

AUPA e - Newsletter

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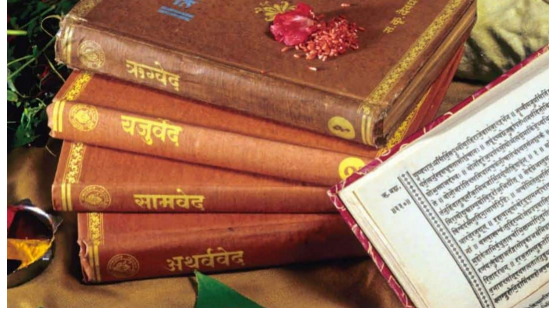


Editor: Swami Chidananda
Associate Editor: Dolly Seth

Mantra to Ponder

VALUES THAT ENRICH LIFE

It is not correct to imagine that all the mantras of the Upanishads are abstract, belonging to the domain of metaphysics. Some of them are utterly simple, guiding us in living our daily life in a value-based manner. An example of this is from one of the minor Upanishads – Akshi-Upanishad – from Krishna Yajurveda: A man on the path of sādhanā grabs every opportunity to meet with pious people, learn from them and serve them; he also does not let go of a single opportunity to study scriptures.



manasā karmanā vācā
sajjanān-upasevate
yatah-kutaschid-āneeya
nityam shāstrāni-avekshate

Mantra 2:8 of Akshi Upanishad

We are thus advised to be careful about our company. When we realize some people around us are not living rightly, we must keep a distance from them. When we see, in contrast, people who are virtuous, we must try to get near them. The latter may be a smaller number but all the same our effort must be to associate with them. It is equally important to be regular in the study of scriptures, which show us the right path.

IS LOVE DUALITY?

A devotee asked Ramana if love postulates duality. How can the Self (the nondual truth) be an object of love?



Maharshi replied: Love is not different from the Self. Love of an object is of an inferior order and cannot endure. Whereas the Self is Love; in other words, God is Love.

(Talk 433, Talks with Shri Ramana Maharshi)

**IS THERE A NEW YEAR?
*You change, the world changes.***



When you change, the year becomes new!

You do not have to wait for the first of January! The day you change, it is the 'New Year' for you. You are the master of your life. A mere repetition of 'Happy New Year' or sending New Year cards does not make it happen for anybody. Think...

The underlying spirit should be a wish that the friend or relative would change their attitude to life through a process of control, regulation, and purification. Thereby the individual changes, and when the person changes, the world outside is effectively changed.

You change, the world changes. When the mind is changed, you are changed. New times, new thoughts have been created. It is the dawn of a New Year!



Swami Chidananda

WHO IS RICH? *And who poor?*

As we spiritually advance, we realize that our state of mind makes all the difference in life's situations. 'It is all in the mind,' goes the summary statement. If the mind is in a favourable state, we bear with Himalayan tragedies with a smile on our face; otherwise, trivial disturbances make us utterly desperate for the whole day.

There are very wealthy people on this earth who are very discontent; and then there are people with a hand-to-mouth existence, who go through their days with enviable cheerfulness. A popular line¹ from the collection of *subhāshitas* (wise verses in Sanskrit) goes, "Who is rich and who is wretched, when one's mind is satisfied with the situation on hand?" It is therefore no exaggeration if we say the crux of the matter when it comes to spirituality is handling our mind with maturity.

The difficulty with the challenge is that most of us imagine all we need is more will power to stay calm during unpleasant times. The truth however is that right living, on one hand, and insights of wisdom, on the other, come together to bless us with such an ability to face storms of life that we ourselves get surprised how we could do it.

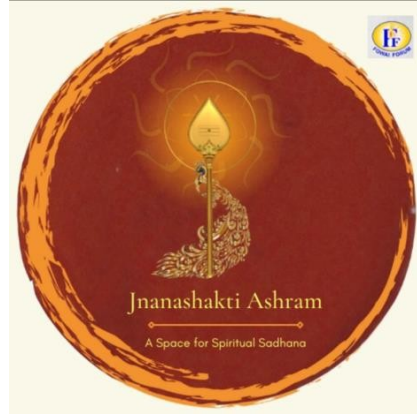
An integrated approach to right living requires the recognition that our body, our mind and our breathing are interconnected. Therefore, lifestyle changes, which make room for proper exercises, nutritious food, study, meditation and *prānāyāma*, go a long way in generating the required state of mind, where we remain happy and energetic in varied circumstances. Unless we tackle the causes of mental imbalance, we will simply not succeed in thwarting the effects. Can one decide not to feel hungry (the effect) while keeping away (the cause) from food for long hours? Can one, similarly, not exercise nor meditate and then feel sad about bouts of depression that hit one periodically?

