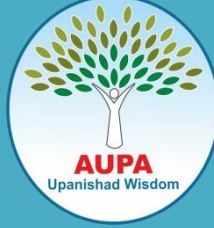


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Editor: Swami Chidananda
Associate Editor: Dolly Seth

Mantra to Ponder

LOTS OF MONEY AND LONG LIFE

What more do you want?

In our narrow outlook towards life, we often imagine that immense wealth and long life are all that we want. This materialistic view gets shaken when life teaches us rude

lessons. We find that certain disturbed relationships ruin our peace and unfulfilled desires leave us agitated. The wise ones among us therefore pay attention to higher goals of life such as living by higher values and getting insights into spiritual truths.



Nachiketā, the young lad who was perhaps barely 14 years old, was one such wise person who looked beyond wealth, pleasure, and long life. Lord Yama, the teacher, tested the boy by offering all sorts of enjoyments of this world and wondered if his youthful student would yield to any of the temptations. Nachiketā, however, rejected them all.

*/ na vittena tarpaneeyo manushyah /
/ lapsyāmahe vittam-adrākshma chet-tvā /
/ jeevishyāmo yavad-ishisyasi tvam /
/ varas-tu me varaniyah sa eva /*

(Katha-Upanishad 1.1.27)

Wealth can never satisfy (for ever) a man. Having seen you, we will anyway get lots of wealth. We will also live long, especially when you rule over (and decide) the lifespan of everybody. I would go for that boon only (of Self-knowledge) and no other.

Through the shining example of Nachiketā, the Upanishad teaches us the intuitive skills of looking beyond materialism. Living a wiser life is what Vedānta is all about.

Light on Self-Inquiry

THE MASTER'S GRACE



'Seek my grace within the Heart. I will drive away your darkness and show you the light.'

Shri Ramana Maharshi

[No wonder his devotees call him Bhagavān. – Editors]

**Thus Spake
Chinmaya**

FOR YOUR ROBUST HEALTH



Faith and prayer are the vitamins of the soul; man cannot live in health without them.

Pujya Swāmi Chinmayānandaji-

[Pujya Swamiji's teachings have a wide range of topics. In a spectrum of topics going from advanced metaphysics to tips on enhancing the quality of our daily life, his words have been a beacon of precious guidance. – Editors]

**From the Editor's
Desk**



Swami Chidananda

THE WISE AND THE UNWISE

/ Four Tips for High Performance from Prime Minister Vidura /

Four factors¹ can take us from mediocrity to excellence – increased self-awareness, proactivity, ability to bear with difficulties and commitment to doing right things. Vidura, the wise Prime Minister at Hastināpura, touches upon many facets of a higher way of living, while counselling Dhritarāshtra, the king. These four factors, Vidura himself says², prevent us from deviating from our pursuit of noble goals of life (*purushārthas*).



Self-awareness: A common error in the way most of us behave is that we tend to be mechanical, just repeating what we did or said before, with no presence of mind, lacking attention to the present moment. This happens because we are not keeping a watch on our thoughts and emotions. When we are self-aware, irrelevant thoughts and inappropriate emotions get caught and we can hold them back. We will then naturally act in not only proper but also effective ways, leading to success in our endeavours.

Proactive Behaviour: 'Act, do not react,' said Swāmi Chinmayānandaji. We often realize that something needs to be done but, despite the call of the inner voice, we do not do anything. We wait for someone else to do it or for the situation to get better by itself. Time is lost and resources remain unutilized. When we get proactive, we take initiatives that everybody appreciates; we nip many a problem in its bud, which adds to how much our team members admire us.

Bearing with hardships: Nobody's life is a bed of roses. Difficulties of many kinds arise very often in our life and we encounter obstacles along the way in all our enterprises. We must not lose heart at such times. When we develop the skill of wiser living, we will learn how to draw more energy from within us upon meeting with hindrances. Rather than dampening our

spirits, troubles that we face then open certain secret vaults of optimism and enthusiasm from deep inside us.

Commitment to dharma: This is an area where extreme caution is warranted. Especially when success in some of our ventures gets into our head, we get deluded to think we are above law. Amidst the joyous mood and the jubilant spirit that accompany accomplishments, we need to stay firm on the course of dharma, which is essentially righteous behaviour. Such care acts as a magnificent foundation for us to build tall towers of praiseworthy performance.

