

AUPA e - Newsletter

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Mantra to Ponder

DO NOT EAT, SHINE LIKE THE SUN

The Quantum Leap from Work to Wisdom

Higher wisdom unravels the mystery of remaining still, not doing anything. Lower wisdom, which is more popular in the world, is all about staying active, doing many things efficiently, and operating with effectiveness.

Higher wisdom, of which the Upanishads are a resplendent representative, is of course not about laziness. The focus shifts from doing to seeing, from action to understanding. It is about breaking our habits, which are mechanical, and looking at every emerging situation with fresh eyes.



*

THE SECOND BIRD DOES NOT EAT. HE JUST LOOKS ON.

/ anashnan-anyo abhichākasheeti /
Mundaka Upanishad 3.1.1

*

In the famous metaphor of 'two birds on the same tree', we find the first bird hopping from one branch to a second. He is active but is often sad. The second bird is depicted as quiet, not eating at all. His face shines.

From inaction, we rise to action. We rise to a greater height where silent watching brings liberating insights. This higher state is not really inaction; on the contrary, loving and more meaningful action flows from the state of higher awareness.

REALISING THE TRUTH

Everyone is the Self by his own experience. Still, one is not aware, one identifies the Self with the body and feels miserable. This is the greatest of all mysteries. One is the Self. Why not abide as the Self and be done with miseries?

One must first discern consciousness from insentience and be the consciousness only. Later let one realize that insentience is not apart from consciousness.

This is discrimination (viveka). The initial discrimination must persist till the end. Its fruit is liberation.

Shri Ramana Maharshi



(Talks with Shri Ramana Maharshi, # 192)

[Discerning, distinguishing and discriminating between the appearance and the truth is the vital dimension of the long path to freedom. Without engaging in intense *viveka*, mere fascination with self-enquiry will remain superficial spirituality. – Editors]

DO YOU BELIEVE THE WORLD IS TOO POWERFUL?



We give our strings to the world to pull and make us dance as it wishes!

Pujya Swami Chinmayananda ji

[Such quotes are instances where Pujya Swamiji helps beginners get a grasp of the fundamentals of spirituality. The materialist imagines that the world has its own strength; he therefore worships the world of money, position, name, and fame. The spiritualist sees on a deeper level and understands that the world derives its strength from us. – Editors]



Swami Chidananda

WORK ON YOURSELF

Be Prepared for Testing Moments

Whiplashing those who claim to be spiritual but do not work on themselves in line with all that they study or listen to, the Bhagavad Geetā says¹, “They will not see the truth; their efforts are in vain!” Spirituality is not child’s play. We need to constantly develop the good nature in us and weaken the bad nature of ours. If we turn deaf ears to either the advice of others or the inner voice of our own, we are doomed to fail miserably when opportunities knock at our door or when situations test us without prior notice.

‘Rome was not built in a day,’ goes the old saying. ‘Om cannot be reached in a day,’ can be the counterpart in the spiritual context. Being able to quote the high-flown Upanishads or to sing lofty Vedānta hymns² after a delicious meal or sitting in a comfortable banquet hall of a 5 Star Hotel will not take us beyond sorrow in life.



We must work on ourselves daily. We must rise after every fall. We must wipe our tears after crying and, as early as possible, cheer ourselves up. We must identify a few exercises for our body, speech, mind, and intellect to become fit to receive the illumination that scriptures speak of.

Geetā calls³ those of us who have been assiduous in our spiritual practices ‘*kritātmā*’ and those who have been irregular, inconsistent, if not shoddy, in the matter ‘*akritātmā*’. Here ‘*krita*’ means ‘worked on and prepared’; ‘*ātmā*’ means ‘oneself’. A person who is expecting 20 guests within a week from now, for example, works daily and gets prepared to host the guests. Another person excitedly talks about the guests who will come but does nothing till the day of their arrival and, when they turn up, is in a quandary about attending to their needs.

We must be true to ourselves. Having listened to wise people, and having appreciated the teachings of holy books on right living, we must note down two or three dos and two or three don’ts too. We must then

conscientiously strive to follow those dos and don'ts. We cannot live haphazardly and, at the same time, believe that enlightenment will descend upon us one fine morning!

