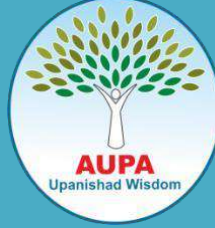


AUPA e - Newsletter

September 2023
Vol 9, Issue 3 (No. 99)



Editor: Swami Chidananda
Associate Editor: Dolly Seth

Mantra to Ponder

WHAT DO WE GET BY STUDYING THE UPANISHADS?

This question, “What, after all, do we get if we study, reflect on and meditate upon the Upanishads?” is neither disrespectful nor unwarranted. Everyone of us never does anything without a result in mind. In business, they call it ROI – Return on Investment. In philosophy, we talk about it as the benefit (*prayojana* in Sanskrit). There is an old saying¹, ‘Even the dull-witted people would not take up any work without keeping some benefit in mind.’



Vedānta answers that question, saying we put an end to sorrow through Upanishadic study and we will no longer suffer from guilt, shame, and other negative emotions (implied by the word sin) when the light of the Upanishads enters us.

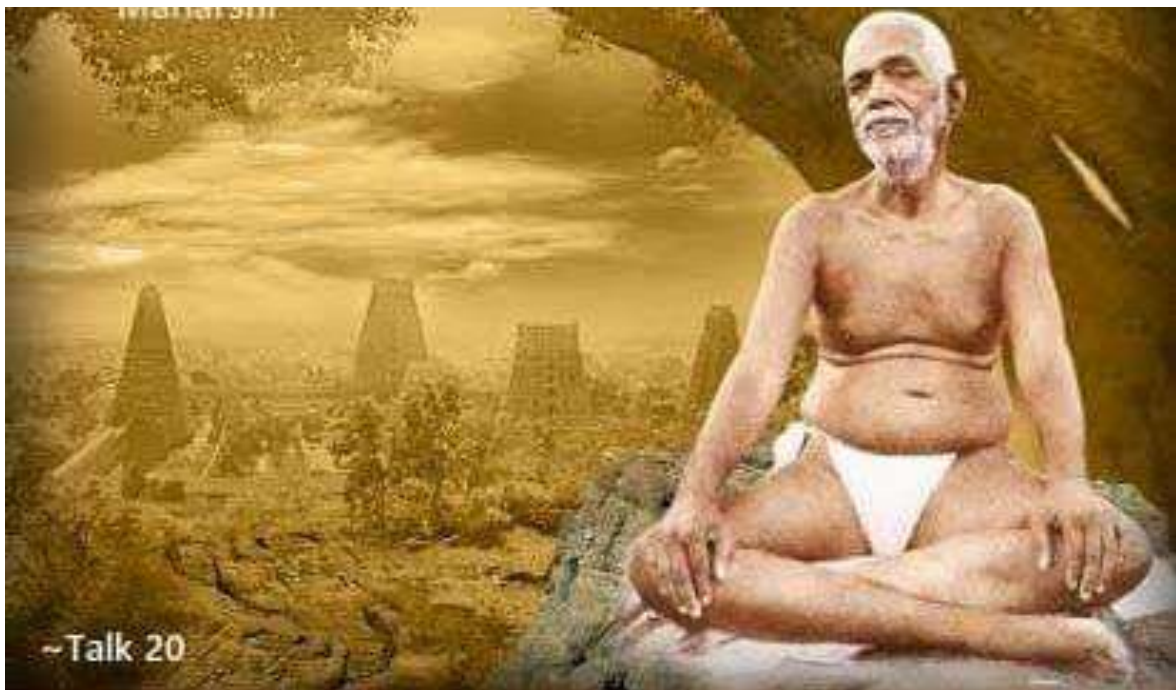
Anybody with this wisdom goes beyond sorrow, goes beyond sin.

/ tarati shokam, tarati pāpmānam /
Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.9

Yes, saying goodbye to suffering, turmoil, fear, and conflicts in our bosom that the Vedānta is all about. Whom among us does not want such an attractive benefit?

Note 1 *prayojanam-anuddishya mando'pi na pravartate.*

**DO WHAT YOU CAN
BUT DO NOT IMAGINE YOU RUN THIS WORLD**



The power which created you has created the world. If it can take care of you, it can similarly take care of the world also.

Shri Ramana Maharshi
(Source: Talks with Shri Ramana Maharshi)

[The spiritual science never asks us to be irresponsible or to run away from our duties. It however discourages us from fancying that the world will depend upon us. An undue self-importance is just another game that our ego plays. While we must do what is our *kartavya* (duty) and *swadharma* (the domain of action in accordance with our nature), we must always remember that God runs every bit of the show. – Editors]

Thus Spake
Chinmaya

FOR WHOM IS SPIRITUALITY?



