

AUPA e - Newsletter

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Editor: Swami Chidananda
Associate Editor: Dolly Seth

Mantra to Ponder

THE REBELLIOUS SPIRIT OF THE UPANISHADS

As the context in the Vedas moves upwards, and as it reaches the level of intense inquiry into the ultimate truth, the rules and regulations of earlier phases of the seeker's life are lifted. An example for this is regarding whether we should wear the sacred thread – *upaveetam* – even when we take *sannyāsa*.



The wise (enlightened person) shall discard the external (sacred) thread, having shaved the hair on the head along with the tuft. He shall put on as (sacred) thread the Supreme Brahman that is immutable (indestructible).

*sashikham vapanam kritvā
bahih-sootram tyajed-budhah
yadaksharam param brahma
tat-sootram-iti dhārayet*

Parabrahma Upanishad, mantra 6

A sapling requires a fence around it to prevent stray cows from eating up the young plant.

The same plant, when it becomes a big tree, does not require any protection; it in fact protects several cows under its shade. Many rules likewise fall off as the seeker grows in his spiritual maturity.

CAN WE OFFER OURSELVES TO THE LORD?



'One's heart has great love towards attending to the Self, the true form of God.'

Not giving the least room in one's heart to any thought raised by vāsanās

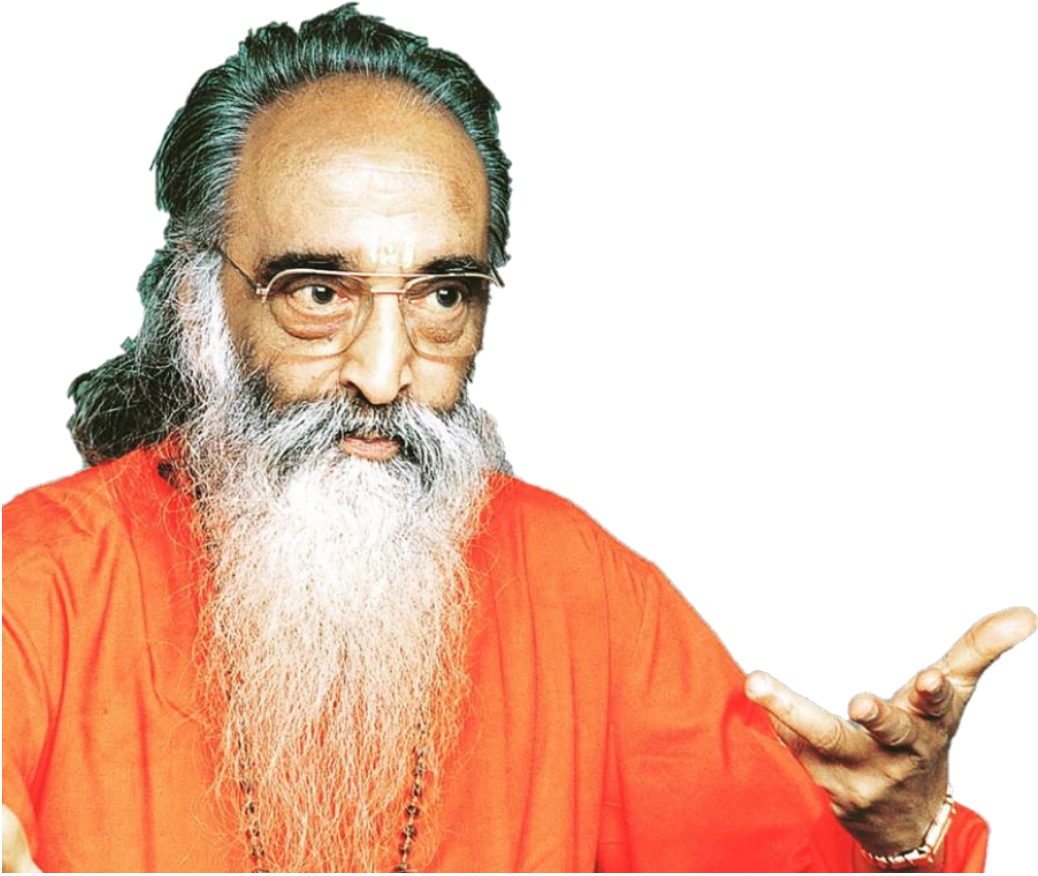
is the right way of offering oneself to the Lord.

