

Chinmaya Smrithi







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

Volume 28, Number 2, March 2018



HOLI MESSAGE FROM SWAMI SWAROOPANANDA

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Foreword: Swamiji's Message: Geeta Chapter 3, Verses 1-21

Karma Yoga – The Art of Action



Editor's Note: [Our beloved resident Acharya Swami Dheerananda provided a synopsis of Gita Chapter 3 Verses 1-21 during the Gita Jnana Yagna at Chinmaya Somnath in December 2017. The editorial team is honored to present a summary of his message below]

No one can remain without performing action for even a minute! Even thinking or feeling is an action. When a person goes to sleep, it may appear that he is not acting. However, he is still breathing which is also an action. In fact, action is the signature of life. Shri Krishna explains to Arjuna the importance of right action which is the fulfillment of one's duties.

What types of duties should a person try to complete? A person should fulfill his obligatory duties.

How should one carry out their duties? The attitude in which duties are fulfilled is also important. Duties should be done in the Yajna spirit, in other words, in a spirit of selfless dedicated service. When a person thus fulfills their duties selflessly, their existing selfishness reduces and no new selfish desires are created. Thus, the pressure of Vasanas (impressions left from our past desire-filled actions) is reduced and the person's mind and intellect (M & I) become quiet, alert and vigilant. The M&I is then available for Shravana (attentive listening or study of scriptures, Mananam (deep reflection based on knowledge gleaned from the scriptures) and Nidhidhyasana (single-pointed attention to our true nature. Such a person is able to use his mind and intellect to contemplate on the highest Self (our true nature) and realize the Self.

Around us in nature, all the beings (trees, animals, birds, rivers, mountains) are constantly working in a selfless or "giving" spirit. Only the human beings, who consider themselves most intelligent, ask "What is in it for me?". Human beings should learn from nature. When you work with nature, it will provide you many fold returns. Thus, working in a Yajna spirit is a universal law. The Preceptor instructed people to work in the Yajna spirit. This is Karma Yoga – the art of action.

Every law typically has an exception. Arjuna is curious at this point to know if there is any exception to the universal law of action. Lord Krishna tells him that there is indeed an exception to the law: one who has awakened to the Self and is satisfied, contented and ever reveling in the Self – for such a person, there are no obligatory duties. Such an individual ever remains engaged in action, for the welfare of all.

For the rest of us, we have obligatory duties to perform – these are borne out of our identification with our Body-Mind-Intellect. For example, a person could have parental duties as a parent, spousal duties as a spouse or professional duties in the office.

It is the mind that goes to sleep and wakes up. So long as a person is identified with the mind, they would say "I woke up". However, the Self ("I" as "I") never sleeps and is ever awake.

In the first few verses of this chapter on Karma Yoga (The Art of Action), the Lord explains how selfless action leads to Chittha Suddhi (purification of the heart). With a pure heart, the seeker can contemplate and meditate on the Higher Self.

To inspire Arjuna, Shri Krishna further gives example of a great ruler, who was also a royal sage (since Arjuna can identify with rulers). King Janaka walked the path of Karma Yoga and attained Self-realization. Citing King Janaka as a role model for Arjuna, Shri Krishna advises that people always look up to their role models and try to imitate their actions. Leaders have a duty to work for the welfare of society. Since Arjuna is also looked upon as a leader in the society, Shri Krishna urges him to step into that role and provide leadership by performing his duties in yajna spirit.

Calendar and Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

- Friday March 30 – Hanuman Jayanti at Chinmayam
- Saturday April 12 – Bhajana Sandhya “Vinaya Purva Aradhana” at Chinmayam
- April 16-18 – Jnana Yajna “Cool Happiness” by Swami Chidatmanandha at Chinmayam
- April 19-22 – Jnana Yajna “Enjoy the Bliss” by Swami Chidatmanandha at Chinmaya Somnath
- Saturday April 21 – Discourse on Teachings of Poet and Yogi Vemana, in Telugu, by Swami Chidatmanandha at Chinmaya Somnath
- Saturday April 21 – Adi Sankara Jayanti celebration at Chinmayam
- May 5-6 – Chinmaya Jayanti celebrations, locally at all chapter
- Tuesday May 8 – Chinmaya Jayanti Day
- Saturday May 12 – Bhajan Sandhya at Chinmayam
- Saturday May 19 – Bala Vihar Graduation Tilak Ceremony at Chinmayam
- Saturday May 26 – Memorial Day Spiritual Camp by Acharya Sadananda

Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Ravi Ravichandran ji by email at ravi5211@yahoo.com , if you are interested in forming or learning more about study groups.