Spirituality is neither the privilege of the poor nor the luxury of the rich. It is the choice of the wise man.

Pujya Swāmi Chinmayānandaji

[Pujya Swāmiji seems to mean that anybody, poor or rich, may have hunger for the spiritual wisdom and embark on the spiritual journey when he or she has *inner maturity*. Certain purity of heart, which reflects as noble thoughts and healthy emotions, opens the doors of spirituality to any of us. Without that wealth of divine qualities (called *daivi sampat* in chapter 16 of Geetā), we will not be interested in the quest for truth. In contrast, when we have inwardly grown, our economic status becomes irrelevant as regards the momentum that we gather along the spiritual trajectory. - Editors]

**From the Editor's
Desk**



Swami Chidananda

HOLD and LET GO

'Hold the higher' is the mantra when we are not much mature in the spiritual and philosophical domain. 'Let go' takes its place when we get higher insights into life's conflicts and contradictions.



'Attach and detach,' said Swāmi Chinmayānandaji, summarizing *sādhana*, spiritual practices. For example, we may attach ourselves to Shiva and detach from '*bhava*,' meaning worldly life. Shiva represents natural peace and unconditional love. *Bhava* here means the confused pursuit of pleasure, name, and fame.

It is all in our mind, in our thoughts and emotions. And the good news is that there are many practices that can enable us to handle our mind. For example, regulated breathing can help us slow down in thinking and arrive at relative quietude. '*nāma-japa*' is another time-tested practice to get a handle on our within.

Love of God, referred to as bhakti (devotion), is often praised¹ as the *boat to cross the ocean of worldly existence*. At the height of philosophy, the scriptures say God alone is real and this world is unreal. In the classic example of advaita-vedānta, where a rope is mistaken for a snake in dim light, the rope is real and the snake is unreal. Seeing the rope frees us from the fear arising from the erroneous perception of the snake.

Hold the (vision of the) rope, and let go of the (illusion of the) snake!

In a hundred ways, we need to hold the good and let go of the bad. Right in the early morning, we feel lazy and do not wish to leave the bed. We need to think of our numerous duties and, with those thoughts to direct us, let go of the comfort of the bed. In relationships, we often need to opt for meaningful associations and let go of wasteful friendships. There is no selfishness here. It is rather caring for our well-being in this precious life. Self-protection and self-defence do not come under the category of selfishness. We do not let people down when we say no to their proposals or invitations upon realizing that time, money, and energy will be wasted if we dance to their tunes. We wish them well and hope they

also move away from false ways of living.

The sun shines unobstructed when the clouds move away. We need not create the sun or invite him from somewhere. Likewise, *letting go* of the false is enough, on higher planes, and we need not create peace or invite happiness from somewhere. Peace and happiness are innate in us. The Upanishads declare the Pure Self (the *ātmā*) is of the nature of bliss². The best example from the sacred literature, which highlights the power of *letting go* is *neti, neti* as said³ by Sage Yājñavalkya in his conversation with King Janaka. '*neti, neti*' stands for negation, 'not this, not this' (*na + iti*).

Following greater understanding of the root causes of our psychological maladies, we happily let go of our possessiveness, ambitions and other thought processes that bring unhappiness to us and to others.

Swāmi Chidānanda

Notes:

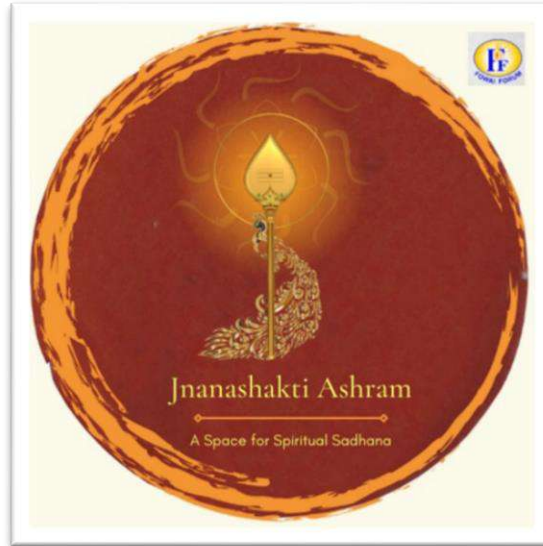
1 *samsārākhye mahati jaladhau .. bhakti-nāvam prayaccha* – Mukunda-Mālā, verse 16.

