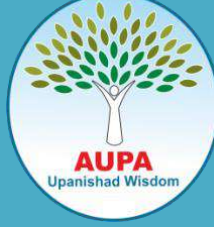


AUPA e - Newsletter

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Editor: Swami Chidananda
Associate Editor: Dolly Seth

Mantra to Ponder

ADVICE ON SĀDHANĀ

On the highest plane, all that the Upanishads do is – they reveal the truth, and nothing more. The rest of it happens on its own. One notch below, however, these sacred texts hold us by hand and lead us on a road to Self-realization. They guide us about *sāadhanā* (spiritual practice).



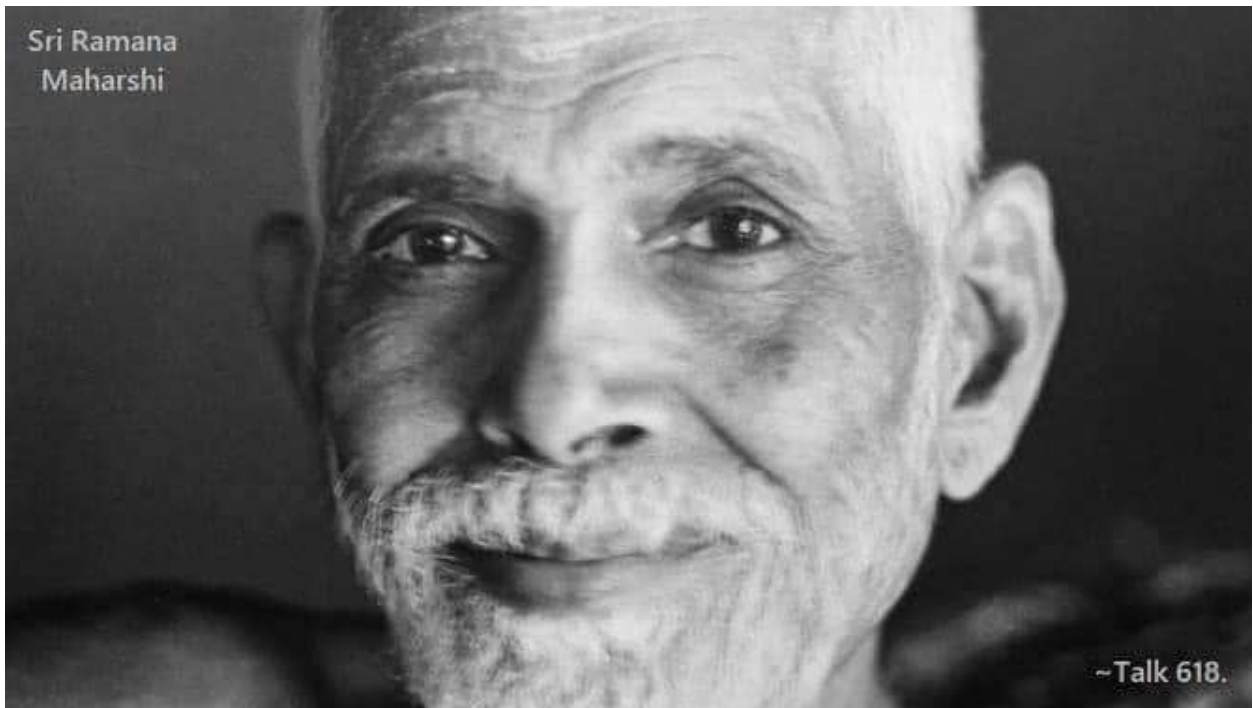
Do not give the least chance to any possibility of forgetting the Self, which could happen by your yielding to sleep or to worldly gossip or disturbance in the form of some noise etc. Undeterred and not distracted by any of these, contemplate upon the Self within yourself.

*nidrāyā loka-vārtāyāh
shabdāder-ātma-vismriteh
kvachid-nāvasaram dattvā
chintayātmānamātmani*

adhyātmopanishad, mantra 5

We exercise our will, only to surrender our will at the altar of the blazing light of right understanding.

WHAT TO DO WITH THOUGHTS?



Thoughts must be checked by seeking to whom they arise. So, you go to their source where they do not arise.

618, Talks with Shri Ramana Maharshi

[A lot of people go on reading books or attending Vedānta classes but do not wisely handle thoughts when they arise in their minds. Shri Maharshi urges us to deal with thoughts, as shown in the quote above, and permits us to study the scriptures which certainly give us clarity on the nature of thoughts and our relation to them. – Editors]

Thus Spake
Chinmaya

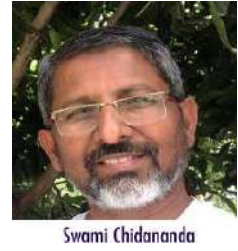
HOW DO WE RISE? HOW DO WE FALL?



