

Chinmaya Smrithi



A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC)

Volume 21, Number 6 November 17, 2011



An inspiring, uplifting and devotional dance performance at Chinmayam by Samarthanam Troupe of visually impaired dancers, September 18, 2011

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Calendar and Upcoming Events (www.chinmayadc.org, Link – CMWRC Events)

- Mon Nov 21- Sat Nov 26 – Jnana Yajna by Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji on Gita Chapter 2, Slokas 1-18, at Dulles, VA. Details on the website
- Mon Dec 26 – Thur Dec 29 – Winter Youth Camp for High School students, under the guidance of Swami Sarveshananda at Chinmayam. Details on the website.
- Sun Jan 1st, 2012 – New Year Day Puja: Vishnu Sahasranamavali, Sri Lakshmi Ashtottara Sathanamavali, Guru Paduka Puja, Sri Gurudev Ashtottara Satanamavali. Details soon on the website.
- Sun Jan 15th, 2012 – Youth Seva – Food for the Homeless, in honor of Martin Luther King Day at Chinmayam.
- Sun Feb 19th, 2012 – Mahashivaratri Observation. Details will be posted on the website.

Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Vijay Kumar ji by email at vijaykumar@rocketmail.com, if you are interested in forming or learning more about study groups.

Bookstore/Library

- Please contact Mr Vijay Singh by email at publications@chinmayadc.org to order any books, CDs, DVDs, etc.. Browse online at www.chinmayapublications.com
- Srimad Bhagvad Gita with Sri Gurudev's commentary is online at www.myholygita.com

Next Issue

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly issue – November 2011, are due by November 1st, 2011
- Email submissions to smrithi@chinmayadc.org. Submission instructions at www.chinmayadc.org, Smrithi link, "Information on publishing in Smrithi"

Useful Links:

CMWRC – Washington Regional Center
Chinmaya Mission Trust
Chinmaya Mission West
Chinmaya International Foundation, E-Vedanta Course
Washington Region – Dulles VA Chapter website
Washington Region – Frederick MD Chapter website
Washington Region – Springfield VA Chapter website

www.chinmayadc.org
www.chinmayamission.com
www.chinmayamission.org
www.chinfo.org
www.chinmayadulles.org
www.chinmayafrederick.org
www.chinmayava.org

Please Note

The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of Chinmaya Mission or CMWRC

Editorial Staff: (smrithi@chinmayadc.org)

Sitaram Kowtha, Gopal Gopinath, Raju Chidambaram, Acharya Vilasiniji, Acharyas, Chapter Coordinators and Teachers. &

BV students - Ananya Krishnan, Asmi Panigrabi, Atman Panigrabi, Harsha Neerchal, Nandini Kishore, Vishnupriya Karedy and Keshav Kowtha

Please contact us if you are interested in joining the editorial staff!

CMWRC Events Held

- Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC) has been conducting an annual Gita Chanting competition under the guidance of our resident Acharya, Swami Dheerananda for the past several years. This year more than 300 children and adults from the Virginia, Frederick and Silver Spring Chapters of CMWRC participated in the competition, chanting and reading the verses from Chapter 12 of the Gita. Trophies and certificates were awarded by Swamiji to all participants in October. Registration and practice for Gita Chanting Competition for 2012 is now underway.
- Youth Seva was held on Sunday, October 23rd at Chinmayam, in observance of Gandhi Jayanti. Bala vihar students from Tapovanam and Chinmayam classes prepared sandwiches for the homeless. Next Youth Seva Day is in January to observe Martin Luther King Day.
- Deepavali was celebrated at Chinmayam on Wednesday, October 26th.
- TGIF (Thank Gurudev it's Friday) Chinmaya CHYK connection (CCC) social was held on October 22nd. The next event is planned for December/January time-frame.

Chinmaya Somnath Project

You can follow the progress of the Chinmaya Somnath project – new center in Northern Virginia at - www.chinmayasomnath.org

This website is continually updated to show progress and information on the project. Please review the fund raising appeal and use the pledge form, available at the website, to support this important CMWRC initiative.



Be sure to read the November 2011 newsletter from Chinmaya Mission West. Browse the latest newsletter at www.chinmayamission.org/cmwnews.

Guidelines: Submit a report/newsbrief on recent major events or activities, for CMW News. In particular, centers where Pujya Guruji has already visited are requested to submit an article with photos.

Please email your article and images to cmwn-submissions@chinmayamission.org Due Dates for Article Submissions to CMW Newsletter in 2012: December 1 (2011), February 1, April 1, June 1, August 1 and October 1.

LOAN PLEDGE FORM

I/We Mr/Mrs/Miss _____
would like to commit to advancing, as loan, a sum of Dollars _____ thousand
(multiple of \$5000) for a fixed term as indicated below to **Chinmaya Mission Washington
Regional Center (CMWRC)** for the purpose of supporting the capital projects in Northern
Virginia and in Maryland.

\$ _____	For FIVE YEARS	@5.0% per annum- simple rate of Interest *
\$ _____	For SEVEN YEARS	@6.0% per annum- simple rate of Interest *
\$ _____	For TEN YEARS	@6.5% per annum- simple rate of Interest *

I/We understand that the interest will be payable in the month of January each year for the
immediately preceding year. The principal will be payable at the end of the five/ seven/ ten year
term. The amount of my/our pledge, as stated above, will be available by:
(Please circle one)

2011	June 1	July 1	Aug. 1	Sept. 1	Oct. 1	Nov. 1	Dec. 1
2012	Jan. 1	Feb. 1	Mar. 1	Apr. 1	May 1	Jun. 1	Jul. 1
2012	Aug. 1	Sept. 1	Oct. 1	Nov. 1	Dec. 1		
2013	Jan. 1	Feb. 1	Mar. 1	Apr. 1	May. 1	Jun. 1	Jul. 1

and will be mailed/delivered to Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center within ten days
of a request for funds from CMWRC.

Signed _____ Date _____
(Please print)
Full name: _____ Phone# _____
Address: _____ Email: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Signed _____ Date _____
(Please print)
Full Name: _____ Phone# _____
Address: _____ Email: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

(* Note: If CMWRC decides to adjust interest rates during the first three years of this loan, those rates if moved
upwards will be applied prospectively to your rates but your interest rate will not go down if the adjustment is
downwards. Early withdrawals will be subject to rate reduction rules - please see FAQ. Please indicate if the loan is in
minor's name)

Please Mail or hand over this form to:
Prakash G. Soman, Treasurer, CMWRC - 6541 South Street, Falls Church, VA 22042

Nominee Designation Form

To:
Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC)
46 Norwood Road
Silver Spring, MD 20905

I/We Mr./Mrs./Miss** _____ wish to advance a sum of Dollars _____ Thousand only (\$ _____ Multiple of \$5000) at the interest rate indicated below to Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC) for a period of five/seven/ten years for the capital projects in Northern Virginia and in Maryland. I/We understand that the interest will be payable in the month of January each year for the immediately preceding year. The principal will be payable at the end of the five/seven/ten year term.

A check (Check # _____ dated _____ on _____ bank) made payable to CMWRC is enclosed herewith.

I/We nominate _____ to be the beneficiary(s)/nominee(s)/assignee(s) of the said loan amount (the principal as well as interest due thereon as stated above) in the event of my/our death prior to the maturity date of the loan.

The social security number to be used for the annual 1099-INT form is _____ and the mailing address for mailing the annual 1099-INT form is given below. We will promptly notify CMWRC if the mailing address changes in the future.

Signed: _____ Date _____

Signed: _____ Date _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Tel: _____ Mobile Tel: _____

Email: _____

Term and Interest Rates:

5 Years	@5.0% per annum – simple rate of Interest *	Please Treat This Loan as an Interest Free Loan for _____ Years.
7 Years	@6.0% per annum – simple rate of Interest *	
10 Years	@6.5% per annum – simple rate of Interest *	

NOTE: Please inform CMWRC promptly of any change in address.

* Early withdrawals are subject to rate reductions – see FAQ for details.

** Please PRINT name and indicate if the Loan is in a Minor's name.

Please mail/give this form to Prakash G. Soman, Treasurer CMWRC, 6541 South Street, Falls Church, VA 22042

News

- New Devi Niwas Parking Lot at Silver Spring: Facilities sevaks at Silver Spring chapter, led by Raj Bommakanti, developed a plan for adding 37 new parking spaces at Chinmayam to alleviate parking shortages. During a weekend in September, they turned a portion of Devi Niwas lawn into a new parking area!

Announcements

Thank Gurudev It's Friday (TGIF) Bala Vihar – Chinmayam class CHYK Connection (CCC) Socials

TGIF socials are held on Friday evenings every other month for CHYK and Chinmayam students/parents. (Chinmayam is Bala Vihar classes for Grades 10-12). TGIFs are get-togethers hosted by a CMWRC family, and all Chinmayam parents across CMWRC are invited to attend. The agenda is simple: free-form discussions, mentorship time, potluck dinner, and fun activity or hangout time. While Chinmayam kids and CHYK hang out, parents have their fun.

Next TGIF social is planned for December 2011 or January 2012. Details to follow.

Contact: Email chinmayamTGIF@gmail.com and/or call Abdulla Meer at (240) 381-1984 to RSVP or for further information, or with any questions, comments or concerns.

Recent Pravachans Available for Download or Purchase (www.chinmayadc.org, Audio)

Acharya Sadananda recently completed Kenopanishad MP3 files are available for download

Current/Upcoming Events

- Jnana Yajna by Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji, on Gita Chapter 2, Slokas 1-18, at Dulles Multipurpose Center in Herndon VA, November 21-26. Flyer and Details at www.chinmayadc.org, Events page.
- Winter Youth Camp for High School students under the guidance of Swami Sarveshananda (Acharya, Chinmaya Mission, Dallas) will be held at Chinmayam, December 26-29. Registration is now underway. Check details at www.chinmayadc.org, Events page.
- New Year (2012) will be welcomed with puja on Sun, January 1st, 2012. Location: Northern Virginia. Program: Vishnu Sahasranamavali, Sri Lakshmi Ashtottara Sathanamavali, Guru Paduka Puja and Sri Gurudev Ashtottara Sathanamavali. Details will be posted on the website soon.
- June 2012: Jnana Yajna with Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda. Topic: Tulsi Ramayan. Location: Herndon High School, Herndon VA. Details soon.
- 2012 GITA Chanting Competition Registration and Practice materials are now online. Member and non-members, children and adults, all are invited to participate. Details on the website.

