



April 2018
Volume 3, Issue 10 (No. 34)

Editor: Swami Chidananda
Associate Editor: Dolly Seth

AUPA eNEWSLETTER

AM I THE BODY?

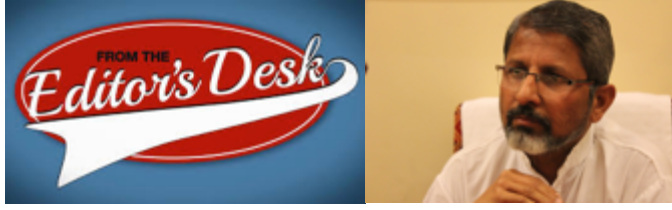
From time immemorial, the spiritual seeker in man has struggled with the idea, “I am the body” and has sought to find a deeper dimension to his existence. The sense of “I” easily embraces the body. When Prajāpati told Virochana and Indra to look into water so they could know the Self (Ātman), both of them saw the reflection of their physical self in the pond. Virochana, the king of demons (*asuras*), was satisfied with the idea, “This physical self (the body) is the Ātman.” Indra, the king of gods (*suras*) was, on the other hand, not at all satisfied.

this self (bodily self) is well adorned when this body is well adorned, well dressed when the body is well dressed, ...(but) will be blind when the body is blind. It perishes immediately when the body perishes. I see no good in this!

*..ayam shareere sādhu alankrite sādhu alankrito bhavati
suvasane suvasanah...
..andhe andho bhavati
shareerasya nāsham anu esha nashyati
nāham atra bhogyam pashyāmi
atha tasya bhayam bhavati*

Chāndogya Upanishad, mantra 8.9.1

Such discontent paves the way to further inquiry, leading to true Self-knowledge.



CHARITY BLESSES THE GIVER

Upanishads talk about human values in daily life too

Abu Dharal-Ghifari¹, a companion of Prophet Mohammad, reported that the Prophet, while sitting in the shade of the Kabah wall, said, “They are the losers.” Abu Dhar enquired, “Who are they, O Messenger of God?” The Prophet replied, “Those who pile up heaps of wealth and do not spend!”

“You must give,” says Taittiriya Upanishad and instructs us, “Give with faith; do not give without faith; give generously; give with humility; give with fear (of not attaining higher regions unless one gives); give with (right) understanding”.²

A wealthy man once offered a substantial donation to Swami Vivekananda, when the latter was in Chicago. The donor expected the Swami to be thankful to him. Vivekananda surprised him by saying he had to be thankful to the Swami for giving him an opportunity to serve a noble cause!

We would never hoard wealthy (or any other resource including knowledge) unless a certain insensitivity born of ‘tamas’ covers us. Higher teachings of the Vedānta therefore ask us to ‘live in attention’ and thereby not succumb to tamas. Do’s and don’ts such as the one above in the context of giving are necessary for a lot of us who may not understand the higher teachings. In fact all the human values like speaking truth, living in self-control or not hurting others follow ‘living in attention’ just as corollaries follow theorems.

The Bhagavad-Geetā, following the footsteps of the Upanishads and taking the liberty to elaborate a bit or even adapt a bit, says in the context of charity, “Charity should be made keeping in mind the right place, the right time and the right (deserving) recipient³.”

This piece of writing has served its purpose if the reader understands that the Upanishads not only speak of transcendental wisdom (such as the oneness of all existence) but also throw light on a number of issues of right conduct in our daily life.

Notes:

1 Practices of Compassion, published by World Buddhist Culture Trust, page 198, in the article by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan.