When I slip outside, I fall.

When I slip inside, I rise.

Pujya Swami Chinmayananda ji



IS SELF-IMPROVEMENT AN ILLUSORY JOURNEY?

The 'self' that improves (or deteriorates) is itself an illusion. How can then the improvement in (or of) the 'self' be real? If the dream personality itself is unreal, how can the narrative that this personality successfully climbed Mount Everest have any value?

Higher Vedānta (or call it Core Vedānta) thus advises us not to get charmed by ideas of becoming a better person or a nobler human being. Nor should we go to the opposite of the matter, becoming indifferent or insensitive towards our own wellbeing or others' welfare. While we live a conscientious life, marked by care, service and responsibility, we must develop, deep inside us, a tendency to question all our notions of who we are. At a given point of time in our life, we need to be true to our values at that time point but not get trapped in any kind of judgmentalism! Feelings of the kind, 'We are right and others are wrong' should be looked at with suspicion, if not rejected outrightly.

Staying thus in a spirit of enquiry enables us to be in a certain inward silence, which becomes a fountain of continued insights into and recurring glimpses of spiritual life. The paradox here is that, on one hand, we indeed live a highly virtuous life and, on the other, we look at the saint and the sinner with equal eyes. There is overarching compassion in our bosom on this exalted plane of consciousness.

Thus, Self-abidance (*ātma-nisthā*) is not reaching a destination at the end of a long journey but waking up from the dream in which we had been travellers. No wonder Shri Ramana Maharshi, when requested to state the nature of spiritual practices required for liberation, said, in two words, 'Be still'!

As our perception of life advances, it is not a matter of *doing* anything that matters. It is *seeing* what truly is.



All doing – worship, recitation of mantras, breathing exercises etc. which are credited with self-improvement (called inner purification at times) – is thus within the error domain (*avidyā-bhoomi*) and loses significance in the state of enlightenment (*vidyā-bhoomi*).

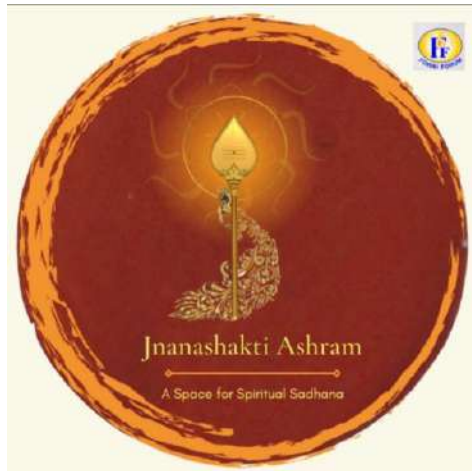
It seems there is a bhajan by Saint Meera where she sings, “I crossed the river of *māyā* with great difficulty; after I reached the other bank, I looked back, to notice that there was no river at all!”

In summary, we must do (and we do anyhow) what appeals to us as worthy or meaningful but must quietly watch the judgments or conclusions that our mind arrives at. Flashes of insight arising in pure intelligence, and not conclusions of the mind, take us to a different plane of existence where all our past turns into mere fiction.

Swami Chidananda

Jnāna Shakti
Strength from Right Understanding

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



Final Touches being Given to the Design

After a wonderful ‘bhoomi-poojā’ on Sunday, October 30, 2022, our team is endeavouring to give final touches to the architectural drawings and finalize on all the parties who will be involved in the construction, which will begin soon.

Ar Preeti Joshi has joined our team as the new municipal architect. She was with our core team when we had yet another round of discussion with our main architects – Vanwari Architects – on November 11.



An aerial visualization of the physical appearance of Jnāna Shakti āshram, November 2022

We welcome contributions from friends and well-wishers to expedite the work.

Team Jnāna Shakti

**Introducing an
Upanishad**

THE BRIHADĀRANYAKA UPANISHAD – 4 of 4

Self-love is behind all Love

‘You love yourself and only yourself, really speaking,’ says Sage Yājñavalkya, revealing an open secret of life. At different phases of life, a man intensely loves his wife, or so it seems. During that phase, the self in him is such (so conditioned) that the wife is rightly aligned to please it. At another time, his sons are so aligned that they please the self the most. Over the length of his life, different persons, or things please the self, and he imagines that they are the sources of happiness. He really, all the time, loves the self in him. He really loves himself the most, all the time (2.4.5). The Pure Self, which is masquerading as the limited self (with its varied conditionings), is the real source of happiness!