The above four are mentioned in half a verse of Vidura Neeti in the Mahābhārata. Vidura Neeti has 593 verses filled with great observations and wonderful insights.

Swāmi Chidānanda

Notes:

1 *ātma-jnānam samārambhah titikshā dharma-nityatā* – Vidura-neeti 1.20

2 *yam-arthāt-na-apakarshanti* – Vidura-neeti 1.20 (the same verse as above)

**Imperatives from
Upanishads**

5

PRACTISE FOCUS

Bring your mind and body together

In this fifth selection, we look at an important preparatory exercise that all of us should do, to spiritually rise. Even if spirituality does not mean much to some of us, this self-training means a lot for worldly achievements too.



Practise focus (tasyai tapah)!

Kena Upanisad, mantra 4.8

The two words in the mantra¹ (*tasyai tapah*) literally mean, 'For that, have concentration.' In the context, it implies, 'Bringing the body, the senses and the mind together'² (*tapah*) is a means to gain the highest understanding of Brahman.'

Ninety out of a hundred among us have immense capacity to grasp higher wisdom, and to stay anchored in it. Alas, only one out of the hundred scales the heights. The other ninety mess up their life. Why?

The author of the popular book³, 'THE ONE THING', says, "If you chase two rabbits at the same time, you are sure to miss both of them!" For being very effective in all that we do, we must develop the habit of 'doing one thing at a time and doing that well.'



This applies to our holistic growth, which is what spirituality is truly all about. University education generally brings about lopsided growth. Many who excel in academics are weak in practical matters. Even if some are good in several fields, they are weak in either the grasp of human values or in living those values. In other words, people may succeed in becoming very good in both theory and practice of several subjects but may fail in the matter of becoming truly good human beings.

Among thousands who throng to spiritual programs, just a handful attain higher levels of consciousness. Some just talk; some others withdraw into a shell of their own making, turning insensitive to the suffering around them; yet others get distracted by secondary aspects of spirituality like mastering some techniques and so on. (The benefits of techniques can be initially charming but are of little value in the long run.)

Therefore, *tapah* is a very thought-provoking suggestion by the Rishi of the Kenopanishad. We must develop advanced skills of studying and practising spirituality without any form of narrowing down of our domain of concern. We must not forget that the ego (the self, the I-thought) has numerous clever ways of protecting itself.

Notes:

1 (whole mantra) *tasyai tapo damah karmeti pratisthā, vedāh sarvāngāni, satyam-āyatanam* – Kena Upanishad, mantra 4.8

2 *kāya-indriya-manasām samādhānam tapah* – Commentary by Shankarāchārya.

3 *THE ONE THING* – Authors, Gary Keller and Jay Papasan

Quote of the Issue

ONE RIGHT PATH



The one who is on the pilgrimage to God is fortunate. The path to God alone is worthy of being called a path; all others are wrong paths, where one meets with troubles and calamities at every step.

Holy Mother Ānandamayī Mā

[Ānandamayī Mā (April 1896 – August 1982) was an Indian saint and revered as incarnation of Hindu goddess Durgā, described by Swāmi Sivānanda Saraswati (of the Divine Life Society) as "*la fleur la plus parfaite que le sol de l'Inde ait produite*" [the most perfect flower the Indian soil has produced]. Her life was suffused in Bhakti Yoga and she was considered as the epitome of divine grace that inspired the societal cultural milieu to lead the path of service, love and constant remembrance of the divine. Precognition, faith healing and miracles were some of her attributes that were experienced by her followers. Paramahansa Yogānanda translates the Sanskrit epithet Ānandamayī as "Joy-permeated" in English. This name was given to her by her devotees in the 1920s to describe her perpetual state of divine joy. – Editors]