(Guru-Vāchaka-Kovai 482)

[These words of wisdom have ample guidance to us regarding how we may conduct our spiritual practices in daily life. We must take great care to follow such advice. If we do so, speedy progress towards the goal is certain. – Editors]

Thus Spake
Chinmaya

ON LOVE



'We may often give without loving but we can never love without giving.'

Pujya Swāmi Chinmayānandaji

[Swāmiji always connected Vedānta with human behaviour and guided us to raise the quality of our life and its relationships. – Editors]



Swami Chidananda

FREEDOM FROM HABIT

A topic of serious nature in the entire spiritual literature is how we may free ourselves from bad habits. Great scholars also find themselves trapped in certain habits, which the public may or may not know. They may be doing certain undesirable things in their privacy and even their family members may not precisely get an idea of their bad habits. Habits need not be smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol only. They can be a behavioural pattern that repeats itself. For example, a husband may often interrupt his wife and say things from his side. Though he knows the annoyance it causes to her, he cannot stop behaving that way. A wife may frequently find fault with a relative and talk about it to her husband even when he requests her not to take up the topic. She understands it is a waste of time but cannot help go into the matter time and again.

What is a habit? The correct definition of a habit is *something we do mechanically*. Mere repetition does not make something a habit. When we do something with awareness, it is no more a habit. If we brush our teeth while being fully conscious of the act, it is not a habit. In contrast, if we have coffee and, after a while, wonder if we had taken coffee at all, that is habit.

Understanding what a habit is can help us tremendously in changing our way of living for better. Knowing the fact that being conscious is freedom from habit and being mechanical is when we are caught in habit can then become a great message of hope. The step forward therefore is to do things – good or bad, big or small – with awareness.

When we are aware, the hold of our past on us diminishes. Otherwise, we are simply driven by the force of the past, of memories. Those of us who live in the present are liberated from the shackles of habits.

Our mind is generally driven a lot by memories. It does not have to be so. We may use the magnificent instrument called the mind with awareness, and help it get off its mechanical ways. All of us have certain profound intelligence within us, which is unconditioned by the past. We need to give a true chance to this intelligence to operate if we are serious about saying goodbye to mechanical ways.

“The wise use their mind; the unwise are used by their mind,” said Vimala Thakar¹.

Life is precious. We must live life like sentient human beings and not like inert machines. Only machines act by habit.

Swāmi Chidānanda

Note 1: Vimala Thakar (1921 – 2009) was an Indian social activist and spiritual teacher.

An Update On



ON GOD

The celebrated mantras of Kenopanishad say, 'Know that to be God, which makes the eyes see, which makes the ears hear... and not this, which the masses worship!'

Jnāna-Shakti is a concept, which primarily draws inspiration from the Upanishads. Jnāna means the highest wisdom, and Shakti is the strength that we may draw from that wisdom. Can we appreciate God in our own hearts, as Bhagavad Geetā also declares, when it says God dwells in everyone's heart?

Temples are no doubt very popular, with their God-forms represented by many idols or Shiva-*lingas*. God however need not be seen in idols and *lingas* only. Yoga is very popular all over the world but Pujya Swāmi Chinmayānandaji maintained the position, 'I do not want yoga in my āshram!' Just because many spiritual centres have yoga classes in their campus, his centre did not have to toe their line. We therefore do not envisage a formal temple at the Jnāna Shakti centre. We hope our participants rise to the level of the Upanishads where God is in the wind that blows, in the fire that burns and in the river that flows.

When people asked Shri Ramana Maharshi if he could show God to them, the Maharshi responded, 'Surely. I will, right now'. And he moved his finger sideways and said, "Can you not see God here?"

Swāmi Vivekānanda, as a last example, set up a centre in Almora (in Uttarākhanda) and made a rule that there should be no idol or image of any kind at that place. He did not want a single picture of even his master Sri Rāmākṛishna there!

Think! Can we not focus on wisdom, and highlight jnāna-yoga at our Jnāna-Shakti?

Swāmi Chidānanda

THE CHĀNDOGYA UPANISHAD – 4 of 4

Sustained Enquiry and Contemplation Lead to Realization



Indra is the hero of the last (eighth) chapter of Chāndogya Upanishad. Indra, the king of gods (devas) and Virochana, the king of demons (asuras) both were sent by their followers to God, called Prajāpati in the chapter, to know the Pure Self. The Pure Self (*ātmā*) is described as free of sin, devoid of agitations, not touched by death, unaffected by sorrow etc. Hunger and thirst too do not apply to the Pure Self.