Bookstore/Library

- Browse Books, CDs, DVDs, etc. online at www.chinmayapublications.com . Contact Sevak to order (Vijay Singh at Chinmayam, Subbarao Kari at Chinmaya Somnath and Bijay Dash at Frederick)

Next Edition of Chinmaya Smrithi

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly edition – May 2018, are due by April 30, 2018
- Email submissions to smrithi-editor@chinmayadc.org.
- Browse Past editions at www.chinmayadc.org/Smrithi/Smrithi.htm

Useful Links:

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust www.chinmayamission.com
Chinmaya Mission West www.chinmayamission.org
Chinmaya International Foundation, E-Vedanta Courses www.chinfo.org
Chinmayam Chapter – Silver Spring MD website <http://chinmayam.chinmayadc.org/chinmayam-chapter/>
Chinmaya Somnath Chapter – Chantilly VA website www.chinmayasomnath.org
Chinmaya Frederick Chapter – Urbana MD website <http://www.frederick.cmwrc.org/>
Chinmaya Richmond Chapter – Richmond VA website www.chinmayarichmond.org
CMWRC – Washington Regional Center www.chinmayadc.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

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

News & Tidbits

Maha Shivaratri Celebration

Maha Shivaratri was celebrated grandly at all three chapters. At Chinmaya Somnath, upwards of 500 devotees participated as Chinmaya Somnath puja, bhajans, cultural program and rudram chanting continued from evening to early hours of the following day. At Chinmayam, the worship began early at 5 AM with Shiva Manasa Puja and continued through midnight when Swamiji blew the conch, followed by meditative silence. Evening program included Lord Jagadeeshwara Puja, bhajans and cultural program. Frederick chapter observed Shivaratri during their weekend session.

Thyagaraja & Purandara Dasa Festival

On March 10th, Frederick chapter hosted the annual Thyagaraja and Purandara Dasa program. Students from Carnatic music schools from across Washington DC area participated, making it another well attended and highly successful CMWRC event.

Bhajan Sandhya Series at Chinmayam

On February 10th, a divine evening of singing, drawing from a collection of devotional songs from Telugu, Hindi and Tamil movies, Krishnapriya Thirumala enthralled the audience at Chinmayam. Swamiji remarked at the end of the performance that Krishnapriya grew up in the mission and sang the songs with clearly in each language, and, furthermore, she sang with knowledge of music as well as the spiritual meaning conveyed in the songs.

On March 10th, Karthik Ranganathan, Indu Sriram, Vish Narayanan and Nandini Duraiswamy, filled Chinmayam auditorium with 'Naama Sankeertanam' – songs and bhajans invoking the glorious names of the Lord.

Dhruva – Lion King Dance Drama

On March 11, Dhruva, the Guiding Star, dance drama was performed in Annandale Virginia as a CMWRC Fundraiser program. The narrative of the familiar story Lion King was captured and presented vividly through the fluid grace of the classical Indian dance form of Bharatanatyam. The multitude of characters in the original story was presented through its creative choreography. The performance was presented by Sanskriti School of Dance, and sponsored/underwritten by friends and members of

CMWRC. Over 400 adults and children attended the drama, making it a successful fundraiser event.

Chinmaya Blossoms – New Director

Chinmaya Blossoms preschool, which opened doors in Fall 2017 at Chantilly Virginia continues to establish strong foundation for its growth. Vibha Kulkarni, a Bala Vihar teacher/coordinator at Chinmaya Somnath, and a teacher at Loudon County Public School, accepted role of a full-time Director of the preschool. Kiran Gupta, whose vision and guidance led to the establishment of the preschool was unable to serve in a full-time capacity at the preschool. She has agreed to serve as an advisor on preschool matters and assist Vibha with training, preparation, curriculum and other critical components of preschool. Efforts are underway to grow the size of student population in the next academic year (2018-19) and offer preschool program this summer.

Geeta Chanting Competition

2018 Geeta Chanting competition was held March 17/18 locally at the three chapters. Initial counts from the three chapters indicated participation in higher numbers from a year ago (last year had over 500 participants, a record). A dozen participants from far away locations – Texas, Bangalore, Chennai, participated using newly introduced video medium – eChantGeeta. Families from neighboring Delaware and Pennsylvania drove to Silver Spring to participate in person. The number of participants choosing to reflect and write on Geeta verses also increased. It was beautiful to see a smile of satisfaction and joy as children and adults completed their chanting.