We may begin small and grow big. We may be late sometimes but it is *better late than never*. If we remain 'akritātmā' out of carelessness or irresponsible attitudes, we will surely miss the bus. If we take responsibility for our life and pay attention to what we do in public or in privacy, we will surely come upon spiritual awakening.

Notes:

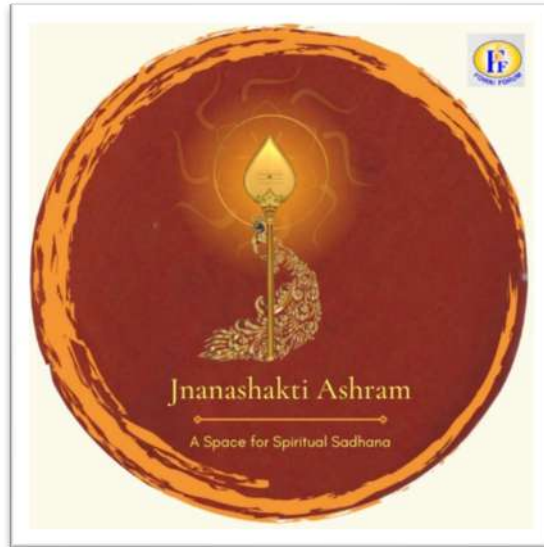
1 *akritātmānah na pashyanti, yatantah-api* – Geetā 15.11

2 Like the composition that says, "I am not the mind, the intellect etc." (*shivo'ham, shivo'ham*)

3 In the verse cited above, 15.11.

Jnāna Shakti
Strength from Right Understanding

An Update On
JNĀNA SHAKTI
A Centre for Vedānta Studies



All the drawings and other necessary papers have been submitted to the Town Planning for their approval and a couple of other departments for 'No Objection Certificates'.

Some new volunteers have emerged from previously unknown sources. That is encouraging for us as we have been a small team.

We will soon give you the good news that *the work has begun!*

THE AITAREYA UPANISHAD

HIGHLIGHTING PURE CONSCIOUSNESS



The Aitareya Upanishad from the Rg-Veda is popularly known to contribute a *Great Statement (mahā-vākya)*, '*prajñānam brahma*,' which means Pure Consciousness is the Ultimate Reality. The sacred text derives its name from the Rishi to whom the mantras were revealed. His mother's name was Itarā, and therefore the Upanishad revealed to him came to be known as Aitareya. This work has 33 mantras, found in 5 sections, distributed in 3 chapters. The *mahā-vākya* appears in the third mantra in the third chapter.

Pure wisdom (*jnāna*) is the main thrust of this Upanishad, though there is praise of vital energy (*prāna*). The former is the means of liberation, which is forever, and the latter, which can be an object of dualistic meditation (*upāsana*) can bless the worshipper with many rewards that eventually perish. *Jnāna* here is the highest Self-knowledge, which alone can justify our calling this body of mantras an Upanishad. Prana is with attributes, and is a powerful aspect of everybody's personality. *Jnāna* is of the Self, which is without attributes, which is the one truth in all the personalities.

The Upanishad narrates, in a dramatic way, that the Pure Self enters the universe and appears as the limited, individual being. It seems there is worldly living, marked by birth, death, old age etc. Realization takes place at some point of time and the individual (*jeeva*) realizes his true nature (*ātmā*).

'The Pure Self alone originally existed; nothing else, whatsoever, winked,' is how the Upanishad begins. In its narration of creation of this universe and all the life forms therein, there is an instance when divinities (like fire, air, sun etc.), wanting to enter a suitable abode, reject the forms of a cow and of a horse but gladly accept the human form. There is a reference to the three states of experience (*avasthāh*), namely waking, dream and deep sleep in this very narration, which is technically a 'deliberate superimposition (*adhyāropa*)' to be subsequently negated (*apavāda*) to facilitate the dawn of the right understanding.

