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AUPA eNEWSLETTER

THE WAY TO CLEANSE OUR LIFE

It is never too late to set our house in order, to clean everything up – inside and outside our life. Inside, we need to wash away all our negative emotions in our bosom. Outside, our words and deeds need to be virtuous. The Upanishads bring to us the good news – we can do it!

Through 'dharma', we can chase away sin.

'Dharma' supports everything.

Therefore, they say 'dharma' is the supreme (means to liberation).

dharmena pāpam-apanudati

dharme sarvam pratisthitam

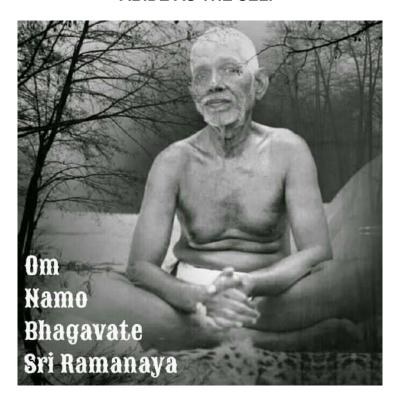
tasmād dharmam paramam vadanti

Mahā-nārāyana Upanishad, Section 79

Beginning here and now, we must go by dharma. By dharma is meant religious righteousness as well as justice. If we have, in the past, transgressed the moral law, practice of dharma now cleanses our bosom. When elders (or those who are themselves righteous) punish us, we get purified too. Thus, dharma is the support of all.

Light on Self-inquiry





What seems to happen to you does not really affect you!

"On the screen, you sometimes see a huge ocean with endless waves; that disappears.

Another time, you see fire spreading all around; that too disappears.

The screen is there on both the occasions.

Did the screen get wet with the water? Did it get burned by the fire?

The things that happen during the wakeful, dream and sleep states do not affect you at all.

You remain your own SELF."

Shri Ramana Maharshi

(Source: Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, 183)

[There is emphasis in the teachings of the Maharshi on 'abidance in the Self' after getting certain inputs from scriptural study. Vedānta study is not discouraged but we are cautioned not to get carried away by words, words and words. Editors]

From the Editor's Desk

DO NOT BE PENNY WISE



and pound foolish!

Many Vedānta students go on attending classes and cover, under the guidance of able teachers, more and more scriptures. Starting from elementary works like Tattvabodha, they go all the way till Brihadāranyaka Upanishad or Māndukya Kārikās too! Alas, even as they collect all these 'pieces of gold,' they do not take enough care to adhere to truth, nonviolence and self-control (*satya, ahimsā* and *brahmacharya*) in their real, daily life.

The idiom – to be penny wise and pound foolish – means 'to be very careful about unimportant matters and careless about important matters'. We must hasten to add that we do not literally mean Vedānta studies are unimportant. All these classes however become utterly fruitless if we do not live a life of right values. They get reduced to the value of pennies in that sense. [It is said that a pound was worth 240 pennies at one time in Britain; now a pound is worth 100 pennies or pence.]

No wonder Shri Krishna in the Geetā exhorts¹ Arjuna to begin on a strong foundation of control over the senses. Vivekachudāmani, one of the most excellent works on the teachings of the Upanishads, says² that control over speech is the first, grand portal of spirituality. Control over the palate is emphasized by certain other teachers and texts. It is agreed by all that, in the absence of self-restraint (*brahmacharya*), all scholarship falls short of the requirements for success.

Swāmi Chinmayānandaji used to clarify that even watching too much of TV would be violation of brahmacharya. In modern times we may replace the TV with the Internet, which has become all the more convenient, being available on handheld mobiles. We must thus recognize that there are many ways in which we may slip from self-control and fall back into worldliness (with all its misery) without enjoying the bliss of the heights of spiritual wisdom.

If the horses are simply disobedient and run contrary to what the charioteer wants, how can the journey by such a horse-driven cart be good? The Kathopanishad uses two words³ – good horses and wicked horses – while throwing light on the journey of every soul. The metaphor where the body is the chariot, the intellect the charioteer etc. has the sense organs as the horses.

"Small victories lead to big victories," observed Eknath Easwaran, who thus gives us some tips on achieving self-control. We need not get frustrated thinking that we cannot change our habits in one lifespan. "Begin small, and grow big," is another mantra that is popular in business circles.