GPS – Guru Sishya Parampara- Chyk Retreat

GPS: Guru Parampara System, a Chyk – Chinmaya Youth (ages 18-35) camp was held on President's Day weekend. The presiding Acharyas were Swami Dheerananda and Brahmacharini Shubhani Chaitanya (Chinmaya Mission, New York). The camp explored the life, works, and legacy of Sri Adi Shankaracharya, with a focus on a book produced by Chinmaya International Foundation, "Adi Sankara – Finite to Infinite". Activities included engaging discourses, interactive discussions, and education-related exercises. Around 30 Chyk members attended the retreat.



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by Pujya Swami Dheerananda**

Day: Every Thursday evening

Time: 7:00 - 8:30PM EST

Venue: Kailas Niwas and Online

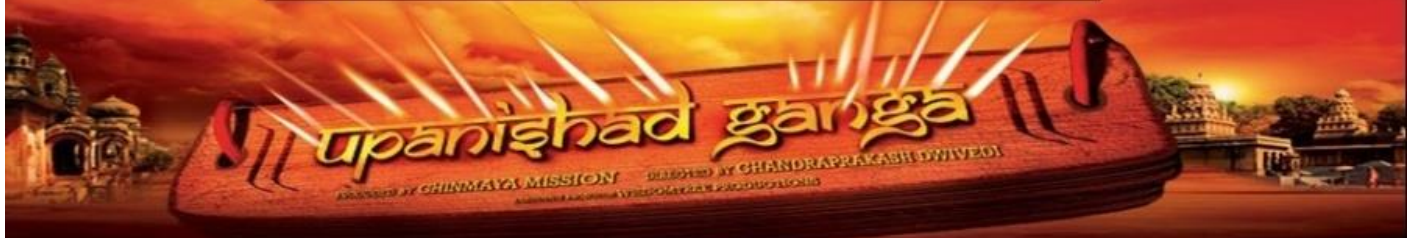
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SUNDAYS- 11.00AM-12.00PM- SADHANA PANCHAKAM

TUESDAYS- 8.30PM-9.30PM- BRAHMA SUTRAS

THURSDAYS- 8.30PM- 9.30PM- ATMA BODHA

SATURDAYS- 11.30AM- 12.30PM- SADHANA PANCHAKAM

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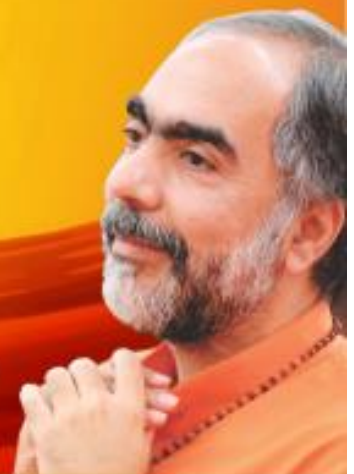
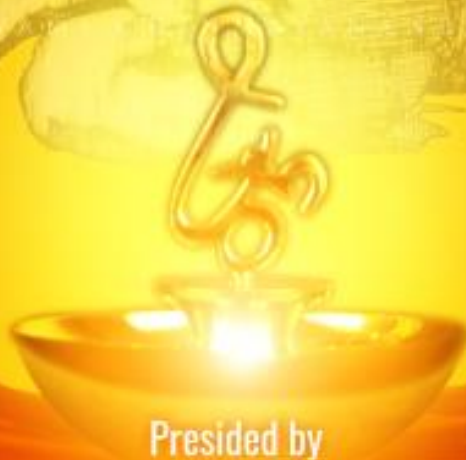


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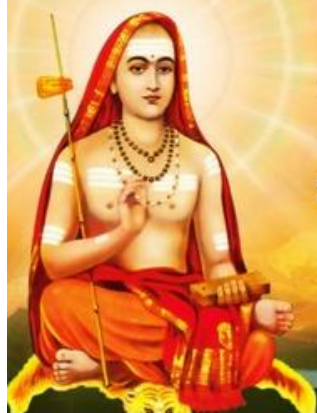


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THEME

Adi Shankaracharya

Conducted By

Swami Dheerananda

For rising 1st to 8th graders
as of September 1, 2018

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Rama itself means 'sarveshu ramate iti ramah'-
That which revels in everyone of us.
That Pure Light of Consciousness, is the Atman,
the Self, the Atma-Rama.

