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AUPA eNEWSLETTER

GOD RULES THIS UNIVERSE

Nothing moves without His will

Advaita Vedānta no doubt speaks of Brahman, the one absolute truth in which the individual soul (*jeeva*), the universe (*jagat*) and God (*Ishwara*) merge when one attains the highest wisdom. Brahman is the truth even now, not recognized by us because we are in the “frame of reference” of *avidyā* (ignorance).

Till we ascend to the lofty heights of *brahma-jnāna*, the ground reality is – Advaita Vedānta unhesitatingly acknowledges – Ishwara (God) is the undisputed Ruler of all that happens in this universe of unthinkable grandeur.

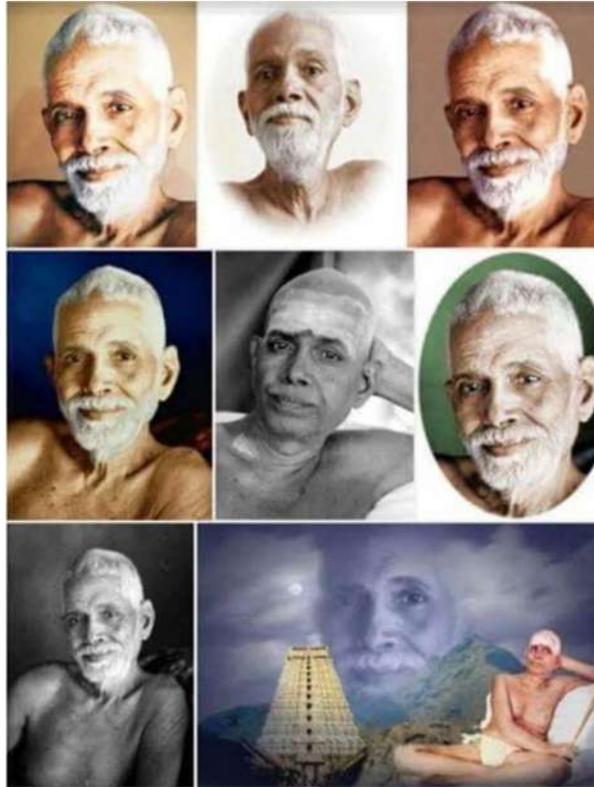
O Gārgi, the sun and the moon stay supported under the rule of this “imperishable truth”!

*etasya vā aksharasya prashāsane, Gārgi,
suryā-chandramasau vidhritau tisthatah*

Brihadāranyaka Upanishad – 3.8.9

(Chapter 3, Brāhmana 8, mantra 9)

Light on Self-inquiry



THE FOUR PATHS

Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Rājayoga and Jnānayoga are meant for the mind (the self) to (merge and) stay at the Heart (the Pure Self). This is certain.

Shri Ramana Maharshi

Verse 10 of Upadesha-Sāra

[The above reconciles the apparent differences and contradictions in the numerous ways of spiritual practices. Erasing the ego and having the vision of the undivided Consciousness is pointed out by the Sage of Arunāchala as the one goal of all paths. – Editors]

From the
**Editor's
Desk**



CULTIVATION OF VALUES

It is a widely held belief that values can be cultivated. Elders, teachers and others have always been trying to inculcate noble values like truthfulness in younger people, students and others. Some boast of success and others cry over their failures. Both in the domains of self-improvement and improving others, the whole world is caught in the struggle to get better.

Cultivation, viewed as trying to shape our patterns of behaviour as per certain ideas of how things ought to be, has actually serious limitations. It can in fact be the breeding ground of hypocrisy. Under the pressure of “how I should be”, a man may just show to others acceptable behaviour while, deep inside, he is not sure if that is the way to be. He may, for example, show absence of desire to win over the confidence of people around him but it is quite likely that he has suppressed his desires.

What is the alternative? Before going into the question of the possible alternative, we must know that people, all of us, have been heavily conditioned to think repeatedly, “I should be like this; I should not be like that”. Leave alone the pressure that others may put on us, we generally suffer from inner conflicts of the nature, “I should not have spoken like that; I should have acted like that,” etc. We must therefore examine the way our psyche works, and not just put the blame on the family, the society or the education system.

Awareness is the healthy alternative. When we are directly aware of the falsity of a certain behavioural pattern, of the silliness of a certain motive within us, we give up that behaviour even if rules permit it. Likewise when we understand the rightness of doing something, we will do that even if the “dos, don'ts, shoulds and should-nots” are otherwise.

Awareness, which in its largest sense is referred to as PRAJNĀNAM in the Upanishads (Aitareya 3.1.3), is the greatest transformative factor in our life. Intense awareness of things outside and inside can lead to dramatic changes. When we directly see the stupid ways of our conditioned mind, those ways cannot continue. And when we see others as they are, right responses that are free from indifference emerge from us.