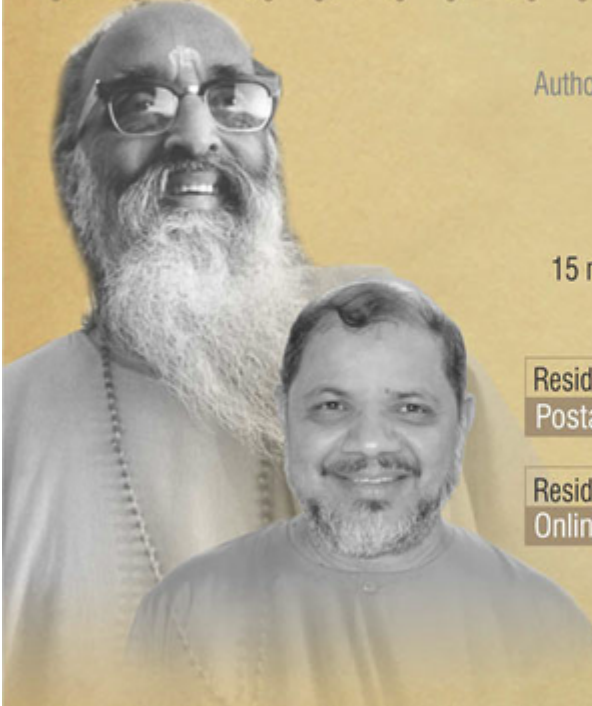
cif Chinmaya International Foundation

Affiliated to Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi & recognised by Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)

launches

BHAGAVAD GITA COURSE

Go through Gita... Grow through Gita...



Author: **His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda**
Head, Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

Course Highlights:

18 Chapters covered in 30 lessons
15 months duration @ 2 lessons per month

Course Donation:

Residents of the Indian sub-continent: ₹3,000	Postal Course	Other Residents: US\$250
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Residents of the Indian sub-continent: ₹3,000	Online Course	Other Residents: US\$200
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Knowledge of Sanskrit is not required
as the medium of instruction is English.

REGISTER NOW!

For online registration visit: www.chinfo.org/courses/bhagavadgita

For further details contact:

Administrator, CIF Home Study Courses
Chinmaya International Foundation

Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad, Ernakulam – 682 319, Kerala, India

Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729

Email: gitacourse@chinfo.org

DHARMA SEVAK COURSE

CHINMAYA MISSION TRINIDAD



COURSE ACHARYA:

**SWAMINI
VIMALANANDA**

ASSISTED BY: SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA

February 1st to March 11th 2012

- ◆ Experience the joy of Gurukula living
- ◆ Learn the fundamentals of Vedanta
- ◆ Learn Sanskrit
- ◆ Learn how to conduct and be firmly grounded in spiritual practices
- ◆ Celebrate auspicious occasions like Ganesh Chaturthi, Janmashtami.



SAVE NOW!

Register Before
Gandhi Jayanti
2nd October,
2011

For A
15% Discount

COURSE DONATION

4000 USD / person (over 25yrs) with AC
3500 USD / person (over 25yrs) w/out AC
2500 USD / person (under 25yrs) with AC
2000 USD / person (under 25yrs) w/out AC

CHINMAYA ASHRAM

#1 SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA DR., CALCUTTA RD#1,
MC BEAN, COUVA, TRINIDAD, WEST INDIES.

TEL: 1-868-679-3652/1-868-636-1571

FAX: 1-868-679-3652

EMAIL: CHINMAYAMMISSIONTT@GMAIL.COM



CHINMAYA MISSION

Washington Regional Center

A non-profit religious organization registered in Maryland)
Kailas Niwas, 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905



PRESENTS

BHAGAVAD GITA JNANA YAJNA

(A Series of Free Discourses)

GITA CHAPTER 2 : VERSES 1-18

(The Yoga of Knowledge)

by Swami Dheerananda
(Resident Acharya, CMWRC)

Nov 21 - Nov 26, 2011

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

**@ Dulles South Multipurpose Center
24950 Riding Center Dr, South Riding, VA 20152**

Swami Dheerananda has served the Washington DC area, guiding families since 1989 when Poojya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda designated him as Resident Acharya for the Washington DC Metro area. Swami Dheerananda is the architect behind Chinmaya Mission's very popular Bala Vihar and Summer Camps for children in the Washington DC area.



Child Care Activities are Planned for Kids ages 4+ along with special class to learn Chapter 2 Vs 1-18 for Gita Chanting Competition.

Info: yajna@chinmayasomnath.org

DIRECTIONS: From Beltway- Rt. 495 take I-66 W to Route 50 West past Route 28 overpass. Travel 5 miles, turn left on Loudoun County Parkway and turn right on Riding Center Drive. Go past the 4-way stop sign and the center will be to your left. **Parking is free.**



Chinmaya Mission
Washington Regional Center
46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905 Tel: 301-384-5009



Announces

Winter Youth Camp 2011

For Tapovanam & Chinmayam Students (Grades 9-12)

December 26-28th 2011, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm & December 29th 2011 9:00 AM to NOON

CTRL-ALT-DEL



Conducted by



Swami Sarveshananda
Chinmaya Mission, Dallas/Fort Worth

Swami Sarveshananda, formerly known as Bramhachari Uddhav Chaitanya joined the Vedanta Course at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya in Mumbai in 1993. Since 2002, he is the Resident Acharya of Chinmaya Mission in Dallas/Fort Worth. Swami Sarveshananda is also the National Director of Chinmaya Mission Yuva Kendra (CHYK) West. Besides his busy schedule, he manages to make time for hallmark activities such as Camps, Picnics, Walkathons, and the popular Lock-ins with various groups like Balavihar Teachers.

Registration Fee -- \$121 until November 24, 2011

After November 24, 2011 Fee will be \$151

Cancellation fee of \$21 applies for all cancellations until December 15, 2011.
After that date, a cancellation fee of \$50 applies to defray the administrative costs.

To Register go to chinmayadc.org

For further details, contact:

Meera Ravichandran (301-279-0434) **or** ravi5211@yahoo.com

Sujatha Rao (301)-528-7863 **or** sujatha_rao2@yahoo.com

Meera Kirkire (301)774-1022 **or** meerakirkire@yahoo.com

Tulsi Ramayan

Jnana Yajna

BY

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda



June 24-30, 2012

Herndon High School, Herndon VA

Free Discourses, Open to All

Further Details will be available soon. Mark your Calendars.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to listen to a beautiful and spiritually uplifting rendering of Saint Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas by His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide, a Hindi and Sanskrit scholar, an expert on Ramcharitmanas, a tireless teacher of Advaita Vedanta and the illustrious sevak of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's vision.



46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring MD, 20905 www.chinmayadc.org

Our mission is to provide to individuals from any background, the wisdom of Vedanta and the practical means for spiritual growth and happiness, enabling them to become positive contributors to society

We hold Bala Vihar and Vedanta classes in : Silver Spring, MD; Northern VA (Herndon); Frederick, MD; Salisbury, MD; and Richmond, VA. For details visit our website: www.chinmayadc.org

Our Main Activities

- Bala Vihar for children 4+ through High School: Values based teaching from Ramayana, Mahabharatha and Srimad Bhagavatham
- Vibrant Summer Camps
- Youth Camps
- Adult Gita Classes
- Celebrations – New Year, Shivaratri, Hanuman Jayanthi, Chinmaya Seva Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day, Bala Vihar Graduation, Bala Vihar Annual Day, Guru Poornima, Sadhana Day, Dasara, Deepavali and Annual Banquet.
- Gita Chanting
- Jnana Yajnas and Spritual Camps
- Vedanta Study Groups

Due to the ever increasing demand for our programs in the Northern VA area in the last few years, we have embarked on a major project in Chantilly, VA, to construct a facility of our own with class rooms, auditorium, kitchen and dining area and playground, with modern amenities.

What is Chinmaya Mission ?

Under the guidance of His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda, devotees formed the nucleus of a spiritual renaissance movement that now encompasses a wide range of spiritual, educational, and charitable activities, ennobling the lives of thousands in India and worldwide.

Presently headed by His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, the Mission is administered by Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT) in Mumbai, India. Under Swami Tejomayananda's guidance, The Mission has continued mushrooming across the globe and stands today with over 300 centers worldwide.

Under the guidance of our resident Acharya, Swami Dheerananda, the Washington Regional Center has seen tremendous growth in the past few years.

What does Chinmaya Mission teach?

Advaita Vedanta: Following the Vedic teacher-student tradition (guru-shishya parampara), Chinmaya Mission makes available the ageless wisdom of Advaita Vedanta, the knowledge of Universal Oneness, and provides the tools to realize the wisdom in one's life. "To give maximum happiness to the maximum number for the maximum time" is the tenet that drives Mission workers to uplift humanity beyond selfish and sectarian attitudes and activities. Vedanta, the essential core of Hinduism, is the universal science of life, relevant to all people of all backgrounds and faiths. Vedanta inspires spiritual seekers to understand their own faith better. Thus, although Chinmaya Mission is a Hindu spiritual organization, it does not seek to convert other religious practitioners.



Understanding the Swastika

Use and abuse of a sacred symbol



AJC American Jewish Committee

Meaning of the Swastika

The swastika (or swastika) has been used for thousands of years since Vedic times. In the Indus Valley civilizations, in ancient Troy and by Native Americans. The word swastika in Sanskrit means "that which brings good luck and well-being"; su means "good" and asti means "is." It appears in one of the most frequently used mantras of the Rg Veda [1.89.6], the oldest scripture known to man.

The swastika is considered extremely sacred and holy by Buddhists, Hindus, Jains and Zoroastrians and remains very widely used from ancient times to the present day. The symbol is engraved on sacred objects of worship as well as on doorways of temples and homes.

It forms part of religious ceremonies to celebrate weddings, consecrations of new homes, embarking on new ventures or any such auspicious undertaking. It is used to decorate books, vehicles, cash registers in stores and myriad other objects in daily use in many Asian countries, especially India. Because the swastika has been so widely used for so long, it has been interpreted in a variety of ways by practitioners of the Eastern Religions.

Interpretations used by Hindus include:

- A solar symbol, spreading light in all directions;
- The four goals of human Endeavour: the line from bottom left to top right represents the pursuit of Artha (material security) and Kama (desire). The line from bottom right to top left represents the flow from Dharma (right action) to Moksha (liberation);
- A representation of Lord Ganesha, the Remover of obstacles, the Repository of wisdom; who is invariably invoked at the start of any religious ceremony in the form of OM.