2 *raso vai sah* – Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 2.

3 *sa esha neti neti ātmā* – Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, 4.5.15

Jnāna Shakti
Strength from Right Understanding

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



Some of us, members of the core group in Mumbai, visited the site on August 7, 2023. We were delighted to see the whole place very green and lively. The stream behind our property was full of water, a delight to any onlooker.

A few more steps had to be taken for the government to approve our plans. No objection certificate from the Fire Department, for example. We have done our part fully and are awaiting the 'Commencement

Certificate' (CC) to reach our hands very soon.

We hope to give, on this page, the good news of commencement of construction.



Team AUPA

**Introducing an
Upanishad**

19

PRASHNA UPANISHAD

Throwing More Light on Aparā and Parā Vidyā

Two *vidyās* (forms of knowledge) were mentioned in Mundaka Upanishad namely *aparā* and *parā*. The former, the lower one, bestows diverse benefits to us within the dualistic realm and the latter, the higher one, blesses us with liberation. This Prashna Upanishad, also from Atharva Veda, elaborates on the two *vidyās*.

Both Mundaka and Prashna begin with talking about the results and rewards of *karma* (rituals) and *upāsana* (qualified, dualistic meditation). Heaven (*svarga*), from which we return when our merit is exhausted, and *brahmaloka*, where we stay long to get eventually liberated are those results. Both the Upanishads then take up the reward of *jnāna*, which constitutes higher knowledge, which single-handedly puts an end to transmigration (going from life to life, remaining as limited individuals).



Six learned Vedic scholars approach Rishi Pippalāda and ask six questions. This Upanishad has six chapters, called *prashnas* (questions), which cover those questions and the answers thereof from the enlightened sage. Sukeshā, Satyakāma, Sauryāyani, Kausalya, Bhārgava and Kabandhi are the questioners, who have vast knowledge of *veda-poorva* (*karma* and *upāsana*) but seek the wisdom of the Vedānta (liberating *jnāna*) from revered Pippalāda.

It is very interesting that the guru here asks them to stay for a year, following the ashram's disciplines, and then come out with their questions. When these mighty Vedic scholars are asked to follow *brahmacharya* for a year and then open their mouths, we can imagine how much preparation and purification of mind we need in modern times. In the opening chapter, the guru also expresses great humility when he says, 'If I know the answers, I will share them with you.' A much-quoted mantra from the first *prashna* emphasizes the need for utter transparency of behaviour and total abstinence from lies, in order to attain the highest wisdom *brahma-vidyā*.

67 *mantras*, divided into the six chapters, constitute this sacred text. The fourth chapter goes into the mystery of deep sleep (*sushupti*) and reveals the Pure Self as the untainted truth of the dreamless sleep state (*avasthā*). The fifth chapter covers the glory of Om. The sixth speaks about our existence as consisting of sixteen aspects (*shodasha-kalā-purusha*), which is another way of approaching the highest wisdom. Everywhere we begin with 'deliberate superimposition' (*adhyāropa*) and conclude with 'subsequent negation' (*apavāda*). We talk of sixteen parts here, for example, and finally arrive at the Pure Self, which is ever devoid of parts.

A detailed study of this Prashna Upanishad, with the profound commentary by Ādi Shankarāchārya, can indeed bless with the transformative outlook promised by Vedānta study.

[This is the twentieth 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*, *Māndukya* and *Aitareya* were introduced in the previous nineteen articles. This is the twelfth Upanishad to be introduced through these 20 articles. – Editors]

**Quote of the
Issue**

EDUCATION AND OUR LIFE

It is a thousand times better to have common sense without education than to have education without common sense.

Robert G Ingersoll



[R G Ingersoll (1833 – 1899), though widely known as an agnostic, said things in his famous speeches and popular writings that deeply touched believers and atheists alike. He was an American lawyer, writer and orator during the Golden Age of Free Thought and campaigned in defence of agnosticism.]

**Smt. Indira Gautam
Writes from the US**

WHO SHOULD JOIN AN ASHRAM?

