

AUPA e - Newsletter

August 2022
Vol 8, Issue 2 (No. 86)



Editor: Swami Chidananda
Associate Editor: Dolly Seth

Mantra to Ponder

Are You Walking over a Hidden Treasure?

An Upanishad gives us the powerful illustration of a son walking over his backyard where his deceased father had kept a lot of wealth – gold, silver and precious stones – under the ground. Buried below the piece of land, there were plenty of riches but the son would not know. Are we like that son? Is the happiness that we are seeking very near us but we are not aware of it?



hiranya-nidhim nihitam-akshetrajnāḥ upari-upari sancharanto na vindeyuh

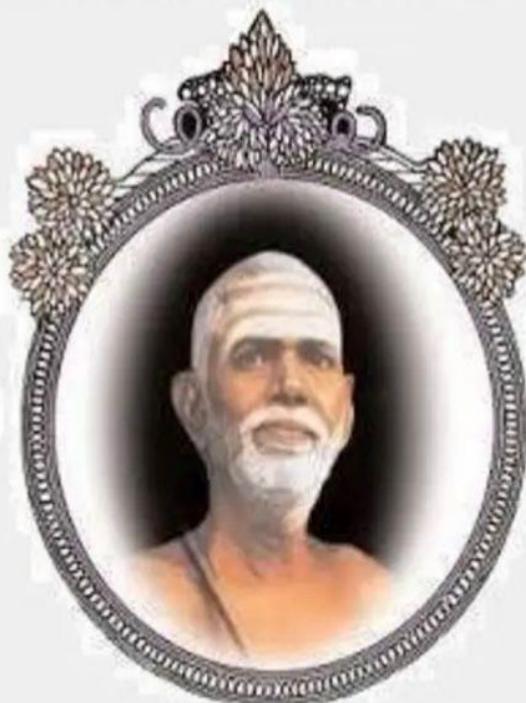
Those who do not know that land, and who walk over the land again and again, do not get the treasure of gold (and other riches) lying right below the place.

छान्दोग्य-उपनिषद् 8.3.2

The Vedānta reveals an astonishing truth. Every time we go to deep (dreamless) sleep, we are with the Pure Self, Brahman. There are no names, forms or subject-object divisions. And yet, we get deluded in waking and dream states, imagining that we are bound.

Proper study and enquiry can help us realize the Pure Self that we are, already! We can claim the treasure, which is already below our feet!

Sri Ramana Maharshi



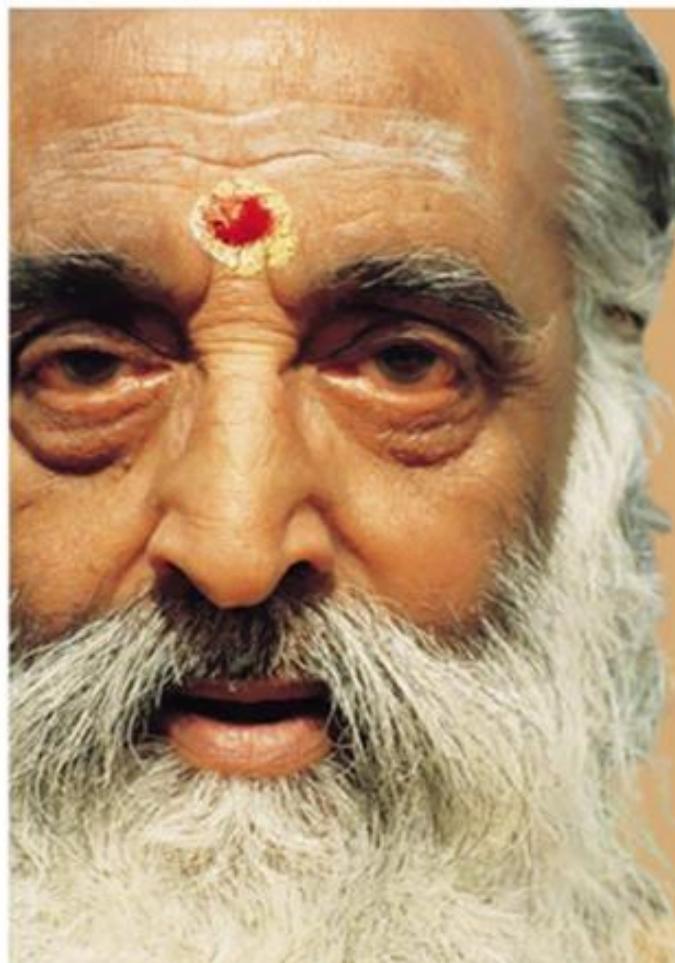
**There is no need to resign your job,
but resign yourself to Him,
the bearer of the burden of all.**