In Buddhism, the four arms of the swastika are interpreted to represent the four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha: there is suffering; the origin of suffering is desire; suffering can cease; the eight-fold path is the way out of suffering.

In Jainism, the swastika is the primary holy symbol. It is a symbol of the seventh Jina (Saint), the Tirthankara Suparsva. All Jain temples and holy books must contain the swastika and ceremonies typically begin and end with creating a swastika mark several times with rice around the altar. The four segments of the swastika represent the four destinies of living beings: life as a human being; as a celestial being; as a fish, bird or animal; and as living in hell.



Swastika used in a Zoroastrian Ceremony



Symbols, by definition, have power. Examples exist throughout history of symbols misused and abused by those who seek to harm and intimidate. Perhaps no abuse of a symbol is more potent than one associated with genocide.

The Jewish Perspective

For Jews, the Nazi swastika is inextricably linked with the German National Socialist plan to rid the world of the Jewish people. The swastika was not an incidental or occasional image for the Nazis. It was ubiquitous. Hitler first used it as a symbol for his National Socialist Party, but its adoption as the sole National Flag for Nazi Germany in 1935 coincided with the passage of laws which defined Jews as being of "inferior blood" and which began the process of terrorizing them. Jews lost their right to vote, their ability to marry (or, in some cases, employ) "Aryans," their capacity to work in certain professions, and their access to a long list of public facilities. Their citizenship was revoked, they became demonized, and described in language usually reserved for vermin.

Under the symbol of the swastika, the Nazis not only waged war against the Allies, but also took to heart their other goal—to destroy Jews. The two goals were not equal: at times the Nazis had to decide whether a particular train would take armaments to the front for its soldiers, or Jews to the death camps. They chose the latter as the more important goal.

Approximately six million Jews were killed by the Nazis under the symbol of the swastika. Some of the most enduring images of this genocidal mission are of the murder of Jewish children, whether of youngsters being gassed to death, or being walked into pits holding hands with their families and neighbors, waiting their turn to be shot. The Nazis approached the killing of Jews as not only a glorious mission, but also something akin to sport. Children were viewed as "useless eaters," and of the 1 million Jewish children in Poland in 1939, only 5,000 survived. To Jews, the swastika is synonymous with the most violent and darkest of hatreds, one which even glorified killing Jewish babies.

The anti-Semitic use of the swastika did not end with the defeat of Nazi Germany. For the last six decades many hateful movements – including white supremacist groups which define non-whites as non-human and Jews as the offspring of Satan – have adopted it. When Jewish graves are desecrated or houses of worship attacked, spray-painted swastikas are frequently found and some anti-Israel activists are now using it to demonize Israel by claiming it is like Nazi Germany. In the Jewish experience, there is no more devastating and hurtful symbol than the swastika.



"The Swastika is an ancient and greatly auspicious symbol of the Hindu tradition. It is inscribed on Hindu temples, ritual altars, entrances, and even account books. A distorted version of this sacred symbol was misappropriated by the Third Reich in Germany, and abused as an emblem under which heinous crimes were perpetrated against humanity, particularly the Jewish people. The participants recognize that this symbol is, and has been sacred to Hindus for millennia, long before its misappropriation."

—Declaration of the Second Hindu-Jewish Leadership Summit, February 2008, Jerusalem

This publication is designed to explain briefly the positive meaning and significance of the swastika for Buddhists, Hindus, Jains and Zoroastrians and the painful significance of the swastika for the Jewish community.

The Nazis desecrated this sacred symbol. In Europe and America, the swastika became a symbol of hate and genocide against the Jews—a symbol that is scrawled on walls by racists and anti-Semites. But for billions of the world's population in India, China, Korea, Indonesia, Tibet, Thailand, and indeed in most of Asia, the swastika has remained a most sacred symbol that has for millennia signified goodness and well-being in both religious and social contexts.

As the world shrinks with globalization, people travel, migrate and mingle more than ever before. We can no longer ignore such widely differing interpretations of a symbol that is as widely used as the swastika.

Issued by:



**The Interfaith Conference
of Metropolitan Washington**
Advancing Justice. Building Community.
Nurturing Understanding.



**American
Jewish
Committee**
www.ajc.org

AJC seeks a secure Jewish future in a more just world. We maintain offices across the United States and around the world, and partnerships with Jewish communities abroad.

Living the values of the Gita - Chapter 4 - Verse 28

Nandini Kishore,
Chinmayam, Silver Spring



द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥ २८ ॥
dravyayajñās-tapoyajñā yogayajñās-tathāpare
svādhyāyajñānayajñās-ca yatayaḥ saṁśitavratāḥ. 28

IV. 28 Again some others offer wealth, austerity and yoga as sacrifice, while the ascetics of self-restraint and rigid vows offer study of scriptures and knowledge as sacrifice.

{Editor's Note: Nandini Kishore submitted this essay on Living the Values of Gita, based on Gita Chapter 4, Verse 28, for 2011 United Hindu Jain Temple Diwali Mela Souvenir. Nandini's essay received three stars (out of possible three) for her essay, and was awarded a certificate of appreciation by UHJT.}

There are five different types of yajnas, they are Dravya-Yajna, Tapo-yajna, Yoga-yajna, Swadhyaya-yajna and Jnana-yajna.

Dravya-Yajna refers to the offering of wealth as in charity. One doesn't have to be materially rich in order to perform Dravya-yajna. Even if someone is poor or sick in bed they can still offer "inner treasure of love, kindness, sympathy and affection" as these are things that don't need to be bought but still bring smiles among us. If we lived with this yajna spirit, we would treasure each other's love, kindness and would not cause any harm to anyone.

The second type of yajna, Tapo-Yajna is based on self-control. When thinking of tap-yajna we should all think of Hanuman as he had learned to control himself in his sense life. Self control trains the mind to remain calm and vigilant. One can think constructively if the mind is not restless.

Yoga Yajna is an attempt of the lesser in us to grow into being a better person. Devoting selflessly to the Lord directly hastens the self development. When we practice yoga yajna, we are also controlling the wandering mind and focusing our thought process. This devoted worship of the Lord is also called Upasna. If we lived with this yajna spirit we would train our mind to become more constructive.

We can associate Swadhyaya-yajna to the daily deep study of the scriptures. Without a complete study of the scriptures, we will not be able to know the reason/logic behind what we are doing "in the name of spiritual practice." The main people who practice this type of yajna are Sages as they contemplate on every single detail and suggestion in our scriptures. In our day to day lives, we learn from our experiences and how the scriptures guide us to become better individually.

The last type of yajna is Jnana-yajna which is the sacrifice of knowledge. The Holy Geeta states that "the sacrifice of Knowledge is the term given to the activity in man by which he renounces all his ignorance in the fire-of-knowledge kindled BY HIM and IN HIM."

Living the life with all the values in the Gita can only be practiced by those who have rigid determination and also who can apply themselves. In my mind motivation doesn't matter without determination. In other words, you have to be determined through yourself and your own actions before anyone else can motivate you. If you don't have the right mind set, then it makes it very hard for others to support you.

This brings the topic of Shraddha (faith) and Tatparah (devoted to it) as they are two of the imperative necessities to be acquired so we can evolve to the diviner stature.

Shraddha is sometimes translated as "blind faith and unquestioned acceptance of any declaration said to be divine." An example of this is those toll free number ads that you see on television where they tell you that they will predict your future through numerology or astrology. If these ads were telling us the truth we could just call them and all our problems would be solved. But that's not the case. Instead we have to question our faith and realize that we are the ones who control our own faith. Once we have correct faith, only then we can make the correct choices when faced with a challenge.

The very last topic of interest is Tatparah. When we have an agitated mind we don't think clearly and that the clarity of mind comes from knowledge and therefore if we know how to cope with our troubles and problems, we will be able to think clearly and find a solution.

Arjuna was lucky to have Lord Krishna as his charioteer who guided him in the battle. If we live the values of the Holy Gita, we can also fight the battle of false tendencies, and the choices we make would be more appropriate. The Holy Gita is a guide to lasting happiness and not the temporary happiness that one gets from transitional gains. By learning from the Gita, and living the values exemplified in the shlokas, we too can be guided in the 'battles' of the difficult choices we have to make.

Bala Vihar Class Summaries - Chinmayam

Prepared by Chinmayam II Class at Silver Spring

Achal Amin – Review of Geeta

September 18, 2011

In our first class of the year, we went over the beginnings of the Gita and summarized the events leading up to the conversation between Arjuna and Krishna

The Gita was set in Kurukshetra, where the pandavas and kauravas were fighting over the kingdom that rightfully belonged to the pandavas. The pandavas, who had lost all their possessions in a rigged game of dice, were promised the return of a part of their kingdom after a long exile. However, the kauravas refused to keep their word and conflict arose. In the impending war, Yudistra, the oldest pandava, and Duryodhana, the kaurava leader, were given the choice to either have Lord Krishna's army or Lord Krishna himself (who would not actually fight). Yudistra, with his faith in god, picked Krishna while Duryodhana picked Krishna's army.

Now right before the war, Arjuna came forward to the middle of the soon to be battlefield with Krishna to view his enemies. Arjuna's Grief explains how here Arjuna began to lose confidence, lost focus, and began to procrastinate on the war. Such a scenario is applicable in our lives because we too face certain decisions that are difficult (although on a different level). The class brainstormed about how under pressure decisions we often lose drive in a choice we made earlier with much more conviction. We pondered where and why does that drive and motivation leave us, and came up with a number of reasons. Sometimes we are over or under confident in a hypothetical result that we feel it is no longer worth the effort, sometimes we pretend we have more time than we really do, and often we are just lazy. The key thing we must realize is that there was a decision to do the thing (be it HW, practice, etc.) in the first place, so the reasons for not doing it are nothing but removable obstacles in an otherwise focused goal.

In the Gita, Arjuna became ignorant and began to base his decision to not fight through ego instead of his dharma, and then he was confused. We too become disillusioned and irresponsible when we fail to stick to our duties and commitments. Krishna preached to Arjuna the importance of determination, focus, and duty. We too can apply those values to become more efficient, level-headed, focused people

Keshav Kowtha – Chapter 10

October 9, 2011

At the start of the class we were asked to take a few minutes, on a separate sheet of paper, to describe what we thought was God. After that, we discussed the Stanford Commencement speech of 2005, given by Steve Jobs. In this speech, Mr. Jobs related three stories from his life to motivate the graduating class. Each story had a theme to it.

