

AUPA e - Newsletter

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Mantra to Ponder

MANTRA TO PONDER THE PASSION TO STUDY

One of the Peace Invocations (*shānti-mantras*), associated with the Upanishads of the Rig-Veda, has a powerful, poetic way to instil in us certain passion to study the scriptures (*shāstras*).



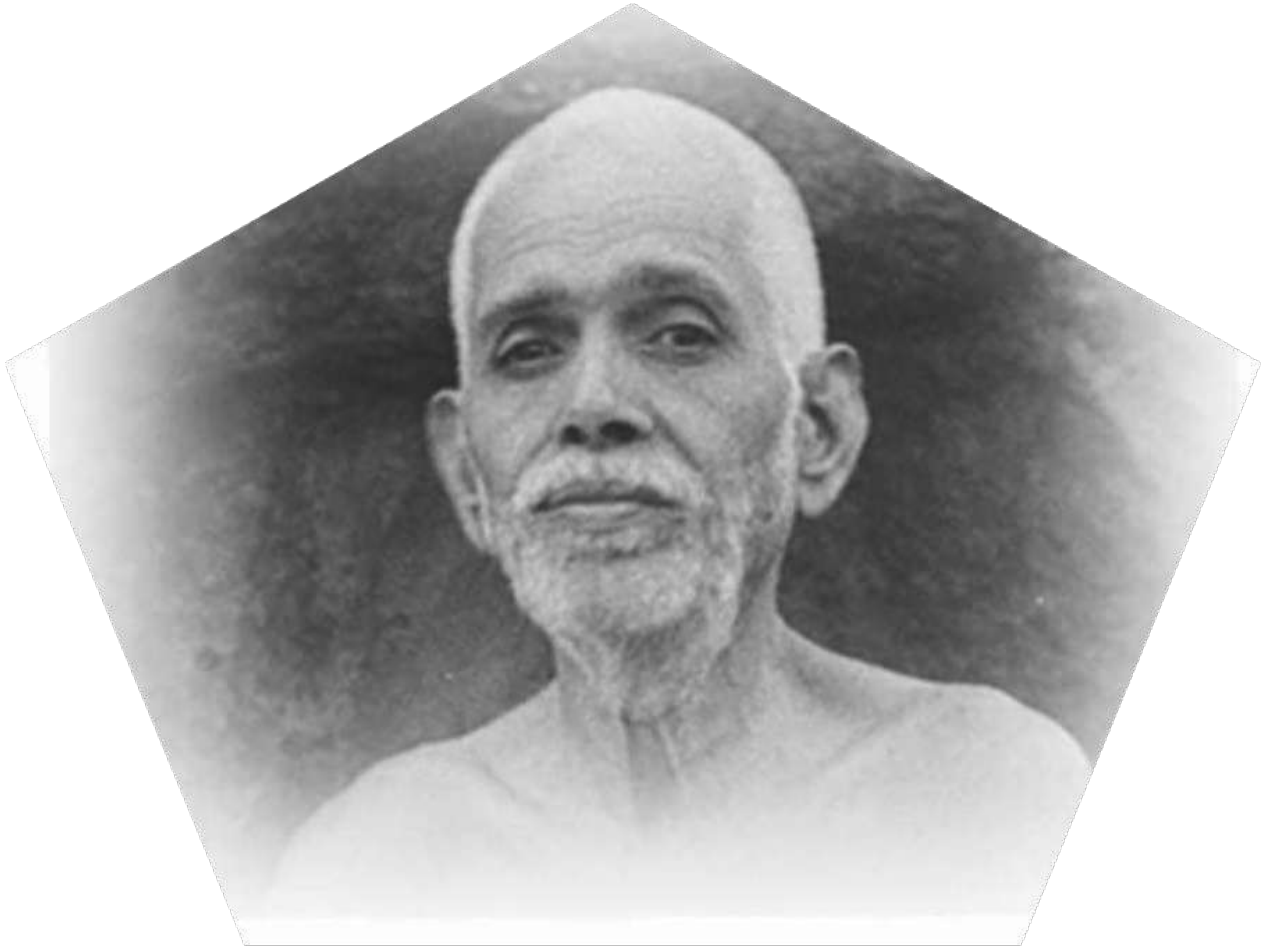
May I connect my day with the night and my night with the day through a program of study!

anena-adheetena-ahorātrān sandadhāmi

(Before, for example, Aitareya Upanishad begins)

We should not take things for granted and stay content with little knowledge of the scriptures. There has to be certain passion to question everything, with neither losing faith, in which case we might become irresponsible custodians of a precious heritage, nor getting shackled by blind faith.

