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**Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa**  
**As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

*This is the forty first part of the serial article, continuation from Dec 2024 edition.*

नैव सा क्षुभ्यते देवी न च स्म परिदूयते । न चास्या मुखवर्णस्य लक्ष्यते विक्रिया तदा ॥ २-३५-३७

*naiva sā kṣubhyate devī na ca sma paridūyate ।*

*na cāsyā mukhavarnasya lakṣyate vikriyā tadā ॥ 2-35-37*

In Kaikeyi's face one could see no change. Sumantra's words did not register, and she sat stern and smug in her determination and her will. She was neither shaken nor stirred nor swayed. She was committed to her own desire. It was really a wonder, and Sumantra gave up. Dasharatha collected himself and began to order the preparations of those who should accompany Rama to the forest. Of course the army with horsemen and chariots and warriors and elephants should go, and singers and entertainers, and grapplers, because Rama enjoyed watching good wrestling, and all the servants, all should go. Dasharatha thought, "I have banished Rama, but I will make the forest into an Ayodhya. I never told Kaikeyi, but I will just send the whole city along with Rama. As king I can command this."

राज्यं गतधनं साधो पीतमण्डां सुरामिव । निरास्वाद्यतमं शून्यं भरतो नाभिपत्स्यते ॥ २-३६-१२

*rājyaṁ gatadhanam sādho pītamaṇḍāṁ surāmiva ।*

*nirāsvādyatamaṁ śūnyaṁ bharato nābhipatsyate ॥ 2-36-12*

When Kaikeyi realized her husband's intent she became afraid, her whole countenance changed and her lips and mouth were parched and pursed, "You cannot send all the wealth with Rama. Bharata will be bereft of these necessities, and he will not want to rule an empty kingdom. Bharata's kingdom must be one with all the wealth that is here now. This is what I asked; you cannot say I did not ask this. It would be like giving wine but taking the alcohol out of it. What good is it without the spiritous part? What wine is that; what a tasteless kingdom that would be." That is her thinking, and that is why Valmiki uses that sentence.

Dasharatha voiced his anger, "You have hurt me and you continue to hurt

me. You send your arrows forth and it is clear I am your target.”

Kaikeyi replied, “Was it not true that in your own *varṁśa*, your family, there was a King Sagara. His careless son Asamanjasa was banished to the forest by his father. He had in his hand but a spade and a basket, and he was sent to the forest like that. Sagara did it and you should do it the same way. Rama, with a trowel and a basket, should go and dig roots to pass his days in the forest.”

Reacting to that, a noble minister named Siddhartha spoke up, “Kaikeyi, what are you saying? What kind of example is this? You are comparing Asamanja to our Rama? What has Rama done that makes him like Asamanja? Tell me one complaint from anybody about Rama. I would like to hear that. You can ask anywhere in Ayodhya. Just look now at the sorrow and sadness you have inflicted on this city. Choose your examples more carefully if you want us to listen to you. Do not further your misdeeds. I too will accompany Rama.”

In fact, in my village when my mother wanted to scold us she would say, “Hey, *śuddha asamanja!* *Śuddha asamanja!*” You are a pure Asamanja. Asamanjasa was a Crown Prince. As a boy he was a stout and strong fellow. He would play with and bully other children around his palace. He would lift the smaller children and throw them into the river, into any water. Some children died, others were barely saved. The people were enraged and demanded the king do something. For what he had done, the boy Asamanjasa was banished to the forest.

अनुव्रजिष्याम्यहमद्य रामं राज्यं परित्यज्य सुखं धनं च ।

सर्वे च राज्ञा भारतेन च त्वं यथासुखं भुङ्क्ष्व चिराय राज्यम् ॥ २-३६-३३

*anuvrajiṣyāmyahamadya rāmaṁ rājyaṁ parityajya sukhaṁ dhanam ca ।*

*sarve ca rājñā bharatena ca tvam yathāsukhaṁ bhukṣva cirāya rājyam ॥ 2-36-33*

When Dasharatha heard Siddhartha’s words he joined in, “I will go as well. You can stay here, Kaikeyi. I am going with Rama. All my comforts I am giving up. Let your Bharata and you stay here. I am getting out.” The king does not even refer to Bharata as his son here.



Rama intervened, "I am leaving now. Prepare the bark that will serve as the clothes for the three of us."

अथ चीराणि कैकेयी स्वयमाहृत्य राघवम् । उवाच परिधत्स्वेति जनौघे निरपत्रपा ॥ २-३७-६

*atha cīrāṇi kaikeyī svayamāhṛtya rāghavam ।  
uvāca paridhatsveti janaughe nirapatrapā ॥ 2-37-6*

Kaikeyi, in her connivance, already had the bark garments at the ready. Giving them to Rama and Lakshmana and Sita, she told them to put these simple clothes on. Sita did not know which arm or leg to put where. She put the bark on over her silken dress and it was not a good fit.

कथं नु चीरं बध्नन्ति मुनयो वनवासिनः । इति ह्यकुशला सीता सा मुमोह मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ २-३७-१२

*katham nu cīraṁ badhnanti munayo vanavāsinaḥ ।  
iti hyakuśalā sītā sā mumoha muhurmuḥuḥ ॥ 2-37-12*

Sita asked Rama, "How do the people in the forest wear something like this? Where do you tie it?" She was not used to this, and it took Rama's help to get the bark properly arranged. Seeing the great Rama assist the girl brought tears to all those who loved this great warrior and his sweet wife who had never said a word against Dasharatha or against Kaikeyi. That was Sita, devoted to her husband, trusting and following him implicitly, a princess raised with all the best who never questioned this dress of bark. It brought tears to the eyes of the women in the assembly. Dasharatha, in his kindness, insisted that Sita's usual fine clothing and jewelry be returned and that she wear them rather than the bark dress.

अतिप्रवृत्ते दुर्मेघे कैकेयि कुलपांसनि । वञ्चयित्वा तु राजानं न प्रमाणेऽवतिष्ठसि ॥ २-३७-२२

न गन्तव्यं वनं देव्या सीतया शीलवर्जिते । अनुष्ठास्यति रामस्य सीता प्रकृतमासनम् ॥ २-३७-२३

आत्मा हि दाराः सर्वेषां दारसंग्रहवर्तिनाम् । आत्मेयमिति रामस्य पालयिष्यति मेदिनीम् ॥ २-३७-२४

अथ यास्यति वैदेही वनं रामेण संगता । वयमत्रानुयास्यामः पुरं चेदं गमिष्यति ॥ २-३७-२५

अन्तपालाश्च यास्यन्ति सदारो यत्र राघवः । सहोपजीव्यं राष्ट्रं च पुरं च सपरिच्छदम् ॥ २-३७-२६

भरतश्च सशत्रुघ्नश्चीरवासा वनेचरः । वने वसन्तं काकुत्स्थमनुवत्स्यति पूर्वजम् ॥ २-३७-२७

ततः शून्यां गतजनां वसुधां पादपैः सह । त्वमेका शाधि दुर्वृत्ता प्रजानामहिते स्थिता ॥ २-३७-२८

न हि तदः भविता राष्ट्रं यत्र रामो न भूपतिः । तद वनं भविता राष्ट्रं यत्र रामो निवत्स्यति ॥ २-३७-२९