Our mind can never objectify and know the supreme truth, the Self. Though much is said about the *ātmā*, which has no birth, death, or transmigration, it is finally to be known intuitively through a thorough negation of all that it is not. This utter negation of all the false layers that hide the Self is expressed as '*neti, neti*' (*na + iti, na + iti*), which appears three times (2.3.6, 3.9.26 and 4.5.15) at different chapters of the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad.

It is this magnificent Upanishad that reveals the truth that the Self is the light of all lights. The light of the Self never ceases to shine even as the sun, the moon, fire, and speech stop providing any clue to possible knowledge. The Self alone is a man's light, when all else fails, says a mantra (4.3.6).

We normally praise work or action (*karma*) in this world. Everything is achieved by staying active. The Upanishads take us to a higher plane where the liberating wisdom is about a truth that neither increases nor decreases in any way (4.4.23), irrespective of any amount of work that may be done. This truth remains unaffected and unmoved. And liberation is when we 'see' this truth, and not when we 'do' anything about it. No wonder the way of the Upanishads is called '*jñāna-yoga*', which is a cut above '*karma-yoga*'.

Erroneous understanding creates duality. Realization consists in knowing the nondual nature of our existence. This Upanishad says without mincing words, 'Fear arises when one sees something (or someone) second to oneself' (1.4.2). The highest vision of seeing no other, hearing no other, touching no other, smelling no other etc. is also expressed in this sacred dialogue itself (2.4.14).

On the whole, a careful study of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad with guidance from a competent teacher can clear all the doubts in a student's mind and pave the way to abidance in the absolute reality. Thus ends a summary, in four parts, of this Upanishad.

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

Quote of the Issue

SPIRITUALITY IS TIMELESS



When you realize that eternity is right here now, that it is within your possibility, to experience the eternity of your own truth and being, then you grasp the following: That which you are was never born and will never die. Eternity is not the future or past. Eternity is a dimension of now.

Joseph Campbell

[Joseph Campbell (1904 – 1987) was an American writer. He was a professor of literature at Sarah Lawrence College (in New York) who worked in comparative mythology and comparative religion. His work covers many aspects of the human experience. Campbell's best-known work is his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), in which he discusses his theory of the journey of the archetypal hero shared by world mythologies. Since the publication of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell's theories have been applied by a wide variety of modern writers and artists. His philosophy has been summarized by his own often repeated phrase: "Follow your bliss." He gained recognition in Hollywood when George Lucas credited Campbell's work as influencing his *Star Wars* saga.]

Smt. Indira Gautam
Writes from the US

PURSUE KNOWLEDGE

May Knowledge Blossom into Wisdom



Rishis of yore spoke of two kinds of learning (*vidyā*): the lower (*aparā*) and the higher (*parā*). Both these have their important places in human life. The first one, *aparā vidyā*, can enable us to become good citizens who contribute to the well being of the society in various ways and enjoy a higher sense of purpose and meaning in life. The second one, *parā vidyā*, facilitates the realization of the goal in life called *moksha* (emancipation).

The higher one is not everyone's cup of tea, at least in one lifetime. We of course believe that everyone is destined to reach *moksha*, maybe after many lives.

Talking of the lower domain, it has its own glory and beauty. We must note however that we can not take it for granted that such knowledge comes to us of its own. We must put in effort.

If we do not strive towards gaining skills, becoming knowledgeable and serving the society, our human life may go to waste. Having got the human body and mind, which have great capacities, we should not let this life pass without rising in consciousness.

It is thus said¹ rightly:

Animals and humans both pursue food and take rest; they have certain insecurity, which they deal with through chosen mechanisms; they reproduce and seek continuity beyond death. What is special in human life is the pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge alone makes our life truly distinguished.

May we go for continued learning whereby we achieve *dharma* through knowledge and, going further, aim at *moksha* through extraordinary wisdom.

1 *āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-santatitvam*

sāmānyam-etat pashubhir-narānām

jnānam hi teshām adhikam vishistham

jnānena heenāh pashubhih samānāh

Indira Gautam

Health is You

GREEN TEA

Have you not started taking it yet?

People have hailed the health benefits of green tea for centuries. Studies suggest that consuming green tea may positively affect skin health, help with weight loss, and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

According to a report from the International Institute of Sustainable Development, tea is the second most consumed beverage in the world, after water.