- Swami Chinmayananda

*Experience the embodiment of
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Swami Swaroopananda



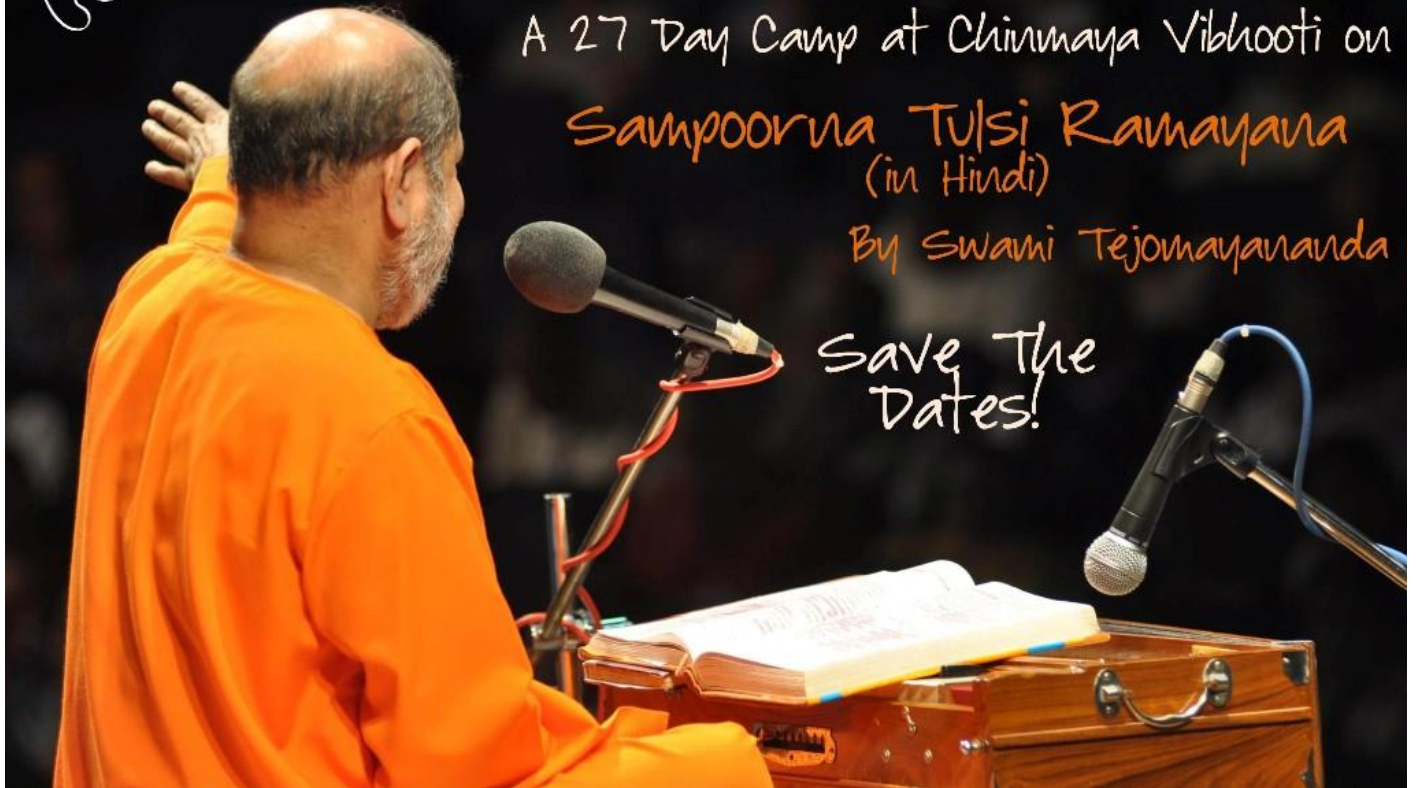
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Non-duality

Anoop Kumar

Non duality puts science and all other philosophies in context

In its most basic form, non duality is simple: Consciousness alone is. Non duality stands on the other end of the spectrum of philosophy from materialism, which says that the world is made of physical things, and that consciousness is the product or epiphenomenon of complex physical things like neurons.

Interestingly, materialism is more commonly referred to as a type of behavior, not as a philosophy. When we hear of materialism in pop culture, it refers to the tendency to accumulate more and more *things* in our life - more cars, bigger homes, new smartphones, the latest clothes, more inflated titles and degrees, and even more popular and powerful friends! But it's important to recognize that this materialist behavior is actually based in the philosophy of materialism. After all, if the world is primarily made of *things*, then I am a *thing* too. It follows that the best way to be successful as a *thing* would be to have as much of the world of *things* as possible.

