

AUPA e - Newsletter

February 2023
Vol 8, Issue 8 (No. 92)



Editor: Swami Chidananda
Associate Editor: Dolly Seth

Mantra to Ponder

THE PARAMOUNT PLACE OF VAIRĀGYA

The world today has plenty of Vedānta scholars. Their discourses and books are impressive. However, those who have erased their ego are very few. The factor that divides scholars from enlightened people is vairāgya – lack of attachment to worldly matters. Those who have no taste for the pleasures of the world and can ponder the Upanishad mantras with attention and alertness cannot but get illumined.



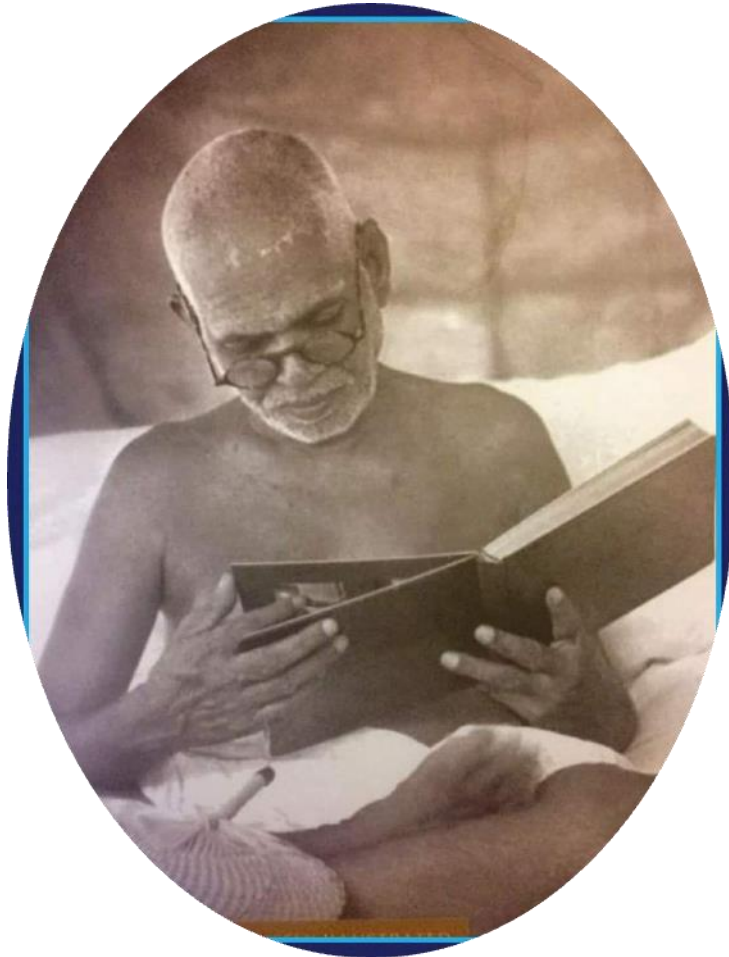
श्वोभावा मर्त्यस्य यदन्तकैतत् / *shvobhāvā martyasya yad-antakaitat*
सर्वेन्द्रियाणां जरयन्ति तेजः। / *sarvendriyānām jarayanti tejah*
अपि सर्वं जीवितमल्पमेव / *api sarvam jivitam-alpameva*
तवैव वाहास्तव नृत्यगीते ॥ / *tavaiva vāhās-tava nritya-geete*

O Lord Death, all these do not last long; these pleasures weaken our senses; even the so-called long life (eventually) becomes short. Keep all these music and dance (that you are offering to me) with yourself!

Kathopanishad, 1:1:26

ARE YOU A WORKAHOLIC?

Attached to talking also?