OBSESSION WITH VERBOSITY



People insist on asking me questions and so I must reply, but the truth is beyond words.

Shri Ramana Maharshi

[It is one thing to have the spirit of exploring, of finding out what is true but quite another to get attached to the habit of conjuring up a question and taking pleasure in posing it before a learned person. Our tradition warns us against losing the delicate balance between passionate enquiry (which may involve verbal activity) and the practices of quietening our mind, going inwards etc. – Editors]

OUR RELATION WITH GOD



Surrender this 'me'
Unto
His care.

H H Swami Chinmayananda ji

[This great master, known for his brilliant lectures on Geetā and Upanisahds, was full of devotion to God. He was indeed a blend of *jnāna* and *bhakti*. – Editors]



Swami Chidananda

A MIGHTY CHALLENGE to which we should not shut our eyes

We must never imagine that Vedānta makes us insensitive to the challenges of our real life and gives us some false comfort of imaginary concepts. On the contrary, the Upanishads ask us to operate from the ground of *swadharma*, which means we must look into our hearts, ask ourselves serious questions and demand honest answers. A good number of us, when we do this exercise, will surely agree that the colossal damage that humanity is causing to the environment is a grave problem in today's world. In this month's editorial, I wish to present a short piece by my long-time friend from Northern California, Dr Mahendra Ranchod MD, who is passionately engaging with the issue.

Swami Chidananda

VEDĀNTA AND CLIMATE CHANGE All this that we see in the world is Brahman. (Chāndogya Upanishad 3.14.1)

Four thousand years ago, the sages of India came up with a profound concept: Everything in the universe was made of the same "stuff" – *Brahman* – and this fundamental "material" is transformed to create the complex world we live in.

According to Advaita Vedānta, this fundamental building block of the universe, *Brahman*, is indivisible, so each of us is in continuity with everything around us, living and non-living. This unifying concept is difficult to see in our daily transactions because the world appears dualistic – me, and everything else. But seeing the unity of the world and acting in accord with it – *dharma* – is crucial if we wish to live in harmony with the world.

It is easy to stray from *dharma*, to falter from doing the right thing – and that is what we humans have done for the past one hundred years. Our planet – our world - harbours an enormously complex ecosystem, and our modern way of life has destabilized it. As a result, we now live with heat waves, unseasonal storms, floods, droughts, wildfires, degraded soil, and failed crops.

We must restore our planet, and we can do so by being attentive to the way we live. We should make every effort to curb global warming, and we should treat the earth, water, air and all living species with the respect and reverence they deserve. The climate crisis is the single greatest challenge we face.

Let *dharma* be our guiding light; let's work together because there is strength in collective action. Join an environmental organization; become a climate activist. Act,

because the efforts you make to restore our ecosystem may be the most important contribution you will ever make for the greater good.

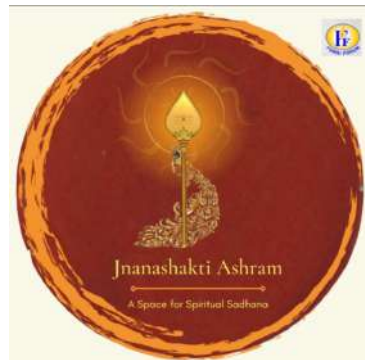
Mahendra Ranchod



Dr Ranchod retired recently from the practice of Medicine, and has devoted his time to environmental issues. He claims no expertise in the science of global warming or activism, but he has decided to join with others to mitigate climate change and ensure the future habitability of our planet. He lives in Palo Alto, California.

Jnāna Shakti
Strength from Right Understanding

**An Update On
JNĀNA SHAKTI
A Centre for Vedānta Studies**



New Bonds, Happy Alliances

Three of the trustees met key officials of a munificent organization that supports charitable initiatives on Wednesday, August 10, 2022. The offices of the Foundation were in South Bombay and the two-hour meeting was very satisfying where discussions took place on a friendly note. We have reason to hope for a good grant to our Ashram project.

