

May 2020
Volume 5, Issue 11 (No. 59)

Editor: Swami Chidananda
Associate Editor: Dolly Seth

AUPA

PRAYING FOR WISDOM

Revelations on the Ultimate Truth are no doubt the main teaching of the Upanishads. They do however touch upon prayers and invocations. They also offer various forms of contemplation on noble values.

Here is a submission to the Goddess of Learning, Saraswati, seeking her protection, which implies an aspiration for our learning to remain unhindered.

ॐ

*pra no devi saraswati vājebhir- vājinivati
dheenām avitree avatu*

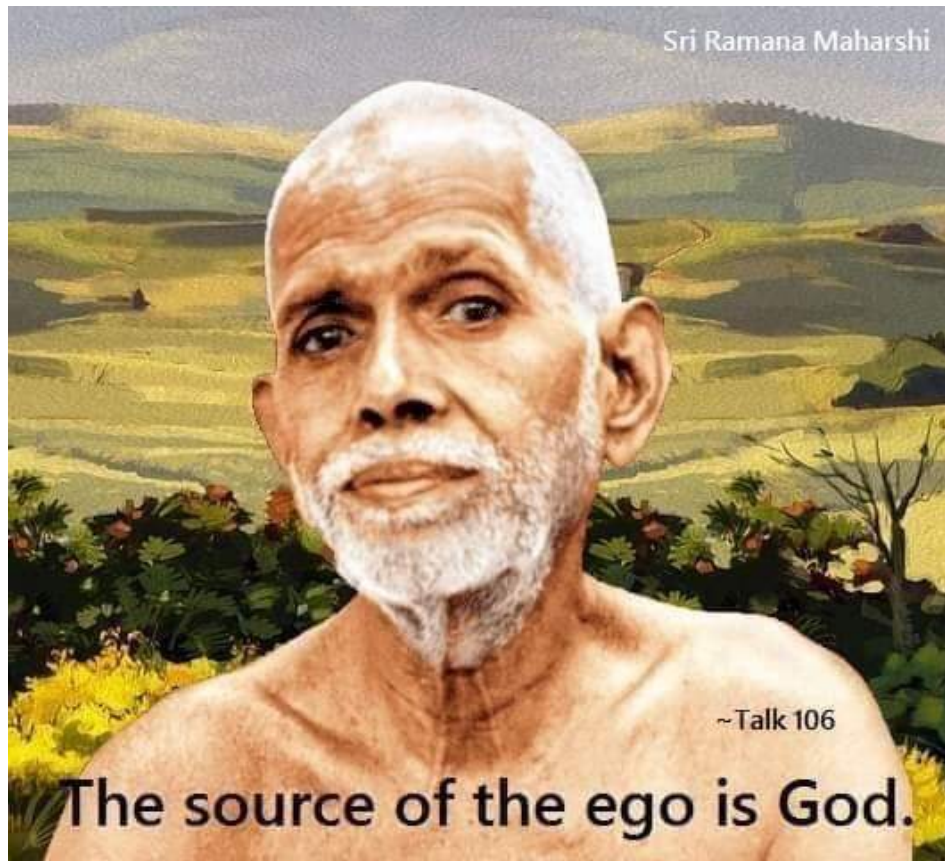
Saraswati-Rahasya-Upanishad, mantra 1

ॐ

May Devi, Goddess, endowed with qualities like dāna, Saraswati, who produces lots of food, whose splendour includes the Vaidika karmas or yajnas, who protects those who meditate, protect us also with special grace!

Light on Self-inquiry

YOU CAME FROM GOD



When Paramahansa Yogānanda (author of the *Autobiography of a Yogi*) visited Maharshi in November 1935, his secretary Mr C R Wright asked the Sage of Arunāchala a few questions. In one of his answers, Ramana said:

Good and evil are relative terms. There must be a subject to know the good and evil. That subject is the ego. Trace the source of the ego. It ends in the Self. The source of the ego is God.