न ह्यदत्तां महीं पित्रा भरतः शास्तुमिच्छति । त्वयि वा पुत्रवद् वस्तुं यदि जातो महीपतेः ॥ २-३७-३०  
यद्यपि त्वं क्षितितलादœ गगनं चोत्पतिष्यसि । पितृवंशचरित्रज्ञः सोऽन्यथा न करिष्यति ॥२-३७-३१  
तत् त्वया पुत्रगार्धिन्या पुत्रस्य कृतमप्रियम् । लोके नहि स न विद्येत यो न राममनुव्रतः ॥ २-३७-३२  
द्रक्ष्यस्यद्यैव कैकेयि पशुन्यालमृगद्विजान् । गच्छतः सह रामेण पादपांश्च तदुन्मुखान् ॥ २-३७-३३

*atipravṛtte durmedhe kaikeyi kulapāṁsani |*  
*vañcayitvā tu rājānaṁ na pramāṇe'vatiṣṭhasi || 2-37-22*  
*na gantaavyaṁ vanaṁ devyā sītayā śīlavarjite |*  
*anuṣṭhāsyati rāmasya sītā prakṛtamāsanam || 2-37-23*  
*ātmā hi dārāḥ sarveṣāṁ dārasaṅgrahavartinām |*  
*ātmeyamiti rāmasya pālayiṣyati medinīm || 2-37-24*  
*atha yāsyati vaidehī vanaṁ rāmeṇa saṅgatā |*  
*vayamatrānuyāsyāmaḥ puraṁ cedam gamiṣyati || 2-37-25*  
*antapālāśca yāsyanti sadāro yatra rāghavaḥ |*  
*sahopajīvyam rāṣṭraṁ ca puraṁ ca saparicchadam || 2-37-26*  
*bharataśca saśatrughnaścīravāsā vanecaraḥ |*  
*vane vasantaṁ kākutsthamanuvatsyati pūroajam || 2-37-27*  
*tataḥ sūnyāṁ gatajanāṁ vasudhāṁ pādapaiḥ saha |*  
*tvamekā śādhi durvṛttā prajānāmahite sthitā || 2-37-28*  
*na hi tad bhavitā rāṣṭraṁ yatra rāmo na bhūpatiḥ |*  
*tad vanaṁ bhavitā rāṣṭraṁ yatra rāmo nivatsyati || 2-37-29*  
*na hyadattāṁ mahīm pitrā bharataḥ śāstumicchati |*  
*tvayi vā putravad vastuṁ yadi jāto mahīpateḥ || 2-37-30*  
*yadyapi tvam kṣititalād gaganam cotpatiṣyasi |*  
*pitṛvaṁśacaritrajñāḥ so'nyathā na kariṣyati || 2-37-31*  
*tat tvayā putragardhinyā putrasya kṛtamapriyam |*  
*loke nahi sa na vidyeta yo na rāmamanuvrataḥ || 2-37-32*  
*drakṣyasyadyaiva kaikeyi paśuvyālamṛgadvijān |*  
*gacchataḥ saha rāmeṇa pādapāṁśca tadunmukhān || 2-37-33*

Perhaps Vasishtha, a wise man who seldom got involved, spoke up in a way that I would never expect him to. “Whaa,” he said, “Kaikeyi, you have crossed your bounds. You have gone too far. Your thinking is all evil. You have deceived the king, and you demean one who has brought fame to the family. Insisting Sita wear this bark is too much. Sita should not go to the forest. She should

occupy the throne that was to be filled by Rama. A wife is one with her husband; this is true for all householders. As the other self of Rama, it is she who should rule this place. If you send Vaidehi to the forest, do you know what will happen? The forest will come to Ayodhya. The people of Ayodhya will all leave and the jungle will return to this place. You will see Bharata and Shatrughna banish themselves to the forest. They will take up this attire of the ascetics and live with Rama. Then, Kaikeyi, you alone will remain here, ruling an empty kingdom. I hope this will make you happy. There is no kingdom of which Rama would not be made king. Where Rama lives, that will be the kingdom. Bharata would never rule a kingdom which was not directly given to him by his father. As the son of Dasharatha, Bharata will never choose you as his ruler.” That is too much for Vasishtha to say. “You will destroy your son. There is no one in the world who does not love Rama, how can Bharata be an exception to that? Today, Kaikeyi, you will see that along with Rama and Sita all the beasts will walk, all the birds and snakes. Even the trees will try. No one will stay after your tricks.” But Kaikeyi did not care about Vasishtha’s words and did not change her mind.

सृष्टस्त्वं वनवासाय स्वनुरक्तः सुहृज्जने । रामे प्रमादं मा कार्षीः पुत्र भ्रातरि गच्छति ॥ २-४०-५  
व्यसनी वा समृद्धो वा गतिरेष तवानघ । एष लोके सतां धर्मो यज्ज्येष्ठवशगो भवेत् ॥ २-४०-६  
इदं हि वृत्तमुचितं कुलस्यास्य सनातनम् । दानं दीक्षा च यज्ञेषु तनुत्यागो मृधेषु हि ॥ २-४०-७  
लक्ष्मणं त्वेवमुक्तवासौ संसिद्धं प्रियराघवम् । सुमित्रा गच्छ गच्छेति पुनः पुनरुवाच तम् ॥ २-४०-८  
रामं दशरथं विद्धि माम् विद्धि जनकात्मजाम् । अयोध्यामटवीं विद्धि गच्च तात यथासुखम् ॥ २-४०-९

*sṛṣṭastvaṁ vanavāsāya svanuraktaḥ suhṛjjane |*  
*rāme pramādaṁ mā kārṣīḥ putra bhrātari gacchati || 2-40-5*  
*vyasanī vā samṛddho vā gatireṣa tavānagha |*  
*eṣa loke satāṁ dharmo yajjyēṣṭhavaśago bhavet || 2-40-6*  
*idaṁ hi vṛttamucitaṁ kulasyāsya sanātanam |*  
*dānaṁ dīkṣā ca yajñeṣu tanutyāgo mṛdheṣu hi || 2-40-7*  
*lakṣmaṇaṁ tvevamuktoāsau saṁsiddhaṁ priyarāghavam |*  
*sumitrā gaccha gaccheti punaḥ punaruvāca tam || 2-40-8*  
*rāmaṁ daśarathaṁ viddhi mām viddhi janakātmaṁ |*  
*ayodhyāmaṭavīm viddhi gacca tāta yathāsukham || 2-40-9*



Lakshmana's mother offered advice to her son. Sumitra said, "I know well your attachment to Rama. Never be indifferent to your brother at any time. In comfort or discomfort Rama is your one refuge. The *dharma*, the *sanātanadharmā*, is that of the wise. Serve your elder brother as you would your father. This is the tradition of our family. Be diligent in the performance of the sacred rituals and ever ready to assist when there is an occasion to serve and protect the people. Look upon your brother Rama as your father, and look upon Sita as me, your mother. Look upon your home in the forest as Ayodhya, there where your lord dwells. Go, and be happy."