Swāmi Chidānanda

Thus Spake Chinmaya



The glory of life is
not in never falling.
True glory consists in
rising each time we fall.



Swami Chinmayananda

Remembering Dr G

GOPIO CONFERENCE IN TRINIDAD

[GOPIO stands for Global Organization for Persons of Indian Origin.]

It was the last week of May 2014 during which Indira ji, Siddharth ji and I flew from Miami in USA to Port of Spain in Trinidad & Tobago. We landed in the capital of the island country, on May 27. We stayed at Radisson for five nights, where the events of GOPIO also were held. Dr G had a lot of friends among the members of GOPIO. Many of them – especially from other parts of USA – seemed to have a long-standing relationship with him. The sessions of GOPIO were warm and vibrant. Both Dr G and I spoke at the conference.

Along with his friends, Dr G went and met the Prime Minister of the country – Smt Kamla Persad Bissessar. As her name indicates, her forefathers had migrated from India to Trinidad. I was taken away by the former students of Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Mumbai – Sri Ravi Bharati, Swami Prakashananda, Maya Vahini and Br Kashyap. While Prakashananda heads the Chinmaya Mission in T & T, the other three work under other banners, all of them teaching various Hindu scriptures.

“A Blueprint for Life” was the topic on which I delivered two evening lectures at the Hindu Prachar Kendra, located in the area called Longdenville, on May 27 and 28.

Dr G could not join these Satsangs but he was with me on the last day when we visited the home of Sri Ravibharati (see picture).

Indira ji, Dr G and I had lots of discussions on Hindu culture, values taught in our scriptures and the main teachings of the Vedanta.

In India, we think of Trinidad for cricket too. One evening, while in Port of Spain, I took a walk, all by myself and chanced upon a little park where I noticed a statue. I went closer and found out that it was the statue of Brian Lara, the legendary cricketer of West Indies! Pleasant memories of this trip to Trinidad linger in my mind. Gautam ji was good company indeed, sharing a lot of good thoughts all the time.

Swami Chidānanda



Sri Ravi Bharati, his wife Radhika, Swami Chidananda, Indira Gautam and Siddhartha Gautam in Trinidad, May 2014

..to be continued

Akshara (imperishable)

The commonly known meaning of the word 'akshara' is – alphabets. The chart of all the basic alphabets in any language is called the 'akshara-mālā'. The alphabets deserve to be called *akshara* (imperishable) as they remain when words go through a million changes. Three meanings in Vedānta are given below.

1

The supreme Brahman¹ is called *akshara* for it remains changeless, even as the entire Creation, along with its countless living and non-living beings go through change and even perish. The wisdom of this akshara is the highest knowledge – *parā vidyā*.

The Geetā restates the Upanishadic truth, when Sri Krishna calls the *para-brahma akshara*².

The truth of Ishwara (God, the Ruler) is Brahman, and therefore the Upanishads sometimes refer to the Supreme Ruler as *akshara*³. Rivers flow in obedience to this Imperishable, says an Upanishad poetically.

Geetā (12.3) puts *akshara* in contrast to the Personal God, personified in some way. While Sri Krishna praises *akshara-upāsakas*, he hastens to add that their way⁴ is harder (than the way of bhakti, devotion.)

2

On a notch below, *akshara* can also mean, in certain contexts, the “unmanifest⁵ seed of all creation”. This source of names and forms, also called *avyākṛita*, is relatively imperishable for the *nāma-roopa* die faster. They are therefore *kshara* (perishable). Geetā echoes the Upanishads in this respect. Sri Krishna talks of three principles (purushas)⁶ – *kshara*, *akshara* and *uttama*!

3

Thirdly we have *akshara* to mean Om (*pranava*) also. Geeta⁷ and Shankara's commentary on Brahmasutras⁸ support this meaning.

Notes:

1 *yayā tad-aksharam-adhigamyate* – **Mundaka Upanishad 1.1.5**

2 *aksharam brahma paramam* – **Geetā 8.3**

3 *...aksharasya prashāsane nadyah ..syandante* – **Brihadāranyaka Upanishad 3.8.9**

4 *klesho'dhikatarah* – **Geeta 12.5**

5 *divyo hi... aksharāt paratah parah.* – **Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.2**

6 *dvāvimau purushau ..* **Geetā 15.16**

7 *Om-iti eka-aksharam brahma* – **Geetā 8.13**

8 **Brahmasutra-bhāshya 1.3.10**

Quote of the Issue

WE ARE THAT JOY

To understand intellectually that we are not a psycho-physical entity is a necessary first step, but this understanding is not sufficient. The fact that we are not the body must become an actual experience that penetrates and liberates our muscles, our internal organs and even our cells. A sudden, fleeting recognition of our true nature brings us a flash of pure joy, but when we have full knowledge that we are not the body, we are that joy.