The first story was about how if one tries to look forward into the future on how life might work out, one cannot envision it and results in loss of hope. To be able to connect the dots of different experiences and learning, one can only look back into the past. Thus, one must follow their instinct; have faith in what they are doing in order to succeed. The second story was about love and loss. Steve Jobs loved his job very much. He loved Apple, so it hurt when he was dismissed. He was able to turn it into a positive experience. He met his future wife, started two new successful companies, and ultimately rejoined Apple. He learned that to be able to keep on going during difficult times, one has to find what one loves, romantically and career-wise to succeed. His third story was about death. In this, Steve Jobs talked about death and that how it is the single best thing to put life in perspective, a constant reminder of what's important and what's not. Mr. Jobs said that lives are too short to live someone else's life. Just live your own life and be yourself. In the Chinmayam class, our consensus was that Steve Jobs was a Karma Yogi. His vision for Apple was to benefit the larger society through advanced technology.

After this, we read chapter 10 verses 17- 41. In this chapter, Arjuna asks Krishna about his glory (Vibhoothi is glory of the Lord. Chapter 10 is Vibhoothi Yoga). These verses show the evolution of Arjuna from a delusional warrior to the one who is beginning to understand the nature of God. I found interesting that not only did Krishna describe that his glory is to be found in the best of the best; but also in the worst of the worst. Krishna's descriptions are really detailed and explain how his glory is to be found in the greatest of all things, like Lord Indra of the Devas, and the gambling of the fraudulent. He even tells Arjuna that among the Pandavas, his glory can be seen in Arjuna!. There are actually 21 verses given to explaining the Divine Glories of Sri Bhagavan and yet in verse 40 Sri Krishna notes that all of that description was only a small fraction, and that there was no end to his Divine Glories. With such an extensive description that barely scratches the surface, it is impossible to imagine the infiniteness of the Lord. So the last point of class was that it is not needed to understand the entire infinity, all that is needed is to be able to recognize ourselves in that infinite.

Lastly, Kisshan Shankar took a day off from the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis to attend the class.

Gaurav Luthria – Chapter 11

October 16, 2011

In class we covered Chapter 11 which explains the universal form of

- To start off the discussion we were posed with the question “Can we compress time? Space?” The class agreed that time can be considered a relative concept. When we enjoy what we are doing, time passes by quickly. After pondering over the question further, we concluded that space can be compressed with technological advancements. Computers, in the 1980’s, for example, had only 50 MB of hard-drive, whereas today, our phones are much more capable.
- We then analyzed Verses 1 – 20 of Chapter 11 of the Geeta, where Arjuna requests to see Lord Krishna’s cosmic, or universal form. Krishna, therefore grants Arjuna freedom of the mind, and reveals his boundless form. Arjuna does not visually see the divine but rather creates a mental image of the entire universe compressed.
- However, then is Krishna’s physical form limiting him? The class concurred that it was indeed limiting Krishna, but a physical manifestation is necessary for us to contemplate God. Without a physical representation, our minds digress easily, and therefore, meditating and picturing God become impractical.
- From verse 1, we also learn that removal of delusion is not the same as gaining knowledge. To truly acquire knowledge we must have experience and understanding.

Vani Ravichandran – Chapter 11

October 23, 2011

This week in Aniket and Anil Uncle’s absence, we began the class by recapping what was covered in class the previous week. We quickly answered the question “can we compress time and/or space?” The general answer came down to the idea that whether or not time and space can be compressed depends solely on our individual perceptions. For instance, when a person is deeply engrossed in an activity and is enjoying the activity, time seems relatively short compared to a person who is acting against their will. We also pointed out the idea that if “everyone is the same”, the gap between two people is nonexistent and therefore space can be compressed. However, in terms of the Gita, it seems highly unrealistic for Krishna to have time to recite an entire Gita before a battle. Therefore time and space seemingly do not play a role in ameliorating oneself.

The main focus of this week’s class, however, was based on the concept that humans are merely “instruments of God”. We defined the term “instruments of god” as surrendering to something higher than oneself. A drummer is higher than his instrument just as God is higher than humans. The drum allows the drummer to be flooded with a constant “mood of tireless enthusiasm and joyous inspiration” that every human should employ.

We proceeded to address the fact that the war in the Mahabharata was not merely a fight between family members, but rather a fight between “good” and “bad” and Arjuna is simply executing a fight between karma and dharma. His actions, however, are not his own. The question then arises “if God is in control of our actions, why do dictators and terrorists exist?” and the answer is quite simple: in the ten verses (26-35) of chapter eleven that we covered today, a reoccurring motif seemed to be God feasting upon great warriors. When all is said and done, our bodies take what we eat (despite what it is) and process it into glucose for energy. In the same way, when we look at terrorists and dictators, we are to see them for their essence, not for their ego. Dictators such as Hitler would base their actions on their ego, not on the common welfare of people. The war that Arjuna fights then becomes not a battle between “good and bad” but “impure and pure” mindsets. This is in reference to acting for recognition and reward, as opposed to acting with a “yajña spirit”. However, if we are instruments of God, are we truly in control of our actions, and therefore do we have the right to have expectations of reward?

We concluded with the famous Shakespeare quote that “all the world’s a stage, and all the men and women are merely players”. We are indeed instruments of God, but we are not puppets of God. We are all the same, but it’s entirely our own jurisdiction how we use what we have learned in life, and the kind of choices we make.

Asmi Panigrahi – Chapter 12

November 6, 2011

The class began with our opening prayers and Gita slokas. We then moved into a discussion about the “Path of Devotion.” First, we exchanged our ideas of what exactly is devotion. Students responded with various kinds of examples, such as:

- Bhakti
- Dedication
- Faith
- Hanuman’s devotion for Lord Ram
- Meerabai’s devotion for Krishna
- A mother or father’s devotion to their child
- Commitment to academics/profession

Among all the examples shared, the class came to the conclusion that regardless of the specific definition or example of devotion discussed, true devotion is eternal. As Anil Uncle nicely put it, devotion essentially connotes a “no strings attached” attitude, regardless of the object of devotion.

Because of the immense level of faith and commitment that pervades the concept of devotion, the class was led to another question: Can devotion be dangerous? Initially, it was deduced that true devotion can make it very easy for an individual to be taken advantage of. Through further discussion, students came up with many instances in which devotion actually has dangerous and often fatal repercussions, ranging from the violent acts of religious extremists (who are devoted to a religious ideal), the genocide led by Hitler (devoted to creating a Master Race), and the fierce defense of a lioness (devoted to the safety of her cubs). Often times, devotion need not be wholesome – a devotee can be misguided or imprudent in his or her steadfast beliefs, as in the case of Hitler of extremists. Thus, for some of these examples of fierce and often times blinded devotion, literacy can make the difference between choosing right from wrong.

The class then began reading the Ch 12 Gita verses with Swami Chinmayananda's commentary. Here, we discovered there are three paths to the Lord:

- Path of Devotion
- Path of Intellectual Pursuit
- Path of Doing (karma yoga)

Ultimately, each of these paths is an expression of devotion, and the differences between the paths allow for God-seekers of all capacities and tendencies to pursue the Lord. Krishna himself explicitly states that worshipping the Lord as both an unmanifest form and through idols is acceptable, but the "unmanifest" is harder to do for the "embodied." Here, the class moved into discussion of the "embodied." At the surface, it seems that Krishna is saying that for us, creatures with bodies, worshipping an unmanifest entity is extremely abstract. Being a limited individual, we would inevitably give limits to the limitless. At a deeper level, being embodied also refers to human attachment to our bodies. Not only are we physically bodied entities, most of us harbor attachment for our bodies as well. This led the class to a discussion of what exactly we are attached to. Through a variety of examples from both Aniket Uncle and the class, we came to the conclusion that most of the attachment comes from the attitude that "I have the power to judge," whether that be judge positive from negative, right from wrong, or generally the exact way any situation should be. However, in the Gita Krishna encourages the principle of "ananya" or "without otherness" to pursue the Lord, an ever steady goal. We noted that in the examples from earlier in the class, from Meerabai and Krishna to a man and his commitment to work, devotion always arose from a sense of oneness with the object of devotion.

As the class drew to an end we wrapped up our discussion and concluded the class with closing prayers.

* * *

Many In One

Chetana Neerchal

I write to
weave these
scattered thoughts
into one stream

Like

Tresses of
a school-girl
held in
a well-oiled braid

Jasmine
strung into a
single fragrance

Colors of
the evensong
trilling
in crickets' unison

Mix of
juices in a
perfect punch

Voices in
a gathering
heard as a hum

My many emotions
caught

in one struggle
- to be happy.

Standing Tall

Aziza Meer

Standing tall

Against winds, and rains and storms

Accepting their existence

But accepting more the existence of peace

Not by force or denial

Not by blocking but by acceptance

Accepting emotions

Accepting attachment

But accepting more the joy of peace

Standing tall

Against perceptions, expectations

Against objections, well-meaning guidance

Accepting perceptions, expectations, objections, and guidance

But accepting more the existence of peace

Standing tall

Against love of people, love of self, love of money, love of all else

People, self, money, all else

Important and accepting as important

Only accepting more the importance of peace.

Standing tall

Against trespasses that hurt

Trespasses are hurtful and accepting feelings of hurt

But trespasses are God's trust in me to allow the other to grow

Standing tall, when trespasses hurt

Remembering more the joy of God's trust than the pain of hurt.

Hurt from trespasses also is a chance for me to grow

Accepting the pain

But accepting more the gratitude for the chance to grow.

Reflections on Drig Drishya Viveka (Seen, Seer, Discrimination) Part 2 of 2

Kiran Varma

{Editor's Note: Kiran Varma hosted Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, for 10 days in 1985, and followed his teachings ever since. She is a psychotherapist by profession and works with adults with mental illnesses. Recently she attended year-long discourse on 'Drig Drishya Viveka' by our Pujya Swami Dheerananda. In the following article, Kiranji reflects on this beautiful work and what it means to her. Our bookstore carries this title in both text (by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda) and audio (discourse by Brahmacharini Sumati Chaitanya) formats. Guruji described Drig Drishya Viveka as follows, "The eye is the seer and form (and color) the seen. That (eye) is the seen and mind is (its) seer. The Witness alone is the seer of thoughts in the mind and never the seen." We had originally planned this to be in a series of 3 installments. The second and third installments are included here as 2nd and final installment.}

Background

Drig (Witness), Drishya (Seen) and Vivek (discrimination) are Vedanta in 31 verses. Vivek comes from separating the Seer from the Seen. Then only can we get the correct Drishya (seeing and understanding).