The two celebrities go to Lord Prajāpati and seek Self-knowledge (*ātmajñāna*) from him. They are first asked to spend 32 years at the teacher's place, practicing self-control. After that, the process of instruction on the highest wisdom of liberation begins.

Both are asked to look into water. A hint is given to the effect that what they see, when they look into water, is the Pure Self. Seeing their own reflection, both make the terrible mistake of thinking that they themselves, as the physical body, are the Pure Self. Virochana returns to his kingdom to celebrate, to receive all adoration from his folks.

Indra too is on way back home, imagining the mission is accomplished but, endowed with a purer mind, begins to question how the physical body could be free from afflictions. He returns to Prajāpati and gets new hints and instructions, which help him to dive deeper into the subject.

In summary, the importance of purity of mind and sustained self-enquiry are brought out very effectively in the concluding chapter of this Upanishad through the story of Indra and his journey to realization.

[This is the fifteenth 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, Brihadāranyaka-4, Chāndogya-1, Chāndogya-2, and Chāndogya-3 were introduced in the previous fourteen articles. – Editors]

ARE YOU WISE IN YOUR SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS?



Nothing out there will ever satisfy you except temporarily and superficially but you may have to experience many disappointments before you realize that truth.

Saint Siddharāmeshwar

[Sri Siddharāmeshwar Mahārāj (1888–1936) was a guru in the Inchagiri Sampradāya founded by his guru Bhāusaheb Mahārāj, a branch of the Navnāth Sampradāya, the 'Nine Masters' tradition in India. His disciples included Nāth teachers Nisargadatta Mahārāj, Ranjit Mahārāj, Kādsiddheshwar, and Ganapatrāo Mahārāj Kannur.]

Smt. Indira Gautam
Writes from the US

AH, THIS HUMAN LIFE!

Though we hear it from many scriptures and from discourses by scholars on various platforms, we do not generally take the statement seriously – that the human body we possess is of extraordinary value. Maybe modern Western education has distracted us a lot with the help of the glitter and glamour of science and technology.

No less a text than an Upanishad¹ says, “It is truly good if you realize the supreme truth in this life itself; if you do not, what a great loss it is!”

We are so enamoured of the material grandeur of this world – with its food, clothes, jewellery, cars and mansions – that spirituality takes a backseat in our life. As we get older, we find that either the world’s capacity to make us happy diminishes or our own capacity to enjoy the objects of the world reduces.

“Kick the world before the world kicks you,” roared Swāmi Vivekānanda. By regular study, sincere prayers and frequent company of the wise people, we can develop the necessary *vairāgya* (detachment) towards the false charm of the world of matter. Why blame the world? It is all in our mind. Satsanga is the best therapy for this ignorance-ridden mind.

“COUNT YOUR
blessings,
NOT YOUR
problems.”

May we understand the value of the human life we have got, and make the best of it to realize our own divine nature. Otherwise, we will go in circles, without getting out of the illusory duality, *māyā*.

Best wishes to all of you, dear readers of AUPA!

Indira Gautam

Notes:

1 *iha ched-avedit, atha satyam-asti* – Kenopanishad 2.5

SLEEPING WELL

The Best Way to Enjoy Good Health

Most of us grossly underestimate the value of 'sleeping well'. Proper sleep during fixed hours every night can help you:

- Get sick less often.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Lower your risk for serious health problems, like diabetes and heart disease.
- Reduce stress and improve your mood.
- Think more clearly and do better in school and at work.
- Get along better with people.



Good sleep **improves your brain performance, mood, and health**. Not getting enough quality sleep regularly raises the risk of many diseases and disorders. These range from heart disease and stroke to obesity and dementia.

Too much sleep — as well as not enough sleep — raises the risk of chronic diseases, such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, anxiety, and obesity in adults aged 45 and older. Sleeping too much puts you at greater risk of coronary heart disease, stroke and diabetes than sleeping too little.

What happens if you do not sleep? Not getting enough sleep can weaken your immune system, cause thinking issues, and lead to weight gain. When you do not get enough sleep, you may also increase your risk of certain cancers, diabetes, and even car accidents.

