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AUPA eNEWSLETTER

NEGATE ALL THAT IS FALSE, COMPLETELY

The Supreme Truth of our existence cannot be ever grasped by speech or mind. The Upanishads however take us 'as far as words can go' and then say, "Negate every concept that you are holding on to." We are asked to deny all possible properties of knowable objects. The Shruti (Vedas) thus expressly says that there is no other possible way of presenting the nature of the transcendental reality except in the negative form, "neti, neti" (na + iti, na + iti).

athāta ādesho neti neti

na hyetasmād-iti

netyanyat param-asti

Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, mantra 2.3.6

{Now the teaching, "not such, not such," for there is none beyond this "not such".}



DESTROY THE PRISON YOU ARE IN

The word 'upanishad' implies the wisdom of liberation

No books are primarily meant by the word 'upanishad'. The 'right vision' or 'understanding' (indicated by the Sanskrit word vidyā) is what the word 'upanishad' actually means. The books, with all the mantras, are Upanishads too, in a secondary sense.

This word is made of three parts: upa + ni + sad. Those of us, who have a high degree of dispassion, would approach this knowledge (right vision, vidyā). The preposition, 'upa,' represents this approaching. We then study the revelations of this body of knowledge with dedication and single-pointedness. The preposition, 'ni' stands for this dedication (nisthā) and single-pointedness (nischaya). The right vision that arises then destroys our spiritual ignorance (avidyā) and its products like desire (kāma) and selfish action (karma).

All we do therefore in Vedānta study is – say goodbye to false notions and say welcome to right seeing. Superimposition of falsehood is 'ignorance' (avidyā), which is nothing but erroneous perception. We see a pencil bent in a glass of water. Upon gaining right knowledge from physics, we know that the pencil is not bent. Similarly we see ourselves as born, ageing, falling sick, getting agitated, feeling depressed, and going to die etc. Upon gaining the right knowledge from Vedānta, we know none of these applies to us!

Therefore the word used in Kathopanishad¹ is 'nibodhata' – please know! It's not about gaining wealth or power; it's not about getting famous or scholarly; it's certainly not about getting supernatural powers (siddhis). It is simply freeing ourselves from the clutches of false knowledge. There is no real prison here. The dark prison of worldly life – of loss, defeat, insult, illness and death – is an illusion; what is more, the prisoner is also a part of the illusion. The world of the ego and the ego, are both a superimposition (adhyāsa) on Brahman, the supreme truth, which is our true nature.

Note: 1 uttisthata, jāgrata, prāpya varān nibodhata – Kathopanishad 1.3.14

Arise, awake, reach competent teachers and know!

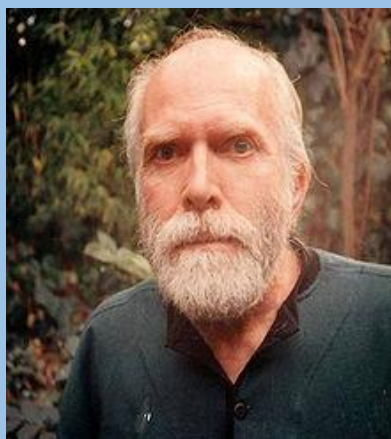


Swami Chidananda

Quote of the Issue

The highest teaching in the world is silence. A devotee who sits with a Sage purifies his mind just by being with the Sage. No words exchanged, no words said. True silence really means going deep within yourself to that place where nothing is happening, where you transcend time and space. You go into a brand new dimension of nothingness. That's where all the power is. That's your real home. That's where you really belong, in deep Silence where there is no good and bad, no one trying to achieve anything. Just being, pure being.

Robert Adams



*{**Robert Adams** (1928 – 1997) was an American, who was drawn to Sri Ramana Maharshi in his childhood. He arrived in Tiruvannamalai in 1946, at the age of 18, and spent time with Maharshi during the last three years of the Sage of Arunachala. He spent another 17 years in India after Maharshi left his mortal coils, and then returned to US. A book – **Silence of the Heart, Dialogues with Robert Adams**, was published two years after his death.}*



LEARN THIS WORD...

ADHYĀSA

Superimposition

In the light of the profound teachings of the Upanishads, the basic problem of our life is no other than a 'fundamental error in seeing'. Called *adhyāsa*, this is defined by Ādi Shankara¹ as '*seeing something else in what actually is*'.

