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## Discovering the Meditator

By Swami Dayananda Saraswati

In preparation for meditation, I relax myself by being objective. If you followed closely what was said every day in meditation, you will see that it is in keeping with a certain reality. There is no imagination involved in this. When you are asked to meditate on *cakras*, centers, there are two things you imagine. One is the *cakra*. You do not know what a *cakra* is, but you visualize a *cakra*, which is not a reality visualization; it is not like the visualization of a blue sky. Then on this *cakra* you superimpose something further. Originally, *cakra* meditation was *devatā*, deity, meditation. For the *mulādhāra*, the presiding deity is Gaṇapati, Ganeśa. So, first you imagine a *mulādhāra*, a *cakra* at the range of the naval, then on that you superimpose Ganeśa and meditate on Ganeśa. That is mediation. For all of the *cakras* there are deities, and on each one of them you superimpose a given deity and then meditate upon it. I don't advise this for certain reasons. I avoid imagination as far as possible, because we already imagine a lot of things. I am trying to reduce subjectivity and then make people be aware of what is. Along the way, you cannot get lost like that—all the way the pursuit should be objective, because we are dealing with what is. We are not even dealing with what is possible. Possibilities are in the realm of *saṁsāra*. In the realm of liberation, *mokṣa*, we are dealing with only what is. So, we are not tapping your potential; I don't use that term. You will find many spiritual teachers talking about your potential, but I never mention it because potential is *saṁsāra*. In this world, there are a lot of potentials and in life you can accomplish a lot of things. That is *saṁsāra*. When you come to *mokṣa-śāstra*, we are not dealing with potentials at all. They are all *karma-phala*.

The only time I use the word "potential" is regarding prayer. Prayer taps the potential, which, for me, is grace. That aspect of yoga, *īśvara-praṇidhāna*, worship of Īśvara is a very important factor in this pursuit, because that aspect is also objective. How? If all that is here is Īśvara, that is how I have to see it. Thus, to see that is to be totally objective. And along the way I want a few things, which unfolds another thing. That is, there are many slips between the cup and the lips—and the

stomach, also, because what goes to the lips can go to the windpipe. Therefore, I see that there are many hidden variables, and as an objective person I want to take care of them. That is what an objective, pragmatic person has to do. Being hidden, I don't even know what they are, or how or when they are going to come. These hidden variables can run counter to what I want to accomplish in my life. And therefore, I have prayer. In life, whatever potential you want to tap is fine, and you include prayer to take care of the hidden variables. But prayer is something that I include, not only so that I can achieve things, but even in the spiritual pursuit. There too, there are a lot of hidden variables. And therefore, I include prayer objectively. Even in the Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti form there is one fellow sitting there with a knife drawn—as a hidden variable. It is a part of the tradition. Religious life for me is relating to Īśvara, accepting Īśvara, so being objective, prayer, etc., is something that I cannot avoid.

Prayer that is purely mental is what we call meditation. And in order to pray effectively, I have to first surface the meditator. Who is doing meditation? The Gita helps us here in the last few verses of the fifth chapter of Gita, and the entire sixth chapter called “Yoga of Meditation.” *Dhyāna*, meditation, is the topic there, but if you read this chapter, you will find that these verses talk about who is the meditator. There is so much about the meditator. In Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtras*, in *yama*, *niyama*, etc., it is the meditator who is talked about. Who is the person who is going to sit and meditate? How does one surface that person?

In the Bhagavad Gita we have this verse for those who are committed to *mokṣa*—*bāhyān sparśān bahirkrtoā*. The external world is taken as external. The meditator keeps the external world external, because we do internalize. This particular word, “internalizing” is, perhaps, a modern word, as a kind of a psychological term. Somebody calls you a name, and then you internalize it; you take it to heart. A criticism, a frown, a damaging remark, is internalized. This is what I call loading yourself with the external world. Because of this, everybody carries a few hurts, nurses them, and keeps the feeling of being hurt going. That will always be there until you take the sources of hurt as external. They have nothing to do with

you; they are just dealing with their own problems. Each one of them has a background, and it is the background that makes the person. So I free myself from this load by unloading all the people who are inside—unloading people, situations, whatever bothers me, hurts me. I can keep them with me for my lifetime, or I can get rid of them. We have to get rid of them.

In certain cultures you are advised to ‘forgive’ them. I always feel that I am not qualified to forgive anybody. I have to be forgiven by people. Who am I to forgive? This concept of forgiveness is a Christian concept. Sin, guilt, and therefore, forgiveness all form a topic. “Reconciliation and Forgiveness” is a typical Christian topic. The Pope asked for forgiveness from the Lord—not from the people who were hurt, but from the Lord. He is asking forgiveness from the Lord, not the community of Jewish people who were destroyed in millions. The Church was a witness to that and did not try to stop it. And other communities, cultures, and villages were hurt, but did they ask each one of them, “We have done this and hereafter we won’t do it; please forgive us”? No. They ask the Lord to forgive. That means the people are left behind, so they can do the same thing, and another Pope can come and ask for forgiveness. I don’t believe in this forgiveness. I am not in a position to forgive anybody, and I need not forgive anybody. That is patronizing.

All I need is understanding. A person does something wrong to me because of his own pressure. So, I cover this step also in my understanding of the person—I understand that there is a background. That is a reality; that is Īśvara. Then nobody can hurt me. This is what I call a two-step response; it is so important. I have to fall back upon that and look at the whole thing as an order. That is understanding. Thereby, you unload the person from your heart and grant freedom to that person to be what he or she is. If you want, you can pray for that person to grow out of his own problems, but you are not going to nurse a hurt. Then you are free. The meditator is free from this inner load, and he must be free, because this inner load is not going to allow him to meditate. I visualize people who have hurt me from