All tea types, except herbal, are brewed from the dried leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* bush. The level of oxidation of the leaves determines the type of tea.

Green tea is made from unoxidized leaves and is one of the least processed types of tea. For this reason, it contains the most antioxidants and beneficial polyphenols.

People used green tea in traditional Chinese and Indian medicine to control bleeding and heal wounds, aid digestion, improve heart and mental health, and regulate body temperature.

Studies suggest that green tea may have positive effects on weight loss, liver disorders, type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and more.

However, it is important to note that more evidence is necessary before scientists can definitively prove these possible health benefits.

AUPA Yuva As Young Eyes See

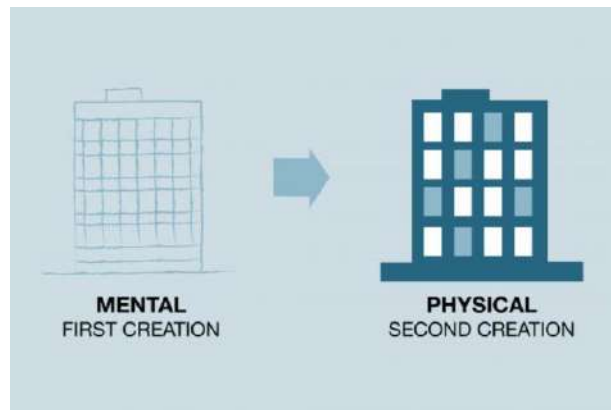
BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

2 of the 7 Habits

Stephen Covey was on the cover of the TIME magazine, during his lifetime itself, as someone who had tremendously influenced the thinking of people around the world.

The second among the 7 Habits that he championed is – Begin with the End in Mind.

'Begin With the End in Mind' is based on imagination—the ability to envision in your mind what you cannot at present see with your eyes. It is based on the principle that all things are created twice. There is a mental (first) creation, and a physical (second) creation. The physical creation follows the mental, just as a building follows a blueprint.



If you do not make a conscious effort to visualize who you are and what you want in life, then you empower other people and circumstances to shape you and your life by default. It is about connecting again with your uniqueness and then defining the personal, moral, and ethical guidelines within which you can most happily express and fulfil yourself.

One of the best ways to incorporate Habit 2 into your life is to develop a Personal Mission Statement. It focuses on what you want to be and do. It is your plan for success. It reaffirms who you are, puts your goals in focus, and moves your ideas into the real world. Your mission statement makes you the leader of your own life. You create your destiny and secure the future you envision.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People – a phenomenal work by Dr Covey – goes hand in hand with the core values of spiritual traditions in different parts of the world. Covey and spiritual teachers both aim at bringing out human excellence, staying aligned with time-tested morals that humanity has honored.

Webinars



The following webinars were presented on Sundays at 8.30 pm IST.

# 232 on Nov 6, 2022	Memories, A Prison	By Swami Chidananda
# 233 on Nov 27, 2022	A Book Review	By Swami Chidananda

The review was of a new book by Prof. Srikumar Rao titled 'Modern Wisdom, Ancient Roots.'

The following webinars will come up, at 8.30 pm IST on Sundays.

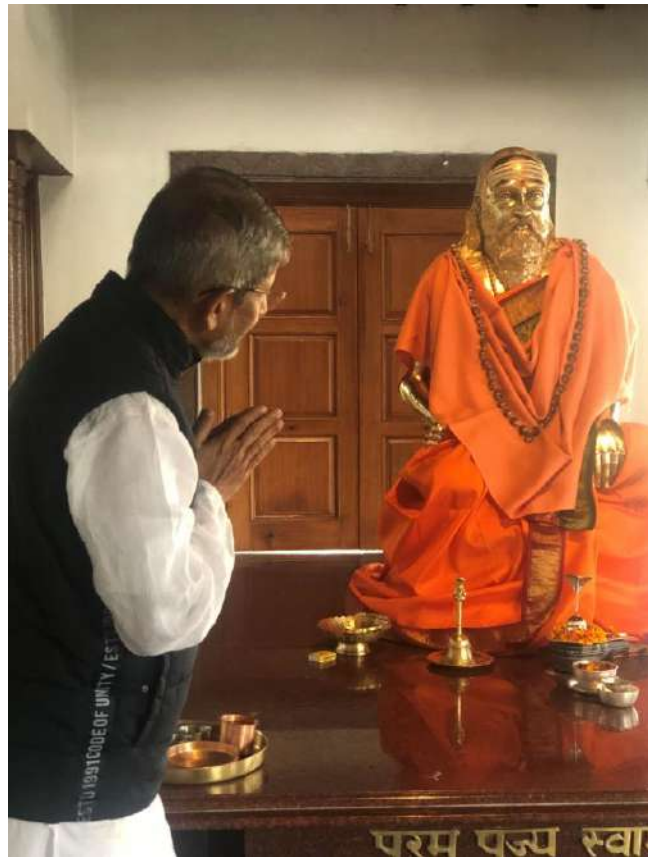
# 234 on Dec 11, 2022	Memories, Our Wealth Too	By Swami Chidananda
# 235 on Dec 25, 2022	A Book Review, Part Two	By Swami Chidananda