Seeing a snake while there is actually a rope is a popular illustration, which is not fully or properly understood by most people. The illustration is not incorrect but, as is the case with all illustrations, there are limitations that go with it. In the case of this illustration, both the rope and the snake are outside. A man called Devadatta remains Devadatta upon discovering the rope, or upon dropping the notion that there is a snake. In the case of the theme here, since the ego also is a part of the 'superimposition', there takes place a radical change in the (erstwhile) seeker when he / she dismisses the superimposition.

To say, "there takes place a radical change," is also a limitation of this tool called language because it misleads the reader as though the ending of *adhyāsa* is a process in time, which it is not.

The case of snake going away and the rope becoming evident is a matter within 'space, time and causation'. In the case of '*adhyāsa*' coming to an end, there is ending of 'space, time and causation'. We therefore need to understand that this 'realization' is not a phenomenon within the framework of 'space, time and causation'.

In summary, *adhyāsa* is a superimposition, as part of which there are space, time and causation. This *adhyāsa* brings forth *avidyā-bhoomi*. Ending of *adhyāsa* brings forth *vidyā-bhoomi*. The shift, if we may call it so, from *avidyā* to *vidyā* is not on the axis of time!

Note:

1 *atasmin tad-buddhih adhyāsah* – Shankara in his introduction to Brahma-sutras.

Dr G wrote:



ARE YOU INTO YO-YO DIETING?

It's better to go for tasty, healthy food in moderation!

If the body is a "machine for living," as Leo Tolstoy says, food is its fuel. Yet, too much food, especially the wrong kinds of food, can be bad for our bodies. In America, the land of plenty, the problem for most of us is that we put in too much food. We are killing ourselves slowly with fork, knife and spoon. About 68% of people in US are either overweight or obese, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in 2010. The developing countries are not far behind. The latest reports from countries like India and China show that the fastest-growing illnesses in these newly rich nations are heart disease and type 2 diabetes, both of which are the result of growing prosperity and a sedentary lifestyle.

People seem to think that the answer to their weight problem will always be found in the next fad diet that comes around. They count carbs and calories. They order special meals delivered to their home. They go to meetings to weigh themselves and calculate exchanges. They keep charts and diaries. They buy non-fat and low sugar foods. They shun red meat and dairy products. They take drugs. They skip dessert. And yet they almost always gain back the weight they lost.

Yo-yo dieting – the process of gaining pounds, losing them and gaining them back – has helped make weight loss a \$55 billion industry around the world, with Americans spending about \$40 billion of that figure. It's one of the most successful ways of capitalizing on failure that exists today. The diet industry is betting that you will fail, and (like most dieters) they seldom lose.

The same can be said of the exercise industry, which profits from good intentions that are not put into practice. One industry publication estimates that more than 80% of the 40 million Americans paying for gym memberships are not using them – a waste of \$12 billion annually. These figures don't include money spent on at-home exercise equipment, workout videos, gym shoes, and clothes that gather dust from disuse.

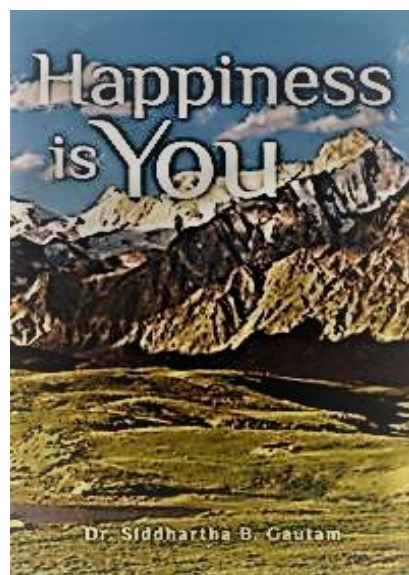
Like the path to happiness, the way to true health and fitness is simple but not easy: **eat less and move more**. What makes that more successful is that it is the only weight loss and fitness plan that is sustainable over your whole life. And the key to making it sustainable is incorporating it into your daily routine in a way that is enjoyable, that doesn't make it seem like you're sacrificing pleasures or doing chores.