FRANCIS LUCILLE



Francis Lucille is a teacher of ADVAITA, based in Temecula near San Diego, California

TIPS FROM THE UPANISHADS

WHEN IS OUR LIFE TRULY FULFILLED?

Gain and loss, success and failure, health and sickness etc. – a million things like them – happen in our life. After all that, we die one day. What can bring true fulfillment to us? What makes our life really meaningful?

It is Self-knowledge (*ātma-jnāna*), the Upanishads say uncompromisingly.

*There is true fulfillment if we know the Self in this life.
Great is the loss if we do not gain this liberating insight in this life.*

*iha ched-avedeet, atha satyam-asti
na ched-ihāvedeet, mahatee vinastih*

Kena Upanishad, 2.5

(Khanda 2, mantra 5)

[The mantra highlights the urgency of Self-knowledge.]

**Smt. Indira Gautam
writes from USA**



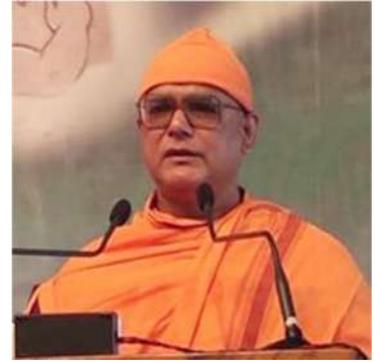
July 4 every year is America's Independence Day. Our friends travel during the few days around this date. We therefore do not hold our monthly HAPPINESS YOGA, which otherwise we organize on the first Saturday of the month.

August 3, 2019 will be the day for our next session of Happiness Yoga.

I wish all my friends in the AUPA circle hearty best wishes for a happy July!

namaste!

Words from Guest writers



Swami Atmapriyananda

ONE OUNCE OF PRACTICE IS WORTH TWENTY THOUSAND TONS OF BIG TALK

Swami Vivekananda, just on the eve of his passing away in *mahasamadhi*, made the following prophetic utterance: 'It may be that I shall find it good to get outside of my body – to cast it off as a disused garment; but I shall not cease to work! I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know that it is one with God.' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol.5, p.414). We believe that Swami Vivekananda is still amongst us in a subtle form. The subtle form is much more powerful than the gross form. Swami Vivekananda said, 'I want to be a voice without a form.' (*CW*, Vol.6, p.283). The formless voice of Swami Vivekananda is still reverberating in the air. All you need to do is to tune yourself and catch the vibration. Coming in touch with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature is equivalent, therefore, to feeling Swamiji's own divine touch in a subtle, imperceptible albeit powerful form. This would enable us to catch the vibration, will give us a special type of Internet connectivity, by which you will be able to tune in and download Swami Vivekananda's infinite thoughts, which are floating in the *Hiranyagarbha* or the Cosmic Mind. Remember that Swami Vivekananda was not an individual. He appears to be an individual: he was born as an individual, as Narendranath Dutta in Calcutta, and he passed away as Swami Vivekananda in Belur Math. But that is not the Vivekananda we are talking about. We are talking about that Vivekananda who is a Power, that Vivekananda who is a Voice without a form, that Vivekananda who is Infinite and the Absolute, that Vivekananda who is merged always in the infinite Bliss. He was always merged in the supreme reality, and by the command of his own Master, Sri Ramakrishna, he delivered the message of his Master to all the people.

Swami Vivekananda prophesied: "The spiritual impact that has come to Belur [Math] will last for fifteen hundred years and this will be a great university – do not think I imagine it, I see it." What he meant was that it would be a great place of learning, where both the *para vidya* and *apara vidya* will be cultivated. Two kinds of *vidya* are spoken of in the *Mundaka Upanishad*. There was a great householder whose name was Shaunaka. He approached a *Rishi*, Angiras, with great humility and asked him a very simple, direct question. The human mind is continuously asking for unification. He does not want knowledge to be fragmented. True knowledge, *Jnana*, is always *akhanda* (unfragmented, whole). Nowadays, we see it is being compartmentalized, being confined to various kinds of disciplines. But knowledge itself is one. What is that key, the master key,

by which I shall be able to open the treasure house of knowledge, which is accessible to everybody? I want to know the password by which I shall be able to immediately connect to the Internet, and that connectivity will never go. Boys and girls are now dreaming of Internet connectivity and of its broadband widths of very high speed, and it should never end: 24 x 7 infinite broadband connectivity is that which every boy or girl is now aspiring for. This is the key which was sought by Shaunaka from Angiras: I want just one master key by which I shall be able to access knowledge of everything. This is what's happening with the Google. Amazing! 'What did you ask for?' That is what people say, 'Where will you find it? Google it.' *Google* has become a verb now! You google it and find out, and Google is a great *Hiranyagarbha*, a great God, the Cosmic Mind, the storehouse of vast, almost infinite, knowledge! You have just a couple of passwords, some keywords, and you get one lakh twenty thousand entries in 0.0001 seconds – immediately you access knowledge from the Cosmic Reservoir of knowledge.

