

mārgabandhu

A spiritual companion



A compilation of writings on Sanatana Dharma by
Shri PVR Narasimha Rao

Introduction

|| Shri Ganeshaya Namah || Shri Gurubhyo Namah || Shri Mātre Namah || Jai Shri Rāma ||

जयत्यतिबलो रामो लक्ष्मणश्च महाबलः राजा जयति सुग्रीवो राघवेणाभिपालितः ।
दासोहं कोसलेन्द्रस्य रामस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः हनुमान् शत्रुसैन्यानां निहन्ता मारुतात्मजः ॥

This book is a compilation of writings of Shri PVR Narasimha Rao a Fire Yogi, Philosopher , world famous Vedic Astrologer who writes prolifically on various aspects of Sanatana Dharma.

It was around six years ago that I stumbled upon Shri Narasimha Rao's Vedic wisdom group & Facebook posts. It was a revelation and I was simply "hooked" and it won't be an exaggeration to say that my life has never been the same! Reading the articles I gained fresh perspective on multiple aspects of Sanatana Dharma, challenging and refining notions as my understanding became deeper. Welcoming Agni (Divine fire) into my life , I feel blessed. It is a sheer joy to engage with Agni on a regular basis as I move closer to my istha deva.

This book contains his writings on “Facebook” in the time period 2013- Early 2021. I am also pleased to note that the section “Book of Songs” includes Sanskrit poems composed by him. This compilation covers diverse topics from the mundane to adwaita, a veritable “MargaBandhu” to sadhakas at various stages. Interested sadhakas might also want to read a previous compilation of Shri Narasimha Rao’s articles posted in Vedic-wisdom yahoo group available at this link “https://vedicastrologer.org/articles/vedic_wisdom_1.pdf”

The articles in this book have been faithfully reproduced from his facebook page with minor edits. Comments from few Facebook posts have also been added to relevant chapters to provide additional clarity. Any errors in compilation are mine and I pray for the gurus' grace to correct them.

yaavadbhUmaNDale sanaatanadharmo vardhatu

May Sanatana Dharma flourish on entire earth

A homa student of Shri PVR Narasimha Rao
23-July-2021

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Shri P.V.R. Narasimha Rao is a world famous vedic astrologer, a Fire Yogi and a Sanskrit Scholar. He has a B.Tech. degree from IIT, Madras and a masters degree from Rice University, Houston, USA and works near Boston as a senior engineering manager at a top semiconductor firm. Making rituals, especially fire rituals, easily accessible to everyone interested in spiritual progress is his mission. His free offerings, including Homa/

Tarpana manuals, a Vedic astrology software, lessons and eBook, can be downloaded at <https://VedicAstrologer.org> , <https://EasyHoma.org> , <https://EasyHavan.org>

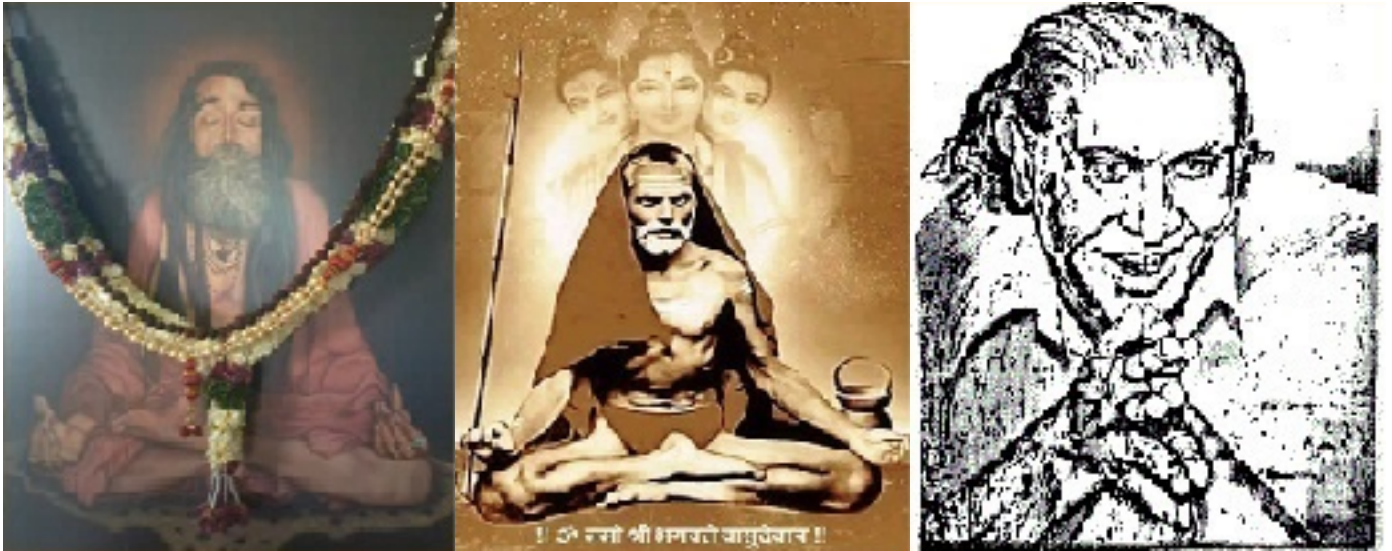


Shri Manish Pandit is the Spiritual guru of Shri Narasimha Rao. He is a Doctor (Nuclear Medicine), Filmmaker, Author and the man behind the DIY Homa movement.

His work can be viewed at

<http://www.saraswatifilms.org/> , <https://www.youtube.com/user/SaraswatiFilms>,
<https://mmpandit.wordpress.com/>

His guru was Sri Nakhate Maharaj from Pune whose guru was Yogiraj Sri Vamanrao Dattatreya Gulavani Maharaj . His two gurus were Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Sri Vasudevananda Saraswati, famously known in Maharashtra as Sri Tembe Swami and Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Sri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj .



Fire always burns, and if you worship it properly it will burn away all your bad karmas - Sri Vimalananda

Humble prostrations to the guru's whose grace has allowed multitudes across the world to welcome agni in their homes and experience the divine through him.

If there is one thing that global events this year can teach is generically, it's that life is not infinite in length and therefore one should be very careful on what one spends one's time on.

Time does not stop for anybody.

- Shri Manish Pandit (Via [Tweet](#)) , 21 Dec 2020

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Foreword

Satsangati kim na karoti pumsam was perhaps the first *subbashita* I learned as a student of the Tilak Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya in Pune: “what can satsanga *not* do for individuals?” Among the good people with whom I have been fortunate to enjoy satsanga is Sri PVR Narasimha Rao, whom I encountered yet again recently when he (as he has many times before) did me the excellent service of picking me up at an airport and serving me some delicious home-cooked food before driving me to my destination. On this occasion I had the enhanced pleasure of meeting for the first time both his wife Padmaja and Swami Sathasivom, who accompanied him. A rewarding satsanga that was indeed!

As with the adaptation of *atithi satkara* to fit the requirements of the situation, Sri Narasimha Rao has a talent for providing clear and practical modern commentary on Sanatana Dharma as a whole, much of which is collected in *Margabandhu*. In his words, “in Kali Yuga most formulas and technicalities are corrupted.” Precepts that worked well thousands of years ago when they were laid down now require reinterpretation in the context of today’s novel realities. This is as true for Dharma Shastra as it is for Ayurveda, Jyotisha or any other shastra, and Sri Narasimha Rao is particularly fortunate as a brahmana both by karma and by birth to be the son of a shastri who carefully schooled him in classical Indian wisdom. He is thus well qualified to provide perspectives on how previous practices can be modified to make that wisdom better applicable to today’s world.

Vimalananda emphasized how important it is for every seeker to “carve out your own niche”, for which it is essential to cultivate a disciplined and focused mind. One of the best ways to focus the mind is to work with fire, by developing a personal relationship with it based on mutual respect. Thanks to the efforts of Sri Narasimha Rao thousands of people around the world now do homa on their own using the manuals he has written and freely made available to all. By doing so they benefit themselves, others, and the world itself. May the Fire Element, which Sri Narasimha Rao has for many years served diligently, bless him and his family abundantly, and may *Margabandhu* benefit all serious seekers!

Dr Robert Svoboda
2021 September 9

Prologue

10th Oct 2019

Recently it was the 14-year anniversary of meeting Swami Satha Sivom. Association with him played an important role in sowing the seeds of do-homa-yourself movement that is now benefiting thousands of spiritual seekers around the world!

In September 2005, we got a call from a friend that a "powerful priest" from India was at the house of a local priest we knew and it would be good to visit and take his blessings. He came for Maha Kumbhabhishekam and Mandalabhishekam at a local temple.

We went to the house of priest Bhairava Sundaram (of Boston Sri KaliKambal Shiva Temple) to meet this visiting priest. On our way to the living room, we passed the kitchen where a nondescript person of stout and stocky build with unkempt hair was washing dishes in a sink.

After we waited for 5-10 minutes, the person who was washing dishes came in and they introduced him to us as "Swami Sathasivom". He was from a traditional family of Sivacharyas and the head priest of a well-known Kalikambal temple in Chennai, visited by thousands every week. His father Sri Sambamurthy Sivacharya was great sadhaka and did Kumbhabhishekam of many temples in several countries around the world.

After introductions, my wife Padmaja abruptly asked him, "Swamiji, what are you doing on this Saturday?"

He smiled and said: "we are doing whatever Mrs Padmaja commands us to do." Mind you, he was meeting us for the first time.

Padmaja told him, "we do Satya Narayana vrata every Pournima night. It is on Saturday. I was wondering if you would like to come."

I was a little embarrassed, because I am a simple householder doing my own pooja and he was a famous priest! Moreover, he is a Shaiva (a "Sivacharya" at that!) and I wasn't sure if Satya Narayama vrata would interest him.

But, to my surprise, he declared emphatically, "yes, we will come." He was supposed to do a Mahalakshami pooja with 1000 lotuses at a temple in Canada on Saturday. He immediately called them and had the pooja postponed.

On that evening, he came along with 2 other priests, one from India and one from Australia - both close to him. The moment he stepped inside our house, he looked around and declared cheerfully, "Mother wants to come here. I must do a Chandi homa here during coming Navaratri. But there is one condition. You cannot give even a cent to me or to other priests who come with me. You can buy materials, but no dakshina to us."

We accepted, though I was wary what this "Chandi homa" was and whether it was "saattwik enough" for me (as though I was a highly saattwik person simply because I mainly worshiped saattwik deities - how naive)! No need to say, I had never seen Chandi homa or read/heard Chandipath.

They sat for entire 4 hours of pooja and enjoyed it. We had a late dinner close to midnight. We talked and they left late.

In the following weeks, we met several times. He would call us at 11 pm and ask, "Can I come and see you just for a few minutes", drive 15 miles to our house, sit with us for 20 min and then leave. There would be nothing important, but he would just want to "see us". If he did not see us for 3-4 days, he would make a visit to just see us once.

With some people, you just feel like you have some deep connection. We all felt that way at that time.

On 2005 Oct 8 morning, I prayed to Mahalakshmi, "Mother, they are going to do a Chandi homa. I don't know Chandi, but the name does not sound nice. Whatever they do and whoever they call, YOU please come and accept the pooja".

How ironic that I started doing Chandipath everyday just a few months later and even did a daily Chandi homa for several years! In fact, there were 3 Chandi homas everyday for a few years at my house. And I had no clue who Chandi was, when my first Chandi homa was conducted by them on 2005 Oct 8!

However, being comfortable in Sanskrit, I could follow much of the text. Being of an analytic/scholarly bent, some of the symbolism behind killing all those demons clicked immediately (the names of people and places in Puranic stories provide important clues to decoding the symbolism). Also, I realized that she was being extolled as "Narayani" in the end and felt more comfortable with the text. 😊

The homa was very elaborate and took many hours. It was done with such care, devotion and a sense of purpose. There were amazing omens around it, including a big rain at the end. It was a divine and spiritually uplifting event and many friends and relatives also enjoyed the experience.

Around that time, my spiritual guru Dr Manish Pandit wanted to perform a Shata Chandi homa in India with a specific sankalpa - relief from legal troubles to Swami Jayendra Saraswati. He had told me in Nov 2004 on Swamiji's arrest that there would be a natural disaster affecting south India around Dattatreya Jayanti day. Indeed, there was a tsunami on that day. In Oct 2005, he felt the continued troubles being faced by a Sannyasi in Aadi Shankara's parampara could bring serious arishta to the nation in 2006.

And, he felt we had a rina to that institution and needed to do something. He thought of a Shata Chandi homa with a specific sankalpa. He wanted to find a function hall in Pune for this.

When Anna (Swami Sathasivom) visited me one night, I mentioned this. He said, "why in a function hall? You can do at my temple. If you want, I'll ask my friends to look for a function hall in Chennai. But you are welcome to do it at my temple."

When I mentioned it to Manish, he immediately accepted. He intuitively felt there was a rina to that temple from a few centuries back and doing it there would be beneficial.

Once we confirmed it, Anna (Swami Sathasivom) asked us to pick dates, just come on the day and sit for the ritual. He said he would arrange *everything*.

And he did. I and Padmaja went one week before the event and he took us to some 40 temples in south India during that week. Manish arrived the day before homa started. Shata Chandi homa itself took one week. As we chanted Chandi 100 times during the week, I became very comfortable with the text. I decided to chant it everyday for 108 days.



On a Friday during the Shata Chandi homa (early 2006), Manish had a darshan of Divine Mother and She commanded him to teach homa to interested people without looking at their

race, gender, caste, creed etc and simplify things. He was told to re-establish Agni on earth and enable anyone who wished to worship the Divine in fire, for spiritual progress.

Though he did not reveal this to anyone for several months (until well after homa manuals were published on internet), Anna had a few books on homa gifted to us by a friend of his. He also gifted me a homa kunda, sruk etc.

When I came back to US, I tried homa a few times. Manish asked me to teach homa to Narayan, as "he really needed to do homa". I experimented with different styles, consolidated a method, started doing it daily and taught Narayan. Incidentally, Narayan was the only person present when Manish had the darshan. As the temple was closed in the afternoon, everybody left and only Manish and Narayan remained there doing Chandipath (I and Padmaja took a break from Chandipath that day and went to Kanchi). Narayan saw nothing, but smelled something special.

When I taught homa to Narayan a couple of times, he was unable to remember instructions. So I just created a document for him with instructions and mantras (kind of like a "cheat sheet").

Manish asked me, "now that you created a document, why don't you just put it on internet? Some more people may benefit." I then turned the document into a more formal manual and uploaded it to internet.

Slowly, hundreds and then thousands of people started doing homa by themselves using the manual. In time, we created manuals for various deities and also recorded audio and video. Going by the website stats, a lot of people have downloaded the manuals! I also get mails with questions and thanks from many people. It seems like a lot of people are now doing daily homa now.

In fact, several people are teaching people around them now and enabling them to do homa.

Manish later said that we are just instruments/dummies in this work. Though we thought we had to do a ritual for the benefit of Swami Jayendra Saraswati, we are nobodies to really help Swamiji. But, the good intention led to the kindling of do-homa-yourself movement!!

Thus, when you innocently intend to do something good which is beyond your capability, God may end up using you for something else that is also good. 🙏

As Manish loves reminding me, we were like the comic heroes of the spy satire spoof "Johar Mehmood in Hong Kong" - two idiots having no clue what they were doing and yet ending up doing something positive. 😊

Especially in my case, I am merely an intellectual philosopher and the antithesis of a "ritual teacher". That thousands are doing homa enabled by the manuals I put together, shows that Divine Mother has a sense of humor! 😊🙏

At the time of Shata Chandi homa, we used the standard method of 1/10th, i.e. Shata Chandi homa is 90 times chanting and 10 times homa. But later I told Anna that a better method is to do all homas, i.e. Shata Chandi homa is 100 homas and Sahasra Chandi homa is 1000 homas.

A few years back, he stayed for 3-4 months in greater Boston and did 1000 Chandi homas. Everyday he would just keep doing homas. It took 3-4 months! BTW, this was done for dharma in the world.

Anna is like a child. He is innocent and unfiltered. He listens to the inner voice without much thinking. If he feels like doing pooja for someone, he will take initiative and do it. If he does not feel like it, he will not do pooja at the house of even a very wealthy patron.

One day, he was driving a new SUV. A person who was sitting on the passenger side said 3-4 times "this car is so good". A thought came to Anna's mind, "this man likes this car so much. Perhaps he should have it". But giving iron freely is not good for the recipient. So he got down, asked the person to shift to the driver seat, asked him to give a rupee and then said "now this car is yours." He gave the car for one rupee and walked away!

He follows the inner voice with no filtering or analysis. And, Mother takes care of him. If he has no money and needs to go to the US, someone shows up and arranges it. He has many powerful friends, but does not approach them. He has faith in Mother to arrange for his needs.

He ignores his own health and comforts and keeps doing poojas and homas for various people. He travels to various countries (US, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Mauritius etc) and does poojas and homas. A few years back, he discovered several ignored ancient temples in Myanmar/Burma and did homa's at several of those temples.

I remembered that yesterday was the 14th anniversary since the first Chandi homa at my house and remembered meeting Anna and the early days. So I wanted to recant and share this.

Now many people are introducing Agni into their life and benefiting from his divine company. In coming decades and centuries, Divine Fire will be firmly established in the world and restore some level of Dharma and balance in this world. Try to be a part and offer some fuel to this movement.

Help Dharma in the world and help yourself in the process - help kindle Divine Fire in the world and within!

Ameen. Amen. Om.

Book of Philosophy



ॐ सह नावतु ।
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

You don't escape the firm grip of duality by just hating duality or fantasizing non-dual realization or with an intellectual understanding of non-dual reality. You only escape it with love, acceptance, respect and true surrender to the Force behind Duality!!!!

- PVR Narasimha Rao

Great Golden Being: An Allegory

22nd Nov 2014

There was once a motionless golden being called Brahman. With a big roar, he suddenly sprang into action. This great golden being took out tiny pieces of gold from himself, moulded them into various shapes and moved them like puppets, enacting a drama. As one puppet hit another, the latter puppet became angry at the former puppet. The great golden being made puppets like and hate other puppets and engage in various actions with others.

He made some fair rules for the drama. Every puppet received equal and opposite reactions for its actions towards other puppets. As he made puppets see others and wish for several things, he eventually gave them what they wished for, after they helped enough in fulfilling the wishes of other puppets. The rules made the drama engaging, self-sufficient, long and lively.

He occasionally crushed a puppet and made a puppet of another shape with the material and changed its role in the drama. But he lent some continuity to the drama by enabling that puppet to still get equal reactions to its previous actions and make it follow its previous desires even without realizing it. However, he made the puppets unaware of the continuation and made them very very scared of being crushed.

He occasionally made a rare puppet finally not fear being crushed, not wish for this or that, do all its actions with no like or dislike to other puppets or to actions themselves. He then "freed" it from the drama - he mixed in himself the gold that made the puppet.

He made some puppets curious to understand the whole drama. After they contemplated enough, he even made some "see" everything that happened! But he made them misunderstand some details.

Someone thought the original motionless being represented the pristine state that one should strive to merge into. He did not realize that motionless golden being and animated great golden being were one and the same. Even if one merged into the motionless golden being, that being would one day spring into action and become the animated great golden being!

There were multiple theories on whether a puppet could ever merge in the animated great golden being, whether the puppet would then become a "part" or "full". There came to be varying theories on the relationship and superiority of motionless golden being and the animated great golden being. There were also theories on how the great being suddenly sprang into action from the motionless Brahman, i.e. what made him do that. Some considered the great being impermanent and Brahman permanent. They did not realize that both were the same. It was a cycle - the great being was sometimes animated and sometimes his animation withdrew and he remained motionless over an extended period. Both were the same being.

The great golden being made some puppets speak eloquently about above theories and claim all-knowingly, "whatever I am doing is done by the great being and not by me". Yet, by pulling invisible strings, great being made them feel internally that they were doing everything! He made them do terrible things to others with vengeance and he made them pay for it. He kept remaking them in different forms in the drama and made them experience various things.

One wise puppet came along and said, "forget all conflicting theories. What matters, O fellow puppets, is to overcome your likes, dislikes, fears etc and participate in the drama without getting carried away. Whether you merge in in animated great golden being or motionless golden being, whether you become part or full upon merging, is irrelevant now. What matters now is to work on your individual conditioning and overcome it."

The great golden being of course made that "wise" puppet speak those words. He pulled the invisible strings to influence various puppets variously by those words!



Why would the great golden want a drama as he is himself Ananda personified ?

[PVR] The play is not because he is not happy or bored. He is in bliss when He expresses as Cosmic Potential Energy during Cosmic Night and also in bliss when He expresses as Cosmic Kinetic Energy during Cosmic Day.

Do you subscribe to the view that the world and the living entities are transformations of brahman?

[PVR] My main message is that one should focus on sadhana and start to somehow overcome conditioning. That is more useful for one's spiritual progress than debating whether Brahman arose from Supreme Being or otherwise, whether we merge in Supreme Being or in Brahman, whether we are part or whole of Supreme Being etc.

When one knows one needs to go to Vrindavan, one can book a flight and start the travel. People endlessly debate on whether to go to this or that temple or this or that garden in Vrindavan and end up getting stuck where they are. First take a flight or train to Vrindavan. Once you reach there, it is easy to explore different places there!

Similarly, if we first develop awe and surrender to the Supreme Being and *sufficiently* overcome our conditioning, likes, dislikes and petty agendas, then a fine understanding may evolve of the relationship between un-manifested Self, animated Supreme Being and our individual selves.