~ Be As You Are, Ch.12

Thus Spake
Chinmaya

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE

Attachment to objects makes them powerful. Then they come to rule over our mind. The mind is the devil that has invoked you and received your blessings. It is now threatening to annihilate you!



*Be a master of situations. Be strong. Do not be a slave to every passing, uncertain happening. Be bold.
Refuse to be unhappy.*

Swami Chinmayananda ji



Swami Chidananda

WORDS HAVE THEIR POWER

Words can heal; they can hurt also. Golden opportunities come to us when we use right words; we lose great opportunities when we speak wrong words. Words can make or mar our life.

No wonder the scriptures have spoken a lot about right speech. 'Let your speech be both true and pleasing,' says¹ an old verse, 'Do not speak such truth that is not pleasing nor such pleasing words that are not true!'

Bhagavad Geetā adds two more dimensions² to how our speech should preferably be. What we speak should not cause unwarranted agitation or perturbation in others and it should be beneficial or helpful.

'A person (who wishes to rise in righteous living) should avoid using angry, harsh and unkind words while addressing others,' says Vidura Neeti³.

When to speak and when not to – is another vital dimension of the wisdom of right speech. Ordinary people waste a lot of their energy in gossiping about other people. They get some pleasure by talking of the negative aspects of others; they do not realize the harm they do to themselves in such idle gossip. Temporary stimulation leads to much drain of their energy, leaving them distracted and reducing their efficiency in the work they do.

'A stitch in time saves nine,' is a well-known saying. When we say a comforting sentence to somebody in grief, at the right time, it can make a huge difference to that person. *Justice delayed would be justice denied* in such a case. It demands a great amount of intelligence to rightly decide *when not to speak*. A word uttered at the wrong time can cause such damage to relationships that setting things right again can be a long drawn and laborious process.

Whatever is said above, with minor modifications, holds good for written communication too. In these days of Emails and Whatsapp messages, we need to take great care in the matter of communication. We must double-check on how the recipient might perceive our message. Does some word we used to mean something imply something else at the other end? Will she or he get offended by some remark, where we had not thought of that possibility?

Lastly, paying attention to details and collecting all the necessary information surely help us in speaking at the right time and speaking rightly too.

Swami Chidananda

Notes:

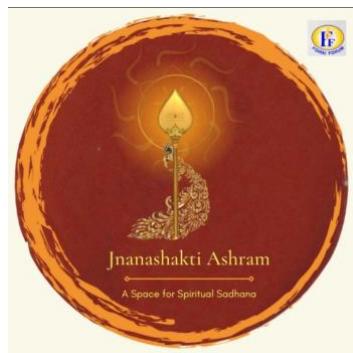
1 *satyam bruyāt, priyam bruyāt, na bruyāt satyam-apriyam priyam cha nānritam bruyāt, esha dharmah sanātanaḥ (Subhāshita)*

2 *anudvegakaram, hitam cha* – Geetā 17.15

3 *rookshām vācham rushateem varjayeeta* – Vidura Neeti 4.6

Jnāna Shakti
**Strength from Right
Understanding**

A New Centre for Vedānta Studies



Progressing slowly towards its destination – a beautiful facility in a serene setting surrounded by villages – the Jnāna Shakti ashram project is gathering momentum. The process of approval by Maharashtra State Government's 'Town and Country Planning' is on. Appointment of several functionaries like Project Liaison Officer, Liaison Architect and Project Management Consultant (PMC) are almost done.