What is the secret? Your own mind is a great Google – an infinite storehouse of knowledge. So, Shaunaka is asking, 'What is it by knowing which everything can be known?' Angiras smiles at him and answers him in a very simple way. Two kinds of knowledge are necessary for enrichment of humanity. One is called the *para vidya* and the other is the *apara vidya* – the higher and lower forms of knowledge. Not that knowledge is divided into two compartments, but one leads to the other. All the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, all the *Vedangas* are put in the category of *apara vidya*. Swami Vivekananda said in the Parliament of Religions: the *Vedas* are the only scriptures in the world which say that the study of the *Vedas* is secondary. Amazing, isn't it? Which book will deny itself, will say that its study is after all not that important, that by studying the *Vedas* you are not going to achieve much? This is what the *Vedas* say, and the person who has realized the Truth sits on the head of the *Vedas*, say the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* as *shabdarashi* – as pieces of knowledge are only secondary. But as *jnanarashi*—embodiment of the Supreme Knowledge, they are extremely sacred. That which is primary, by which the supreme imperishable Brahman is known, is the *para vidya*. Then he goes on to explain what is Brahman, what is the nature of Brahman, how it is to be realized, and so on. The entire body of the *Upanishads* is devoted to the cultivation of *para vidya*.

Swami Vivekananda wanted the institutions he founded to work for man-making. What kind of men he wanted to make? A person well versed in both *para vidya* and *apara vidya*, so that he is able to access all knowledge. And this knowledge, transmuted into wisdom, is to issue freely and selflessly in loving service of others, for the love of mankind will transform humanity. That is why Swami Vivekananda said about Sri Ramakrishna, 'From the very date that he was born, has sprung the Satya-yuga.' (CW, Vol.6, p.335). On the horizon arose Sri Ramakrishna, who is a symbol of Divinity. Once again, do not look upon Sri Ramakrishna as a person who was born in Kamarpukur, did his *sadhana* in Dakshineswar, and entered into *Mahasamadhi* at Kashipur. We are not referring to that Ramakrishna. We are referring to that Ramakrishna, who is Infinite and the Absolute, is the symbol of Divinity. Romain Rolland said in his famous biography of Ramakrishna: 'The man whose image I here evoke was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people. Although he has been dead forty years, his soul animates modern India.' He represents India – the eternal spiritual wisdom of India, embodied in both the *para vidya* and the *apara vidya*.

Swami Vivekananda, therefore, said that a person should be completely imbued with the idea of accessing the *para* and *apara vidya* on the one hand and service to humanity on the other. These are the fundamental ideas that he gave: *tyaga* and *seva* – renunciation and contemplation on one side

and service to mankind on the other. What is necessary for this to happen? You should have the proper gadgets, the proper instruments, by which you will be able to access it. For example, for accessing all the knowledge the Internet gives you, you should have proper instruments, which you should then be able to tune to the Internet. You need the personal computer and such Internet connectivity that will not be lost easily, and you have also to prevent viruses. Now, what is the instrument you need for all knowledge? Swami Vivekananda repeatedly said that all knowledge is already within you. It does not come from books or anything outside—it is within the depths of your own being.

Ramakrishna is asking Master-mahashai, who styled himself as M., the author of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, 'Are you married?' M. replied: 'Yes sir, I am married.' Sri Ramakrishna's instant reaction was to cry out: 'Oh Ramlal, look! He is married!' M. reacted as if he has committed a great crime, hanging his head in shame. Then Sri Ramakrishna said with great affection, 'What kind of a wife do you have? Is she of the variety of *vidya* or of *avidya*?' That means: is she a virtuous, spiritual wife, who helps you in spiritual growth or a person who wants to drag you down in the world? M. replied, 'Sir, she is good, but ignorant.' He thought at that time that reading a lot of books is knowledge and not reading books is ignorance. Many people think that a man who has read a lot of books is a great man of knowledge. Mere book reading without assimilation or cultivation of wisdom simply means that so many people have vomited so many things and you have collected so much of that vomit. That's all. It does not result in increase of your true knowledge or wisdom. So Swamiji said: not one man of original thinking has been produced in the then four presidencies through the kind of negative education that we have been imparting to our boys and girls. That is so, because when we only collect, copy and repeat without understanding other people's knowledge, original thinking is totally lost.