Brahmachari Damodar Chaitanya, with years of administrative experience behind him, helped our team prepare neat proposals with which we have approached companies to

support us through their Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) funds. We are quite optimistic here too.

Damodar ji accompanied some of us, in a second visit for him, as we went to the Ashram site on Saturday, August 27, 2022 for checking on certain land-related issues and for some video shooting. Thanks to the rainy season, the stream just behind our piece of land was full with lots of flowing water and everything was lush green in and around our place.



And on Monday, August 29, we had a get together at the residence of Shri Bharat Thacker in Juhu, where a few friends – old and new – discussed ways to expedite fund collection for the venture.

The Bhoomi-poojā, which had earlier been planned in May but was postponed, will take place in late October; we will intimate the exact date in this column. Construction should also begin soon after that.

We once more appeal to all of you, our dear readers at AUPA, to come forward to support this work of ours meant for the rejuvenation of head and heart of everyone in our society through sharing spiritual wisdom.

Team Jnāna Shakti

**Introducing an
Upanishad**

THE BRIHADĀRANYAKA UPANISHAD – 1 of 4

Lead me from darkness to light!

Brihat means huge or vast; *aranya* means a forest; so, one meaning of '*brihad-āraṇyaka-upanishad*' is 'the vast body of mystical teachings studied in forests'. Forests here mean places or environments where one leaves behind worldly ways such as earning, spending, saving for future, pursuit of pleasure etc.

'*rana*' means battle or war. The word '*aranya*' can therefore mean a bosom that is free from conflicts. When one has a high degree of *viveka* (discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral) and *vairāgya* (freedom from attachments and aversions), one has an enviable measure of inner peace, which qualifies one to study the metaphysics of the Upanishads.

Running into six chapters, this Upanishad is found in the Shukla Yajurveda. It has a large number of significant mantras that have their echoes in a numerous Vedānta works. The mantras here have lofty revelations at places; charming stories at other places with powerful moral lessons; prayers that represent deep aspirations of humanity; teachings that evoke detachment towards worldly possession; and much more.

Many popular mantras that are used on various occasions of religious or cultural nature are from this Upanishad. For example, the famous mantra – *asato mā sad-gamaya, tamaso mā jyotir gamaya, mrityor mā amritam gamaya* – is from this scripture. (It means *lead me from falsehood to truth; from darkness to light; from death to immortality.*)

The well-known mantra – *poornam-adah poornam-idam..* – also is from this Upanishad. Pointing out that Brahman alone is and the infinity that Brahman represents is in the cause (of this creation) and in the effect (the creation), the mantra makes a strong case for ‘Oneness’ of all that exists.

A mantra from this Upanishad lays the foundation for the widely accepted model of *sāadhanā* (spiritual practices) in the Vedānta. The timeless teachings on *shravana* (listening), *manana* (reflection) and *nididhyāsana* (meditation) have their source in a dialogue between Yājñavalkya, the guru, and his own wife Maitreyi, the student, in a story that is found in this Upanishad.



Apart from Yājñavalkya, a towering figure among Rishis (sages), this Upanishad features teachers like Ajātashatru, a king and a *kshatriya* (a warrior by social classification).

We shall see more highlights of this immortal work in three more parts under the same title.

[This is the eighth piece in this series after the Upanishads – Ishā, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, Taittiriya-1 (shikshā-valli), Taittiriya-2 (Brahmānanda-valli) and Taittiriya-3 (Bhrigu-valli) were introduced in the previous seven articles. – Editors]

The Glory of Awareness



Deepen and broaden your awareness of yourself and all the blessings will follow. You need not seek anything; all will come to you most naturally and effortlessly.

Nisargadatta Maharaj

{Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897 – 1981), born Maruti Shivrampant Kambli, was a guru of nondualism, belonging to a lineage of teachers from the Navnath Sampradaya. The publication in 1973 of *I Am That*, an English translation (by Maurice Frydman) of his talks in Marathi, brought him worldwide recognition and followers, especially from North America and Europe.}

Smt. Indira Gautam
Writes from the US

A Thought to Share WHAT IS MOST COOLING?