In summary, we need to carry the two together – order in daily life and efforts at higher, philosophical study. The first without the second remains lame and the second without the first lands us in hypocrisy.

Swāmi Chidānanda

- 1 Therefore, in the beginning, restrain your senses, O the best among Bharatas! Geetā 3.41
- 2 'yogasya prathamam dvāram vāk-nirodhah' Vivekachoodāmani, verse 367
- 3 sadashvāh and dushtāshvāh, Katha Up. 1.3.5 and 1.3.6

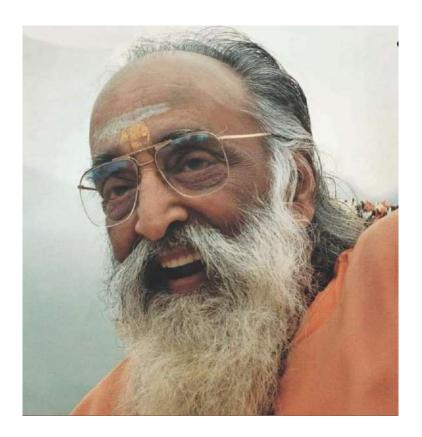
Thus Spake Chinmaya



STAY CONNECTED, WITH GOD

"See His play everywhere. See Him in everything, in every being and in every situation."

Swami Chinmayananda ji



[The quote above is especially relevant these days when we are all the time worried about Internet connection! 3G, 4G, broadband, optic fiber and other forms of connectivity have become central to our daily living. Pujya Gurudev seems to say, "Amidst all this, do not forget your connection to God! - Editors.]



PURUSHA (THE INDWELLING PRINCIPLE)

The word 'purusha' is found in a lot of scriptures with several meanings attached to it.

- 1 Lay usage: The word *purusha* means a man, a male human being, in lay language. As is the case with most languages, the word for 'a man' can also represent any human being *(manushya)* male or female at places. The mantra 1.2.1 in Kathopanishad and the shloka 3.4 in Geetā use the word *purusha* in the sense of 'a man / a human being / a seeker in general'.
- 2 The sentient principle, in contrast with inert matter: Common to the systems of philosophy such as Sānkhya, Vedānta and many others, we have a pair of words *prakriti* and *purusha*, which represent matter and spirit respectively. Geetā 13.19 and 13.21 use both the words to represent 'jada' (lifeless) and 'chetana' (having life).
- 3 The ultimate truth: In the hierarchy of various factors such as sense objects, the senses, the mind, the intellect etc., as found in the Kathopanishad (1.3.10 and 1.3.11), the highest truth is *purusha*. "There is nothing beyond the purusha," declares the Upanishad. This hierarchy is echoed in the Geetā 3.42 though the pronoun 'sah' (He / That) replaces the word *purusha*.
- 4 Three levels of the reality: Geetā employs the meaning 'a principle' of the word 'purusha' and applies on three levels, leading to three purushas *kshara*, *akshara* and *uttama*. All that is perishable is kshara; the principle that is relatively imperishable is akshara; and that which is absolutely imperishable, and which acts as the substrate for both kshara and akshara, is uttama. Lord Krishna claims that he is the 'uttama purusha' or 'purushottama'.
- 5 The indwelling Self: If the body is compared with a city, the ruler (the king) of the city is the *purusha*. It is explained as, "*puri shayanāt*", which means, "because this truth resides inside the city". As this inmost truth is identical with the ultimate truth (Brahman), (meaning 3 above), the word here is also explained as '*poornatvāt*', meaning 'because it is complete, full, infinite'. See also Mundaka Upanishad, 2.1.2!.
- 6 The Cosmic Being: There is a whole hymn, very popular in various contexts, called the 'purushasookta'. The word purusha in this hymn stands for the Supreme Truth that expresses as the whole universe and extends² beyond it too!

Note 1: poornah, purishayo vā - Shānkara-bh āshya on Mundaka Up. 2.1.2.

2: atyatisthad dashāngulam – stretches ten inches further! Purusha Sookta, mantra 1.

Tips from the Upanishads

YOGA BEGINS WITH TRAINING THE SENSES

Slavery to Pleasure Mars Spiritual Excellence

After talking about the wisdom¹ of the 'Indestructible Self,' the Kathopanishad gives us a refresher course towards the end of the text, emphasizing self-restraint in our indulgence in sense pleasures.