Rama's chariot was readied, and the three boarded. According to the tradition, when one is banished his feet should not touch the ground of the city. This tradition was meant to prevent a revolution or coup. The banished are taken to the boundary and then left there. As Rama and Sita and Lakshmana went forth, many men of the city followed them on horseback or on foot or were carried. Their plan was to stop Rama and to convince him to come back. At the border, Rama stopped the chariot and looking back at Ayodhya saluted the city. At the river that bounded the city, it being late, they all stopped to rest and sleep. In the morning, rising early and rousing Lakshmana and Sita, Rama had the chariot brought around before any of the others woke. The three rode off quietly.

When the others woke they searched for the trio, but it was too late, and everyone returned to the city to tell what had happened. The men who had followed Rama went back to their wives and said they had not been able to retrieve their hero. Their wives all said, "Then why did you come back?" The people of the city were dejected. As a result they talked of leaving the city and Kaikeyi *en masse* and going somewhere where they would not be reminded of their loss.

*To be continued...*

**Mahābhārata**  
**As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

*This is the seventeenth part of the serial article, continuation from Dec 2024 edition.*

Bhima reached in and grabbed the demon, lifted him off the ground and got a good grip on him with his hands. With a flex of his muscles and a twist of wrists he crushed Hidimba to death. No *rākṣasa* ever thought that a human could do such a thing. Hidimbi was all admiration for her potential husband, “This guy is not only so beautiful, he is very powerful.” Hidimbi was an intelligent beast, and she knew just what she needed to do. She gave up Bhima; she did not talk to him at all. She talked to his mother, “You are a woman. You know very well what I am feeling. I want to marry your Bhima.” Then Hidimbi turned to Yudhisthira and asked him not to destroy her chance for life. Hidimbi had heard Bhima say that Yudhisthira was like a god to him, and she thought it was a good idea to appeal to Bhima’s older brother. Like an arranged marriage, you know. The family members were amused, but Kunti was also moved by the lovely girl.

Kunti asked Bhima, “This girl seems very sincere, very genuine. Why should you not marry her?” Bhima did not answer anything – that meant Bhima wanted to marry her. But Yudhisthira, the elder son, was still a bachelor; Bhima should not marry before his older brother. Kunti said, “Bhima does not seem to be averse to this marriage. Let him marry.”

Yudhisthira looked at the other brothers and asked them what they thought. “Yes, why not,” they chimed. Arjuna and Nakula and Sahadeva said why not. Then they looked at Bhima. Bhima looked elsewhere. He kicked the stones at his feet.

“I think our brother wants to get married, “ said Arjuna. Everybody was for it. It was settled, and Bhima and Hidimbi married. Hidimbi knew well the whole forest, and she set up a lovely cottage where they all lived for some time. Vyasa, the guiding force, would show up occasionally, and he came to the forest and

talked to Yudhisthira.

“Good days are ahead for you, Yudhisthira,” said Vyasa, “You will perform *rājasūya* and *Ashvamedha yāga*, and you will rule this kingdom. In-between there will be some problems, but the end will work out well for you. Stay here for the time being, for Bhima will bear a son here. After that it will be time for you all to leave this place and go to Ekachakra.”

In time the boy Ghatotkaca was born to Bhima and Hidimbi. Even as a baby, as a child, Ghatotkaca had great strength. He was destined to be a force and very useful. He could and would appear whenever Bhima thought of him. He had all the powers of a *rākṣasa*; we will see him in the war to come. He was a major force to reckon with. We also get to see how Hidimbi took and showed Bhima all the wonders of the forest she lived in. She made Bhima’s life very happy, but the day came when the Pandavas had to leave. Vyasa had said that they would have to go on. Accounts had to be settled, and the Kaurava cousins had to be punished. Bhima broke the news to Hidimbi that he was going to leave her and the boy behind. He consoled her and assured her that he would ask for them to come and join him in good time.

The news had traveled to Hastinapura that the Pandavas were all dead. It was also said that Purocana had died in the wax-house fire. This was not bad news for Duryodhana because now there was no way Purocana could reveal their secret. The remains of what looked like seven burnt bodies had been found in the ashes. Dhrtarashtra escalated his grief, crying and moaning about the cruel fate of his beloved brother’s sons and their mother. He wondered out loud why Lord Shiva, whom the Pandavas prayed to, had not protected the Pandavas. Didn’t Shiva have enough *vibhūti*? Dhrtarashtra’s lamenting went on and on. Dhrtarashtra carefully had the rites performed at Ganga, and he distributed alms and made sure that the rituals were followed. Krpa was sincerely unhappy, and Bhishma was beside himself. It was very difficult to console Bhishma, and Vidura took him aside at the Ganges and told him there was no need to ritually offer anything to



his grandsons.

“Why not,” asked Bhishma.

“Because the Pandavas are not dead. They are alive,” said Vidura. Vidura shared the whole plan hatched by Dhrtarashtra and Duryodhana and Shakuni. “I have done what had to be done to make the family safe,” assured Vidura. Bhishma was very happy, and he praised Vidura’s foresight - having the Pandava survival remain undisclosed. The false knowledge that they were dead was a good idea. Not knowing any better, Duryodhana and his one hundred brothers were all very happy that the Pandavas had been taken care of. Now nothing seemed to stand in their way.

The five Pandava brothers and their mother made their way to the village Ekachakra and were taken in by a Brahmana. The Brahmana mother of two children was very kind to the Pandavas, but she was also very unhappy. The woman was preparing an massive quantity of food when Kunti asked, “Are you preparing food for a feast? Why is there so much?”

“No, no, no,” said the Brahmana lady, “this food is to be sent away. There is one *rākṣasa*, a demon named Bakasura, who lives on the outskirts, in the forest near the village. He eats human flesh; he insists on eating human flesh. He used to come and attack and kill recklessly. Everyone in town agreed that we would cook a cartful of food and send it to the demon every month. We would offer the *rākṣasa* the food along with the fellow who drove the cart. The families in town select the cart driver in turn. The turn has come to our house, and one of us has to be sent as an offering with the prepared food. My husband said he would go. I said I would go. Our children said they should be sent, but there is no way a child would satisfy this demon. The childrens’ father decided he had to go so that the village would again be spared.”

Kunti, seeing the distressed family, in her compassion said to the Brahmana woman, “I have five sons. I will send one of them. You don’t worry. In fact, I have

a son who is enormously strong; you might have seen him. This boy, my son, may just do something to that *rākṣasa*. He may get rid of the problem for good. Therefore I will send him. Even if he gets killed, I don't mind because I cannot bear to see you so sad. I have five children, and I will do this for you." Of course Kunti knew that Bhima could very well take care of any *rākṣasa*, even this Bakasura.

When Bhima heard about his assignment, all he could think of was the cart-load of fresh food. "When, when, when?" asked Bhima. Tomorrow, he was told. "Why not today?" he wanted to know. Bhima had to wait all night; he could not sleep. In the meantime Yudhisthira came to know what Kunti had asked Bhima to do. Yudhisthira was afraid that Bhima could get killed - there are *rākṣasas* and there are *rākṣasas*. For the first time Yudhisthira was angry with his mother.

"How can you promise this?" demanded Yudhisthira, "Do you think I can live without Bhima? Bhima and Arjuna are our hope. Without them how can we get back at Duryodhana? Bhima is the most affectionate person; you cannot afford to sacrifice him. How can you send Bhima?"