The knowledge by which you can see the one Reality which is manifest everywhere, that knowledge comes to you by *realization* of that one infinite Reality within you. Boys and girls come and ask us: How is it that Swamiji says I am able to remember anything? The moment you enter the examination hall, you forget what you have learnt, and the moment you come out, everything you seem to remember again! So, how is it that all knowledge is within you and you can manifest this knowledge? 'All knowledge is within you' does not mean that you have knowledge of everything in the universe. What it means is: you have the capacity to access any piece of knowledge any time through the power of concentration and purity and the power of *tapasya* and *tyaga*. Omniscience does not mean man has the knowledge of everything, but the knowledge is in a potential form in him, and he has the capacity to access it, to manifest it, with the power of concentration and purity. How does it happen? The ancient wisdom, called the *Upanishads*, can guide us in this regard. Swamiji repeatedly exhorted: 'Go back to the *Upanishads*.' Now, what do the *Upanishads* say?

A disciple goes to the Guru. In this case, his Guru is his own father. He asks, 'Can you tell me about Brahman?' The Guru gave a beautiful definition: 'That from which everything arises, That in which everything is sustained, and That in which everything merges, that is Brahman.' He is not explaining how to get the knowledge of Brahman. We mug up the answer, memorize it, and get good marks. The ancient wisdom was: the Guru helps you to think and find out the answer. This is the fundamental difference in technique. Swami Vivekananda repeatedly emphasized that. You are motivated, encouraged, and empowered to discover the truth from your own vision. Unless you discover it from your own intuition, inner vision, it will not be your own answer. This process is called *jijnasa* – thirst for knowledge. This is a very important word in the *Upanishad*. I want to know about it, I want to come to

a conclusion, and for that I investigate. The whole process is through investigation and not through talking to you about the truth right at the beginning. So what is the disciple being told? '*Tapasā brahma bijjnāsasva. Tapo brahmeti.*' (Taittiriya Upanishad, Brigu Valii, ChapterII). There are two important sentences. You will understand the Brahman through *tapasyaas* a means, because *tapasya* itself is Brahman.

So the goal and the means are to become one. This is another very important point Swami Vivekananda repeatedly mentioned: make the means and the end the same. We lose the track in our life by overmuch dreaming about the goal rather than walking the path. Now there is much talk about management science. It says dreams are not enough. The important issue is how to make your dream practical. The buzz words these days are: 'Walk the talk'!

Swami Vivekananda said, 'The dry, abstract Advaita must become living – poetic – in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogism must come the most scientific and practical psychology – and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work.' (CW, Vol.5, p.104-105). These words of Swamiji are to be made practical in our everyday life. We have to hear them, think over them again and again, become saturated, mad with these ideas. Someone commented that Sri Ramakrishna had become mad by thinking too much about God. On hearing this Sri Ramakrishna said, 'People are mad about so many things. Somebody is mad about women, somebody is mad about wealth, somebody is mad about name and fame. Why should I not be mad for God?' Some kind of madness is required. Vivekananda's words and thoughts are so powerful that they will penetrate into your conscience and make you a completely different kind of person. You will not know it. Unconsciously you will become a transformed person. You cannot remain the same person after listening to Vivekananda. The moment Swamiji touches you, you will be transformed.

You dream so much. There are so many books on our dreams for the year 2020, 2025, 2030, and even 2050. But, what are we going to do with our life now? This very moment what are you going to do? What's the path you are going to take? This is what Swamiji said: Be extremely vigilant about the path you are going to take rather than only dream about the goal you are going to achieve. Your goal will be automatically achieved, if you sincerely and relentlessly walk the path. A batsman who has reached 95 runs can easily go to 100, if he concentrates on each ball, rather than keep looking at the scoreboard to look for his reaching 100! But, the moment you reach 90, your whole attention is on the score board and in dreaming about 100, and therefore you get out. Revered Swami Smarananandaji, who is one of the main inspirations behind the Mahamandal, used to tell us a very interesting incident. Once he was going to temple on a mountain. Suddenly there was a fog which completely enveloped the whole mountain path. Nothing could be seen. Visibility almost zero. But the next step could be clearly seen, just one next step and nothing else. Imagine a person is climbing stairs of about two thousands steps, and as he has gone just 500 or 600 steps, suddenly there is a fog which completely envelopes his vision and he just can't see anything. Visibility is zero. Just one step can be seen. When they climbed that one next step, they could clearly see the next one, when they climbed that too, the next step and so on. By and by, finally they reached the top. He was very thrilled with his experience. It was the Christmas day, and he remembered the hymn by Cardinal Newman, 'Lead, Kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom... Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step enough for me.' So, keep you focus clearly on the little next step and keep relentlessly, assiduously, tirelessly moving. *Charaiveti, charaiveti*, 'move on, move on' as the Vedas say. And you will certainly reach the