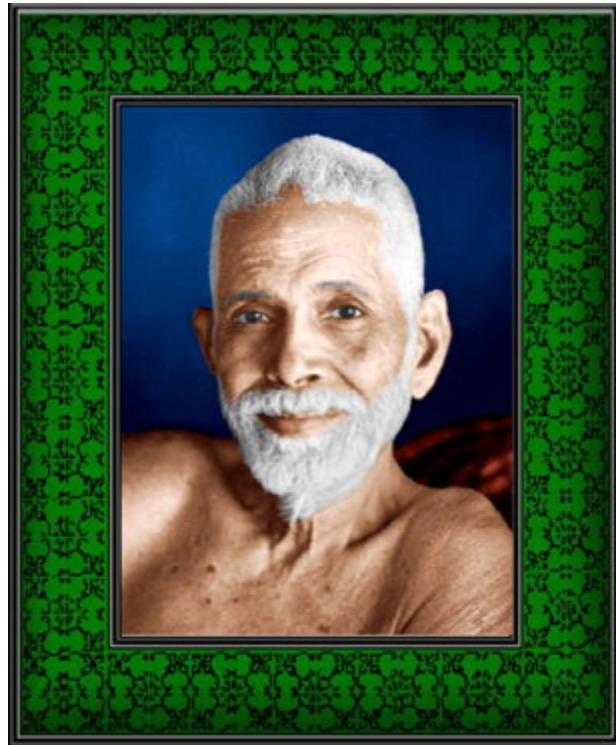
2 shraddhayā deyam, ashraaddhayā na deyam.. – Valli 1, anuvāka 21

3 deshe, kāle cha pātre cha – 17.20



Swami Chidananda

Light on Self-enquiry



“As and when thoughts occur, they should, one and all, be annihilated then and there, at the very place of their origin, by the method of enquiry, in the quest of the Self.”

Sri Ramana Maharshi

(Editor’s note: *Thoughts here, though further qualified as ‘one and all,’ imply the I-thought. This category – the I-thought – represents the psychological memory, which alone binds us. Functional memory and its thoughts do not bind.*)

HOMAGE



It will be two years on the 29th of this month since our beloved Dr Siddhartha Gautam left us. We gratefully remember the inspiration and support he supplied to this project on Upanishads. We cherish the memory of our association with him, who was always a fountain of enthusiasm and creative energy.

May his soul roam in peace!
Editors and Everybody in AUPA team



QUOTE OF THE ISSUE



Faith is (not just about believing in God or negating scientific evidence, but) about....
“...the willingness to give ourselves over, at times, to things we do not fully understand” .

Alan Lightman in his famous book *The Accidental Universe*, pp 50 – 51

{With a Ph.D. in theoretical physics from Caltech, Alan Lightman is now Professor of the Practice of the Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He is a novelist, essayist, physicist, and educator. He straddles the two worlds of science and religion.}



LEARN THIS WORD

MANTRA

Mystic Sound String

The most well-known meaning of the word mantra is - a string¹ of sounds that has mystical power. This string of sounds is believed to have spiritual powers that defies ordinary human understanding. A mantra can have influences that most people do not understand.

For example, “*Om Namah Shivāya*” is a mantra. Without counting Om, it has 5 syllables so it is called *panchākshra-mantra*. Counting Om, it is referred to as the ‘*shadakshara mantra*’ (*shat* = 6). The *asthākshari* (*Om Namo Nārāyanāya*) and the Gāyatri (*Om tat-savitur...*) etc. are famous mantras. *That² which protects us when we recite and contemplate on it* – is the explanation given to the word mantra.

The second meaning is any utterance in the Vedas. The Vedas consist of mantras. A *rishi* (sage) is, by definition a *mantra-drasthā*, one to whom a (Vedic) mantra is revealed.

Mantras of the Vedas, in overwhelmingly large measure, reveal ‘*karmas*’ (actions or rituals) to be performed. The ritualistic portion (*karma-kānda*) therefore regards the entire Vedas as meant for³ prescribing ‘things that may be performed’! A mantra is meant for suggesting a karma (*kriyā*), it asserts. The secondary portions of Upanishads endorse this view⁴. “Take it to be true – all the rituals that the sages envisioned through the mantras!” – says Mundaka Upanishad of Atharva Veda.