As for sadhana, I do not emphasise one sadhana vs other. Nama sadhana is terrific in this age. Some people may prefer to focus the mind on other aspects of Lord. Whatever works for one and allows one to develop awe and surrender.



A parable related to self-realization, heaven, religion, pseudo-wisdom, sadhana

19th July 2015

Bound in Maya:

There was a room (cosmos) that was filled with really bright light (Self). It was filled with many people (beings in this cosmos), whose eyes had been closed (ego-sense or I-ness) for such a long time that opening them is not natural anymore and eyes feel as though they simply can't be opened (dense conditioning)!

They were moving around like that, hitting and rubbing against each other, liking some and disliking some and becoming angry at some for hitting them.

Self-Realization:

There were some people at different times in different parts of the room, who managed to open their eyes and see the brilliant light (Self-realized). Once they could see, some looked for the doors, opened them and left the room (videhamukti), while some stayed in the room and moved around (jeevanmukti). The light made them feel so nice and gave them such clarity. They clearly saw everybody around them moving about and all of their misconceptions about what others were upto disappeared. They no longer harboured any ill-feelings for someone hitting them. They continued to hit some people and be hit by some people, but they could better understand what was happening, because they could see.

Religions:

Some with opened eyes started giving guidance to others. Some gave directions on how to go to less crowded and more pleasant parts of the room (various heavens). Some gave directions on how to open the eyes (Self-realization).

Some people ignored the importance of opening *their own* eyes and instead developed fascination and admiration for those with open eyes and started following them blindly. But they got lost while trying to follow, because they could not see. People started arguing about which way to go. Followers of the same open-eyed persons, after they left the room, kept arguing which way the persons who left wanted them to follow. Being unable to see, they were all wrong in different ways of course.

Instead of trying to open their eyes, they kept running here and there with closed eyes and arguing with others on where to go. Some spent a lot of energy and time convincing others to walk along with them (conversions) and felt proud of being part of big groups. Some called those who were going other ways and crossed their paths by bad names and even tried to hurt them or even kill them.

Pseudo-wisdom:

Some people recognized that various people may have seen the same light though their descriptions were in different words. They realized that everyone will and can see that same light if they opened their eyes. They correctly recognized the closed eyes (conditioned egosense or I-ness) as the problem.

But they grossly *underestimated* the difficulty in opening eyes after keeping them closed for too long. They kept saying, "you just open your eyes and then there will be brilliant light". Some even *imagined* that their eyes were open and that they were seeing bright light.

Sadhana:

Some recognized the role of effort in opening eyes. They kept trying to pull the eye lids apart consciously everyday (sadhana). Some of them had such wild imagination and anticipation of what they would see when the eyes opened (experiences), that they were carried away by that and could not focus the energy on actually opening the eyes. Some of them ended up imagining that they were seeing brilliant scenes that they had imagined earlier.

Some of them kept arguing about how to wash the hands before trying to open eyelids and how to pull them, with what force, in what angle etc etc (specifics & procedures). Instead of pulling eyelids apart however one can do it, they kept arguing about the best way to do it and their eyes remained closed.

Some of them succeeded in opening the eyes a little bit and the flash of brilliant light startled them. Having been in darkness for too long, they could not keep eyes open for more than a split second. They closed eyes again, but became proud of their achievement. They assumed that the light could be seen only for a split second by anyone and that they achieved what was there.

Of course, some of them did not complicate things, did not get distracted and tried sincerely using the best method they could think of and managed to open eyes and see light.



Where does the concept of "God" fit in this scenario? What represents God here

[PVR]: God is the light as well as the cause of the light. God is also all those with opened/closed eyes. There is nothing really special about world we live in. Vasishtha teaches that there are zillions of such worlds throughout cosmos. We just think that way to feel good about ourselves.

Does 'Self Realization', mean 'Ourselves' realizing or 'Realize' that there is a 'Real Self' neither your or mine?

[PVR]: Scripture does NOT say that "real Self" is neither yours nor mine, it says real Self IS both you and I.

Can all pervasiveness(Agraahya, Aniketa, Avyayaha, Aprameya, Ajah,Amrutah etc) by definition fit with limited selfs independent real existence? Will it not be a logical error?

[PVR]: There is nothing but Self in cosmos. Agraahya, aniketa, avyaya, aprameya, aja and amruta aspects of Self are beyond perception or even discussion, though scholars tend to obsess with those. On the contrary, one can perceive and interact with the graahya aspects of Self. If one imbibes those interactions with respect/gratitude/devotion for Ishwara, that can be more fruitful than obsessive scholarly discussions of the nature of Self. Of course, though mind may contemplate Ishwara as graahya (kind of super-graahya), Ishwara is actually an agraahya aspect of Self.



Four Actors: A Parable

11 Oct 2015

There was a big drama in which many actors took part. The director had chips implanted in the brains of all actors. The chips created thoughts and impulses in an actor to say or do various things to other actors in the scene. Basically, instead of giving the script of the drama on paper, director used these chips to communicate the script and give instructions, in real time.

As the actors followed the instructions (and acted on the thoughts) to the best of their ability, the director kept tweaking the script for future scenes and kept communicating it to actors via chips.

One actor developed attachment to another actor who was being nice to him. When the other actor left him or changed attitude, he was upset. He was happy/sad when someone praised/abused him. He forgot that he was just an actor and took whatever happened to the character he played very seriously and personally. When he said or did things to other characters, he tried hard to justify them to himself, instead of just saying "this is just the script and I am an actor". He wished he played a better character. Director balanced such wishes by all and kept giving different roles in different plays.

A second actor realized that he was just an actor playing various characters. He just left the drama.

A third actor kept telling everyone how this is just a drama and everyone just an actor, but was upset whenever someone did something mean to his character and excited whenever someone did something nice to his character. He wanted his character to be an important one. He secretly kept wishing to play this and that character. Yet, he pretended like he did not care. He did not immerse himself in the role and acted the role disinterestedly. This affected the performance of others and made the play uninteresting. Yet, he wished for his role to be written differently and wished for different roles in future.

A fourth actor realized that he was just a character. He followed the script and said and did things to others. He did not try to justify to himself whatever he said or did. When others said nice things to his character, he did not get excited. When others said bad things to his character, he did not get upset. At the same time, if his role required behaving in an excited or upset manner, he followed the script, immersed himself in the role and showed those emotions fully. This enabled others to act well and made the play more interesting to watch. But, internally, he was 100% clear he was different from the character. He did not wish to play this or that character and did not wish his character to be changed in this or that way. He enjoyed the role without the role getting to his head.

First actor represents normal people who are deluded by Maya. Second actor represents a mukta. Third actor represents a deluded person with pseudo-intellectual wisdom. Fourth actor represents a jeevanmukta.



Karma and jnana

20 Dec 2015

Best wishes for Gita Jayanti tomorrow (actually Ekadasi already started)!

Viewing karma and jnana as opposites and seeing a non-existent conflict between them, as done by many, has been the bane of modern practice of sublime Vedanta philosophy.

I quoted last week from Yoga Vasishtha that the bird of self flies into the Infinite sky of Self by flapping the two wings of karma (action) and jnana (wisdom). There needs to be harmony between the two.

I will address some critiques of a learned Vedantin friend who denounces karma and the above quote from Yoga Vaasishtha. At the end, I will talk about action, desire of fruits, identification, non-action and what harmony between wisdom and action means. I will talk about how a liberated person acts.

As my friend's primary text is Gita, I'll focus on Gita today.

The combination of Karma and Jnana is commented by bhAshyakAra Sri Sanakara, saying that Karma Yoga (NishkAma) is a precursor to Jnana and never an addendum.

In Gita 3.22-23, Krishna says: "There is nothing I cannot get. But there is nothing I want. I do not NEED to do any karmas. Yet, I perform karmas eternally, to set an example and to obey the cosmic order."

Similarly, there is nothing a jeevanmukta needs. He does not NEED to do any karmas. Yet, he performs karmas while embodied, to obey the cosmic order.

Yes, the chapter on Karma yoga is indeed a precursor to the chapter on Jnana yoga. The former explains the source and nature of actions and allows a seeker to perform good actions.

The chapter on jnana yoga explains how it is difficult to identify correct actions. It asks to see non-action in action and see action in non-action. It highlights the need to be detached to the fruits of actions. It also talks about various types of yajnas, i.e. actions involving sacrifice.

We see something as "I" and something as "others". The precursor to seeing all as ONE is actions involving sacrifice of things related to what is seen as "I" and benefiting what is seen as "others".

Then the chapter on Sannyasa yoga discusses at length the difference between giving up actions and performing actions with detachment to their fruits and extols the latter as superior.

After teaching Dhyana yoga, Jnana Vijnana yoga, Akshara Brahma yoga, Raja yoga, Vibhuti yoga, Bhakti yoga etc, Krishna culminates with a teaching on "Moksha Sannyasa yoga".

A seeker may perform actions and avoid actions, read things, contemplate etc, while desiring moksha. Desire of moksha is better than any other desire. Yet, in the end, it too is a desire and blocks one.

Moksha sannyasa yoga describes how a seeker becomes liberated by not seeking anything, including moksha. This chapter describes how a liberated being functions in the world. What it teaches is quite consistent with Vasishtha's teachings to Rama in "Yoga Vaasishtha".

In Gita 18.4-6, Krishna clearly says yajna, daana, tapah karmas shall never be given up. In other words, one shall never give up actions involving self-sacrifice, giving to others and building tolerance to any circumstances. In Gita 18-11, Krishna clearly declares that an embodied being cannot give up actions and hence what should be given up is a desire for the fruits of actions.

In Yoga Vaasishtha terms, selfish actions, actions with desire for fruits etc, are actions with no harmony between action and wisdom. Selfless actions involving self-sacrifice and giving to others, without any attachment to fruits or a sense of "I am doing this" or "I am helping others", are actions in harmony with wisdom. When one is constantly able to perform such actions, the two wings of the bird of self (action & wisdom) are flapping in harmony and the bird flies!!

Sri Krishna repeatedly said Karma is necessary only in the case to bring back person from worldly life or laziness. He even went to the extent of reminding that 'ahamkravimoodhAtma kartAhamiti manyate'.

What is denounced here is thinking of oneself as the doer (kartA). Not action itself. As I showed above, Krishna extols selfless and detached actions throughout Gita!

Vasishtha clarifies this in "Yoga Vaasishtha". Due to a play arising in Brahman, Brahman entertains notions of diversity, interactions between those objects and an elaborate set of rules that those interactions obey. A liberated being realises this play. He performs actions, but neither recognises himself as the doer nor worries about their fruits. He faces various life circumstances (fruits of previous karmas done with attachment) with non-distinction. He performs various selfless actions that present themselves before one, with no attachment to fruits or identification with doership.

THIS is what is meant by harmony between actions and wisdom, karma and jnana.

If you see a text like Katha Upanishad, Karma is tremendously denounced, negated as Nachiketa himself refuses to accept the results of the best possible Vaidika Karma, for Atma Jnana.

Not being attracted to the fruits of "Vaidika karmas" or any karmas does not amount to denouncing karma itself.

Any living organism engages in many karmas all the time, as Yama mentions to Nachiketa. In fact, Yama himself, the preceptor of Atma jnana to Nachiketa, engages in karma constantly - he maintains Dharma in Cosmos!

The key is NOT doing no karmas, but it is to not identify with them, not have a sense of doership and not be attracted to their fruits.

If one thinks "this body-mind complex is I. This I needs to be freed. Let me do XYZ and avoid ABC, to enable MY liberation", there is no liberation. Even avoiding an action, while identifying with that avoidance and expecting some fruits from avoiding that action, is a karma and binds one!!!!!!

Some pseudo-Vedantins are deluded that actions are binding. They do not realize that moksha is NOT "achieved" by frantically engaging, with a *desire* for moksha, in the forced and selfish action of running away from other possibly natural/spontaneous and selfless actions.

Krishna clearly teaches in Gita that actions do not bind, but desire of their fruits does. He also extolled selfless and sacrificial actions with no desire of fruits must always be performed.

Moksha is realized by spontaneously engaging in actions which are possible in one's current circumstances and which benefit others, though with neither a desire for any fruits nor a sense of doership nor a sense of "this must be done for the good of others or world".

Nothing is a "must do". Yet, small and big selfless sacrificial actions that naturally present themselves before one are spontaneously performed, with no interest in their fruits. THAT state is moksha.

There is a difference between mumukshus (those desirous of liberation) and muktas (liberated ones).

A mumukshu may temporarily avoid some actions and see them as binding. But a mukta does not see any selfless action as binding and does not avoid any.

Best wishes for Gita Jayanti again. Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum!



Selfless actions for the good of the world sometimes can be some thing which the ego attaches itself to, at the cost of one's own well being. Because one may desire the best for the world, and sacrifice his own well being oftentimes being a doormat. I wonder what is your take on this.

[PVR] It is the nature of ego sense to possess, label things as "mine", "I did it" etc. Even in selfless actions, there is often a subtle selfish motive. Even selfless actions make one feel proud.

Focusing on the action and trying to remove thoughts of fruits is the beginning. Until one develops awe and surrender for the Supreme and realizes the Supreme as the Doer and Giver of all, ego-sense cannot be fully suppressed. This is a loooooong process.

But, by simply avoiding selfless actions, one will not suppress this ego sense. In fact, an ascetic cutting off all worldly links and living a meagre life in a forest may also be secretly proud of his austerity. It is simply the nature of ego sense to feed itself with anything it comes in contact with.

Making actions more and more selfless and becoming more and more detached from fruits is a good beginning. But, without genuine Bhakti in the Supreme, ego sense cannot be overcome fully.



Jnana and Karma Continued

13th Dec 2015

A spiritual Guru visiting from India said in a talk I attended recently at a temple: "What is the purpose of our stay on earth? Nothing! We are temporary visitors here. We should just enjoy the stay and leave. Problems start only when we think that we must do this or that."

While not incorrect, this is only one side of the coin!

As individuals entertain notions that they need to do this or that, they get stuck in a web of experiences and actions that are weaved from those notions. If they stop entertaining such notions, they only stop further complicating the entanglements from such a web of experiences and actions.

The pre-existing web still needs to be navigated!

Thus, the purpose of existence is not exactly "nothing". It is to enjoy the stay here, experience what comes and perform the right actions to play out the sequence of actions and experiences resulting from previous desires.

It is to disentangle without adding on to existing entanglements!

Having notions that so and so thing is a "must do" can often be problematic and can lead to further entanglements. While it is important to overcome such notions, it is equally important to focus on "can do" in the short term and act!

In the long term, one should know where one is going, viz a spontaneous state of no preferences and goals. But, in the short term, one should focus on baby steps and act on current preferences and goals based on current opportunities.

This is why Vasishtha teaches Rama in "Yoga Vaasishtha" that the bird of individual self flies into the Infinite Sky of Self by flapping the 2 wings of jnana (wisdom) and karma (action). Flapping just one wing is useless!

Wisdom enables us to not get entangled further. Action enables us to disentangle existing entanglements, which won't happen automatically and requires clear actions.

World runs on the principle of balance. When there is a balance between wisdom and actions and they work in unison, then only the bird flies. A bird flapping 2 wings in disharmony cannot fly.

Thus, strive for harmony between wisdom and actions, without de-emphasizing either!

Let the guiding light of wisdom (Jupiter) shine brightly on the paths to the coveted destination of liberated spontaneity and detachment (Ketu) and let patient and firm steps of actions (Saturn) take you towards it!



Does it mean we should not plan for the future? should we just do whatever comes automatically?

[PVR] Well, planning is ok, but don't be attached to the plan (or any parts of it). Go ahead and implement your plans sincerely, but be flexible enough to adapt the plans based on feedback from cosmos!



Some questions on Karma answered

19th May 2017

Someone sent me a thank you note for positively impacting his life and quoted a philosophical writing of mine from an old vedic-wisdom yahoo group post that he liked. When I re-read it, I realize that it is very beautifully written clarifying subtle nuances and may benefit others here.

"If the remedial measures can only push the karma phala down to manifest at a later date/birth then isn't it a futile exercise. Why not accept whatever comes our way as 'PRASAD' from Isvara and move on."

My response: The final goal is indeed to reach a state of mind where one can accept the fruits of all karmas as prasada of Lord, with an equanimous mind. However, it is not easy. When we receive the fruits of some really terrible karmas, our mind gets so twisted and agitated that we lose our balance and our judgment gets badly beaten. This may result in further bad karmas being committed in that agitated/confused state.

Thus, it IS sometimes useful to push off some really bad impending karmas when one is still in a position to do so. If one reaches a calmer state of mind in that borrowed time, one may be able to handle the bad fruits better. It is even possible theoretically that one pushes off a really bad karma, makes progress during that borrowed time, reaches an equanimous state of mind, becomes liberated and then faces the karma as a liberated being with a totally equanimous mind that does not get agitated.

Comment 2: Prarabdha karma is which was already done and sanchita and agami are what we going to do.

My Response: Actually sanchita karmas are also karmas already done. Sanchita means "piled up". Prarabdha karmas are different in the sense that their fructification has already begun. The verb "prArabh" means "to begin". Its noun form "prArambha" means "beginning" and its gerund noun form "prArabdha" means "the [one that was] begun". Prarabdha karmas are actions for which the process of reaction has already begun and in the pipeline. Whereas sanchita karmas are piled up karmas that have not kicked off their fruits yet. They can be delayed indefinitely. If one becomes liberated while living, one can merge in Cosmic Self without experiencing the fruits of sanchita karmas. However, fruits of prarabdha karmas are already in the pipeline and need to be experienced even by a liberated being.

Though fruits of prarabdha karmas are already in the pipeline, even they can actually be delayed or manipulated. Bottomline is that there are agents of delivery at the physical and subtle level even for things deep in the pipeline and hence some limited adjustment is possible.

Comment 3: How does nishkam karma works? In other words, when a doer detaches himself from an action, where does the reaction goes?

My Response: If one identifies with a body-mind complex and a limited sense of self-identification and pursues its selfish agenda, one keeps accumulating karmas. But, if one has minimal identification with a body-mind complex to just sustain it, pursues no agenda and engages in whatever action is natural in the situation one is in (but not driven by any conditioning, i.e. agendas or desires or likes/dislikes), then one is untouched by karmas performed in that state.

In the words of Swami Sivananda of Hrishikesh, "The accumulated and current actions of a Jnani take shelter in Brahmanda Prakriti". In other words, Sanchita karmas (piled up actions from past that have not yet begun fructifying) and aagami karmas (actions being performed right now) of a liberated being take shelter in Cosmic Kinetic Consciousness (Brahmanda Prakriti).

Comment 4: If my destiny is to suffer, why should I pray to God? And if i am being punished for some kind of bad karma from the past, why am i not aware of it? It is like getting punishment without knowing your bad deeds.

My Response: One need not pray to God. All one needs to do is to stop engaging in problematic karmas to add to the pile of such karmas from the past. More importantly, one needs to reach a calm and sustainable state of mind in which that can be maintained even in the middle of a tumultuous hurricane caused in one's life due to serious bad karmas from the past. Once serious troubles set in or mind focuses on sense objects, material world and one's pleasures and pains, mind tends to lose its balance and judgment, starts pursuing its limited selfish agendas and starts performing even more bad karmas. Thus, praying to God and contemplating various ideals and qualities that God represents can give a shelter to the mind in which it can maintain some calmness, balance and judgment. If that is not the case for one, perhaps one needs to perfect it further.

God has no agenda to either punish you or hide the reason. God is an impartial balancer of reactions to all actions. If there is something unreasonable about the reaction you are getting, it means your action had a similar unreasonableness.

Let me turn around your question on being "aware" and ask a simple question. When we cause loss or hurt to someone, do we always tell that person why we are doing it? If not, how can we expect someone to tell us before causing loss or hurt to us? If I caused terrible strife to someone pious and pure for no reason, then Nature will use someone in future to cause terrible strife to me despite my piety and purity and apparently for no reason.

In fact, what will you achieve by knowing exactly what was the action that caused what is happening to you right now? Why is that useful? More useful is your conscience (a representation of God in each heart) that tells you right from wrong. It constantly gives guidance on which actions will give good reactions *in future.

Comment 5: Vasana can be for wealth, fame, power, domination (a struggle for power!) etc. Many ripus, many reasons...!

My Response: Well-said. Though we are discussing karma and karma phala here, the root cause of karma is vasana in chittaakasha. (Chidaakaasha is the space of pure consciousness and chittaakaasha is the space of conditioned consciousness that has likes, dislikes, desires, agendas etc.) Vasishtha defined liberation as overcoming vasanas in Yoga Vaasishtham and Patanjali defined yoga as "chitta vR^itti nirodhaH yogaH" (resisting the working of conditioning is oneness with Cosmic Self) in Yoga Sutras. Until we overcome our vasanas, we are bound. Some are dense and some are very subtle. But all of them bind us.

Comment 6: 1. As per Shri Vimalananda, you may also offer all the karmas as Homa to inner devas or ishta devta? He mentioned that there is lesser of suffering if you do that. Who gets the remaining delta suffering?

My Response: Karmaphala for a specific karma is not a function of that karma alone. It is a function of that karma and one's current state of mind. If someone serves spoiled food, one may get an upset stomach for half day or diarrhoea for a week. It depends on how strong one is. Similarly, the same karmaphala set in motion by the same external agents of delivery (physical & subtle) can cause different reaction inside one, depending on one's current state of mind.