In an interesting part of this scripture, there is a mention of how the spiritual principle in everyone undergoes three births: being in the form of an embryo, coming out of the mother as a son (or as a daughter), and, after departing from one life, being born in the next life. Then there is an awe-inspiring

example of Sage Vāmadeva who realizes the True Self while still in his mother's womb! "I burst out of the hundred strongholds made of iron and, with the swiftness of a hawk, I got out," he says, in one of the mantras. A case of prenatal enlightenment!

The last section takes up self-enquiry by asking what the basis of all knowing could be. What is the basis of consciousness, perception, discrimination, insight etc.? This enquiry leads to the final understanding that there is certain Supreme Intelligence (in everyone of us) and that is the Ultimate Reality. / *prajnānam brahma* /

Thus, this Upanishad has its own flavor in guiding a student to the recognition of the Truth of the Pure Self.

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[This is the nineteenth piece in this series after the Upanishads – *Ishā*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Mundaka*, *Taittiriya-1* (*shikshā-valli*), *Taittiriya-2* (*Brahmānanda-valli*), *Taittiriya-3* (*Bhrigu-valli*), *Brihadāraṇyaka* (in four parts), *Chāndogya* (in four parts), *Kaivalya*, *Amrita Bindu* and *Māndukya* were introduced in the previous eighteen articles. This is the eleventh Upanishad to be introduced through these 19 articles. – Editors]

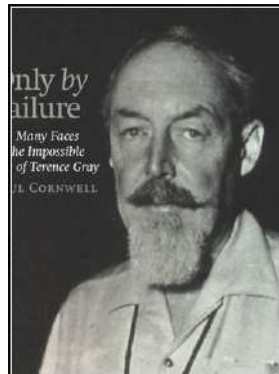
Quote of the
Issue

FOR WHOM ARE YOU WORKING?

Why are you unhappy? Because 99.9 percent of everything you think, and of everything you do, is for yourself — and there isn't one.

Wei Wu Wei

[This thinker from England has put the gist of self-enquiry in an elegant way. We worry about things, day and night, which revolve around 'I, me and my'. This separate self is an illusion. The real I – the Pure Self – has no problems whatsoever.]



[**Terence Gray** (1895 – 1986) was a theatre producer who created the Cambridge Festival Theatre as an experimental theatre in Cambridge. He produced over 100 plays there between 1926 and 1933. After he left his theatrical career, his thoughts turned towards philosophy and metaphysics. This led to a period of

travel throughout Asia, including time spent at Ramana Maharshi's ashram in Tiruvannamalai, India. Between the years 1958 and 1974, eight books and articles in various periodicals appeared under the pseudonym "Wei Wu Wei" (Wu Wei, a Taoist term, translates as "action that is non-action"). Under the pen name Wei Wu Wei, he published several books on Taoist philosophy.]

Smt. Indira Gautam
Writes from the US

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF GOOD WORDS

Continuing the theme that I took up in the last issue, I wish to share with you another verse, which calls 'words of good advice' no less than precious stones.

*There are three precious stones
in this world – water, food and subhāshita,
Fools however attach great value to
things that are mere pieces of stone¹.*



It is true that, in high philosophy, they say truth is beyond words and that it can never be described or defined. Does it mean that the beautiful *subhāshitas*, which are of course *words of good advice*, go in vain? Certainly not. The opposite is true for most people. For ninety-nine percent of humanity, right words at the right time are the most effective driving force behind right action on their part.

In a certain old story, a king was away from his palace for 15 years as he went from place-to-place fighting enemies. When he finally returned at midnight, after that long duration, he made his way straight to the inner chambers of his palace, eager to meet his queen. His eyes could not believe it when he saw a young man on the bed with his beloved wife. He raised his sword with unbearable anger and was about to strike the stranger but, exactly at that moment, his eyes fell on something written on the wall. He himself had got it inscribed on the wall when he had highly appreciated a poet and his compositions. The verse² on the wall said, "Do not do anything in haste; it can lead to great sorrow." Touched by those words of caution, he stopped short of killing the youngster and instead shouted, "Who are you?" Both the queen and the young man woke up in shock. The queen then said, "My son, touch the feet of your father."