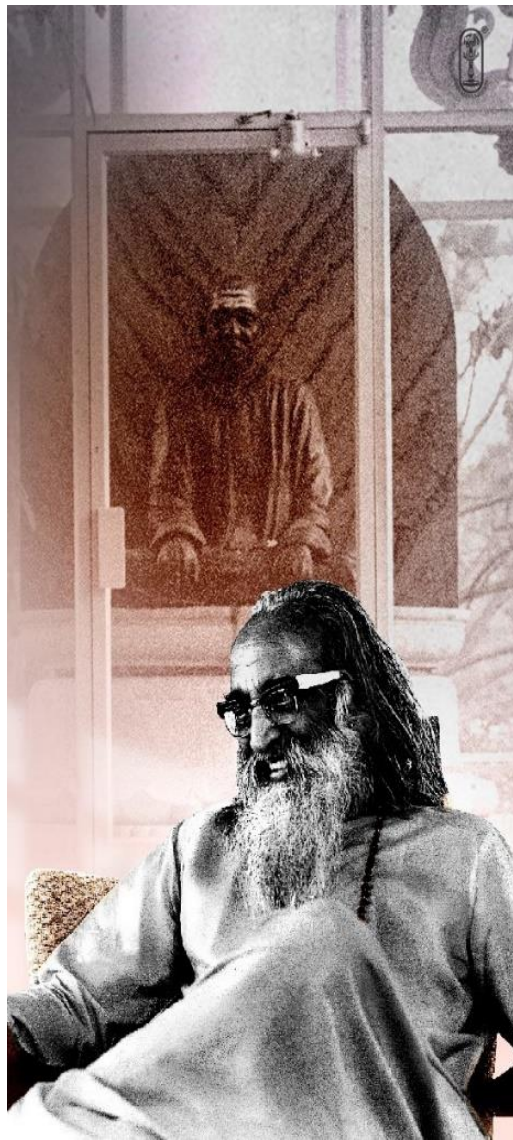
'Mouna (silence) is constant speech. Inactivity is constant activity.'

Shri Ramana Maharshi

[The seers on the earth, a special gift to us from God, always awaken us to a higher point of view. In our immaturity, we get attached to work and its results, which are more easily visible. We are fond of talking, expressing our various sentiments and ideas. We feel we have done something when we talk. As we turn spiritually mature, we realize the hidden powers of silence and the wonders that staying away from action does. Silence and inaction are powerful when, of course, they are backed by alertness, compassion and understanding. We are in no way making a case for inertia, tamas or sloth. – Editors]

**Thus Spake
Chinmaya**

ASPIRING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE?



“Man can change his destiny not by wishing for it but by working for it.

Pujya Swami Chinmayananda ji



Swami Chidananda

SING YOUR OWN SONG

The concept of '*swadharma*' in our scriptures, especially emphasized¹ in Bhagavad Geetā, is an excellent example of how spirituality offers insights into human psychology. We are at our best when we sing our own song. We underperform when we imitate others, blindly borrow the song from others. This world has, as though, songs in countless frequencies in the air. When we choose that song among the many, with which our own inner make-up resonates, we perform excellently and enjoy inner harmony.



What comes in the way is the influence that glitter and glamour of the world exert on us. Externalities like wealth, name and fame tempt us to pursue ways of living that are not in sync with our constitution. A fish, charmed by seeing a bird fly, tries to move in the sky; the result is disaster. Nor can the bird try to swim in the water. The best actors of Bollywood will neither perform well in the field of sports nor enjoy a career in sports. So will the sportsmen suffer if they fancy a career in acting.

The difficulty in identifying our *swadharma*, therefore, is lack of honesty and courage. We must examine our own choices with great objectivity and, upon gaining the required clarity, put aside all our fears and go for the right way, which provides the best opportunity for our self-expression.

'Be yourself' is often the summary of what is expressed above. 'God made you an original; do not die a duplicate,' said a wise man. Yes, we follow the crowd like blind sheep and miss the golden opportunity to sing our own song. In contrast, when we find out where we truly belong and make our work in the right field an offering² to God, we attain higher states of being.

Notes:

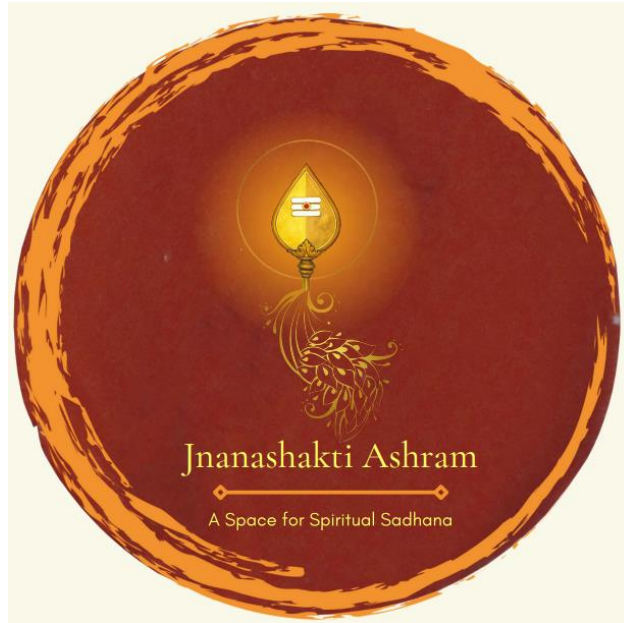
1 *shreyān swadharmo vigunah paradharmāt svanusthitāt* – Geetā 18.47