The primary portion of the Upanishads, which is real Vedānta, however, says the job of a mantra is just to “reveal” the true nature of the highest reality. For example, the Veda mantra – *satyam jñānam anantam brahma*⁵ – does not ask us to “do” anything; it simply reveals that Brahman, which alone exists, is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Limitlessness. Understanding the truth revealed, one gets liberated *without doing anything!*

There are many more meanings of the word ‘mantra’. A third and the last one here may be mentioned: consultation. A leader consults able advisors or experts in the decision-making process and such discussion⁶, often held secretly, is *mantra*. No wonder ministers, who advise, are called *mantris!*

Note:

1 *Om* however is regarded as a monosyllabic mantra, not a string. Likewise there are ‘seed mantras’ (*beeja-mantras*) like *hreem*, *kleem* etc which also are extremely concise. Otherwise a mantra may have 5, 8, 12 or any other number of syllables in the ‘string’.

2 *mananāt trāyate iti mantrah*.

3 *āmnāyasya kriyārthatvāt* – a Jaimini Sutra

4 *mantreshu karmāni kavayo yāni apashyan* – Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.1

5 Taittiriya Upanishad 2.1

6 *mantra vijaya-moolam hi* – Vālmiki Rāmāyana, 2.100.16 (Right consultation is the key to victory.)



TIPS FROM THE UPANISHADS

APRAMĀDA Being Attentive

Staying alert is perhaps one of the most important values that the Upanishads ask us to practise in our daily living. The Sanskrit word 'apramāda' represents this value. Common people slip and fall due to lack of attention, which is pramāda. Even eminent people get into degradation because of their carelessness. Alertness is the hallmark of the attribute 'sattva'. People lose it when 'rajas' drives them towards ambitious goals or intense enjoyment. People lose it when 'tamas' makes them shut their eyes to right action.

Self-knowledge is impossible for those who are not alert! **Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.4**
..ayam ātmā ..labhyah .. na cha pramādāt..

Dr G wrote:



Dr. G wrote:

WHY ARE WE WORRIED?

Dr Siddhartha Gautam reminisces here how his father questioned him.

When I first left for America, I had promised my father I would return home when I had saved ten thousand dollars. He asked me, when I went back to India on a visit once, if I had saved that much money yet. I had, but now I didn't think that would be enough to sustain the lifestyle I had so quickly become accustomed to. I told my father, "When I have one hundred thousand, I will come back."

My father shook his head sadly. "Son, you will never have enough savings and you will never come back." He could not understand why anyone with a vast fortune of ten thousand American dollars could possibly have need for more. "**Why are you worried?**" he asked in his simple, straightforward way.

His question continued to haunt me after I returned to America. Why was I worried? I had more than

enough to meet my needs. I had a loving wife and family. I had the respect and admiration of my colleagues and clients. Why was I so restless? Why was happiness so elusive?

I found the answer

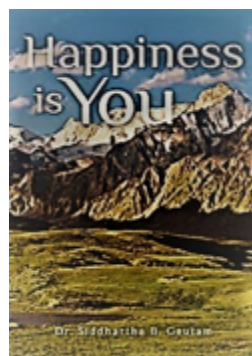
One day I came across the answer in a twenty-two-page pamphlet by Swami Dayananda, printed in large letters on the plain, unadorned cover, “The Problem is You; the Solution is You.” Suddenly I realized that I was trying to find something outside, in the world, that truly only exists within, in myself. The swami’s words were uplifting and discouraging at the same time. Now I knew where true happiness could be found, and it was not on some remote mountaintop, or at the bottom of the sea. It was within me. I was the answer to my quest. But if happiness was really so close, why wasn’t I experiencing it? Because I was also the problem. I myself was the obstacle that separated me from bliss.

How can something be both the problem and the solution?

The swami illustrated what he meant with a story of a man who sat down to read the newspaper one morning but couldn’t find his reading glasses. He searched the drawers of his desk, all over the table, even on the floor. “Where are my glasses?” he shouted so loudly that his whole family came running to help. Finally his youngest son pointed to the glasses, which were sitting on top of the man’s head. He’d had them all along. He had been searching high and low for something that he possessed the whole time. He was the problem and he was the solution. But – and here is a key point for relentless seekers of happiness – the reason he was the problem was that he didn’t know he was the solution. He was ignorant of what he had readily within his grasp.