childhood onwards—father and mother first, who are the initial sources of hurt, and then some others later in life. I don't 'forgive' any of them, but I grant them the freedom to be what they are. If a person has really done something wrong, that means the person is suffering from some background that drove him or her to do that. "Let that person get out of that problem" is my prayer. This is saintliness, humaneness—the meditator's disposition. It is not only a meditator who has to do this—any human being has to do this—but for a meditator, it is so important. The meditator has to be saintly. This two-step appreciation makes you a compassionate person, naturally. It doesn't mean that you condone what the person does. You just understand that this is all he or she could do, period—that's it. If you say that he could do better, then why didn't he? Is it for want of knowledge, or is it due to some pressure? If it is due to want of knowledge, that means you can enlighten him. If it is due to pressure, then that person should know there is a pressure. You can perhaps tell him that much, if you are in a position to do so. Therefore, you understand that it is the person's problem, but you are not indifferent, because you pray. You don't say "It's his problem; I don't care." If you say that, it is very clear that you do care. If you really don't care, you need not say, "I don't care about that!" That means you care a lot. A scorpion has a sting, but you don't complain, "This scorpion has a sting and is always stinging everybody!" No. A scorpion has a sting. I know that, but that doesn't mean that I love scorpions. That is what I mean by objectivity. I have to be understood in this. My objectivity is understanding a scorpion as a scorpion. It has a sting, I don't like that sting, and I don't like to be stung by a scorpion. Therefore, I keep myself away from scorpions. A lot of people are like scorpions—they sting with their words or actions.

People do what they do because they cannot do anything else. That is the truth; there is no gainsaying it. Only if you understand this, will you have a mind available to you for meditation, for anything. Then you can deal with people and situations pragmatically. This pragmatism is also objectivity, according to me. Certain people you need not have any truck with, because you find that your own threshold is not adequate for that. And for some people, being away from certain situations is also good for them. Therefore, you are objective, totally, and in this there

is a certain inner freedom. You free yourself from people—not from love, not from care, but from people sitting inside you. Let them live in their own spaces. They are already living in their own spaces, so there is no need for them to sit in your head. You need not be that accommodative. They live in their own spaces, as you do. In fact, you yourself don't know in how many places you are sitting!

*Bāhyān*, the word, is so beautiful. *Bāhyān*, external, *sparsān*, objects that are perceived by you, that are contacted by the senses. This is the entire external world—*bāhyān sparsān*. *Krtvā*, doing. Doing what? *Bahiḥ krtvā*, making them external. Look at the words—keeping the external objects external. What a nice thing. It is very clear. No doubt they are external; the first statement is a fact. The second statement is meant to make the fact a fact. The first statement is that they are external—your mother-in-law, your house, carpet, all situations, everything, is external. But for some people, even the carpet, travels along with them.

You go for a retreat with all these people traveling along with you, without tickets. You say that you travel light. Maybe externally, but internally, it is very heavy. Why? You are running away from people and situations because you find that they are too much for you. This is a common thing. I am going away from the hurly-burly life, from the noise of the external world, from the pollution, from the daily chores, from this and that. I am going away for a retreat. Are you? “Yes.” You are not going away. Because you want to go away, there is a pressure, which means that you are not getting along with these situations well. It means that they are there, inside you, and that pressure impels you to get away from them. However, when you go away from them, the pressure is still going to be there, because the facts remain with you and you have to go back and face them. So they are all traveling with you. And you sit and meditate. One after the other, these people come, so you can't relax. To relax is to drop all these people. So many of them are there—small and big—so we have to unload them. How do you do that? Do you say, “Get out of my system!” If you do, they are going to be there. When you demand that they get out, that means you cannot handle them. They will remain inside saying, “You can never handle me.” They will be sitting there in that form.



Anger won't work; anxiety won't work; contempt won't work. Nothing will work. Forgiveness will not work, because you are not qualified to forgive anybody. You are already hurt; who are you to forgive? That is a patronizing attitude, so it will not work.

What will work is granting freedom to that person. For that you require knowledge, which means you have to step back and look at the order. That is where Īśvara comes in. Step back, and see the order that is there, the psychological order. This is a very important order. If you look at the psychological order, you can grant freedom to all of them. You will find that all the springs of compassion are not tight any more. Then you find yourself a free person. Even as you understand this, you can see the freedom you have inside. This is called "teaching." You can understand why I have taken all this time to explain this. I don't just say one sentence and then proceed. It doesn't work. You have to help the person to see that freedom. That is what teaching is about. And then, once the person has that freedom, he or she is available.

That person is aware of certain realities about himself or herself. What are those realities? There is a physical body. It is a reality. The external world is a reality. You are objective to the external world and your physical body. The complexes based on the physical body are too numerous, starting from your hair—the color of the hair, the body of the hair, the absence of hair, and so on. There is a hair complex, then there is a nose-shape complex and a complexion complex. The white person doesn't want to be that white, so goes all the way to Rio, and shiskabobs himself in the sand, because he must have a uniform tan. So, the color of the skin is not accepted. Weight is always a complex. In American culture, you are acceptable only when you can pass through the eye of a needle. Then you are beautiful. People should be able to count all your bones, and your cheekbones must be protruding. In India, if anybody has such cheekbones, they will think, "He is a skeleton! You got married to a skeleton? In which museum did you pick him up?" We have funny concepts. Because of all these complexes you like to hear that you are not the body. Because the body is a problem for you, "I am not the

body” seems to be very attractive. This is not a solution, but a denial of a problem. That is why when these people take to a spiritual life, they just draw a blank.

The problem is not going to be solved by “I am not the body” because the body is you. First, you have to accept that the body is you, because that is the objective reality. Every cell is you. Therefore, you just need to be objective to this body, without judgment. The body is a vehicle, meant for taking you around. In the Upanishads, there is an imagery of this body as a *ratha*, a chariot. And you are the *rathaswāmi*, seated in this *ratha*. It takes you around, gets up when you want to get up, sits down when you want to sit down. Then, why should you bother? As you take care of your car, you take care of your body. Self-love starts there. There is nothing to detest here, but, on the other hand, you can’t spend your lifetime at the altar of the body. It is subject to time and therefore aging and going out of shape—that is the nature of this body. So, this body has to be accepted as it is. Whatever change you want to be bring about, please do that, so that you need not meditate before you get up, “Should I get up or not?” because getting up is such a problem, or sitting is a problem. This body has to be taken care of, but at the same time, I am objective to it. This body is helpful to me, and a lot of my well-being depends upon the well-being of this body, so I take care of it. The body was never meant to create a complex. The nose was given for breathing, smelling, and wearing a nose ring; never for a complex. Therefore, I have to be objective—this is how this body is, period.