We invite our friends and well-wishers to generously contribute to this noble endeavour in all possible ways.

TEAM JNĀNA SHAKTI

Introducing an
Upanishad

THE TAITTIRIYA UPANISHAD – 3

Bhrigu Valli

Bhrigu-valli, the third chapter of the Taittiriya Upanishad, is the lightest of the *vallis* and, all the same, provides precious guidance with regard to Brahma-vidyā. Half of it, in six *anuvākas*

(sections) is an excellent review of the five forms or levels of the self (*ātmā*) that were touched upon in the preceding *valli*, namely *Brahmānanda Valli*. The remaining four *anuvākas* deal with some noble human values, meditation on certain virtues and, last but not the least, a fascinating description of the joyous expressions of an illumined person.

The chapter is named upon the student whose father is Varuna, who sets a beautiful example of an excellent teaching method. Upon being asked to instruct on Brahman, the ultimate reality, Varuna does not go into descriptions or direct pointers to the Truth. He instead provides six possible locations where his son could find the answer to his query. Food, vital air, eyes, ears, mind and speech are the six domains where the ‘treasure hunt’ could be conducted! And, more importantly, Varuna supplies the criteria to be used to carry on the great quest. ‘Brahman is That from which all these living beings arise; in which they stay; and into which they merge.

The student, fit and eligible for the most challenging exploration of life, performs austerity (*tapah*), which consists of ‘gathering of all the energies of outer and inner instruments’, which implies single pointed application of all sense organs, organs of action and mind to the one task taken up. Bhrigu gets going with the search and, like in *Brahmananda Valli*, goes on discovering subtler and more valid understanding of the self. It culminates in his coming upon the dimension of Pure Bliss, which is no other than the Pure Self.

We are asked not to insult food. By insult is meant any kind of wasting, misusing, not using rightly, not producing enough and not sharing with the needy etc. Striking a strong note of individual and collective responsibility, the Upanishad makes a case for respecting food. The unfortunate ways in which we play with Nature, using technology, and, in the process, cause more damage than relief, are addressed here in an essential way.

Another value taught here is about respecting guests. We must never turn away a hungry traveller at our doorstep. We must offer hospitality with due regard and respect to the visitors that come to us.



The *Valli* ends with a delightful chant that represents the ecstatic expressions of someone in the state of illumination. He (or she) crosses the physical self, the self of vital energies, the self of emotions, the self of thoughts and arrives at the Pure Self of uncontaminated bliss. He roams about this world in utter freedom. He sings, ‘I am the food; I am the eater of the food too. I am everything.’

[This is the seventh piece in this series after the Upanishads – Ishā, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, Taittiriya-1 (shikshā-valli) and Taittiriya-2 (Brahmānanda-valli) were introduced in the previous six articles. – Editors]

Quote of the Issue

THE ‘NO MIND’ STATE

Where there is no ego

Mind is just a bundle of thoughts along with the ‘I’ that moves them around. When the ‘I’ drops off, there is no mind. When ‘no-mind’ sinks into its source, and stays there, Reality shines, permanently and irrevocably.

Papaji



[Papaji (H W L Poonja) lived between 1910 and 1997. Born in Punjab, he had an extraordinary experience at the age of 8. In his younger years, he roamed about South India. Sri Ramana Maharshi made a tremendous impact on him. A Muslim peer and a *sādhu* by the roadside in Karnataka also influenced him deeply. He spent his last 20 years or so in Lucknow. David Godman wrote several books on him, one of which is titled *Nothing Ever Happened*.]

