attributes and of the nature of Sat (existence), Chit (consciousness) and Ananda (bliss).

Hence, the non-difference or identity expressed here is between jivatma and the nirguna svarupa i.e.
Brahman. Bhagavatpada has not equated the saguna svarupa with the jivatma.

Hence, without realising this difference between the divine Reality with and without forms, those who think that Bhagavatpada gives no place for bhakti have grossly misunder stood.

Bhagavatpada has not only penned several devotional hymns, but also travelled to various pilgrim centres, dispelled unnecessary practices and revived the traditional forms of worship.

For instance, in Badrinath, Bhagavatpada restored the

murti of Bhagavan Badri
Narayana. The Skanda
Purana states this fact that
Bhagavatpada, the
incarnation of Lord
Paramasiva, brought up
Bhagavan Badrinarayana
from the Narada Kunda, and
reconsecrated it for the
benefit of the world.

The new Rajagopuram of Sri Malahanikareshwara temple in Sringeri in all grandeur





There are No Shortcuts in Acquiring Knowledge

here is an interesting story in Mahabharata to drive home the message that any form of learning requires hard work, and acquiring knowledge through shortcuts would be a disaster.

There lived two great sages, Bharadvaja and Raibhya. Both were well known for their austerities and scholarship. The two sages built their hermitages next to each other, and spent their time following their dharmic duties.

Raibhya had two sons Paravasu and Arvavasu, and both had mastered the Vedas and commanded great respect for their knowledge.

Bharadvaja's only son, Yavakrida, became jealous of them. He realised that he had failed in his duty to study the Vedas in the prescribed way, as he did not have the patience to learn from a teacher over many years. Realising that it was too late to study in the traditional way, he desired to acquire knowledge instantly, and directly from a divine source.

So, he decided to perform severe penance to please the celestial chief Indra. Soon Lord Indra appeared before him, and upon hearing Yavakrida's wish, told him that it would not be possible as knowledge is supposed to be obtained only from a qualified Guru.

Indra said that whenever one labours, the resulting fruit would be sweet. On the other hand, if one obtains something far too easily without putting in required effort, it will lose its value soon. He told Yavakrida that even if he were to grant his

wish, it would not endure for long. With this, Indra disappeared.

A dejected Yavakrida decided to put in more effort to please Indra, and commenced rigorous penances once again. Lord Indra became concerned and decided to make Yavakrida understand the message in a different way.

He disguised himself as an old man, and went down to a spot on the river bank where Yavakrida used to come for bath daily. Yavakrida noticed this old man scooping up fistfuls of sand from the banks, and repeatedly throwing them into the river.

As he was constantly doing this, the surprised Yavakrida asked him what was he doing. The old man said he was trying to build a bridge across the river by putting in sand into the river.

Yavakrida laughed and told him that it was impossible to build a bridge that way.

The old man said that he had heard of a youth, Yavakrida, who was trying to gain the knowledge of the Vedas and *smritis* by merely doing rigorous penance, without studying them under a Guru. If that was possible, why should not a bridge be built in this way, asked the old man.

The Mahabharata story continues to describe that ultimately Indra yielded to Yavakrida and conferred the knowledge on him, but it only created several problems for the newly minted 'scholar'.

Yavakrida became vain as he got knowledge from the chief of devas, and not from a human teacher. While his father warned him against this vanity, Yavakrida was too proud to listen to him.

He started coveting the wife of Paravasu, and the enraged *rishi* Raibhya taught him a severe lesson through his *yogic* powers, by creating a ghost that ultimately killed Yavakrida.

This story shows the importance of learning through one's hard work and efforts, so that it bears fruits in a positive way. There are no shortcuts to bypass hard work.









Prayer to Nandi, the Greatest Devotee of Siva



s we enter any Siva temple, we first notice the image of a great bull, Nandi, positioned near the entrance, facing the Sivalinga in the garba griha. Nandi literally means 'giving delight'.

Nandi, also known as Nandikesvara, is considered the bull *vahana* of Siva. He is also the guardian deity of Kailasa, the abode of Siva.

The legends describe that once Siva blessed a person known as Shilada with a son, whom he named as Nandi. The boy grew up to acquire knowledge of the scriptures, music and dance, and he showed extreme devotion to Siva. Shilada came to know from the sages Mitra and Varuna, that his son would not live long. Nandi was, however, unperturbed as he believed Siva would take care of his life.

He did intense penance, and a pleased Siva appeared

before him to grant a wish. Nandi was so enchanted by Siva's form that he prayed to always remain in his proximity. The wish was granted that Nandi would be the guardian of Kailasa and at all Siva temples, he would remain on constant vigil, guarding his lord and master.

This allegorical story is a reminder that Sivalinga is the symbol of the Supreme Power or Paramasiva, and Nandi as the individual soul (jiva) is ever waiting to realise the merger of individual's identity with divinity as the goal of life.

Nandi is thus a symbolism for eternal waiting, meditating on the ultimate goal. One who knows how to simply sit and wait is naturally meditative. He is not expecting Siva to come out immediately, but he will wait forever

Nandi is also a reminder to those visiting the temple not

to ask for mundane objects or favours from Siva, but just sit and meditate, turning one's attention only to the supreme power.

It is customary to get permission from Nandi before entering Siva's shrine by reciting this *sloka*.

नन्दिकेशमहाभाग शिवध्यानपरायण । गौरीशङ्करसेवार्थं अनुज्ञां दातुमर्हसि ।।

Nandikeśa mahābhāga Sivadhyānaparāyaṇa | Gaurīśaṅkara sevārthaṁ anujñāṁ dātumarhasi ||

O Nandikesa, the fortunate one who constantly meditates on Siva! Please grant permission to serve Sankara, the consort of Gowri.