From the external world I go to the physical body, then to the *prāṇa*. It is not just a body; it is a breathing, live body. Now I go from the physical, the gross, to the subtle, *sthūla* to *sūkṣma*. Even though this body is accepted by me as me, I am more than the body; that is why I travel within now. There is a reality. There is no imagination here. I am breathing; that is a reality. And since it is going on without my willful effort, then I can be conscious of it. Observing the breathing like this does wonders. It makes me more objective. From within I am watching something within and something external. There is something external, because the external air goes in and comes out, but it is internal also, because once inside the body, it

can still be observed.

Then I go to my senses. *Prāṇa* is different from the senses, though it is necessary for the senses to operate. The reverse is not so, however, for *prāṇa* will go on even when the senses do not operate. In sleep, that is what is happening. *Prāṇa* is active, so active that others cannot sleep anywhere around you, and again, you get up in the morning as hungry as a wolf. At night, before you went to bed, you had a six-course meal. What happened in between? You didn't know anything; that is, your senses were not functioning, but *prāṇa* was active, digesting all that food. So, when I sit for meditation, I become conscious of this *prāṇa*. The *prāṇa* is me but I am not the *prāṇa* —that becomes clear.

Then I observe a sense organ, the sensation of touch. Look at how we are moving here. The sensation of touch is subtler than breathing. I pick up that sensation of touch, and to this sense perception I am objective. Then, I am objective even to my mind. With my mind I appreciate all this, and now I am objective to the mind itself. I observe my mind. This itself becomes meditation for some people—observing the *prana* for many days, then observing the mind for days and days. I don't advise that nor is it necessary. This is not meditation.

I want to pull myself out as a person so that I can meditate. That's all. I do this by observing the mind as a person, as a conscious person. This is the meditator—free from tension. Because of losing objectivity, one becomes tense; by being objective, I find I am free from tension. Understand the beauty of objectivity. Now, if this person is less informed, there is a certain type of meditation; if he is properly informed, there is meditation leading to *samādhi*.

- Excerpt from classes on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, Fall, 2000, transcribed and edited by Constance DiMartino

The serial article “Eight Significant Verses of the Bhagavad Gītā by Swami Dayananda Saraswati” could not be published this month, it will be continued from Jan 2025 edition. Thank you. - Editor

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

*This is the thirty eighth part of the serial article, continuation from Sep 2024 newsletter.*

सान्त्वयित्वा ततस्तां तु बाष्पदूषितलोचनाम् । निवर्तनार्थे धर्मात्मा वाक्यमेतदुवाच ह ॥ २-२८-२

*sāntvayitvā tatastām tu bāṣpadūṣitalocanām ।*

*nivartanārthe dharmātmā vākya metaduvāca ha ॥ 2-28-2*

She just said, “What? What are you saying? You are talking like an ordinary man. Really, you must be joking. I should stay here without you? I will definitely follow you wherever you go.” She said nothing about the loss of the kingdom or of the reasons for his leaving. “I will walk ahead of you and remove the thorns from the brush that blocks your way. You cannot leave me behind. I will never be an annoyance. I will not ask for special treatment. I will be helpful to you. I will eat what you eat with no problem. I will be of use to you.”

Rama said, “Sita, you do not know about the forests, the dense darkness and danger, beasts and biting bugs, snakes and swamps and mountains to cross. It is not a place for a princess of Janaki. You have never been to such a place. Your place is in the palace.”

Sita laughed, “I like the forest. I can swim in the ponds, play with the swans, smell all the beautiful flowers. I know I can hike as well as anyone. I will be right at home in Nature, I do not care that much for the palace life. I will be with you wherever you go. There will be no problem. Anyway, the lions and snakes will run away when they see you coming. Who has seen such a one as you before? Without you I am incomplete. I am going and that’s final.”

Rama let up and said, “Okay. Okay. Actually I was hoping you would say that. Definitely you should come along with me. But I wanted it to be your choice. Be ready. Give away all your extra things and offer them to the Brahmans.”

Then it was Lakshmana’s turn, “I am coming with you as well. I have always been with you. I am not going to stay here without you. I would like to be

allowed to come with you. You can be sure that I will be useful. As Sita follows you, I would like to follow.”

Rama replied, “Dear Lakshmana, out of my concern for Kausalya, I must say no. Please stay and help my mother in her grief and loneliness. She will need your help getting what she needs.”

तवैव तेजसा वीर भरतः पूजयिष्यति । कौसल्यां च सुमित्रां च प्रयतो नास्ति संशयः ॥ २-३१-१९  
यदि दुःस्थो न रक्षेत भरतो रज्यमुत्तमम् । प्राप्य दुर्मनसा वीर गर्वेण च विशेषतः ॥ २-३१-२०  
तमहं दुर्मतिं क्रूरं विधिष्यामि न संशयः । तत्पक्षानपि तान् सर्वास्त्रैलोक्यमपि किंतु सा ॥ २-३१-२१  
कौसल्या विभृयादार्या सहस्रं मद्विधानपि । यस्याः सहस्रं ग्रामाणां सम्प्राप्तमुपजीविनाम् ॥ २-३१-२२  
तदात्मभरणे चैव मम मातुस्तथैव च । पर्याप्ता मद्विधानां च भरणाय मनस्विनी ॥ २-३१-२३  
कुरुष्व मामनुचरं वैधर्म्यं नेह विद्यते । कृतार्थोऽहं भविष्यामि तव चार्थः प्रकल्प्यते ॥ २-३१-२४  
धनुरादाय सगुणं खनित्रपिटकाधरः । अग्रतस्ते गमिष्यामि पन्थानं तव दर्शयन् ॥ २-३१-२५  
आहरिष्यामि ते नित्यं मूलानि च फलानि च । वन्यानि च यथान्यनि स्वाहाद्वीणि तपस्विनाम् ॥ २-३१-२६  
भवांस्तु सह वैदेह्या गिरिसानुषु रंस्यसे । अहं सर्वं करिष्यामि जाग्रतः स्वपतश्च ते ॥ २-३१-२७