Smt. Indira Gautam
Writes from the US



KEEPING THE MIND CALM

Calmness of the mind – *manah-prasāda* – is called a *tapas*¹, an austerity in the Geetā. The mature way to have this calmness, of course, is through wisdom (*jñāna*), where our perception itself changes of various situations, which otherwise would depress or provoke us.

She who conquers her mind, it is rightly said, conquers the world. Much of the world is what our mind makes of it, after all. The world at the most provides a stimulus and it is up to us to respond to it in one of many possible ways. Some teachers speak of a ‘space between the stimulus and the response’ where, they say, lies our choice to act in a mature way. Intelligence can operate in that space.

At a given point, where we are conditioned by our present knowledge, we may not have the best perception of situations. Ideas of how we should be and what we should not do pull us apart as we face dilemmas in life.

Various spiritual exercises – the different yogas – are meant to raise our level of consciousness, which means our perception changes. We change when our perception changes. This inner change is accompanied by appropriate biological changes too. Various glands would not secrete the chemicals in the same measure as they used to do before the inner change took place. Thus it is a fascinating journey where the calmness of the mind, *manah-prasāda*, and biological changes in us operate in tandem.

What first? It is difficult to decide where spiritual maturity causes various inner changes like the level of medical parameters (various secretions) or it is the other way around. We do yoga, for example, and medical parameters change; that leads to calmness and mature outlooks. Either way, human life is marked by periodic ups and downs of the level of consciousness where the self is functioning at a given time.

Many best wishes to all of you, dear readers of AUPA, in the wonderful and mysterious journey of yours, up and down the scale of consciousness.

Notes:

1 Geeta 17.16

GuestSpeak

FIND THE FUEL FOR YOUR ROCKET

Vivek Asrani

Building self-control and escaping from the clutches of our temptations and tendencies is like launching a rocket. Anything that is thrown up gets pulled down by gravity. Our temptations, like gravity, pull us down. But the rocket carries enough fuel and builds escape velocity to break away from the gravitational pull into a different orbit.

We too need the fuel to move into a different orbit. The fuel of our knowledge, conviction, commitment and dedicated self-effort. And when we decide that we want to break free, nothing can stop us. Every temptation becomes an opportunity to strengthen our resolve, test our commitment, and deepen our understanding ourselves.



[Vivek Asrani is based in Mumbai. He is the Managing Director of KAYMO in Mumbai, India. He was Founder President of AYBI (Association of Youth for a Better India). Active in community work he serves on the Board of TOYBANK, PRAJA, Initiatives of Change in India and Switzerland. He's also on the Advisory Board of Muktangan and Annamrita Mid-Day Meal program. We had featured him in the last issue of AUPA also.]

Story Time

RAIKVA AND JĀNASHRUTI

(A story from Chāndogya Upanishad)

There was a great king called Jānashruti, who was especially known for his charitable disposition. He had ensured that nobody remained hungry in his kingdom. Towards that noble objective, he had made resting places for people at lots of places where plenty of food was made available. He also had performed a lot of Vedic rituals and other noble deeds.



Some swans were flying over the palace of the king one night and the king, by chance, overheard what they were talking. One of the birds said to another, "O Bhallāksha, do not spread your wings too close to the palace of Jānashruti. He is so great that the 'dharma' he has acquired makes him a fire. Your wings may get burnt!" In response, Bhallāksha said, "Come on! This king may be great but he is nowhere near that wiseman called Raikva who sleeps below a bullock cart."

Jānashruti was a bit disturbed. The very next morning, he organized a search for Raikva, the illumined man.

They finally found Raikva, looking most unimpressive, resting below a cart, scratching his own skin as there was some problem at certain places on his skin.

The king initially finds it extremely hard to persuade Raikva to instruct him on the wisdom the latter possesses. Raikva was, after all, a man of great dispassion. Ultimately, when the mystic agrees to share his vision with the king, it became clear that Raikva indeed was on a very high plane of wisdom. The value of his spiritual wisdom was way higher than the value of millions of karmas, however noble they may be.