Let's look at diet first. There is no joy in giving up foods that you love because they contain too much sugar or too much fat. It's not even practical to deprive yourself completely because, as any failed dieter will tell you, abstinence only sharpens your cravings for forbidden foods. Substituting non-fat or sugar-free foods for the real things also doesn't work because they don't satisfy your appetite and leave you feeling empty. These are the reasons diets fail.

So what's the solution? "**Moderation**. Small helpings. Sample a little bit of everything," according to Julia Child, author of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, and perhaps America's best-known TV cook. "These are the secrets of happiness and good health." We can trust what she says because, despite her love of butter and cream, she lived just a few days short of ninety-two years.

Choose what you eat for taste and health, opting for organic and natural foods whenever possible to avoid the extras you don't need in most packaged and processed products. Filling your body with junk and fast food doesn't give it the fuel it needs, and a diet like this will leave you feeling tired and ill. As the computer programmers say, "Garbage in, garbage out." Your body is a temple; do not fill it with garbage.

{The above is an excerpt from the book by Dr. Siddhartha B Gautam, **HAPPINESS IS YOU**, pages 85 - 87.}



Smt. Indira Gautam contributes from USA:



Inspirational Story

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up, and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement.

She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!"

The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied, "Well, I made a difference to that one!"

The old man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined the little girl in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon others joined, and all the starfish were saved.

Adapted from ***The Star Thrower*** by Loren C. Eiseley



Mrs.G

Words from Guest Writers

REAL CONVERSION

Conversion should be from impurity of the mind to purity of the mind.

S N Goenka

{Late Shri Goenkaji (1924 – 2013) spearheaded the Vipassana Movement all over the world. The following is the text of a speech he delivered at the United Nations in August 2000, at the Millennium World Peace Summit.}



Friends, leaders of the human spiritual world, leaders of the human religious world, we thank the organisers that such a wonderful occasion is here where all can unite and serve humanity. Religion is religion only when it unites. Religion is no more religion when it divides. Religion is not for dividing people, it is for uniting people.

So much has been said about conversion, for conversion and against conversion. I am 'for conversion'. I am not against conversion, but (I am for) conversion *not from one organised religion to another organised religion*. No. (I am for) conversion from misery to happiness, conversion from bondage to liberation, conversion from cruelty to compassion. That is the conversion needed today and that is what this organisation should make a point to implement.

Our ancient country had not only given the message of peace and harmony to the world, to the humanity. Enlightened persons have given a method, a technique - how to have peace? How to have harmony? To me, to think of peace in a human society we cannot ignore individuals. If there is no peace in the mind of the individual, I can't understand how there

can be real peace in the human world. If I have an agitated mind, if I have a mind all the time full of anger, hatred, ill-will, animosity, how can I give peace to the world? (How can I) because I have no peace myself? I am an agitated person. Therefore the great enlightened persons have said, "First have peace within yourself." So one has to observe whether really there is peace in me or not. All the sages, saints and seers of the world have given this advice, "Know thyself." (We must know ourselves)not merely at the intellectual level, not merely accepting at the emotional, devotional level but at the actual level. When you start experiencing the truth about yourself within yourself at the experiential level, many of the problems get solved.

You start understanding the Universal Law, the universal law of Nature or the Universal Law of God Almighty, the Universal Law which is applicable to one and all. When I start observing within myself and I find that I am generating anger, hatred, ill-will, animosity, I immediately realise that I am the first victim of my anger. I am the first victim of the hatred, animosity that I am generating within myself, then only I start harming others. This is the Law of Nature. If I observe within myself, I find that, as soon as I generate any negativity in the mind there are a lot of physical reactions. My body starts burning, gets heated up, has palpitation, tension....I am a miserable person. And when I generate negativity in me and become miserable, I don't keep this misery limited to myself. I keep on throwing this misery on others. I make the entire atmosphere around me so tense that anybody who comes in contact with me becomes miserable; and I talk of peace, I talk of happiness! I keep on talking of happiness and peace. What is happening to me is more important than anything else. The Law of Nature (acts). And if I am free of these negativities, if my mind is free from negativities, the mind is pure. Again the Law of Nature starts working. I observe within myself at this moment there is no negativity in the mind and look! The Nature or the God Almighty has started rewarding me. I feel so peaceful, so peaceful. As when I generate negativity, I observe I become so miserable.