*tavaiva tejasā vīra bharataḥ pūjayiṣyati |*

*kausalyāṁ ca sumitrāṁ ca prayato nāsti saṁśayaḥ || 2-31-19*

*yadi duḥstho na rakṣeta bharato rajyamuttamam |*

*prāpya durmanasā vīra garveṇa ca viśeṣataḥ || 2-31-20*

*tamahāṁ durmatim krūraṁ vidhiṣyāmi na saṁśayaḥ |*

*tatpakṣānapi tān sarvāstrailokyamapi kintu sā || 2-31-21*

*kausalyā bibhryādāryā sahasraṁ madvidhānapi |*

*yasyāḥ sahasraṁ grāmāṇāṁ samprāptamupajīvinām || 2-31-22*

*tadātmapbharaṇe caiva mama mātustathaiva ca |*

*paryāptā madvidhānāṁ ca bharaṇāya manasvinī || 2-31-23*

*kuruṣva māmanucaraṁ vaidharmyaṁ neha vidyate |*

*kṛtārtho'haṁ bhaviṣyāmi tava cārthaḥ prakalpyate || 2-31-24*

*dhanurādāya saguṇaṁ khanitrapīṭakādharāḥ |*

*agrataste gamiṣyāmi panthānaṁ tava darśayan || 2-31-25*

*āhariṣyāmi te nityaṁ mūlāni ca phalāni ca |*

*vanyāni ca yathānyani svāhārdvāṇi tapasvinām || 2-31-26*

*bhavāṁstu saha vaidehyā girisānuṣu raṁsyase |*

*ahaṁ sarvaṁ kariṣyāmi jāgrataḥ svapataśca te || 2-31-27*

Lakshmana said, “Rama, Bharata will take care of Kausalya and the family. I know that he is not such a bad guy. He will protect the people. In spite of how wrenching a turn things have taken, Bharata will be here to protect the *dharma*. He will hold you, great brother, as his example. I have no fear in this. If by word or deed Bharata does fall away from *dharma* and fails to protect our people I will immediately return from the forest and deal out punishment. I will return and slay a cruel-thinking Bharata. If hundreds of fellows join him I will destroy them as well. If the three worlds join him they too will fall before my sword. Kausalya has the wealth and resources to protect herself and those who are close to her. She could protect me and a thousand others without suffering. Please allow me to come with you, there is no *adharma* in this. This is my fulfillment, for you are like my father. As you follow the words of our father, it is my duty to follow my elder brother. I will in no way stifle your purpose. Both of us will be fulfilled. With bow in hand I will walk before you in the forest, and I will clear away anything that might detain us. I will be your pathfinder, your guide. Route and root I will find. Every day I will bring fresh fruits, the wealth of the forest, all that is good for *tapasvins* to eat. You can spend your time enjoying the mountains and trees. I will stand guard at night, watchman. You know about the forest at night. I will guard us. You must let me come.”

रामस्त्वनेन वाक्येन सुप्रीतः प्रत्युवाच तम् । व्रजापृच्छस्व सौमित्रे सर्वमेव सुहृज्जनम् ॥ २-३१-२८

वसिष्ठपुत्रं तु सुयज्ञमार्यं त्वमानयाशु प्रवरं द्विजानाम् ।

अपि प्रयास्यामि वनं समस्तानभ्यर्च्य शिष्टानपरान् द्विजातीन् ॥ २-३१-३७

*rāmastvanena vākyaena suprītaḥ pratyuvāca tam |*

*vrajāpṛcchastva saumitre sarvameva suhr̥jjanam || 2-31-28*

*vasiṣṭhaputrāṁ tu suyajñamāryaṁ tvamānayaśu pravaraṁ dvijānām |*

*api prayāsyāmi vanaṁ samastānabhyarcya śiṣṭānaparān dvijātīn || 2-31-37*

Again Rama had to give up, “Okay, okay. Go now and take permission from your mother, Sumitra. Get your weaponry ready and prepare to take off. When you come back this way, ask the great *ārya* Suyajna, son of Vasishtha, and the other Brahmans to come with you. I am going to distribute our wealth to these

great-souled men. I want to worship them and get their blessings before we proceed." Lakshmana took leave.

तमागतं वेदविदं प्राञ्जलिः सीतया सह । सुयज्ञमभिचक्राम राघवोऽग्निमिवार्चितम् ॥ २-३२-४

*tamāgatam vedavidam prāñjaliḥ sītayā saha |*

*suyajñamabhicakrāma rāghavo'gnimivārcitam || 2-32-4*

When Suyajna came he was received like the reception shown to the light which has been offered to the Lord in a temple. That *agni* is *prasādam*, the bright blessing from the Lord that enlightens all who partake. No less was that Suyajna, as pure as fire, as brilliant as flame, sacred. Both Rama and Sita prostrated to this *muni*. The phrase *paṇḍitaputraḥ*, son of a wise-man, is sometimes used in Sanskrit literature to describe a fool. Because that is often the case. That is because a scholar often finds no time to take care of his son. The boy grows like a wild grass. But that was not the case with Suyajna; he was as great as was his father. All the Brahmins and *ṛṣis* came to see Rama off and to see him off well. Queues of people formed, and each person received Rama's blessing and something which would remind them of Rama's care. Sita and Lakshmana gave away their possessions as well.

One *paṇḍita* who was poor came with his wife. Rama asked what the fellow would like. The man said, "Dear Rama, whatever you offer I gratefully accept."

With a generous mind, Rama told him, "Well, now, just take this stick and throw it across the field where those cows are grazing. Wherever that stick lands, up to there you will have all the cows that the stick measures. They will all be yours." Thrilled, the man seized the stick firmly, took a deep breath, and with all his might launched the stick out into the pasture. Rama laughed and took great pleasure in the effort of this fellow. Rama assured the fellow that he was not trying to make fun of him and that he was very happy to give him all this. Even more Rama gave to this fellow along with his blessing.