When we look at educational systems worldwide, we see that they implicitly teach materialist philosophy without using explicit philosophical terms. The reasoning is simple: Science and technology have dramatically improved our lives, therefore the scientific perspective that the world (including you and I) is made of up *things* must be correct. It's no surprise that even in medical school, my professors subscribed to the same old story that the human being is made of tiny *things* called particles and atoms.

But there's a glitch in the above reasoning, and it's a major one. Science works well because it meticulously studies *regular, observable patterns* in the world, not because it tells us what the world actually *is*. For example, Issac Newton noticed that forcefully pushing an object seems to cause it to move, until friction halts its motion. By observing the regularity of this pattern in detail, he was able to come up with the laws of motion. Yet the laws of motion still do not tell us what an object *is*. Similarly, we know how particles behave, but what exactly *is* a particle?

The beauty of non duality is that it contextualizes and accommodates science without quarrel. Science can continue to describe patterns, behaviors, and

relationships that improve our lives, while non duality points out that science is a system of thought, a model of the world in consciousness.

The current scientific mind is generally steeped in materialism for reasons described above. But there is a shift happening in scientific culture. Flabbergasted by the inability of material things to explain subjective mental experience, some scientists are now subscribing to the philosophy of panpsychism, which states that consciousness is a fundamental property of the universe - as fundamental as matter. A smaller group of scientists are even more daring. They are considering the philosophy of idealism, which says that the world is a combination of ideas, mental in nature. In this view, even objects like the bed I am sitting on is of the nature of mind, like objects in a dream. This comes awfully close to non duality.

A fearless and diligent scientific mind that follows the facts will have no choice but to steadily progress along the bridge from materialism to panpsychism to idealism, and finally, to dance with non duality. But this journey is not only for scientists to make. Every rational-minded seeker of truth will make the same inward journey, placing consciousness here and there in their private map of the universe through trial and error, until one day consciousness reveals itself as the maker of both the map and the universe.

Go Ahead, Take A Vacation Within.....

An interpretation of Gita Verse 55 Chapter 2 by Anu Prabhala

What if someone were to tell you that the most beautiful vacation you can take does not require you to pack multiple bags and travel anywhere? And what's more, that it comes free of charge? You'd think they are crazy, right?

Not if you were to believe verse 55 from chapter 2 of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. If the wisdom in this verse were to be believed, it merely takes a journey *within* (and that's no mean feat) to encounter the most profound and meaningful destination of all, **your own Self**, to attain peace with yourself and with the external world, and become a wiser person.

*śhrī bhagavān uvācha
prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha mano-gatān
ātmany-evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthita-prajñas tadochyate*

Literally translated, the verse means: When a man completely casts off O Partha, all desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self by the self, then he is said to be the one of steady wisdom.

The Self as a destination is not only free, but it is an infinite pool of wisdom that keeps giving. It's through the wisdom attained from the Self that we can hope to gain *sthita-prajñas* or steadiness of the mind. This message is meaningful in a time when we are bombarded with so much external stimuli through the TV and social media that pull our senses *outward* in so many different directions.

This verse is a call instead to focus *inward* and discover the divinity and wisdom that resides right within each of us.

So how do you take this journey inwards?

The Bhagavad Gita offers several tools to accomplish this trek inward and become a person of *sthita-prajñas*.

They all have to do with the act of shedding.

First, the shedding of our **vasanas**. The Bhagavad Gita reminds us constantly that our *vasanas* or our daily desires are what distract us most in life. We get attached to objects, wants, and aspirations and they grow on us such that when we don't get them, we get angry and dejected.

The first order of business is therefore to cast away our daily desires and set our mind on a higher ideal. This is of course easier said than done. But we can start with at least the *awareness* that what you are experiencing are *vasanas* and that they are trivial pursuit and a temporary machination of the mind.

What's wrong with desires, you may ask. First, desires come from *ignorance*. Ignorance of not just knowing that desires are unreal, but that these desires are mere fabrications of the *mind*, which in and of itself is often confused with our true Self. This as we know is a key tenet of the Gita and the BMI chart—that *we are not our mind*, but that the mind is merely a tool that needs to be used wisely to journey inwards. As Swami Dheeranandaji keeps reminding us, compare it to a steering wheel that you use to drive a car, with you or the Self being in charge. You don't let the steering wheel drive the car but *you* control the steering wheel that drives the car. Once we recognize desires, acting in ignorance has a chance to end. When we get rid of ignorance, there is a chance for true knowledge to shine, and with knowledge, we can then hope to attain wisdom.