So anyone belonging to this religion or that religion, this tradition or that tradition, this country or that country... when one breaks the Law of Nature, one generates negativity in the mind, and is bound to suffer. Nature starts punishing this person, (there is then) the hell-fire within. One starts feeling the misery of hell-fire within. This is the seed that I am sowing, the seed of hell-fire within. After death I will get nothing but hell-fire. The Law of Nature is such that, if I keep my mind pure, full of love, full of compassion, I enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven within myself and this seed of the Kingdom of Heaven will bring nothing but the fruit – the Kingdom of Heaven after death. Whether I call myself a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian or a Jain, it makes no difference. A human being is a human being. The human mind is the human mind. Conversion should be from the impurity of the mind to purity of the mind.

How do people get changed? Such wonderful changes come. No magic, no miracle! It is a pure science. Observing the interaction of mind and matter within ourselves. How mind keeps on influencing the matter, the body, how body keeps on influencing the mind. If we

keep on observing, we understand the Law of Nature so clearly that as and when I generate negativity I start suffering and, as and when I am free from negativity, I start enjoying peace and harmony. That can be practised by one and all. A wonderful tradition, a wonderful technique given by the Enlightened One in our ancient country and spread in the world.

Even today, people from different communities, different traditions, different religions, they come and learn this technique. They get the same benefit. They continue to remain (in their own religions): Hindu as Hindu, Buddhist as Buddhist, Muslim as Muslim, Christian as Christian; it makes no difference. A human being (remains) a human being. What is the difference? A big difference does come. They become real spiritual people – full of love, full of compassion. Good for themselves, good for others. When I generate peace in my mind, the entire atmosphere around me gets permeated with the vibration of peace. Anybody who comes in contact with me starts enjoying peace. This is the real conversion which is necessary. Nothing else.

I have heard the sound of the bell but still permit me to read out a message from my ancient country. A benevolent message from my ancient country which is inscribed on the rocks from 2300 years and gives a message to the entire human world. The message of the great emperor Ashoka, an ideal emperor. Now this message says, "One should not honour only one's own religion and (one should not) condemn other religions." (This is such an) important message to the world today. You keep on condemning others, keep on saying that mine is the best, mine is the best. You are creating difficulties for all human beings. Instead one should honour other religions for various reasons.

Every religion worth the name has got this core, the wholesome core of love, compassion, goodwill. Give honour to the religion because of this core. The outer shell always differs. This rite, that ritual, this ceremony, that ceremony, this belief, that belief.....don't quarrel over those. But whatever is the inner essence, give importance to that and there will be no quarrel. "By so doing one helps one's own religion to grow and also renders service to the religions of others. In acting otherwise, one digs the grave of one's own religion." Understand? Big warning. "...and harms other religions as well". The message says, "Someone who honours his own religion and condemns other religions may do so out of devotion to his religion thinking, "I will glorify my religion," but his actions injure his own religion more gravely." Now a message, "Let all listen, let all listen, the message of Dharma, the message of the Universal Law. Concord is good, it is only concord which helps us, not the quarrel. Let all be willing to listen to the doctrine professed by the others." Don't condemn anything. Give importance to the essence of the teachings of every religion and there will be really peace, real harmony.



WHEN TRUTH DAWNED

Gentle Touch Transforms Us



Ryokan, the Zen teacher, was requested by his sister-in-law to come to her house and talk to her son.

"He does no work, squanders his father's money in wild parties and is neglecting the estate," she complained, "If he does not reform, we will be ruined."

Ryokan went to his brother's house and met his nephew who was genuinely pleased to see him. The two of them had spent many happy hours together before Ryokan had turned to Zen and entered the monastery.

The young man knew why his uncle had come and braced himself for the scolding he was sure he would receive. But Ryokan said not a word in rebuke, the whole day.

The next morning when it was time for him to go, he put on his garments and then said to his nephew, "Will you help me tie the thongs of my sandals? My hands shake and I cannot do it."

His nephew helped him willingly.

"Thank you," said Ryokan. "A man becomes older and feebler day by day. You remember how strong and robust I used to be?"

"I do," said his nephew, thoughtfully. "I do indeed remember how you used to be."

It was the moment of truth for him. He suddenly realized that his mother and all those who had looked after him had become old and that it was now his turn to look after them and to take on the responsibilities of the household and the community.