*To be continued...*

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

*This is the fourteenth part of the serial article, continuation from Sep 2024 newsletter.*

Many of the problems between the Pandavas and the Kauravas were the result of Dhrtarashtra's blindness. The kingdom had to be administered on behalf of Dhrtarashtra, though he was king. Now Dhrtarashtra had to name a crown prince. He had to make one of the princes *yuvarājā*, and there was no one eligible except the eldest, Yudhisthira, a Pandava. Certainly Dhrtarashtra did not want a Pandava ruling the kingdom, but the *rājadharma* was set. Dhrtarashtra wanted to see Duryodhana king, but there was no way because Dhrtarashtra would be wronging Bhishma, Drona, Krpa, and Vidura. Dhrtarashtra did not want to go against them and their sense of the royal family's *dharma*. Yudhisthira was anointed crown prince, and he did very well. He was a popular public figure and effective at conducting affairs. He won the admiration, respect and devotion of all the citizens. With Arjuna's and Bhima's support, Yudhisthira subdued all the lesser kings in the region, and they all paid tribute to the crown in Hastinapura.

Pandu had expanded the kingdom, and now his sons furthered the expansion and solidified the empire. Yudhisthira had grown into rulership over his first year, and Duryodhana was fuming, seething. Duryodhana could not stand to hear the praise showered on Yudhisthira, and he shrank from negative comparisons as to what might have happened if he himself had been named king. Meanwhile Dhrtarashtra was fuming in his own way. Dhrtarashtra's insecurity about his disability and his dependence on Bhishma were sensitive points to the Kauravas. The talk of the town was that Yudhisthira should be king, and Dhrtarashtra and Duryodhana were disgusted and defiant. All in the court could see that despite all the kind speech and posturing, Dhrtarashtra was exposed and vulnerable and not impartial in his treatment of Pandu's sons. Dhrtarashtra was a simmering, molten volcano.

Duryodhana was flowing lava, always flowing. One day Duryodhana went



to his father Dhrtarashtra and said, "I cannot stand this anymore. You have made a mistake. You should not have made Yudhisthira the crown prince. Why did you give him *yuvārājā* status? Now the people say I am not fit to be king, yet I am the son of the king. I should be the king irrespective of birth order. I am your son. You cannot make a Pandava king. Do you think I will serve them? I cannot do that. I will be the king."

Dhrtarashtra advised his son to calm down and look objectively, "Do not think like this. Do not be jealous of these people. This is not correct. Pandu was able to expand the kingdom and his heirs are keeping up this growth. They have proved their benefit for this family and for the crown by reestablishing order in the kingdom. Do not wrong them. You cannot afford to wrong them. Pandu was a good man, very loving to me, and more than that, Yudhisthira is a man of *dharma*. All the Pandavas are following *dharma*; you cannot justify going up against them. Therefore just accept them. They are not going to ill treat you, and you are a prince anyway. You will have your place. Do not think that they are going to disrespect you. They are good people and they will strengthen the crown."

Duryodhana said, "Dad, I think you are afraid that somebody is overhearing our discussion. No one else is listening, tell me your mind. Come on, tell me what you think. I know what you think. There is no way the Pandavas should be our kings. Either I am going to die, or I become the king. You can do one thing, Dad. You call them and send them away. Dharmaputra, Yudhisthira, will always follow *dharma*, as you said, and he will always do as you say. You are the eldest, like a father to him, and he will obey. You tell Dharmaputra what I tell you to say. You must tell the Pandavas to go to Varanavata and to stay there for a year."

Varanavata was a place, an island, which did not belong to anybody. That place, a temple and the people, belonged only to Lord Shankara. Nobody ruled that place. "Let the Pandavas stay there for a year. I will take care of everything," said Duryodhana. Dhrtarashtra knew his crafty son was planning something. He asked what his son had in mind. Duryodhana went on, "In the year they are gone

I will create an atmosphere where the people will accept me and completely forget the Pandavas. Then I will proclaim myself king, and they will not be able to do anything about it."

Duryodhana continued, "I know you are worried about what Bhishma will think. Do you know what the truth about Bhishma is? I know Bhishma is totally disinterested. Bhishma knew I poisoned Bhima and what did he do? He did not say a word to me. Deep down, he has got some unwept sorrow inside, and he does not really care what happens anymore. Neither is Bhishma supporting the Pandavas, nor is he supporting us. You know, I came upon him sitting on the riverbank recently and he was crying. I asked him, 'Grandfather, why are you crying? What is wrong?' He told me he was tired. I asked him why he did not take a rest. He said he had a long way to go and he could not rest. Bhishma is depressed and disinterested; he does not mind at all.

"Drona could be against this plan, but actually he cannot be. Why? Because of his only son, Ashvatthama, his weakness. Ashvatthama is my best friend. He teamed up with me because of his father's jealousy towards Arjuna. Drona cannot and will not go against his son. Therefore Drona will be with me. Krpa cannot go away because where Drona is, Krpa, his brother-in-law, will be. Vidura is the only person who is a question mark. He is a low-born person who only talks about *dharma*. He will go on talking about *dharma*, and you may find you like listening to him. You can spend your time listening to *dharma*, and I will rule the kingdom. Send the Pandavas to Varanavata."

In the meantime Dhrtarashtra's mind worked to find what else they could do to get rid of the Pandavas. He called for Shakuni. Shakuni was Duryodhana's uncle. Shakuni, also known as Kanika, was another small fellow, a past master in scheming. Dhrtarashtra told Shakuni that Duryodhana wanted to rule, and he asked Shakuni what should be done. Shakuni had one word of advice,

*To be continued...*

## Commemoration of 9th Aradhana of Pujya Swamiji at AVG Anaikatti, Coimbatore

On Oct 13, 2024 the 9th Aradhana of our venerated Guru pujya swamiji was commemorated as per Vakya panchangam tithi at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti, Coimbatore.

Offering of reverential tribute to Pujya Swamiji through Paduka Puja, by Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati ji ,Swamini Vedarthananda Saraswati ji , and Swamini Saradananda Saraswati ji followed by other Swamis, brought alive the life size marble murti of Pujya Swamiji radiating Guru Kripa to all!