We must live wisely and then the fragrance of happiness fills our life, coming as though like a side-product!

Swāmi Chidānanda

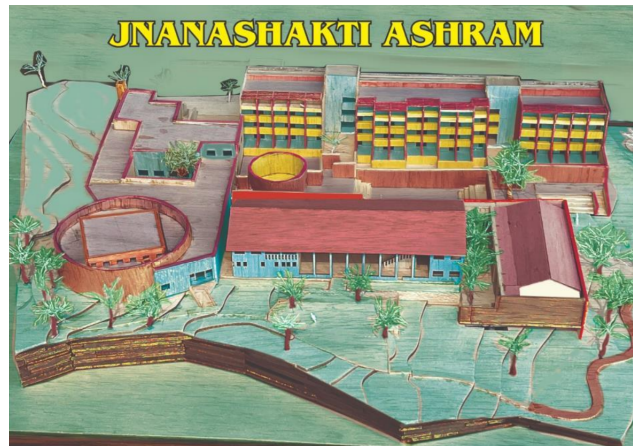
¹ *manasi cha paritusthe, ko'rthavān ko daridrah?* (Bhartrihari's vairāgya-shatakam)

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



Fund-raising has been progressing on one hand, and, on the other, we are getting closer to begin the construction. We will soon announce the commencement of the work on the site.

Hotel Ramanashree Richmond was the venue for a successful fund-raiser event on December 17, 2022. Shri Shadakshari, a well-known businessman, a noted writer, and a much-regarded philanthropist, joined us and announced his generous support to the project. He was recently awarded the 'NADOJA' title at the Kannada University in Hampi in Karnataka for his significant contributions to Kannada literature, social uplift, and spiritual growth in the State.



Above: A painted version of the thin wood model of the facility to come up.

We once more appeal to all our friends' circle and to Vedānta students to support this noble project.

Team Jnana Shakti

THE CHĀNDOGYA UPANISHAD – 1 of 4 *Know Clay, Know All Pots*



Chāndogya Upanishad belongs to the Sāma Veda and has 8 chapters. It begins with the words ‘*Om-iti-etad-aksharam*’. The imperishable truth (*aksharam*) is thus the essence of this voluminous sacred text. A singer of the mantras called *sāmāni* (singular form is *sāman*) is called a *chandoga*. (*chandah sāma gāyati iti chandogah*). This Upanishad is a part of the Chāndogya Brāhmana, which has 10 chapters. The first two *brāhmanas* deal with various sacrifices and other forms of worship. The following eight *brāhmanas* constitute the Upanishad.

The first and the second chapters of this Upanishad discuss the problems of liturgy and doctrine such as the genesis and significance of Aum and the meaning and names of *sāman*.

“That work alone becomes surpassingly effective, which is performed with right understanding, faith, and with yoga (the mind being where the hands are),” goes a powerful (and popular) mantra, right in the first section of the first chapter. It is one of those mantras that have inspired workers in diverse fields of human endeavor.

The much-quoted mantra, ‘*sarvam khalu idam brahma,*’ is from this Upanishad. All this is Brahman. One must meditate, with a mind free of agitations (on Brahman) as That from which everything rises, in which everything gets dissolved, and on which everything (stays) breathes. The cryptic expression ja-la-an in the advice to meditate on Brahman stands for birth (*ja – janma*), death (*la – laya*) and sustenance (*ana – prāna – breathing*).

The celebrated story of Satyakāma, the son of Jabālā, appears in this Upanishad. The boy asks his mother, ‘What is my gotra (lineage)?’ His mother says, ‘Your father died young. When you were a little child, your father and I were very busy attending to a lot of guests. I could never ask your father what our family’s gotra is. Therefore, tell Rishi Hāridrumata that you are the son of Jabālā and that you do not know your gotra.’ Satyakāma just does that. He does not fabricate something and mislead the head of the *gurukula* (residential centre for learning the Vedas) where he was eager to join. The story, which has much suspense at a certain point regarding the question whether he gets rejected or admitted, ends on a happy note when Rishi Hāridrumata deeply appreciates the transparency and straightforwardness of the boy and declares, ‘Someone who speaks the truth like you do has to be worthy of studying the Vedas. Get in.’

The sixth chapter of this Upanishad is perhaps the most well-known part of all the Upanishads, where the great statement ‘*tat-tvam-asi*’ also appears. The fascinating story of Shwetaketu, the son of Rishi Uddālaka, has the boy returning from his *gurukula* after studying the Vedas for 12 years. He however is lost when his father asks him, ‘Did you study and know that truth, knowing which all the unknown becomes known at

once?’