The wise call that 'spiritual excellence' where the sense organs are firmly held under check.

tām yogam-iti manyante

sthirām-indriya-dhāranām

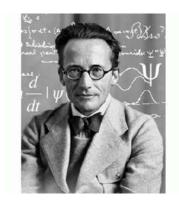
Katha Upanishad 2.3.11

Note that the word 'yoga' in the mantra above is not to be taken in the limited sense of the word as applicable to Patanjali's system of eight limbs (*astha-anga*). It rather means the high plateau of spiritual living.

Lord Yama seems to say this towards the end of the celebrated scripture especially with a view to warn all the scholars of Vedānta that the quality of their real, daily life is a greater indication of how spiritually high they are, more than how much of the books they know.

Note 1: The Self is not born and does not die. - Katha Up. 1.2.18

Quote of the Issue



Erwin Schrödinger

The East and the West

"I do believe that this is precisely the point where our present way of thinking does need to be amended, perhaps by a bit of blood-transfusion from Eastern thought. That will not be easy, we must beware of blunders – blood-transfusion always needs great precaution to prevent clotting. We do not wish to lose the logical precision that our scientific thought has reached, and that is unparalleled anywhere at any epoch."

[Schrödinger (1887 – 1961) was a Nobel Prize-winning Austrian-Irish physicist who developed a number of fundamental results in quantum theory. Exposed to Indian philosophy through the works of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, he was much fascinated by the Upanishads. (He had named his dog Atman!) In his book *What Is Life?* Schrödinger addressed the problems of genetics, looking at the phenomenon of life from the point of view of physics. He paid great attention to the philosophical aspects of science, ancient and oriental philosophical concepts, ethics, and religion.]

Remembering Dr G



SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

When you simplify your life, you will have more time to enjoy it. The saying is not, "Run as fast as you can and smell the roses." It is, "Stop and smell the roses." You will begin to appreciate what is truly important in life, like watching your children grow up, sitting quietly and holding your spouse's hand, listening to the summer rain gently hitting your roof. And whenever you look back on the way you lived before, you will wonder what it was that you were always so busy doing and why.

{From the book **Happiness is YOU by Dr Siddhartha B Gautam**, page 45}

Smt. Indira Gautam writes from USA

BALANCING THE NEAR AND THE FAR

Readers of AUPA, dear friends,

I am so glad you are going through the contents of this e-newsletter, which are inspired by the Upanishads. These lofty teachings are not everybody's cup of tea! While they interest us, we realize that the goals they set before us are distant. This fact can sometimes unnerve us. A patient study of the same Vedānta, however, lets us notice that this body of teachings is a fine blend of "the far and the near". The description of moksha (liberation) seems far for us but the appeal for dharma (right living) seems near, within our reach. The same scripture that declares that the truth is 'beyond thought and word,' also asks us to 'speak the truth and live virtuously.'

We must therefore not jump to the conclusion that all this is too high a philosophy. In fact, the high ground of the Vedānta appeals to our curious intellect and the moral values enter our list of "things to do today"!

I send to all of you, once more, my hearty best wishes for your success on this arduous journey of spiritual aspirations. **Harih Om!**



{The picture above shows Indira ji and Dr Gautam just before the Upanishad Conclave began at Karshni Ashram in Varanasi in December 2014. Smt Seema Rajgarhia and Shri Shiva are also seen.}

Words from Guest writers

THE BUDDHA AND THE VEDA

Prof. Subhash Kak



The layperson believes that whereas the Veda accepts the idea of the ātman (translated into English as "Self"), which is both immanent and transcendent, Buddhism does not. Indeed, in the popular imagination the Buddha promoted the doctrine of anātman or anatta, and he took the ground stuff of reality to be nothing, what came to be called śūnyatā or emptiness. Generally speaking, the recognition of the three doctrines of anatta, the absence of self, anicca (Sanskrit. anitya, impermanence), and dukkha (suffering) as three characteristics of all existence (tri-lakṣaṇa), constitute "right understanding" in Buddhism.

The Self-Noself dichotomy means that the philosophical foundations of Hinduism and Buddhism are different. In Hinduism, consciousness (ātman) is primary and at the analytical level it is different from matter. In Buddhism, on the other hand, consciousness is a phenomenon that emerges on the ground of the body although it survives in the chain of influences it engenders. As an aside, both these doctrines are under consideration in modern science's quest to define consciousness.