Kunti said, "There is no other way. We have been given shelter here. We should free this village from its problem. These people need to be saved from this horror. You must know what Bhima can do. I know what he can do. You need not be worried. He will take care of the whole thing."

Bhima was confident, "So what about one *rākṣasa*. This is a good chance for me. Let me go after him." The next day the cart was ready, and Bhima was ready. He had been up since early morning, and he took off with the cart toward the pond where he was supposed to meet the demon. Above, on a hill, the *rākṣasa* would be watching to see that the cart had come. Bhima released the bullocks from the cart, and they began grazing nearby. Bhima eyed the cart and, of course, decided he was hungry and began eating the whole thing.

*To be continued...*

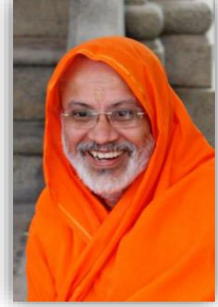


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*from*

**25<sup>th</sup> Feb – 26<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025**

*(Including MahaShivaratri Puja celebrations on 26<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025)*

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## Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti - New Year 2025 Puja

New year at the Gurukulam is a great way to start the year! Many sadhakas who have discovered this, come regularly every year to the Gurukulam to celebrate the New Year. This year about 400 people participated in the program, starting 2025 in a very auspicious manner. Those who could not come for some reason, watched it live on the AVG, Anaikatti YouTube channel.

Like every New Year, Jan 1st, 2025, started with a short meditation by Acharyaji on the time principle and on resolving the old year and welcoming the New Year with prayerfulness. This was followed by a class on Upanishad, marking an auspicious beginning with the study of scripture.

After this uplifting start and a festive sponsored breakfast, everyone went to the main temple of Lord Dakshinamurti at 10 am, where there was a special kala-abhisekha with 11 dravyas to the chanting of Rudram and other suktas. The tirtham from the abhisekham was sprinkled by Acharyaji blessing each and everyone one present. It gave the feeling of being blessed by Lord Dakshinamurti on this day. This was followed by a talk by Acharyaji, Sw Sadatmanandaji.

New Year Talk by Sw Sadatmanandaji -

At the outset I wish you a very happy, healthy, prosperous, peaceful New Year 2025. Every year when this New Year day is going to come near, in the WhatsApp groups this discussion starts whether we should celebrate this New Year day or not. Somebody sent a poem in Hindi – “This New Year is not accepted by us. This is not our celebrations”.

But I had heard a beautiful sloka in this context which I share with you -

न भारतीयो नववत्सरोऽयम्. तथापि सर्वस्य शिवप्रदः स्यात्।

यतो धरित्री निखिलैव माता ततः कुटुम्बायितमेव विश्वम्।

*“Even though it is not an Indian New Year day, let it be a source of blessings for everybody. Since the entire earth is our mother, therefore the entire world is our family.”*

Therefore, if we have one more day to celebrate New Year day by worshipping the Lord, then it is one more day for us to express our gratitude to Bhagavan. For us every activity is supposed to be centered on Isvara because the vision of Vedanta is - All that is here is Isvara - which is the idea conveyed by - ईशावास्यम् इदम् सर्वम् let everything be pervaded by ishvara . But that awareness does not happen right away. We start relating to Isvara in a gradual manner. If we see a typical association with the Lord of a young person born in

this culture who starts praying to Bhagavan to help in his difficult exams. Or if we start something new and we want to be successful in that particular endeavor, then we pray to Bhagavan. So we start our relation to Bhagavan as Arta bhakta and arthArti bhakta – bhakta in distress and bhakta who wants some material gain. So I look upon Bhagavan as Arthihara- remover of my afflictions and arthapradAtha- giver of my desired end. That is how we start our association with the Lord.

Later on we come to know that Isvara is creator of this world and I am creature. This is accepted in most of the religions that God has created this world. Pujya Swamiji prefers to use the word Isvara because the word God has certain connotations which doesn't match with what we mean by the word Ishvara. Isvara is creator and I am a part of the creation. Then Isvara continues to be the alter of my prayer, surrender. This type of relationship of seeing Isvara as creator and myself as created, is very useful . But at this juncture, we may be thinking that Isvara is a person who has created this world. In the beginning sastra does not interfere with this idea. It lets us accept Isvara as Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva who created this world. Later on, sastra gives us the understanding that for any creation not only nimitta Karanam is required, but upadana karanam is also required. So if Isvara is nimitta karanam, then who is the upadana karanam? Sastra itself gives the answer that Isvara is not only nimitta Karanam (intelligent cause), but also upadana Karanam (material cause). Like for pot, clay is the material cause and pot maker is nimitta karanam. Generally, the maker and the material are different. But sometimes we see like in the case of spider, the maker and material cause are one and the same. Better example is : for my dream, I alone am the intelligent cause since my knowledge alone is used and I alone am the material cause for the dream. Based on that, sastra derives the corollary that since Isvara is the material cause, Isvara pervades the entire creation like clay being material cause pervades all pots. That is why it is said that - All that is here is Isvara - because Isvara is the material cause. This is how Isvara is revealed by sastra as the material cause. As Pujya Swamiji says, for us Isvara is not a matter of belief, but a matter of understanding. Sastra reveals the vision of Isvara being material cause pervades everything.

Now the question is - how do we appreciate Isvara being everywhere?

I see wall, mike, pillar, etc - the world of objects and people. I don't see Isvara, that can be a doubt..

One beautiful way of appreciating Isvara is - as the order. You appreciate Isvara In the form of various types of order - physical, biological, physiological order. Order is that which makes things the way they are. The way things happen is because of order. Like if

this watch is released, then it will fall down. That is physical order. If I eat very spicy thing, there will be acidity. That is order. Thus, there are various orders. This order is manifestation of Isvara's knowledge ie, All knowledge which is Isvara. Now I can appreciate Isvara everywhere because nothing is bereft of order. Anything which happens is pervaded by order.

One more important order is psychological order. If a person has a certain background, he will behave in a certain manner, this is because of psychological order. If a person has a lot of pain, he will have tendency to get angry. So this anger is because of unprocessed pain. This is psychological order. When I appreciate this psychological order, then I can have a healthy response to different situations.

Pujya Swamiji talks about 2 step response. This is a very beautiful idea which we can see and implement in our life. What is that?

Generally, when somebody gets angry, we have a one step response. He got angry and shouted, so I got angry and shouted more loudly. That is one step response coming from this ego jiva who feels hurt, persecuted. But when we bring Isvara in our life, we don't stop with one step. Somebody shouted at me, then I got angry. Before I respond, I take one more step. I try to understand that person is angry because of his pain. There is helplessness. There is order behind the angry behavior of this person. Therefore, that person's behavior is in order. That order is Isvara. When I appreciate Isvara behind the behavior of that person, then I will be responding to that situation objectively. It will be an action and not a reaction. Thus, everytime there is a 2 step response - First step is the natural reaction of the jiva in the form of anger at mental level and the second step is I appreciate the order and then respond to the situation. Thus, by appreciating the psychological order, I can reduce my reactions. This is how we appreciate Isvara everywhere in all situations.