[Maharshi here reveals that the problematic ego has its source in God, the Truth with no problems whatsoever! This may remind the readers of Lord Shri Krishna's words in the Geetā (15.1) where this chaotic world is said to have its roots in Brahman, the Supreme Reality.]

From the editor's Desk



RECEIVE IT, IN SILENCE

After speaking thousands of words, great masters have often summarized their teachings in such words as, "Be still and know."

We are advised to see clearly for ourselves the utter limitations of speech and mind, of word and thought. Human logic, language, verbalization and analysis have no capacity to grasp the ultimate truth. These gifts of many a bright man can only help him discover the secrets of the created universe but not the nature of the Creator. Nor do these skills succeed in unravelling the mystery of the Pure Self, *shuddha ātmā*, that has no birth or death. Our intellect can operate in space and time but cannot go far in the realm of that truth, which is beyond space and time.

This does not mean we must put aside all verbal discussions and force silence upon ourselves. That would amount to suppression and not sublimation. Such artificial silence can make us dull and dumb, without taking us nearer to freedom. True silence can come about in the intuitive understanding of the futility of verbal endeavours.

In true silence, we are quietly observant. There is no question of lack of alertness. Such alert silence is rightly compared with "a flame that flickers not" in the Geetā¹ and with "a flame without any smoke" in the Kathopanishad². The flame here signifies alert watchfulness of the silent mind. Flicker and smoke signify oscillations, vacillations, habitual longings and subtle, selfish motives. Purity and silence thus go together.

Study of the Upanishads (Vedānta) therefore is not to be given up prematurely. On the contrary, a careful study of the profound statements of the Upanishads helps us realize how we tend to get attached to concepts and ideas, while missing out the truth. In other words, the deliberations on the Vedānta are an exercise in words that has the capacity to lead us beyond words. It is a case of 'effort that leads to effortless abidance'.

Increased awareness of the purpose behind everything that we do can expose our attachment to the pleasure and comfort of merely clinging to concepts. This seeing, accompanied by intellectual honesty, ensures that there is no delay in our letting go of false attachments. The attribute of *tamas* (darkness) prevents us from seeing where we are stuck. The attribute of *rajas* (movement without balance) ties us down to habits, giving to us – in bargain – bits and pieces of pleasure. We feel great, for example, when we are able to explain a difficult idea to another person or to an esteemed audience. Only when adequate *sattva* rises in us, we notice how wasteful these gratifications are. This attribute of *sattva* then opens the door of our self-created prison and lets us walk out free.

Swāmi Chidānanda

Notes:

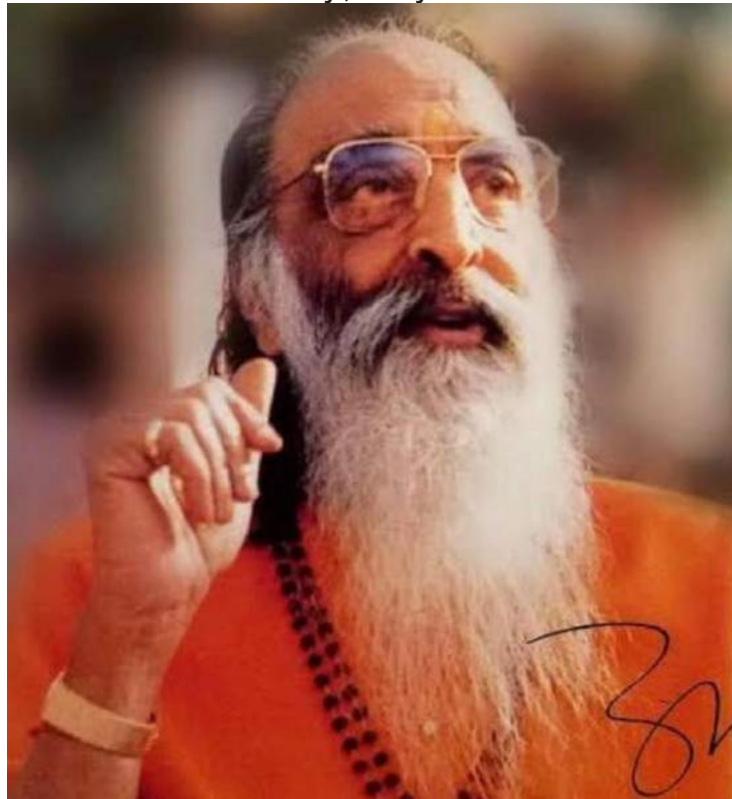
1 *deepo nivāstah* – Geetā 6.19

2 *jyotir-iva-adhoomakah* – Kathopanishad 2.1.13

Thus Spake Chinmaya



CHINMAYA JAYANTI 2020
Friday, May 8



We bow down before the great master on his 104th Birth Anniversary.

Words of Wisdom

What you have is God's gift to you. What you do with what you have is your gift to God!

Swāmi Chinmayānanda

Word Of the month

PANDITA (A Wise Man)



The word *pandita*, which becomes *pundit* also, basically means learned (adjective) or a learned man (masculine noun). Therefore, depending on the context and the level, this word can move a lot, horizontally and vertically!

1 An expert in any subject. Thus a man who is an expert in policy, and is prudent, may be called '*naya-pandita*'. The name of the subject is typically inserted before the word '*pandita*' to mean the person's area of expertise. Thus we have *āyurveda-pandita*, *sanskrita-pandita*, *sangita-pandita* etc. (medicine, Sanskrit, music etc.)

2 Someone having the highest wisdom, an enlightened person. The *Geetā*¹ uses the word '*pandita*' at four places in its entire body of 700 verses. At all of these four places, the meaning is 'one who has the highest understanding²'.

3 With *māni* added after it, the word means a conceited person who fancies himself to be wise or learned. So *pandita-māni* or *panditam-manyamānah*³ means 'not truly wise'.

4 A Hindu Brahmin community in Kashmir is called 'pundits'. Close to the year 1990, a very large number of them, estimated to be nearly 300,000, left their homeland and settled elsewhere. There are some Muslims also in Kashmir who too apply the title 'pundit' with their names, indicating they were Hindu Brahmins before converting to Islam. You may meet a man, for example, whose name is Ayub Pandit.

5 In North India, at many places like Varanasi, the word '*pundit*' implies the Brahmin caste.

6 Major English dictionaries have included the word '*pundit*' now in their collection of words, to mean a subject expert. So now the English language uses the word to mean a person who knows a lot about a particular subject, or someone who gives opinions in a way that sounds intelligent or wise. Example sentence: Wall Street *pundits* are divided over whether the economy is slowing down.

Notes:

1a – *na anushochanti panditāh*, *Geetā* 2.11

- 1b – *tam-āhuh panditam budhāh, Geetā 4.19*
1c – *bālāh pravadanti, na panditāh 5.4*
1d – *panditāh samadarshinah Geetā 5.18*
2 – *pandā asya asti iti* (where *pandā* means wisdom)
3 – Kathopanishad 1.2.5

Tips from the Upanishads

RESPECT FOR WHAT IS BEST IN MAN *A New Moral Outlook Can Save Humanity*

The spirituality of the Upanishads, called the science of human possibilities by Julian Huxley, asks us to go for an intellect upon which the light of *ātman* (the Pure Self) shines. Such an intellect can save humanity from moving in the dangerous direction of exploiting nature. The great thinker Bertrand Russel observed¹, “Man has been disciplined hitherto by his subjection to nature. Having emancipated himself from this subjection, he is showing something of the defects of *slave-turned-master*. A new moral outlook is called for in which submission to the powers of nature is replaced by respect for what is best in man.”



We would say such an outlook is possible if we have the intellect as described in the mantra line:

(That) is seen by a sharp and subtle intellect, by people who can look beyond gross (benefits).