In summary, Raikva was anchored in Self-knowledge and knew he was not a doer (*kartā*) or enjoyer (*bhoktā*). Jānashruti, on the other hand, was attached to his image as a noble king. He had identified with that image, and thought of himself as a doer of great work.

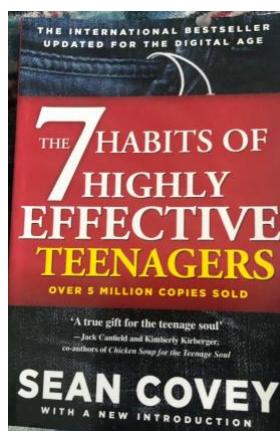
Shankarāchārya makes a reference to Raikva in his commentary on the Geeta at 4.33. The great *bhāshyakāra* in fact quotes the mantra 4.1.4 from Chādonya Upanishad, where the supreme place of *advaita-jnāna* is pointed out, where the glory of all karmas is included in that of jnan.

AUPA Yuva
As Young Eyes See

THE PERSONAL BANK ACCOUNT

Sean Covey

How you feel about yourself is like a bank account. Let's call it your *Personal Bank Account* (PBA). Just like a checking or savings account at a bank, you can make deposits into and take withdrawals from your PBA by the things you think, say and do. For example, when I stick to a commitment that I have made to myself, I feel in control. It's a deposit. On the other hand, when I break a promise to myself, I feel disappointed and make a withdrawal.



So let me ask you. How is your PBA? How much trust and confidence do you have in yourself? Are you loaded or bankrupt? The symptoms listed below may help you evaluate where you stand.

Low PBA:

You cave in to peer pressure easily.

You wrestle with feelings of worthlessness and inferiority.

You are overly concerned about what others think about you.

Healthy PBA:

You stand up for yourself and resist peer pressure.

You're not overly concerned about being popular.

You see life as a generally positive experience.

[The above is an extract from the book – The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers – by Sean Covey. As most of you know, Stephen Covey wrote in the late 1980s the famous book – The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Sean is Stephen's son.]

Health Is You

THE NEED FOR HOLISTIC MEDICINE

Ralf Damwerth

The treatment of a part should not be attempted without treatment of the entirety. – Plato in 'The State'



Nobody should give up the right to benefit from the amazing skills of modern medicine. But it is good to remember that modern medicine generally does a poor job of assisting people with the everyday needs of managing their physical, emotional and spiritual irregularities.

Modern medicine restricts itself only to the body, neglecting the subtle dimensions of the human personality. According to it, life is limited to the body and chemical pathways determine our thoughts and behaviour and we are responsible for health and illness. The body is considered a machine which can be repaired in case of disorder. Such ideas create high expectations in the patient going to a physician. These expectations are enhanced by TV reports of new breakthroughs in modern medicine. These so-called breakthroughs have not changed the limited concept of modern medicine. It continues to restrict itself to manipulations in the body, only the methods are getting finer. But the truth is that the body is only a superficial part of our real personality.

Ellis Huber, president of the Berlin medical profession, has brilliantly analysed the problems of modern medicine and the mistakes of the German health system in his book *Love Instead of Valium*. He says that because of the limited view of modern medicine, physicians often do not find a diagnosis to the complaints of their patients. What they find are symptoms. It is these symptoms that are treated. People get impressed by technical investigations, which seem to allow fascinating insight into the body. Patients want to be in good hands and be treated in places where they can be connected to a maximum number of 'unbribable' and 'objective' machines. The trouble in finding explanations makes even normal laboratory results or minimal abnormalities in X-ray a cause of the complaint.

Holistic medicine gives disease a deeper meaning. It emphasizes prevention. It concentrates on health and aims at self-healing. It accepts death and dying. Holistic medicine can have a good financial backing if politicians and the established medical profession change their attitude.