Beautiful illustrations found in this Upanishad, like clay being the substance of all clay pots, became the nuts and bolts of Vedānta, for they allow themselves to be much elaborated upon, facilitating a profound learning of all the fundamental revelations of the science of Self-knowledge, which is the same as Brahma-vidyā. (To be continued)

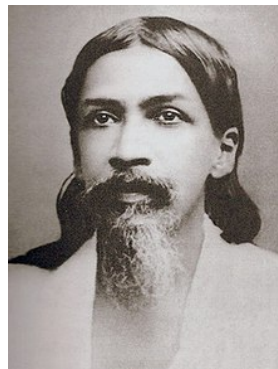
[This is the twelfth piece in this series after the Upanishads – Ishā, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, Taittiriya-1 (shikshā-valli), Taittiriya-2 (Brahmānanda-valli), Taittiriya-3 (Bhrigu-valli), Brihadāranyaka-1, Brihadāranyaka-2, Brihadāranyaka-3 and Brihadāranyaka-4 were introduced in the previous eleven articles. –Editors]

Quote of the
Issue

THE FLOOD OF SPIRITUAL REVELATION

The Upanishads are the supreme work of the Indian mind, and that it should be so, that the highest self-expression of its genius, its sublimest poetry, its greatest creation of the thought and word should be not a literary or poetical masterpiece of the ordinary kind, but a large flood of spiritual revelation of this direct and profound character, is a significant fact, evidence of a unique mentality and unusual turn of spirit.

Sri Aurobindo
(Extracted from his work *The Foundations of Indian Culture*)



[**Sri Aurobindo** (August 1872 – December 1950) was a philosopher, yogi, maharshi, poet, and Indian nationalist. He was also a journalist, editing newspapers such as *Vande Mātaram*. He joined the Indian movement for independence from British colonial rule, until 1910 was one of its influential leaders, and then became a spiritual reformer, introducing his visions on human progress and spiritual evolution.]

Smt. Indira Gautam
Writes from the US

GOOD HABITS *The Fertile Ground for Spiritual Growth*



One of the tragic consequences of industrial growth, made possible by unimaginable advancements of science and technology in modern times, is that large numbers of people live chaotic lifestyles. They do not sleep at the right time; they do not stay awake during the right hours; their eating and working habits also leave much to be desired.

I came across a Sanskrit verse¹, which says in its translation:

Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, would certainly keep away from that man – even if he be Nārāyana himself – if he sleeps even after sunrise and is often on the bed at the time of sunset too!

No doubt we tend to justify our erratic ways of living, saying we are helpless, our work is such, the society is bad these days etc. That is seldom true. Our life is really in our hands. Where there is will, there is a way.

We just cannot afford to throw our lifestyle to the winds if we really wish to spiritually blossom. In matters of work and rest, food and drink, speech and silence, we need to make strict rules for ourselves and work hard to bring our way of living to something that Mother Nature designed us for. We will thereby ensure a sound mind in a healthy body. Such body and mind can then surely facilitate splendid spiritual growth.

Indira Gautam

1 *suryodaye cha astamaye cha
shayānam-ashuchi-naram
Lakshmiḥ parityajed-noonam
yadi Nārāyano'pyasau*

PRATYĀHĀRA A Powerful Means to Speed up our Inward Journey

Kavita Raju

Man, today, finds himself racing against time in all aspects of his living. He seeks quick and effective remedy for all his hurdles, be they physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or even spiritual. In this current fast paced world, where everything that we see around us pulls our mind into numerous directions, it is often difficult and at times seemingly impossible to keep our mind engaged or concentrated when we need it the most.



Pratyāhāra, one of the limbs of the *ashtāṅga yoga* gives us a technique to gain control of our racing mind. The word *pratyāhāraḥ* is a compound of two Sanskrit words. *āhara* means “food” or “anything taken into ourselves from outside” and the word *prati* is a preposition meaning “against” or “away”. *Pratyāhāra* therefore literally means control of *āharaḥ* or ‘gaining mastery over external influences.’ *Pratyāhāraḥ* is thus the withdrawal of senses from the sensory objects.

Yogic texts teach us that *pratyāhāra* has to be done at four levels – *indriya-pratyāhāra* (sensory control), *prāna-pratyāhāra* (*prānic* control), *manah-pratyāhāra* (mental control) and *karma-pratyāhāra* (control of action).