goal. Swamiji said that infinite purity, infinite patience and infinite perseverance are necessary for success in any endeavour and above all, Love. Do not overmuch imagine about the goal, but concentrate on the immediate next step. We are always worried about finishing something, rather than moving on with what is immediately in our hand. Management science tells you about Vision and Mission. But merely dreaming about it, without steadily moving along the path to success will not get you anywhere. Who will be able to say where you will be after some years, if just go on dreaming without acting? I always have a funny joke about the infamous incident of 11 September 2001, the 9/11 as it is called. The Twin Towers in America were destroyed by terrorists. What must have happened there on the 10th of September, can you imagine? So many organizations would have conducted so many seminars. Perhaps there was a very famous organization, which conducted a seminar on its vision for next five years. Perhaps they presented PowerPoint presentations on their vision of where we should see the company after five years! Well, in reality, where was the company after one day?! This is life, this is the uncertainty of human existence. Life is so fragile, so flimsy. Life is so uncertain and so unpredictable.

So, be intensely practical, at the same time combine your practicality with the highest idealism. What is the method for it? Swamiji said there are three important *mantras*: Purity, truthfulness, and unselfishness. Swamiji emphasized purity so much, particularly in the youth, that in his fiery lectures on national awakening etc., we sometimes lost sight of his emphasis on individual character. Try for six months to keep your body and minds immaculately, absolutely pure and holy, to maintain unbroken *Brahmacharya*, and see what power comes to you. It is not a joke, it is a pure challenge – a scientifically proven fact demonstrated by millions in India over thousands of years. The power which comes through purity and self-control is something tremendous. Self-reverence will come to you, only when you observe self-control. Why are there so much depression, inferiority complex, frustration, and gloom? Why do so much of depression, so much of defeatism come to a person? Because of lack of purity, lack of moral and ethical basis, because of perfect *brahmacharya*. That is why Swamiji said that your nerves should become pure, body and mind should be pure, your thoughts should always be pure and elevating.

How to achieve it? Swamiji has given us a very simple formula. Suppose you say: 'I want to become pure, but I may feel I am impure. Impure thoughts come to me when I try to meditate or study Swamiji or at other times.' When boys and girls tell me so, I ask them if they tried these things in the previous years and faced the same problems. They say they did. I ask them to describe what kind of thoughts used to come then. They cannot remember. So, I say: 'What is the use of getting so anxious about what you cannot even remember after some time?' That means things that are absolutely impermanent come and go in the first stages. Don't give any importance of these thoughts. Fix your ideas on something which is positive, which is invigorating, elevating. Always be positive in your outlook, positive in your thinking. Abandon all negative thoughts like: I can't do this or that. Swamiji says: Stop weeping. Wicked people never weep, they show strength however false, and make others weep because of them! Why should strong people, pure people, spiritual people weep? Spirituality should bring great strength: *atmana vindate viryam*, from the Atman, the Higher Self, comes great strength of character. Know that you are the Infinite Itself. Know that all power is within you. Do not brood over any impure thoughts rising in the mind, but think of yourself as infinitely strong. Swamiji said: Know that you are the infinite Self, eternally pure, eternally awakened, eternally free—*nitya-suddha-buddha-mukta*. You are pure, eternally pure and infinite. Identify yourself always with the eternal Spirit. 'If the fisherman thinks that he is the Spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if the student

thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better student.’ (CW, Vol.3, p.245). Identify yourself with your real nature, and see how it awakes. Swamiji said, ‘Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.’ (CW, Vol.3, p.193).

Therefore, in order to get rid of your negative emotions, impure thoughts, the only way is to fill yourself with pure, high thoughts. Fill your mind with positive thoughts, elevating thoughts. Continuously think of them, contemplate them. Have you seen the advertisement: ‘Eat Cricket, Sleep Cricket, Dream Cricket’? Similarly, dream these great thoughts. Think of them constantly; saturate yourself with the elevating thoughts, till your whole life becomes completely overwhelmed and overpowered by these great ideas. Until you have gone to sleep, as long as you are alive with a little breath still left in your body, fill yourself with holy thoughts. Also engage in elevating discussions with your friends and companions, with other like-minded ones. Talk about elevating things. Talk, think and rejoice in discussions about Swamiji, about the *Vedanta*, about high, elevating ideas. The Bhagavad-Gita says (6.5): *Uddaret atmanaatmanam, aatmanam avasaadayet*, meaning ‘Raise yourself by yourself, never demean or degrade yourself.’ I don’t mean to say you will have to discuss religion or spirituality all the time. You may discuss science, literature, history, philosophy or any branch of knowledge that elevates you, purifies you and enriches your mind. Remember that knowledge is sacred, there is nothing more sacred than cultivation of knowledge: *na hi jnanena sadrisam pavitramiha vidyate* (Gita, 4.38).