Therefore, it will surprise many that this dichotomy of ātman versus anātman was declared false by the Buddha on his last day of life. He said:

"The Self (ātman) is reality (tattva), the Self is permanent (nitya), the Self is virtue (guṇa), the Self is eternal (śāśvatā), the Self is stable (dhruva), and the Self is auspiciousness (śiva)."

Other adjectives used by the Buddha for the Self are "sovereign" (aiśvarya), "unchanging" (avipariṇāma), and "true" (satya).

These are precisely the "attributes" associated with the Self (ātman) in the Vedas. The attribute *aiśvarya* implies agency and brings to mind Īśvara, or Śiva. Īśvara is the free mind who has access to "transcendental knowing" or *lokkottara-jñāna*, which explains how Śiva-Maheśvara was integrated into worship in many parts of the Buddhist world.

Quite like the term āvaraṇa (covering) hiding the Self from the mind, the Buddha speaks of many kleśas (mental and moral afflictions) preventing one from seeing the Self.

He suggests that the doctrine of Noself was advanced by him as an *upāya* to get his followers off from attachment to old ideas. But now they were attached to impermanence and emptiness, and so before he left the world he wished to reveal the secret doctrine of the Self.

He gave the Self or the ātman the name *tathāgatagarbha*, "thus-arrived-nature" (*svabhāva* of beings), or the *buddhadhātu*, "ground-state-of-illumination". Just as the Veda speaks of a churning between *avidyā* (materiality) and *vidyā* to obtain deep knowledge of the Self, the Buddha spoke of a churning between emptiness and non-emptiness.

The need for both *avidyā* and *vidyā* for knowledge is most beautifully expressed in the Isha Upanishad (mantra 11) as follows:

vidyām chāvidyām cha yas-tad-vedobhayam saha

avidyayā mrityum tirtvā vidyayā amritam-ashnute

Buddha's Parinirvāna

The circumstances under which Śhākyamuni Buddha died and his last sermon are described in the Pali Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta and the Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra (MPNS) (or just the Nirvāṇa Sūtra), the latter of which is a much more substantial text in which the Buddha goes into the very heart of the teachings that had been taught earlier by him.

We find the eighty-year old Buddha unwell. He and his entourage are in transit to the town of Kushinagara in the land of the Mallas, where in the outskirts he lies down between a pair of *sal* trees, announcing his impending death. Hearing of this, throngs assemble. Amongst them is Cunda, an artisan from the town. He and others get down on their right knees and address the Buddha entreating him to stay longer in this world. The Buddha reminds Cunda:

All created things

Have natures impermanent.

After coming into existence, they do not abide.

Tranquil extinction is bliss.

But Cunda presents many arguments why the teaching of emptiness was not going to give them comfort and words like *nirvāna—or even the non-nirvāna—of the Tathāgata* seemed contradictory and difficult to understand. This prompts the Buddha to eventually reveal the secret doctrine of the ātman.

The MPNS is one of the most important scriptures in the Buddhist canon and, in the fifth century, two translations based on two different Sanskrit texts were produced, one by the famed traveller Faxian (418CE); and the second, longer "Northern version" by Dharmakshema in 422 CE. There is also a later Tibetan version (c 790CE).

The Buddha had used emptiness to help his disciples separate themselves from earlier attachments. He explains the supersession of the Nonself doctrine by the Self doctrine with this parable:

Consider the story of a mother whose infant son is ill. The physician gives her medicine for the boy with the instruction "After the child takes the medicine, do not give him your milk until he has fully digested the medicine." The mother smears a bitter-tasting substance on her breasts and tells her young child that the breasts have poison on them. Having heard this, the child pulls away from her when he is hungry. But after the medicine has been ingested, the mother washes her breasts and calls out to her son, "Come and I shall give you milk."

The Veda is the mother's milk that the Buddha did not allow his disciples to partake until they had *purified* themselves with the austere message of emptiness.

Mahāparinirvāņa-sūtra in China

I conclude with a last word on Dharmakshema, the translator of MPNS into Chinese, who was a great celebrity of his times. He was born in Central India, and he received instruction from several teachers. This was the golden age of transmission of Buddhist texts to China, and to seek fame and fortune he went to Central Asia. At first he lived for several years in Dunhuang, busy with his work. But the city was conquered by the Northern Liang king Juqu Mengxun, who took Dharmakshema with him to his capital Guzang in 421 and installed him as teacher, court advisor and translator of Sanskrit sutras. By the mid-twenties, Juqu's overlord Tuoba Tao, the emperor of Wei, having heard of Dharmakshema's fame wanted him, but Juqu resisted. To ease the pressure, Dharmakshema was sent to India to acquire more texts. But when he returned after a couple of years, Tuoba Tao repeated his demand and threatened to invade Guzang.