Therefore, as we can see, shedding of the *vasanas* is tied with shedding of our **ignorance**. The intellect from a very young age is shrouded in a veil of ignorance preventing us from encountering the wisdom of the Divine Self. This ignorance has many sources. A chief source is our thoughts produced by our mind. We are so conditioned by our thousands of thoughts a day (it's believed that the mind produces upwards of eighty thousand thoughts a day, a mere handful of which are even useful), leading us in multiple directions. Add to that external expectations from the family and society as well as our own internal expectations. A further layer of complexity arises from *reactions* to our own thoughts as well as others' thoughts such that the layers of mental noise stack up rather quickly and get thicker and thicker over the years till such a day when we have trouble distinguishing the real from the false.

How do we know this to be true? For all of us spiritual seekers here at Chinmaya mission, isn't this the quest that brings us to this mission? That feeling that our life is either lacking some direction or that there is something bigger and better than our individual and often selfish quests in life? That maybe we are missing an essential spiritual

backbone and want to become more profound? Thus, the quest for knowledge and the process of shedding ignorance begins.

You can visualize this as the slow, methodical process of the peeling of an onion, arguably less tearful.

Thirdly, the shedding of ignorance is intrinsically connected with the **shedding of the ego** or the notion that you have to be something or someone you are not—something *external* to you rather than what you are inherently internally. Ego is that voice (or call it noise) telling you that you should live a certain life or buy certain clothes rather than being who you truly are. I quote Songyal Rinpoche here from *Beyond Ego* wherein he is talking about discovering your true Self: “The memory of your real nature, with all its splendor and confidence, begins to return to you...you will find that you have uncovered in yourself your own **wise guide**. Because he or she knows you through and through, since he or she is you. Think of this inner guide and let it be your wise guide.”

So the shedding of the ego is tied deeply with listening to this inner wise guide. For example, think of an argument with someone. Things get heated up and you hear that voice saying just stop, don't say anything more, it's no good. But you lose your temper anyway and say, you slap your kid or call your spouse a name and later regret it. That inner voice that we often ignore is our wise guide. **We have to learn to listen to it more and more, and learn to listen less and less to the fluff of noise created by layers of ignorance shrouding us.**

Therefore in this trek inwards, you learn to see the world through the **lens of the Self**. When you see the world through the lens of the Self or the wise guide, you see vanity and greed where *you think* you see utility and need as we recognize that desires are unreal. When you see the world through the lens of the Self, you care more about the *inside* than the outside as true divinity resides within you. So you tend to journey inward, rather than outward.

It's the process of self-fortification through shedding the vasanas, shedding ignorance, shedding the ego, and seeing life through this miraculous lens of the Self that characterizes this journey inward to the glorious destination of the Self.

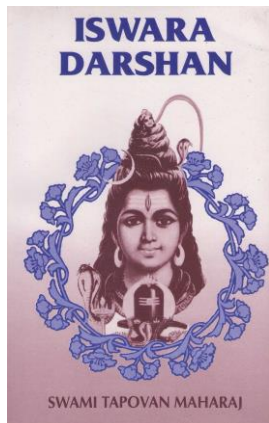
It is easier said than done, but as with anything else in life, what's important is to be aware, set the intention, and try. This is one journey where you don't have to wait to reach the destination to experience its beauty. The journey itself is illuminating.

So, the next time you decide you want to pack your bags and vacation in Florida or the Caribbean, remember, you can save time and money, and potentially achieve greater bliss and wisdom by taking a free ride into your own Self, right here at home. You may be less tanned, but you are guaranteed to be more enlightened.

Messages from an autobiography of a Mahatma -5 (Iswara Darshan)

Sitaram Kowtha

Editor's Note: In this series, selected excerpts from the book "Iswara Darshan" by Pujya Swami Tapovan Maharaj of Uttar Kashi, are provided by Sitaram Kowthaji to inspire the students of Vedanta to delve deeply into the glories of a mahatma who inspired our sadguru, Swami Chinmayananda.



5. Passing of His Father

March of Time

Relentless, time was on the march. Our hero was now twenty-one. Suddenly, his father, rich, liberal and university honored, passed away leaving all mundane riches behind and taking with him nothing but the fruits of his actions. Many of the kinfolk felt orphaned. His numerous friends were immersed in grief.