The second point is: you must stick to truth without compromise. Even a little poison makes the whole food poisonous. Truth is the only most powerful thing in the universe. You may experiment, as Mahatma Gandhiji did, with practice of Truth for some time, say for a few months, and you will see how Truth protects you, fills you with new strength of character. Swamiji wrote in a letter, ‘I will compare truth to a corrosive substance of infinite power. It burns its way in wherever it falls – in soft substance at once, hard granite slowly, but it must.’ (CW, Vol.5, p.71). The moment people know that you are untruthful, you will have no credibility, you lose your image as a trustworthy person and you will certainly not have true friends. You tell me, what the greatest sorrow that could come to a person? It is when a person is not accepted by society, not trusted by society, not wanted by anybody because he cannot be trusted. His life then becomes miserable; he is rejected as absolutely useless. There may be many provocations coming your way. Others may appear to succeed by resorting to falsehood, but ultimately it is Truth alone that triumphs. This is our national motto: *satyameva jayate*, ‘Truth alone triumphs.’ Never doubt this whatever be the provocation.

The third virtue is unselfishness. Swamiji repeatedly said, ‘Unselfishness is God.’ (CW, Vol.1, p.87). What is the main problem of our country? Why is it so poor and backward? You have thousands of crores of rupees at your disposal to spend. But how difficult it is to find one person who is truthful, pure, and selfless, who could be trusted with spending this money for the purpose for which it is meant! If you practise unselfishness despite all the temptations to be selfish, a great power will come to you. Thousands of people will follow you and look up to you for guidance and inspiration. You will no longer remain a person, but an institution, a great Source of Power—or purity, of truth, of unselfishness. Practise unselfishness for some time and test this for yourself. Swamiji said, ‘If a man works without any selfish motive in view, does he not gain anything? Yes, he gains the highest. Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it.’ (CW, Vol.1, p.32) It

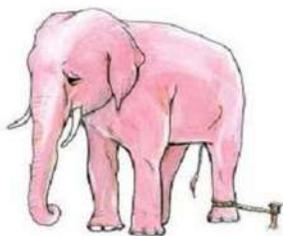
may first seem to you that the unselfish people are fools because they seem to lose their worldly reward. They give up so much for others, while others seem to enjoy life at the cost of their fellow beings. There are many cunning people in this world, but all of them are so miserable, friendless, untrusted. For a change, let us be a little 'foolish' in the name of Swamiji and be prepared to forego our selfishness! We shall be able to do good, if only we have the conviction. Let us unleash a huge wave of purity, truthfulness, and unselfishness, so that it inundates and completely overwhelms the whole world. Let us make a new experiment in the name of Swami Vivekananda, who practised purity, truthfulness, and unselfishness. See how power and glory will come, all that is good and grand will come, when our sleeping soul, the Atman within, awakens from its slumber.

Swamiji said, 'One ounce of practice is worth twenty thousand tons of big talk.' (CW, Vol.3, p.212). If you practise just about a little, great will be your benefit, and with the grace of Swami Vivekananda, who represents the Infinite and the Absolute, power will come, glory will come, and your individual and collective life will become blessed. May your stay in this camp fill you with the virtues of purity, truthfulness and unselfishness. May you be saturated with holiness. Carry the elevating thoughts of Swami Vivekananda when you go back to your own workplaces and relentlessly try to put them into practice. However infinitesimally you may be able to succeed in actualizing these elevating, noble ideas and ideals, great will be your gain, blessed will be your life. Jayatu Swami Vivekananda, glory be to Swami Vivekananda.

The author is Vice Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Belur Math, Kolkata.
[Article is an edited version of a lecture delivered on 25 December 2014 at the 48th Annual All India Youth Training Camp of the Mahamandal held at Fulia, West Bengal]

Story time

DO YOUR BELIEFS BIND YOU?



ELEPHANT ROPE

A gentleman was walking through an elephant camp, and he spotted that the elephants weren't being kept in cages or held by the use of chains. All that was holding them back from escaping the camp, was a small piece of rope tied to one of their legs.

As the man gazed upon the elephants, he was completely confused as to why the elephants didn't just use their strength to break the rope and escape the camp. They could easily have done so, but instead, they didn't try to at all.

Curious and wanting to know the answer, he asked a trainer nearby why the elephants were just standing there and never tried to escape.

The trainer replied: "When they are very young and much smaller we use the same size rope to tie them and, at that age, it's enough to hold them. As they grow up, they are conditioned to believe they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free."

The only reason that the elephants weren't breaking free and escaping from the camp was that over time they adopted the belief that it just wasn't possible.