2 *svakarmanā tam-abhyarchya siddhim vindati mānavah* – Geetā 18.46

Swami Chidananda

Jnāna Shakti
Strength from Right Understanding

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



We are happy to let our readers know that the different appointments regarding the construction of the 'pilot phase' of Jnānashakti Āshram have been made. The work is likely to begin in mid-February.

We again request our well-wishers to contribute their time, talent, energy and, of course, money towards this noble project.

TEAM JNĀNA-SHAKTI

THE CHĀNDOGYA UPANISHAD – 2 of 4

The Ultimate Truth is Pure Being (sat)



The sixth chapter of the Chāndogya Upanishad uses the word *sat*, which means Pure Existence, to indicate the ultimate truth. Uddālaka, the teacher, becomes the mouthpiece of Mother Shruti (the Vedas) to make the very seminal revelation, 'Pure Existence alone was (and is, and will be)'.

The *advaita* (nondual) position is that this 'Pure Being' alone was, is and will be; nothing other than that ever was, is and will be. Everything else that we see and we, the conditioned perceivers, are part of a superimposition (*adhyāsa*), which is an error in seeing. Ample support for such an understanding of the entire school of nondual Vedānta can be found in the mantras of the sixth chapter (and is made extremely clear by the able commentaries of Ādi Shankarāchārya).

When the scriptures begin to help us understand the *advaita*, they employ a method called 'deliberate superimposition and subsequent negation' (*adhyāropa* and *apavāda*). [The error on the part of a student, who is not seeing rightly, is *adhyāsa*. The structures and concepts that the Vedānta texts supply, as a part of the teaching method intended to remove the *adhyāsa*, constitute *adhyāropa*.] The Chāndogya Upanishad introduces a component of *adhyāropa* by stating that fire, water and earth (*tejah*, *āpah* and *annam*) rise from the Pure Being (*sat*). These three elements, incidentally, represent the five elements (*pancha-bhootāni*), where the additional two are *ākāsha* (space) and *vāyu* (air).

Fire (*agni*), the sun (*āditya*) and the moon (*chandramā*) seem to have their own existence but they are no other than fire, water, and earth. Saying so, This Upanishad shows us the way 'subsequent negation' (*apavāda*) operates. In other words, many rising from the one is *adhyāropa*; many vanishing in the one is *apavāda*. This Upanishad excellently demonstrates the method (*prakriyā*), which is the umbrella under which many other *prakriyās* operate in the methodology of the Vedānta.

The remarks that Chāndogya Upanishad makes about food are fascinating. [They are of course part of the *adhyāropa* and should not be taken as absolutely real.] The fire facet of any food we take, in its subtle aspect, nurtures *vāk* (speech) in us; the water facet nurtures *prāna* (vital air) in us; the earth facet of anything we consume, in its subtle aspect, nurtures *manah* (mind). Among other implications, the intimate relation between what we eat and how we think is revealed by Shruti here.

Uddālaka asks Shwetaketu, the son, not to eat for fifteen days. The latter does as is asked to do. As a consequence, Shwetaketu fails to remember and recite the mantras that he otherwise was adept at. With this experiment, the teacher reinforces the understanding that food (annam, the earth facet, in annam, the food we eat) nurtures our mind. This connection between *āhāra* (food) and *manah* (sattva, mind), introduced in the sixth chapter, gets reinforced in the last section of the seventh chapter, which declares, 'Purity of mind results from purity of food'! (To be continued)

[This is the thirteenth piece in this series after the Upanishads – Ishā, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, Taittiriya-1 (shikshā-valli), Taittiriya-2 (Brahmānanda-valli), Taittiriya-3 (Bhriḡu-valli), Brihadāraṇyaka-1, Brihadāraṇyaka-2, Brihadāraṇyaka-3, Brihadāraṇyaka-4 and Chāndogya-1 were introduced in the previous twelve articles. – Editors]

Quote of the Issue

BE THANKFUL

'The struggle ends when gratitude begins.'