The body of literature that goes by the name 'Subhāshita' has been a source of valuable guidance to people from time immemorial. Be it a dilemma at office, a conflict at home or a struggle within our own mind in the context of our spiritual practices, there is always a verse in the 'Subhāshita Sangraha' that as though knows what we are going through and addresses the issue directly.



Wherever we are, our life gets better and our voyage more smooth-sailing if we speak with care. Highlighting this power of soft speech, there goes this verse* – a *subhāshita*:

*Cooling is sandal paste in this world
More cooling is the moonlight at night.
More than sandal wood and moonlight,
Caring words are most cooling!*

Who can deny the ability of carefully chosen words, delivered at the right time and place, to give a healing touch to pained hearts and troubled minds?

Indira Gautam

* *chandanam sheetalm loke
chandānadapi chandramāh
chandanādapi chandrāccha
mriduvākyam susheetalam*

**AUPA Yuva
As Young Eyes See**

YOUR YOUNG YEARS As the eyes of a mystic poet see

Youth is a beautiful dream, on whose brightness books shed a blinding dust. Will ever the day come when the wise link the joy of knowledge to youth's dream?

Kahlil Gibran



Kahlil Gibran (1883 – 1931), was a Lebanese-American writer, poet and visual artist, also considered a philosopher although he himself rejected the title. He is best known as the author of *The Prophet*, which was first published in the United States in 1923 and has since become one of the best-selling books of all time, having been translated into more than 100 languages.

WALK YOUR WAY TO GOOD HEALTH



- healthy weight and lose body fat.
- Prevent or manage various conditions, including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, cancer and type 2 diabetes.
- Improve cardiovascular fitness.
- Strengthen your bones and muscles.
- Improve muscle endurance.

News

Sunday , August 28,2022

Satsang in Borivili: About 15 long-time students of Vedānta gathered at the residence of Swāmini Amrutānanda ji in Haridās Nagar, Borivili, Mumbai, and listened with rapt attention a talk in Hindi by Swāmiji on '*More your clarity, less will be the need for any practice*'. Some of the participants had attended long residential courses on the study of prasthāna-trayi (Geetā, Upanishads and Brahma Sutras). A short QA session brought a happy end to the delightful program.

Monday, August 15, 2022

Face-to-face Trust Meeting: After a long interval of more than two years, an offline meeting of all the seven trustees took place at the residence of Smt Geeta Nair in Mumbai. Swāmiji had already relocated to Mumbai on August 2. The four trustees who were not residents of Mumbai came from Goa and Pune, making the attendance 100%. The discussions were meaningful and fruitful. Some of the time was spent on adopting a book of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), which had been under study for some time.
September 1 thru 5, 2022

Swāmiji joins 18 to visit Andaman & Nicobar: Swāmiji has been closely associated with Suvarnamukhi Samskriti Dhāma (SSD) for six years now. A group of 18 from the management and supporters of SSD had Swāmiji with them when all of them flew from Bengaluru to Port Blair on September 1. Though the five-days and five-nights trip was mostly for refreshing sight-seeing, they had daily evening Satsangs. Dr Nāgaraju, the President of SSD and Shri Mahādeviah, the Vice President, were among the vacationers.

Upcoming Events

November 12 thru 16, 2022

5 Day Residential Camp in ADVAITAM: The serene campus of 'Advaitam' near Doddaballapura, a town to the northwest of Bengaluru, will be the venue for a 5-day residential camp in Kannada. Swamiji and Swami Advaitanandaji invite people to this Retreat in which the theme will be Vidura Neeti.



Dakshinamurti at the campus of Advaitam, Bengaluru

Webinars



Webinars coming up

No. 228 Sep 11, 2022 FIVE TEACHINGS OF THE GEETĀ
by Swāmi Chidānanda

No. 229 Sep 25, 2022 FIVE TEACHINGS OF THE UPANISHADS
by Swāmi Chidānanda

Webinars conducted

No. 227 Aug 21, 2022 – Shakti and Shānti
by Swāmi Chidānanda

No. 226 Aug 7, 2022 – Meditation in Vedānta
By Swami Chidananda

(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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