This was a beautiful, creative assignment by our beloved Guru, Swami Dheeranandaji. He explained the text, but how can we make it a part of ourselves? We are not particularly fond of exams but preparing to present this text verbally I found was the only way to assimilate this profound material that we only intellectually grasped.

How then is man to get rid of this Delusion that I am this limited body? And How to Realize the Self?

By getting rid of the Delusion or Ignorance of Self. There are two parts to the Ego. Firstly, it is identification with the reflection of consciousness that cannot be annihilated. But the other part Delusion of the body is due to Karmas and can be eliminated by exhaustion of karmas. Delusion due to Ignorance of Self can be exhausted by experiencing Direct Knowledge of Sakshi. Ignorance can only be removed by Knowledge and not Actions, e.g. knowledge of rope removes snake.

The Ego goes through 3 states of experience in the body: Waking, Dream, and Deep sleep. In deep sleep the ego ceases to function (dormant). Therefore it is a thought-free state.

Who exactly experiences these 3 Ego states? and who takes up different bodies?

It is the Subtle Body (Mind and Ego) that experiences these 3 states. (The Subtle body has 17 factors: 5 Sense Organs, 5 Organs of Action, 5 Vital airs, Mind and Intellect). The Gross Body has 5 gross elements, space, water, air, fire, and earth.

Why do we experience these 3 states? It is due to Maya. **What is Maya?**

Maya does not exist. Maya is a perception. It is an experience. **Why do we experience the world?** Because Maya is an illusion. Illusion is due to Ignorance and Ignorance is Maya. Maya creates incongruities. **How does Maya create incongruities?** Through its 2 powers of Veiling and Projecting. Veiling veils the Truth and Projecting projects the Illusion, e.g. rope and snake. Projecting power functions only when supported by the Veiling power. Projections of the Mind cause bondage and agitations, e.g. screen and images. We can only get rid of agitations of the Mind by Knowing the Truth. So Maya is ignorance of Self and Self Knowledge puts an end to ignorance. Once we know we are the Infinite Consciousness, **why do we experience finitude?** Because we do not know Reality. Once Maya has knowledge of Reality the veil is removed and existence as infinite is known and experienced. Our identification with the inert world of names and forms causes bondage e.g. I, Mine, likes and dislikes cause mind agitations and we are unhappy.

What to do to get rid of the notion "I am the body."

Purify the Mind, through Japa, puja and pranayama. This aides concentration in making Enquiry of the Truth. Continuous Enquiry is required because of weakness of the mind in abiding in the Knowledge.

What is Jiva?

The Subtle Body identifies with the reflection of Consciousness and gives rise to sentient thought. The sentient thought then identifies with the gross body, and enlivens it. This enlivened entity is the Jiva. This Jiva transacts with the world. The subtle body experiences the world and the gross body is the counter from which all transactions take place. This same Jiva transmigrates from body to body, gathering new vasanas and exhausting some old ones.

How does this Jiva get liberated, thus stopping the cycle of birth and death?

By Knowledge. But who is bound who seeks liberation? It is the sense of finitude that seeks liberation. Finitude is the feeling "I am the body" created by Maya (veiling and projection). Ignorance (Maya) of Self binds and Knowledge liberates or liberation by destruction of the veiling. **How does veiling power cover the truth of the world?** Maya veils Reality. It sees names and forms (images on the screen) and does not see Reality (the screen; No screen, No images). Reality (like screen) is the substratum over which all changes appear and disappear.

Why do we want to distinguish between Reality and the World?

Man's innate desire is to become Immortal. By identifying with the world I suffer joys and sorrows and am tossed around by vagaries of circumstances. If I can be aware that I am not this body but the immortal self within, I can be spared this suffering. This knowledge destroys the veiling. The world is superimposed on the Substratum and every change takes place on it. The substratum is changeless. **Who knows the changes?** The Reality, Substratum, Illuminator. This knowledge destroys Maya. **How can we recognize Reality in every object the Mind wanders to?** Every entity has 5 aspects: it is, it shines, it is dear, it has a name and form. Is, shines and dear or Isness, Awareness and Dearness is Existence/Reality. Name and form is Unreal/Maya. When attention is on Maya, Reality is hidden. When attention is on the first three we are established in Reality.

Now comes the topic of **Meditation**. Meditation is a means for Self knowledge, a means to an end. We have to understand the nature of the Self before we meditate so I know what I am doing. The Self is understood through discriminating between the Seer and Seen. After discriminating the Seer from the Seen we can move to the topic of **owning and abiding in the Self**. By being indifferent to name and form and devoted to Truth, we can practice Meditation both in the heart and outside.

Then what is Samadhi?

It is that locus into which the entire world merges. It is a state of complete absorption in the Brahman, Atman or Self. Samadhi is abidance in Brahman. (Meditation is the practice of dhyana which can lead to Samadhi). We can divide the ego states into 4 parts, Waking, Dreaming, Deep Sleep and the fourth Samadhi. State of Samadhi cannot be achieved by action but only by knowledge. Our experience of Self is limited by thoughts but Samadhi transcends thoughts. Samadhi is not a state of knowing or not knowing. It is an abidance in Pure Consciousness. That Consciousness that illumines thoughts. Samadhi is a Noun and not a Verb. One cannot **do** Samadhi. One can only be **in** Samadhi. Samadhi is an alert, steady, poised state of mind, there are no agitations. This poised attentiveness can be maintained irrespective of the person's activity, feelings or thoughts. In true Samadhi one does not experience something new or out of this world, e.g. flashes of light, or sound of conches. Such experiences only occur as stages of in the practice of Samadhi. They indicate a relative degree of Reality only.

Practice of Samadhi can be within or without.

- a. With closed eye, enquiry of, who am I? This is in reference to the individual.
- b. Open eye, what is this world? This is in reference to the perceived world.

What ever be the locus of attention, withdrawing attention from names and forms and fixing it in Truth, is Meditation. Truth is beyond words, yet words are used to **indicate** the Truth and not to describe it. Truth is directly experienced as the Self.

Classification of Samadhi into different kinds is only in terms of practice and stages of progress in Samadhi, and not in Samadhi itself.

Kinds of practice of Samadhi within:

- a. *With duality* of 2 kinds; associated with Seen and associated with words.
- b. *Without Duality*.

With Duality: Savikalpa Samadhi: Duality of meditator and meditated.

Nirvikalpa: Once this duality melts only Infinite Self remains.

Savikalpa (Saguna Brahma) culminates or glides into Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Nirguana Brahma). Self is always non-dual or nirvikalpa. Mind creates duality. When mind is transcended it slips into nirvikalpa, .e.g. sleep.

With Seen-Savikalpa. Be witness of thoughts which are Seen. Slowly shift attention from Seen Thoughts to Seer of thoughts. Then *thoughts do not disappear; they just cease to affect us*. When thoughts cease to affect, the mind becomes calm and poised, it concentrates easily and learns to abide in Self.

With words: Say words like "I am sat chit ananda (Existence, Knowledge, Bliss). Words are used as an aid or means for concentration, contemplation to reach the Truth. Scriptural meaning of the words are the focus of attention and not the literal words. As practice of meditation increases the quantum of joy and peace will increase too.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi: It is a state which one glides into, like sleep. This is non dual because thoughts have ceased or ceased to have any effect on us. In this state we experience a silence beyond comprehension, a peace that passeth all understanding. This **State of Knowledge is called Liberation**. Liberation from Time, Space, Causation. This is a state of almost nothingness yet a complete fullness. This Silence is feared even by people who desire liberation, as a sense of Self annihilation or nothingness. Such doubts create fear in the mind. Vedas say such fear is unfounded. This state of liberation removes ignorance of the Self. On regaining consciousness, the transaction with the world continues, but with a difference. There is no more bondage, sorrow or limitations. Ignorance is never experienced again.

That into which the mind merges is Samadhi. The effects merge into the cause, just like waves in the ocean and gold ornaments into gold. Similarly the mind merges into the Self or Substratum. Hence Samadhi is Self.

Samadhi is not a stage of practice like meditation. There is no duality. When all efforts end one glides into it as in sleep. In sleep also there is no duality. But sleep is not Samadhi. When we wake up from sleep we are only mentally and physically refreshed. Sleep is a state of inertia, while Samadhi is a state of knowledge. Sleep is absence of sorrow, a negative peace; Samadhi is the positive experience of Bliss. Sleep is temporary. Samadhi is eternal. Samadhi has to be our own direct experience or anubhav. In this Blissful state man attains total stillness. There is a dynamic calmness in Samadhi or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. There are no different kinds of samadhi. The different kinds are described to facilitate our understanding. Having passed the practice stage the constant abidance in knowledge, is Samadhi. Samadhi can be practiced both within and without while functioning in the world. That state is called Sahaj Samadhi, an Eternal state of Bliss. The source of Joy is within and merging with that Joy is Bliss. That merging is Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

In this state of Sahaj Samadhi, constant Bliss, all knots of the heart are cut, all doubts resolved, and all karmas get exhausted. The notion that this body is the Self is the knot or ignorance. Desire is the second knot that arises from ignorance. Desire prompted action is the third knot of the heart that arises from ignorance.

When did ignorance begin.? It is beginningless. But ignorance is not endless. Ignorance ends with Self knowledge. All our endless questions, who created God etc end with Self Realization.

We are all of us collectively Blissed out at this time!

Hari Om!

* * *

Living Our Relationship with GOD

Nanik Lahori

To understand the relationship between US and GOD, we have to ask two important questions: First, who is GOD? Secondly, who are we?

Let us understand GOD first.

What the Religion says:

All the objects of the world are the effects of some cause. As we are the effects and the cause are our parents. They in turn were the effect and the cause was their parents and so on. Proceeding in this manner, there has to be some original cause: the causeless cause. That original cause is the intelligent cause. Call it by any name in any language, but we all mean the same cause, commonly known as God. Believers believe, cause to be Omnipresent (present everywhere), Omnipotent (all- powerful), and Omniscient (all-knowing).

In essence, as the cause of water, ice, or steam is Hydrogen and Oxygen, cause of all Gold ornaments is Gold, the same way cause of all inanimate and animate objects is the same God, the causeless cause.

