

AUPA e-Newsletter

May 2022
Vol 7, Issue 11 (No. 83)



Editor: Swami Chidananda
Associate Editor: Dolly Seth

Mantra to Ponder

UNSHAKEABLE STEADINESS

There is something above and beyond karma.

There is a widespread notion among people that the Vedic wisdom considers the 'Law of Karma' as the ultimate law. 'As you sow, so shall you reap,' in the Vedic version is believed to be infallible. That is not true. Just as quantum physics supersedes Newtonian physics, the wisdom of the Upanishads shows a higher domain where the 'karma-siddhanta' breaks down.

॥ न वर्धते कर्मणा , नो कनीयान् ॥

na vardhate karmanā, no kaniyān

(The Pure Self) does not swell by karma, nor gets reduced.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad ५.३.४.२३ (Chapter 4, Section 4, mantra 23)

A practical implication of this mantra is that we can discover a ground of no fear, of unconditional love.

Light on Self - Inquiry

WHEN DOUBT AND DEPRESSION ARISE



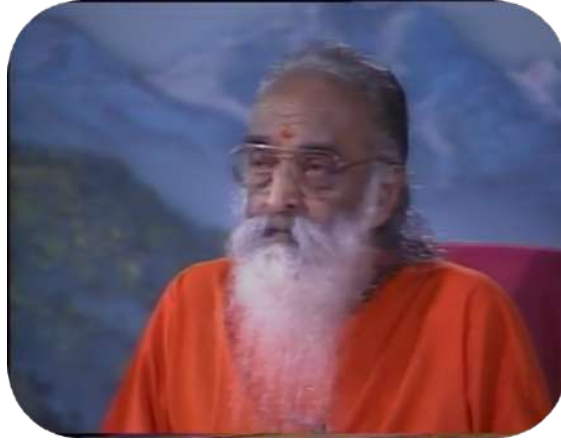
As each doubt or depression arises, ask yourself, “Who is it that doubts? What is it that is depressed?” Go back constantly to the question, “Who is the ‘I’? Where is it? Tear everything away until there is nothing but the source of all, which remains. Live always in the present. There is no past or future except in the mind.

SHRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

[Taken from *Conscious Immortality*, chapter 6]

Thus Spake Chinmaya

RISING TO HEIGHTS



It is qualitative intensity, sincerity, devotion, understanding and enthusiasm of the heart with which one does sadhana, that will determine the true heights to which the student can rise in his self-mastery.

Pujya Swāmi Chinmayānanda ji

(From the book *As I Think*)



{We bow down before the celebrated Vedanta Master on his birthday, which falls on May 8.}

From the Editor's Desk



Swami Chidananda

HIT THIS SIXER

Achieve Balance on a Weekly Basis

Many people complain that all this philosophy is good to hear but they are not able to live it. That is understandable but we need to find out why it is so.

Our body has a lot of energies with their own movement, which can be in disorder. Different kinds of flow, which modern medicine connects with the functions of various glands, affect our ability to do the right thing at the right time. If our energies are not in sync with our thoughts, we may not be able to smile when we want to, and we cannot cry when the situation is most saddening.

All the yogas – bhakti, karma, rāja and jnāna – have their own ways in which our energies fall in place. We must either find the solution to this problem of energies being in disarray within the systems of our spiritual practices or do the following on a regular basis.

1 Walking: Regular walking, adding up to about 5 hours in a week can help the body arrive at far better health than otherwise. The different systems in us begin to synchronize with each other and there will be internal harmony.

2 Yoga āsanās: The well-designed postures of Patanjali's Yoga are known to have a great influence on both our physical and mental states. We must ensure that, in a week, we do 3 to 4 hours of yogāsanās.

3 Prānāyāma: Breathing exercises are a wonder, which most people either do not know or neglect. About 90 minutes of prānāyāma, spread over the 7 days of the week, can go a long way to enable us to live our philosophy and thus bridge the gap between theory and practice.