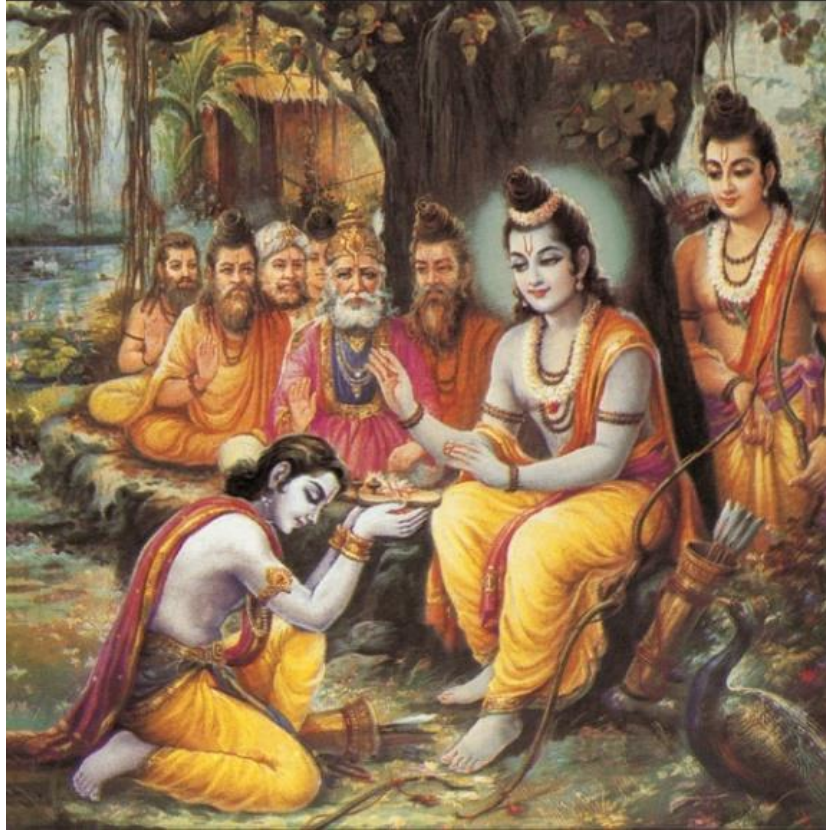
Smt. Indira Gautam
Writes from the US

CODIFIED COMMON SENSE

That is What Wisdom is, Many a Time.

'Hope your income is large and your expenditure is less than the income,' says¹ Shri Rāma to his younger brother Bharata. He then softly adds², 'I hope the undeserving do not

take large portions of your wealth.’ Is it not common sense for anybody among us to ensure that our expenses are within our capacity? Who wants to suffer under debts and loans? Who does not enjoy economic robustness where there is always enough to spare, and we are not in the red? Spending and owing more money than what we earn is a nightmare for any sensible and responsible person.



The occasion is when Bharata goes to the forest to persuade Rāma to return to Ayodhyā, rather than embark on the 14 years’ stay in the jungles. While that purpose of his does not get fulfilled, he receives the loving blessings of his noble elder brother along with valuable guidance on governance, administration, and leadership.

It is not just money where we have got to earn more and spend less. Even in time management, we must not take too many tasks and, as the idiom goes, try to bite more than what we can chew! In relationships also, can we build more contacts than we can handle? In a teacher’s job, for yet another example, can she promise more classes than what her (physical and mental) capacity permits?

‘Use your common sense,’ is one tip for peace of mind, which can really work where reading a hundred books fails. No wonder the wise say a whole lot of wisdom to live rightly is nothing but codified common sense.

Hearty best wishes,
Indira Gautam

Notes 1:

1 / āyas-te vipulah kaccit

/ kaccid-alpataro vyayah | Valmiki Ramayana, Ayodhya Kanda, 100.54

2 / apātreshu na te kaccid

/ kosho gacchati Rāghava || (second half of the same shloka as above)

CAN MILK AND OTHER DAIRY PRODUCTS BE HARMFUL TO US?

Why a lot of people are going off milk

Are you in the in-between phase? Do you purchase almond milk on occasion and sometimes ask for oat milk in your iced coffee, but also love cheese in your burritos and snack on yogurt? You have heard dairy may not be the best thing for you, but you are still on the fence. It may be time to detox from dairy.

We hear you, but the true health impacts of dairy are often muted by dairy industry marketing dollars. Many do not fully realize the negative effects dairy can have on our health, and once you know, it is a lot easier to cut it out.



Ah, these are delicious but are they good?

Here are six reasons why we should detox from dairy.