An idle mind is devil's workshop. Our minds keep vibrating with various notions and thoughts. A mind vibrating with selfish desires and unnecessary clutter/confusion *amplifies* the negative effects of one's environment (through which fruits of karmas are administered).

If one thinks of ishta devata with reverence and contemplates various ideals and qualities of ishta devata and mind vibrates with saattwik energy, it absorbs the negative effects of one's environment better or at least does not amplify them.



Who is a Brahmana ?

18th Sep 2013

(1) Of course, one can use whatever definition one wants ("Lets keep it simple in our group. Brahmin is by birth."). My goal is not to expand your group. It is to merely make people think of underlying issues.

(2) The definition of Brahmana is of course not one who is self-realized.

(3) It is not even "one who is interested in knowing Brahman". As <deleted> said, "Who doesn't want to know the Brahma who is the Ananda swaroopam"?

But then, there is a BIG difference between merely wanting something and *prioritizing* it over everything else and dedicating oneself to it!!! THAT is what makes one a brahmana.

If a Narendranath Dutta dedicates himself to realizing Self and spends 5-6 hrs every night meditating in front of a big fire at Dakshineswar under the guidance of a Ramakrishna Paramahansa, he certainly becomes a brahmana. He may take sannyasa, become a "Swami" and even become Self-realized later. But you don't need to wait till then - he is a brahmana once he prioritizes God-realization over other things.

If a non-Brahmin young man in 30s resigns his IT job in Mumbai and spends everyday, for nearly a year, in his one room studio apartment in chanting Saptashati many times and doing homa without any selfish personal sankalpas, he certainly becomes a brahmana. He may do greater things later and even become Self-realized. But you don't need to wait till then - he is a brahmana once he prioritizes God-realization over other things.

(4) Traditionally upanayanam (sacred thread ceremony) is taken as second birth and one becomes a brahmana THEN. However, look at the spirit and not the letter.

In the old days, young men did dedicate themselves to Gayatri sadhana and God-realization once upanayanam was done. Now-a-days, people just engage in some show-off/theatrics during upanayanam. Even without understanding the meanings, they merely repeat Sanskrit lines like "I'll go to Kashi, live by begging and dedicate myself to realizing Truth". Though they are also interested in Self-realization, they give higher priority to power and influence over others or money or physical comforts.

In my above 2 examples, there was no upanayanam or sacred thread and yet those 2 people prioritized god-realization over other things! THAT is the main thing.

(5) Regarding:

A devout sudra is a good sudra, he doesn't become a Brahmin. By doing acts, which are NOT recommended, like reciting veda etc he is a bad sudra. They also can get vedic wisdom by reading/listening to Ramayana and mahabharatha.

😊:-) Veda stands for Self-knowledge. That is why it was limited to brahmanas. Veda is not for one prioritizing physical comforts or money or success. If one born in a family of those pursuing X or Y prioritizes finding god over everything else, he does become a brahmana and FIT to read Veda and perform Vedic rituals.

(6) External "Acharam, madi etc" in Vedic rituals are important in the beginning, but internal purity is million times more important. Often, I find that people not well-versed with all rules have simpler and more innocent minds and that works in their advantage!

Also, a ritual done for adharmik purposes is taamasik (e.g. a homa done for a murderous politician); a ritual done for selfish but dharmik purposes is raajasik (e.g. birth a child); and, a ritual done for selfless dharmik purposes (i.e. no kaamyam) is saattwik. This principle is far more important than acharam etc. People talking about how Veda requires "external" purity miss the point that Veda is more concerned with internal things and intent!

Homa manuals at <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org> employ a generic sankalpa for the pleasure of so and so deity and do not include personal sankalpas. I also tell people to do it with the spirit of "I will do my bit for dharma in the world. Whatever god gives in return, I will accept it gratefully. God knows better what is good for me." I also tell people doing homa to seek spiritual progress and not think about material things. If necessary, ask god to take just enough care of material situation to remove obstacles in spiritual progress.

Whatever learned people may think about it, tens of thousands of people use these manuals to perform a daily/weekly homa by themselves! Many of these are by-birth brahmins who lost the knowledge in their traditions and needed a manual to learn. But there are also many non-brahmins and even women.

(7) Regarding whether "Vedic rituals" (i.e. does Veda have to do with any external rituals), one may enjoy reading a detailed metaphor given at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vedic-wisdom/message/361>.

(8) As adharma increases in the world, threatening the very fabric and balance of this world (in material as well as subtle realms), we DO need a highly increased number of brahmanas. For that, the "by birth" criterion is useless. We need people who dedicate themselves to Self-realization and make sadhana the central (though not the only) piece of their lives.

As an ascending phase of Dharma within Kali yuga has been triggered, I am certain that that will happen in the coming century. The only unknown is whether this new class of brahmanas

who help the world come from within the ranks of "by birth" brahmanas (easier as they have a lot of prerequisites already!) or the wider society. Time will be the judge of that.



Additional Comments:

[PVR] Working out at the gym can give a good physique. However, how fast it works really depends on things like how one's physique was before one started working out, how much (and how well) one is working out and what one is eating. For a really fat person, it may take a long time. But, reasonable exercise can only help. Of course, the only exception is when one feels too proud of working out and eats a lot more than before!

Similarly, even with spiritual sadhana (not just homa, but any practice), the efficacy depends on how densely conditioned one is before one starts sadhana, how much sadhana (and how well) one is doing and what one is doing at other times. For a densely conditioned person, it may take a long time. But, reasonable spiritual sadhana can only help. Of course, only exception is when one feels too proud of sadhana and allows too much sense overload and non-saattwik activities.

Just as what one eats and other habits are as important as working out, how one introspects and controls oneself during "normal life" outside of spiritual sadhana is as important for making spiritual progress.

When judging someone other than oneself, one needs to remember one thing though. Character is not a monolith. It is a product of so many instincts arising from so many rinas (karmik debts) to so many people and things. One may genuinely be making progress with some parts of one's conditioning, but some conditioning may still be too raw. For example, I may be getting excellent control over my instincts, feelings, thoughts and actions when dealing with some people, but be very immature with certain people because of some deep-rooted conditioning that is yet to be worked on. In terms of the gym analogy, one's biceps may look ordinary despite the work-out, but, who knows, the abdomen muscles under that T-shirt may be perfectly toned now and just hidden from your view! Or may be the calf muscles.

Of course, someone may indeed be doing sadhana and yet to reach some decent level. However, it is also possible that he/she is making excellent progress in some areas that are not visible to you (yet) and yet comes across to you otherwise. It is often not that useful to judge others, unless some dharmik cause rides on it.

One should, however, be brutally honest, blunt and ruthless in judging ONESELF. There is no need to discuss it with anyone, but one can atleast analyze for oneself what one's motives are behind various thoughts and instincts.

Just my 2 cents.

[PVR] We cannot judge the karmas and rinas and know exactly what rinas are there or what rinas caused a specific event or behavior, though one may be tempted to come up with convenient guesses based on one's agendas. My point is not that we can judge rinas. It is merely

that different karmik rinas are in play and result in different attachments, aversions, desires and agendas.

Infinite attachments that we cling on to cannot be broken at once. They are broken one/some at a time. So, even one with an increased level of detachment after some years of sadhana may have certain attachments that are as strong as before. When we see someone else affected by an attachment, there may be nothing we can do about it (whether you give the benefit of doubt, not judge the person and move on, as I suggested, or whether you judge him negatively, is upto you. In either case, I did not suggest ignoring "pratyaksha pramana" or blindly believing in someone. I only suggested not wasting time and energy judging others when not needed for any swadharma). But, when we see OURSELVES affected by an attachment, we CAN do something about it. We can try to probe it to see the deeper root cause and try to eliminate it.

There are some basic attachments/desires/agendas of mind at the deepest level and they manifest agitations on the surface due to interactions with others. When the surface is agitated, probing deeper is tough. But, when surface cleans up, it may be possible to probe deeper and see what caused the previous surface waves, if one is very honest. Then one can work on the deeper attachments and try to control them, before they spring into action and cause the next agitation on the surface (during the next provocation).

As you wisely said, the goal of working out is not to tone muscles or reduce fat, but to be healthy and well! However, it is tough to know if one is healthy, by looking at one. External signs can be misleading.

Similarly, the real goal of spiritual sadhana is to increase detachment and dispassion internally. However, it's tough to know it by looking at one. External signs can be misleading.

As one works out and becomes healthy, some external signs may develop, such as reduced fat and better muscles. But it is not necessary.

Similarly, as one does sadhana, some external signs may develop, such as siddhis, calmer and balanced behavior, charisma, clarity of expression etc. But it is not necessary.

One more thing - focus on the external/tangible factors can be problematic. For example, one can develop better muscles by using steroids but ruin health. That is not worth it. Similarly, developing siddhis, charisma, eloquence and such tangible external signs at the cost of real spiritual progress is not worth it.

Another factor - if a few chains holding a big metal ball are cut off, the ball may drop. Some other heavier chains that were loose before may now become tight and stop the ball from dropping further. Cutting these chains for a further drop may take much longer! Similarly, overcoming some attachments may enable one's kundalini to rise, but that can bring to surface (and accentuate) some hitherto inactive attachments that may prove far tougher to overcome. Thus, one may meet sadhakas with awakened kundalinis and with some clear abilities, who are still badly stuck.

In the end, however, it is better to focus on one's own weaknesses and try to overcome them.

[PVR] When there is too much conditioning resulting in frequent bouts of mental agitation, some simplification of lifestyle and seclusion from elements that cause agitation may help to create some level of relative equanimity.

However, it may not eliminate all underlying conditioning. When seclusion ends and interaction starts, agitation may eventually return, unless its seed is removed. So seclusion is not the final/complete solution - it is only a temporary strategy to pool resources and strength to eventually combat and subdue conditioning.

We feel proud/possessive/guilty of what we are/have/do [to others]; we want some things (e.g. appreciation) from some people; we do not want some things (e.g. criticism) from some people; and so on.

All such conditioning is the internal (primary) cause of agitation. When an external (secondary) cause, such as an actual/perceived action/word/gesture from someone, acts as a trigger and combines with the internal cause, the agitation that ensues is the 'effect' of the two causes.

The external cause cannot be controlled by us and is anyway secondary. So, to remove agitation, we MUST remove the internal cause. In order to remove it, we need to first identify it, reflect on it and understand it.

But, in an agitated state of mind, one can almost never identify the internal cause. One can only identify the external cause and blame others.

Of course, others may indeed deserve blame, but, we cannot change others and can only change ourselves. So a yogi should focus on the internal causes of agitation.

So the best strategy is to not analyze things during agitation. After it subsides (in a few hours/days/weeks), then look inside to identify what desires/expectations/agendas/conditioning caused that agitation. Analyze it and prepare so that the next external cause that combines with the same internal cause results in less (or no) agitation. This is a long process. New and more effective habits can help us to come out of the trap of old and debilitating habits. But one requires a sense of purpose, clarity, honesty and discipline.

Otherwise, one will keep going in circles through millions of lives..

[PVR] the intoxication from the drink subsides in a few hours and lets one focus and assimilate again. But the intoxication of pride, guilt etc takes too long to subside. That too prevents us from focusing and assimilating the teachings of scriptures and saints..

These things BTW are easy to say/write, but tough to actually assimilate and imbibe in one's thinking and instincts.

There is a saying in Sanskrit "paropadesha samaye tu sarve vyAsa parAshaRAH" (when it comes to preaching others, everybody is a Vyasa and a Parasara!). It is indeed easy to preach, but difficult to follow oneself. Those who like what I wrote should not think I am some elevated soul providing wise counsel. I may be as (or more) flawed as you are. If my words make sense to you and seem like something you may benefit from, try to benefit from them. Otherwise, ignore them. But don't blindly accept my words under any assumptions..

BTW, one factor not covered in this thread so far is dharma. We may have different dharma (duty) towards different people. When it comes to choosing who we interact with and how, dharma must have a role. We must prefer a higher dharma to a lower dharma. However, knowing one's dharma is very tough.



Varna System

22nd March 2014

India's much-misunderstood varna system (aka caste system) divides people into 4 groups based on their *aptitudes* and roles in society (and NOT their birth or family). Krishna describes their qualities in Srimad Bhagavatam 11.17 (see <http://vedabase.com/en/sb/11/17>).

Brahmanas (wise men) have self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, mercy, balance, truthfulness, honesty, contentment, devotion to God, love and equal vision for all. They guide the society.

Kshatriyas (warriors) have strength, dynamism, tolerance, generosity, steadiness and devotion to the learned. They protect and rule the society.

Vaisyas (businessmen) have desire to accumulate money and use it for Dharma, giving nature, lack of deceit and service to the learned. They move and supply goods within society.

Sudras (servicemen) have the ability to serve others and being contented with whatever they get from that service. They perform miscellaneous tasks in society.

Nonviolence, honesty, truthfulness, selflessness, desire for the welfare and happiness of others, and freedom from lust, anger and greed, are the BASIC qualities of ALL four varnas!!

Chandalas who fall outside of 4 varnas have dishonesty, impurity, lust, anger, selfishness, thievery and useless quarrel.

I was supposedly born in a brahmana family, but had qualities of various varnas and MANY qualities of a chandala too! With time, I am trying to reduce my chandala qualities and to increase my brahmana qualities.

Others will also be better off figuring out which varna is more suitable for their basic nature, trying to increase those qualities in them and reducing the chandala qualities in them.

Learned men, leaders and businessmen of this age are more chandalas than they are brahmanas, kshatriyas or vaisyas (respectively). Instead of being proud of their birth caste or of the position they have in society, they will be better off increasing the qualities of their varna and reducing the chandala qualities.



What about ManuSmriti?

[PVR] Scriptures of Sanatana Dharma do 2 things - (1) outlining the goals of human existence, (2) outlining some specific paths to those goals.

Knowledge of type (1) is absolute and does not change based on desa-kala-patra, but knowledge of type (2) is relative and dependent on desa-kala-patra.

ManuSmriti was for Satya/Krita yuga. Gautama smriti was for Treta yuga. For Kali yuga, the standard is Parasara smriti. In addition, we also have a continuous stream of realized masters (e.g. Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharshi) who realize the absolute truth within, and interpret it for others in relative terms, suitable for their own desa-kala-patra.

Absolute knowledge is like raw grains - stays fresh forever, but one can't digest it. Relative knowledge is like cooked grains - easy to digest (i.e. specific guidance easy to follow) but has shelf life!



Detachment

9 June 2020

Many people mistake "detachment" as aversion for the world. Aversion is a negative *attachment*, i.e. NOT detachment.

True detachment is a great harmonizer and not something that disharmonizes and messes up one's life. Sadly, lives are thrown off balance due to *attachment* to an immature ideal - an ill-conceived idea of "detachment"!

Attachment is the tendency to feel either attraction or aversion for some situations, outcomes, actions and people. One holds oneself and others responsible for various experiences and actions and thinks that one can control them.

An analogy will be very useful here:

When I do something (e.g. think and type this), billions of cells in my body are involved in that action and do their part. They may think they are doing something, but it is I who is doing something! I am forcing all those cells to engage in various actions and interactions. Together, they are all accomplishing something that they are not even aware of.

One cell may be pushed by another cell or receive an electric pulse or a chemical and may find it pleasurable or painful. It may love or hate the experience and love or hate the other cells.

But I am their master and doing everything. Of course, I am not explicitly and consciously controlling all those cells, though my consciousness is distributed across them and makes them work. It happens implicitly and there are some natural laws that govern the working of all the cells, how they interact, how they are sustained, destroyed and recycled. If a cell does not effectively do its designated work, these laws correct things over time so that I function as a whole. We are just like those cells!!!!

As supreme being does various things, billions of us are involved in it. We do our parts, but we never get the big picture (like cells in my body do not know that they are doing their part in my typing this). We may think we are doing something, but it is Lord (or his potency) who is doing. We may love and hate our life situations and other people in them, but they are mere instruments.

Though it is God's potency that does everything, his consciousness is distributed in all of us and makes us work. It happens implicitly and there are some natural laws that govern it. We should trust the natural laws to sustain, destroy and recycle us. We need to recognize the work designated to the consciousness distributed in us, learn to enjoy it and do it effectively. At the same time, we should recognize that our role is limited and not agonize over what is not in our control. We should have faith in the higher force to take care of the big picture well.

Detachment is different from either aversion or frustrated resignation. Detachment comes from recognition, and complete surrender to a higher force that is using one and those around one as instruments.

It does not mean relinquishing either experience or action or trivializing instruments delivering them, but recognizing the real doer of it all and having complete faith in that real doer and the wisdom and long-term fairness of His laws.

This can only enable one to go through the experiences and actions with a calmer mind and harmonize one's interactions with other instruments!

Even when killing a Ravana or a Drona, a Rama or an Arjuna can still have a heart filled with love and respect.

Looking at other people around one as instruments in the play of a higher force can promote empathy for them and harmony in dealings.

One facing an unfavorable situation due to someone else's actions and seeing it as an act of a higher force and the other person as a mere instrument, will not harbor ill-feelings and waste time and energy hating that person.

One still does what is in one's hands, but leave what is not in hands to the higher force. One sees even what one does as work of a small part of that higher forces distributed in one.

Instead of regretting past or worrying about future, instead of being proud of past or dreaming about a future that one falsely believes is ensured by one's current actions, one focuses on current action and leaves the rest to the higher force. And one looks at others around with empathy and camaraderie.

Faith in the wisdom and long-term fairness of the master, in whose body we are trivial cells, can also help ease fear of disease, suffering and death and make us calm, confident, optimistic and blissful.

A detached person experiences things and he does things, but he realizes it as but a minute portion of the work of Lord's potency and not of one's doing or that of people around one. He does not think "my friend did this to me", "I achieved this" etc.

But a detached person is not a stone or a robot. One can still tell dessert from bitter melon. One can still tell praise from abuse.

When doing something nice or harsh to someone, one can still recognize that the other person is pleased or pained.

But a detached person accepts and enjoys whatever experience comes to him "here and now". He sees it as God's act and does not attribute it to people around him, whom he sees as instruments.

At the same time, he sees the spirit of enjoying things and the spirit of doing the right thing, inside one, as minute portions of the higher force and takes them seriously. Yet, he realizes their minuteness and does not take them seriously enough to agonize over what is out of control of that minute portion of higher force.

Whatever he feels like doing and is able to do, he will do. At the end, he will see Lord's potency as the doer of everything. It uses every being in cosmos to do whatever is suitable for that being. One lets the aspect of distributed consciousness that is working through one do whatever feels right at that time.

If the correct action to do is not clear and various dharmas one has towards various entities are clashing and pulling one in different directions, one does not overly agonize about it.

After all, the belief that one is the doer and responsible for everything related to an action puts all pressures and brings agony.

In the absence of such agony and pressure to perform the perfect action, each action does not linger in his mind for a long time even after the actual action and there is no agonized effort over a long time to justify the action to oneself! These are the BIG dissipators of energy!

Some are proud of their "detachment" and try to flaunt it - what an irony!

Real detachment does not involve making a show of it or trying to make others appreciate one for one's actions.

It involves enjoying what comes one's way, without worrying about what else could've come or what else may come later.

It involves sincerely and earnestly doing what one feels at a time - correctly or incorrectly - as the right thing to do. It involves faith in the mastery and fairness of the higher force that is doing everything.

At the same time, it involves taking seriously the minute portion of the action designated by the higher force to a part its consciousness operating through one, but not seriously enough to agonize over things that minute part has no control over.

It is a great harmonizer. It enables effective actions by a focused, assured and calm mind.

Don't be afraid of detachment. At the same time, don't be **attached** to an immature and ill-conceived idea of a self-centered detachment that messes up your life (and that of those around you!) instead of harmonizing!

Don't have a self-centered faith of convenience in God. Instead, have unshakable faith in a fair God who is beyond your conceptions, before whom you and everybody around you, despite the any apparent differences in spiritual caliber, are mere cells in a human body!!!



Can you please explain the need for detachment and how it would help in making spiritual progress ? For eg if I am very attached to my father, and when he passes, I will be shattered and life does go on even though I miss his presence. How does it affect my spiritual progress ?

[PVR] Overthinking what is beyond one's control - what could have been or what may be in future - wastes one's praana and stops one from fulfilling one's current dharma. That spoils both

material life and spiritual life. Detachment is the science and art of letting go what one has no control over and focusing on what one can control and doing the best job one can.



Three levels of meaning of Veda

12th Nov 2014

A friend discussed on a private facebook page about 3 levels of meaning of Veda (adhiyajnika, adhidaivika & adhyatmika) mentioned by Nirukta and asked for my views. I'll share my 2 cents publicly so that others can also read.

To understand ANY layer of meaning of Veda (adhiyajnika, adhidaivika or adhyatmika), linguistic skill alone is insufficient. One needs to be "in tune" with the hymn in question, its Rishi and Devata, which comes only with subtle awareness developed through sadhana and, more importantly, kripa (grace) of Rishi.

NONE of the 3 levels mentioned above actually covers the so called "literal meaning", i.e all of them are still way above the literal meaning! In fact, literal meaning is irrelevant.

It is important to understand these 3 terms clearly. Lord Krishna uses them in 7.29-30 of BhagavadGita, where he says, "those desirous of liberation should know Brahman as the all-pervading adhyatma or transcendental Self. They should be clearly aware, even at their final moment, that Self alone becomes all objects (adhibhutam), becomes all ethereal forms behind those objects (adhidaivam) and becomes all actions between all forms (adhiyajnam)."