When we seek our happiness outside ourselves – by acquiring more possessions, by pursuing a better job, by accumulating more money – we are like the man fruitlessly searching for his glasses. Just as he convinced himself that his glasses were hopelessly lost, we can convince ourselves that we are unhappy. That is the power the mind holds over us.

{The above is an excerpt from the book by Dr. Siddhartha B Gautam, **HAPPINESS IS YOU**, pages 2 – 3.}





Smt. Indira Gautam contributes from USA:

Report on Happiness Yoga, Session 60, held on Saturday, March 3, 2018:

Dr Sid Gautam had initiated, under the banner of S T E P (Society to Educate People), these events on the “first Saturday of every month,” at the Kiwanis Recreation Center in Fayetteville (North Carolina). We had the 60th session on March 3.

Dr Neeti Kapur’s session on HOMEOPATHY was very well received. As the e-leaflet attached below shows, she gave to the eager audience perspectives of alternative medicine *beyond the Western System of Healing*.

Andres Josephs guided the participants through simple movements of yoga and also conducted a ‘group meditation’ exercise for their benefit. The movements could be done while sitting on the chair. The meditation was to help people gently clear their minds, allowing insights to emerge that could resolve their issues of stress in daily life. The regular part of the event – exposing participants to healthy, vegetarian food – also received enthusiastic response.

JOIN US

OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC

Happiness Yoga 60

HOMEOPATHY: HEALING BEYOND WESTERN MEDICINE

SPEAKER:
Dr. Neeti Kapur

WHEN:
Saturday, March 3, 2018

WHERE:
**Kiwanis Recreation Ctr.
352 Devers Street
Fayetteville, NC 28303**

TIME:
9:00 a.m. –11:00 a.m.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The program is sponsored by the Society to Educate People (STEP), a non-profit organization initiated by Dr. Sid Gautam. It is a monthly event called “HAPPINESS YOGA” presented on the first Saturday in every month. We meet to have fun, enjoy free healthy food, and discuss a specific topic that the public can benefit from.

On March 3, 2018, Dr. Neeti Kapur, a board certified family physician will discuss alternative medicine. Prior to her presentation, there will be a segment on the **MAGIC OF MOVEMENTS and MEDITATION**, followed by **FOOD, FLAVOR, and FUN**, with healthy food sample served.

For more information, please call 910.867.0070; Email sgautam@gmail.com, or visit Facebook Happiness Yoga

Words from Guest Writers

UPANISHADS AND HINDUISM

Swami Harshananda



If there is one mass of scriptures that has inspired and sustained the Hindus over the millennia, it is the Upanishads. By advocating the ultimate triumph of the spirit over matter, of man over nature, the Upanishads have created, strengthened and preserved a great tradition of spirituality. This they have done, not only by a fearless spirit of inquiry to its logical conclusions, but also by intuitive mystical experiences beyond the ken of the intellect, these experiences almost always converging to a unitive principle.

No school of thought, no religious movement, of the subsequent periods in the history of India, has remained untouched by their influence, if not pervaded by them. In fact, many of these schools and movements could gain respectability or acceptance only because they tread the path lighted up by the Upanishads.

Scholars of Indian thought have discovered the influence of the Upanishads on the religio-cultural life of other nations far beyond the boundaries of India, whether it is Japan, China and Korea in the East or Central Asia in the West.

Relevance in Today's Context:

The greatest problem of the modern man is lack of inner peace and constant conflict with the outside world. By stressing meditation on the inner, incorporeal self (called Ātman or God), and harmonious relationship with others – in whom too the same God dwells – in the outside world, the Upanishads are very relevant even today. This solution which has worked for five millennia (or more) – as indicated by the men who lived such a life – can work even today if taken seriously and implemented sincerely.

An earnest study of the Upanishads, without preconceived notions and prejudices, is bound to inspire one to aspire for the life of the spirit. Swami Vivekananda said that the Upanishads are a mine of strength, and anyone who reads them will derive strength and succour. Unlike earlier times, now they are available to all.

[Excerpts from *Upanishads and Daily Life*, pages 102, 103 and 110, published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai.]