The healthcare system of the future is a net of institutions that supports everyone in being self-responsible about health; it will support people in their personal development; it will remove the separation between medicine, psychology and religion, and it will become an important instrument for the evolution of society.

[Dr Ralf Damwerth of Berlin, Germany, studied medicine in Great Britain and in the United States, and is now serving in the Jewish Hospital (Jüdische Krankenhaus) in Berlin.]

{Courtesy: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai. The above is an extract from their wonderful publication: Healthy Mind, Healthy Body.}

News

Guru Purnima, July 13, 2022

On one hand, Dr Thimappa Hegde's webinar on July 10 was a nice get together of the Vedanta students of FOWAI FORUM, PARAM VEDANT, THE SCHOOL OF ANCIENT WISDOM etc. Dr Hegde spoke on Guru Mahima.

On the other hand, some of the Pune group of Vedanta students gathered at the residence of Brahmacharini Vibha Chaitanya and celebrated the auspicious occasion. Many others from different parts of the country joined online. At the middle of the two-hour long function, Swamiji joined online and gave a short talk in the middle of the proceedings.

Upcoming Events

FOWAI FORUM will hold a second event at the School of Ancient Wisdom during the weekend of September 10-11. The text will be based on Vidura Neeti.



The statue of the 'Torchbearer' is at the centre of the beautiful 9 acre campus of The School of Ancient Wisdom in Bengaluru, where Swamiji will hold a Spiritual Retreat on September 10 and 11.

Webinars

The following webinars **were held** at 8.30 pm IST on

224: Sunday, July 10, 2022:

'Expressing That which cannot be expressed' (Thanking Our Guru on Gurupurnima)

by Dr Thimappa Hegde

225: Sunday, July 24, 2022

'A Divine Swan Instructs Gods' (Revisiting Vidura Neeti)

by Swami Chidananda

Upcoming webinars will be held at 8.30 pm IST on

#226, #227 on Sundays, August 7, 2022 and August 21, 2022

Please write to fowaiforum@gmail.com for details

Special Days

RAKSHĀ BANDHAN / RĀKHĀ

Thursday, August 11

(Shrāvana, Shukla, Purnimā)

(Month, Fortnight, Day)



Rakshā Bandhan is a popular, annual rite, or ceremony, which is central to a festival of the same name. On this day, sisters of all ages tie a talisman, or amulet, called the *Rākhi*, around the wrists of their brothers, symbolically protecting them, receiving a gift in return,

and traditionally investing the brothers with a share of the responsibility of their potential care.

We wish all the ‘sister and brother’ pairs in the world prosperity and happiness in the coming year!

JANMĀSTHAMI

Thursday, August 18

(Shrāvana/Bhādrapada*-māsa, Krishna-paksha, Asthami-tithi)

(*In South India, the practice is to count the month from Amāvāsyā to Amāvāsyā; in the North, it is Purnimā to Purnimā. The eighth night of the dark fortnight, therefore, falls in Shrāvana in the South and in Bhādrapada in the North.)



*krishnāya vāsudevāya
haraye paramātmane
pranata-klesha-nāshāya
govindāya namo namah*

We offer our most reverential pranāms to Shri Krishna, Govinda, the son of Vasudeva, the One who takes away sorrow, the Supreme Self, the One who destroys the suffering of those who surrender to Him. Salutations to Him!

GANESH CHATURTHI

Wednesday, August 31

(Bhādrapada, Shukla, Chaturthi)



Please join us, dear readers, in praying to Lord Shri Ganesha, who removes obstacles on the path of success in all our noble endeavours!

We wish you Happy Ganesh Festival!

(AUPA is the short form AUPANISHADA-PURUSHA, the truth of the sacred source called Upanishads. This e-Newsletter comes from the Project Manager of the website: aupa.in – Upanishad Wisdom).

Publisher: Shahid Sayed, AUPA Project Manager for STEP Press Email: info@aupa.in
Contact : +91 99678 78798