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AUPA eNEWSLETTER

MANTRA TO PONDER

THE GREAT LEAP

Can you good deeds without thinking of rewards!

In activities of the world or in spiritual endeavours, the ego sustains itself by dreaming of rosy results or by fearing unpleasant outcomes. It is next to impossible for us to do our work to the best of our ability without worrying about consequences. The Upanishads, which excel in pointing out a way of living that is totally different from the ego-driven one, gently warn us that we reinforce our bondage when we do not let go of our attachment to victory or defeat.

Lord Yama says to young Nachiketā –
Unless your mind gives up its hankering after results, you will not gain the
highest wisdom.

॥ *na – ashānta-mānaso'pi prajñānenainam-āpnuyāt* ॥

Katha Upanishad – 1.2.24

(Chapter 1, Valli 2, Mantra 24)

SHIVA-BHAKTI AND SELF-INQUIRY

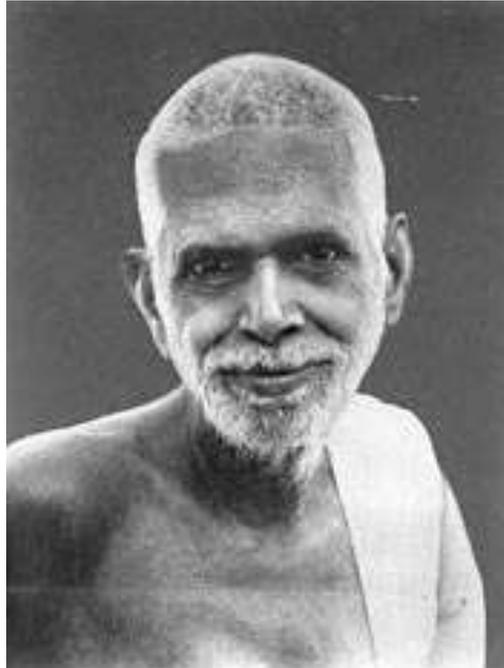
(Shivarātri-special)

Shiva is the conqueror of death. When fear of death seizes us, we may surrender to Shiva.

Our notion of who we are – the “I-thought” – first dies following this surrender.

Then – as our true nature after all is deathless – how can even a trace of that fear rise again?

Saddarshanam, Verse 2



{In this stanza, we can see Maharshi showing the intimate connection between bhakti (devotion) and jñāna (wisdom) – Editors}

From the
**Editor's
Desk**



GOOD BUT UNPLEASANT

(The art of choosing rightly)

In his article (in this issue) *Eat that Frog*, Om Swami pays a tribute to Brian Tracy who wrote a whole book with the same title. The “frog” here represents important pieces of work that all of us have to do, which unfortunately we postpone because we find them rather unpleasant.

In Vālmiki Rāmāyana, Sri Rama urges his younger brother Bharata to take up such tasks first that have “less investment¹ but huge rewards”. The advice again is not to look at the unpleasant aspect but to recognize how, even with a few hours spent on them first, “high priority” tasks deliver great benefits to us. Days spent on less important pieces of work fail to give us the same satisfaction.

The Kathopanishad seems to lay the basis for all this wisdom of time management when Lord Yama exhorts us to opt for ‘*shreya*’ and reject ‘*preya*’. Translated ably by some as “preferable” and “pleasurable”, the two choices that present themselves before us are marked by aspects that are “good but unpleasant” and “pleasant but harmful”.

Shreya – good but unpleasant – is not really unpleasant! Most of the times it is just starting trouble or initial inertia. Once we take it up and get going, it is actually enjoyable. Likewise ‘*preya*’ is not really pleasant all the way; once we indulge in the “low priority” tasks, and get going, we begin to feel, “hey, aren’t we wasting time here?” We must therefore overcome the initial hurdles and then the ride will be nothing but delightful.

Spirituality is meant to make our whole life better than before. *A place for everything and everything in its place* – goes an old saying. Order in daily life is both the prerequisite and the reward of true spirituality. On one hand, unless we live ‘dharma’, it is not possible for us to rise spiritually. As we rise spiritually, on the other hand, our ability to recognize the subtle nuances of dharma increases and we will succeed in living on the plane of ‘higher dharma’ for sure.