Later on, sastra goes one step further to reveal that Isvara is nothing but Satyam-Jnanam-Anantam Brahma- Existence, Conciousness which is limitless. Finally I appreciate that Satcit Brahman alone is my true nature – आत्मरूपः ईशवरः

So the steps to appreciate Isvara -

- First, we talk about Isvara as the altar of prayer in the form of remover of pain and giver of desired ends
- Then, we talk about Isvara as creator .



- After that, we talk about Isvara as the all-pervasive order.
- Finally, I appreciate Isvara as myself. I and Isvara are one and the same consciousness. Thus, finally I appreciate my oneness with Isvara.

With that appreciation, my cognitive spiritual journey is completed and there is a sense of fulfilment. That is the purpose of life. That particular discovery of oneness happens when I have already brought Isvara in my life by seeing Isvara in the form of order.

So we pray to Bhagavan that may we have awareness of Isvara in the form of order and finally we discover our oneness with Isvara and fulfill the purpose of life. Om Tat Sat.

Swamiji's talk was enlivening food for the mind. Now it was time for some food for the hungry body. A sumptuous New Year day mahaprasadam lunch sponsored by several devotees was served to everyone present. All left satisfied and feeling blessed with a confidence and strength to face the New Year.



Continuation from Dec 2024 edition of AV Monthly Journal...

The 2024 Fall *Vedānta* retreats, guided by Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswatiji, began with a two-week course (<https://courses.avgbooks.org/product/aparokshanubhuti-audio/>) primarily on *Aparokṣānubhūti*, a *prakaraṇa grantha*. Following this course, there was a five-week (<https://courses.avgbooks.org/product/aitareya-upanishad-2/>) program covering the much-anticipated *Aitareya-Upaniṣad* with *Śāṅkara-bhāṣya*. The introduction to the retreat was described in earlier articles; this continuation focuses on the summary of selected highlights covering the *Aitareya-Upaniṣad* that spanned the last five weeks of the seven-week program.

### Highlights

#### *Śānti-Mantra*

Om, the sacred sound and symbol of nature discovered by the *ṛṣis*, initiates the *Śānti-mantra* associated with *Aitareya-Upaniṣad*. The mind depends on speech while listening, and speech depends on the mind while speaking. Let there be resonance and integrity between what I say and think, and vice versa. *Nāma* and *Rūpa* cannot be separated. Let *vāk* and *manas* be mutually established in each other.

*Īśvara* is *Tejomaya*. *Īśvara* is composed of *tejas* or effulgence. The *Gāyatrī-mantra* likens the Sun's 'outside effulgence' to the real effulgence 'inside' the heart, revealing the world. *Īśvara* is addressed as effulgence, recognizing that physicality is only a symbol. *O Īśvara*, may you reveal the wisdom of effulgence in the heart. May speech and mind function to reveal that effulgence as *Veda*, representing wisdom. Here, learning is not about cognition in brain cells, like say, grammar, which is subject to accumulation and subsequent loss over time but learning to connect to the infinitude of truth in the heart.

With this learning of timeless truth, which is not subject to loss, may I abide in that wisdom day and night. May I never think, say, or act in *adharma* (*anṛtam*), and may I never say untruth (*asatyam*). This is based on *Sāyaṇācārya*'s commentary. In the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad*, *ṛtam* is described by *Śrī Śāṅkara* as wisdom communicated by *śāstra*, while *satyam* is described as experiencing wisdom as truth. It is also possible to understand *ṛtam* as speaking the truth in the mind and *satyam* as the truth reflected in my speech. The prayer is truly about living a life of integrity where thoughts, speech, and actions are consistent.

May this effulgent *Īśvara* bless and protect me and the speaker so that this *śravaṇam* to learn the wisdom and secret of life is effective. The intent emphasizes studying together without superimposed roles of student and teacher during the *śravaṇam* period.

May there be peace at the *adhi-daiva* level without conflicts arising from the unknown, peace at the *adhi-bhūta* level with no conflicts among people around me, and peace at the *adhyātma* level from problems of body and mind.

The starting proclamation of this *Upaniṣad* “*ātmā vā idameka evāgra āsīt, nānyat kiñcana miṣat*” translates to “In the beginning, verily there was only the Self, nothing else whatsoever moved.” This profound statement emphasizes that before the universe appeared, only *Ātmā*, the Self, existed. It highlights the non-dual nature of reality, suggesting that the *Ātmā* is the fundamental essence in whose presence everything emanates. The entire universe and all beings are merely apparitional manifestations of this One, undivided Self, which is my very essence.

This understanding cannot be grasped by the mind engaged only in a life of *karma*, or *upāsanā* and stands in contrast to the *Pūrva-mīmāṃsakas* who believe the *Veda* is solely about *karma* and *upāsanā*. They cannot accept that the *Upaniṣad* departs from *karma* and *upāsanā* and requires non-accumulative understanding beyond brain knowledge.

This perspective is not just ancient; it persists today, promoting the belief that effort is essential for achieving lasting happiness. This mindset enslaves one to a life of constant struggling. Even *sannyāsīs* often aren't exempt from this cycle. Many religions and *Vedānta* teachers suggest that realization of timelessness as one's true nature can be achieved through time-bound actions. Consequently, studying *Vedānta* often becomes mastering vocabulary that only leads to conceptual ideas within the mind, itself a product of ignorance.

The mind is trapped by space, time, and causality, leading one to a life of becoming. The study of cosmology, with the creation of the universe from a singularity (Big Bang), continues to seek a unified theory guided by the cause-effect paradigm. Similarly, *Vedānta* includes *Upaniṣadic* models describing *Brahman* as the material and efficient cause of the universe. These models, though appealing to the mind, are preliminary and not meant to establish cause-effect as ultimate reality, since *Brahman* or *Ātmā* remains unattached to the unreal universe.

*Upaniṣad s* include *vedantic-upāsanā* sections that admit provisional duality, in order to prepare the mind for creative insights. Vision in a *vedantic-upāsanā* is not to establish the reality of that vision.

The *Sambandha-bhāṣya* by *Śrī Śaṅkara* introduces the *Upaniṣad* section through an imagined conversation between *Pūrvapakṣi* (here *Mīmāṃsakas* who are ritualists) and *Siddhānti*, who asserts the truth. These points are relevant even today, putting self-knowledge in the context of a life of action.

The *Aitareya-Upaniṣad* is positioned at the conclusion of the *karma* and *upāsanā* section titled *Bṛhatī-sahasra* and is followed by the *Samhitopaniṣad* section, which also deals with *upāsanā*. The preceding *upāsanā* sections direct one to contemplate *apara-brahman*, the universal *prāṇa* from which the universe appeared and into which it will resolve. Various *devatās* such as *Varuṇa* and *Agni* are considered limbs or *vibhūti* of this *apara-brahman*, understood as an effulgent power. Contemplation on this higher power, through various means of *upāsanā* on *devatās*, is mandated in these sections.



The *Pūrvapakṣi* asserts that the *Upaniṣad* section continues the mandates from the *uktavākya*, or *upāsanā*-prose, of prior sections. According to *Pūrvapakṣi*, the *upāsanā* section continues in the *Samhitopaniṣad*, making the *karmī* eligible for it. Therefore, *Pūrvapakṣi* argues that *karmī* is eligible for the *Upaniṣad* section also as it falls between these two sections. The *upasarṁhāra* or conclusions of these sections appear consistent across all three sections. These objections are fully refuted by *Siddhānta* which is illustrated in detailed discussions by students in a [play](#) based on the class noted in previously published sections of this article.