{Swami Harshananda ji is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and the President of the Ramakrishna Math on Bull Temple Road, Bengaluru. He is a versatile speaker and a prolific writer having several publications in English, Kannada and Sanskrit to his credit. Several volumes of (a version of) *Encyclopaedia of Hinduism* have also been compiled by him.}



AGONY FOLLOWS EGOCENTRIC BEHAVIOR

Even gods went once on an ego trip!

Once the gods defeated the demons in a long-drawn-out battle. Full of conceit, they wanted to celebrate their victory.

It was Brahman who had achieved victory for the gods but the gods weren't aware of Brahman's role. Their pride and elation therefore knew no bounds. Brahman thought to himself, "The gods must be protected from this dangerous vainglory. Otherwise they will in course of time become devilish creatures. For their own sake I must remove their presumptuousness."

Brahman appeared to them as a luminous form on the eve of their celebration. The gods had never seen anything like it. It was a mystery that they could not fathom.

The gods told Fire, "You are powerful among us. Please go and thoroughly look into the matter. It seems to be some venerable being."

Fire approached Brahman, or rather Brahman in the guise of the mysterious object. Brahman asked him, "Who are you?"

"I am known as Fire," came the reply.

Brahman: "You possess such a famous name. What power do you have?"

Fire: "I can burn up everything in the universe."

Brahman placed a straw before Fire and asked him to burn it. Fire tried his utmost but couldn't consume it. He became ashamed and silently withdrew. He reported to the gods, "I couldn't tell what this being really is."

Then the gods sent Air to the luminous being on the same errand. Brahman said, "Who are you? What power do you have?"

"I am known as Air. I can blow away everything in the universe," was the reply.

Brahman placed the same straw before Air and asked him to blow it away. Air was also foiled in his attempt, and he too returned to the gods to report that he had failed to find out the strange being's identity.

Now all the gods requested their leader, Indra, to go and meet this mysterious being that had so far eluded identification. No sooner had Indra approached it than the luminous object vanished. Indra's pride was humbled. Yet he did not go back like Fire and Air.

Indra kept deliberating in his mind about the baffling matter. Then Supreme Knowledge itself appeared in the flesh as Uma, the beautiful and charming daughter of the Himalayas.

Indra asked Uma, "Please tell me the nature of the being who showed itself to us and then vanished."

Uma said: "It was Brahman. The demons were actually conquered by Brahman. You were merely instruments. But you became vainglorious because of your triumph."

Indra's conceit was gone. He fully understood that behind the endeavors of all the gods was the {It is Brahman alone that motivates and activates all creatures in the universe. And it is egoism that hides this truth from us. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "All agonies come to an end when man ceases to be egocentric."}

*(The story above is from **Kenopanishad**, and is narrated as above by Swami Amarananda in **STORIES FROM VEDANTA**, a publication in 2003 by Advaita Ashrama, pages 71 - 72.)*



Rajguru Nagar near Pune, March 1 thru 4:

Swamiji stayed at the Study Centre attached to the Sahyadri School, run by Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI), on a very picturesque piece of land near Rajguru Nagar. He took note of the different aspects of the educational campus, including 'land care'. Rain water harvesting, organic farming, joining hands with villagers nearby to protect indigenous seeds of various grains, pulses and cereals etc. He also addressed the students and staff at the school's assembly on Saturday, March 3. As a member of the Executive Committee of the Education Centre, he joined its meeting on Sunday, March 4.

Sidhbari, Himachal Pradesh, March 11 thru 13:

The Samādhi Shrine of Pujya Swami Chinmayanandaji (1916 – 1993) at the beautiful Ashram (popularly known as Tapovan in the area) was the special attraction for the 3 day visit to the village near Dharamshala. Swamiji stayed at the new house of Neelam and Sudarshan Sharma, at walking distance from the Ashram. He spoke to nearly 80 trainees and staff at CORD (Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development), where the Director Dr Kshama Metre accorded him a warm welcome. Accompanied by Ms Ratna Bhatia from Los Angeles, and a devotee couple from Mumbai – Padmaja and Sriprakash Menon – he also visited McLeod Ganj, the abode of the 14th Dalai Lama.