What the science says:

Nearly 13.9 billion years back there was a small kernel of energy of the size of an atom which started to expand at the speed of light (186,000 miles per sec) and which is still expanding today, in the process creating new stars and new Galaxies. Our Galaxy of 8 planets moving around the sun - The Milky Way - is only one of the millions of galaxies. To give an idea of time and Space, one of the most famous constellations of 7 stars (Big Dipper), which we can see through naked eye is 729,000 billion miles from the Earth and it takes more than 124 years for the Light to travel to Earth. So what you see today is the far past when our parents were not even born.

Those gases emitting from the kernel were hot and dense, and formed the clusters of stars. It took billions of years for those gases to cool down and become solids. It took nearly 9 billion years for one of the stars to cool down and become this Earth.

Seeing it backwards, let us think of Time Square in New York, the most important land mark in the world. Hundred years back, it was called Long Square, consisting of 1 story strip shops.

Two hundred years back it was a farm land. Remember 200 years back there was no light bulb. Thomas Edison invented the light bulb in 1879, about 130 years back.

15000 years back, Manhattan was buried under sheet of ice.
1 billion years ago, NY was a mountain.
5 billion Years ago, there was no earth.

So even according to science, we are all the effects of the same cause. According to an astronomer Dr. Allan Sandance, there is not a single atom in us which was not there in that kernel 13.9 billion years ago.

Let us understand US!

All the objects are made up of the five elements: Earth, Fire, Water, Air, and Space. All the objects made up of these elements are perishable and return back to their original state. Our body is made up of these five elements. There is another mystical element called Pure Consciousness or Life Force, which runs through this inert inanimate body, making us vibrant, animate, alive, and dynamic. This mystical Pure Consciousness is all pervading. This is only Real in the sense that it was in the past, it is in the present, and it will remain in future. Everything else is unreal in the sense that it is transitory. 100 years from today, most of 6.94 billion people living today will not be alive.

Then who am I?

Am I this body? I can't be this body. It is my body. Who is that "my" to whom this body belongs?

When I say it is my car, or my house, I am neither the car nor the house. Who is that "my" to whom this car or house belong? Scriptures tell us that this ME, MY, or I is that mystical Life Force which makes me alive. It is all pervading, imperishable and is the same in every one. I am that immortal Self. At death, only the body dies, the Self lives on.

Relationship between US & GOD.

As seen above, our basic identity is the same as that of Almighty God. For an untrained mind, it is hard to believe. Some questions arise:

1. If I am the same as God, and God is all loving, all intelligent, all bliss, and then why do I not feel it?

The answer is that God has also given us Free Will to think and act. Our basic nature is bliss and happiness. We are all searching for this happiness in the wrong direction in material objects. Some are seeking this happiness in drugs and alcohol! Instead of running outside to seek happiness in worldly objects, if we seek within by meditation or other means, we will be able to return to our original state.

2. How do I know that GOD is all pervading?

The answer is given in our scriptures. When you go to the theater to see a movie, movie is projected on the screen. When the movie is playing, you don't see the screen. You only see the movie. But there can't be a movie without a screen.

In the same way, the Life Force, the Pure Consciousness, this substratum is all pervading like a screen and we are all the objects existing with the support of this substratum. We only see the objects and not the supporting substratum.

Through the process of meditation, reading scriptures, and following our faith, we can go beyond worldly objects and experience the beauty of this all-pervading substratum. Here we see only GOD!. Here our heart gets filled with love and we see ourselves in everybody. We will recognize GOD in everybody!

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Living the values of Srimad Bhagavad Gita: *Practical Qualities for Purposeful Living*

(Excerpts from Chapter 13, Verses 8-12, "The Holy Gita" by Swami Chinmayananda)

The theme of 2011 Diwali Mela Souvenir (published by United Hindu and Jain Temples of Washington DC) is 'Living the Values of Srimad Bhagavad Gita'. The following list of practical attributes were used to introduce the theme section of that souvenir. It is reproduced here for the benefit of Chinmaya Smrithi readers.

1. **Humility**: Absence of exaggerated self-respect; recognition of our insignificance compared to totality
2. **Unpretentiousness**: Being truthful to ourselves and to others about our strengths and weaknesses; successes and failures; possessions or lack thereof, etc.
3. **Non-injury**: Non-injury to any living being, mainly by our vicious intentions, feelings or actions
4. **Forgiveness**: A capacity to be compassionate enough, even to those who cause injury, and help them in need
5. **Uprightness**: Harmonized thoughts, words and deeds with intent on right conduct
6. **Service to the Teacher**: Not only physical service to the teacher, but more importantly, identifying mentally and intellectually with teacher's pure heart and intellect; tuning the mind to teaching received and passing that on to the knowledge gained to others who desire.
7. **Purity**: physical cleanliness, and more importantly, cleanliness in thoughts and emotions
8. **Steadfastness**: consistency of purpose and the concentrated effort put forth towards that purpose
9. **Self-control**: self-restraint practices at all layers of personality and in contacts with the outer world
10. **Absence of attachments for objects:** eliminating preoccupation with worldly objects, living detached and not be shackled by them
11. **Abandonment of "I"**: Reduce the delusive misconception of ourselves and asserting and living our real divine nature
12. **Perception of evil of pain**: Being constantly conscious of the evil of pain is necessary to establish spiritual urge, enthusiasm and courage to overcome them and seek perfection
13. **Non-attachment**: Being conscious of desire propelled attachments and controlling the mind to reduce and remove attachments.
14. **Non-Identification with 'Mine'**: Absence of excessive love for what is "mine" - child, spouse, home, and the like.
15. **Even-Mindedness**: Discovering equipoise in us to keep away disturbances caused by situations in life.
16. **Unflinching Devotion**: Steadfast concentration upon a steadfast goal of concentration (upon the pure Self) is necessary for progress and growth in spiritual pursuit
17. **Undivided Attention**: Controlling the mind from wild imaginations, vacillations, preoccupations, day-dreaming, etc. at the seat of mediation.
18. **Seeking Solitary Places**: finding or creating environment conducive for reflection and meditation
19. **Developing distaste for crowded society life**
20. **Learning and Living the Knowledge of the Self**
21. **Understanding the end of True Knowledge**

Series – Summary of the Gita

Ch. 18 (Moksha Sanyasa Yoga)

The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation

Part II – Four-fold Classification (Caste System)

Nilkanth Bhatt, Richmond Chapter

In the part 1 of this chapter we have learnt about the nature of actions from Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Depending on the nature of its constituent parts, actions may be classified as *Sattvic*, *Rajasik* or *Tamasic*. In a similar manner the performers of actions (actors) also can be classified in the same three categories. An actor, who performs actions without ego and attachment, who is firm in his resolve and enthusiastic about the work and does not get affected by the success or failure, is called a *Sattvic* actor. On the other hand a person who is passionate about getting reward for his actions, who is greedy about what he wants to get out of his actions and who gets elated by the success and becomes miserable by the failure is a *Rajasik* actor. However one who is not appropriate for the actions but performs them out of jealousy, stubbornness, and maliciousness, one who may be appropriate but procrastinates and who is unsteady, is considered a *Tamasic* performer.

Intellect and fortitude, which are essential aspects of any action, also may be classified similarly. An intellect, which can differentiate between right action and wrong action, is a *Sattvic* intellect. One that distorts the view of right and wrong conveniently for selfish reasons is a *Rajasik* intellect and the one that regards right as wrong and sees everything erroneously is a *Tamasic* intellect. The fortitude by which one can control the functions of mind and senses is a *Sattvic* fortitude, but the one that binds you to the fruits of actions is a *Rajasik* fortitude, and that by which we can not give up fear, grief, despair, *conceit etc., is a *Tamasic* fortitude.

Results of our actions, if they are as per our expectations, give us pleasure. But all pleasures are not the same; they can be classified in the same three categories as the actions. Some actions give pain in the beginning but give pleasure and happiness in the end. For example when a person is preparing for any athletic achievement, it is painful preparation, but the resultant strength and fitness gives him happiness. Such pleasure is *Sattvic*, but the pleasures, which are enjoyable in the beginning but result in pain and unhappiness, are *Rajasik* pleasures. For example eating sweets may feel very pleasant to a diabetic person, but its results are very harmful and painful. And there are some pleasures, which are painful in the beginning and also painful in the end, such as scratching my leg when I get itch. It gives some relief from the itch but all around it is a painful experience. Such pleasures are certainly *Tamasic*.

No person in this world is free from the three qualities of *Prakriti* because all of us are part of the *Prakriti* (the manifest world). Therefore our duties in this world also should be taken as per the predominant aspect of our personalities. In any given society, its people can be divided into four distinct groups. Those who are predominantly *Sattvic* and therefore they are thinkers and scholars. Serenity, self-restraint, purity, forgiveness, uprightness etc. comes naturally to them. They are the

Brahmins of the society. Others who have equal amount of *Sattva* and *Rajas* in their personalities; strength, bravery, leadership, and charity are natural qualities of these people. They are *Kshatriyas* of the society. Then there are others who are predominantly *Rajasic*, and they are more interested in agriculture, trade, cattle farming, etc. In other words they are the wealth producers in the society. They are *Vaishyas* of the society.

Remaining members of the society who do not fall into the above mentioned three categories are the most valuable servants of the society. They provide the essential services for the smooth running of any society. Can you imagine a society, where all are leaders and no followers, no garbage collectors, no restaurant workers, no construction workers, no factory workers? It seems that would be a very highly evolved society, isn't it? The fact of the matter is no such society can ever exist. The people who are happy about providing services are the *Sudras* of the society.

This four-fold classification of the people in the society is based strictly on the inherent qualities of people, and it has no bearing on a person's family background, race or color. Bhagavan says, "The duties of *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas*, and *Sudras* are distributed according to the *Gunas* born of their own nature."

Each person devoted to one's own duty achieves perfection. Bhagavan says "The Supreme Being, from whom all beings have evolved and who pervades this entire universe, worshipping him with one's own duty one achieves perfection." Everything we do in a course of daily duties is a service to the Lord of all beings. No duty is inherently higher or lower. It is our own attitude towards it, which makes it higher or lower.

It is better to perform one's own duty well than try to perform someone else's duties, even though they seem nobler than your own. Bhagavan says, "He who performs the duties ordained by one's own nature incurs no sin. One should not abandon one's own duties even though they seem imperfect because all undertakings are tainted with imperfection, just as fire is always tainted with smoke."