He gave up his dissolute life forever.

{This story has a subtle point to convey. We normally believe in sermonizing, advising or even screaming those rules of do's and don'ts. And we get frustrated when younger people don't listen to us. As the above episode shows, it is a hint sometimes – delivered in an atmosphere of love and non-judgmentalism – that makes the other person hear an inner voice, which alone has the power to change him! – Editors}



Bengaluru, January 3 thru 7:

Swamiji completed 4 sessions at the Study Centre attached to the Valley School, run by Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI). There were five resource persons: Kabir Jaithirtha, Steve Smith, Gopalan, Donal Creedon and Swami Chidananda. The format was such that any four of them became presenters leaving the fifth one to be the moderator. There was presentation by each panellist, interaction between panellists, and finally interaction with the audience. The topics were:

Jan 3: The World and I: Social Responsibility

Jan 4: Living and Dying

Jan 5: Meditation

Jan 7: Negation

In the 3 sessions during the week days, some 30 to 45 people took part. On Sunday January 7, there were more than a 100 participants.

Bengaluru, January 8 thru 14:

Swamiji spoke on seven themes, drawing from Upanishads, throwing light on real life's challenges at the hall in Jayarama Seva mandala in Jayanagar. These were in Kannada.

Bengaluru, January 15: A talk on "Time and the timeless, Paths and the pathless" was held at "Meditation and Study Circle" in Jayanagar 4thT Block.

Bengaluru, January 16 thru 18: A Retreat in Kannada was held at Suvarnamukh Samskriti Dhama, where the text as Skanda Upanishad.

Bengaluru, January 19: The alternative school *La Wisdom in Koramangala* had Swamiji speak to their teachers and senior students on *Multiple Forms of Intelligence*.

Shimoga (in Karnataka), January 20, 21: DHIMAHI Centre for Child Neurology in Shimoga had an interesting session on Stress Reduction, where Swamiji addressed an audience which had a number of physicians of the town of diverse specializations. He also visited an institute for special children run by SARJI group, and delivered a public talk on "Mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation". He spoke at the new, elegant Sarji Hospital for Mother and Child on the theme Communication Skills.



Audience at Jayanagar, Bengaluru, January 12, 2018



Swamiji speaking on Upanishads - Jan 8 thru 14, 2018 in Bengaluru



Talk on Stress Reduction at Dheemahi Centre for Child Neurology in Shimoga, 20 Jan 2018



Talk on "Multiple Intelligences" at La Wisdom school in Koramangala, Bengaluru, Jan 19
(Director of the School Jaspal Ahuja to Swamini's left)



Prof. G Venkata Subbiah - the 103 year old celebrity known for compiling voluminous "nighantu" (dictionary) of Kannada - in conversation with Swamiji, Bengaluru, Jan 12.



A class on Skandopanishad in progress at Suvarnamukhi Samskriti Dhāma, Bengaluru, Jan 17



Swamiji spoke on Eknath Easwaran's insights into Bhagavad Geeta, Chennai Jan 28



Another section of the audience at India Immersion Centre, Chennai 28/1



UPCOMING EVENTS

Mysore, February 13: Swamiji will join and speak at the Mahā Shivarātri celebrations organized by Sādhana Mandir Trust. The venue will be NIE Sports Complex, Vishweshwara Nagar, Mysuru.

Mumbai, February 19 – 28: Swamiji will speak at Somaiya Centre for Lifelong Learning for 6 evenings: Feb 19 thru 24. He will also address audiences at Juhu Gymkhana on Sunday, February 25 (morning) and at the Mithibai College hall for 3 evenings on February 25, 26 and 27. For details, visit www.chidananda9.blogspot.in |

MAHĀ SHIVARĀTRI

Wednesday, February 13, 2018



Lord Shiva destroys the darkness of our spiritual ignorance. He destroys all our impurities. Devotion to Him lifts us above all our worldly attachments.

The **AUPA** team wishes all the readers Happy Shivarātri! May the Three-Eyed Lord shower His blessings upon all!

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(AUPA is the short form of AUPANISHADA-PURUSHA, the truth of the sacred source called Upanishads. This e-newsletter comes from Project Manager of the website: aupa.in – Upanishad Wisdom).

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