Here is the new issue of AUPA in your hands (or on the screen before you) and we trust you will enjoy all the contents. May these insights, drawn mostly from the Upanishads, not only enrich you intellectually but also help you resolve various conflicts in your daily life. Let the fragrance of Vedanta wisdom pervade all the departments of your life, blessing you with wealth, health and harmonious relationships.

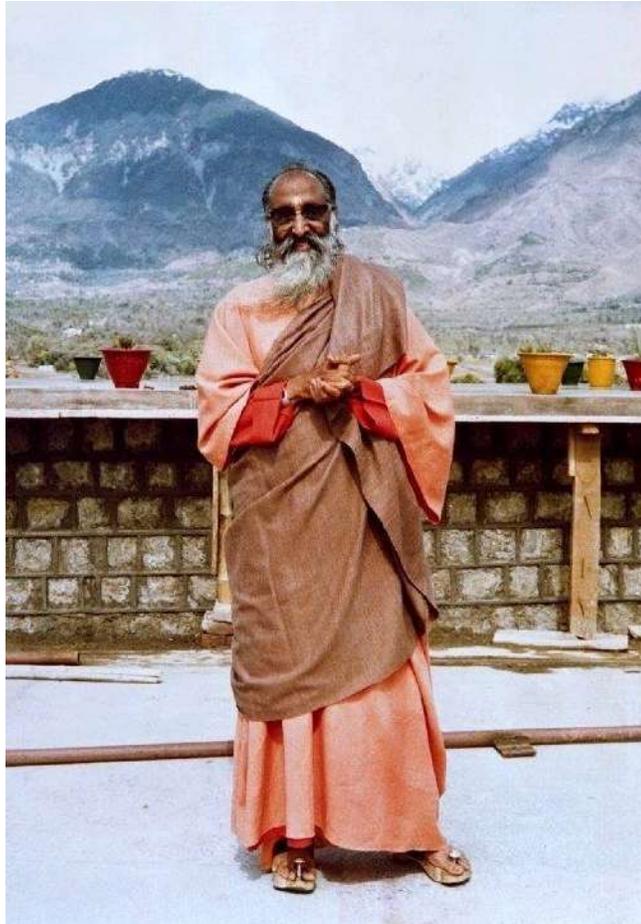
¹ *laghumoolam mahodayam* as found in **Verse 2.100.19 (Ayodhyā-Kānda, 100th sarga, 19th shloka)**

Swāmi Chidānanda

Thus Spake Chinmaya



REAL FREEDOM



Not to do what you feel like doing is - freedom!

Swami Chinmayananda

[Puja Swamiji shows here that the popular notion of freedom – as being the ability to do anything and everything that we want – is false. We are mere slaves of our instincts and urges in such misconceived freedom. His quote above shows how real freedom is when we are blessed with the discriminative power to avoid wrong actions and to go for right actions.]

ADHYĀTMA-YOGA **(Essential spiritual practice)**

The word '*adhyātma-yoga*' is defined by Ādi Shankarāchārya in the following way:

Withdrawing the mind from sense objects and fixing it in the Self.

The compound word gathers immense significance as Lord Yama, the divine teacher in the Kathopanishad¹, says on one hand that Self-knowledge is extremely difficult but assures, on the other, the extraordinary student Nachiketā that '*adhyātma-yoga*' can lead one to attaining the Self.

Here '*adhi*' means related to, and '*ātmā*' is the Self. Then '*yoga*' of course signifies a spiritual practice in general. These components put together, '*adhyātma-yoga*' indeed means the mature spiritual practice that we can take up, where, upon gaining substantial clarity on the revelations of the Vedānta, we gently and firmly pull our mind back from its habitual pursuits and remain in contemplation upon the truth of the Self.

Notes:

1 *adhyātma-yogādhipamena devam..* – Kathopanishad 1.2.12

Quote of the Issue



LET GO OF THE PAST

In a flowing river, if there is an obstruction, the flow is backwards. Dirt accumulates there. The water that flows forward is clean. Similarly if we keep moving ahead, there is pleasantness; if we keep on thinking about the past, our mind becomes a mess.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

[Sri Sri is the head of Art of Living Foundation, and has taught Sudarshan Kriya, a set of breathing and other exercises, which is practised by large numbers around the world.]