*drishyate tu agryayā buddhyā
sookshmayā sookshma-darshibhih*
Kathopanishad 1.3.12

An intellect that lacks the subtlety referred to above settles for an insensitive and unfair treatment of nature. “The intellect on which the light of *ātman* shines is far different from the intellect which is in thrall to the sense organs,” says² Swāmi Ranganāthānanda.

May we aspire for a refined intellect, which respects nature, and recognizes *what is best* in man.

Notes:

1 The Scientific Outlook, pages 278-279

2 The Charm and Power of the Upanishads, page 52

Quote of the Issue

SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

Spiritual Quotient (SQ) is the necessary foundation for the effective functioning of both Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ). It is our ultimate intelligence.

Danah Zohar



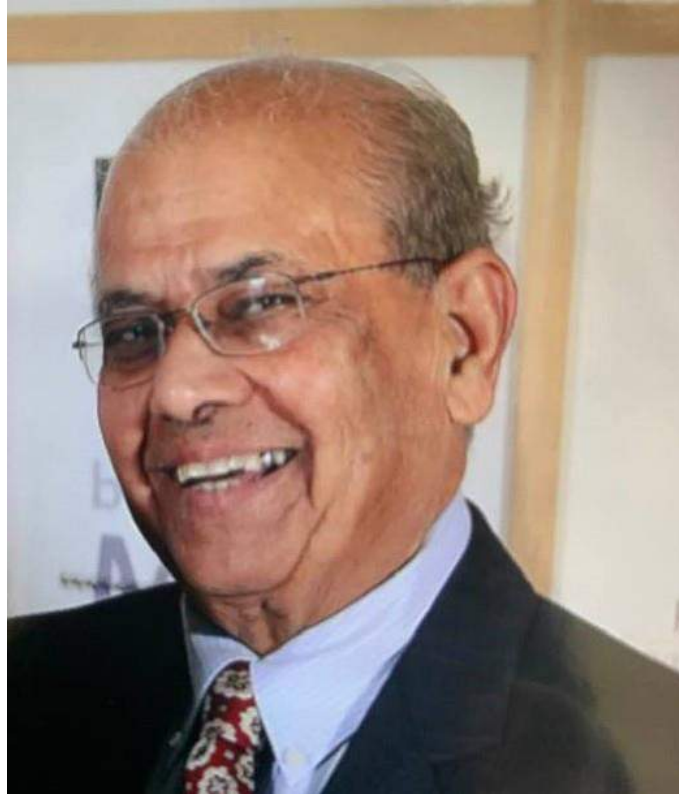
(in her book, with co-author Ian Marshall, *Spiritual Intelligence, The Ultimate Intelligence*)

[**Danah Zohar** (born 1945) is an American-British author and speaker on physics, philosophy, complexity and management. Zohar studied Physics and Philosophy at MIT and did postgraduate work in Philosophy, Religion & Psychology at Harvard University. She is Visiting Professor in the College of Management at Guizhou University in China. She was included in the 2002 Financial Times Prentice Hall book *Business Minds* as one of "the world's greatest management thinkers."]

Remembering Dr G

UNHAPPINESS TO HAPPINESS

In his yoga-sutras, the ancient sage Patanjali says that ignorance of one's true nature is the root cause of unhappiness. This ignorance leads to egoism, when a person seeks personal gratification at all costs. Neither attachment nor aversion to things of the world leads to happiness. Egoism leads to an unhealthy fear of death.



The way to break down egoism and ignorance is by experiencing “the light of understanding that comes from regular and persistent practice of yoga,” according to the introduction to Swāmi Satyānanda Saraswati’s commentary on the yoga-sutras.

[This quote is from the book **HAPPINESS IS YOU** by Dr Siddhartha B Gautam, page 39.]

**Smt. Indira Gautam
writes from USA**



LET US WISH EACH OTHER WELL!

from North Carolina

The pandemic continues to hold the whole world a hostage, almost! All of us in the entire globe have come together now as one community. This surely is a time to introspect, correct ourselves in our lifestyle, learn and train ourselves in some new skills.