A *karmī*, with a sense of doership, tends to have the syndrome of ‘me-and-mine’, which is contrary to *mokṣa*, the state of being free from such a syndrome. Only a *sannyāsī* who has relinquished doership and enjoyership can be *akarmī* and eligible for the study of *Upaniṣad*.

### Importance of *Sannyāsa* as a Lifestyle

In the *Sambandha-bhāṣya*, *Śrī Śaṅkara* emphasizes not only the correct understanding of what *sannyāsa* means but also advocates strongly a lifestyle conducive to this understanding. This contrasts with *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*’s teachings, that emphasizes correct understanding only and the traditional lifestyle part is not described as mandatory for *mokṣa*.

The ritualists believe that the *Veda* mandates a life of doership for all until death. The *Veda* originated from *jñānī*; therefore, it cannot issue a mandate to a *jñānī*. Besides, not all mandates of the *Veda* apply universally to everyone. *Śruti* never states that you are the *kartā*. The *Mīmāṃsā* asserts that, while there may be no mention of doer or *kartā*, it is determined by *ākṣepa*, which is *anyathā anupapatti (arthāpatti)*, otherwise untenable. If detailed rituals are described for a given goal, there must be a doer of such rituals, to whom the details are stated.

The response is as follows. My nature is determined by what I am, not what I do. I am timeless awareness, not a time-based doer. The various stipulations of debt for a human being, such as those to *ṛṣis* and *pitṛs*, raised as objections, are not the reason to be in a life of *karma* because these *Veda*-enjoined *karman*s mandated only for one who is eligible and married. This does not apply to a *jñānī*. The *Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad*, quoted by *Śrī Śaṅkara*, asserts what is *yajña* for a *jñānī*. For example, a *jñānī* offers the organ of speech as an oblation to *Prāṇa*, which means becoming silent.

The highest possible results in *upasarṁhāra*—the conclusion reached in *Bṛhatī-sahasra*—is that time-limited *upāsanā* of *devatās* leads one to merge with that *devatā*. But all *devatās* are themselves subject to hunger and thirst, as evidenced by the *Upaniṣad* model. Hence, desirelessness and fearlessness are not realizable, since the *devatās* themselves are bound.

The *Upaniṣad* conveys that there is *prajñānam*—the knowingness which is "I"—that shines where there is no doing. This is the origin of the universe; hence, *prajñānam* is *Brahma*. This insight alone is the conclusion or *upasarṁhāra* of the *Upaniṣad*, in contrast

to the assertions of the *Pūrvapakṣi*.

Stars burn and the universe moves, yet there is no doer. If I perceive myself as a doer and remain in that illusion, the mind can never be quiet. There is the power of action (*kriyā-śakti*) and the power of intellection (*viññāna-śakti*) in all living beings; I am beyond the origin of both. I am the only reality; all else is a shadow, with the whole world and persona casting a shadow on the canvas of space-time. This understanding is not intellectual; otherwise, it is lost. I am what I am, with no need for further definition. "I am that I am" is the only truth that can never be negated. "I am that I am" refers to Yahweh in the Bible essentially meaning "I am who I am" and representing the self-existent nature of God.

Time defines a persona—a product of memory, which is itself in time as information stored from the past. I exist in timelessness and spacelessness; this understanding is not cerebral. The *Upaniṣad* should not be studied by the body/mind, which can only produce conceptual knowledge. Look closely; I am unattached (*asaṅgo'ham*). This is the *siddhānta*. A *jñānī* has nothing to do since he has no desires or fears.

The *Pūrvapakṣi* says desirelessness lacks purpose; And for a *jñānī*, there is no *prayojana* in *karma*, so why not do *karma* anyway he asks. *Siddhānti* responds that desire creates a world for its fulfillment. *Kriyā-abhāva* does not imply the absence of actions, only the absence of motivated actions due to desire (or fear). This is called *vyutthāna*. A *jñānī* has no motive or desire. *Vyutthāna* is his nature or *svarūpa*. The *Veda* cannot mandate *vyutthāna* since it is not *karma* but the natural *svarūpa* of a *jñānī*. *Vyutthāna* is not an action but an understanding. It signifies lack of attachment to anything specific, leading to unconditional love for all while working ceaselessly without selfish motives, allowing one to remain wherever they are.

Living in a family environment is not conducive to realizing *vyutthāna*. Hence, *Śrī Śaṅkara* says it is proper to wander away from the world of our conception to realize the nature of oneself. *Bhāṣya* highlights the *svarūpa* of *Ātmā* in a detailed manner. In that understanding, the universe is seen merely as linguistic and observational and not existential. All that is cognized is *mithyā* and arises due to *nāma-rūpa-vyākaraṇam* alone. Space-time is not in the *vastu* which alone is existential. Such creative insights are improbable when the lifestyle of *sannyāsa* is not followed.

The glory of *sannyāsa* is highlighted in the *bhāṣya* of this *Upaniṣad*. The Song of the *Sannyāsin* by Swami Vivekananda captures the spirit conveyed. This is a strong message for listeners aspiring to escape the bondage of *saṁsāra*.

### Select Topics

In this summary, the intent is to provide select highlights that can give an idea of what is unique about these teachings, with the following background comments.

*Brahman* is considered both the material and efficient cause of the universe by all schools of thought, including teachers of *Advaita-Vedānta* and teachers of dualism. This means

that *Brahman* is the substance from which the universe is made (*upādāna-kāraṇam*) and the intelligence that orchestrates the creation (*nimitta-kāraṇam*). The statement underscores the non-dual nature of *Brahman*, indicating that there is no separation between the creator and the creation. However, **no** statements in the major *Upaniṣads* or Śrī Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* explicitly assert that *Brahman* is a *nimitta-kāraṇa*, though it is considered implied in preliminary studies. *Nimitta-kāraṇa* is stressed mainly in dualist schools of thought wherein matter and mind are seen as separate realities.

This *Upaniṣad* starts by asserting that in the beginning, before the appearance of this universe, there was *Ātmā* alone. *Ātmā* is the essence of who I am here and now. It can be referred to as *Īśvara*, provided the word *Īśvara* does not automatically conjure up a vision of something remote from I, which is often the case due to social and religious conditioning of the mind. The assertion of the *Upaniṣad* is that I am the center of the cosmos. How to understand this assertion without bringing in a remote *Īśvara* for creation or bringing in an intelligent cause to satisfy the mind's urge to have a cause-effect paradigm? The universe is *tuccham* as asserted in *Daśaślokī* and in its lack of existence, it is no different from the serpent seen on a rope by mistake, which also lacks an intelligent cause. The universe is *mithyā* to the extent that it appears and disappears, but its nature of existence is that it is *tuccham*.

The teachings in the class clearly communicated the vision of the *Upaniṣad*, which can be validated by our own direct experience. For example, we create our own world every day and this world resolves in deep sleep. More importantly, the objective was not to unfold a concept of a vision but to communicate a vision of reality that can bring about a radical inner transformation in the listener. The teaching was supported by rich examples from life to 'see' the falsity of deluded thinking.