News

'Shivānanda Lahari' online classes

November 9, 2022: Online talks in Kannada on 'Shivānanda Lahari' began. A bunch of people, mainly in Goa, had requested Swamiji for these classes. These weekly sessions are now being held every Wednesday, at 5.30 pm. Those who know Kannada and wish to join may contact Smt. Ashwini Kulkarni at Email id: aakgoa07@gmail.com for the link.

Guru Padukā Poojā





Nov 18, 2022: Swamiji, accompanied by Brni Vibha Chaitanya, Shri Sudarshan Sharma and Smt Neelam Sharma, performed Guru-Pādukā Poojā at the 'Gurudev Kutia' in Sidhbari. He also meditated during 4 mornings, at the samādhi sthal of Pujya Swami Chinmayanandaji, located within the campus of the āshram.

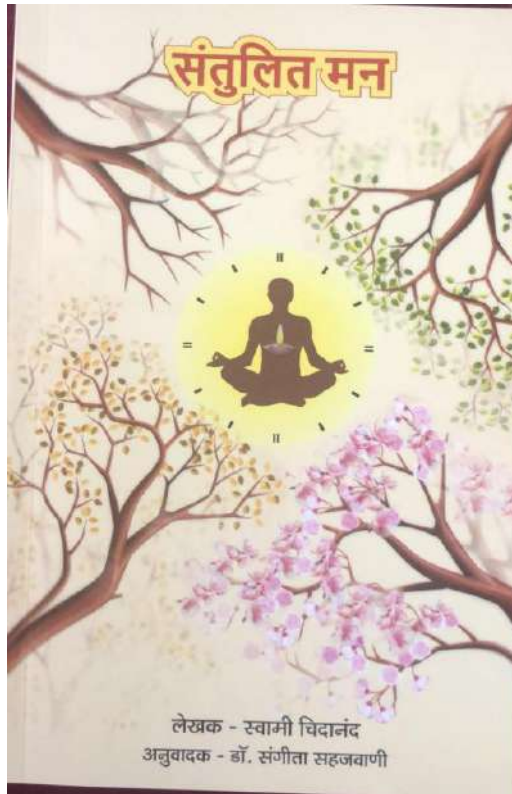
Discussion on Shankara, Ramana and J Krishnamurti

Nov 19, 2022: Shri Dharamraj, originally from Prayag (called Allahabad previously), used to visit the Krishnamurti Centre in Varanasi quite frequently. He has moved to Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh a year or two back. Along with two of his associates – Urmil and Suromita – he offered lunch to Swamiji and his group, following which there was discussion. A 3-member panel, consisting of Dharamraj, Brni Vibha Chaitanya and Swamiji exchanged their ideas about three great masters – Shankara, Ramana and J Krishnamurti. Its video was later uploaded on YouTube.



Release of a book in Hindi

Nov 27, 2022: Dr Sangeeta Sahajwani had translated one of Swamiji's books – The Equanimous Mind – into Hindi. This book 'SANTULIT MAN' was released on Sunday, Nov 27 at the Otters' Club in Bandra. The event was made a part of the celebrations of the 50th wedding anniversary of Sangeeta ji and Shri Ramesh Sahajwani



Upcoming Events

Regular Online Events:

Wednesdays, 8 am: Bhagavad-Geetā (YouTube, FOWAI channel)

Wednesdays, 5.30 pm: Shivānanda Lahari (in Kannada)¹

Wednesday, 7.30 pm: Suvarnamukhi Samskriti Dhāma Satsangs²

Fridays, 8.30 pm: Chāndogya Upanishad (YouTube, FOWAI channel)

Notes 1 and 2: The Readers who wish to get the link to the weekly events may Email fowaiforum@gmail.com

Proposed Retreat on Vidura Neeti: Incessant rains in Bengaluru again prevented certain infrastructural work at the ADVAITAM, and this Retreat is postponed further. We will intimate everybody once the Yoga Hall is built and made ready to hold the classes.

(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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