Though some may translate "adhiyajna" in the light of rituals, Swami Krishnananda wisely translates it as "the transcendent purpose behind all activities".

When nirukta says that Veda has adhiyajnika, adhidaivika and adhyatmika meanings, it is 3 perspectives rather than 3 layers. These 3 perspectives are: (1) how supreme Self appears as multiple selves (2) how supreme Self appears as multiple ethereal beings operating through those selves, (3) how Self appears as interactions among those beings.

As I type this write up, Brihaspati operates in my consciousness and does his job of inspiring a thought. Budha operates in my consciousness and does his job of coming up with the right articulation. Similarly, various ethereal beings operate through my consciousness and do their job. The result is this writing! I may suffer the delusion that "I, Narasimha Rao, typed this write up", but it is the work of several ethereal beings inside me working in harmony, governed by some cosmic laws applied on the prior momentum of their interactions within this being (self) currently called Narasimha Rao. Vedic hymns describe how Self becomes multiple selves, how Self becomes various ethereal beings and how Self also becomes actions by them.

To be blunt and honest, I do not think much of Sayanacharya's translation - it is too literal. Swami Dayananda Saraswati goes deeper, but his symbolism is often highly superficial and tends to be more adhibhautika (i.e. not adhiyajnika or adhidaivika or adhyatmika).

On the last day of his life, Swami Vivekananda told his disciples that none of the commentaries on Veda was reasonable and wished for a better commentary in future. It is interesting that Sri

Aurobindo, who was imparted some subtle knowledge in his prison cell by Swami Vivekananda, wrote in later years what is in my opinion the most insightful commentary on Veda written in the last 4 millennia.

The best way to understand any Vedic hymn is to learn to chant it, think of its deity and rishi with reverence, seek their blessings and keep chanting & contemplating it. If you are lucky, an insight may dawn one day. Don't be greedy when it comes to understanding Vedic hymns. Real understanding of even one hymn can transform one's life.



Veda Mantram Interpretations

5th Oct 2014

I promised in a discussion on a private closed facebook page of a friend to give my independent interpretation of a couple of Vedic hymns. I'll do it here publicly, as others may be interested.

Hymns: RigVeda 1.10.1-2, Rishi: Vishwamitra, Devata: Indra

गायन्ति त्वा गायत्रिणः = Gayatris are singing of you, O Gayatri.
[Note: Gayatri = sing-worthy, target of all singing]
अर्चन्ति अर्कं अर्किणः = Suns are worshipping Sun
ब्रह्माणः त्वा शतक्रतो उद्वंशमिव येमिरे = Supreme Lords, O supreme Lord, form you in a hierarchical structure
यत् सानोः सानुं आरुहत् = as climbing higher from one summit to another
भूरि अस्पष्ट कर्त्वं = makes things (down below) highly unclear
तत् इन्द्रः अर्थं चेतति = so Indra inspires meaning
युथेन वृष्णिः एजति = while Vrishni stirs multitudes

First verse establishes that there are multitudes of beings and hierarchies, though all are Self. Lord is arranged in a structure that contains Lords; Sun is worshipped, by Suns; and, Gayatri is sung of, by Gayatris!

Second verse speaks of how consciousness is aware of one level in this hierarchy and unaware of levels below.

A simple example can drive the point home: When I open my eyes and some light falls on them, cells in the eye, cells in optical nerves and cells in brain work together to produce the notion that I am seeing so and so object. I am aware of the object, but not of various sensations in various cells.

Vrish means to rain or storm. Vrishni is the deity who storms consciousness by stirring multitudes of its parts into action. But we are not aware of it. At the summit of those actions by those cells is Indra, who inspires an "understanding" (अर्थं चेतति) based on those multitudes of sensations. We are aware only of that understanding ("I am seeing so and so object") and not of all the sensations that brought it, just as one on a high summit does not see what is below clearly.

However, as the first verse says, Vrishni and multitudes of aspects of consciousness stirred into action by him, are all Self! The operational hierarchy does not imply superiority and inferiority.

All are Self, but they do play different roles in a hierarchy. It is more nuanced than saying "all is Self and any division/duality is a delusion".

Different aspect of Self play different roles in various hierarchical structures. When we are aware of one level in the hierarchy, the lower levels may be obscure or quite unclear. By extension, there may be higher summits supported by various realities/experiences we have now, on reaching which these realities/experiences may just fade away into obscurity!

The simple act of thinking of this sentence and typing it involves billions of cells working together nicely! All those cells and consciousness operating through them are Self too, though I am not explicitly aware of them.



Shruti Vakhya

27 Sep 2015

Shruti (literally, "the heard") consists of Vedic knowledge that was heard within by Vedic Seers, i.e. direct revelation.

Smriti (literally "the remembered") consists of stories and accounts (e.g. Puranas) given by Seers, remembered and passed on by generations as tradition.

We normally hold Shruti vaakya to be the final authority, but people often miss a key point when quoting Shruti vaakya as the final authority!

Vaak or speech is of 4 types - para, pasyanti, madhyama and vaikhari.

When a thought is about to arise in the mind, first arises a subtle vibration signalling the subtle intention behind the thought. The thought is not even formed, but an intention behind it is formed in consciousness. So one is not yet consciously aware of the thought. This is para level (literal meaning: beyond).

Then that thought establishes itself in the mind. It is not yet formulated so as to be expressed externally. But one is conscious/aware of it as a visualization or an image or as an idea or a notion in the mind. This is pasyanti level (literal meaning: seeing).

Then that thought is formulated in the mind in some medium (e.g. a language). Mind is aware/conscious of the thought formulated in that medium. This is madhyama level (literal meaning: medium).

Then that thought is expressed externally (e.g. spoken words, written words, facial expressions etc). Now the thought is accessible to the physical senses of others around one. This is vaikhari level (literal meaning: dispersed).

As you can see, written/spoken Words are the grossest level among the 4 levels of speech. They are used as tools to convey ideas and intentions in one's mind and recreate them in the minds of other people.

Words may not even mean the same thing to everyone. Structures of words often need a context to interpret. We interpret them by contextualizing them with our own life experiences, inclinations and biases.

As words of scriptures are conveyed across generations in vaikhari, no wonder a lot of disagreement creeps into their interpretation with time.

Thus, no word (or anything in vaikhari), whether in Sanskrit or Hebrew or Aramaic or Arabic, can be an absolute and non-negotiable Truth.

For example, Vedic hymns are translated vastly differently by different scholars.

Then, why did rishis say that shruti is the pramaana?

Vedas were heard internally by sages in highly elevated states of consciousness. The "shruti" or what was "heard" by them, is not merely the words that are written down in books, but also the seed intent and subtle and explicit thoughts that vibrated in their mind as they heard those words. Those seed intents and subtle and explicit thoughts that vibrated in their mind cannot be captured by spoken/written words. They can only be recreated in our minds with much effort. The only link we have with that state of mind is those explicit words. By uttering them repeatedly in the same manner, we hope to oneday recreate the explicit thoughts, then the subtle thoughts and then the seed intent, that was clearly "heard" within by those sages! THAT state of mind captured by shruti IS indeed absolute and non-negotiable.

But, if there are 10 interpretations of a Vedic hymn, obviously not all of them are an absolute truth and final authority or a "pramaana".

To put it bluntly, what people refer to as "shruti" is, for them, actually "smriti". It is not "heard within" by them. It is only heard externally and hence counts as the "remembered". It is tainted by conditioned interpretation and cannot be the "final authority".

Let me clarify my intention better. Suppose a great scholar of Veda is not enlightened himself and has not overcome conditioning yet. Suppose he quotes a Vedic hymn and says "so and so rule must be followed in so and so ritual."

Suppose an enlightened master (such as Ramakrishna or Ramana) overcame conditioning and has a clear and loud conscience. Suppose he does not quote any Vedic hymn or even a Puranic verse and gives guidance based on a vibration that arises in his extremely clear consciousness.

The former guidance, though it quotes Veda, is not guidance of Shruti, but guidance of Smriti. The latter guidance, though it quotes nothing, it IS the guidance of Shruti - any vibration that arises in a clear consciousness IS Shruti (heard within).

In this age, Vedas are interpreted in a very gross manner and many interpretations include specific external rituals. Just because one does a ritual based on such an interpretation attributed to Veda or just because one's ritual incorporates Vedic hymns, it does not become superior.

Whatever one's practice is, the key is whether one is approaching the state of mind of the seers of Veda.

Whether one chants or meditates with a Veda mantra, whether one chants or meditates with a Pauranika mantra, whether one meditates without any mantra, whether one does a homa based on an interpretation of some Vedic hymns or some other Aagamas or Tantras, whether one sings bhajans and dances, whatever be one's spiritual practice, the only yardstick is whether one is approaching the state of mind captured by Shruti and the state of mind that led seers to hear Shruti within!!

People can say "I am following Shruti & so my sadhana is superior" or "I am worshiping so and so deity & so my sadhana is superior" etc. But, bluntly speaking, they may just be projecting their ego to their sadhana (which is, BTW, extremely common among spiritual sadhakas)!

Do whatever sadhana you or your guru picked. But try to calm the mental activity so that the same vibration that guided Seers of Shruti vibrates in your consciousness and informs and guides you. Don't be misled by the superficial distinctions; don't entertain a state of mind that sees spiritual sadhana as a rat race; and, don't become egoistic about anything related to your spiritual path, including the symbols used in it.

Shruti vakya IS pramaana and hold it in the highest regard, but don't see it as words imprisoned in a book(s), but as a primordial vibration clearly perceptible to Seers with a very subtle, stable and calm state of mind.

BTW, try to have a spiritually fulfilling total lunar eclipse in a few hours.



Hidden Meaning of Bhrigu's story

9th May 2015

Sage Bhrigu, son of Brahma, wanted to test Trinity and see who is superior. When he met his father and did not greet him properly, Brahma was angry. Then he went to Shiva. Though he did not greet Shiva, Shiva got up and embraced him lovingly like a child. When Bhrigu insulted him, "you are so dirty. Why do you embrace me and make me also dirty? Get off me", then Shiva was upset.

Then Bhrigu went to Vaikuntha and, ignored by Vishnu in yoga nidra, kicked hard on his chest. Vishnu woke up and said with much concern, "my child, I hope your foot was not hurt!" Bhrigu asked for forgiveness and declared Vishnu as the best.

Now, what does it all mean?

The word "Bhrigu" comes from the root "bhraj" (to shine or beam). As Self manifests as various objects in the field of duality, Bhrigu is a personification of the quality of Self to shine a bright light on objects so they can be seen and understood.

Trimurtis stand for the subtlest forms of gunas. The subtlest Rajas (Brahma) creates distinction in Self, the subtlest Sattwa (Vishnu) sustains distinction in Self and the subtlest Tamas destroys it.

Throwing up light on things (and making them perceptible and understandable) is a by-product of the principle of creating variety and differentiation, represented by Rajas. So Bhrigu came from Brahma.

Naturally, shining bright light on things is accompanied by an interest to discriminate and judge. No wonder young Bhrigu had a judgmental instinct.

Creation is of rajasik nature and structure, hierarchy, rules and protocols are important. No wonder Brahma was upset when Bhrigu disobeyed protocol.

Shiva stands for the subtlest Tamas that destroys any differentiation in mind. No wonder Shiva did not care about protocols and embraced Bhrigu. The quality of throwing light on things and differentiating them (Bhrigu) no wonder frowns upon (and considers dirty) the quality of destroying distinctions and absorption in Oneness (Shiva).

Shiva being angry is not the same as you and I being angry. If the quality of shining bright light to differentiate things considers seeing all as one dirty, the spirit of eliminating differentiation is no wonder not pleased.

This is just a matter of clash between different principles operating within consciousness.

Vishnu stands for the subtlest Sattwa, who sustains the Creation. Sustaining distinction in Self involves the quality of masterfully maintaining a delicate and complex equilibrium between various objects and forces in the field of duality!

Despite seeming inactive, this quality is ever active and alert. Vishnu in Yoganidra is active and sustains balance between various forces and objects.

The spirit of shining light on things and understanding them (Bhrigu) is ignored by Sattwa guna (Vishnu), which seems inert (asleep) and yet understands every object and force perfectly and actively balances their play.

Chest is shown by 4th house in Jyotish, which also shows peace, contentment and sense of direction. Vishnu's chest is what gives a sense of direction and contentment to Sattwa Guna, i.e. the spirit that masterfully maintains a balance between various beings and forces in this Creation. That is extremely strong and nothing or nobody can hurt it!

Also the spirit of maintaining sustainable balance between various forces is impassionate and perfectly understands how various forces work the way they do. If the spirit of shining light and understanding things is upset that it is not paid attention and misbehaves, that is its nature and the spirit of maintaining sustainable balance does not get upset. Instead, it is concerned about the well-being of latter.

In fact, the spirit of maintaining sustainable balance utilizes the spirit of shining light and understanding things, without the latter even realizing it!

As I keep saying, Puranic stories are metaphorical representations of the play between various forces - some gross, some subtle, some too subtle - that are present within one's consciousness. Deities and ethereal beings are personifications of various aspects of our consciousness. Not that they do not exist outside of us, but what is outside resonates with what is inside. As is the macrocosm outside of us, so is the microcosm inside us.



Esoteric meaning of the story of Holika.

5th March 2015

Best wishes for Holi!

Someone asked me for the esoteric meaning of the story of Holika.

First, the story. Not sure which scripture gives this story, but this is a famous story in folklore:

When demon king Hiranya Kashipu's son Prahlada became a staunch devotee of Vishnu, the demon king could not bear it and tried to kill him. One of the ways apparently was for demoness Holika to hold Prahlada and sit in a fire. Though she had the ability to resist fire, that ability was transferred to Prahlada and Prahlada was unharmed while she was reduced to ashes.

Now, my 2 cents on what it could esoterically mean.

Kashipu stands for material objects. **Hiranya** means gold and stands for the absolute. Hiranyakashipu stands for seeing the material objects as absolute.

Prahlada means supreme bliss. Supreme bliss does not come from a perfect understanding of, or mastery over, material objects. It comes from an unconditional surrender to the spirit within, i.e. the Supreme Lord. Thus, Prahlada symbolizes supreme bliss coming from an unconditional surrender to Lord.

Holika comes from the root "hul", which means "to conceal". She stands for concealing the true nature (spirit) and obviously an ally of Hiranya Kashipu (material absolutism).

Such concealment of spirit indeed has the boon of not being burnt by the low level of fire of logic and rationalism. Material absolutism may foolishly think that such fire can finish off supreme bliss coming from surrender.

But, when encountering the supreme bliss of surrender, fire turns into the higher fire of discrimination and leaves it unscathed and instead finishes off the concealment of spirit!

BTW, those who chant "Durga Saptashati" or "Chandipath" or "Devi Mahatmyam" may remember this line:

kaalaraatrir maharaatrir mohaaraatrishcha daaruNaa

There are 4 special nights that are Her different manifestations - Kaala Raatri, Mahaa Raatri, Moha Raatri and Daaruna Raatri. The last one is also known as "Kroora Raatri" (Aghora book uses that name). It falls tonight.

This night is supposed to be favorable for shatkarmas (6 abhicharas/prayogas). Of course, every action begets an equal and opposite reaction at some time and one will be foolish to engage in such practices, except in rare cases for the greater good of humanity. But, if one suspects that

someone is doing some abhichara against one, one can seek protection. Lord Narasimha is excellent for such protection.

Best wishes for Holi again!



Puranic stories are external metaphors for internal realities

7th Feb 2015

Puranic stories are external metaphors for internal realities. The names chosen for characters and places hold the key for decoding. Of course, the stories may have indeed happened in distant past, but that is not so important. What's more important is that those stories can unfold within us internally any time!

Take the story of Bhargava Rama. **Raama** comes from the root "ram", which means "to enjoy" or "to stop". Within us, he stands for the bliss that comes when all mental activity is stopped.

Bhargava Rama's father was **Jamadagni**. Jamat+agni means "brightly burning fire". His mother was Renuka. It means "a particle". **Renuka** stands for being rooted in the material world. Jamadagni stands for the burning fire of spiritual aspiration. When they combine, bliss is born.

But, when Bhargava Rama became an adult, he had to behead his mother. In other words, when the bliss within grows and matures, it cuts off being rooted in the material world. But Bhargava Rama makes Renuka alive again, without impurities that made her fascinated with Chitraratha before. **Chitraratha** means "variety of attachments". Renuka's fascination with Chitraratha shows that being rooted in material world comes with an inherent tendency towards various attachments.

After the bliss of cessation of mental activities matures, one may still be rooted in the material world and yet not have any attachments and desires. That is the hidden meaning of Renuka being beheaded and becoming alive again without any impurities.

When Bhargava Rama is away, king Kartavirya Arjuna kills his father Jamadagni. That makes him angry and he kills all kshatriyas. What does that symbolize?

Kartavirya means "born from an achievement". **Arjuna** means "strength and firmness". Within us, this king represents the sense of strength and pride that comes from having done something great. If such pride arises in one during a moment of absence of the bliss of cessation of mental activity (i.e. Bhargava Rama is away), that pride can extinguish the burning fire of sadhana.

When the bliss of cessation of mental activity returns it will not only kill that pride, but kill any sense of power and entitlement that may be in any corner of one's consciousness. That is what Rama killing all kshatriyas on earth stands for.

Take the story of Chandra eloping with Brihaspati's wife and Budha being born. Brihaspati forgave his wife, accepted her back and treated Budha as his own son & sishya.

Within us, **Moon** stands for **manas** (mind). **Jupiter** stands for **dhee** (intellect, which discriminates between right and wrong). While male deities show various aspects of *potential* energy that are present in the universe, their consorts show the *kinetic* energy form of the same! Thus, Jupiter's wife stands for the *application* of intellect to judge things. Mind is naturally fascinated by it.

When mind combines with the application of intellect to judge things, the learning ability (Mercury within us) is born! Discriminating intellect (Jupiter) treated learning ability (Mercury) as a son & sishya and brought him up lovingly!

Take the story of Urvashi & Pururava. The great king Pururava was the son of Ida/Ila. He saw celestial nymph Urvashi and fell in love. She agreed to be with him if he is never seen naked by anyone other than her. After they spent many years, Indra wanted her back. His trick exposed Pururava and Urvashi left him. He was lovelorn for the rest of his life.

Urvashi means "**widely expanding**". Within us, she symbolizes the excitement and sense of brilliance that expands in our mind, accompanying any deep insight. While Pingala nadi is the solar channel of logic and structured analysis, Ida/Ila nadi is the lunar channel of emotion and unstructured intuition. **Pururava** means "**many voices**". Within us, he stands for multitude of notions arising from intuition. Mental notions arising from intuition obviously seek the flashes of excitement/brilliance represented by Urvashi! However, these flashes of intuition should not be shared with the world in their *raw form* and some packaging/interpretation/dressing up is needed. If they are shared in their raw form, the flash of brilliance/excitement will leave them.

These are just some samples. EVERY story in Puranas and other scriptures has a deeper metaphorical meaning, which explains how various forces within our consciousness work and interact. Irrespective of one's current life situation, there may be a Puranic story that explains what is unfolding within one's consciousness right now.



[PVR] Yes, Bhrgu comes from bhraj and means effulgence. And Bhargava Rama is "Rama of Bhrgu lineage" but can also be "effulgent Rama".

[PVR] knowledge of Sanskrit, Puranas, Tantra texts, logical thinking and intuition can all give a better understanding. But, even without those, it can come in a moment of inspiration, if God so wills and there is a larger purpose served by it.

However, please note that understanding something is neither necessary nor sufficient to benefit from the underlying wisdom! An articulate scholar may writes pages on how anger develops in one's consciousness and how it works and yet not be able to detect it and overcome it when

encountering that situation practically. A person who does not know all that theory may yet develop greater self-control through sadhana and God's grace.

Theory is helpful, but it is practice that makes us perfect. So, do sadhana - whatever sadhana appeals to you - and focus mind on God.

Reading Puranas, whether or not one understands subtler meanings, is also a sadhana. It may be a far better way to spend time than many other distractions that are so readily available and pervasive today.



Sanatana Dharma and other deities

16 October 2016

A highly disturbing Facebook incident in the last week showed how some wanting to protect Hinduism may actually harm Sanatana Dharma (which NOBODY, however powerful, can succeed at in the LONG run).

A highly saattwik and learned man who embodies the subtlest wisdom of rishis wrote on facebook about various forms of Divine Mother during Nava Ratri. Instead of sticking to "Hindu" deities such as Lakshmi, Durga, Saraswati, Kali etc, he covered forms of Divine Mother from various religious traditions, such as Pele, Yemaya, Isis, Mary etc.

All hell broke loose when this was seen by a Hindu activist who did yeoman work in the last few years on countering biased and demeaning takes on Hinduism by western (and some Indian) academicians and mass conversions by Christian missionaries. Sadly, he assumed the worst intentions when he saw these posts and ruthlessly set his troll army on the scholar. It got ugly. The saattwik man had to take his post down. This activist is well-connected to powerful Indian politicians and also to religious gurus.

He wrote: "After decades of seeming like a genuine scholar of dharma, ayurveda, jyotish and tantra, <name deleted> has UTurned by digesting Hindu Goddess into Mother Mary. This is plain nonsense just to appease his western clients. I am glad our supporters are giving him a solid thrashing on his post. Please read the comments to understand the hypocrisy of such thieves busy digestion dharma into Christianity."