Mumbai, March 17, 18:

During this short visit, two Satsangs were organized for a smaller group of interested Vedānta students at the elegant residence in Sholay Apartments in Versova that belonged to Mrs. Pramila Rao. The topics were "virakti and bhakti" on the first day and "shakti and mukti" on the second, both in the light of Upanishads.



Inside the samādhi shrine, Sidhbari, Himāchal Pradesh



Shri Hanumān and the cottage of Pujya Chinmayānandaji - with the Dhaulādhār range of the Himālayas in the background at Sidhbāri.



A view of Chinmaya Samādhi Mandir when it's dark all around.



At the samādhi mandir of Pujya Swāmi Chinmayānandaji in Sidhbari, March 14, 2018 (with Ratna Bhatia from Los Angeles)



Some of the Mumbaikars who attended the Satsang on March 17 and 18 in Versova



Swamiji spoke on the first evening on Bhakti and Virakti and on the second evening on Shakti and Mukti (Energy and Release) in the light of the Upanishads at Sholay apartments, Versova on March 17 & 18



A section of the audience at the Sholay Apartments, Versova



Retreat near Shirdi, July 6 thru 11: The beautiful campus of Arunodaya Institute of Culture, located in Tilaknagar, Shrirampur, district Ahmednagar, (30 kilometers from Shirdi), will be the venue for the next Retreat of FOWAI FORUM. Running into 6 nights, Friday thru Wednesday, this event will have the 6th chapter of Chāndogya Upanishad for study. This is the portion of Vedānta where the celebrated mahā-vākya *tat-tvam-asi* appears 9 times. For details, visit fowai.org or aupa.in |



TAT TVAM ASI

Celebrate Auspicious days Of April



Remember that your attention has to be on holistic health; do not make Vedanta an isolated compartment; may your spiritual studies bring the fragrance of total fitness in your life!



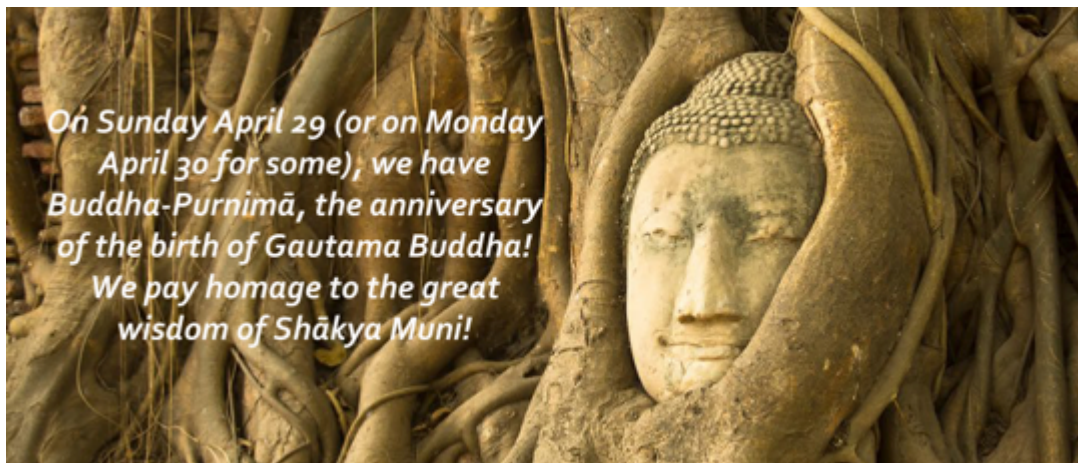
May these auspicious days usher in 'good luck' to you!



The birthday of the Shaiva Saint
Shri Basaveshwara will be
observed on Wednesday April 18.
He was also a great social reformer.
We offer pranāms to him!