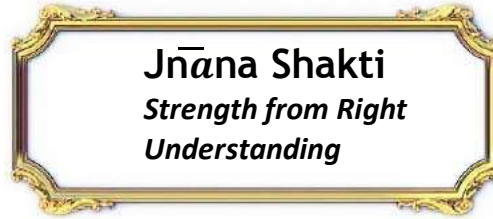
4 Scriptural study: Staying in touch with the eternal messages of traditional books of wisdom like Bhagavad Geetā and the Upanishads keeps us aware of various dos and don'ts of life (dharma-vichāra). Such 'shāstra-adhyayana' helps us see various situations of life in healthier angles of view. About 3 hours in a week of this can do wonders.

5 Study of general (non-scriptural) works, which also throw precious light on the art and science of living. Many writers from the East and the West help us see things which, though mentioned in the scriptures, would have not occurred to us. This too can be 3 hours a week or more.

6 Meditation: 20 mins on a daily average of meditation, done with proper guidance from wise instructors, can release a lot of negative energies from our system, keep us calm and facilitate the emergence of creative insights.

An integrated approach, as envisaged above, can make everyone of us not only study the liberating philosophy of the Vedānta but experience the joy of being able to live it.

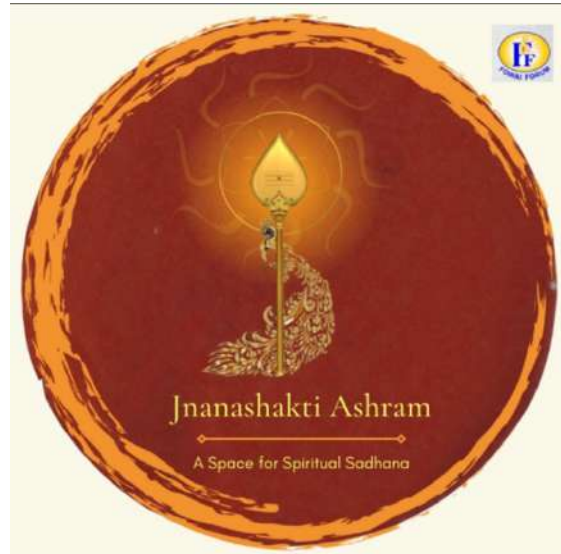
Swami Chidananda



An Update On

JNĀNA SHAKTI

A Centre for Vedānta Studies



'Slow and steady wins the race,' goes the old saying. The work of the Jnanashakti Team is indeed progressing slowly and steadily.

Our team is trying to get the government approval for all our drawings, which show the architectural plans for the Ashram to come up.



In view of the very hot weather at this time, the proposed 'bhoomi-poojan' on May 8 has been postponed. We will announce the new date.

We request everyone to come forward to support the work.

Team AUPA



SEEING FAR

Looking Deep

One simple way of saying *what Upanishads are all about* is – seeing far, looking deep.

Short-sightedness always leads to sorrow. There was a prisoner whose cell had no ceiling. He wished he could climb the walls and jump on the other side to freedom. There was no ladder though.

One winter night, he felt so cold that he strongly wished there was some wood that he could burn, which would make him feel warm. And lo, there suddenly appeared some oil, some cloth and match sticks too. Where to find wood? In another two minutes, wood also was found – in the form of a ladder.

The man was so eager to get warmth that he somehow broke the steps of the ladder and burnt them one by one.

Yes, he got warm but he no longer had the ladder with him!

इतो विमुच्यमानः क्व गमिष्यसि ?

ito vimuchyamānah kva gamishyasi?

After you leave this place, where will you go?

Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, mantra 4.2.1

Vedanta asks us to make small sacrifices, let go of passing pleasures and ensure that we rise in maturity, to finally arrive at 'freedom from the cell of individual existence'.

Introducing an Upanishad #4

THE MUNDAKOPANISHAD

Running into 64 mantras, divided into three '*mundaka*'s (like chapters), each having two sections (*khandas*), this Upanishad, found in the Atharva Veda, is a feast to any student of philosophy, who has penetrating questions and a taste for picturesque metaphors. Rishi Angiras is the preceptor here and Rishi Shaunaka is the disciple. The disciple is not a young man; he is rather someone who has lived a full life and gained vast knowledge of the 'Veda-purva', consisting of instructions on *karma* (rituals) and *upāsanas* (qualified, dualistic meditations). He has approached Angiras with a burning desire to know 'Veda-anta', the science of liberation.