According to the gentleman, "I cannot pretend that I was not annoyed when for several hours hundreds of his followers sent me insulting (and often unprintable) names, threatening (saying I should be hanged, and telling me to "BE CAREFUL" when I visit India), and ignorant (I was even told that "you don't even know enough to know that it is 'Ayurved', not 'Ayurveda')." "

Note: Correct SaMskRta word is Ayurveda and Ayurved is a corruption under Arabic influence!



It is wrong that this activist jumped directly to daNDa without even flirting with sAma (much less dAna or bheda). It is wrong that he set an army of trolls on someone he disagreed with. But, what is even more troubling is a militant, narrow and incorrect understanding of Sanatana Dharma itself.

What one may see as digestion of Hinduism by other religions may in some cases actually be digestion of other religions by all-encompassing Sanatana Dharma!!

Let me make it as simple as I can.

We worship various graama devatas (e.g. Poleramma, Ellamma, Pochamma etc) in various villages of India, using totally different methods sometimes. We see them as lower manifestations

of Divine Mother, very much in the spirit of "aham vibhutyaa bahubhiriha rupairyadaa sthithaa" (Chandipath, Ch 10)! Supreme Mother declares that various forms of mother in cosmos are her own emanations and there is none other than Her.

If some other form, whether historical or even imagined, was revered by generations in another part of the world, won't that concentration of thought over generations create an ethereal form (assuming it wasn't originally present)? If anybody thinks that that ethereal form revered by many is NOT an emanation of Divine Mother, how can that person possibly call himself/herself a believer in Sanatana Dharma??! Why treat Ellamma and Yemaya differently?

Sanatana Dharma has never been and will never be a constant. There are crores of ethereal beings emanating from the Supreme Being. As seekers and seers experience (and create/influence) these ethereal beings and try to bring them to others, practices and spiritual realities are created and refined.

Though various religions and specific paths focus on one or few forms, Sanatana Dharma taught by rishis of India gives a generic framework for understanding this. Thus, Sanatana Dharma is **all-encompassing**, ever evolving and undergoing change and THAT is what makes it in fact sanatana (eternal)!

To a discerning thinker, viewing Pele, Isis, Yemaya, Mary, Tonantzin, Fatima, Nyaya etc as emanations of Supreme Devi can be seen as "digesting various religious traditions INTO Sanatana Dharma"!

We should not accept everything in every tradition, but, every tradition DOES have parts that are consistent with the basic tenets of Sanatana Dharma.

In fact, Sanatana Dharma as taught by rishis leaves ample scope for absorbing other traditions. After all, RigVeda declares "ekam sat vipraa bahudhaa bhavanti" (The absolute is one but the learned say it in many ways). We also firmly declare "vasudhaiva kutumbakam" (entire globe is one family).

As a Sanatana Dharmi who believes in these tenets, why should I consider a blissful, balanced, selfless and peaceful native American worshiper of Mother Nyaya as any lower than a greedy, angry, selfish and unbalanced worshiper of Ma Lakshmi or Durga???

In fact, I will argue that any saattwik, sustainable, selfless and long lasting aspects of ANY religion are but subsets of Sanatana Dharma!! Why fear other traditions? Simply create a division in them, by embracing the good in them, even while fighting the evil in them.

In fact, that is the ONLY way in the long run. Fighting and trying to suppress **wholesale** is the modus operandi of misled religions of Kali yuga that people like this activist are trying to fight. It will be sad if they become like whom they were trying to fight in the first place!!

BTW, the idea of allowing sacred chants of any form of divinity in our "Fire Yoga" manual (<http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/fire>), while using the basic homa structure and retaining oblations to Vedic deities (while internalizing them and explaining their inner esoteric meaning),

was our attempt at expanding the scope and, in the language of "digestion" used by this activist, digesting all traditions into the Agni worship aspect of Sanatana Dharma.

Those who stoke fear and anger find more following now-a-days than those who propagate nuanced understanding and tolerance (with discretion). Of course, tolerating intolerance is dumb, but there ARE tolerant and balanced aspects to any tradition, which must be cherished, supported (and absorbed back into the vast platform that Sanatana Dharma was, is and should be).

There is nothing intolerant about posting a picture of Mother Pele or Mother Yemaya or Mother Mary and seeing her as a lower emanation of Supreme Mother. It should not provoke an angry reaction from a true Sanatana Dharmi.

This activist picked a really ugly fight on social networks with another excellent and soft-spoken scholar of Sanskrit and Vedanta several months back. I truly value his work and hope he becomes wise in picking his "enemies". His "rajas" is very much needed in today's world to fight tamas and rajas. I hope he is wise enough to avoid confrontations with "sattwa", which causes punya kshaya.

I have a request to all. After you do your sadhana (homa, japa, whatever), please say "yaavadbhUmaNDale sanaatanadharmo vardhatu" (यावद् भूमंडले सनातनधर्मो वर्धतु), i.e. may Sanatana Dharma flourish on entire earth. If enough people do this, it may smooth out things in long run.



Is one sure that they will be born again in same faith birth after birth.

[PVR] One need NOT be born in the same faith birth after birth. Once's religion, gender, race, ethnicity, caste, creed, class etc can change from life to life. Even which species one belongs to (human, deer, lion, mosquito etc) can possibly change.



Ashta Pashas

7th August 2016

Scriptures speak of ashta pashas - 8 nooses - that bind a soul to an individual identity. Liberation requires breaking free from these nooses. These 8 nooses are also symbolically represented in the 8th chapter of "Durga Saptashati" (Chandipath) by 8 classes of demons killed by Divine Mother. I will briefly discuss these pashas today and also their link to astrology.

Out of 9 planets, Ketu is moksha karaka, i.e. significator of liberation. Others show 8 nooses that bind us.

- (1) **Ghrina (heat/aversion):** Having hard feelings about someone/something and feeling dislike and aversion, not realizing that all is Self. Planet: Sun (he is known as Ghrini, i.e. one with ghrina).
- (2) **Lajja (shame):** Wanting to hide one's inadequacies, not realizing that all grand/little things are merely temporary appearances of the same Self. Planet: Saturn.
- (3) **Bhaya (fear):** Fear of losing temporary possessions that one falsely believes to be permanent and one's own, and gets attached to, like wealth, position, wife, parents, children (and even one's own life!). Planet: Mars.
- (4) **Shanka (doubt):** Not having full confidence in Shruti vakya that all is Self, one is free and needs nothing to make one happy. Planet: Rahu.
- (5) **Jugupsa (disgust):** Preferring some people/things/experiences and being disgusted by some, not realizing that all is Self. Planet: Moon.
- (6) **Kula (sense of flock/community):** Having a sense of community, commitment or patriotism towards people/things having something common (e.g. same profession, company, caste, political ideology, religious tradition, town, region, country etc). Planet: Venus.
- (7) **Jati (kinship by birth):** Having attachment to people/things that one associates with by birth (e.g. family, lineage, relatives etc). Planet: Mercury.
- (8) **Sheela (character/conduct/propriety):** Holding some behaviour/conduct as desirable, instead of seeing all as Self and apparent differences as "role play" in a transient drama. Planet: Jupiter.

Maharshi Parasara taught that the 12th house from the amsa of chara atmakaraka (AK) shows how one is bound and can become free. There are many perspectives depending on how deep we go, but, the most basic one is to see the sign occupied by AK in D-9 (navamsa - chart of dharma), mark the same sign in rasi chart and see the influences on it (i.e. occupants, planets with graha drishti and owner).

Of course, this is the tip of the iceberg. The 16 charts show pancha koshas within us and D-60 shows the subtlest kosha (Anandamaya). The 12th from AK in D-60 is the key to knowing what

soul "needs" for getting bliss. Of course, you really need nothing to be in bliss and any notion of "I need this for bliss" is bondage!

But, for the purpose of this writeup, we will stick to the basic one mentioned above. We can see a few examples.

(1) Swami Vivekananda

Birthdata: 1863 January 12, 6:32:20 am (LMT, 5:54 East of GMT), Kolkata, India (88 E 30, 22 N 40)

AK is Moon, as he is the most advanced in the sign he occupies. In D-9, he is in Ge. In rasi, 12th from Ge (i.e. Ta) is occupied by Ketu. There are no strong aspects except Rahu's. Venus is the lord.

Ketu shows a high level of freedom. Rahu shows some doubt. Swamiji was skeptical and even doubted even his own enlightened guru till the latter left this world. Venus shows attachment to a group. After all, Swamiji established a mutt.

(2) Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Birthdata: 1836 February 18, 6:44 (LMT, 5:51 East of GMT), 87 E 44' 00", 22 N 53' 00"

AK is Rahu. In D-9, he is in Aq. Counting in reverse (Rahu!), the 12th is Pi. In rasi chart, Pi has exalted Venus. There is a close aspect of Ketu. Jupiter is the lord.

Pi with Ketu's aspect shows a high level of freedom. Venus shows attachment to a group. He trained a few sishyas and said he and his sishyas will come back once more for another mission. Jupiter shows character/propriety. He had many rules in the beginning and did not even eat the prasad at the temple, as it was constructed by a lower caste lady. He cooked and brought his own food. Even when taught Adwaita, he had to first seek the permission of his Mother to enter Nirvikalpa samadhi.

(3) George W Bush

Birthdata: 1946 July 6, 7:25:30 am (EDT, 4:00 West of GMT), New Haven, CT, USA (72w56, 41n18)

Venus is AK. He is in Pi in D-9. In rasi chart, Aq is occupied by none, aspected by Mars and owned by Saturn and Rahu.

Mars shows fear, Saturn shows shame and Rahu shows doubt. Saturn is the strongest of these planets and shame dominates. Bush's feeling of being less accomplished than his father and brothers was a driving factor in his political success and perhaps even in attacking Iraq.

Unlike the first 2 example, where the bondages were overcome to a large extent, Bush succumbed to his bondages.

As mentioned earlier, this is the tip of the iceberg. But the 12th from chara atmakaraka is the key to what binds an individual soul.

Even if one does not know astrology, it does not preclude one from understanding these 8 nooses, identifying the main noose(s) that one need to break free from and work on it.



Is it possible to predict which pasha is dominant so that we can strive to overcome the same? But every one will have all the pashas to some extent at least.

[PVR] you are absolutely right - we are all bound by all 8 pashas to some extent. The ones that represent the strongest fight in a particular life can be seen in the chart, as shown in this write up.

[Compiler] Astrologically inclined readers might benefit from reading Shri PVR Narasimha Rao's research papers on topics discussed here

http://www.vedicastrologer.org/articles/c_karaka.pdf

http://www.vedicastrologer.org/articles/pp_ayanamsa.pdf



Adwaita (non-dualism) and Dwaita (dualism)

23 August 2015

I want to put Adwaita (non-dualism) and Dwaita (dualism) in perspective today, using an analogy.

Laws of physics allow us to build machines. We precisely understand the laws of physics and design cars and other machines that obey those laws. We are even able to design and control satellites that go to Pluto!

All the physical objects to which these laws apply are made of molecules and there is vacuum between molecules. Within each molecule, there are atoms and a lot of vacuum between them. Within an atom, we have a few sub-atomic particles amid a whole lot of vacuum. If we are oneday able to look inside a sub-atomic particle, there will probably be yet tinier particles amid a whole lot of vacuum.

In the end, everything boils down to vacuum!!!

When it comes to sub-atomic particles, the standard laws of physics do not apply and instead laws of quantum physics (aka quantum mechanics) apply.

According to quantum physics, a sub-atomic particle can never be reliably observed. It says that what we consider as particles of matter are actually probabilistic waves of energy.

At the micro level, energy vibrations in space give the mere *appearance* of particles. It is debatable if those particles actually exist or there is just vacuum everywhere!

But those particles, with an uncertain existence, combine to form what we conceive of as matter, at the macro level. There is nothing uncertain about this matter and it obeys some precise laws! We can even design precise machines at the macro level. Isn't it amazing?

Similarly, at the micro level, energy vibrations (energy = Shakti/Prakriti) in consciousness (Atman/Brahman) give the mere *appearance* of various subtle/celestial beings/forces (e.g. Indra, Varuna, Mitra etc). It is debatable if those beings/forces actually exist or there is just consciousness everywhere!

But, those beings, with an uncertain existence, together build all beings of this world that we can perceive, at the macro level. There is nothing uncertain about these beings at the macro level and they obey some precise laws (e.g. law of Karma or action-reaction)!

When one designs a car, one does not say "there is just vacuum everywhere and probabilistic waves of energy in vacuum seeming as matter". One recognizes matter, applies the regular laws of physics, makes measurements and analyzes carefully. Then the car will work as expected.

Similarly, when one is identifying with a physical and mental existence and desires some results, one does not say "there is just consciousness everywhere and probabilistic vibrations in consciousness seeming like various things" (or that "all is Brahman"). One recognizes various physical beings, the karmik laws governing their interactions, analyzes and plans actions well. Then one will get desired results.

But, as one stops working with cars and other machines and starts working at the level of sub-atomic particles, one recognizes that there are just waves of energy in vacuum and realizes that everything is vacuum.

Similarly, as one's identification with a physical and mental existence and associated desires are overcome and one starts being aware of various subtle forces operating within oneself, one recognizes that there are just vibrations in consciousness and realizes that everything is just consciousness.

Just as you don't mix up regular physics and quantum physics, you don't mix up Dwaita and Adwaita. Just as laws of both Newtonian physics and quantum physics are correct for different circumstances, both Dwaita and Adwaita are correct for different circumstances.

Stop seeing them as competing theories and apply the correct one based on your circumstances.



One sees what one chooses to see. You want to see Dwaita, you see Dwaita. You want to see Adwaita, you see adwaita.

[PVR] It is not as simple as "You want to see Adwaita, you see adwaita". Even if one theoretically believes in Adwaita, is attracted to it and "wants to see" it, one will still see Dwaita only, until one's I-ness becomes subtle enough. A dense I-ness may think "this is I. I am great. Others see Dwaita, but I see Adwaita, because I am great".

Quantum physics can be studied and liked by anyone. But, doing real experiments in quantum physics requires sophisticated equipment. Similarly, Adwaita theory can be studied and liked by anyone. But, doing real experiments in it requires a really subtle I-sense that is not pulled down by any likes, dislikes and wants.



Pseudo-understanding of Adwaita

17th July 2016

The greatest teaching of rishis is also the heaviest burden on us, the people of Kali yuga with moderate intellect and little self-control. If a monkey is given a coconut, it does not know what to do with it and can even hurt itself with it!

I am of course referring here to the Vedantic teachings on Adwaita or non-duality! 😊:-)

I will put it in perspective using an apt analogy from modern science. To be clear, I do not dislike or disapprove Adwaita. Dwaita and Adwaita are both valid and for different purposes/situations. Adwaita IS the ultimate reality, but it is useless, irrelevant and even misleading, to 99.999999% sadhakas.

Laws of Newtonian Mechanics enable us to design machines, including cars, cranes, satellites etc. We can do a lot of things in the world using these machines. These laws ($F=Ma$, reaction=action etc) DO work. There is nothing arbitrary or delusional about them.

But, as we dig down into all substances around us (even solids!), we see that they are made up of mostly vacuum and a few molecules exist in them sparsely. Even within a molecule, it is mostly vacuum and a few atoms exist sparsely. Even within an atom, it is mostly vacuum and a few electrons, protons etc exist sparsely.

If we keep digging deeper, we see that there is just vacuum all around us. Some waves of energy appear here and there as tiny particles, with a high level of sparseness, and even the existence of those particles is subject to uncertainty!

The ONE energy field that fills the entire material world with minor variation in terms of waves here and there, appears as different dense objects to us and they interact in predictable ways. We have formulas for it and are able to make machines that behave deterministically.

However, when one digs down to subtlest levels and goes to sub-atomic particles, those formulas do not work! One needs to then realize that it is all an energy field and the existence of mass at a position is uncertain and dependent on the observer.

Similarly, the one Self (Brahman/Atman) that pervades the entire cosmos with minor variation in terms of vibrations in consciousness here and there, appears as different people and things to us. Those people/things interact in predictable ways. You give pleasure/pain to someone and you get pleasure/pain back. There are guidelines on how karmik forces work and how to channel them to get what we like and avoid getting what we dislike, even as we try to transcend likes and dislikes. Rishis taught many relativistic spiritual sciences such as Aagamas, Mantra, Tantra, Jyotisha, Vastu, Ayurveda etc, for this purpose.

As one digs down deep within oneself and becomes aware of various subtle forces that operate within oneself and others (like molecules, atoms, electrons etc make up matter!), many of these shastras start to hit their limits. One has to then see them as subtle vibrations in Self and see all as Self. Veda describes these forces, how they arise from Self, how they work together and how to transcend them.

Pseudo-understanding of Adwaita is dangerous. It does not help one transcend duality. There is no gain from dismissing what one *clearly* experiences as a *delusion* or saying "nothing matters. It is all a delusion anyway".

If I say "it is all uncertain - the position and speed cannot be determined with certainty anyway. So it does not matter" and design a car or a satellite arbitrarily, it will crash. I have to use the formulas and analyze properly. The uncertainty applies to subtler particles.

Similarly, if I want a job or money or happiness or something else, and say "it is all a delusion. It does not matter" and do things arbitrarily, it can ruin life.

Quantum mechanics is useful only to a small subset of scientists - most scientists and engineers can ignore it and rely on Newtonian mechanics. Similarly, Adwaita is useful only to a small subset of sadhakas - most sadhakas can ignore it and rely on Dwaita.

TRUST that there is a higher cosmic Force. Surrender to It. Be mindful of what you are doing to others and be kind and nice. Trust the Force to be loving and fair. Don't lose that trust even when things go wrong and make zero sense. Keep faith and keep going. Be kind and nice to others.

As consciousness becomes aware of its subtler karmik building blocks and their struggle, then consider Adwaita. Let us come naturally, rather than rush to it.

Keep one thing in mind. Lord Dattatreya thought much and waited many years before teaching Adwaita to Lord Parashu Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu! He said that this knowledge, though it is the ultimate reality, should not be given to one not prepared, for it can distract, delude and destroy an unprepared seeker!

Sadly, that caution is gone in this deep Kali yuga. Adwaita has become a buzzword. There is a stream of seekers, who misunderstand Adwaita and prematurely think they have "arrived". There are many who get solid theoretical understanding and think they are "realized". They grossly underestimate the effort required to internalize it and reach the state of realization.

Is one able to recognize one person's words as praise and another's as blame and yet react to them the same way, not just externally, but in terms of deeper instincts too? If not, one is not realized.

If one's leg is cut off, one is profusely bleeding and knows that this body will perish in a few moments, does one yet remain calm and composed and not worry about the perishing of the body? If not, one is not realized.

One can give many pleasant and painful situations like this. But the bottomline is that the state of self-realization is not easy to attain, though clearly knowing what it is is much easier!



Does self realization experiences vary according to the deity one worships?

[PVR] Self-realization is not an "experience". It is a permanent state of mind. It is like a clear lake that is the same whether you come from east or west or north or south. But, each path may look different. Once you reach the lake though, it is the same and has the same clean water.

If you believe differently(Dwaita, Adwaita) will different laws apply to you ?

[PVR] Even if I believe differently, Newton's laws and laws of quantum mechanics will not stop working.



Dwaita vs Adwaita

10th July 2016

While Vedanta emphasizes Adwaita (non-duality), Veda describes Dwaita (duality) very well, while reconciling and blending Adwaita and Dwaita beautifully. If "all is Self" and there is nothing else to discuss, why describe different aspects of consciousness, such as Prajapati, Indra, Varuna, Mitra, Agni etc, in detail?

Prematurely rejecting duality (instead of understanding and working through it) is NOT a winning strategy for reaching non-duality!! The simple fact is that Veda and Vedanta together provide a coherent and complete approach to understand and navigate duality to firmly establish mind in non-duality.

I am re-posting something I posted in 2014. These 2 fantastic RigVedic hymns juxtapose and blend duality and non-duality so brilliantly. If you ask me, THIS is the ESSENCE of Veda and Vedanta!!

Hymns: RigVeda 1.10.1-2, Rishi: Vishwamitra, Devata: Indra

गायन्ति त्वा गायत्रिणः = Gayatri is singing of you, O Gayatri. [Note: Gayatri = sing-worthy, target of all singing]
अर्चन्ति अर्कं अर्किणः = Suns are worshipping Sun
ब्रह्माणः त्वा शतक्रतो उद्वंशमिव येमिरे = Supreme Lords, O supreme Lord, form you in a hierarchical structure
यत् सानोः सानुं आरुहत् = as climbing higher from one summit to another
भूरि अस्पष्ट कर्त्वं = makes things (down below) highly unclear
तत् इन्द्रः अर्थं चेतति = so Indra inspires meaning
युथेन वृष्णिः एजति = while Vrishni stirs multitudes

First verse establishes that there are multitudes of beings and hierarchies, though all are Self. Lord is arranged in a structure that contains Lords; Sun is worshipped, by Suns; and, Gayatri is sung of, by Gayatris!

Second verse speaks of how consciousness is aware of one level in this hierarchy and unaware of levels below.

A simple example can drive the point home: When I open my eyes and some light falls on them, cells in the eye, cells in optical nerves and cells in brain work together to produce the notion that I am seeing so and so object. I am aware of the object, but not of various sensations in various cells.