Then the king remembered that his wife had been pregnant when he had left many years back. Words

of advice (*subhāshita*) saved him from murdering his own son!

We must regularly be in touch with words of wisdom coming towards us from different quarters. We must never underestimate them.

Many best wishes to all of you, dear readers of AUPA, in making your life truly good, virtuous, and happy!

1 The Sanskrit verse goes as follows:

/ samsāre treeni ratnāni

/ jalam-annam subhāshitam |

/ moodhaih pāshāna-khandeshu

/ ratna-samjnā pradeeyate ||

2 The Sanskrit line goes: *sahasā vidadheeta na kriyām..*(Poet Bhāravi)

Indira Gautam

Health is You

SIDE TO SIDE LEG SWINGS

Know their Unique Benefits

Side to Side Leg Swings are a foundational mobility movement as well as a warm-up in the curriculum of many fitness institutions. Such a movement helps us to prepare the muscles and hips for common movements in various disciplines.



One way to do it

Stand facing a wall, place both hands on the wall. Keep your base leg flat on the floor for maximum flexibility benefits and begin swinging the loth leg sideways towards the outside of your body. Then let the momentum take your leg down while you control it and pull it back across your body in front of the other leg. Be careful not to kick the wall and do not forget to switch legs and do both sides!

After mastering the Side-to-Side Leg Swings, we can work towards doing them without a wall to challenge our balance.

These side-to-side movements strengthen the muscles we do not use often and thereby enhance our performance on the fields of many games too. Also known as lateral movements, give us an extra edge over our opponents in sports.



Very often in our life, our entire body must move like a well-oiled machine. If some of the muscles are weak and do not come into play, it affects the overall performance or deprives us from rising to our full potential.

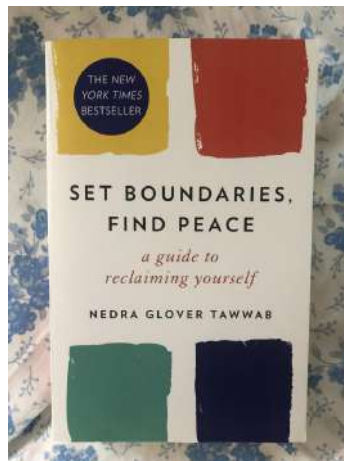
SET BOUNDARIES, FIND PEACE



Lakshman set a boundary but Mother Sita misjudged her wicked visitor, believed that he was pious and crossed the boundary. The result was the big war with Ravana, the visitor who had exploited Sita's kindness.

You and I will not have someone like Lakshman always to set a boundary. We must ourselves set boundaries in a lot of life's scenarios. We must not cross the boundaries nor should allow others to cross them.

In a new book published in 2021, the author provides a lot of guidance on the art of setting boundaries and guarding our valuable space.



Calling them *healthy boundaries*, Nedra emphasizes their need in order to achieve work/life balance, cope with toxic people and enjoy rewarding relationships with partners, friends, and family. In practice, it is all about successfully expressing our needs, saying 'no' and being assertive without offending others.

Can we identify and express our needs clearly and without apology – and unravel a root problem behind co-dependency, power struggles, anxiety, depression, burnout and more?

Some among us very badly need these tips to reclaim our space. Some others are on the other extreme: they say no too often and rudely too at times. The second kind of people also need to learn how they may set boundaries in a healthy way.

An Example

Let us say someone is often encroaching upon our space, knowingly or unknowingly. Their intentions may often be good too. All the same, we may be suffering. One way to tackle this can be as follows. We may send a precise text message or Email, mentioning the behaviour we are noticing. People are likely to respond because they do not want to seem upset when they are. We must express the concerns we have about the relationship. Sometimes we may not receive any response for a few days! Such a behaviour is sometimes called ghosting (or simmering, icing) where the other person suddenly ends all communication and avoids contact without any apparent warning. We must then clearly restate how this ghosting makes us feel.

We must know, in several such situations, that the other person’s reaction was not about us. It was about his (her) interpretation of the situation.