An outstanding feature of this Upanishad is an extraordinary question that Shaunaka asks, "What is that, knowing which nothing remains to be known?" The central teaching of this text therefore may be considered 'the wisdom of completeness', for the insight into the *shuddha ātmā* (the Pure Self), termed 'akshara' (the Imperishable) makes one realize one's completeness *where nothing remains to be known or acquired*.

All knowledge belongs to two camps: the lower and the higher, *aparā* and *parā*. It is *parā vidyā* that sets us free for the '*akshara*' is known through *parā vidyā*. Excellent pointers to that Imperishable Truth are supplied in this Upanishad.

Karma (religious or secular action) has its place in the grand scheme of life. It surely gives results. It's sad limitation is that all results die away in due course of time. Though *karma* is most useful in ordinary contexts, it simply is not the answer to anybody who seeks the timeless or the infinite. This Upanishad first praises and then puts aside *karma* (and *upāsana*), paving the way to higher wisdom.

Metaphors galore mark this sacred work. The Supreme Truth (Brahma, Akshara) creates this universe just as a spider creates its web. Brahma is both the efficient cause and the material cause of this Creation. This is unlike the scenario of a potter who makes pots and uses clay as the material cause.

Brahma is like a huge fire; all of us, living beings, are like the countless sparks that emerge from the fire. Both fire and sparks have heat and light; both Brahma and we are *sat* (Existence) and *chit* (Consciousness).

Om is the most excellent tool in spiritual practices. Om is the bow; our mind is the arrow; Brahma is the target to be hit. When everything goes well, the seeker merges with the sought just as the arrow becomes one with the target.

The most well-known metaphor from this Upanishad is perhaps the one of two birds on a tree, of which the first one is mostly unhappy and the second very happy. The first bird is active, is eating many kinds of fruits and yet is miserable. The second is not into action, does not eat at all but is established in joy. The metaphor points to jeeva (individual soul), caught in *karma*, as the first bird. The second bird is Ishvara (God), who is ever free without involving in *karma*. This whole narration signifies the journey of a jeeva culminating in the nondual state where the three – jeeva, ishvara and jagat – lose their boundaries and become one.

A careful examination of life, especially the results possible through all actions (*karma*), leads us to true detachment. We then need to approach a guru, who has turned his back to *karma* and is established in Brahma.

"Truth alone wins," "A knower of Brahma becomes Brahma" and many other powerful statements are among the salient marks of the Mundaka Upanishad.

[This is a sequel to three other Upanishads that were introduced in previous issues: *Ishā, Kena and Katha*.]

Quote of the issue

BAD HABITS, GOOD HABITS

The task of breaking a bad habit is like uprooting a powerful oak within us. And the task of building a good habit is like cultivating a delicate flower one day at a time.

James Clear



(James Clear is the author of the bestselling book ATOMIC HABITS.)

**Smt. Indira Gautam
writes from the U.S.**



**SHOULD THE WORLD CHANGE?
*Or should we change?***

Readers of AUPA, dear friends,

Isn't this world too puzzling to manage? Even after countless saints – in different religions or spiritual systems – came and went, the world seems to be as much caught in chaos as ever before, if not in a worse condition!

So, should we roll up our sleeves and try to change this world? Maybe by forming small and big groups of like-minded people and exerting our influence on the 'wrongdoers'? The West seems to be generally on the side of trying to change the outside first.

Alternatively, should we focus on our own change, trying to get better in our thought, word and deed? This made society is surely our own creation and, therefore, if we change, the society too will change. A lot of Eastern philosophy emphasizes inner change.

Both approaches perhaps have their own strengths and merits. Should we have an integrated approach where we carry the two goals together – outer reform and inner change?

One of the statements that has always been inspiring to me is from Swami Vivekananda¹, "Work towards your own liberation and (at the same time) for the uplift of the world too!"

It means we should neither isolate ourselves nor get too caught up in social work. Balancing time for oneself and time for others is required.

Let us understand our true abilities, our actual nature, and, being true to ourselves, march ahead.

Best wishes to all of you!

1 आत्मनो मोक्षाय, जगद्-हिताय च..... *ātmano mokshāya, jagad-hitāya cha*

GuestSpeak

SHOULD WOMEN WORK?