1. Dairy Is Linked to Acne and Skin Issues

Dairy causes the overproduction of sebum. The hormones in cow's milk trigger the production of this oily, waxy substance within the skin. If sebum gets trapped in our pores, bacteria will grow in our follicles and clog them. Clogged pores cause inflammation, which can then progress to redness, swelling, and inflamed acne.

With that, staying away from dairy is a popular way to make your skin less susceptible to acne. Cutting milk from your diet will decrease your sebum production and likely make your skin look and feel better. More research is needed to show the causal relationship between dairy consumption and acne, but anecdotal evidence has continued to support a link between the two.

2. Dairy Impedes Digestion

Do you need to take Lactaid before consuming dairy products? You are not alone—lactose intolerance is more common than you may think. According to the US National Library of Medicine, 65 percent of humans are lactose intolerant, but many are unaware of this issue. Those who are lactose intolerant have a very hard time digesting any dairy product—be that ice cream, cheese, or yogurt. If you experience gas, bloat, stomach pain, diarrhoea, or other

digestive issues after consuming dairy products, you are likely in the majority of people who cannot digest dairy.

There is an easy fix to these uncomfortable symptoms: ditch dairy. Once you do, your digestion will become more consistent. Imagine living with no bloat! It is possible if you detox from dairy. The best part: you will reap the benefits within days of living dairy-free.

3. Dairy May Lead to Weight Gain

The supply of dairy in the US has constantly outpaced the demand for decades. To entice consumers to buy more, the dairy industry has laced many products with added sugars. From flavoured yogurts and cream cheese to chocolate milk, it is hard to find a dairy product that is not pumped with sugar. Sugars are high calories but minimal in nutrients. Further, dairy products have little to no fibre, so even though you are eating a good amount of calories, it will not fill you up, which could cause you to eat more. Excess calories transform into fat if not burned off. If you have been trying to shed a few extra pounds, simply ditching dairy could help you accomplish that goal—without dieting. Once you eliminate dairy from your diet, weight loss becomes more achievable.

4. Dairy Drags You Down

It is not uncommon for many people to consume dairy-rich foods after a long day. It is normal to seek comfort from pizza, cheese-filled pasta, ice cream, or wine and cheese when under stress. While these dairy-laden foods may provide a fleeting distraction, they may also cause you to feel tired all the time.

Dairy products increase the formation of mucus within the body. Moreover, the protein from dairy may cause inflammation in some parts of the body. When the digestive tract and the thyroid gland are inflamed, your body may undergo serious issues. Thyroid problems can cause fatigue and lower energy levels.

If you feel sluggish throughout the day, ditching dairy could help raise your energy levels. You may not even need that second cup of coffee!

5. Dairy Could be Messing with Your Mood

While most do not think about it as they reach for that gallon of milk, dairy comes from cows. More importantly, pregnant cows. Your favourite brand of milk may say “no added hormones,” but that does not mean there are no hormones to begin with. Pregnant cows are raging with natural bovine hormones such as oestrogen, cortisol, and progesterone, and these hormones are transferred into their milk. Once they enter your body, these hormones can throw off your hormone balance and lead to changes in mood.

6. Dairy May Exacerbate Headaches

Have you ever had a headache that came out of nowhere? If you have been suffering from migraines a lot lately, think about what you have eaten. If dairy makes a regular appearance in your meals—specifically, cheese—it may be the culprit. Tyramine, a natural chemical, has been linked to headaches. Cheese contains a substantial amount of tyramine, which could set off your next headache or migraine. Give dairy a rest to see if you feel better. Once you do, you will never be tempted by cheese again.

Courtesy: The Internet – switch4good.org

GREAT CAUTION IS NECESSARY
Four Factors can Ruin a Young Person

4

/ yauvanam, dhana-sampattih
/ prabhutvam avivekatā
/ ekaikam-api vināshāya
/ kimu yatra chatusthayam?

The Himālayan blunders that Duryodhana committed, in the well-known story of Mahābhārata, began with his losing the head during his youthful days. When there is a lot of energy, stamina, and ability to bounce back, it seems to us that we can do anything and nothing will happen. Is that so?

Can we avoid the mistakes that Duryodhana did? If we are keen to be different, there is the second factor to note. Wealth. If we have a lot of money at our disposal, we run the risk of losing sight of right priorities and go berserk with the Rupees in our pockets. Philosophically, money itself is not bad. Certain tendencies in us to indiscriminately pursue pleasure can get a conducive atmosphere to grow wild when we possess plenty of money. Therefore, we have got to be cautious.