Vrish means to rain or storm. Vrishni is the deity who storms consciousness by stirring multitudes of its parts into action. But we are not aware of it. At the summit of those actions by those cells is Indra, who inspires an "understanding" (अर्थं चेतति) based on those multitudes of sensations. We are aware only of that understanding ("I am seeing so and so object") and not of all the sensations that brought it, just as one on a high summit does not see what is below clearly.

However, as the first verse says, Vrishni and multitudes of aspects of consciousness stirred into action by him, are all Self! The operational hierarchy does not imply superiority and inferiority.

All are Self, but they do play different roles in a hierarchy. It is more nuanced than saying "all is Self and any division/duality is a delusion".

Different aspect of Self play different roles in various hierarchical structures. When we are aware of one level in the hierarchy, the lower levels may be obscure or quite unclear. By extension, there may be higher summits supported by various realities/experiences we have now, on reaching which these realities/experiences may just fade away into obscurity!

The simple act of thinking of this sentence and typing it involves billions of cells working together nicely! All those cells and consciousness operating through them are Self too, though I am not explicitly aware of them.



[PVR] I look at Vedic literature slightly differently. I am afraid Vedas, Brahmanas etc are grossly and rigidly [mis]interpreted today as descriptions of rituals, customs and ways of life. IMHO, they were subtler and flexible descriptions of how the field of duality operates and the interactions between various forces. They can help us first understand the forces and then transcend them.

Well said about sannyasa ("Sanyasin means not wearing certain dress ,but ,free from worldly desires"). Many external sannyasins today suffer from worldly desires.

Though worldly desires are difficult to overcome, even more difficult to overcome are *subtler* desires and notions (e.g. "I am a great scholar", "I am a good sadhaka", "I need to reform Jyotish", "I need to build a nice temple", "I am detached from material desires", "I need to build

a Vedic school", "I need to make homa popular"). Mahamaya is too powerful and ruthless. If a little seed of desire left hidden deep within the consciousness, She will make it grow into a huge tree in no time!!!

I knew of a sannyasin (and head of a famous and ultra-rich mutt, who comes on Telugu TV a lot), who has very sweet exterior in public, but was mighty unhappy behind closed doors when a workshop he was holding in US did not get the audience he was expecting. Of course, the money was go to towards a good dharmik cause. Yet, true sannyasa is acceptance of what He sends your way and not wanting this or that instead!!!



Tripuraa Rahasyam

4th June 2016

There are several brilliant scriptures on Adwaita Vedanta (non-duality), such as Upanishads, Yoga Vaasishtha, Avadhoota Gita, Bhagavad Gita, Ashtaavakra Gita etc. But I haven't found another scripture like "Tripuraa Rahasyam", taught by Lord Dattatreya to Lord Bhargava Rama. No wonder Ramana Maharshi held this text in high esteem and recommended to seekers!

Most Vedanta texts over-emphasize the destination and describe it so well, but trivialize the path and the challenges on it. While clearly understanding the destination is vital, understanding the challenges on the path and how to deal with them is FAR MORE vital.

One who wants to reach Shiva while belittling Shakti will reach neither!

You don't escape the firm grip of duality by just hating duality or fantasizing non-dual realization or with an intellectual understanding of non-dual reality. You ONLY escape it with love, acceptance, respect and TRUE SURRENDER to the Force behind Duality!!!!

This vital point is missed in most Adwaita texts and "Tripuraa Rahasyam" brings it home so clearly. It shines a bright light on non-dual reality without belittling the appearance of duality or trivializing the challenge of escaping its grip.

The very first story told to Bhargava Rama illustrates the pitfalls of half-baked pseudo-wisdom. It shows how an unprepared craftsman ruins himself with a lazy, half-baked and complacent theoretical understanding of "all is Self".

The text has many stories that illustrate various challenges in overcoming duality. It throws ample light on not only the final destination of non-dual realization, but also on the duality, how it works, how it binds us and how we can overcome it.

To all spiritual seekers wanting to escape the bondage of duality and realize Self, I strongly recommend this scripture.

You can buy Swami Sri Ramananda Saraswathi's English translation published by Ramanashramam at:

¹<https://bookstore.sriramanamaharshi.org/product/tripura-rahasya/>



¹ Updated link

I dont understand this post

[PVR] Don't worry then. It is no big deal. To simplify a bit, non-duality or Oneness or "all is Self" (all is God) is a concept that can be dangerous to one who has likes and dislikes. One can hurt someone and claim "Self hurt Self. The act of hurting is also Self. I did nothing". One will do good and bad to others and all actions done with identification (the the sense "I am doing it") will reap their fruits. One keeps going through the cycle of actions and fruits and become happy one day and sad another day.

Thus, there is a HUGE GAP between theoretically claiming that "all is Self" (which does NOT free one from the cycle of happiness and sadness) and truly imbibing it in one's thoughts and instincts (which does free one). The scripture I referred to elucidates that gap well.

BTW, when Lord Parashu Rama approached Lord Dattatreya, the latter sent him away and asked the former to worship the Divine Mother for several years to become prepared for realization of Oneness. Only after years of that sadhana did Lord Dattatreya teach him.

Thus, if this is too complex for an avatara of Vishnu, it is not going to be easy for us. So, no need to despair!

Puranas are full of stories where various avatars of Vishnu have worshipped Siva to get gyana. Will that mean Worshipping Vishnu will not give gyana?

[PVR] Vishnu maintains Dharma, cosmic order and balance. He is a personification of perfect equanimity and balance. Shiva stands for perfect detachment. They are just 2 sides of the same coin.

Detachment has affinity to equanimity and balance. Equanimity and balance have affinity to detachment. No wonder Vishnu worships Shiva and vice versa. It does not imply superiority or inferiority.

Detachment may lead to more and more balance and equanimity or balance and equanimity may lead to more and more detachment.

Whether one starts from eastern door of the room and walks towards west or starts from western door and walks towards the east, one will eventually reach the center of the room!

What Vaishnavas refer to as Narayana or Shaivas refer to as Sadashiva is the center of the room - Nirguna Parabrahman.



Tripuraa Rahasyam - Allegory explained

9th January 2021

Of the many wonderful allegories in scriptures, I think the most brilliant and perfect one elucidating human condition was taught by Guru Dattatreya to Guru Bhargava Rama in the jnana khanda (wisdom section) of "Tripuraa Rahasyam", which Bhagavan Ramana used to call the best text of Adwaita Vedanta.

Guru Dattatreya tells this story as being narrated by Hemalekha, Rishi Vyaghrapada's daughter and a liberated being, to her husband, prince Hemachooda. However, "I" in the story is a metaphor for jeeva (individual consciousness/self). Here is the story. The more you contemplate, the more you can realize how PERFECT and brilliant it is!!!!

O dear, please hear my ancient story. Long back, my **mother** (metaphor for "pure consciousness/self/chit") gave me a playmate called **Buddhi** (metaphor for intelligence). Surprisingly, my friend was attached to an evil lady named **Avidyaa** (metaphor for ignorance). Yet, because of her simple, straight, gentle, subtle and pure nature, I could never leave her.

Avidyaa brought her foolish son **Moha** (metaphor for delusion/confusion) close to Buddhi. He would constantly force himself on her and became her lover in time. Buddhi even gave birth to a son with him, named **Asthira** (literally unstable, metaphor for mind). Though Asthira was foolish and unstable, he was also very talented and could construct strange and impressive things very quickly.

Though my playmate Buddhi was inherently pure, subtle and gentle, her attachment to her lover, son and mother-in-law (cum-friend) polluted her. Yet, due to my simple and gentle nature, I could not desert her and stuck with her.

Seeing this, her foolish lover Moha tried many times to force himself on me too. However, I am extremely subtle and innately pure, just like my Mother. So he could never succeed.

Yet, due to my continued commitment to my friend Buddhi, despite these attempts by her lover, world started to wrongly believe in the rumor that her lover Moha routinely violated me too!

In time, my friend handed her son Asthira (mind) over to me and started spending all her time in the embrace of her lover. While I was nurturing him, his grandmother (Avidyaa) one day got him a very old wife named **Chapalaa** (metaphor for fickleness). She always sensed her husband's mood and transformed herself in so many different forms and pleased him. Together they could momentarily travel the whole world.

Asthira and Chapalaa got **5 children** (metaphors for 5 senses). They were fully devoted to parents. Because of my friend's love for them, I nurtured them and made them strong. In time, they built their own vast bungalows. Their parents (Asthira and Chapalaa) visited their bungalows and enjoyed great things there. One bungalow was filled with great sounds - both pleasant and unpleasant (hearing). One contained soft and hard objects that gave different sensations (touch). One contained beautiful and ugly things to look at (vision). One contained foods with various tastes - sweet, sour, spicy, bitter etc (taste). The last one contained various smells - nice and disgusting (smell).

The parents kept visiting various bungalows and enjoying various objects. The sons did not touch a single item when parents were not with them. When the parents visited them, they enjoyed the objects along with parents. Yet, greedy Asthira started stealing some objects from the houses of sons, bring them home and enjoy them with wife (i.e. without children).

Chapalaa had a younger sister named **Mahaashanaa** (literally great consumer, metaphor for desire/want). She also accepted Asthira as her husband. Asthira was very attached to her and procured a lot of things to please her. But she would consume everything in a moment and ask for more. Though his children were arranging for so many materials, his second wife consumed them all in a moment and was always hungry and shouting for more.

In a short time, she gave birth to 2 sons - **Jwalamukha** (literally fiery face, metaphor for anger) and **Nindyavritta** (literally despicable conduct, metaphor for selfishness) and they were always right next to her. Whenever Asthira tried to embrace his second wife, his whole body burnt (from the heat of Jwalamukha) and everyone insulted him (because of Nindyavritta). He was living in burning pain from Jwalamukha's contact and guilt and suffering from Nindyavritta's contact. Due to his second wife, he lost all his freedom.

Due to his previous punya, Asthira acquired a nice city with 10 gates (metaphor for the physical body). He was constantly visiting the bungalows of his sons and roaming around that city. He constantly pursued pleasure and obtained pain instead. Everybody insulted him and he always felt guilty, dissatisfied and unhappy. He was constantly tired and never happy.

Though she was pure and gentle, my friend (Buddhi) was in misery seeing her son's miserable situation. I stayed with her, intending to stay till the misery ended.

After all, if I left her, she and her entire family would perish in a moment! They all needed me for their survival, while I did not need anyone. I seemed like Buddhi, Avidyaa, Moha, Asthira, Chapalaa, Mahaashanaa and his 7 sons when I was with them (respectively). Without me, none of them would survive. I needed none. But, due to my compassion for my friend, I stayed with them.

Though others saw me as polluted and dirty, truly wise still saw me as pure, subtle and unblemished (un-blemishable!), just as my mother. My mother is pure and subtle. She is wider than space and subtler than atom. She knew ALL and yet seemed ignorant of everything. She did all and yet seemed idle. She was the base for all and yet seemed to be aloof and isolated. Though all forms were hers, she seemed formless. Though She shined everywhere, she was yet imperceptible. Though she possessed all bliss, yet she seemed emotionless. She had no parents. She had zillions of daughters like me, like ripples in an ocean. They were all just like her in spirit, but devoted to their individual friends and families.

Except for my compassion for my friend and her family, I was just like my mother!

My friend's son Asthira roamed the whole city and slept in the lap of his mother (Buddhi) when he was tired. When he slept, his wives and children also slept. Then his dear friend **Prachaara** (literally distribution, metaphor for praana, i.e. life force) roamed the whole city and guarded it and everyone who lived in it. When all slept, I would reach my mother and lie blissfully in her lap. But, when they all woke up, I would get up and go with them.

Prachaara was very powerful. In various forms, he would protect his friend Asthira, his family and all residents of his friend's city. They would all perish if he left them. He derived all his strength from me and he connected me with all of them and became to the city what a thread is to a garland.

When the city became too dilapidated, he took everyone with him to another city. With his support, Asthira became the master of several cities in succession (in time). Despite the efforts of Prachaara and my unwavering support, Asthira was always miserable. Pulled in different directions by his wives and children, he was always pursuing pleasure but finding pain. He sometimes lived in a wonderful city and sometimes in a terrible city. Irrespective of that, his miseries continued.

His misery made my friend also sad.

After a long time like this, my friend sincerely wanted to change things. She met me secretly, surrendered to me and asked me for a way to save herself!

Then she left her friend Avidya and lover Moha. She found a **good husband** (metaphor for clarity or a Sadguru). With her husband's help, she kept her son Asthira under control. As for her son's wives and children, she imprisoned/restrained some and killed some. When things were under her control, she reached my mother's city accompanied by me.

She constantly embraced my mother and stayed happy forever!

The only things that made me different from my mother earlier were (1) my friend's misery AND (2) my compassion and commitment for my friend. Now that my friend became free, happy and one with my mother, I became permanently united with my mother!

O dear, this story is not just mine! It is the story of everyone.

Aatma vichara (self-contemplation), the primary tool for Adwaitic realization, is not about understanding true, unborn and imperishable self. It is after-all not even knowable!

Instead, aatma vichara is about understanding the perishable layers born from self and peeling them off with discrimination and discipline.

If you contemplate the story, characters, relationships and incidents in the allegory, you can really understand human condition and how one can free oneself.

Jaya Guru Datta!



On the Worship of "Formless"

22 Feb 2015

I once met someone from another state at a housewarming party. He said he is a spiritual teacher in so & so spiritual organization. I said, "Oh that's nice." A friend who was also present revealed that I too was interested in spirituality. Then the visitor asked me, "what practice do you engage in?" I replied, "I do a homa everyday." He said, "we don't do rituals. We meditate." I said, "That's great. I also meditate in front of fire as poornahuti burns." He said, "but we don't meditate on any forms - we meditate on the formless."

Though I started the conversation disinterestedly, the dismissive look on his face when I mentioned "homa" and the proud face he made when mentioning "formless" signalled me to engage him further. So I enquired how he "meditated on the formless".

He explained, "we imagine a big reservoir of energy above us, from which we are deriving energy and refilling ourselves with energy. As you meditate, you refill yourself with energy and that empowers you."

I decided to give him a piece of my mind. I said:

"Well, whether you specifically visualize like that or not, there IS an infinite reservoir of energy that supports every desire, awareness and action that every being engages in.

"Whether a yogi is meditating on the Formless or a pig is eating junk from gutter, the same Cosmic Energy drives both actions!

"Even your act of visualizing that there is a big reservoir of energy from which you are deriving energy, is driven by the same Cosmic Energy! 😊:-)

"By the way, the energy you are visualizing is a form too. This is not really worshipping the formless."

He then said that he assumed I was just a "ritualist" and wanted to educate me on the "Formless meditation". He said that he now understood that I was not just a ritualist and knew Vedanta as well.

Even light, sound and energy is a form. The real "formless" supreme being is the source all forms - lights, sounds, energy and any other entities that we can perceive or contemplate or discuss.

How do we then worship the formless supreme Lord? This is what Lord Shiva taught Vasishtha in "Yoga Vaasishtham":

"He touches all, he tastes all, he hears all, he thinks through all though he is beyond thinking. He does everything at all times, he dwells in all, he is the all. Thus should one contemplate him.

"The Lord is not to be worshipped by material substances but by one's own consciousness. Not by waving of lamps nor lighting incense, nor by offering flowers nor even by offering food or sandal paste. He is worshipped by self-realization alone. This is the supreme meditation, this is the supreme worship: the continuous and unbroken awareness of the indwelling presence, inner light or consciousness!

"While doing WHATEVER one is doing - seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing or talking - one should realize one's essential nature as pure consciousness and offer those actions as worship to Lord.

"His worship is performed day and night perpetually, with the objects that are *spontaneously* and effortlessly obtained, and are offered to the Lord with a mind firmly established in equanimity and right spirit.

"The Lord should be worshipped by means of all enjoyments that the body enjoys, through eating, drinking, being with one's consort and such other pleasures. The Lord should be worshipped with illnesses and every sort of unhappiness or suffering one experiences. The Lord should be worshipped with all of one's activities, including life and death. The Lord should be worshipped with one's poverty and prosperity. The Lord should be worshipped with friendship and love and even with fights and quarrels as well with sports and other pastimes, and with manifestations of the emotions of attraction and aversion.

"The Lord should be worshipped with all kinds of pleasures that come to one *unsought*, whether those pleasures are sanctioned by scriptures or forbidden by them. The Lord should be worshipped with those which are regarded as desirables and others which are regarded as undesirable, with those that are considered appropriate and others that are considered inappropriate.

"For this worship, one should abandon what is lost or unavailable and one should accept, receive and use what is available and comes to one spontaneously and unsought."

Basically, one should accept every experience that comes to one unsought (possibly as a result, however, of desire and effort from the past!) and engage in every action that seems natural and spontaneous in the circumstances. While doing so, one should offer every experience and action to Lord and visualize that Lord is the experiencer and the actor.

Such attitude on a 24x7 basis is the only way to worship the Formless Supreme Lord as per Lord Shiva!

The key is not what one experiences and what one does. The key is the attitude - acceptance, naturalness, spontaneity and equanimity. The key is contemplating the Lord as the experiencer in every experience and as the actor in every action.

When it comes to spirituality, people have stereotypes in their minds, which are triggered by certain keywords. For example, if you say that you do a havan everyday, a Vedantin or "Gyani" may think "oh, he is just a karmakandi or ritualist". If you say "all is Self", a bhakta may think "oh, he is just a Mayavadi non-dualist or pseudo-gyani".

One may think his meditation is superior to your ritual or his "formless" meditation is superior to your meditation on Krishna or Kali, but all that is silly. One's ritual may be so sublime and transform one internally, while another's meditation may just be mechanical, be like a "ritual" 😊:-) and cause no internal transformation.

In the end, all these notions of superiority and inferiority are plain dumb. What matters is internal transformation. That can come in ANY path, when there is a confluence between intent, effort and Grace.

It is unwise to go shopping around and try to find the "perfect" or "fastest" path. Greed is never a formula for spiritual progress - patience and surrender are.

It is also silly to be proud of one's path or think that one's path is superior. Instead, walk the path you picked and focus on yourself. Understand your agendas, motives and instincts and try to transform them. Each time you fall and break, pick up the pieces and keep walking.

Surrender to Him and patiently wait for His grace, even as you keep walking.



In my opinion, you cannot recollect formless experience, because to experience it you have to 'dissolve' and when you get back into this world, then you won't be able to recollect it. If I am not mistaken Vimalananda talks about this and was very irate when someone blabbered 'formless' in front of him! I guess only a Rishi or a some elevated adept will be able to experience 'formless' ness!

[PVR] Here are my theoretical 2 cents.

Formless all-pervading Self is beyond experiencing, perceiving or even contemplating. You cannot "experience" formless Self - you can only "be" that, when structures and forms within one's consciousness disappear.

However, there may be experiences on the way to/from formless Self, at the transition between form and formlessness.

Crossing the boundary between (1) being a specific form that perceives, experiences and interacts with other forms (all existing and animated within Self) and (2) being the formless Self that just "is" (without any distinctions), may involve some sublime "experiences". When the boundary is crossed on the way back, some of those experiences may be recollected. But then, that is not really an "experience" of "formless Self".

Apart from "formless" Self, there is also the "supreme form" of Self that encompasses all forms manifested in Self. That supreme form, aka Cosmic Being or Purusha or Ishwara or Lord, CAN be experienced.

Moreover, shastras declare that the formless Self and this all-encompassing supreme form are not really different! One can only "be" the former and not "experience" it, while one can only "experience" the latter as a part and not "be" Him.

Yet, shastras declare both are not really different! One is like a suppressed spring and the other is like a released spring.

BTW, the word "experience" should be understood carefully here.

When I say that I see an "ocean", I mean that I see a small part of it. I cannot see the "entire ocean" with these eyes. Similarly, supreme form can be experienced, but cannot be "contained" or "completely encompassed" by any single experience!

That is why rishis spend eons contemplating the supreme Lord..



Cows and Horses in Veda

23 Dec 2017

Cows and horses appear a lot in Veda. I will share my thoughts and meditations on them, drawing a clear inspiration from Sri Aurobindo's brilliant work, "Secret of the Veda".

Sanskrit is a tricky language with some words having multiple meanings. Veda uses them very well to allow layers of insights to emerge as a seeker evolves!

Words & Meanings:

The word go means "cow", as well as "sense organs" and "rays of light". The word ashwa comes from the root ash, which means "to reach, pervade" (the word "aashu", which means quick or spontaneous, comes from the same root). The word "ashwa" means "horse" (which moves fast). Also, "shwa" means "a weak one" and "ashwa" is the opposite - "a strong one". After all, horses are seen as symbols of strength.

Subtle Meaning:

Let us see one subtle layer of meaning. Herds of cows were associated in Veda with Dawn and Sun. Even Greek mythology talks about the cows of Sun!

In Jyotish, Sun shows soul, while Moon shows mind. Night stands for not being aware of the inner self (Sun) and being aware of only the changing moods of mind (waxing and waning Moon). Day stands for being aware of the inner self. Ushas or Dawn is the sacred transition. Ushas arrives in Veda with Her herds of cows. Obviously, cows are the rays of light.

Cows stand for insights that bring clear perception of reality.

Now, how does Sun's chariot move? It is drawn by horses! Horses stand for prana or subtle force of vitality. Prana also manifests as nervous force throughout body. But here we are talking about the subtlest force that animates the soul (individualized self) and allows it to do its work! Here we are nicely using the "strong one" meaning of ashwa.