(Picture: Bengaluru, Dec 2014)

I send my best wishes to all the readers of AUPA. Stay home and stay safe. May all of you be well.

Harih Om.

Words from Guest writers

THE IMPORTANCE OF SĀDHUS IN OUR LIVES

Ishwarya Chaitanya



From the time I was born, rather, while I was still in the making, the presence of sādhus has been a constant blessing in my life. As I grow, this association grows more entrenched, more beautiful, giving solace, meaning and inspiration. Being in contact with these gentle souls has brought profound and deep-rooted change which continues to shed light on the cobwebs within. I can only speak from my own experience and by grace, it has been a beautiful one.

A sādhu is like a mighty elephant. With its large body mass, an elephant treads so softly on the earth that one cannot hear even the sound of a twig breaking under its weight. How many of us have enjoyed the presence of elephants in the forest, whose sudden gigantic appearance comes as an utter surprise because we never heard them coming? Similarly, the sādhu is so unassuming in appearance, in speech, in demeanour, yet their impact on the mind, on our thinking is substantial.

A sādhu lives a life without desire, without agenda. They live for the welfare of all, spreading peace and love wherever they are. Love personified, the sādhu accepts everything as it is, every circumstance, every individual, without judgement. They work tirelessly, with superhuman strength, living in simplicity and purity. Who better to find inspiration from? Who better to cry about one's problems to? Who better to seek advice from than one who has no vested interest, can look at matters objectively and desires nothing in return?

A sādhu's generosity is like none other. Having no compulsive needs for themselves, accepting whatever is provided, they nourish and protect all those around them. They are the ultimate givers. I have been a fortunate recipient of sādhus' generosity and protection, time and again. The gift of learning, the most delicious food, a roof over my head, clean water and clean surroundings. Giving, giving, and giving, with no expectation of anything in return, just for you to discover that you are the freedom you seek. Can there be anything more valuable than this?

A sādhu is a mother of mothers, a father of fathers, gentle as the petal of a rose, whose impact is as grand as the hurtling Alakānanda. A sādhu is Gangā. We must cherish them as the most precious gift of Mother Earth.

The recent brutal videographed murders of Sri Kalpavriksh Giriji, Sri Sushil Giriji and their innocent young driver left a very deep and painful scar. I cannot understand the anger of the young men of the mob, nor the strength with which they could wield the sticks and sickles and hurt another life form. I cannot understand the complicity of the police in this killing or the total failure of the justice system. I cannot understand this hatred that burns the hearts of men.

I can only say that perhaps, if these people had such sādhus in their lives as I have had in mine, they would be incapable of committing such an act. We must give our love to these gentle souls who walk this earth with care. They are an epitome of evolution and a pinnacle of righteous living. They are the rays of the sun which dispel darkness. All we have to do is turn towards them and receive their grace and blessings and live a life of abundance.

They are there for us regardless, but if we fail to recognize their significance, the loss is ours to bear. And if those who hurt them get away with it, the pain will rebound on all of us for not raising our voices in protest against injustice.

Even though I had never heard of him, never met him, Sri Kalpavriksh Mahārāj taught me a lesson in his last moments. As he failed to escape his persistent attackers and received no help from the onlooking police, Mahārāj finally knelt down on the floor, brought his palms together in Namaskāra and with his head bent downwards, gracefully accepted the final blows. This is the line that separates the realized from the distraught. I bow my head to that line of understanding that enlivens those whom I admire and pray that one day, it enlivens me as well.



{Ishwarya Chaitanya is a student of life. She lives in Bengaluru. Yoga and dance have been her areas of interest, and Vedānta too. See beneathabanyan.wordpress.com for more of her writing. }

Story time

A SPARROW'S FAITH

The battlefield of Kurukshetra, where the mighty armies of the Kauravas and Pāndavas would be engaged in the inevitable war, was being cleared. They used elephants to uproot trees and clear the ground. On one of the trees a sparrow had her four fledglings. As the tree was being knocked down, her nest landed on the ground along with her little ones that couldn't fly just as yet. However, miraculously they were unharmed.