Most importantly, we must find time and space to reflect on the stressful situation, consult wise people and come out with ways to solve the problem. When we know the way ahead, we must not lose time in moving in that direction.

– *Wisdom from Here and There*

Webinars



DONE

PRESENTED by Swāmiji on Sundays at 8.30 pm IST

July 9, 2023	248	Understanding Hinduism	Episode 4
July 23, 2023	249	Geetā in Plain English	-



TO BE PRESENTED by Swāmiji on Sundays at 8.30 pm IST

August 6, 2023	250	Understanding Hinduism	Episode 5
August 20, 2023	251	My Experience at the Parliament of World's Religions	-
Sept 3, 2023	252	Upanishads in Plain English	-

To join these webinars on Sundays at 8.30 pm IST, please go to YouTube, FOWAI channel at the time. To join on Zoom, where you get to see other participants and ask questions through voice, please Email fowaiforum@yahoo.com /



Mumbai, July 3:

Gurupurnimā celebrated: The Orchid Hall at the Juhu Vileparle Gymkhana Club was the venue for the special annual event. About 60 devotees gathered and there was an atmosphere of spiritual fervour as poojā, bhajans and Swāmiji's talk took place.



Tiruvannāmalai, July 14 thru 16: Accompanied by six people from Bengaluru and Kundāpura, Swamiji visited Shri Ramanāshrama again within a month of his previous visit to the holy place. Darshana of Shri Arunāchaleshwara at the ancient temple in the town was also a part of the program, in addition to meditation at the Old Hall and some interaction with a few devotees who live in Tiruvannāmalai.



In the precincts of the ancient Arunāchala Temple in Tiruvannāmalai, July 15, 2023.

Bengaluru, July 16: Dr Thimappa Hegde, reputed neurosurgeon in Bengaluru and the Vedānta teacher at Param Vedānta group, visited Swāmiji, accompanied by Shri Shivakumār Yādālam, and made contributions to the Jnāna Shakti project.



Dr Thimappa Hegde, Swāmiji, Shri Shivakumār Yādālam and Smt Suchetā Nādiger, July 16, 2023

Bengaluru, July 17 thru 19: Swāmiji delivered three more talks at the Shankara Jayanti Mandali on *Selected Gems of Teachings in the Geetā Bhāshya* of Ādi Shankarāchārya.

Bengaluru, July 20: Spending 24 hours at Suvarnamukhi Samskriti Dhama, Swamiji interacted with teachers, staff, and students of the high school on the campus.



The newly made amphitheatre at Suvarnamukhi Samskrit Dhāma

Pune, July 22: A satsang was organized at Brahma Exuberance in Kondhwa where Swāmiji spoke on *Geetā in Plain English*.

Sahyādri School, Rajguru Nagar, July 23: Brni Vibhā Chaitanya and Swāmiji spent 30 hours at the beautiful and serene campus of KFI's Sahyādri School on top of Tiwai Hill near Rājguru Nagar (between Pune and Nashik). A meeting of the Centre's Executive Committee, a Dialogue and an Interaction with non-teaching staff were among the engagements.

Upcoming Events

US Tour, Aug 13 thru Sept 25: Along with Shri Bansi Mahājan, Swāmiji will participate in the Parliament of World's Religions (POWR) in Chicago, August 14 thru 18.

A CALL TO CONSCIENCE:
**Defending Freedom
& Human Rights**

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He will also visit the Arunāchala Āshrama in Queens, New York, towards end of August.



The altar at the Arunāchala Āshrama, NY

He will return to India after this six-weeks tour, the rough itinerary of which is as follows.

Aug 14 thru 18: at the Parliament of World's Religions, Chicago

Aug 19 thru 22: Talks at the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago (HTGC) and a few residences

Aug 25 thru 27: at Arunachala Ashrama, Jamaica, Queens, NY

Aug 28 thru Sept 6: at Different places on the East Coast

Sept 10: A lecture at the Duke University, Durham, North Carolina

Sept 14 thru 17: Satsangs at Tucson, Arizona

Sept 20 thru 24: Satsangs at Southern California

A few more details are being worked out.

(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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