TIPS FROM THE UPANISHADS

PLACE OF MEMORY IN SPIRITUALITY

It is not correct to say that memory is a hurdle in spirituality. Remembering the teachings of the scriptures/teachers has immense value in our inner growth. Retention of the understanding that we gain during 'shravana' of (listening to) Vedānta sessions helps us speedily gain higher insights.

Brooding over the past of course is bad. Remembering the incidents where we were insulted and reliving those scenarios can indeed weaken us. Remembering the times when we enjoyed life and longing to have those times return to us also is a kind of emotional slavery. "Remembering", taken in the right sense, is about retaining our grasp of moral values and spiritual principles. That kind of memory is an asset beyond doubt.

Adore retention!

smaram-upāssva

Chāndogya Upanishad, mantra 7.13.1

Dr. G wrote:



THE JOY OF GIVING - 2

Did you know the three Ts that you can give?

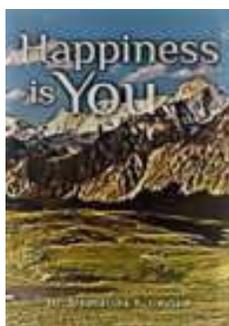
What you send out to the world will come back to you! That is the concept of karma! So if you give, you will receive!

{Part 1 had covered giving treasure. Part 2 now covers talent and time. – Editors}

Giving is getting. This is true for those with the second 'T' – talent. By talent I don't mean singing, dancing or other performance abilities. In this case a talent can be anything that you can do that would be helpful to someone else: an accountant who helps people fill out their tax forms; a knitter who makes blankets for children in the hospital; a teenager who mows the lawn for his elderly neighbor. If you have been blessed with certain useful talents, then it is a crime not to use them in service to others.

Charitable organizations are always in need of people with different skills. If an organization asks you for a monetary donation, and you can't afford to make one at the time, ask them if you can donate a service instead. The current trend of social entrepreneurship – using entrepreneurial skills to address social problems – is changing the whole landscape of charity work. Instead of simply giving away food or trucking in water to a place suffering from a drought, for example, these entrepreneurs focus on ways to improve farming practices and infrastructure so that a drought won't have such devastating effects in the future. Social entrepreneurs believe in the Chinese proverb, "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime."

Even if you believe you don't have any skills to share, you have the third 'T' – time. Take a few minutes to listen to your spouse when he or she is telling you about the day or to go outside and play with your young children. Go visit your neighbor with failing eyesight and ask if he wants you to read him the newspaper or a book. Invite the new family next door over for a dinner. Maybe you can't afford to pay people big checks, but you can always afford to pay attention. Don't multitask when you're spending time with someone. Look at them when they are talking. Ask questions or repeat what they have said back to them to show that you're listening and you care.



{The above is an excerpt from the book by Dr. Siddhartha B Gautam, **HAPPINESS IS YOU**, pages 76 – 77.}

Smt. Indira Gautam
writes from USA

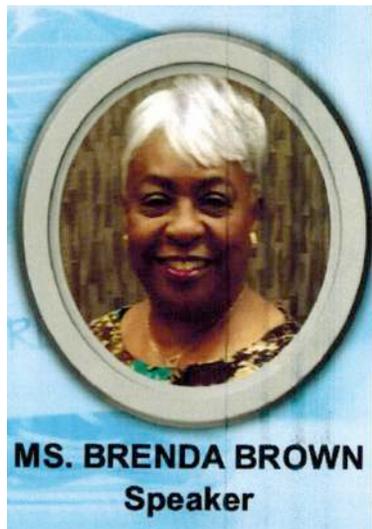


A SESSION ON ASPECTS OF RETIREMENT

March 2 was once more time for **Happiness Yoga** again!