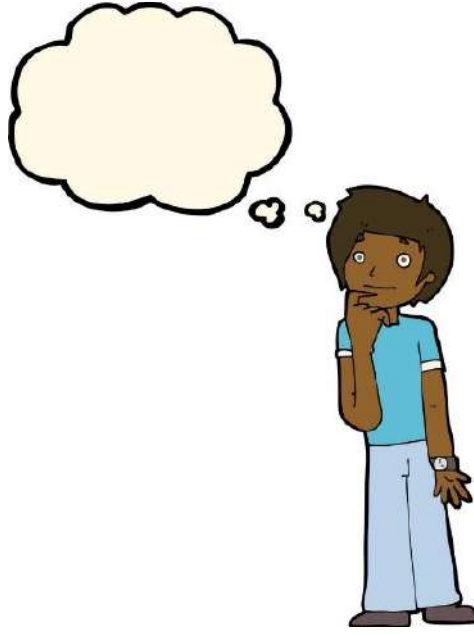
The Enigma of Fitness

Among the millions that wish to go for rigorous spirituality, the majority of us doubt our own eligibility. Questions like, 'Is this the right time for me to embark on the spiritual journey? Should I not get readier before signing up for such a program as this?' and so on pop up in our minds and we tend to postpone

taking up study and practice. This is nothing new in human history. From time immemorial, humankind has pondered and wondered over this matter of fitness. Someone humorously wrote¹:

*Do not join an āshram
If you have not conquered desire and anger.
There is no need to join an āshram
If you have conquered desire and anger!*

if we are emotionally immature, our joining an āshram can cause disturbances to the peace and harmony there. If we are emotionally mature, there is perhaps no need to go to an āshram for the purpose is already served!



This riddle is solved when we realize that the problem here is going to extremes in our thinking. We must know that, between 'being much troubled by negative emotions' at one extreme and 'being not affected at all by them' at the other extreme, there is the possibility of *being relatively well-balanced*. A teacher expressed this point in a nice way, using the acronym FIR. If the frequency F, the intensity I and the restoration time R – all of them in the context of negative emotions like lust, greed, jealousy etc. – reduce considerably, we may plunge into advanced study of spiritual works, which is meant by the figurative expression, 'joining an āshram'.

I wish you greater clarity, dear readers of AUPA, in moving ahead with spiritual practices, which alone can bring about rise in consciousness and the resulting blessedness of life.

1 The Sanskrit verse goes as follows:

*kāma-krodhau anirjitya
kim-aranye karishyati?
athavā nirjītau-etau
kim-aranye karishyati?*

Indira Gautam

TURMERIC, 15 BENEFITS

Forerunner among Home Remedies



- 1) Cures acne.
- 2) Heals wounds.
- 3) Cures psoriasis
- 4) Prevents growth of cancer cells.
- 5) Prevents inflammation.
- 6) Treats diabetes.
- 7) Controls blood pressure.
- 8) Acts as face pack.
- 9) Prevents skin damage.
- 10) Acts as exfoliating agent.
- 11) Tightens skin.
- 12) Gives us a glowing skin.
- 13) Lightens facial hair.

14) Reduces cholesterol.

Courtesy: Internet

AUPA Yuva
As Young Eyes See

**YOUNGSTERS, PLEASE AVOID THESE!
7 HABITS OF HIGHLY DEFECTIVE TEENAGERS**



One great way to understand *what good habits are* is to understand *what they are not*. Here, for example, are 'the opposites' of the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers.

Habit 1: *React.*

Blame all your problems on your parents, your stupid teachers or professors, your lovely neighbourhood, your boyfriend or girlfriend, the government or something or somebody else. Be a victim. Take no responsibility for your life. Act like an animal. If you are hungry, eat. If someone yells at you, yell back. If you feel like doing something you know is wrong, just do it.

Habit 2: *Begin with no end in mind.*

Do not have a plan. Avoid goals at all costs. And never think about tomorrow. Why worry about the consequences of your actions? Live for the moment. Sleep around, get wasted and party on, for tomorrow we die.

Habit 3: *Put first things last.*

Whatever is most important in your life, do not do it until you have spent sufficient time watching reruns, talking endlessly on the phone, surfing the Net, and lounging around. Always put off your homework until tomorrow. Make sure that things that do not matter always come before things that do.

Habit 4: *Think Win-Lose.*

See life as a vicious competition. Your classmate is out to get you so you had better get him or her first. Do not let anyone else succeed at anything because, remember, if they win, you lose. If it looks like you are going to lose, however, make sure you drag that sucker down with you.

Habit 5: *Seek first to talk, then pretend to listen.*

You were born with a mouth, so use it. Make sure you talk a lot. Always express your side of the story first. Once you understand everyone understands your views, then pretend to listen by nodding and saying “uh – huh.” Or if you really want their opinion, give it to them.