The frightened sparrow looked around for help. Just then she saw Krishna inspecting the battlefield with Arjuna, as they were devising a winning strategy before the war began.

She flapped her tiny wings with all her might to reach Krishna's chariot.

"My nest has fallen off the felled tree. I have my four little ones in the nest which is now on the battlefield. Please save my children, O Krishna," the sparrow pleaded. "They will be crushed tomorrow when this battle begins.

"I hear you little one," said He, the Omniscient One, "but I can't interfere with the law of nature."

"All I know is that you are my saviour, O Lord. I leave my children's fate in your hands. You can kill them or you can save them, it's up to you now."

Krishna spoke like an ordinary man implying that there wasn't anything he could do about it as *what must happen will happen as time rolls by*.

"I don't know your philosophy," the sparrow said with faith and reverence. "You are the wheel of time. That's all I know. I surrender to thee."

"Stock food for three weeks in your nest then," Krishna said to the sparrow.

Unaware of the ongoing conversation, Arjuna was trying to shoo away the sparrow when Krishna smiled at the bird. She fluttered her wings a few minutes in obeisance and flew back to her nest.

Two days later, just before the boom of conchs announced the commencement of the battle, Krishna asked Arjuna for his bow and arrow. Arjuna was startled because Krishna had vowed to not lift any weapon in the war. Besides, Arjuna believed that he was the best archer out there.

"Order me, Lord," he said with conviction, "my arrows never miss their mark."

Quietly taking the bow from Arjuna, Krishna took aim at an elephant. But, instead of striking the elephant, the arrow hit the bell around its neck and sparks flew.

Arjuna couldn't contain his chuckle seeing that Krishna had missed an easy mark.

"Should I?" he offered.

Again ignoring his reaction, Krishna gave him back the bow and said that nothing more needed to be done.

"But why did you shoot the elephant, Keshav?" Arjuna asked.

"Because this is the elephant that had knocked down the tree sheltering that sparrow's nest."

"Which sparrow?" Arjuna exclaimed. "Plus, the elephant is unhurt and alive. Only the bell is gone!"

Ignoring Arjuna's questions, Krishna instructed him to blow his conch.

The war began, numerous lives were lost over the next eighteen days. The Pāndavas won in the end. Once again, Krishna took Arjuna with him to see the aftermath on the battlefield. Many corpses still lay there awaiting their funeral. The battleground was littered with severed limbs and heads, lifeless horses and elephants.

Krishna stopped at a certain spot and looked down thoughtfully at an elephant-bell, fallen on the field.

"Arjuna," he said, "will you lift this bell for me and put it aside?"

The instruction, though simple, made little sense to Arjuna. After all, in the vast field where plenty of other things needed clearing, why would Krishna ask him to move an insignificant piece of metal out of the way? He looked at him questioningly.

"Yes, this bell," Krishna reiterated. "It's the same bell that had come off the elephant's neck I had shot at."

Arjuna bent down to lift the heavy bell without another question. As soon as he lifted it though, his world changed, for ever.

One, two, three, four and five. Four young birds flew out one after another followed by a sparrow. The mother bird swirled in circle around Krishna, making circumambulations around him in great joy. The one bell cleaved eighteen days ago had protected the entire family.



"Forgive me, O Krishna, said Arjuna, "Seeing you in human body and behaving like an ordinary mortal, I had forgotten who you really are."

Every occurrence in and around us indeed has a divine purpose. We must recognise the Lord's hand in it.

[Edited by Shalini Keshavan]

News

Advaita Academy invited Swamiji to deliver two lectures *online* to a large number of interested listeners on May 3 and May 7, at 6.45 am. As this e-newsletter reaches your screen, the first one was done and it received excellent response.