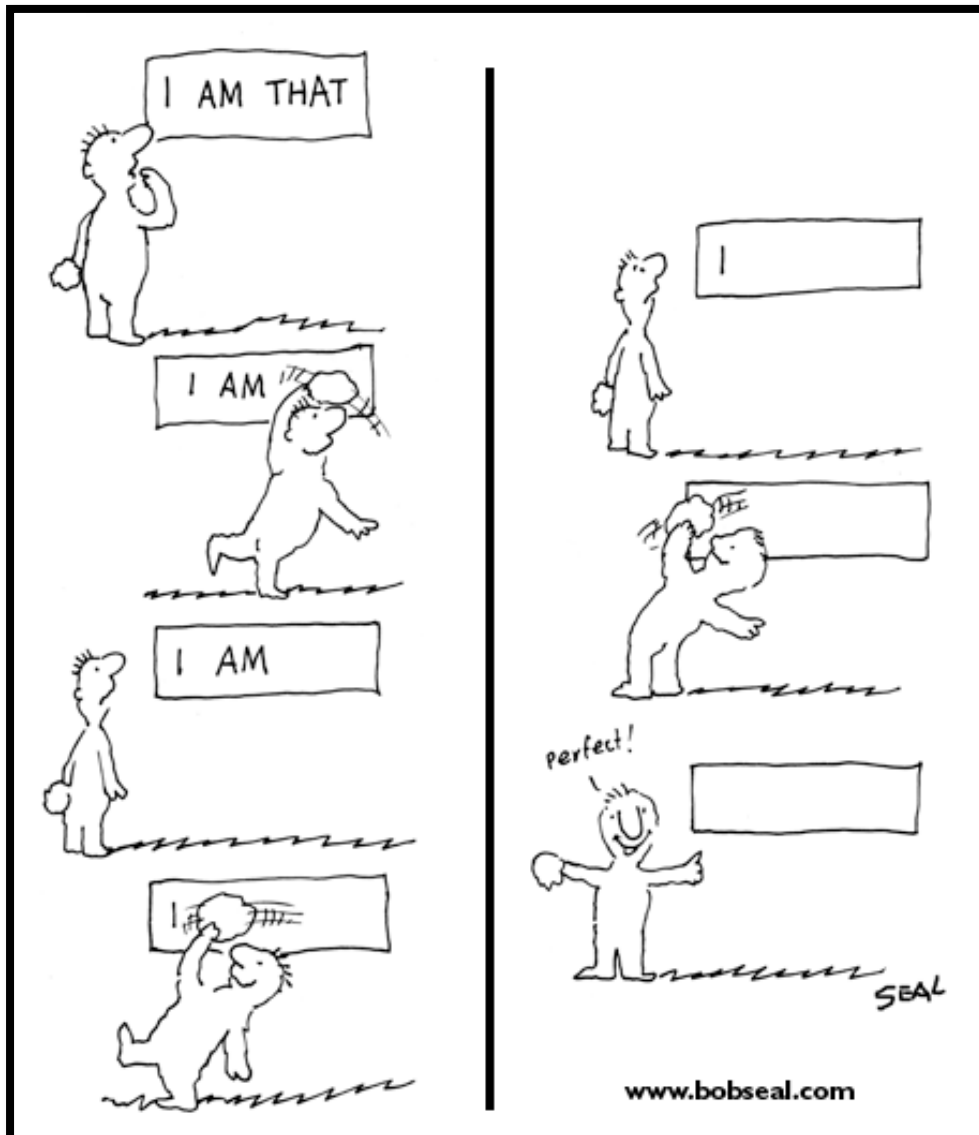
On Friday April 20 and Saturday April 21,
we bow down with gratitude to Ādi
Shankarāchārya and
Shri Rāmānujāchārya, who gave us two of
the most illustrious schools of thought,
namely Advaita and Visisthādvaita!
Their 'Jayantis' are celebrated this year
on these dates.



On Sunday April 29 (or on Monday
April 30 for some), we have
Buddha-Purnimā, the anniversary
of the birth of Gautama Buddha!
We pay homage to the great
wisdom of Shākya Muni!

Best wishes to our readers from Swami Chidananda and the Team ALPA

THE JOURNEY OF NEGATION, LAST PHASE!



It seems we reach the void (shoonya) finally but the Vedānta's stand is that we reach Brahman, the limitless One.

{The AUPA team thanks Bob seal for this cartoon.}

(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).

Publisher: Shahid Sayed, AUPA Project Manager for STEP Press
Email: info@aupa.in Contact: +91 9967 878798