The *tattva* or the absolute truth is presented in this *Upaniṣad* as a delightful story in a poetic fashion. The vision enunciated through the story is the main focus, for it has the transformative power. The story itself should not be analyzed for its superficial logic. In this summary, the focus here is to highlight a few aspects of the vision, and the reader is welcome to procure an audio or video recording to get the complete vision.

#### What is creation in this vision?

Upon waking up, like a gossamer spider, 'I am' projects the countless *nāma-rūpas* that constitute my world (for the world is nothing but my conception shaped by sensations in the sense organs). It is "my world" and not "the world", for no two worlds are alike. In the beginning, before the appearance of the world, I alone am there, for 'I am' is the essence of all the unmanifest. The *nāma-rūpa* shines in the underlying light of knowingness that arises from *Ātmā* shining in the mind. Hence, 'I am' is *Ātmā*, the essential truth by which *nāma-rūpas* appear to be spun out. This is indeed our everyday experience upon waking. As awareness absolute shines through the shutters of the mind, there is initially a sense of 'I am', which immediately appears as 'I am here and now', reflecting the space-time aspect of the mind in terms of here and now. The body appears aided by memory,

and there is instant identification. *Nāma-rūpa-vyākaraṇa* is in full force, and a world is spun out, shining in the waking consciousness. This is just like a world of movies created from a large number of still frames that are supported by the faculty of memory embedded in the film. The *samsāric* world which is our world experience is similarly created from moment to moment using the faculty of memory.

Bubbles, wavelets, breadth, variety, size—all these are words used to describe foam, which is nothing but water. It is entirely *nāma-rūpa-vyākaraṇam*. All appearances in the universe are known by a name referring to a form, and the name itself is produced by grammar. It is a verbal world, after all. A variety of names point to the same *vastu*—water in this example. This arises because *rūpa*, which is about shape in space for a period of finite time, arises from the mind, since space and time are mental categories.

The question then is, what is the *upādāna* or the material cause of this universe, which is nothing but *nāma-rūpa-vyākaraṇam* (the grammatical explosion of names and forms)? For something to be, it has to be cognized as known or unknown, which is possible only in an underlying light of knowingness, which is my essence—namely *Ātmā*. It is incorrect to think that the *upādāna* or material cause is one real thing and the universe is another and that there is a process by which the universe is created. Rather, the universe is but an appearance, much like a mistaken snake on a rope, in the background light of knowingness.

The story itself has a parallel to the daily experience of waking up and going to sleep. Upon waking, a *loka* or world appears. *Lokyate bhujyate iti lokaḥ*—it is not created and not existential but is instead only seen and experienced. Whatever appears must necessarily end, like the world disappears when we are in deep sleep. This makes the universe momentary in time, no different than the world of a movie in its own space-time or a dream world in its own space-time. All that is momentary is indeed transient, and transience is a pointer to its unreality.

*Ātmā* is *sarvajña*, all-knowing. I know as witnessing awareness, all that I know and all that I do not know. And I witness the knower, means of knowing and the known, all arising in the mind. In that sense, I am *sarvajña*. I wake up and decide to make a cup of coffee, for example, which is a *saṅkalpa*. Similarly, the story relates that *Ātmā* began with a *saṅkalpa* to create the universe.

An objection can be raised here, that since *Ātmā* has no body, how can it have *saṅkalpa*? *Ātmā* is the very knowingness and all-knowing. The assumption in the question is that to create anything a sense of ‘doership’ is needed which in turn needs a body. *Ātma* is the very knowingness, all-knowing and light of awareness which makes all appearance and disappearance possible. The universe is nothing but observational only, not existential. As an example, consider this. A movie projector can project unlimited movies, and the appearance of movie characters is due to light alone. All characters appearing on the movie screen is only light and yet light, that has ‘as though’ created characters in the movie screen has no doership.



In the story, *Ātmā* thought, "Let there be these *lokas* where living beings can enjoy the fruits of *karma*." This is no different than the loka we create every morning upon waking, and we experience pleasure and sorrow in the loka or world of our creation. There is a question as to what is the *upādāna* or material cause for this world that I create every morning, and the answer is that it is an unlimited collection of names and forms all arising from ignorance. To understand this, let us take an example: How is a husband created? Not by taking a man and making him a husband. He is not the material cause of a husband. Rather, the word husband with a given meaning is assigned to him, making him a husband, and that is the *upādāna* or material for making a husband.

In the beginning, the *nāma-rūpas* were in unmanifest form, just like our unique world is in unmanifest form when we are in deep sleep. Upon waking, the names and forms manifest, and become the *upādāna* for the universe. *Ātmā* (I am) can be said to be the substratum of unmanifest names and forms or *avyākṛta nāma-rūpa*. *Nāma-rūpa* does not create duality, for it is only observational and unreal.

Another way to state this is to say that, as in a rope magic trick, the magician or *māyāvi* creates the illusion; jagat can be taken as an illusion. It is there so long as I take it as real. When I want to see the truth, it dissolves and is not there. For one invested in cryptocurrencies, bitcoins are very real. For one who is desireless and has no interest in the glitter of the world, a world of cryptocurrency is unreal. Something transient, due to addiction to *nāma-rūpa*, can appear real. The world appears real because of my belief and false ideas. The suffering that follows as a result is entirely optional, for seeing the false as false is all that is needed. The focus is on seeing the false, not knowing the false by the mind.

Every aspect of the story in this *Upaniṣad* has tremendous significance. As an example, it is said that *Ātmā* first created an expanding egg—*Brahmāṇḍa*. In fact, modern cosmology is in alignment with this vision, for the universe is ever-expanding and its shape is an ellipsoid, which resembles an egg. *Ātmā*, which can be taken as *Īśvara* in this understanding, is said to create a cosmic person from the waters. A person here at any level should be considered as one with structure due to negative entropy and able to sustain an orderly form over time. Evolutionary biology is consistent with the vision that primordial single-cellular life forms appeared in water, and hence scientists who search for extra-terrestrial life in the cosmos first look for evidence of water on exoplanets.

*Ātmā*, that is *Īśvara*, is considered omnipotent and all-powerful. If we look at the life that we have created upon waking, we realize we have the power to identify with sorrow or pleasure or be out of this dream altogether. In that sense, we are 'all-powerful'. So, every facet of the story not only has significance in many dimensions, such as consistency with science, but is also directly relevant to this life and points to how to wake up from this dream we call life.

*Ātmā* is said to have created not only this world, the atmospheric world, and the celestial world, but also protectors and various devatās or demi-gods. All these seeming creations

are affected by hunger and thirst, signifying every life-form, be it exalted or otherwise. These exalted demigods mentioned in the story can be seen as facets of this life here and now in terms of the power of sense organs, the power of organs of actions and speech, and the power of intellection and emotion.

The story continues that these demigods demanded life forms to be created for their expression in various organs, and until a human endowed with wisdom was created, they were not satisfied. In a human being, the sense organs and mind are most refined and powerful. Life forms then needed food that can help sustain an orderly form by throwing negative entropy on themselves as food. These were then provided. As an aside, the original cooks are the plants that take the negative entropy from the sunlight and convert carbon dioxide and water to form glucose, a marvel of quantum computing at room temperature, to produce food consumed by some living organism to form a sustainable food body to be consumed by other living beings endowed with food bodies.