We will do whatever we want, why care?

The red signal turns on in a third scenario too. That is when we have authority, power, or the privilege of dictating orders to others. Here too the culprit is various *vāsanās* (*hidden tendencies in the unconscious, which we might have brought forward from a previous life*)

that are waiting to express themselves. We therefore have got to exercise our authority with a lot of care and concern.

The fourth danger is if we, for whatever reason, tend to fail in discriminating between right and wrong. If we have a track record of making wrong judgments in matters like when to say yes and when to say no, or whom to include in our friends' circle and whom to avoid, or where to invest our money and where not to, etc., such poor ability to figure out the right way ahead is called *aviveka*.

The Sanskrit verse quoted at the beginning of this piece of writing says, 'Even one of these four – youthfulness, wealth, authority and *aviveka* – is enough to jeopardise our life. What if all the four factors are playing their part in our case?

Let not the bitter statement, 'Youth is a time to err; old age a time to regret,' come true in our life!

- Editors

Webinars



PRESENTED

The following webinars were presented by Swāmiji at 8.30 pm IST, on Sundays:

January 14, 2024	Webinar #260	Understanding Hinduism, Episode 9 (Reincarnation – Punar-janma)
January 28, 2024	Webinar #261	What happens when one dies?

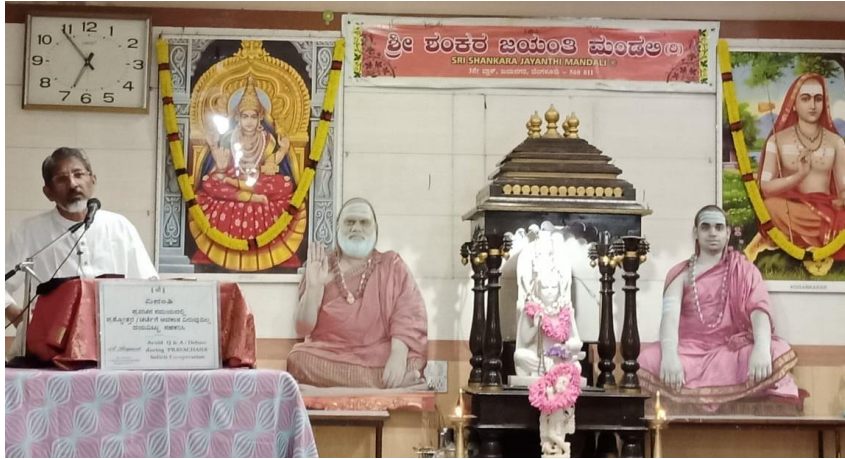
TO BE PRESENTED

Sundays, 8.30 pm IST

By Shri Jnān Dāsh, California		
February 11, 2024	Webinar #262	Meditation in Daily Life, Guidance from Viveka-Chudamani
By Swāmi Chidānanda		
March 3, 2024	Webinar #263	Understanding Hinduism, Episode 10 (The Four Yogas: Time-tested Paths)

News

Bengaluru, Jan 17, 18: Swāmiji delivered two talks at the Shankara Jayanti Mandali on the kaccit-sarga of Valmiki Ramayana, and completed the 4-talk series in Kannada.



A talk in progress at Shankara Jayanti Mandali, January 17, 2024

Talk at Serene Urbana: Swāmi Advaitānandaji and Swāmiji were invited by the Residents' Committee at the beautiful and spacious Senior Living Space called Serene Urbana, just 3 kilometers away from the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru. While Swāmiji spoke on '*Letting Go – The Two Words that Hold the Secret of Peace*', Advaitānandaji conducted a guided meditation. Both the Swāmis engaged the 80 strong audience in a lively QA session at the end. Smt Lakshmi Nandakumār, the Secretary of the RC facilitated the program, while Smt Padmā Vijayādrī provided support.



The Audience at Serene Urbana, Bengaluru, Jan 17, 2024



Swāmi Advaitānanda answers questions.

Meditation and Study Circle: Swāmiji delivered an online talk on 'The Nature of the Self as presented in Viveka-Chudāmani' on January 23 under the banner of the M and S Circle. The language was Kannada.