When Women Work and Earn, It Spells Human Progress

Indra Nooyi

I believe that women's choice to work outside the home is integral to their well-being and their family's prosperity. Somehow, some people in even the most sophisticated societies have continued to question whether women should engage in paid work at all. This perspective seems connected to the idea that children suffer if a job distracts their mothers from caring for them. In some places, it's just easier for the whole society to stick with outdated habits they know.

I don't see it this way. In fact, working women's kids tend to do better in school, are more independent, and see their mothers as valuable role models. Besides, we have clear proof that women's paid labour-force participation is crucial to the whole economy. More women in the workforce makes us all more prosperous – cutting poverty, boosting wages and swelling gross domestic product.

But, for me, the reason women need a clear path to paid work is more direct. We all deserve the power of the purse for our own freedom. The full acceptance of women as paid workers spells human progress. It unlocks them from being at the mercy of a male-dominated world.

(Excerpts from the author's bestseller autobiography *My Life in Full*.)



{**Indra Nooyi** (born 1955) is an Indian-American business executive and former chairperson and chief executive officer (CEO) of PepsiCo. In 2017, her final year at PepsiCo, her pay was \$31 million. She has consistently ranked among the world's 100 most powerful women. In 2014, she was ranked at number 13 on the Forbes list of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women^[8] and was ranked the second most powerful woman on the Fortune list in 2015. In 2017, she was ranked the second most powerful woman once more on the Forbes list of The 19 Most Powerful Women in Business. She serves on the boards of Amazon and the International Cricket Council. Philips has proposed that Nooyi join their board in May 2021.}

Story Time

Obedience is the Key to Success!

'Kacha and Devayāni'

There was once a battle between devas (gods) and asuras (demons), and the demons were victorious, on account of their submission to their Guru Shukrācārya.

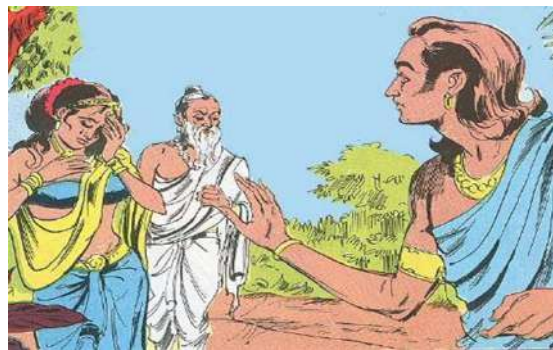
The devas wondered how the asuras could win. They found that Shukrācārya was using *amrita sanjeevani* mantra, which was bringing the dead and injured demons back to life. Brihaspati summoned his son Kacha to go and learn the mantra from Shukrācārya.

Kacha wholeheartedly accepted his father's instruction and kept it as his only goal. He went to the other camp and offered respects to Shukrācārya and requested him to accept him as his disciple.

Shukrācārya knew that Kacha's inner motive was to learn the *amrita sanjeevani* mantra. He was determined not to teach that to him, but still allowed him to stay with him.

In course of time, Shukrācārya's daughter, Devayāni fell in love with Kacha and decided that she would marry him.

The asuras did not like Kacha's presence and they decided to kill him. They chopped him into pieces and threw all the pieces in different directions. In the evening Devayāni, not finding Kacha, went to her father and said, "Father, I feel that something wrong has happened. Please use your *amrita sanjeevani* and bring Kacha back as I want to marry him."



To please his daughter, Shukrācārya chanted the mantra and, from nowhere, Kacha appeared again. Kacha requested Shukrācārya to teach the mantra with which he had brought him back to life. Shukrācārya refused to give it. Kacha waited patiently.



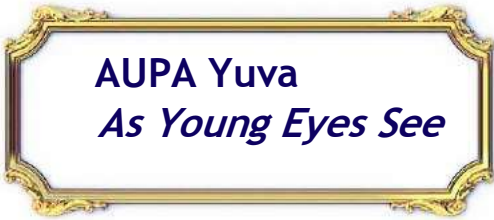
The next time the demons took him to a faraway place to kill him. They ground his body in the grinding mortar into a nice paste and threw the paste into the ocean. Again Devayāni cried; *amrita sanjeevani* was chanted and Kacha came back. Kacha requested Shukrāchārya for the mantra, but again he was denied.