In due course, all living things decay and dissolve. Death waits for no one. Only the wise man learning detachment from this power of time, can transcend time. Alas! Thinking in terms of 'I', 'my' and 'mine', without trying to realize the Self, man wastes his precious life, attached to wife and child, pelf and power and influence, ever under the illusion that he is enjoying while all the time he is suffering and sorrowful. Rich or poor, ignorant or enlightened, outcaste or sannyasin, good, bad or indifferent, all are subject to worldly sorrows.

Father wanted to do much, and he was called off prematurely. Relations and friends were flabbergasted and did not have the nerve to face the situation. Subramania, of course, knew that there was no resisting the decree of providence. Moreover, by his very nature, he was unattached. He consoled the kinfolk, performed

all the funeral ceremonies in strict accordance with the customs of the community.

The obsequies over, Subramania sought to lift up his mind from the depths of sorrow to the feet of God by composing a beautiful hymn called "Vishnu Yamakam". For a man harassed by the three sorrows (bodily, relationship with things and beings, relationship with other elements) there is no refuge other than the thought of God, the singing of His glories and complete surrender to His will. They are like the gentle rain from heaven which saves the poor wild animals fleeing in fear of life from a spreading forest fire, by putting out the fire.

Love of God, Faith and Devotion

Love of God is the highest and the best means to man's happiness here and hereafter. That is why, whether one is afflicted by sorrow, one desires wealth, one is curious or one has the right knowledge, they all turn to Him. For the same reason, Subramania's mind was fixed on God.

According to sage Narada and others, Bhakti marga or path of devotion, is described as easiest and best path to God, over Karma (path of action), Jnana (path of knowledge) or Dhyana (path of meditation). The reason it is the easiest is that it does not require wealth, no stupendous effort to control mind, and no exceptional power of discrimination. Without a touch of devotion, other paths become dry, dull, insipid and vain. Bhakti alone is charming. While one may think that love of worldly pleasures is charming, those pleasures are fleeting like lightning and are the root cause of sorrow. On the contrary, love of God is untouched by sorrow; it is eternal and of the nature of bliss, and so to the seekers of liberation, it is most desirable and acceptable.

Bhakti is of two types – Sadhana Bhakti and Sadhya Bhakti. Sadhana Bhakti, also known as Aparā Bhakti, is dvaita – two entities – devotee and God. Sadhya Bahkti is monistic, it is also called Para Bhakti and Advaita. There is no difference between two forms of devotion, and neither is superior to the other. In light of this truth, it is childish and meaningless for devotees to argue that one is superior to the other. The best way to generate true devotion is through association with the knowers of the Truth (Sat Sangah). He who secures the grace of the good and the wise, has firm faith in them and their conduct, will

gradually contract a liking to the hear the story of the Lord and His glorious attributes. Step by step, his mind steeped itself in Divine love and devotion.

Subramanya found it easy to immerse his mind in God, as he had displayed fervent devotion to God in form during his childhood days. He did not have to pass through the stages of devotion enumerated in Srimad Bhagwatam. He found 'Santam' (tranquil meditation) to be most suitable to him, and he practiced quite contemplation of the Lord.

After His father's passing

After the demise of this dear mother, the fire of dispassion had been smoldering in his mind. Now, with the death of his father, it blazed into flame. Resolute and fearless in the discharge of his duties, he did not yet break away from custom and tradition. The idea of throwing away all the rich parental estate and leaving not only the relatives, but also everything dear, obsessed his mind. One thing stood in his way. His younger brother was still a student in school. To leave him alone to his fate would have been unnatural and even cruel. So, he decided to stay on, until his brother's education was finished and his duty to him was fulfilled. He planned to spend the time at his house with meditation, study and tapas.

He continued to contribute to Sanskrit journals and that brought him fame. Eager to gain more knowledge, he approached scholars and Sanskrit colleges, but he found the environment to unsuitable for his spiritual growth. He had made acquaintance with a famous scholar, Swami Santyananda Saraswati, who had settled in Bhavnagar in the state of Saurashtra (now Gujarat), and sought to study advanced Vedanta from him. In time, Subramania was invited to Bhavnagar. On his way, he visited Madras (now Chennai), Bombay (now Mumbai), Narbada River, Ahmedabad and Gandhiji's ashram.

At Bhavnagar, he started study of Vedanta under Swami Santyananda, and a famous Gujarati poet, scholar, Kavya Vachaspati Sri Daya Sankar, was also studying Vedanta there. He spent many happy days at Bhavnagar studying sastras, associating himself with great sannyasins, acquiring the knowledge of the Self, clearing all doubts and enjoying supreme bliss.