J Krishnamurti Study Circle, Indore: On alternate Thursdays, Swāmiji has been giving 30 mins online talks on various themes, followed by a couple of other speakers and then open interaction. These are online. Two such talks took place on January 11 and 25, and the topics were *Energy that is not of the self* and *Musings on Fragmentation*.

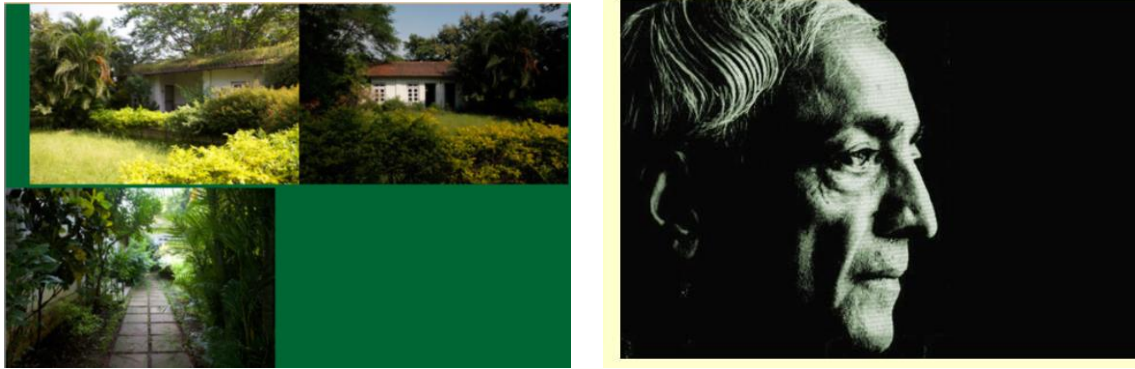
Satsang at a house: Smt Tripta and Shri Bharat Bhushan Bhalla hosted a Satsang at their home in Shāstri Nagar on Sunday, Feb 4. Swāmiji spoke on *Hinduism: Its Past, Present and Future*.

Upcoming Events

Mumbai:

A Talk at a College: Swāmiji will address young girls and boys pursuing B.Com. at the Mālīni Kishor Sanghvi College of Commerce and Economics in Juhu-Vile Parle on Friday, February 9. '*You and Your Personality: Fragmentation to Integration*' will be the topic.

An Event at Badlāpur: Swāmiji will be the main speaker at the Annual Gathering of J Krishnamurti Self Education Society, Bombay, at their Retreat Centre located in Badlāpur. The theme of this daylong event is: *Education: Why is there no sense of love here? Is it that we have become so intellectual?* (as perceived by J K). Those who wish to join may contact K V on 98928 18205 (mobile number).



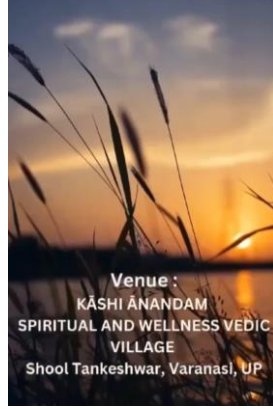
The Anand Vihār Retreat in Badlāpur

Satsang on a Terrace: Smt Sangita and Sri Ramesh Sahajwāni will host a Satsang on the terrace of the building where their flat is, in Khār. This event is on Thursday, February 15 and the topic for the evening will be: *Optimistic Foresights into India after January 2024.*



Kāshi Retreat, Feb 17 – 22, 2024: All the available seats were booked within a week after the announcement was made of the upcoming Retreat in Varanasi. The five-day Retreat at Kāshi Ānandam, a Spiritual and Wellness Vedic Village, Shool Tankeshwar, Vārānasi, will be on the theme, '*Living and Dying*' – *Guidance from Geetā and Kathopanishad.*' Some of

the participants have planned to visit Ayodhyā also after this Retreat, and have the darshan of Ram Lallā.



Retreat in Vārānasi, Feb 17 thru 22, 2024

M and S Circle again: Two online talks will be delivered under the banner of Meditation and Study Circle, Bengaluru, on Monday the 26th and Tuesday the 27th of February. The first one will be in English and the second in Kannada. The topics will be '*A Powerful Illustration from Kathopanishad*' and '*The Happy Bird that does not Eat*' respectively.

(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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