Habit 6: *Do not cooperate.*

Let us face it, other people are weird because they are different from you. So why try to get along with them? Team work is for the dogs. Since you always have the best ideas, you are better off doing everything by yourself. Be your own island.

Habit 7: *Wear yourself out.*

Be so busy with your life that you never take time to renew or improve yourself. Never study. Do not learn anything new. Avoid exercise like the plague. And, for heaven’s sake, stay away from good books, nature, or anything else that may inspire you.

As you can see, the habits listed above are recipes for disaster. Yet, many of us indulge in them... regularly (me included). Given this, it is no wonder that life can really stink at times.

[Courtesy: Sean Covey in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers*
– *Wisdom from Here and There*

Webinars



DONE

PRESENTED by Swāmiji on Sundays at 8.30 pm IST

August 6, 2023	250	Understanding Hinduism, Episode 5
August 20, 2023	251	Experience of Parliament of World's Religions, Part 1
Sept 3, 2023	252	Upanishads in Plain English



TO BE PRESENTED by Swāmiji on Sundays at 8.30 pm IST

September 17, 2023	253	Understanding Hinduism, Episode 6
October 1, 2023	254	Experience of Parliament of World's Religions, Part 2

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

News

Bengaluru, August 8, 2023:

Swāmiji spoke, online, on the platform of Meditation and Study Circle, Bangalore, on the topic *Geetā in Plain Kannada*.

Foreign Travel, August 12:

Accompanied by Shri Bansi Mahājan, who runs a 'Bhagavad-Geeta Study Circle' in Mumbai, Swāmiji flew by midnight towards USA. With 4 hours break in Munich, the two reached Chicago by 11.45 am Sunday (local time and date there). Swāmiji will return to Mumbai by midnight of September 26.

Chicago, The Parliament of the World's Religions, August 14 thru 18:

Mr Mahājan and Swāmiji took active part in the PoWR, held for the 9th time in the past 130 years. Swāmi Vivekānanda had spoken at the first PoWR in 1893, held in the same city as this 9th one. The Parliaments 2nd thru 7th were held in 1993, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2015 and 2018 at Chicago, Capetown, Barcelona, Melbourne, Salt Lake, and Toronto respectively. The 8th in 2021 was on virtual mode.




Bansi Mahājan and Swāmi Chidānanda

Swāmiji spoke at three 'parallel sessions' at this International Interfaith Conference. Mr Mahājan and he interacted with a lot of representatives of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, the Parsi religion, Baha'i faith and, of course, several organizations under the Hindu faith.

A CALL TO CONSCIENCE:
**Defending Freedom
 & Human Rights**
 AUGUST 14-18, 2023 | McCORMICK PLACE

**2023 PARLIAMENT
 OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS**




CHICAGO, USA


Workshops

Tuesday, Aug 15th, 3.00 PM to 4.30 PM
SHANTI MANTRAS - PRAYERS FOR PEACE
 ☎ E258

Wednesday, Aug 16th, 4.30 PM to 5.30 PM
JEEVANMUKTANANDA LAHARI - BLISS OF THE LIBERATED
 ☎ Hall E - Room 2



SWAMI CHIDANANDA
 Founder, Trustee and
 Chief resource person of
 FOWAI FORUM, Mumbai, India



SWAMI SANDEEPANANDA GIRI (SANDEEP CHAITANYA)
 Chairman & Director
 SCHOOL OF BHAGAVAD GITA
 Kerala, India

Poster made for a session at the PoWR



Speaking at a Parallel Session / Workshop



Participants asked Swāmiji various questions.



With Maa Karunāmayi at the Conference



By the bank of Lake Michigan, with Rājiv Khanna

This was a grand, mega – event held at the huge McCormick Center in Chicago on the bank of Lake Michigan. For more details, readers may go to the FOWAI channel at YouTube and look at the webinar 251 titled, 'My Experience of the Parliament of the World's Religions'.

Chicago, August 19 thru 24:

A discourse at the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago (HTGC) in Lemont and three Satsangs at the residences of Shāntala Sadānanda, Rānee Limaye and Rājiv Khanna were among the events held in the suburbs of Chicago.