Patience Pays

Kacha did not lose heart. He remembered the force and power of obedience – the potency of obedience. The next time the asuras wanted to make sure that the mantra is not used. They killed Kacha; they chopped him up, ground him, made him into a paste and then they took a glass of wine and poured the powder into the wine and gave it to Shukrāchārya to drink.

In the evening, when Devayāni asked for Kacha, Shukrāchārya realized that Kacha was in his stomach. If he comes out, he will kill Shukrāchārya himself. Kacha spoke from within the stomach, “Revered sir, I have a suggestion. You have actually no choice. If you want to live, you have to teach me *amrita sanjeevani* because, when you first use *amrita sanjeevani*, and I come out, you will be dead. Before that, if you teach me *amrita snjeevani*, then, when you are dead, I will use the *amrita sanjeevani* and bring you back to life.”

Then Shukrāchārya had no choice and had to teach Kacha the mantra. Grudgingly, he blessed Kacha and said, “I do not know where you learnt this trait, but by the power of your obedience to your father and spiritual master, you have literally extricated this mantra from me which even the greatest of the devatas could not learn.”



THE 80/20 PRINCIPLE ***Work Smarter, Get Better Results***

Radhika Dave

The 80/20 principle or the Pareto principle states that roughly 80% of consequences come from 20% of causes.

The Pareto principle comes from the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, who chanced upon this rule after concluding that around 80% of the land in Italy and other countries he studied, was owned by 20% of the people.

He kept noticing this pattern in other situations as well. The main thing to understand here is that the focus should not be on the ratio but the imbalance. The gist is to work smarter and prioritise things to get the best results.

The gist of this principle is to find small things that have the greatest impact. 80% of value, is achieved with the first 20% of effort, as written by Thaisa Fernandes on Medium, as she breaks this principle down.

This can apply to our goals, businesses, maximizing our time, etc. The possibilities are innumerable. This got me thinking. Taking the first step towards anything, taking up a new project, learning a new skill, is the hardest. Once we can overcome this and incorporate this in our schedule, half the battle is won.

The first part is clear. Identify tasks that bring the most value. One way that I find effective in identifying tasks is from a book I had read a couple of years ago, called **Eat That Frog**, by Brian Tracy.

Taking it from Mark Twain, who supposedly had quoted, “If it’s your job to eat a frog, it’s best to do it first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day”, Brian Tracy has used this for effective task and time management.

Finish your most difficult tasks first in the morning, is the message the book conveys, stating it leads to increased efficiency and happiness.

Coming back to the Pareto principle, once we have identified the ‘frogs’ for the day, we have automatically prioritized the goals.

Here’s to working smarter, and hopefully sticking to our goals too!



{Radhika Dave is a bibliophile and loves writing. She is currently financial writer with Acuris, with previous stints at BloombergQuint and CNBC-TV18. Radhika has done her BA in Economics from St Xaviers, Mumbai, with a double honours in English Literature and Economics. She has also completed her associateship level from The Trinity College of London in Communication Skills.}

Health is You

CROSS-TALK BETWEEN BRAIN, MIND AND UNIVERSE

Can Medicine and Spirituality Come Together?

Dr K Sindhuja

Mental health is so intimately linked to physical health. One's spiritual quest, I would say, encompasses both and more dimensions of health that are yet to be named and articulated. Belonging to the scientific community, one may argue about the ambiguity in such statements as this kind of proclamation or intuitive understanding does not lend itself to testing of its evidence.

The vastness and complexity of the human mind can only be comparable to the perplexity of existential questions that the universe poses. The intersection between neurology, psychiatry, neuropsychiatry, psychology and philosophy evokes images of how dissecting these branches of science, when dissected layer by layer, inevitably is referred back to that esoteric fundamental Truth of human existence which we all seek.

My interest in spirituality grew alongside my passion for medicine. I often used to wonder *what we are*, beyond pounds of flesh and mass of hormones and chemicals, as there seems to be a biological basis for every emotion, every action of ours.

As I was writing this piece, I was tempted to look up references on the internet. And I was surprised to stumble upon the term "Neuro-theology". Neurotheology has the potential to offer a great deal to our understanding of the human mind, consciousness, scientific discovery, spiritual experience, and theological discourse.