If we all try to perform others duties because they seem nobler or better, there will be chaos in the society. Imagine if nurses try to be surgeons, surgeons try to be preachers, preachers try to be politicians and politicians try to be architects and engineers overnight in our society. There will not be much of a society left after a while.

We must follow our own hearts and engage ourselves in work, which comes naturally to us. That is the greatest service we can offer to the society and to the Lord of this universe.

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{ Editor's Note: We thank Nilkanth Bhattji for sharing the invaluable Gita summaries with us. This is the final installment and so this series comes to a close. Readers are encouraged to review back issues to read any summaries they may have missed. Hari Om! }

Jnana Yoga and Self Realization – Part IV

Acharya K. Sadanandaji

We have discussed that the Karma Yoga prepares the mind for Jnana Yoga. Hence Karma Yoga is not a means for moksha, since moksha is not something to gain or somewhere to go, etc., for which action is required. In short, it is not apraaptasya praaptam, gaining something that one does not have. Moksha means freedom from all limitations. Any limitation leads to inadequacy, and therefore it leaves behind a longing or a wanting mind that wants to become adequate i.e. wanting to have everything in the universe to make itself full or limitless. Wanting to become limitless can never be fulfilled, since limitless is infiniteness. One cannot become infinite, reach infinite, or gain infinite, nor infiniteness or moksha can be given. Thus, everyone is caught up in the dichotomy. He cannot become limitless, and at the same time he cannot stop wanting to become limitless. It is observed fact that however much one has, one still feels inadequate and the wanting mind will not stop wanting until it feels it is complete or contented with what it has. We have seen that people having billions of dollars, yet greedy to grab some more since they do not feel contented that they have. Truly a rich man is not the one who has more but the one who feels he has more than he needs and is ready share what he has with others who are in need.

Hence all pursuits for infinite absolute happiness will fail miserably, since no pursuit, pravRitti or nivRitti, i.e., gaining something or getting rid of something, can make him infinite, since plus or minus finite can only be finite. Hence Vedanta says moksha or freedom from limitations is not apraaptasya praaptam but praaptasya praaptam, that is, it is not gaining something that one does not have, but it is gaining something that one already has. There is no need to gain what one already has, unless one does not know that he already has. Everyone is searching for happiness. Therefore moksha is recognition of the fact that I am already what I am searching for. I am puurNaH or full, therefore, I have no inadequacy whatsoever. Hence ignorance of one's own nature is the root cause for a wanting mind or mind that feels inadequate. I take myself what I am not, and try to solve the problem of presumed inadequacy and suffer due to the consequence of that misapprehension. Vedanta says everyone is trying to solve a problem where there is no problem to solve; and that itself has become an eternal problem. Only solution to the problem is to recognize that there is no problem to solve. That recognition involves recognition that I am already full or I am eternally liberated or nithya muktaH. Any other attempt to solve an imaginary problem is making the problem more real than what it is. What is required is a firm understanding of the fact that I am already that infiniteness that I am longing for; and that is the essence of the teaching of Vedanta, in the form of mahavakya upadesha –or teaching by great aphoristic statement - tat tvam asi, you are that.

How do I see myself as real 'I am', and not take myself what I am not? Let us look at a simple case. I have a pair of eyes that I use to see everything in the world. Suppose I want to see my eyes. How do I see my eyes, using my eyes? Someone says I have a red-eye; but how can I see my red-eye. The only way is, I have to stand in front of a mirror and look at my eyes, using the same red-eyes. That is, I need a mirror and I have to keep my eyes open to see. Of course, other factors such as enough light falling on my face, etc., will help. Am I really seeing my eyes as I stand in front of the mirror? Not really, I am seeing the image of my eyes in the mirror using the same eyes,

and assume that the image is a true reflection of my own eyes. Is there any other way to see my eyes using my eyes? Without the mirror and the image that is formed, I can never see my eyes. Seer eyes cannot be seen – or to put in general form, seer cannot be seen, or even more generally, subject cannot become an object. I see the image in the mirror, and deduce the state of my eyes based on the image, assuming that the image is a true reflection of my eyes. If some one asks, 'Sir, I am only seeing the reflected image of my eyes, how does that prove that I have really the eyes to see and that I am seeing those real eyes in the reflection?' All we can say is, he needs more gray matter than eyes, to see his eyes.

Of course, if the mirror is dirty or if the light in the room is not adequate, then I cannot see my eyes clearly, even though my eyes are perfect. What I see is a fuzzy image of my face. To see myself clearly, I need to clean the mirror so that it can reflect my face as it is. If the mirror is concave or convex or crooked, the face that I see also looks crooked or distorted. It is only the image that gets distorted not the original face. Can I see my face without a mirror? That is impossible. Mirror is a darshaNa needed to see myself. Vedanta acts like a darshaNa or mirror reflecting my true nature. The light also should be proper enough for me to see clearly. Vedanta for a well prepared mind shows the reflection of myself, and using that reflection I can see myself. That is the teaching of mahavaakhya upadesha. Without that teaching, I can never know my true nature.

Looking now at the process of perception, eyes can see everything through pratyaksha pramaaNa. Behind the eyes there is mind and behind the mind is the true seer, which Kena Up. calls it as the eye of the eye, cakshuShaschakshuH or ear of the ear, etc.; and that seer or knower cannot be seen or known by any instrument of knowledge, aprameyam. Vedanta too does not show me who I am. It only facilitates for me to see myself by myself, just like a mirror. What I see is only reflection of myself and never the original; original can never be seen or can never be known. However, from the reflected image, I recognize myself with all my glory. For any knowledge to take place mind is required. Behind the mind is the self that I am, that is always present. Seeing myself by myself therefore involves myself using the mind as instrument and Vedanta as a means. Without the mind present, no knowledge can take place. Just as to see my face, I have to use my eyes standing in front of the mirror. What I see is only image. Similarly, I use the mind to see myself, and what I see is only reflected image of myself not the original. Hence, the amRitabindu Up. statement – mana eva manushyaanaam kaaraNam bandha mokshayaH –mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation. It is not the mind that sees but I behind the mind recognize myself by looking at the reflection of myself in the mirror of the mind. I am not the mind, but I need the mind to see that I am not the mind, since, as in the mirror case, I cannot see myself without the mind. We will discuss this process more since there is lot of confusion in terms of what exactly involved in self-realization; some quoting segments of scriptures or bhaashyaas to support some views. The truth is beyond anybody's views. Once we understand the process correctly, we can unravel the truth ourselves; irrespective of who says what, since the truth is not out there – it is myself. This is what clear-understanding means, what Shankara calls repeatedly as samyak jnaanam or Ramana calls as dRiDaiva niShTaa or firm abidance in the knowledge. Examples of pot-space or reflected consciousness, etc., are given with specific connotations. These examples are provided as analogies and the extent of their application have to be understood. We need the shruti, yukti and anubhava, the scripture, logic and personal experience for self-realization.

We discussed briefly in the last post the mahaavakya statement – tat tvam asi, you are that. Mahaavaakya is the statement of identity relation relating the self that I am with the universal self. Krishna says – sarva bhuutastam aatmaanam sarva bhuutanica aatmani – one who sees himself as the self in all and sees all in himself, he really sees the truth. Mayahvaakya is defined as akhanadartha bodhaka vaakyam or statement of revelation that provides the non-differentiable oneness of seer and the seen or the knower and the known.

Any sentence communicates an idea or thought relating a subject to its predicate. The predicate qualifies the subject. For example, as we discussed before, in a statement – maanasa sarovar is ten miles long - maanasa sarovar is the subject of the sentence and the rest is predicate that qualifies the subject. In tat tvam asi, we have a subject, tvam, and a predicate, tat asi, which qualifies the subject, tvam. (I am skipping here the bhagatyaga lakshaNa or jahaajahalakshaNa involved in the statement of this identity relation, which we will address later). For communication to be clear the subject of the sentence should be known and the predicate is unknown and is to be known via the sentence. If we do not know both the subject and the predicate, the sentence will not make any sense. In the sentence – maanasa sarovar is ten miles long – it will makes sense only if we know what maanasa sarovar is but do not know that it is ten miles long. If we know both the subject and predicate, then the information does not give any new knowledge. Hence it is redundant. If we vaguely know what the subject is, then we are left with vague knowledge, which is of no lasting value. Knowing the subject is called samaanya jnaanam. Both the speaker and the listener should have that saamanya jnaanam for communication to be complete, that is, both should have clear understanding of the subject that is being discussed. What the listener does not know is the vishesha jnaanam, the particular qualifying knowledge, which the scripture is communicating through mahaavakyam. Hence in the statement - tat tvam asi or You are That – I should know the subject – tvam, you - that is being addressed. Major hurdle in the communication arises due to the gulf between what scriptures is referring to the word- tvam –in relation to what the listener assumes as its meaning. First, we need to know what the subject, tvam, is before we can understand the rest of the qualifying predicate – tat asi.

What is the meaning of word, tvam, and how to know it?

Tat tvam asi is instruction by the Vedas via a teacher to the student who wants to know the truth. You are that –is the truth. Here 'you' is referring to the student and from the student's reference the instruction is 'I am that', where I, the subject is presumed to be known before the rest of the statement can be understood. 'I am' is the subject and is different from any object that can be designated by the word 'this'. The subject I am – involves conscious entity, the knower, I, who wants to know who that 'I am' is. The object 'this' is always an inert entity. In order to know the subject itself, scripture provides several methods. This 'I am' can be known via study of the scriptures using any or all of the following three methods of analysis: 1. anvaya vyatireka, 2. dRik-drishya viveka and 3) avasthaatraya vilaksaNa.