Another Layer:

Rays of light when reflected on things, allow us to perceive them (whether in day or night). Jnanendriyas (senses of perception) allow us to perceive things.

When one faces inward, "go" expresses as a ray of illumination from Self that allows clear perception of one's true nature. When one faces outward, it expresses as sense organs that allow perception of things around one.

When one looks at the world around one, one's vitality expresses as actions to others. So, "ashwa" that expresses as subtle force of vitality when one faces inward, expresses as actions towards others when one faces outward. In this layer, horses show sense organs of action.

Cows move randomly, graze peacefully and give milk to the owner. Similarly, sense organs of perception move randomly, absorb various information and give us understanding of the world.

Just as horses move fast and carry the owner, sense organs of action move fast, take one through various situations. Often, our problems do not stem from seeing or hearing or smelling something. They come from what we DO about them (mentally or physically)! 😊:-)

Related words:

Krishna is gopala, because he is the protector of the senses. At the subtlest level, he is also the ruler of clear perception of one's true nature! He is also govinda, i.e. knower of the clear perception of one's true nature.

A Goswami is one who mastered his sense organs. He is also one who mastered a clear perception of true nature.

When we pray to Lakshmi in Sri Suktam as "ashwadaayi cha godaayi", we are not just asking for physical cows and horses, but asking to enrich our senses of perception and action. At the subtlest level, we are asking for clear perception of reality and the vital force.

In Vedic lore, the allusions to search for lost Sun and lost cows are actually a reference to seeking a clear perception of Self!

Ashwamedha:

An emperor leaves his horse to roam freely around the world for a year. His soldiers protect it from capture by rival kings. At the end, it is sacrificed in fire and one is acknowledged as an emperor.

This strange external ritual is symbolic of one being a perfected nishkama karma yogi.

The vital force and organs of action are allowed to perform any actions that are spontaneous (free roaming horse). If one's vital force does not get stuck in any action (i.e. no attachment), one is free. By surrendering one's vital force to the fire of wisdom, one becomes a perfected nishkama karma yogi.

BTW, most Vedic rituals ARE symbolic of aspects of inner transformation.

Concluding Remark:

On his last day in that physical body, Swami Vivekananda talked about the importance of Veda to his disciples. He lamented that none of the commentaries were reasonable and told them that a fresh approach was needed.

A few years later, Sri Aurobindo was visited in his prison cell by Swamiji ethereally (as claimed by him & I have no reason to doubt it). And Sri Aurobindo came up with "Secret of the Veda" a couple of decades later. It is IMHO the best Veda commentary of the last 2000 years!

However, it covers only some verses. It lays the ground work and shows us the way. A lot more work is still left.



I may add here Sri Ramakrishna was against digging out secret meanings of shastras .

[PVR] Well, but then RK also gave subtle and hidden meanings of some scriptural words at times!!

With RK, you have to be careful. He may contradict himself based on who he is talking to! Here is an example.

Once he taunted mild Jogen, "how can you stay calm like that when someone criticizes your guru? You should kill them".

But, when Niranjana fought with some who abused RK on another occasion, he chided him, "this is how you think you can bring good name to your guru. Shame on you!"

Great gurus like RK adapt their teachings based on who is in front of them and circumstances. What is good for goose is not good for gander!!

These are not linguistic games. These are gradual release mechanisms of knowledge and understanding, just as some medicines release chemicals into our bloodstream in stages.

One thinking that there are no layers of meanings in Vedic and Puranic stories, is missing their essence!!

I read something else too about ashwamedha yagam in a book written by taapii dharma Rao called - devalayalapai boothu bommalu enduku (why vulgar pictures on temples)?

[PVR] Well, the sculptures on temple walls are not necessarily vulgar, for vulgarity is in the eye (and brain!) of the beholder. When a baby sees a woman's breast, it may see it as a source of nourishment. Someone else may see it as a titillating object. When Ramakrishna Paramahansa was taken to prostitutes and they undressed, he saw Divine Mother in them and went into samadhi! The ladies were awestruck with his simplicity and devotion.

Social norms do evolve based on common thinking patterns and common thinking patterns are in turn affected by social norms!!



The Veiling power of Lord

13th Mar 2016

All knowledge of material things and all spiritual knowledge of the Divine as described in various scriptures, is merely the veiling power of Lord. Similarly, all material experiences (of the material world around us) as well as all spiritual experiences (of the entire Cosmos that exists *within* us as a microcosm) are also the veiling power of Lord.

All these are aspects of Lord, but Lord is beyond all these and not limited by them. One who acquires these has NOT found Lord. Such a person is only groping on the periphery.

Just as my consciousness works through various cells in my body and various cells play their roles and act with/against other cells, Lord's consciousness works through various beings in this Cosmos and various beings play their roles and act with/against other beings.

Go through whatever situations life throws at you and keep doing whatever makes sense and is natural/spontaneous in your situation. But think of yourself and others as cells in Lord.

Whether a cell is in the artery near heart or in the anus, it is just a cell in the body and all cells are important for a body to function. Similarly, all beings are important for Cosmos to function. Whatever you need to do for/against someone, do it. But, after the fact, don't think much about what you do, how important or trivial it is and how others are being good or bad to you. Think of Lord instead.

All this is quite easy to understand intellectually, but exceedingly difficult to internalize and implement at all times!

Only one who has *internalized* the essence of spiritual knowledge so deeply and thoroughly that nothing distracts or disturbs one's equanimity, has found Lord. Only one who thinks of everything as Lord's Play, does things and experiences things, but with full awareness that Lord is the doer and experiencer, has found Lord. Only one who can face very pleasant experiences and very painful experiences (e.g. severe suffering and even death!) with the same mindset that is focused on Lord, has found Lord. Only one who is always confident that Lord is the only permanent reality and everything else (including one's current form) is a transient ripple arising in the limitless ocean that Lord is and is not unduly carried away by these transients, has found Lord. Only one who, while taking part in the drama of Samsara, neither loves nor hates co-actors or situations in the drama and realizes that those situations and actors are imagined by the Director, has found Lord.

There is one more thing.

As one does sadhana and spiritual knowledge or experiences come to one, they may bring some clarity in looking at things around one. That clarity and associated recognition and appreciation may unfortunately increase pride and that pride may muddle one's thinking. In some cases, tangible special abilities (siddhis) may develop and the scope for pride and a mistaken sense of achievement or entitlement is much larger.

Ironically, a well-developed sadhaka may be amazingly wise and brilliantly clear in looking at SOME things and yet utterly foolish in looking at some other things (especially those that directly feed one's ego)!

Even the best of sadhakas struggle to escape, and sometimes even recognize and accept, this trap!



I am a lay person and feel pain and joy in life's universal dealings. I find it difficult coping up with things whose goodness or fairness I don't comprehend today. How do I start peeping into the veil even, is it even part of my destiny?

[PVR] Feel the pleasure and pain, but try to cut it off quickly instead of letting the emotion grip the mind for too long.

For example, someone close to one may abuse one and that may make one sad. Feel sad for a while, but don't spend a long time thinking "why should he be so unfair to me", "it is all his fault", "how should I get back at him" etc. As soon as you get back some semblance of control on your mind, tell yourself, "I must've done some karma that made Lord give me this fruit. Let me move on" and think of Lord instead of sulking, thinking badly about the person or engaging in a mental analysis/argument on how he was wrong etc.



Everything as an offering to the divine

20th Feb 2016

Making everything we do through the day an offering to the divine, to the ultimate source of all, is sometimes said to be a sadhana. But what does it mean to make everything into an offering? How does one do so?

A book can be written in response to this question. But, in this age of few words and sound bites, I'll answer in a few paragraphs.

As long as we have a self-identification to a body-mind complex, the cosmos is divided into 2 parts - I and others. We do things to others (our "actions"). Others do things to us (our "experiences").

Every action has a recipient. Consider that recipient as a limited manifestation of Lord and the action as an offering to THAT manifestation of Lord. Every experience has an originator. Consider that as a limited manifestation of Lord and the experience as a blessing of THAT manifestation of Lord.

This posting I am typing is an offering to Lord manifesting as various curious seekers who read this on various forums. Any responses like "wow, that's so insightful" or "that's just some silly and dumb theory" are blessings coming from those manifestations of Lord.

Suppose I have pneumonia and feeling very weak. That experience is a blessing coming from bacteria in my lungs that are limited manifestations of Lord. Suppose I take some medicine that kills those bacteria. My action of taking medicine and hurting those bacteria is an offering to Lord manifesting as those bacteria.

Various beings clinging to life and other things they deeply desire engage in a play of actions and reactions based on the forces of momentum and opportunity! Lord manifests as ALL being. No action is dirty or forbidden. But each action gives rise to a corresponding reaction.

While playing this game, it is natural to think "I must get so and so thing", "I must avoid so and so thing", "so and so beings are so nice to me", "so and so beings are so mean to me" etc.

Yet, it is possible to see the Lord of the Doer and Experiencer of all actions and reactions through various manifestations and think of Lord throughout. Then, it is possible to "engage in" a seemingly aggressive act with a calm mind or a seemingly dirty act with a clean mind. Then it is possible to experience even death (i.e. release of one manifestation of Lord that one currently identifies as I) with no panic.

THAT is what we mean by converting everything into sadhana. Lord exists as all. Lords makes up desires in all and creates a play of actions and reactions.

Though "I" and "others" are all Self, we clearly associate more with what we consider as "I". To reduce association with "I" and expand it to "others", we can cultivate the approach of seeing every action and experience as Lord's. Then pride, guilt and fear (of even death!) slowly disappear.



With Lord manifesting in various, mentioned in scriptures like Gita, what is the cause for the so called 'individual/sadhaka' to act and with his apparent identity of being a separate entity, associated with its feeling divided, superior, moderate or inferior and related attributes long, tall, short, dark, wealthy, poor etc? Can those also be also attributed to the 'Lord'?

[PVR] just as MY consciousness spreads throughout the cells in my body and works through them, Lord's consciousness spreads throughout the Cosmos and engages in various actions/experiences through various beings.

Just as I am not specifically and consciously making a cell in my brain or heart act in a way, so is the case with what Lord does through you and me. There are some basic laws that affect my body and various cells obey them. Similarly, there are some basic laws that affect our divine consciousness acts via various instruments and how there is a balance between them and how the balance evolves with time.

One can go through actions/experiences based on prior momentum while recognizing them as Lord's actions/experiences and seeing the instruments of their discharge with neither passion nor frustration.

One part of Divine Cosmic Law is that one who understands the law and participates in the game with a frame of mind that focus on the Lord rather than individual instruments can become free from the play.

a lot of visualizations and actions (and reactions) are possible. My main point is not to recommend one vs another. My main point is to suggest doing whatever one feels inspired to (based on prior momentum), but, more importantly, do it with no passion or frustration and mind on Lord.



Worshipping the formless

22 Feb 2017

On the Supreme Method to Worship the "Formless" Lord

Best wishes for Maha Shiva Ratri on Thursday night! This is a good day/night to do a very simple Shiva homa (<https://vedicastrologer.org/homa/download.htm>). On this auspicious occasion, I want to share what Lord Shiva himself taught Maharshi Vasishtha about the supreme method to worship Lord.

I once met someone from another state at a housewarming party. He said he is a spiritual teacher in so & so spiritual organization. I said, "Oh that's nice." A friend who was also present revealed that I too was interested in spirituality. Then the visitor asked me, "what practice do you engage in?" I replied, "I do a homa everyday." He said, "we don't do rituals. We meditate." I said, "That's great. I also meditate in front of fire as poornahuti burns." He said, "but we don't meditate on any forms - we meditate on the formless."

Though I started the conversation disinterestedly, the dismissive look on his face when I mentioned "homa" and the proud face he made when mentioning "formless" signaled me to engage him further. So I enquired how he "meditated on the formless".

He explained, "we imagine a big reservoir of energy above us, from which we are deriving energy and refilling ourselves with energy. As you meditate, you refill yourself with energy and that empowers you."

I decided to give him a piece of my mind. I said:

"Well, whether you specifically visualize like that or not, there IS an infinite reservoir of energy that supports every desire, awareness and action that every being engages in.

"Whether a yogi is meditating on the Formless or a pig is eating junk from gutter, the same Cosmic Energy drives both actions!

"Even your act of visualizing that there is a big reservoir of energy from which you are deriving energy, is driven by the same Cosmic Energy! 😊

"By the way, the energy you are visualizing is a form too. This is not really worshipping the formless."

He then said that he assumed I was just a "ritualist" and wanted to educate me on the "Formless meditation". He said that he now understood that I was not just a ritualist and knew Vedanta as well.

Even light, sound and energy is a form. The real "formless" supreme being is the source all forms - lights, sounds, energy and any other entities that we can perceive or contemplate or discuss.

How do we then worship the formless supreme Lord? This is what Lord Shiva taught Vasishtha in "Yoga Vaasishtham":

"He touches all, he tastes all, he hears all, he thinks through all though he is beyond thinking. He does everything at all times, he dwells in all, he is the all. Thus should one contemplate him.

"The Lord is not to be worshipped by material substances but by one's own consciousness. Not by waving of lamps nor lighting incense, nor by offering flowers nor even by offering food or sandal paste. He is worshipped by self-realization alone. This is the supreme meditation, this is the supreme worship: the continuous and unbroken awareness of the indwelling presence, inner light or consciousness!

"While doing WHATEVER one is doing - seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing or talking - one should realize one's essential nature as pure consciousness and offer those actions as worship to Lord.

"His worship is performed day and night perpetually, with the objects that are *spontaneously* and effortlessly obtained, and are offered to the Lord with a mind firmly established in equanimity and right spirit.

"The Lord should be worshipped by means of all enjoyments that the body enjoys, through eating, drinking, being with one's consort and such other pleasures. The Lord should be worshipped with illnesses and every sort of unhappiness or suffering one experiences. The Lord should be worshipped with all of one's activities, including life and death. The Lord should be worshipped with one's poverty and prosperity. The Lord should be worshipped with friendship and love and even with fights and quarrels as well with sports and other pastimes, and with manifestations of the emotions of attraction and aversion.

"The Lord should be worshipped with all kinds of pleasures that come to one *unsought*, whether those pleasures are sanctioned by scriptures or forbidden by them. The Lord should be worshipped with those which are regarded as desirables and others which are regarded as undesirable, with those that are considered appropriate and others that are considered inappropriate.

"For this worship, one should abandon what is lost or unavailable and one should accept, receive and use what is available and comes to one spontaneously and unsought."

Basically, one should accept every experience that comes to one unsought (possibly as a result, however, of desire and effort from the past!) and engage in every action that seems natural and spontaneous in the circumstances. While doing so, one should offer every experience and action to Lord and visualize that Lord is the experiencer and the actor.

Such attitude on a 24x7 basis is the only way to worship the Formless Supreme Lord as per Lord Shiva!

The key is not what one experiences and what one does. The key is the attitude - acceptance, naturalness, spontaneity and equanimity. The key is contemplating the Lord as the experiencer in every experience and as the actor in every action.

When it comes to spirituality, people have stereotypes in their minds, which are triggered by certain keywords. For example, if you say that you do a havan everyday, a Vedantin or "Gyani" may think "oh, he is just a karmakandi or ritualist". If you say "all is Self", a bhakta may think "oh, he is just a Mayavadi non-dualist or pseudo-gyani".

One may think his meditation is superior to your ritual or his "formless" meditation is superior to your meditation on Krishna or Kali, but all that is silly. One's ritual may be so sublime and transform one internally, while another's meditation may just be mechanical, be like a "ritual" 😊 and cause no internal transformation.

In the end, all these notions of superiority and inferiority are plain dumb. What matters is internal transformation. That can come in ANY path, when there is a confluence between intent, effort and Grace.

It is unwise to go shopping around and try to find the "perfect" or "fastest" path. Greed is never a formula for spiritual progress - patience and surrender are.

It is also silly to be proud of one's path or think that one's path is superior. Instead, walk the path you picked and focus on yourself. Understand your agendas, motives and instincts and try to transform them. Each time you fall and break, pick up the pieces and keep walking.

Surrender to Him and patiently wait for His grace, even as you keep walking.



Why does a sadhaka build ego, arrogance, high headedness, unfriendliness, become unapproachable or selfish?

[PVR] Ego is ever hungry to feed itself with *anything* it comes in touch with. Anything we can consider as "I" or "mine" is delicious food for it!

If you deprive ego of some kind of food, it will find something else to feast on.

If you do spiritual sadhana and overcome pride of your beauty, strength, house, vehicles, career, wife or children, you may become proud of your spiritual guru/path or deity you worship or your spiritual experiences or your wisdom or your spiritual progress.

Like a man falling down from a cliff tries to grab something on the way to stop falling, ego that is being shattered will try to find something to hold on to and anchor itself on.

This happens to even highly elevated people. Until one is liberated, there will be something or the other that one's ego attaches to!

My eating and drinking are motivated by physical needs, or should I say, what I perceive as my physical needs. How can I then dedicate my actions to the Lord ?

[PVR] The "formless" is beyond perception, contemplation and discussion. So it is kind of pointless to discuss the formless. But the formless also manifests as the Lord and his Energy and those also manifest as ALL forms.

Based on momentum of karmik pipeline, those forms encounter various circumstances that allow various experiences and actions.

Whether one realizes it or not, it is Lord who is experiencing and acting through each form. But, if a form identifies with that experience/action, it adds to the karmik pipeline and increases the momentum.

Agendas and identification with experiences/actions reduce in an enlightened yogi. But, being in a form (e.g. body), one may still have needs of that form (like hunger, thirst etc). Also, due to momentum of prior karmas, one may still get various opportunities to experience/enjoy various things and do various things.

The key is acceptance of circumstances and engaging in experiences and actions that are *natural and spontaneous*. If one keeps engaging in spontaneous experiences/actions without a complex agenda, and does not identify with those and let the web of karmas becomes denser, one's momentum of karmik pipeline eventually slows down and stops. Then that form will stop its journey and merge with formless.

A simple example: I and Manish are from the lineage of Tembe Swami (Sri Vasudevananda Saraswati), considered a Dattatreya avatar. He used to do homa and tarpana everyday. On the day of his death, he was very weak and his hands were trembling. He still tried a few times to do tarpana and water fell off from his palms. Then he gave up, said "Ishwarechchha" and continued with the rest of the activities.

What one sees as dharma (whether doing a daily ritual or eating or drinking or pleasing someone), one can do as long as there are conducive circumstances (but surrendering the action to lord). If circumstances are not conducive, one does not feel bad or upset. Just as one surrenders the action to Lord, one surrenders any inability to do the action (occurring naturally) to Lord and moves on. THAT is the sign of liberation.

As for your comment on hunger, yes, food is a need of one's physical body (which is also a manifestation of the Lord). A liberated yogi eats what is available naturally with gratitude and a sense of surrender. If nothing is available, one does not panic but accepts that too as the Lord's wish and surrenders.



Phases in Spiritual Evolution

28-Jan-2020

Our subtle self is made of 5 subtle elements - earth, water, fire, air and space, in decreasing order of density. These are controlled by 5 chakras, from Mooladhara chakra to Visuddhi chakra. Let us see the qualities that manifest in a spiritual seeker as each element is influenced by each of 3 gunas. Please note that people may purify different elements in different order.

Earth element governed by Mooladhara chakra is about structure, stability and habits.

When there is predominant Tamas there, one may be stuck in laziness, unwise habits and harmful routines. One may struggle to maintain regularity in spiritual sadhana.

When there is predominant Rajas there, one may passionately engage in some practices and routines and fluctuate between obsession and disappointment, both caused by high expectations.

When there is predominant Sattwa there, one may engage in regular and contented practices. One's expectations become less self-centered and one may not get disheartened if expectations are not fulfilled.

Karma yoga is the ideal path for purifying this element. One fulfills, and eventually purifies, this element by performing regular actions - whether serving others, reading books and contemplating, doing rituals or whatever - and transitioning from selfish actions to selfless ones without attachment to results.

Water element governed by Swadhishthana chakra is about harmony, sense of belonging, emotionality and attachment.

When there is predominant Tamas there, one may be stuck in stagnant and self-serving emotional attachment to a group/path/guru/deity.

When there is predominant Rajas there, one may be passionately and emotionally attached to a group/path/guru/deity and one's attachment may fluctuate between selfish and unselfish motives.

When there is predominant Sattwa there, one may possess stable and steadfast attachment to a group/path/guru/deity, without any self-serving motives.

Bhakti yoga is the ideal path for purifying this element. One fulfills, and eventually purifies, this element by infusing actions with feeling and devotion - whether for a group or a path or a guru or a deity - and transitioning from self-centered feelings to selfless ones of giving oneself up without any expectations.

Fire element governed by Manipoora chakra is about will power, esteem, mastery and ability.

When there is predominant Tamas there, one may pursue self-serving notions of esteem, ability and power over others.

When there is predominant Rajas there, one may passionately pursue notions of esteem, ability and power over others and oneself, driven by a mixture of selfish and selfless motives.

When there is predominant Sattwa there, one is in a focused, contented and selfless pursuit of power over one's own vasanas and instincts.

Raja yoga is the ideal path for purifying this element. One fulfills, and eventually purifies, this element by channeling one's self-esteem and sense of control/power to develop self-control over one's own vasanas and transitioning from a selfish sense of power to a selfless one that looks inward.

Air element governed by Anahata chakra (literal meaning: unbound/unconstrained) is about expansiveness, empathy and identifying with all.

When there is predominant Tamas there, one's own limited agendas outweigh empathy for others, their feelings and needs.