Indriya-pratyāhāra is central to *pratyāhāra*. We are constantly confronted with bright colours, loud noises, and dramatic sensations. Most of us suffer from sensory overload today. Patanjali Yoga Sūtra 2.54 (*sva-viśaya-asamprayoge cittasya svarūpānukāra ivendriyāṅām pratyāhāraḥ*) says – when the senses do not conform with their objects but imitate the nature of the mind, that is *pratyāhāra*.

The *sūtra* says *cittasya svarūpānukāra* – Allow the mind to gain control by regulating the senses, reversing the control from senses to the mind. In the Vedic age, the Rishis used their senses for fulfilling their dharma and, at other times, chose to keep them at rest. Therefore, they never had to wear spectacles to see nor hearing aids to hear. They used their senses efficiently. So, the *sūtra* says, “Give the senses the opposite of *what it wants*, to gain control.” By withdrawing our awareness from negative impressions, *pratyāhāra* strengthens the mind’s power of immunity. When eyes want more forms to see, then give them a divine impression such as the OM symbol to feed on, or give them rest by closing them; when ears want more sound, then give them divine sounds to feed on or give them silence. In this manner, gain control over the senses and train the mind to use the senses to lead it to fulfil its dharma (the purpose of its existence, which is to realise its divine nature).

NOW IS THE TIME

Shalini Keshavan

Time - We love it, and we quite dislike it! If only we could control time rather than have it control us!



When we think about it, what is time? When seen in relation to events, we have past, present and future. In absolute terms, time is always the present, the Now, for, as the great masters have brought it to our understanding, time is just the gap between 2 events! That gap arises from, stays in, and recedes into the mind!

Events always arise in the mind as thoughts and are then expressed as words or actions. Thus, the gap between two thoughts is probably the shortest time. This implies that thought must precede time! This means that time is after all a concept of the mind; mind being defined as the flow of thoughts! Yet, the mind seems to be in the grip of time!

Before clocks were invented, time did not bother us as much. All activities were planned out between sunrise and sunset - a very broad time space, in tune with nature outside and nature of the body! The moment clocks and a 24-hour day came into usage, we have been as though enslaved by time! Time, when seen as 60 seconds, 60 minutes, 24 hours, 30/31 days, 12 months, a decade - these bring out the two aspects - Time is a boon/Time is a curse! Time is time - neither *good* nor *not good*, neither *slow moving* nor *fast*, neither *too long* nor *too short*...time is just right, time is just time!

As an old habit, the mind is constantly in a pendulum motion between the past and the future. It takes tremendous effort to keep the mind in the present. To keep the mind in the present implies being extremely alert, keeping the thoughts to a minimum and, at some point, bringing the scattered thoughts to a single thought focused into a flow, as is the attempt in meditation. However, while at work, one cannot be in single-thought state! Learning from the past and planning for the future while executing the plan in the present is the constant pre-occupation of the mind at work.

Every thought is a packet of energy. It could be *jnāna-shakti* (thoughts that are objective knowledge), *icchā-shakti* (thoughts that are desires) or *kriyā-shakti* (thoughts that are execution oriented). The more the number of thoughts, more is the energy expended. Thoughts of knowledge and those that are desires are high energy, while thoughts of execution are relatively of lower energy. The more thoughts of objective knowledge and desires we entertain, the more tired we feel! The more thoughts of the past or future we entertain, the more we are drained since those thoughts are tremendous in quantity! Energy drain is, in other words, called - Stress!

More the objective knowledge we gain, more are the desires that come up, more the thoughts of learning from the past and goals for the future, and then accordingly thoughts of execution, the more one is stressed out!!

The more we narrow down the time space, the more time enslaves us. In fact, the mind and time together bind us as though, tie us down! There is much to be accomplished within the 'given time frame'!! If that is not achieved, stress builds up!

So, what exactly is the problem here? And what is the solution?

The problem is the emotional mind being associated with time, a concept of the mind which has enslaved the mind. The need to accomplish a certain task within a time-period, drives one to plan as per the need. In the process, when the emotional mind craves for fulfilment of more desires – very selfish desires – in a short period of time, the more will be the planning, excitement, agitation, joy/disappointment and more will be the stress!

If one can plan the execution of selfless desires, intention to help larger populations of beings (not just humans) and does not associate all this with a rigid time frame, one would accomplish the task with least energy drain – the least amount of stress! To be able to do this, one needs to be self-disciplined, value values and be extremely mindful and aware of oneself!