In a research study by directed by Dr. Mark Potenza in 2019, *Neural Correlates of Spiritual Experiences*, scientists used a special kind of brain imaging, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to examine neural structures and systems that are activated when participants engaged in spiritual practices in which they felt "a strong connection with a higher power or a spiritual presence." Spiritual experiences were associated with higher levels of activity in certain parts of the brain: the inferior parietal lobe (IPL), the part of the brain associated with perceptual processing, relating to the concept of self in time and space, the thalamus and striatum, the parts of the brain associated with emotional and sensory processing

In a study, Ferguson and colleagues used a technique called lesion network mapping that allows investigators to map complex human behaviours to specific brain circuits. They found that spiritual experiences are centred in the brain circuit in periaqueductal gray (PAG), a brainstem region that has been implicated in numerous functions, including fear conditioning, pain modulation, altruistic behaviours and unconditional love. Lesion locations associated with other neurological and psychiatric symptoms

also intersected with the spirituality circuit. “Only recently have medicine and spirituality been fractionated from one another. There seems to be this perennial union between healing and spirituality across cultures and civilizations,” said Ferguson.

How does the biological basis for spirituality and spiritual enquiry affect you? Is it disconcerting to know that maybe a tumour in the aforesaid areas of the brain can hinder the spiritual progress that we have so far managed? Is it perishable? Or does it make you feel even more connected to see the grand scheme of things and marvel at the beauty of creation that has sown seeds of knowledge of something beyond body, mind and intellect within each one of us in the physical realm? Is the universe contained in your intellectual thinking mind, the organ in your body called the brain or are these instruments contained in the universe? I leave you with these questions to ponder about.



[Dr K Sindhuja is a passionate anesthesiologist and critical care physician, currently pursuing post-doctoral (post MD) super specialization in Critical Care Medicine at Sundaram Medical Foundation in Chennai. She has a natural inclination, since childhood, towards spirituality and finds discourses on Vedantic topics immersive and relatable.]



Which line will you join?

News

Online Event, April 9, 2022: Krishna Kamala Vedānta Pāthashala, Bengaluru, had invited Swāmiji to speak on “Reverence for Traditional Vedānta in the Works of H H Swāmi Sacchidānandendra Saraswati of Holenarasipura”. The 45 minutes long talk at 7.00 am IST was well received.

Rtambhara Wellness, Bengaluru: A second online event on the same date took place, starting 6.30 pm IST. Swāmiji spoke on ‘Spiritual Perspectives in Holistic Living’. Shri Krishnaphani Kesirāju had taken the initiative to invite Swāmiji on this platform.

Shankara Jayanti in Bengaluru, May 6, 2022: Smt Indira Sāstry and Dr Sridhar Sāstry from Tampa, Florida, organized a vibrant function to mark Ādi Shankarāchārya’s Birthday at ‘Āgama Bhavan’ in Bengaluru. Among the four speakers who addressed the audience was Swāmiji, who elaborated on ‘Science and Vedānta’. While Dr H V Nagarāja Rao from Mysuru spoke in Sanskrit, Swāmiji spoke in English. The other two – Shri Shivarām Agnihotri and Dr KG Subrāya Sharmā – spoke in Kannada.

Upcoming Events

(Bhagavān Ramana Maharshi) 72nd Aradhana Day celebrations, Arunāchala Āshrama, New York, May 8, 2022: Swāmiji will speak at 8.30 pm IST (11 am in New York) during these 14-hour celebrations (6.30 am thru 8.30 pm in New York). Anyone can watch it on YouTube at the link: <http://www.youtube.com/c/ArunachalaAshrama>

9 pm in Florida, Every Wednesday, Classes on Shivānanda-Lahari: The lectures on Shivānanda-Lahari (a hundred verses on Shiva-bhakti, composed by Ādi Shankarāchārya) started well on Thursday, February 3, 2022. This was an initiative of Sanātana Dharma Pratisthāna of Tampa, Florida and the classes will continue. Those attending from India should note that the time in India is 6.30 am every Thursday.