But Juqu Mengxun did not want to give up Dharmakshema, so as a way to solve this problem and appease his overlord Tuoba Tao, he decided to kill him. Dharmakshema was murdered in 433, when he was forty-eight years old.

[Prof. Subhash Kak (born 1947 in Srinagar) is an Indian-American computer scientist and a Hindutva-based historical revisionist. He is the Regents Professor of Computer Science Department at Oklahoma State University—Stillwater, an honorary visiting professor of engineering at Jawaharlal Nehru University, and a member of the Indian Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council.]

Story time

ADD ONE TO NINETEEN!

Horses Connect to Vedānta

There was once a horse trader, who at the end of his life left behind nineteen majestic Arabian horses to be divided as per the instructions in his will.

The will read thus -

One half of the horses are to go to the *Munim* (accountant), who was instrumental in the success of his trade.

A half of the remaining half is to be given to his five personal servants, who were so close to him that they had access to his bedroom too!

Of the rest, one horse each was to be given to each of his four sons.

The horse trader died one morning, and his will was read out to his sons in the presence of the *Munim* and the personal servants. All of them were in a dilemma now. How could they possibly divide nineteen horses into half?! No one was ready to give up their share, not even a part! As they sat thus in front of a pond where the horses were drinking water, another horse trader stopped there for his horse to quench its thirst. He found these people discussing and looking very puzzled. Upon enquiry, this horse trader offered to help them out. He told them that they could take his horse too and that would make the division easy! They were now relieved as they accepted his offer.

Now there were twenty horses, of which ten were given to the *Munim*, five to the personal servants (one each) and of the remaining five, each of the four sons got one each and the horse trader got back his horse! They thanked the trader profusely and praised his wisdom. The trader with his horse went on his way.

This story carries a profound advaitic concept.

The Jeeva's experiences have been made possible by the organs of knowledge (five *jnānendriyas*) and the organs of action (five *karmendriyas*) and thus half of the earnings are to be given to them.

However, he has always been energised by the 5 *prānas*, his personal servants, who are with him every moment of his life! Thus they are entitled to their share.

He, of course, has his 4 sons, his own Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahankāra. They too get their due.

However, all this is made possible only in the presence of the *ātman* – the one that stands untouched, unattached and unaffected by the experiences, yet without whom nothing is possible! This is technically referred to as Vivarta-vāda.

Without this *ātman*, everything is nothing while with the *ātman*, 'nothing' is rendered everything; however, the *ātman* is neither nothing nor everything!

(The above nineteen have been mentioned in the Māndukya Upanishad as *ekonavimshati mukhāni* (19 aspects) and are explained by Āchārya Shankara in his *bhāshya* on the third *mantra* of the Upanishad.)

(Collected and edited by Shalini Keshavan, Bengaluru.)

News

September 14, 2020: The spiritual movement called Meditation and Study Circle, which was started in 1979 by Late Sri S Krishnamurthy and Late Smt. Rukmini Krishnamurthy, had Swāmiji speak to all its members on a portion of the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad – "Yājnavalkya – Maitreyi Samvāda" (Chapter 2). The event was of course online, over Google Meet.

September 22, 2020: Three groups based in Bengaluru, Mumbai and other places showed interest in listening to Swāmiji on Self-inquiry, Self-knowledge and Self-observation. The online session took place over Zoom. The groups were 1) Study Life study group (coordinated by Sri Viswanadhan), 2) My Retired Life Foundation (founded and run by Prof. A K Sen Gupta) and 3) Higher Education Forum (also by Prof. Sen Gupta). The talk for an hour was followed by a vibrant QA session.

September 30, 2020: Smt Ratna Bhatia in Los Angeles had passed on Aprill 22. She was associated with Swāmiji since 1994. Of late she had closely bonded with FOWAI FORUM also. Starting in May, Swāmiji has been presenting a Satsang every month in her memory, as per the request of her family. The 5th Satsang in this series was held on the 30th(October 1st morning in India), online over Zoom.