Shabdanjali by respected Swamis evoked in the devotees and attendees memories of grace , guidance & knowledge showered on them by Pujya Swamiji.

Swami Ganeshswarupananda Saraswati ji said how Pujya Swamiji quenched his quest for seeking the meaning & purpose of his life .

Swami Tadevananda Saraswati ji conveyed that Pujya Swamiji gave three important things to others - love, solace & support and knowledge generously.

Kamatchidasa Swamigal offered his shabdanjali in his unique style saying pujya swamiji has become one with all of us

Swamini Brahmaleelananda Saraswati ji expressed her gratitude for the punya of being in this parampara of pujya swamiji.

Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati ji illustrated that the virtuous qualities that reveal spontaneously in a wise person are meant for others to emulate. By deliberate efforts these virtues can be developed. 'We have heard so many inspiring qualities of Pujya Swamiji ,they can become our sadhana to grow'.

Programs in Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, under the direction and blessings of Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati ji have an amazing precision in keeping up the time! As the Emcee , Swami Jagadatmananda Saraswati ji guided the flow of the event seamlessly leaving the audience wishing for more.

With the attitude of worship and gratitude that all Swamis offered their shabdanjali and pushpanjali

- Report By Smt.Pavithra Srinivasan, Coimbatore

*Photos in the cover page #31*

**Veda Vidyarthi Prabodha Shibir (II Batch)**  
**at AVG, Anaikatti (4<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> Sep 2024)**

Vidyaranya has been working to nurture next generation of Ved pandits that are rooted in Veda gurukula parampara and equipped with skills needed to become a well-rounded individual such as formal education, Sanskrit, yoga, patriotism, and music. Pathasala is in Bhagyanagar (Hyd), Telangana with 110+ students currently learning Krishna Yajur and Rigveda sakhas along with modern education.

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam came forward to implement Vedic heritage course curriculum aligning to Vidyaranya's structure and conduct sessions in three batches of their students and teachers on a periodic basis.

On the inauguration day, the Chief Acharya, Swami Sadatmananda ji while giving Anugraha Bhashanam, said:

*"Our Dharma is called Vaidik Dharma because it is based on Vedas. Veda is our fundamental text. Our Dharma is revealed by the Vedas. The Vedas are given by the Ishwara, received by the Rishis. Brahmachari means one who has dedicated his life to study vedas. His life is based on four principles:*

*Anushasanam (discipline),*

*Sarala jeevanam (simple food, dress, and stay),*

*Adhyayana nishta (commitment to the study of scriptures),*

*Prarthana (prayer in the form of sandhyavandanam)*

*All these four qualities are required to be successful in your study of Shastra.*

*For this you require motivation (Prerana), effort (prayatna), self confidence (atma vish-vasa), Ishwara kripa (the grace of Ishwara). My blessings and prayers for your study."*

The current batch of students from Vidyaranya had been represented by its founder Shri Madugula Sasi Bhushan Somayaji Ji and CEO Smt. Sirisha Ji, and participated by 2 Adhyapakas and 40 students.

Swamini Satyavratana Saraswati Ji, Shri Acharya Kota Maheshji from the ashram led the entire program and provided a great deal of help to this Shibir. Also, the students of Swaminiji and Maheshji extended their support with Annasantharpana.

The course covered the main topics such as foundations of Sanatana Dharma, its value system, Yoga, Bhagavadgita and the values extracted from Bhagavatha, Mahabharatha, and Ramayana were also imparted. With utmost discipline and hard work, along with

their regular veda adhyayana, students participated and learned the topics.

The Vidyarthi and teachers were invited to visit Swami Dayananda Vedapathashala (where Atharvana Veda teaching is taking place), Swami Dayananda Ayurveda hospital on the occasion of Onam festival and were provided with a grand feast. They were also invited to visit Swami Dayanilayam of Swami Jagadanandaji.

An examination had been conducted and certificates were distributed to all the students. The students thoroughly enjoyed the lush green campus, beautiful peacocks and deers, Guru theertha temple and delicious Tamilnadu cuisine.

Swaminiji has designed this entire program to inculcate the vision of Pujya Swamiji in the younger generation.

On the last day Swamini Sharadanandaji gave a brief overview about Pujya Swamiji's achievements.

As an Ashirvachanam, Swami Sadatmananda ji said, *"I congratulate all of you for completing this Vaidik Samskriti program successfully. Now, this place is really looking like a Gurukulam. All people who were seeing you are so happy. When you successfully complete any program, you should see:*

*Labha Swikriti -The acknowledgement of what you have benefited and achieved in this program*

*Samshodhana Chintanam - What are the areas you can learn better next time*

*Janebhyaha Kritajnata Inapanam – Expressing gratitude to all people who are involved, like organizers, teachers, and helpers*

*Finally, expressing gratitude to Bhagavan because of whose grace alone this program is successful.*

*I invite you all again to come in the next year also. You are the future of this country. We are proud of you. You will do well wherever you are."*

We thank everyone involved with a great sense of gratitude. Namaskar

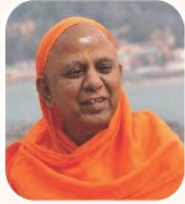
- Report by Smt. Sirisha Pingali, CEO



## Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

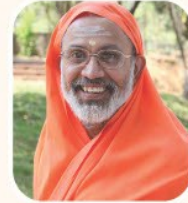
(Sruti Seva Trust), Anaikatti

is pleased to announce a 15 day residential retreat  
from 8th Dec - 22nd Dec 2024



**Swami Sakshatkrtananda**  
will be teaching  
**Kenopanishad** with Bhashyam

**Swami Sadatmananda**  
will be conducting  
**Guided Meditations**



**Note:** Familiarity with Sanskrit and some Vedanta study will help to get more benefit from the retreat

For registration, kindly visit <https://arshavidya.in/camps-retreats/>

For further details, kindly contact the office through phone or email

**Email :** office@arshavidya.in

**Phone :** +91-9442646701 , +91-422-2657001

## ARSHA AVINASH FOUNDATION'S RESIDENTIAL CAMP

With the blessings of our Guru Parampara, Arsha Avinash Foundation conducted a residential spiritual camp on Sep 28 and 29, 2024 at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti.