ONLINE Classes as in May, June 2022

Subject	Time
Bhagavad Geetā	7 am Wed IST / 6.30 pm Tue Pacific
Shivānanda Lahari	6.30 am Thu IST / 9 pm Wed in Florida / 6 pm Fri Pacific
Upanishads	8.00 pm Fri IST / 7.30 am Fri Pacific

Webinars

Webinars # 220 (on Māyā Panchakam) and # 221 (on Kaupeena Panchakam) were presented on Sundays April 10 and April 24, 2022 respectively. Swāmiji was the presenter.

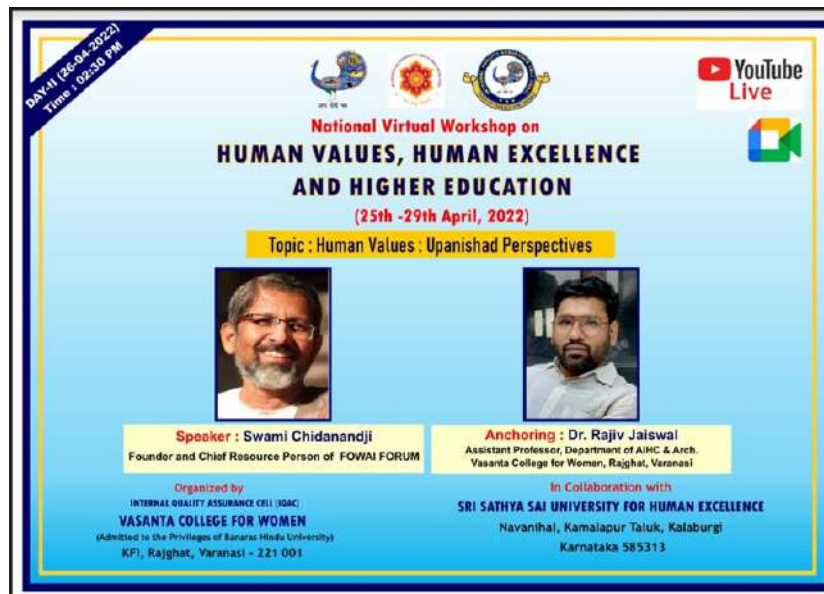
Webinars to be held:

Webinar # 222 will be held on Sunday, May 22, at 8.30 pm IST.

Those who wish to receive the Email invitations to our webinars (or make enquiries) may please write to fowaiforum@gmail.com

Dhimahi

National Virtual Workshop, April 26, 2022: The 'Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)' of the Vasanta College for Women in Varanasi (U.P.) and the Shri Satya Sai University for Human Excellence in Kalaburagi (Karnataka) jointly organized an online workshop for five days – April 25th thru 29th. The general theme was 'Human Values, Human Excellence and Higher Education'. Swāmiji spoke on the 26th on the topic, "Human Values: Upanishad Perspectives". Apart from students and staff at the two campuses, a lot of people watched the workshop over YouTube too.



DAY 1 (26-04-2022)
Time: 02:30 PM

National Virtual Workshop on
HUMAN VALUES, HUMAN EXCELLENCE
AND HIGHER EDUCATION
(25th -29th April, 2022)

Topic: Human Values : Upanishad Perspectives

Speaker : Swami Chidanandji
Founder and Chief Resource Person of FOWAI FORUM

Anchoring : Dr. Rajiv Jaiswal
Assistant Professor, Department of AJHC & Arch.
Vasanta College for Women, Rajghat, Varanasi

Organized by
INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CELL (IQAC)
VASANTA COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
(Admitted to the Privileges of Banaras Hindu University)
KFI, Rajghat, Varanasi - 221 001

In Collaboration with
SRI SATHYA SAI UNIVERSITY FOR HUMAN EXCELLENCE
Navanihal, Kamalapur Taluk, Kalaburgi
Karnataka 585313

YouTube Live

Special Days

WISHING YOU HAPPY BUDDHA PURNIMĀ

Monday, May 16, 2022

(2584th Birthday of Gautama Buddha)



The Purnima during Vaishākha month is celebrated as the birth anniversary of Gautama Buddha. Most historians date his lifetime between 563-483 B.C. They consider Lumbini, Nepal, as the birth place of Buddha. Buddha died at the age of 80 at Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh.

May we imbibe the essential teachings of The Budd

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).

Publisher: Shahid Sayed, AUPA Project Manager for STEP Press