Legends also describe that Nandikesvara, who is well versed in music and dance, plays the drum during Siva's Ananda Tandava, or ecstatic dance, during the pradosham period.

Pradosham is an auspicious three-hour period, ninety minutes before and after the sunset everyday but specially, bi-monthly on the 13th day of every fortnight (trayodasi).

There is a ceremonial abhisheka of Nandi and Siva done in the temples during this sacred hour, with milk, ghee, honey and other auspicious materials.

Scriptures describe Nandi, with a human body and the face of a bull, plays a drum to the rhythmic dance of Siva during *pradosha* to the delight of onlookers.







Say it in Sanskrit

1.	त्वं किं ?
	Tvaṁ kiṁ?
	What are you doing?
2.	अहं गणिताभ्यासं ।
	Ahaṁ gaṇitābhyāsaṁ
	I am doing maths exercises.
3.	बालकौ किं।
	Bālakau kiṁ?
	What are the two boys doing?
4.	बालकौ कन्दुकेन लगुडेन च ।
	Bālakau kandukena laguḍena ca
	The two boys are playing with bat and ball.

	5. बालिक युवा कि ?
	Bālike! Yuvaāṁ kiṁ?
	Hey Girls! What are you two doing?
	 आवां पूजार्थं पुष्पचयनं ।
	Āvām pūjārthaṁ puśpacayanaṁ
	We two are picking flowers for worship.
	7. माता किं?
	Mātā kiṁ ?
	What is mother doing?
	8. माता अल्पाहारं पाकं ।
	Mātā alpāhāraṁ pākaṁ
	Mother is preparing snacks.
	9. उद्यानपालाः किं ?
	Udyānapālāḥ kiṁ ?
	What are the gardeners doing?
	10. ते पुष्पसस्यानि सभायाः प्राङ्गणे ।
	Te puṣpasasyāni sabhāyāḥ prāṅgaṇe
	They are planting flowering plants in
	the auditorium's frontyard.
Ans:	1. karoşi; 2. karomi ; 3. kurutaḥ; 4. krīḍataḥ;
	5. kuruthaḥ; 6. kurvaḥ; 7. karoti; 8. karoti;
	9. kurvanti; 10. āropayanti.

The Indian numbering system is indeed ancient, existing from the time of of *Itihāsas* and *Puraṇas*.

There are specific words in *samskritam* to denote the numbers as per western scale. For instance, a *prayutham* represents one million, *koti* represents ten million, *maharbudam* represents one billion, *kharvam* represents 10 billion, and so on.

1	एकम्
---	------

10 दश

100 शतम्

1000 सहस्रम्

10000 अयुतम्

100,000 लक्षम् (नियुतम्)

1,000,000 प्रयुतम्

10,000,000 कोटिः

100,000,000 अर्बुदम्

1,000,000,000 महार्बुदम्

10,000,000,000 खर्वम्

100,000,000,000 निखर्वम्

Vasumathi R

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here lived a strong and healthy bull in a village. He was very free spirited and liked to roam about a lot.

Once, the bull entered a forest nearby and was curious to see the sights and creatures in the forest. After roaming around for a while,

the bull decided to turn back to reach the village, but lost its way to find its home.

Realising that it is stuck in the forest, the bull kept moving around for several days, and one day found a clear pond in the forest. After drinking the sweet and clear water in the pond, and munching on the fresh grass growing on its banks, it happily let out a big belch.

Just at that time, a lion was coming to the pond to drink water. When it heard the sound of a huge belch for the first time, the lion felt a rush of fear, and left the pond hurriedly to return to its den.

Two wily jackals were watching the above, and they decided to use the situation to become friends with the lion. So they went to the lion and asked him why he had returned from the pond without drinking water. The lion told them about the unusually loud sound. The jackals told him that the sound was from a bull and they offered to bring the bull to the lion.

The lion agreed, and the jackals went to the bull and told him that the king of the jungle wished to meet him.

So the bull went to meet the lion along with the jackals. The lion and the bull soon became good friends, and started spending time with each other.

The jackals became jealous of this lion-bull friendship, and thought up a plan to end the same.

They went up to the lion and told him that the bull was planning to attack and kill the lion soon. Though the lion found it hard to believe this, the cunning jackals kept on convincing him, and described how the bull would come charging to attack the lion.

The jackals then went to the bull, and told him that the lion was planning to kill him soon. The bull refused to believe this, but the wily jackals kept on trying to convince him by describing how they noticed the lion's eyes red with anger, which was a sign that it was ready to attack the bull.

The angry bull immediately went to see the lion, and confront him about this. As the bull angrily charged toward, the lion's temper shot up and he fiercely rolled his red eyes and charged towards the bull.

Both of them got into a terrific fight and soon the bull lay dead. The wily jackals felt happy how they had tricked the friends and ended their beautiful friendship.

This story from the *Hitopadesa* shows us that a good friendship is difficult to nurture and can be easily ended by cunning people. One should be mindful of manipulations of bad characters.

A Subhashitam from the Kishkinda Kandam of Srimad Ramayana sums it up well:

सर्वथा सुकरं मित्रं दुष्करं प्रतिपालनम् । अनित्यत्वात् तु चित्तानां प्रीतिरल्पोऽपि भिद्यते ।। Sarvathā sukaram mitram duṣkaram pratipālanam Anityatvāt tu chittānām prītiralpo'pi bhidyate.

It is easy to make friends but difficult to sustain friendship till the end. Due to fickleness of minds, friendship gets broken even in the event of a minor misunderstanding.

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Sri Mahasannidhanam performing special Puja to Sri Chandramoulisvara on the Vardhanti day



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