Moral of the story:

No matter how much the world tries to hold you back, always continue with the belief that what you want to achieve is possible. Believing you can become successful is the most important step in actually achieving it.

NEWS

BENGALURU

June 11: Smt Vani Vasudev welcomed Swamiji at the weekly gathering of "Meditation and Study Circle" on Tuesday, June 11. Swamiji spoke on "Choiceless Awareness – a High Plateau Spiritual Practice" in Kannada. The venue was a college hall in Jayanagar.

June 12 – 20: The elegant facility "Preranā," a part of the larger campus of Mount Saint Joseph, was the venue for nearly 25 Vedanta students to study '**Brahma-Sutras**' (the first four of the 555 aphorisms, named chatuh-sootri). Fr John Pradeep, the Director of Preranā, and his staff left no stone unturned to make it comfortable for both those who stayed on the campus for 8 nights and for those who came from the city to attend the classes. Dr Thimappa Hegde, who mainly coordinated the event, himself joined all the (main) sessions and gave two or three talks too on the subject. On Sunday the 16th, additional students poured in and there were more sessions during the day. Swamiji held some 24 classes on the text, along with the commentary of Ādi Shankarāchārya. Brni. Vibha Chaitanya ji anchored the group discussions held in the forenoons.

June 21 – 24: Aaranyaka is a new Āshram that has come up near Nelamangala, in the north-eastern suburbs of Bengaluru. Several bunches of visitors met Swamiji during his 4 nights stay at this pretty place, which has all the facilities for spiritual programs.

June 25: Akshara-Maney (Home of Learning) is a new school, which is presently running on the bank of Agara Lake in the southern outskirts of Bengaluru. Inspired by visionaries like J Krishnamurti, this informal space has dialogues every Tuesday, where especially the parents of the children studying here join the teachers. Above all, the understanding is that the *educators* need *education*. Swamiji joined the vibrant discussion that took place on June 25.

June 26 thru July 4: Seven dialogues were held on the profound insights of J Krishnamurti as brought out in his dialogues with Prof. David Bohm, the eminent physicist from UK. The book *Ending*

of Time containing these dialogues was used as a launch pad for these discussions, in which Swamiji actively took part. The venue was the Study Centre attached to the Valley School of Krishnamurti Foundation India.

Webinars:

DONE

June 9 – Webinar 149 – Spiritual Practices in the Geetā

June 23 – Webinar 150 – Spiritual Practices in the Upanishads

COMING UP

Two presentations on Sundays by Swami Chidananda

July 14 – Webinar 151 – “Awareness” in Upanishads and Geetā

July 28 – Webinar 152 – Nature of Brahman, the Absolute Reality

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



“Choiceless awareness, a high plateau sādhanā” - was the topic on June 11 at the "Meditation and Study Circle" Bengaluru



Fr John Pradeep flanked by Swamiji and Dr Thimappa Hegde on the inaugural day, June 12, at Prerana



Ms Dakshu Mansukhani was the MC at the inaugural function, June 12



Dr Hegde and Prof DVR with Swami Chidananda at Prerana



A class in progress on Brahma-Sutras at Prerana, Bengaluru



Group pic on the last day of the Retreat at Prerana



Fr John Pradeep gave an inspiring talk on AMR (Awareness, Meditation and Relaxation) on June 18.



The natural surroundings on the bank of Agara Lake (southern outskirts of Bengaluru) were the venue for a morning discussion on NATURE OF LEARNING at Akshara Maney, a different kind of school.



Aaranyaka, a new Ashram near Nelamangala (on way to Tumkur) in Bengaluru provided the serene atmosphere for informal discussions on Vedānta, June 23.

DHIMAHI Events

Deriving Holistic insights into Management from
the Heritage of India



Cdr Guruprasad addressed the students at the following schools in Udupi district of Karnataka:

Monday, June 3: Class X of the Board High School students at Kundapura

Tuesday, June 4: Classes VI, VII and VIII of Seva Sangama, Tekkatte

Tuesday, June 4: Class IX of Sri Venkataramana English Medium High School in Kundapura

The former commander of Indian Navy took the topic, **"We shall win" (*hum honge kaamiyab*)**. He emphasized values like hard work, devotion to the country.



Cdr Guruprasad inspires high school kids at Kundapura

Upcoming
Event

Talks in certain colleges and other institutions / companies are being planned in Mumbai area. Please visit our websites aupa.in and fowai.org after the second week of July.

GURU-PURNIMĀ
Tuesday, July 16, 2019



The GURU is both outside and inside. Appearing outside of us, he pushes our mind inwards. Shining within us, he pulls our mind inwards. He is both impersonal and personal. Vedānta regards GURU on par with Ishwara (God) and Ātma (the Self).

HEARTY BEST WISHES TO ALL OUR READERS!
Team AUPA

(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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