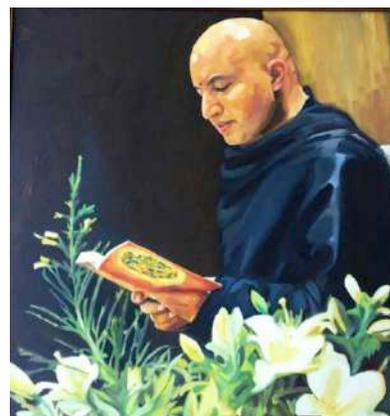
Our friends gathered at 9 am at the Kiwanis' Recreation Center in Fayetteville (North Carolina) when S T E P (Society to Educate People) welcomed everybody for the monthly event.

The main speaker was Ms Brenda Brown. Her topic was ***Retirement: Planning, Benefits, Medicare and Social Security***. The majority of the audience being senior citizens, and many others being on way to retirement, everybody was excited to learn more on this vital topic. The lecture and the QA were highly informative, with a touch of humour too!



Andres' Josephs' ***Magic of Movements and Meditation***, as always, were much appreciated. Everyone also enjoyed the healthy food samples served by Ms Kamlesh Tandon, under the feature ***Food, Flavor and Fun***. Mrs Carol Scheib ably facilitated the entire program. During this monthly event, we once more met to have fun while we discussed a topic that the public could benefit from.

Words from
Guest writers



Om Swami

EAT THAT FROG

Four levels of competence and time management

Mark Twain once said, "Eat a live frog first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day."

Though, it's debatable whether he actually said something like this. Nevertheless, if you can get past the visual, this little piece of advice is priceless.

Brian Tracy in his book, *Eat That Frog*, talks more about this proverbial croaker.

Your “frog” is your biggest, most important task, the one you are most likely to procrastinate on if you don’t do something about it. It is also the one task that can have the greatest positive impact on your life and results at the moment.

The first rule of frog eating is this: If you have to eat two frogs, eat the ugliest one first.

This is another way of saying that if you have two important tasks before you, start with the biggest, hardest, and most important task first. Discipline yourself to begin immediately and then to persist until the task is complete before you go on to something else.

Think of this as a test. Treat it like a personal challenge. Resist the temptation to start with the easier task. Continually remind yourself that one of the most important decisions you make each day is what you will do immediately and what you will do later, if you do it at all.

The second rule of frog eating is this: If you have to eat a live frog at all, it doesn’t pay to sit and look at it for very long.

The key to reaching high levels of performance and productivity is to develop the lifelong habit of tackling your major task first thing each morning. You must develop the routine of “eating your frog” before you do anything else and without taking too much time to think about it.”

The singular important common denominator in the lives of all successful people is this: they almost always open their day with a productive morning. They have a routine that they stick to no matter what.

Most people we call gifted, they are usually the product of relentless discipline, dedication and hard work. When you look at a creative person, say a poet, a writer or a painter, maybe a musician or just any successful person, you may be tempted to think that there’s something special going on for them. That, they wake up every morning to great flashes of brilliance or something from some other world descends upon them. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Whatever you wish to master, give it a bit of time every day and before you know it, you’ll be frolicking about in the same pond of creativity and competence as the best of the best in your field. Per psychology, moving from incompetence to competence has four stages. It is a skill anyone can acquire. I came across the hierarchy of competence in multiple works, but Graham Fitch’s succinct description of it in *Practicing The Piano* is my favourite. Here are the four stages by Mr. Fitch (in italics):

1. Unconscious Incompetence (The Novice)

We don’t know that we don’t know.

This might manifest in an overly confident attitude, thinking that can’t be all that hard or that it won’t take long to master. We are blissfully ignorant of what is really involved.

2. Conscious Incompetence (The Apprentice)

We know that we don’t know.

“Ah! This is much harder than I thought. I’m not sure I can accomplish this.” Motivation and encouragement are often needed at this stage of learning as this is where it is easy to give up.

3. Conscious competence (The Journeyman)

We know that we know.

This is the stage that lasts the longest. It still feels difficult and awkward, and yet we believe that, after much more work, we will reach our goal. We are constantly striving for the right tools for the job, slowly chipping away at problems and challenges.

4. Unconscious competence (The Master)

We don’t know that we know.