Time is one's friend, if one wants to accomplish and attain high quality results, if one wants to transform one's proficiency into efficiency and if one values and respects the importance of a poised mind. However, when one is extremely ambitious/passionate and attempts to achieve multiple targets in short spans of time, time becomes a challenge and a cause for stress! Time is a tool, and it is the texture and quality of the mind that determines how time is utilized.

'Now' is the time to give this a thought, keep the mind poised and at peace, and make 'time' our best friend and use the time-tool efficiently! Now is the time...

Now is the time

Now is the time to
Be at my best
Now is the time
To face the present
With all its presentations
The situations, the uncertainties
The moments delicate and vulnerable.

Now is the time
To value the sandpaper rubs
That bring challenges and opportunities alike
As I am cut off from my comfort zone
A new routine to be made

With plans flexible, in thought and act.

Now is the time
To check my mind
To face my imperfections
That stare me in the face
Revealed by the nearest and dearest
To be thankful for the same.

Now is the time
To be duty bound
To prioritize my time
To send out thoughts out to the universe
Thoughts of understanding, compassion
Thoughts of abundance
Thoughts of gratitude inexpressible

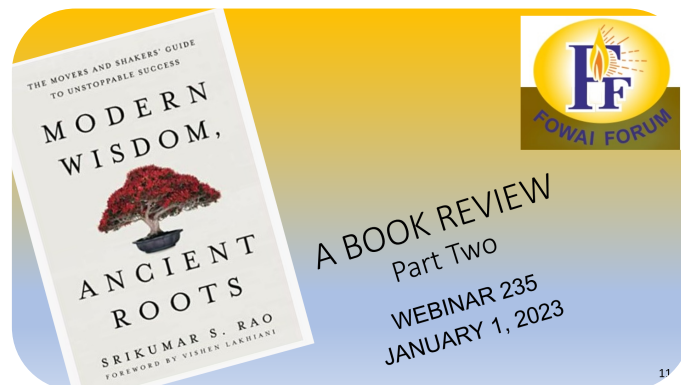
Now is the time
To put myself aside
And wear my hat of gratitude
That melts in the warmth
Of knowledge, faith, and love
To be a part of me, beautiful and inseparable.

Now is the time
For there can be no other

Webinars

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

# 234 on Dec 11, 2022	Memories, Our Wealth Too	By Swami Chidananda
# 235 on January 1, 2023	A Book Review, Part Two	By Swami Chidananda



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



# 236 on January 15, 2023	Dealing with Guilt	By Swami Chidananda
# 237 on January 29, 2023	The Miracle of Gratitude	By Swami Chidananda

News

BENGALURU

Talk at Adhyātma Prakāsha Kāryālaya, Dec 5: Shri Devarāya Kulkarni (1922 – 1993) was a wonderful speaker and writer on Vedānta, being an ardent follower of Swāmi Sacchidānandendra Saraswati of Holenarasipura in Karnataka. This year 2022 was Shri Kulkarni's centenary year. His family members and other admirers celebrated the occasion with 7 days of spiritual discourses by different, eminent scholars at the Kāryālaya in Bengaluru. Swāmiji delivered one of the *pravachans* on Monday the 5th.



Satsang at the residence of Sri Viswanath Bokkasam, Dec 5: There was good response to the *offline event* at J P Nagar, where more than 60 people enthusiastically gathered and listened to Swāmiji, who spoke on 'The Light of Geeta for Today's World'.

Visit to Serene Urbana, Dec 16:

Responding to the invitation of Smt Padma Vijayadri, a resident of the Senior Living Facility called Serene Urbana, just three kilometers from Bengaluru airport, Swamiji went and delivered a talk on Bhagavad Geeta. The audience were nearly sixty seniors, who listened attentively and responded vibrantly. The beautiful campus with lots of elegant facilities was indeed something wonderful.



MUMBAI

A friend turns 75: Shri Bansi L Mahajan, a good friend, patron and well-wisher of FOWAI FORUM, turned 75 years old, and there was a beautiful get together and celebration at the Raheja Classique Club in Andheri West, Mumbai. Melodious bhajans were sung by some volunteers of ISKCON, some old Bollywood songs were also sung by two professional singers, Swamiji and Swami Kapil Prabhu (ISKCON) spoke and blessed Shri Mahajan. Ms Surbhi, the younger daughter of Mahajan, was the Master of Ceremonies, and the dinner was saatvik, where onion and garlic also were absent.



Ms Uma Muchhala, Ms Renu Gandhi, Brni Vibha Chaitanya, Shri B L Mahajan, Swamiji and Shri Kapil Prabhu at the event on Dec 25.

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 sacredsource called Upanishads. This e-newsletter comes from Project Manager of the website: aupa.in – Upanishad Wisdom).

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