To Be Continued

Iswara Darshanam - VIII

Discussion of the 11th Chapter of Gita – Acharya Sadanandaji

In the 11th Chapter, we have the description of Viswaruupa Iswara first by Krishna himself, next by Sanjaya and then by Arjuna.

Vishwa darshanam is Iswara darshanam: Scriptures say, first space is born, since that is the subtlest of all five elements – AtmAnaH AkAshaH sambhUtaH. AkAsha itself is all pervading, and is the subtlest objectifiable entity. Lord Narayana is described normally in the sloka – viswAkAram gagana sadRisham mEghavarnam subhAngam..... He is in the form of whole universe, or pervades the whole universe, similar to the Space. Hence the body of Lord himself is like space (aakaashaH that which provides avakAsha or that which accommodates everything) containing everything in one – but now visible in infinite forms. Hence Lord says- mE rUpANi shataShOtha sahasrashaH nAnA vidhAni divyAni– hundreds of thousands of forms in many divine forms in multitude of colors (nAnA varNAkRitInI). meghavarnam is actually blue color and Lord Narayana is considered blue. For a human eye, anything that is infinite or limitless appears to be blue, even if it is not blue, ex. Space or Oceans. Hence meghavarnam or blue color of Vishnu is only to indicate that He is infinite. Etymologically also Vishnu means that which pervades everything, vyaapakatvat vishnuH.

In Bri. Up., even pure consciousness that illumines everything is referred to Akaash- Here Shankara gives etymological meaning for Akaash. Normally it is defined as that which provides avakaashha for everything or that which accommodates everything is space. Instead Shankara says that Akaashi here used in the sense of luminosity, and is derived from the root kaash –meaning that which shines as in prakaash. Hence aakaash is pure consciousness that which is self-luminous and also illumines everything else – tatya bhaasaa sarvam idam vibhaati - that which illumines everything else, says Shruti.

Krishna says you cannot see all his divine forms with your normal eyes and for that you need wisdom-eyes or divine eyes, which I give you now. Here the exalted vision is described that even jnaani can see with his wisdom eyes. Earlier, Krishna has described a jnaani as the one who sees everything in Me, and Me in everything – yo maam pasyati sarvatra sarvanca mayi pasyati, which is the same as seeing himself in everything and everything in himself

– sarva bhUtastam Atmaanam sarva bhUtAnica Atmani. Hence Krishna describes here that -shataShO sahasrashaH rUpANi mE pasya – hundreds of thousands of forms you can see in Me and - nAnAvidhAni divyAni and nAnAvarNAkRiteeni ca– innumerable divine forms and multitude of colorful forms you can see in Me.

In essence, everything that we see in this limitless universe is the expression in terms of varieties of names and forms; and they are all part of Him only. We all experience in our life-time innumerable forms and colors, but yet we do not recognize these as part of Iswara. In the 10th Chapter, Krishna essentially declared that whatever you see in terms of various names and forms, that is my glory only. Here in this Chapter, 11, Krishna shows that as a fact, by providing temporary wisdom-eyes. From the bhakti point, at the most, we may that it is all the beauty of His creation. However, Krishna here shows that He and the creation are not different. Seeing the whole creation right in front is seeing the Lord appearing in front. Vision of the Universe is the vision of the Lord – that is the essential point of this Chapter.

To see the Lord we run to the temple, in order to see Him in particular forms that we are conditioned. However, here is real vision of the Lord, in varieties of names and forms. He who is formless and pervades all forms, and exists in all forms can be invoked in any form. That is for upAsana or for Bhakti. Ye yathaa maam prapadyante tam stathiva bhajaamyaham – Whoever worships Me in whatever form, I bless them in that form. However, considering that form is only God, and not others will be ignorance due to not understanding the vishwa rUpa Iswara darshanam or Lord expressing in multitude of infinite names and forms; and yet beyond all names and forms. Bhakti without understanding can lead to fanaticism. We see that people are ready to destroy others who do not worship the Lord in the form (or name) that they worship. That is due to lack of understanding what Lord stands for. Hence Krishna emphasized earlier jnaani or the one who knows this truth is the greatest bhakta, since he is always with the Lord in all his perceptions and transactions. Hence Bhagavan Ramana says – jagadalshadhIH yukata sevanam – Consider the whole universe is Him and serve the world as though you are serving the Lord.

To be continued.