Neale Donald Walsch



Neale Donald Walsch (born 1943) is an American author of the series *Conversations with God*. He is also an actor, screenwriter, and speaker

Smt. Indira Gautam
Writes from the US

GOODNESS NEVER FAILS

God wants us to be good people

We truly get perplexed at the diversity of faiths in this world where we live. Some religions talk of God with form and others think of Him as formless. Some condemn idol worship while others love to see God in idols. Yet others make no mention of God at all, advising just mind management. Some believe in reincarnation and others say this life is the only one we have. Some look at cows as sacred and dare not kill or eat them. Others have no qualms about consuming beef.

Without denying the merits is certain views and limitations in others, when we look at them from various points of view, we must remember that people on this earth grow up in certain cultures and what looks wrong to another group is all right with them. We must also recognize the fact that there are good and bad people in every community, professional group, economic strata etc.



Goodness is most important. Goodness leads to God. Goodness is what God values the most. I remember a shloka (verse)¹ that I have been hearing from childhood:

*Just as all the rain water falling from the sky
Reaches the ocean, making its own way
All obeisance made by people anywhere
Reaches One God, in its own way.*

Variety, they say, is the spice of life. We should, it seems to me, respect the different faiths in this world and live in harmony. 'Live and let live' should be our slogan.

Shivaratri is around the corner. May Lord Shiva bless all of you, dear readers of AUPA!

Notes:

1 *ākashāt patitam toyam
sāgaram pratigacchati
sarva-deva-namaskārah
keshavam pratigacchati.*

Indira Gautam

HAPPINESS, FROM A MEDICAL VIEWPOINT

Kimshuk Mahapatra

As I sat in the park after my morning walk, my wife came and slumped next to me. She had completed her 30-minute jog. We chatted for a while. She said she is not happy in life. I looked up at her sheer disbelief since she seemed to have the best of everything in life.

"Why do you think so?"

"I don't know. Everyone tells I have everything needed, but I am not happy."

Then I questioned myself, am I happy? "No," was my inner voice reply. Now, that was an eye-opener for me. I began my quest to understand the real cause of my unhappiness, I could not find one.

I dug deeper, read articles, spoke to life coaches but nothing made sense. At last, my doctor friend gave me the answer which put all my questions and doubts to rest. I implemented those and will say I am a lot happier person.

She said there are four hormones which determine a human's happiness - Endorphins, Dopamine, Serotonin, and Oxytocin. It is important we understand these hormones, as we need all four of them to stay happy.



Let us look at the first hormone, the Endorphins. When we exercise, the body releases Endorphins. This hormone helps the body cope with the pain of exercising. We then enjoy exercising because these Endorphins will make us happy. Laughter is another good way of generating Endorphins. We need to spend 30 minutes exercising every day, read or watch funny stuff to get our day's dose of Endorphins.

The second hormone is Dopamine. In our journey of life, we accomplish many little and big tasks, it releases various levels of Dopamine. When we get appreciated for our work at the office or at home, we feel accomplished and good, that is because it releases Dopamine. This also explains why most housewives are unhappy since they rarely get acknowledged or appreciated for their work. Once, we join work, we buy a car, a house, the latest gadgets, a new house so forth. In each instance, it releases Dopamine and we become happy. Now, do we realize why we become happy when we shop?

The third hormone Serotonin is released when we act in a way that benefits others. When we transcend ourselves and give back to others or to nature or to the society, it releases Serotonin. Even, providing useful information on the internet like writing information blogs, answering people's questions on Quora or Facebook groups will generate Serotonin. That is because we will use our precious time to help other people via our answers or articles.

The final hormone is Oxytocin, is released when we become close to other human beings. When we hug our friends or family, Oxytocin is released. The "Jadhoo Ki Jhappi" from Munnabhai MBBS (a popular movie) does really work. Similarly, when we shake hands or put our arms around someone's shoulders, various amounts of Oxytocin are released.

Now, we can understand why we need to hug a child who has a bad mood. So, it is simple, we have to exercise every day to get Endorphins, we have to accomplish little goals and get Dopamine, we need to be nice to others to get Serotonin and finally hug our kids, friends, and families to get Oxytocin and we will be happy. When we are happy, we can deal with our challenges and problems better.