Anvaya vyatireka method is extensively analyzed by taarkika-s or Nyaaya Vaiseshika-s. The method is anumaana pramaaNa involving inferential knowledge based on perceptual data. This has been extensively analyzed in Vedanta Paribhaasha, a critical analysis is presented elsewhere (www.adviataforum.org). The following discussion is somewhat technical but essence can be

easily grasped. Anvaya means a co-presence establishing a positive relation, while vyatireka means co-absence establishing the negative relation concerning two entities. In the context of Vedanta, these relations can be used to establish cause-effect relationships, particularly for upaadaana kaaraNa or material cause. The basis for this is that cause pervades the effect and not the other way around. Applying to clay and pot, clay pervades the pot – that is, clay is, pot is – this is the co-presence or anvaya. Applying the vyatireka, if we start with the effect – pot is not, clay is; there is no co-absence. Co-absence works only if we start with cause – clay is not, pot is not. Implication is - clay can exist without being pot, while pot cannot exist independent of clay. Navya Nyaaya calls this as viShama vyaapti – similar to fire and smoke – smoke is, fire is, as in the kitchen; and smoke is not, fire is, as in red-hot iron ball. There is also a third situation; we start from the fire, and say when fire is not, then smoke also is not, as on a lake. These are pictorially represented by two circles one inside the other, the inner circle is effect like pot or smoke while the outer circle is the material cause, clay or fire (In terms of set-theory, one set is enclosed in other.) In the inner circle, both smoke and fire coexist – anvaya. Outside the inner circle but inside the outer circle, there is fire but no smoke, or there is clay but no pot – here the vyatireka fails, that is, there is no co-absence. Now if we go beyond the outer circle, we have a region where there is no fire and no smoke or no clay and no pot – co-absence, vyatireka applies, as on the lake where there is no fire and no smoke. We have dRishTaanta, example, for each, as part of Nyaaya requirement. Examples help to develop the relation or vyaapti, and therefore example should be different from the situation where this relation has to be applied. The example and the application cannot be the same as it results in circular argument.

How do we apply this knowledge for knowing tvam or the subject, you?

Everybody understands who they are. It is taken for granted and everybody has a bio-data describing who they are – as I am born on this and this date, and I have accomplished this, this and this, etc., Now applying anvaya, we have a case where this - is, and I am- is; that is, the co-presence of I am and this is - as in pot is, clay is. Now applying vyatireka, this is not, but I am still is, similar to pot is not, but clay is. We can say that clay pervades the pot and not the other way. Pot is inner circle and clay is outer circle. Similarly – ‘this is’ – is inner circle while ‘I am’ is the outer circle. This is also a viShama vyaapti – I pervade all this, but I am beyond all this, like fire pervades all smoke, but there is a region where fire is but smoke is not. In addition, we have a region beyond the fire circle, where there is no fire, and no smoke, as on lake. In the case of ‘I am’ and ‘this is’, we cannot have region which is beyond ‘I am’ circle. The reason is the ‘I am’ circle is infinite and therefore all inclusive; of course, the knowledge of the infiniteness nature of I am will come later through the application of mahaavaakya.

Now Vedanta applies this anvaya vyatiraka logic step by step starting from each of the koshas that every one of us identifies himself as I am this body, I am this mind, and I am this intellect. Everybody assumes I am the body, which is annamaya kosha– body is there, I am there, anvaya. One needs viveka to understand that I am not the body since body is an object of my knowledge. I am different from what I know since I am the subject knower and this is object of my knowledge that is different from I. Here anubhava or experience of deep sleep comes to our help in understanding I am there even when I am not conscious of the body. Thus using anubhava,

that is the experience of the three states of consciousness, waking, dream and deep sleep states, and applying anvaya vyatireka logic, I can understand that I am not this, this and this but I am pure consciousness that pervades (vyaapaka) all this, this and this; yet I am beyond all this. That is the meaning of tvam – you – the subject of the sentence, tat tvam asi or you are that. Hence mahaavaakya would make sense only if one has clear understanding of what I am that is being referred in the sentence. I should know without doubt that I am is the pure saakshii chaitanya or witnessing consciousness, which is different from saakshyam the witnessed objects, yet pervades the witnessed objects. According to Vedanta Paribhaasha, the perceptuality is complete with the knowledge of perception of any of ‘this’ occurs only when the existence of this in the form of vRitti unites with the consciousness of the subject, I am, for me to be conscious of the existence of ‘this’. In essence the conscious subject I am and existence of inert – this is – are connected or united to have the knowledge as I know this. I know this involves existence (SAT) expressed as this and consciousness (CHIT) expressed as I am get united or becoming one in the rise of the knowledge as- I know this or I know this is a pot.

I am not this, yet I pervade this.

With this knowledge of I am, I look at the Vedic statement, tat tvam asi – you are that - and recognize ‘that’ that is being referenced is the Brahman, which is limitless. That includes both saakshii and saakshyam; then the knowledge becomes crystal clear, as though seeing and recognizing the fruit that is right in my hand. Aham brahmaasmi – becomes immediate knowledge since both the subject and the predicate in the sentence – you are that – is now known. Since the subject – I am – is immediate and direct, that knowledge is immediate and direct, aparoksham.

Now what else I need to do after knowing – I am that. The clear understanding of - I am that- implies that I need not do anything else; nay, I cannot do anything. I cannot but (as though) scream out, akartaaham abhoktaaham, aham evaaham avyayaH’. I am neither a doer nor an enjoyer. That understanding implies that there is nothing more to understand, nothing more to do or not to do, to go or not to go, to renounce or not to renounce, to leave the body or not to leave the body, to meditate or not to meditate. The very knowledge that I am that or aham brahmaasmi, I realize that there is nothing more to know; eka vijnaanena sarva vijnaanam bhavati – knowing this, everything is as well known; just as knowing gold, all golden ornaments are as well known. We have the essential knowledge of the jiiva, jagat and Iswara. Then, what about the body, mind and intellect (BMI) that was there and is still there functioning, and that requires constant maintenance? That question itself is invalid, since the BMI itself is given only to realize this truth, and therefore their main function in life is over. The life itself is fulfilled. Knowledge of aham brahmaasmi does not destroy anything; it destroys only the ignorance. Everything remains as they are. BMI will remain the same with all their limitations. Knowledge that all ornaments are gold does not destroy the ornaments. Ring will still be ring and bangle will still be bangle. The naama and ruupa will remain as they were before the dawn of knowledge. Only now, I recognize that I am the ring, but yet I am not the ring; I am bangle, but yet I am not the bangle; in truth I am pure gold that pervades both ring and the bangle, yet different from the ring and the bangle. Gold can say, look at my glory, I can exist in varieties of names and forms. They are all in me, but I am not in them; that is, their individual sufferings do not affect me as I am pure gold, without any

modifications in spite of all these apparent modifications. Since, the equipments are still in tact, Brahman that I am, can 'as though' utilize them for my sake, since for my sake is the same as for the sake of Brahman only – that is for the benefit of the totality. That is what loka kalyaanaNam means. Does jnaani do any action? Jnaani, by definition, understood that he is akarthaa and bhoktaa, yet we can say Brahman (which is now called Iswara when he takes the 'role' of a kartaa or bhoktaa) himself 'acts' as though he is a doer, just like an actor knowing I am an actor playing a different role in a drama. He sees, but he does not see, he acts but he does not act; everything becomes His glory – pasyam me yogam aishwaram – Look at my glory Arjuna. Brahman acting as though as Iswara as the creator, sustainer and destroyer at the samaShTi level, and is the same as Brahman acting as though as jiiva as local karthaa and bhoktaa at vyaShTi level. I am neither Iswara, nor jiiva nor the world, yet I am Iswara, I am jiiva and I am jagat too. Aham brahmaasmi – that pervade the jiiva, jagat and Iswara.

The do-s and don't of worldly drama do not affect the actor, either at samaShTi Iswara level or vyaShTi jiiva level - he is not really doing any action other than acting. Actually this is true whether one is jnaani or ajnaani, but jnaani understands he is akarthaa and abhoktaa, in spite of any apparent action or enjoyment (or suffering), while ajnaani thinks he is the kartaa and bhokta and hence suffers as a consequence of that misunderstanding. Hence Krishna says – prakRityaiva ca karmaaNi kriyamaanaani sarvaShaH, yaH pasyati tat aatmaanam akartaaham sa pasyati. All actions (without any exceptions) are done by prakRiti only. One who sees this clearly that I am neither doer nor enjoyer, he alone sees the truth. mayaadhyaksheNa prakRitiH suuyate sa charaacharam – Under my presidency the prakRiti puts forth all these varieties of movable and immovable entities. I am not really a kartaa or doer. In my very presence, the prakRiti manifests into the multitudes of kaleidoscopic projections. It is similar to the self-shining Sun in the sky, but in its very presence the life becomes dynamic on the earth. What is that prakRiti? That prakRiti is nothing but maayaa – maayantu prakRitim vidyaat –says Swe. Up. maayaa is that which is not there but appears to be there. For those who see the truth, the maayaa becomes apparent, and the whole creation becomes mithyaa. In pure Brahman there is no creation; in infiniteness there are no parts. It is homogenous mass of pure consciousness. I do not become Brahman, I understood as I am Brahman. Once understood, the whole creation then is seen as either Iswara vibhuuti or my own vibhuuti. aham vRiskhasya rerivaa, kiierthiH puShTam giririva -declares sage Trishanku's , a realized master (Tai. Up. I-X). I am the very source of all this ever expanding tree of samsaara with branches spread all over the world-the very support for whole drama of life. I am the pinnacle of whole creation. There is nothing wrong with drama as long as it is understood as drama. That is what jnaanam involves. I do not get burned by making contact with the world with knowledge that -all is play. On the other hand, I will get burned if I make a contact with the hot world without the insulating gloves of jnaanam; says sadvidya of Chandogya Upanishad.

For those who understood the meaning of the words, tvam and tat, the equation tat tvam asi becomes immediate knowledge. Once knowledge arises, the ignorance of 'I am this' is gone. He is jiivanmukta. People after studying and discussing Vedanta for years, and even teaching others feel that they have not yet realized. A puurvapakshi says, that means a) either knowledge did not remove the ignorance, or b) it removed the ignorance temporarily during the class, but once back into the world, the knowledge has evaporated, meaning ignorance has comeback. Therefore, some say that one has to renounce the world for knowledge to take place. Others say jnaani is different from jiivanmukta. To become jiivan mukta one has to renounce the world. Some say enough of Vedanta discussions what we need to do now is to sit in solitary place and meditate, or move around the world without staying at one place (since you cannot get out of the world) as parivraajaka in order to become jiivanmukta – that is what scriptures says, nidhidhyaasitavyaH, etc. Look at all the great mahaatmaas of the recent past, Bhagavaan Ramana or Kanchi kaamakoti or Chandrashekara Bharati, etc. Their lives clearly show that renunciation is the only way for jiivanmukta. gruhasthaa jnaani, it is an oxymoron; argue some.

Well, we will address some of these issues form the point of truth, particularly the role of nidhidhyaasana, in the next post.

Hari Om!

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