**CHIEF ACHARYA'S ADDRESS:** Swami Sadatmananda, Chief Acharya, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam inaugurated the camp. He welcomed the campers. In his anugraha bhashanam, Swamiji explained a verse from Vivekachudamani. Sraddha in the Vedas is required. One should be committed to live a dharmic life. Every action should be done with an attitude of karma yoga, as an offering to Isvara. For a person with a pure mind, knowledge of Paramatma will take place.

The pursuit can be summarised as follows: Karma yoga is for citta-suddhi. Jnana yoga is for jnana Prapti. Atma jnanam gives moksa. Wherever you are, you see yourself as the basis of all happiness. Swamiji blessed the campers.

**MEDITATION SESSIONS:** Swami Jagadatmananda and N. Avinashilingam conducted one guided meditation session each.

**BHAGAVAD GITA CHAPER 15:** Bhagavad Gita Chapter 15 titled Purushottama Yoga was taught. This Chapter gives the essence of Bhagavad Gita. Samsara tree can be destroyed with the weapon of self-knowledge. Isvara enlivens and nourishes the world. "I am all" is the vision of the Sastra. The one who knows Purushottama becomes the knower of all and gains fulfilment.

N. Avinashilingam gave a summary of Gita Chapter 15 in two classes. Ponmani Avinashilingam gave verse by verse explanation in two classes. Swami Jagadatmananda conducted majority of the classes and gave verse by verse explanation in six classes.

### **FEED BACK FROM STUDENTS:**

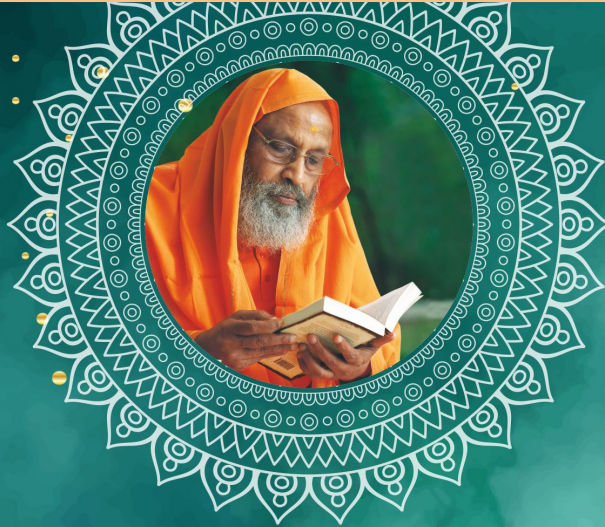
"The Camp was both uplifting and enriching the soul. The erudite and lucid explanations of Bhagavad Gita were made clearer by the apt common day, relatable examples. The meditation sessions were soothing and calming, giving us tranquillity of mind. The accommodation was clean and comfortable and the food healthy and tasty. The camp was a wholly satisfying and enriching experience." – Dr. S. Bhagyalakshmi

"We were taught that as a magnet focus on north, our focus should be on spirituality. Meditation sessions and classes gave us peace of mind. The camp gave clarity of thoughts on spirituality. Food was good and healthy." – S.T. Maya Devi

"Bhagavad Gita classes were enlightening. Our gratitude for the spiritual guidance. The meditation sessions were insightful." – M. Bhavani

- Report by N. Avinashilingam.

*Photo in cover page #2*



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# 5 BOOKS

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## Swami Dayananda Memorial Retreats 2025 at AVP, Rishikesh

We are pleased to announce the schedule of Swami Dayananda Annual Memorial Retreats 2025 at Arsha Vidya Pitham Rishikesh:

### Retreat 1

by **Sri Swami Suddhananda Saraswati** of Uthandi, Chennai

**Retreat topic: Ashtavakra Gita, Chapter 2**

**Date: 21/02/2025 to 28/02/2025**

### Retreat 2

by **Sri Swami Shankarananda Saraswati** of Coimbatore Tamil Nadu

**Retreat topic: Inner growth through right understanding and deliberate choices.**

**Date: 04/03/2025 to 11/03/2025**

### Retreat 3

by **Sri Swami Brahmananda Saraswati** of Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Retreat topic: Mahavakya Vichara (across the Upanishad)**

and **Sri Swamini Brahma Prajnananda Saraswati** of Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Retreat topic: Mastery of the Mind (selected Gita Verses)**

**Date: 15/03/2025 to 22/03/2025**

### Retreat 4

by **Sri Swami Viditatmananda Saraswati** of USA/Ahmedabad

**Retreat topic: Jyotir Brahmana of Brahadaranyaka Upanishad**

and **Sri Swamini Paraprajnananda Saraswati** of USA/Ahmedabad

**Retreat topic: Ishavasya Upanishad**

**Date: 27/03/2025 to 03/04/2025**

### Retreat 5

by **Sri Swami Shuddhabodhananda Saraswati** of Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Retreat topic: The Modus Operandi of gaining Brahmajnanam (ब्रह्मप्राप्ति) Gita, CH. 18, vs.**

**46,50 to 55 with selected Bhashyam.**

**Date: 07/04/2025 to 14/04/2025**

To register for the retreat, please click the following link: <https://forms.gle/ebfhEpmfDrkR98pR6>

- ◆ The last date for receipt of the application form is 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.
- ◆ Those whose registration has been accepted for participation in the retreat(s) will be sent confirmation letter on or before 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025. For foreigners, confirmation letter will be sent within a week of receipt of registration.
- ◆ The participants will arrive only a day before the start of the retreat and positively leave on the day after the retreat ends.

## Upadesa Sahasri camp at AVP, Rishikesh

As a continuity to the camp in 2023, Sw. Sakshatkritananda ji held the Upadesa Sahasri Camp this year from 11th to 18th September, 2024, in Rishikesh Ashram. Nearly 200 students attended the camp. Everyday there were 2 classes on Upadesa Sahasri, one class by Arsha vidya teachers on topics of their choice, meditation and satsang.