At this stage, we can play our piece [of piano] with no conscious thought. It feels easy, and we often wonder why we ever struggled. We are on autopilot, and can take risks or go with the flow.

[Om Swami is a monk who lives in an ashram in the Himalayan foothills. In search of Truth, he renounced the world and went to the Himalayas, where he realized himself after practising intense meditation. He has a bachelor’s degree in business and an MBA from Sydney, Australia. His blog, omswami.com, where he writes every week, gets more than a million views annually.]

NEWS

Bengaluru, February 14 thru March 3:

Acharya Dr Nagaraju and Swami Chidananda taught Geeta (ch 18) and Kathopanishad respectively during the 18 day Retreat at Suvarnamukhi Samskruti Dhama in Bengaluru. The program turned out to be an intense one, with only ten full-time participants (plus quite a few joining on many of the days). Brni Vibha Chaitanya moderated the daily “group discussions”. On one of the days, on Sunday, February 24, a number of physicians from Bengaluru city, who were also Vedanta students under Dr Thimappa Hegde, joined two sessions and took active part in the program.

Webinars:

The following webinars were held in the recent past:

Feb 10 - webinar 142 - Education for Well-being - 3
by Shri Satyesh Bellur

Feb 17 - webinar 143 - Personality Integration, Guidance from Kathopanishad by Swami Chidananda

Feb 24 - webinar 144 - Education for Well-being - 4
by Shri S Bellur

[Those who wish to join these webinars may please write to fowaiforum@yahoo.com]