AUPA Yuva
As Young Eyes See

TEACHER'S MISTAKE, STUDENTS' GAIN

It was a fine morning at the college. The students had assembled in the classroom. The professor arrived, greeted the students, and began to write on the board. Interestingly, he wrote the multiplication tables for 9 and when he came to the last equation, he made a mistake.

$$9*1=9$$

$$9*2=18$$

$$9*3=27$$

$$9*4=36$$

$$9*5=45$$

$$9*6=54$$

$$9*7=63$$

$$9*8=72$$

$$9*9=81$$

$$9*10=91$$



The class began to laugh, and the professor turned around and said that he had deliberately written the last equation wrong! The class was now curious. The professor went on to say thus-

“I deliberately made this mistake because I want you to learn something important. All of you witnessed that I wrote the correct equation nine times, but nobody congratulated me on that, did you? As soon as I made a mistake, you laughed and criticized me. Why do you think this happened?”

One of the students answered – “Maybe that’s because you are supposed to be smarter than us?”

The professor replied, “I may be in a position of authority, but that doesn’t make me perfect or smarter than you! I am a teacher, but I am also a human being who makes mistakes!”

He went on to explain the point of the whole exercise thus –

“You will soon discover that the world is quick to criticize and find fault and much slower to praise and find the positive. You will all experience criticism many times in your life. Those who are lucky enough to succeed or become ‘successful’ will likely experience more criticism than the rest. Because you will find the one thing people love more than pointing out another’s mistakes is when they can do it to someone who has achieved more than them! However, the person who criticizes others is only revealing the lack within themselves. Those who are happy within themselves need not point out the faults in others.”

“So, the three things I want you to remember from today’s little exercise is –

1. Try to notice the good in others. If someone makes a mistake, try to let them know in a kind way, praise more than you blame.

2. When you are criticized, remember the good in you, remember your great qualities. Remember you are worthy and capable of great things.
3. Remember that criticism is something you can avoid easily – by saying nothing, doing nothing and being nothing. So, dream big, get out there, live your life. See how far you can push the limits. Do not fear criticism, but know when it comes, it is the result of your success and not your failures.”

Be the person who encourages others, who chooses to see the good in the world and speak it out loud.

Be frequent in your praise and thoughtful in your criticism.

*(Collected from the Internet and edited a little by **Shalini Keshavan**)*

Webinars



Presented	15 Jan 2023	#236	DEALING WITH GUILT <i>Gift yourself with an unburdened mind</i>	Swami Chidananda
Presented	29 Jan 2023	#237	THE MIRACLE OF GRATITUDE <i>Thank all and the Universe will bless you</i>	Swami Chidananda

Coming up	12 Feb 2023	#238	IS SPIRITUALITY EASY? <i>Dreaming of a Garden does not Create a Garden</i>	Swami Chidananda
Coming up	26 Feb 2023	#239	TO KEEP MOVING IS LIFE <i>To Sit Idle is Death</i>	Swami Chidananda

News

Bengaluru

Saturday, Jan 7, 2023: Shankara Jayanti Mandali, active since the year 1958, had Swamiji speak at their hall for the first time. The topic was (in Kannada) 'The Framework of Shankara Vedanta'.

Friday and Saturday, Feb 3 and 4, 2023: Shankara Jayanti Mandali had two more evening talks by Swamiji on the same topic, in parts 2 and 3.

Mumbai

Saturday, Jan 21, 2023: The Bandra Hindu Association was the venue for a talk on 'Ever-shining Hinduism, Its Modern Challenges'. Shri Ajit Maniyal and Shri Mohan Motwani, key office bearers of BHA, were present. 'Santulit Man (The Equanimous Mind)' the first Hindi publication of FOWAI FORUM was made available for the audience to buy.



Swamiji speaking at Bandra, letting the audience know of the new Hindi publication also



A section of the audience at Bandra

Sunday, Jan 22, 2023: The Mysore Association in Matunga had a two-hour event on 'Hindu, Hinduism, Origins, Knowledge and Behavioural Model' where Swamiji spoke, presenting a number of PowerPoint slides.

Chennai

Saturday, Jan 28, 2023: The Centre for Continuing Dialogue (CCD) of the Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI) organized a talk on the lawns of KFI's headquarters where Swamiji spoke on 'Facets of Inquiry, into the self and the world'.

(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
Mobile: 99678 78798