Typically, adults need 7 hours or more of sleep at night. Cutting down on necessary sleep can apparently save time to do things but actually ends up in a lot of loss of time.

VIVEKANANDA INSPIRES THE YOUTH



Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be.

See for the highest, aim at that highest, and you shall reach the highest.

I want from you (the youth) muscles of iron and nerves of steel.

Let us be human.

Train yourselves in order to serve humanity.

Build a strong character. Go for an educational system that is truly man making. Such an education will mean manifestation of perfection already in man.

Let us encourage all those doing good so that they can make their dreams come true. Until the uplift of the last poor person in the country is ensured, development is meaningless, he said.

Webinars

Webinars presented and to be presented by Swamiji:

Presented		
12 March 2023	#240	An Outline of Amritabindu Upanishad
26 March 2023	#241	Pride and Prejudice
To be presented		
9 April 2023	#242	Understanding Hinduism
23 April 2023	#243	Attachment, Possessiveness Etc

To join these webinars on Sundays at 8.30 pm IST (8.00 am Pacific Time), please go to YouTube, FOWAI channel at the time. To join on Zoom, where you get to see other participants, please Email fowaiforum@gmail.com and you will get the link to do so.

News

IRC, Kolkata, March 11, 2023: Swamiji spoke on Wellness, Spiritual Perspectives at the International Relations Council (IRC), headquartered in Kolkata. There were two other speakers – Soumya Gupta and Paromita Mitra Bhaumick – who spoke from the perspectives of nutrition and psychology respectively. The event was online. Ms Joyeeta Mazumdar, Director of IRC, had organized the program and Mr Saikat Mazumdar ably conducted the proceedings.

Meditation and Study Circle, Bengaluru, March 13, 2023: 'Upanishads Throw Light on Turning Within' was the topic for the online lecture (plus interaction, meditation etc.) at this event.

Shankara Jayanti Mandali, Bengaluru, March 16, 17 and 20, 2023: Hastamalaka Stotra was the subject for Swamiji's three talks (in Kannada) at the S J Mandali.

Ramatirtha Seva Foundation, Bengaluru, March 18, 2023: 'Welcome Positivity, Say Goodbye to Negativity' was the topic on which Swamiji spoke at the event organized at the

venue 'Niramaya Yoga Kuteeram'. The elegant hall was filled with enthusiastic listeners, including a good number of young women and men.



Shri Raghavendra Shenoy, the Yoga Acharya, helping Swamiji with the microphone at the start of the event.

D H I M A H I

Deriving Holistic Insights into Management
from the Heritage of India

SIES College, Nerul, March 13, 2023: Ms Bhumika More, Associate Professor, coordinated the offline event at this academic institution in New Bombay. It was under the banners of Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and the Department of Banking and Insurance. The theme of the seminar (offline) was Holistic Excellence. Nearly 200 students constituted the audience.



Principal Dr Koel Roychoudhury interacting with Swamiji and Shri Mohan Hejamadi at the Seminar at SIES College, Nerul, March 13, 2023.



A section of the audience at SIES College, Nerul as welcome address by the Principal was going on.

Upcoming Events

ONLINE CLASSES: Regular classes on YouTube will be held as per the schedule below:

All timings shown in IST

ENGLISH

7 am Wednesdays: Bhagavad Geeta (chapter 6 presently)

8 pm Fridays: Upanishad (chapters 7 and 8 Chandogya presently)

8.30 pm specified Sundays: Webinars on general themes

IN KANNADA

5.30 pm Wednesdays: Shivananda Lahari

7.30 pm Wednesdays: Suvarnamukhi Samskriti Dhama Satsangs


Shankara Jayanti Mandali, Bengaluru: Three discourses in Kannada will be held on the remaining verses of Hastamalaka Stotra on April 27, 28 and 29(Thu, Fri, Sat).



SHRI SHANKARA JAYANTI MANDALI
45, Shri Shankara Kripa Road, 16th Cross, 3rd Block,
Jayanagar, Bengaluru 560 011

Spiritual Discourses in Kannada
Theme:
SELF-KNOWLEDGE
Nectarine Words of Hastamalaka

April 2023
Thursday, 27th
Friday, 28th
Saturday, 29th
6 to 7 pm Daily



Speaker
Swami Chidananda

ALL ARE WELCOME.

(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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