A talk at the Vivekānanda Center in HTGC, August 19



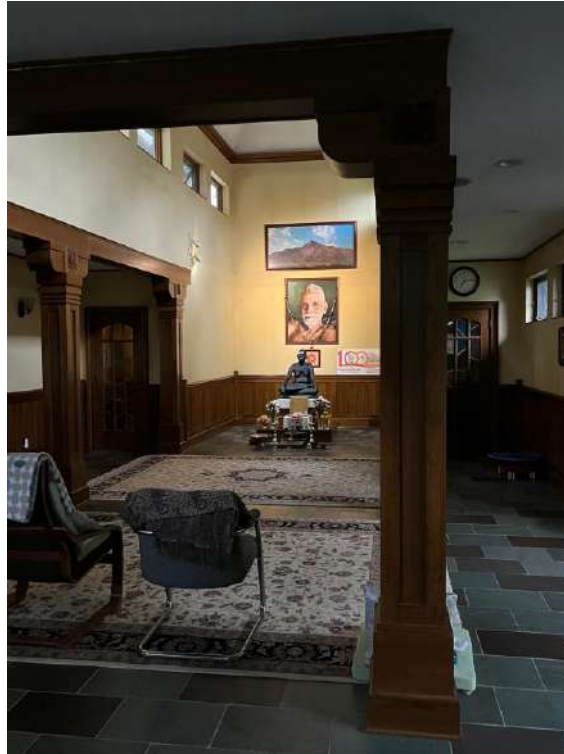
Swāmiji flanked by Rānee Limaye and Seemā Limaye



Swāmiji speaking at the residence of Shāntalā and Henry

New York, August 25 thru 30:

Leaving Chicago after spending 12 days there, Swāmiji arrived at the John F Kennedy airport in Queens, New York City, to spend 5 days at the Arunāchala Āshrama (Ramana Center). Meditation, prayers, bhajans, and interactions with different small groups of Ramana devotees marked the time.



The Ramana Shrine in New York

With Shri Mohan Rāmaswami and his wife Smt Sāvītri, Swāmiji visited the famous Times Square one night at 11 pm to look at the place, very popular with tourists from around the world. The next day, he went to the Ganesh Temple in Flushing, NY, accompanied by Jeff, Mark and Mohan – all connected with the Arunāchala Āshrama.

Upcoming Events

US Tour, second part:

Swāmiji will visit more places in the USA including Baltimore, Raleigh, Houston, Tucson, and Los Angeles before returning to India.

Sept 7 and 8: Two lectures at the Duke University, Durham, North Carolina


Sept 13: A Satsang at Sugarland, Houston, Texas

Sept 14 thru 17: Satsangs at Tucson, Arizona

Sept 20 thru 24: Satsangs at Southern California

The next issue of AUPA will give details of these get-togethers. For information on any of these events, readers may write to fowaiforum@gmail.com

6 Day Retreat in Kudāl, Maharashtra:



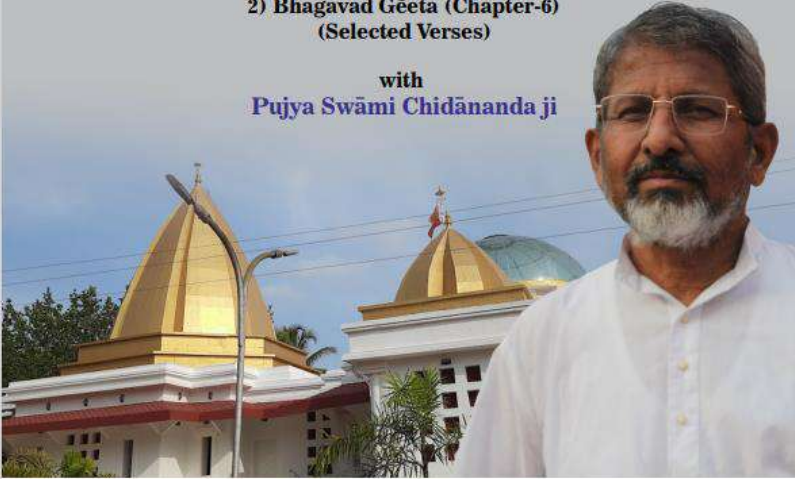
6 Day Retreat
TRAINING THE MIND
Light from Geetā and Ramana Geetā

3 November - 9 November 2023
(Friday) (Thursday)

Venue: SARSOLIDHAM
'Sarsolidham' Durgawad, Sarambal Rd, Kavilgaon,
Taluka-Kudal, District-Sindhudurg,
Maharashtra - 416520

STUDY
1) Ramana Geetā (Chapter-6)
2) Bhagavad Gēeta (Chapter-6)
(Selected Verses)

with
Pujya Swāmi Chidānanda ji



For any queries contact: Ms. Renu Gandhi (7715933334) / fowaiforum@gmail.com

(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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