Swamiji was conducting classes on chapter 18 Tatvamasi Prakaranam, and last year had concluded upto verse no. 59. Before continuing, Swamiji gave a summary of last year's classes. This year Swamiji took up from verse 60 to 118.

In this part of the text there is a discussion about who is the shrotru/knower of the mahavakya upadesa 'Tat Tvam Asi'. While the poorva pakshi contended that it cannot be either buddhi or Atma, Sankaracharya, after elaborate discussions and explanations establishes with an example of face, mirror and reflected face (reflection) that Sakshi Caitanyam reflected in the Buddhi and known as Cid Abhasa the reflected consciousness is the knower as buddhi is jadam and Sakshi is akarta. It is in the presence of Sakshi caitanyam the buddhi is illumined and becomes sentient and is known Cid Abhasa and does the act of listening mahavakya and knower of Brahman. Once the knowledge is gained the ignorance goes.

Thus, the concept and importance of 'Cit Abhasa' was highlighted in this part and Swamiji very lucidly in simple terms explained this and also how Sankaracharya dismisses all objections raised by other systems. Om Tat Sat.



*More photos in cover page #2*

## Online 3 Year course on Advaita Vedanta and Sanskrit

With the grace of Pujya Swami Dayanand Saraswati, blessings of Swami Sakshatkritananda Saraswati, Chairman and Chief Acarya of Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh and Arsha Sampradaya teachers, Swami Shivaswaroopananda Saraswati would like to announce the proposal to start a three-year online course on Vedanta and Sanskrit from 2 Oct 2025, Vijaya Dashami day.

### Course Delivery:

The proposed teaching model is planned to be as below:

- ◆ The duration of the course is 3 years, with daily classes for 6 days a week.
- ◆ Attendance of the registered students is compulsory for all the classes.
- ◆ With the intention of giving the students an opportunity to study in a Gurukulam atmosphere, along with Guru seva and participation in the Ashram activities; in the first year of the course it is proposed to have, a one month stay for each student, in the Rishikesh Ashram, on rotation basis for up to four students at a time. During the second and third year of the course, the stay may be increased to a maximum of three months for four students at a time on rotation basis.

### Course Content:

- ◆ All classes will be available online for the registered students only.
- ◆ The original texts in Sanskrit will be used as course material and language of instruction will be English.
- ◆ Curriculum will be in line with the content created by Pujya Swamiji
  - ◆ Bhagavad Gita
  - ◆ Upanisads
  - ◆ Brahma Sutra
  - ◆ Prakarna Granthas
  - ◆ Sanskrit
  - ◆ Vedic Chanting
- ◆ Guided meditation, Satsang and Q&A will be a part of the curriculum

### Eligibility and Selection:

Persons interested in serious study of Vedanta and Sanskrit having exposure to Vedanta and are above 25 years of age, having good English language skills and capable of committing to three years of continuous regular study of five hours daily, can express their interest along with questions, if any, to Swamiji's email ID [avgclass@gmail.com](mailto:avgclass@gmail.com) or Whatsapp +91 8300230283. Prior exposure to Vedanta is essential. Swamiji will respond to your "expression of interest" within a week of receipt of the request.

### Faculty:

- ◆ The main acharya will be Swami Shivasvaroopananda Saraswati.
- ◆ Samskritam, Bhagavad Gita and Praakarana Granthas will be taught by Acharya Revathyji.

### Course fees:

- ◆ The classes are free of charge
- ◆ A minimum donation of ₹ 500/- per month per student, for maintenance of infrastructure of the online classes, is expected.
- ◆ A monthly donation of ₹ 10,000/- per person, only during the period of stay in the Rishikesh Ashram for boarding and lodging is expected.

## Navaratri Celebrations at AVP, Rishikesh

श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः

We are truly fortunate to receive the Darshan of Ma Ganga every day. This October, however, has brought extra blessings from the Divine Mother in the form of Navratri. The ashram has been alive with devotional pujas and traditional ceremonies aimed at invoking Her grace and facilitating the uninterrupted transfer of knowledge. Among the beautiful events we experienced was the Sarasvati Avahanam Puja, where all ashram dwellers gathered and left their books for Sarasvati's blessings. This was followed by a Nitya Puja for Saraswati held twice daily. The six-month course students also participated in Pushpa arcana and chanting Sarasvati mantras. On the ninth auspicious day of Navratri, we honored the practical aspect of Sarasvati with an Ayudha Puja, where all instruments, gadgets, and vehicles were worshipped. In the evening, Ma was invoked through Garba, a joyful community dance, was beautifully celebrated with the Pustaka Udvasanam Puja, during which all blessed books were distributed to their rightful owners, and classes has resumed after a few days meant for assimilation, japa and chanting. May Ma protect all beings, and bless them with the light of knowledge. Om Tat Sat - **Report by Ms. Shambavi**



## Jnana Pravaha Shibhir

Brahma Vidya Mandir (BVM), Coimbatore chapter organized Jnana Prabha's Shibhir - a 3 day camp at Manjakkudi dedicated to the study of Upadesha Saram by Shri Ramana Maharshi.

The camp was attended by around 46-48 students of Coimbatore BVM, undergoing 2 year course "Tattvamasi" conducted by Acharya Shri. Rangaji. The camp started with an inaugural session presided by Mr. Rajagopal, a resident of Manjakkudi and working in Wipro as the head of location. He addressed vidhyarthi by sharing his experience with Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati and how Manjakkudi became a model village with developments on educational front, employment and organic farming. Acharyaji spoke thanking Smt. Sheela Balaji recollecting her studentship and Guru Seva to Pujya Swamiji that was instrumental of Manjakkudi what it stands today.

Upadesha Saram was covered by Acharya Shri. Rangaji. Guruji made the students understand the text with lucid explanations coupled with real life examples. The learning was well aided by Acharyaji's meditation sessions. There were Satsangs later in the evening for 2 days where Acharyaji cleared the doubts of the students. The camp got over with samarop where the students expressed their experience and learning.

We take this opportunity to thank Swami Ramesvaranandaji and the administration for all the support.

— Report by BVM, CBE Chapter



## Dayananda Anugraha Fund



### Dayananda Anugraha Fund

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