Talks on Radio: The FM station in Mysuru (Karnataka) 'jnāna-dhwani' (FM 90.8) has been airing Swāmiji's talks almost every Monday at 7 am.

Geetā and Upanishad talks on YouTube: These have been going on, receiving excellent response from audiences in India and in the USA. Anyone can join by reaching over to FOWAI channel at 7 am (IST) for Geetā on Wednesdays and at 8.30 pm (IST) for Mundaka Upanishad on Fridays.

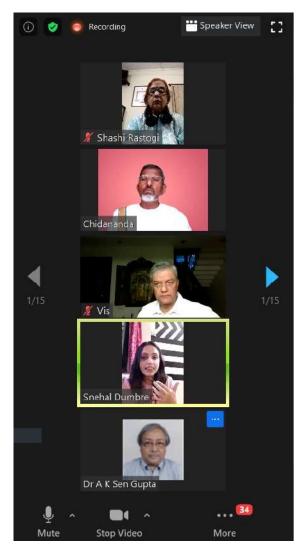
Webinars

WEBINARS, done:

September 13, 2020: A webinar – # 181 – was presented by Swāmiji on the highlights of the discourse of Sage Yājnavalkya to his wife Maitreyi (chapter 2, Brihadāranyaka Upanishad).

September 27, 2020: A webinar – # 182 – was presented by Swāmiji on "Sparks from the Fire," drawing from the famous illustration found in the Mundaka Upanishad (2.1.1), where it is said that all living beings rise from God, live in God and merge back into God.

October 4, 2020: Commander (Indian Navy, Retired) Lijo Chacko presented a webinar on "Sāgar to Sagarmāthā," which was about the expedition in the year 2004 by the Indian Navy to the world's highest peak, Mount Everest. Sāgar-māthā (Goddess of the Sky) is how the mountain is called in Nepal. The Britishers had, just two centuries back, named this ancient mountain Everest. Cdr Lijo was a member of the brave team who had made it to the top.



Swāmiji spoke online on Self-inquiry and Self-knowledge to three groups on Sept 22, 2020



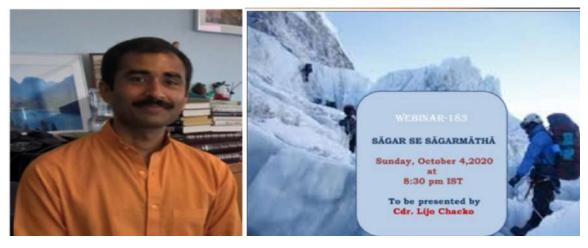
Members of Meditation and Study Circle, Bengaluru, listened (online) to Swāmiji on the Dialogue between Yājnavalkya and Maitreyi on September 14, 2020.



A Satsang was held on Sept 30, once a month for the fifth time.



One of the slides at the Satsang on Sept 30, 2020



Cdr Lijo Chacko, who had scaled the Mount Everest, presented a webinar on Oct 4, 2020

Upcoming Events

YouTube Classes: These will continue as per the schedule mentioned above

WEBINARS, to come up:

October 11 and 25: Swāmiji will present the webinars to be numbered 184 and 185. One or two other presenters will also hopefully speak on the other Sundays.

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Best Wishes For Sharad Navarātri (Oct.17-25) From Team AUPA

May the great goddess Maa Durga provide you the strength, wisdom, and courage to overcome all obstacles in life. Have an auspicious Navarātri. May the nine days and nine nights of Navarātri bring you good health and spiritual awakening. Wishing you a very Happy Navarātri.

WISH YOU HAPPY DUSSEHRA

Sunday, October 25

Dussehra celebrates Lord Rāma's victory over the demon king Rāvana and the triumph of good over evil.



Everybody studies (a lot of people study, we mean) Vedānta but very few realize the Truth. Why? Vijaya-dashami, the 10th day of the Dussehra festivities, has the answer. It requires none less that Rāma, the embodiment of dharma, to kill Rāvana, who represents 'multi-faceted adharma'. Our ego has ten, if not more, faces. Unless the spiritual seeker within us equips himself with the 'dharma' of Lord Rāma, the annihilation of ego will remain a mere dream.

Team AUPA

wishes all its readers success in nurturing 'Rāma' inside them, to drive away the last traces of 'Rāvana' from their being.

Harih Om

(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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