**CAPTURED MOMENTS OF 18 DAYS OF SPIRITUAL CAMP AT
SUARNAMUKHI SAMSKRUTI DHAMA IN BENGALURU**



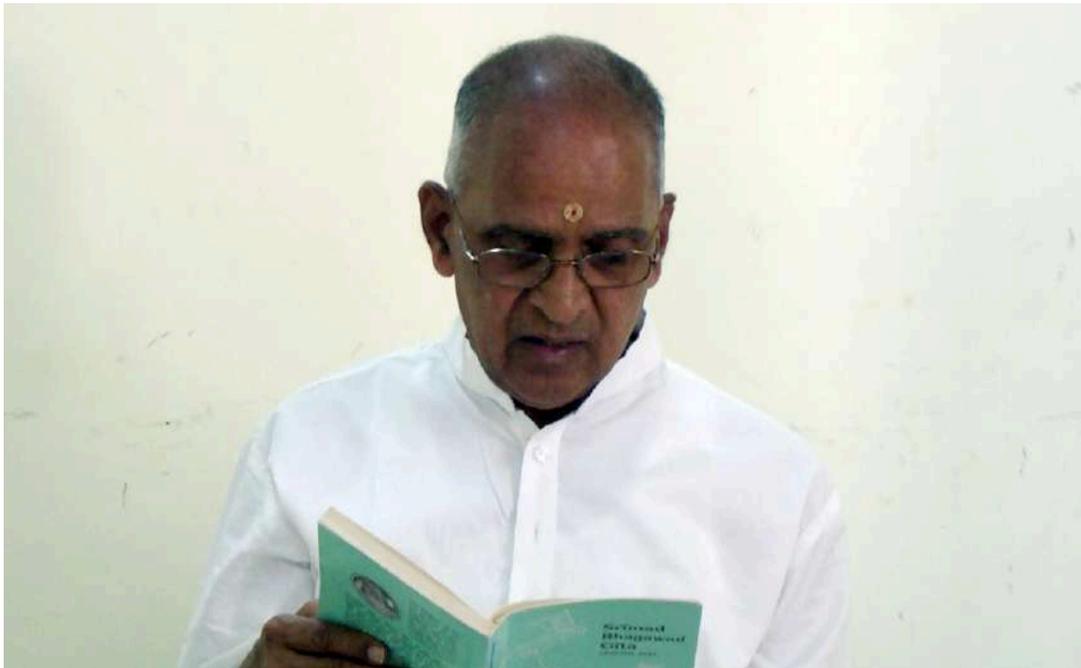
Inaugural lighting of the lamp



Swami Chidananda with Acharya Dr Nagaraju for the inauguration



Swami Chidananda's talks on Kathopanishad for 18 days



Talks by Acharya Dr. Nagaraju on Geeta (Chap.18)during the 18-day camp



Participants with Swamiji and Acharya Dr Nagaraju



Swamiji interacting with vibrant children of some participants



Concluding function on March 3, of the 18 day retreat

DHIMAHI Events

Deriving Holistic insights into Management from
the Heritage of India



Bengaluru, December 21, 2018

Cdr. Guruprasad addressed a large audience at the Annual Day of Paradise Group of Institutions to speak on *TIPS TO SUCCESS*. The grand event, named Paradise Habba, was held at the White Feather Convention Hall. Along with the student body, there were parents, teachers, secretaries, directors, principals and other staff in the audience. Dr T Manjunatha, the chairman of Paradise group of educational institutions, felicitated the speaker.



Cdr Guruprasad addressing youth in Bengaluru.



Dr T Manjunatha, Chairman of Paradise Group (wearing a red jacket) honours Cdr Guruprasad.

Upcoming Event

Bengaluru, March 9 and 10

Swamiji will deliver two talks (Kannada) at 9.30 am each day at the famous Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya on dharma and brahma in Upanishads.

Bengaluru, March 11 and 12

Swamiji will deliver two talks at the Meditation and Study Circle, at the SSMRV Junior College in Jayanagar on the topics of metaphysics and mysticism in Geeta and Upanishads. The one on the 11th will be in English.

AUSPICIOUS DAYS AHEAD

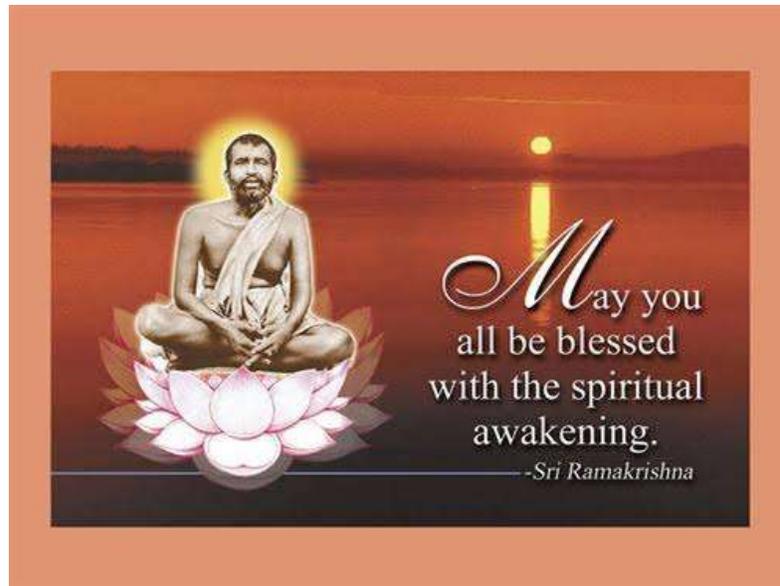
BIRTHDAY OF SHRI RĀMAKRISHNA

(Friday, March 8 this year)

Shri Ramakrishna (1836 – 1886) was undoubtedly an Avatāra-Purusha, a divine incarnation. A thorough jnāni inside, he was a great champion of bhakti outside. He asked us to hold God with one hand while the second is at work, and, as soon as the work gets over, to hold God with both our hands.

We offer our humble pranāms at his lotus feet!

Team AUPA and Swami Chidananda



HOLI

(Thursday, March 21 this year)

Colours! Lots of colours! The festival of Holi is popularly known for the splash of numerous colours – in the air, on faces, on clothes and everywhere!

Life is full of colours otherwise too. Joy, sorrow and varieties of emotions in between them!

Amidst all of them, Vedānta advises us, we must find inner poise – equanimity! Amidst the infinite combinations of the three *gunas* – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* – we must search for their substrate – the ātman, which is every free! Let's not run away from life; instead, let's go through life, through all its ups and downs, with our inner eye gazing at the Pure Self!

Happy Holi to you!

Team AUPA and Swami Chidananda



(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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