Webinars

Swamiji presented two webinars in April 2020 on the following days:

Monday, April 6, at 8.30 pm IST – Handling Anxiety and Insecurity, Guidance from Geetā

Sunday, April 20 at 8.30 pm IST – Outer and Inner Victories, Action in the World and Spiritual Practices

The second one above was based on Shri Ramana Maharshi's work Shri Ramana Hridayam, rendered in Sanskrit by Shri Lakshmana Sharma (who).

The following gets over as this e-newsletter reaches your device!

Sunday, May 3, 2020 – Living in the Moment,
Letting go of the past and the future is not easy.

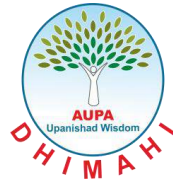
He will present two more webinars on dates as follows:

Sunday, May 17, 2020, 8.30 pm IST – Topic to be announced.
Sunday, May 31, 2020, 8.30 pm IST – Topic to be announced.

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

DHIMAHI Events

**Deriving Holistic insights into
Management from the Heritage of India**



Swamiji delivered an hour of talk over ZOOM to a large number of listeners under the banner of Madras Management Association (MMA) on Monday the 20th April. The invitation from MMA, as given below, shows the details.



You are cordially invited to Watch Live on
ZOOM/MMA Facebook/Live IBC
Talk on

“EQ” and “SQ”
The Fuel to Sail through Hard Times

by

Swami Chidananda

Founder and Chief Resource Person, FOWAI FORUM &
Trustee, Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI)

It was very well received. There were many questions at the end, which Swamiji patiently answered. Group Captain Vijayakumar, the Executive Director of MMA, ably organized the event, welcomed the speaker and proposed a vote of thanks too.

Upcoming Events

Mumbai

Three public talks that were planned for the middle of April in the city of Mumbai are now indefinitely postponed. For details, Email info@aupa.in

Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh

A 4 day Retreat, with Bhagavad Geetā as the source of wisdom, was to be held at Misty Meadows, Kasauli, in the beautiful Himachal Pradesh. As the lock down is extended till May 17, and further decisions on the part of the government are not known, this Retreat is postponed. Kindly check with us, using the Email info@aupa.in again. Details may also be seen at the website fowai.org |

FOWAI FORUM PRESENTS
ITS 24TH RETREAT IN
KASAULI, H.P.

THEME: ASATO MA SAD GAMAYA
(LEAD ME FROM FALSEHOOD TO TRUTH)
Practical wisdom and key takeaways from Geetā
THE WAY THE VEDĀNTA LEADS US TO FREEDOM

WITH SWAMI CHIDANANDA
FROM 22ND TO 26TH MAY 2020

VENUE: MISTY MEADOWS RESORTS,
KASAULI HILLS, H.P.

Click to add
Click to add
POSTPONED

BUDDHA PURNIMĀ

Thursday, May 7, 2020



(Picture above: The Big “Tian Tan” Buddha in Hong Kong)

Though he put aside the Vedas, and seemed to dismiss the eternal Pure Self (ātmā) of the Upanishads, we find a lot of common ground between The Buddha’s teachings and the Advaita of Ādi Shankara.

We offer homage to The Buddha on the auspicious occasion of the Buddha Purnimā, commemorating the day of enlightenment of Prince Siddhārtha! His was indeed a great attempt to simplify religion, emphasize basic human values of truth and nonviolence and free humanity of all inequality.

Om

TEAM AUPA

NO COMPLEXES PLEASE

embrace

I hope you embrace it all, my beautiful friend: your body, your mind, your heart, your ideas, your dreams... I hope you learn to stand up for yourself even if your voice shakes. I hope you learn to be proud of your body and your mind even if they have imperfections... Because before you can love and cherish yourself, you first have to *accept* and *embrace* who you are. You have to embrace yourself inside and out, imperfections and all. You have to let go of the images of who you thought you should be, and start looking at all of the beautiful things that already are. Because at the end of it all, *you* have to be the first one to embrace yourself and everything that makes you so wonderfully you.

- Nikki Banas

(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