Food-bodies consuming food-bodies arising in nature can be understood from the second law of thermodynamics and the law of entropy described in the previous parts of this article, published earlier. An important corollary that follows is the understanding that food comes to any life form including humans. not because of a body-mind identified persona working hard to get food, but because of law of entropy that operates regardless of our imagination. Body and mind take care of each other, and 'I am' the uninvolved witnessing awareness.

### Praveśa-śruti

"Praveśa-śruti" refers to passages in the *Upaniṣads* that describes how *Ātmā* (the Self) enters into the created world of names and forms. This kind of description is found in many *Upaniṣads* to reinforce the understanding that anything which is cognized and referred to with a name and form is unreal and is not what it appears to be. Instead, the only reality that makes the names and forms shine is *Ātmā* alone. One way to understand this is with a metaphor. If one were to conceive of a fancy gold ornament to be worn on the head, the first step would be to create drawings using computer programs and then refer to it with a name. A mold is then made to create the ornament envisaged in the mind. Until molten gold is poured into the mold there can be no ornament. The pouring of the gold to make an ornament which is otherwise just a name and form is akin to *Ātmā* in the story entering the creation of the cosmic person thereby becoming a *jīva* experiencing 'as though' limitation. *Jīva* is not soul but is rather the power by which the five sense organs, five organs of action and mind are held together in the body. This upholds the expression of life force and is therefore described as 'jīva prāṇadhārane'. This entry of *Ātmā* into the cosmic person by *vyākaraṇam* means that *Ātmā* is reflected in all life forms. *Ātmā* functions as a *jīva* in these life forms while its *swarupa* is the apparitional cause of all, namely *Brahman*.

- Report by Sri. T.K. Srinivas, USA

To be continued...

## AVP Rishikesh — 6-Months Course completion

Completion of the Vedanta 6-Month Course, June-November 2024\*

The cultural program at the conclusion of the course was presented by the students on the final evening. It featured chants, songs, and entertaining skits inspired by key Vedantic teachings, including the choice made by Arjuna, who chose Krishna as his charioteer, to the relief of Duryodhana, who wanted Krishna's army for the Mahabharata war. The evening program also reflected teachings on the three Gunas, Pujya Swamiji's story "Comes Without Coming" about Atithya (guest hospitality), and how the transformative Vedantic knowledge empowers the student to return home changed, helping and uplifting their families, friends, and colleagues.

The Valedictory ceremony on the final day included Gurupaduka Puja, chanting, Guru Dakshina, heartfelt words of wisdom by the Swamis, Swaminis and other teachers, as well as the distribution of certificates. During this ceremony, Srimati Varsha Kajaria delivered a touching and inspiring speech, reminding us of the importance of the knowledge we've gained and encouraging us to continue our journey with steadfast dedication.

This six-month journey has been an incredibly transformative and life-changing opportunity. Words cannot fully convey the profound impact and deep gratitude we feel towards the most compassionate one, Pujya Swami Dayanandaji, his devoted students, and the entire Parampara (spiritual lineage) that has shaped this study. We are deeply grateful for the tireless and selfless dedication of all those who have passed on this timeless knowledge, ensuring its continued purity and relevance in our lives.

We were blessed to study the Taittiriya Upanishad with Sri Acharya Sakshatji, a teacher of profound wisdom, clarity, and depth, whose love for the teachings helped each of us understand and appreciate the beauty of Adi Shankaracharya's commentary.

Sri Swamini Svatmavidyanandaji guided us through the Tattva Bodha, a foundational text for all Vedanta students, in a way that has deeply touched our hearts, both inside and outside the classroom.

Sri Swami Shankaranandaji tirelessly shared his wisdom and love for Pujya Swamiji over the six months, teaching us through guided meditations, Bhagavad Gita, Kaivalya Upanishad, and Q&A sessions. His commitment and energy were an inspiration. Our heartfelt gratitude also extends to Sri Swami Parabrahmanandaji, and Muktiji, our dedicated Sanskrit teachers, for their patience and guidance. A special mention also goes to Gopalji, who has brought us closer to the sacred sounds of the tradition with wonderful Vedic

chanting classes.

We are profoundly grateful to everyone who has made this course possible. It is only through their efforts that we, as students, were able to partake in this invaluable journey. May we continue to abide in self-knowledge and carry its light wherever we go.

Om Tat Sat.

- Report by Ms. Shambavi

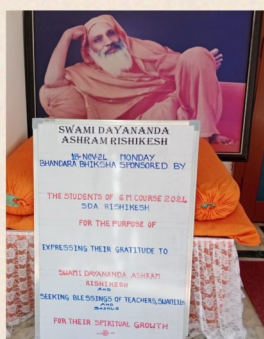


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## Book Release by Swami Shuddhabodhananda Saraswati

ATMANUBHAVA is a compendium containing the nature, role, relevance and indispensability of the state wherein one is directly aware of the ever self-experiencing (anubhava-swarupa) Atma, the 'I' in its real nirupadhika nature free from all the erroneously superimposed (adhyast) upadhis – the embodiment at different levels of our personality. Atmanubhava, the direct experience of self-experiencing 'I' atma free from triputi (free from pramata, prameya and Pramana-vritti) reveals itself in total contrast with our 24x7 sopadhika (with upadhis) experience from womb to the tomb called calamitous Samsara.

Though the same Veda is the Pramana for both jnana and karma, the mode of gaining knowledge and its nature differs very much in both. This text has discussed this topic at length. The different pramanas necessary to gain atmajnana (Brahmavidya) are analysed with their roles and stages totally based on Vedanta Sampradaya beginning from Adi Guru whether we call him Sadashiva or Narayana.

This book is published by Sri Visweswar Trust, Mumbai (India) on 25th of December, 2024. It was released by Smt. Bhanuben Kanakia (96), the eldest student of Sri Swamiji. Before that, Sri Swamiji released its e-book. It is available along with all other books by Sri Swamiji on the website [www.turiyabodha.com](http://www.turiyabodha.com) for free download in PDF format.

The printed copies are also available with Publishers Sri Visweswar Trust ( Contact : [info@turiyabodha.com](mailto:info@turiyabodha.com)), Pujya Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh and Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti, Coimbatore. - Report by Sudhakar Shanbhag



## Bhagavad Gita 15th Chapter Vedanta camp at AVG, Anaikatti

With the blessings of Pujya Swami Dayananda and Swami Sadatmananda, the Portuguese Vedanta Acarya Paulo Vieira held a Vedanta Camp, from the 9th to the 13th of November, where in he taught the 15th Chapter of the Bhagavadgita to the students, who were from Portugal and also Brasil. The camp began and ended with two satsangs with Swamiji Sadatmananda and all the students felt blessed. The students also had every day yoga classes with Sónia Vilela and chanting classes with Inês Ritto. During the camp the students also visited the Swami Dayananda Veda Patha Shala and the Ayurvedic hospital founded by Pujya Swamiji. It was a blessing for all the students who became very grateful and honored, both for the knowledge of Vedanta they received as well as for the memorable experience in AVG. At the end, the students chanted the 15th Chapter of the Gita to Swami Sadatmananda, who congratulated them with happiness and joy. - Report by Paulo Vieira



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New Year Puja at AVG Anaikatti