When there is predominant Rajas there, one fluctuates between empathy for others and one's own agendas.

When there is predominant Sattwa there, one instinctively empathizes with others and one's "own" happiness and well-being stop being much more important than those of others. The gap between "I" and "others" narrows considerably.

Jnana yoga (especially viveka or discrimination) is the ideal path for purifying this element. One fulfills, and eventually purifies, this element by channeling one's discrimination and wisdom to identify, downplay and overcome agendas of limited self, increase empathy for others and expand one's self-identification to the unlimited Self.

One word of caution here: Theoretical knowledge of pseudo-Vedanta and repeating like a parrot that all is Self will not increase sattwa in air element. There is no way other than de-identifying with one's own needs and feeling empathy for others around one.

Space element governed by Visuddhi chakra (literal meaning: purity by absence) is about subtlety, absolute lightness and just "being" - being devoid of agendas and notions.

When there is predominant Tamas there, seeds of many agendas lie scattered in one's subtlest core existence.

When there is predominant Rajas there, seeds of some agendas lie hidden in one's subtlest core existence.

When there is predominant Sattwa there, one's subtle core existence is devoid of any considerable agendas - explicit or hidden.

Jnana yoga (especially Ishwara pranidhana or complete surrender) is the ideal path for purifying this element. One fulfills, and eventually purifies, this element by completely surrendering to the Supreme and ridding oneself of any notions of "I need to be/experience/do so and so thing".

One word of caution here: Even tremendous viveka (discrimination) and deep empathy for all will not increase sattwa in space element. Concepts and notions keep arising in the space of

consciousness. Even selfless notions and agendas prevent a state of "pure being devoid of notions". There is no way other than complete surrender to the will of the Supreme - "sarvadharmaan parityajya maamekam sharanam vraja" (leave all dharmas and take refuge in Me).



I'm curious why you consider Ishwara pranidhana jnana yoga and not bhakti yoga? Although to be fair they are practically inseparable. Although the rasa will be different

[PVR]: Good point - I could've actually used either. The key is Ishwara pranidhaana. Jnana yoga and bhakti yoga may be different at start, but the ultimate form that both converge to in the end is undoubtedly Ishwara Pranidhaan



True sannyasa

26 March 2019

The word "sannyasa" is said to come from "saMnyasa", which is interpreted by scholars as "leaving altogether", i.e. renouncing. I have a different interpretation. Nyasa can mean leaving, but its more regular meaning is "placing or fixing" (e.g. Anga nyasa, Kara nyasa, Maha nyasa, Vinyasa etc).

Sannyasa is sat+nyasa, i.e. fixing on the truth (note that "sat" means "truth"). Samnyasa is sam+nyasa, i.e. "fixing on the whole" (note that "sam" means "together"). So both words mean fixing the mind on the absolute and holistic truth.

We pursue that by giving up our pre-occupation with material and subtle aspects of a transient perceived reality. One gives up desire for wealth, family, career success and even knowledge, darshan of deities etc, in the process of fixing the mind on the absolute and holistic truth.

So sannyasa is a very high state. That is why shastras say that sannyasins are not reborn!

Sannyasa is when your mind is firmly focused on the awareness that good and bad things happening to "you" and "the world around you" are transient and will keep changing with time and that there is an unchanging and perennial holistic essence that connects all, which is the real "you".

Even as you are peripherally aware of good or bad things happening to "you" and "the world around you" on a transient basis, due to the Play of Mahamaya (great delusion - the source of Duality), you are fixed in your awareness that this is transient and the real "you" transcends all these divisions and transience and does not need to either embrace or avoid ANY thing!

Though that state is "sannyasa", there are very few real sannyasins in today's world. Hence we colloquially use the term to refer to those who actively pursue that state and, in that process, give up various transient things, such as family, wealth etc.

True sannyasa is internal and external factors may not correlate with inner reality. After all, one sitting alone in a hut in a forest may develop attachment and pride over that 'austere' life. One heading a religious organization may develop deep attachment to expanding it, building a temple or a Vedic school or having darshan of a goddess. And, on the other hand, a royal sage ruling a kingdom and seeing a goddess everyday may do so with an equanimous and detached mind that truly recognizes the transience of those and is perfectly ready to lose them next moment with no regrets!

But, in Kali yuga, the focus is more on external things and hence on rules, structures and processes. So, popular notions of sannyasa are based on external rules and processes.

In many traditions, sannyasins completely cut off relations with mother, father, siblings, wife, children and other relatives. They do not accumulate any money or properties and leave their

sustenance to nature and chance. They minimize their interaction with the world and spend most of their time in contemplation of the Supreme Being. In some traditions, even the worship of various forms of god is forbidden and only formless Narayana is to be worshiped. In some traditions, all rituals are forbidden - even homas and yajnas with an external fire are forbidden!

Socio-cultural and religious institutions may have their own rules. But the tricky thing is that Nature has its own unsaid and implicit laws that you cannot break!! 😊

You may pretend to not care, but deeply ingrained conditioning makes you care about some things at crucial times (e.g. time when prana leaves this body!). You simply cannot overcome some conditioning (and become free) without paying back various debts within the field of Duality! Thus, withdrawing into a shell and cutting down on "give and take" with the world is a bad strategy. One can cut down on "take", but not on "give"!!

After all, in the final chapter of "Bhagavad Gita", Lord Krishna clearly said that sannyasa as detachment from the fruits of actions. At the same time, he clearly cautioned that actions of "yajna, daana and tapas" should NEVER be given up. In other words, actions of sacrifice, giving and penance are a must at all times. They enable you to pay back your debts to the world and lighten your karmik load!

So it makes sense to cut down on what you *get* (or want/expect to get) from the world. But, never cut down on what you *give* to the world.

Some great masters have set a precedent in this area and broke social norms. For example, though sannyasins give up all relationships and do not perform last rites to father or mother, Aadi Shankara is said to have gone to his birth place and performed last rites to his mother.

Recently, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Sivananda of Hrishikesh started the trend of renunciates taking charge, building organizations and doing social service.

An aspiring sannyaasin should not need or expect to *get* anything from the world, but can *give* whatever is natural to give to the world in one's circumstances.

If you have physical strength, serve the needy. If you get money from devotees, distribute it to the poor. If you know medicine, cure the sick. If you know Jyotisha, teach it and help people. If you have materials to do a homa, do it, without any personal sankalpa and for the pleasure of celestial beings and sustainable dharmik peace in the world. If you have money and feel like building a temple or a Vedic school, do it.

But don't get *attached* to those actions. If you try to build a temple and it is going slow, don't be frustrated. If you try to teach holistic living to people and they are uninterested, don't be upset. Give to the world what you are in a position to give and what you feel inspired to give. And don't worry about the end result. Also, don't expect any appreciation and co-operation.

Selfless actions for the benefit of others do not bind one, as long as one does not get attached to them and does not expect anything in return!

THAT is the problem. It is very very very difficult to perform actions without attachment. Also, "purely selfless giving" is very difficult. Every action involves give and take. Even in something given to the world for free (e.g. a free Jyotish software or free homa manuals), there is something that comes to one in return - the appreciation of those who benefit and the happiness and pride brought by that appreciation.

Our brains are inherently wired to develop attachment to what we get. After all, all organisms evolved to prioritize self-interest, self-preservation and self-promotion.

Thus, selfless and detached giving is not easy. For one, one may get attached to the appreciation. Secondly, one may be upset if the act of giving encounters obstacles.

However, there is really no way out. If you are in a position to do something for the world (or a specific person) and you recognize it, it is Nature's way of reminding you your karmik debt and providing you an opportunity to pay it off! 😊 If you ignore it, you only make things more difficult for yourself in future.

Keep giving to others. Do not expect anything from others. Happily accept what comes unsought. Focus more on giving than on gratifying yourself at the expense of the world. Whenever you recognize that you are attached to an action or expecting something in return, tell yourself that is not in your hands and only action is.

Keep working on your internal attitude. Keep walking persistently and that will take you closer and closer to the state of sannyasa.

If a sannyasin has organizational and administrative abilities and administers a religious organization or even a state/national government, there is no problem with it, as long as he is just selflessly giving and not expecting anything for himself. What is important is not whether his surroundings are austere or opulent. What is important is that that makes no difference to him and he will be ok if they are switched. What is important is not whether he is living alone in a forest or ruling a kingdom. What is important is that that makes no difference to him and he will be ok if he goes from one to the other next moment.



Deeper Meaning of Durga Saptashati (Part 1)

11th Nov 2014

Durga Saptashati, popularly known as Chandipath, is said to be equivalent to Vedas - its 3 parts were equated to Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas.

No wonder Saptashati is more than a story of battles, blood, gore and praise of a victorious warrior lady. It HAS to be about the journey of self-realization, if it is equivalent to Vedas.

While vedanta (veda+anta, end of veda) describes the state of self-realization, Vedas cover the *journey* towards it. Irrespective of path taken, it can be abstracted to various stages and one needs to work with the same internal forces. Vedas cover them. One focusing mainly on the final destination and not paying attention to the journey may get lost somewhere. Many now-a-days emphasize Vedanta more. It can lead one to getting stuck in a delusional state of pseudo-realization, where one knows theoretically that all is Self and yet is a slave of the pushes and pulls of deep conditioning, without being able to truly overcome them.

From that point of view, Veda is even more important than Vedanta. However, Veda is too difficult to comprehend in this age. Even though Saptashati is also filled with symbolism and hidden meanings and difficult to comprehend, it is relatively easier. It is at higher level of abstraction, covers the essence and is easier to decode than Veda.

In this series of writings, my understanding of the inner meaning of some of the symbols in this story will be explained. Just like Veda, each verse in Chandipath may have layers of meanings. But, the basic overall thread and symbolism in each story will be covered here very briefly.

Durga Saptashati: Chapter 1

Frustrated king Suratha & businessman Samadhi come to the hermitage of rishi Medha and he tells them about the exploits of Devi.

Su-ratha means a good chariot and it stands for an able body. Scripture uses the metaphor of body as a chariot, breath as horses, pranas as reins, mind as the charioteer, intellect as the minister guiding the charioteer and soul as the king enjoying the ride. As an able body gives one a sense of power and control, it is depicted as a kshatriya.

Samadhi means mental focus and concentration on something. It may be a work such as writing some code. It may be understanding something intellectual. It may be being absorbed in an abstract idea. It may be experiencing some subtle energy. It may be being one with an aspect of divine. Whatever it is, one wants something in return when one focuses. So it is depicted as a businessman.

An able body and a focused mind get one many rewards and give happiness. But they alone never make one permanently happy, for happiness and sadness come in cycles. That is why Suratha and Samadhi, who enjoy tremendous success earlier, get frustrated later and approach rishi Medha.

Medha means intellect and wisdom. As the purpose of intellect is to inform and guide, it is depicted as a brahmana and a rishi. When body and mind are ably guided by intellect, one's journey to liberation can start!

The first story told by rishi is of the slaying of Madhu and Kaitabha. Madhu means honey. Kaitabha comes from keeta and stands for bee-like nature. Honey and bee stand for the fruits of this world and their pursuit. These demons stand for the quality in us, which makes us attracted to the various things in this world and pursue them. Bees accumulate honey with much hard work and may not enjoy it in the end. Similarly, we accumulate jobs, success, fame, houses, cars, spouse, children, friends, family etc.

Vishnu being woken up from sleep and fighting the demons stands for sattwa guna inside one being awakened and leading one towards sadhana. This is the start of self-enquiry. One overcomes laziness, overcomes attachment to material things and starts thinking about god, Self and spiritual progress. This is the first step in spiritual sadhana, i.e. in the long walk towards enlightenment.

The deity of this story is Mahakali, who is the power, might and force of divine Mother's primordial cosmic energy. Getting out of slumber and complacency and starting serious sadhana does require that might and force.

The next 12 chapters describe various stages and obstacles one needs to pass through, on the path to liberation. I will write about the remaining chapters serially.



Can women chant Saptashati ?

[PVR] This is the age when people neither do nor let others do. Women can certainly chant Saptashati or pursue Sri Vidya.



Deeper Meaning of Durga Saptashati (Part 2: Chapters 2-4)

23 Nov 2014

The first charitra of Saptashati deals with how one's I-ness covered by tamas manifests as delusion by the material world, laziness and complacency. Once internal Madhu and Kaitabha are slayed, one overcomes attraction to material things, and stops running after them like a bee. One's spiritual journey starts then.

The second charitra (chapters 2-4) deals with the next stage of rajas. Tamas shows darkness while sattwa shows clarity and light, but both are stable. In contrast, rajas is unstable and shows changes, flux, running around and a play of light and darkness.

When one's I-ness is covered mainly by rajas, one is no longer in complete darkness. In other words, one is not deluded by the physical world or runs after its objects. One overcomes laziness and complacency and does a lot of sadhana passionately. One exerts oneself. However, one CAN fall victim to Mr. Pride and his associates!

Bull symbolizes strength and excellence. For example, naravrishabha literally means "a bull among men" and it is commonly used to refer to an excellent and capable man. Like bull, buffalo also symbolizes strength and excellence, but with some pride attached!

As a spiritual seeker engages in various practices, pride sets in. One may think greatly of oneself, one's guru, one's path, one's level of sadhana, one's spiritual experiences, one's special purpose/mission in life etc. Slaying of that demon symbolizes overcoming that pride and self-importance.

When Mahisha took away what belonged to Indra, Varuna etc, devatas complained to Trimirtis. They all took out their energy/essence, put them together and created Divine Mother. For example, from Vishnu's energy/essence came her shoulders. From Agni's energy/essence came her 3 eyes. From Moon's energy/essence came her breasts. And so on.

This does not mean that she did not exist before and was "created" by them. Divine Mother existed forever, as the energy that was within Supreme Cosmic Being and animated Him. Various aspects of Her infinite energy in fact created various deities. For example, Vishnu who upholds dharma came from her shoulders. Agni who gives clear vision came from her eyes. And so on.

When this great lady reconstructed by all devatas by putting together their own energies went on to fight Mahisha, he sent his army generals. They came with millions of warriors and fought her.

This is what these generals stand for:

- (1) **Chikshura** - A variation of chit + kshura = chitkshura. Stands for cut or incomplete knowledge.
- (2) **Chamara** - Means a plume. Stands for lack of firmness and focus in actions (and sadhana), in favor of comfort.
- (3) **Udagra** - Ut+agra. Stands for superiority complex and haughtiness.
- (4) **Mahahanu** - Great jawed. Big jaws are used by animals to crush other animals. Stands for greed and trickery in pursuing one's agendas.
- (5) **Asiloma** - Means one with knives as body hairs. Stands for selfishness and insensitivity to the well-being of others.
- (6) **Bashkala** - A variation of Vashkala. Vashk means to go. Stands for fickleness and wandering nature.
- (7) **Parivarita** - Means surrounded by others. Stands for wanting followers and supporters.
- (8) **Bidala** - Bit+ala. Bit means abuses and ala means discharging venom. Stands for hurling abuses and insults at others.

When one is proud, the above qualities may take root in one. They in turn make one even more proud and self-absorbed.

Going back to the story, Devi destroyed these generals and their armies and then took on Mahisha himself. Whenever she was about to cut off his head, he escaped it by changing form, once into a lion, then a man, then an elephant and then back into a buffalo. She finally killed him. Then all deities praised her in many ways and she blessed them.

When one tries to overcome mental pride, it takes many forms to escape death. For example, sadhaka may be proud of one's guru, path, sadhana and experiences. When one truly realizes one's pride (i.e. divine Mother is about to kill Mahisha!), one may become proud of something else. One may even become proud of one's realization of pride! It is so difficult to overcome mental pride completely. It takes various forms to escape death! Despite the form taken, it is still Mahishasura (demon of pride). Overcoming pride completely and surrendering to the Divine is very difficult. It requires rajas to be completely overpowered by sattwa.

Just as tamas and rajas are rooted in the physical and mental planes, sattwa is rooted in the spiritual plane (soul) and overcoming it is even more difficult. It is dealt with in the Uttama charitra (3rd charitra).

The deity of the first charitra is Mahakali, who is the power, might and force of cosmic energy. Tamas is rooted in the physical reality and in being deluded by it. Mahakali's might and force can help one overcome tamas.

The deity of the middle charitra is Mahalakshmi, who is the grace, sophistication and balance of cosmic energy. Rajas is rooted in the mental reality and in giving primacy to constructs and notions of mind (which all serve one's sense of self-importance in some way or the other!). Mahalakshmi's grace and balance can help one overcome rajas.



How does the nature of a satwik person differ from the nature of a liberated person?

[PVR] When Totapuri came to Ramakrishna he used to ridicule the path of bhakti. But Ramakrishna was clear that he (Totapuri) was a liberated man. OTOH we have saints who vouch for Bhakti as the best path to liberation. This difference comes in the experience of liberation from the heart (the center of Bhakti) vs the experience of the mind or whatever is beyond the mind (Jnana). Even in a normal human being knowledge is a faculty of the mind whereas emotions is of the heart. What is the difference between liberation through bhakti and liberation through jnana? BTW, Totapuri never took kindly to Bhakti as a valid path to liberation, though he did accept the validity of Shakti (later on).

Is the soul and the Self the same thing?

[PVR]

1. A saattwik person is filled with clarity and light, which illuminates the sense of dharma towards the world developed in that soul over the course of many lives in various bodies in various environments. Though he/she needs nothing from the world, he/she uses every opportunity to fulfill that sense of dharma (without compounding or confusing or conflicting that sense of dharma with new desires!). One does not worry if there is no opportunity, but, one sees and uses every opportunity.

A liberated person does not need anything from the world and does not have any sense that "I have to do this for the world or so and so person/group". One gladly accepts whatever Nature throws at him and does whatever one is spontaneously able to do for others. One neither resists nor runs towards any experience or actions. All experiences and actions happen spontaneously and there may or may not be any binding theme behind them.

2. A liberated being may do whatever spontaneously feels right at that time. It is tough to judge. If Ramakrishna judged Totapuri as a liberated being, it must be what his Mother inspired him to feel, for reasons She and he would know. For others, it will be very tough to judge.

In general, no path can be discounted for liberation. Bhakti to the supreme divine being is certainly a valid path. But, most people's bhakti in this yuga tends to be driven by a need or fear and that can only take so far.

3. Self is the great golden being from my other allegory yesterday (refer "[Great Golden being](#)"). A synonym is Paramatma (supreme/absolute soul). Individual soul is the puppet in that allegory. Though a puppet can realize itself to be a part of the great golden being, the great golden being pulls invisible strings and makes it view itself as a separate being interacting with many other beings (other puppets) favorably and unfavorably.

When tamas is predominant, it plunges into the drama fully. When rajas overcomes tamas, it starts to question and try hard to get out of the drama. When sattwa overcomes rajas, it goes through drama with full acceptance but tries to shape the drama the way it wants. When it is liberated, it just sees itself as the great golden being who is merely playing with various parts of himself!

After reading all this, if you did not understand that my answer to your specific question is both yes and no, I will not achieve much by specifically mentioning it.. :-)

To put loosely, soul is Self that subjects itself to a play of gunas. Self is the soul that has overcome the influence of gunas.

Why does Durga Saptashati have wars? What does it signify?

[PVR] These wars are symbolic of internal struggle a seeker goes through as one fights various vasanas.

First charitra (chapter 1) shows the struggles when one is predominantly in Tamas. Middle charitra (chapters 2-4) shows the struggles when one is predominantly in Rajas. Last charitra (chapters 5-13) show the struggles when one is predominantly in Sattwa (but not free yet.)



Deeper Meaning of Mantra Pushpam

27 May 2020

Mantra pushpam is a Vedic hymn chanted towards the end of most Hindu rituals. I'll share its traditional meaning as well as the deeper meaning. The latter is consistent with the essence of Veda and better explains the importance accorded to this hymn.

Traditional Meaning

The following paragraph is repeated 7 times, by replacing X in it with (1) Fire, (2) Wind, (3) Sun, (4) Moon, (5) Stars, (6) Indra and (7) Year.

"One who knows the abode of water, becomes established.

X is the abode of water.

One who knows the abode of X, becomes established.

Water is the abode of X."

One may wonder why this prayer is so important.

Deeper Meaning

Though normally understood as "water", the words "apas" and "aapas" have another meaning.

[Note: You may note that I used this meaning to explain the real meaning of the popular Veda mantras of Mars and Saturn.]

Apas also means "action" and employed in many Vedic hymns with that meaning. Aapas (with long aa) is an inspired action (of Supreme Being).

Just as water flows from a mountain and sustains life, actions flow from consciousness and sustain universe in the field of duality.

Now, this becomes the refined meaning and replace X below with each of the above deities!

"One who knows the abode of action, becomes established.

X is the abode (doer) of action.

One who knows the abode of X, becomes established.

Inspired action of Supreme is the abode of X."

Now let us look at the 7 deities mentioned.

Fire, Wind and Sun are the rulers of physical, subtle and astral realms of dual world (i.e. bhooah, bhuvah, suvah). Those who do homa regularly may recognize 3 standard offerings to Fire, Wind and Sun in "Uttaragam". Fire, the transformer, enables physical reality. Wind, the mover (of thoughts etc), enables subtle reality. Sun, the shiner (of the light of clarity), enables spiritual reality.

Moon rules mind, i.e. that which experiences the dual world.

Stars rule the destiny, i.e. karmik momentum that governs experiences and actions in dual world.
Indra rules senses (indriyas), i.e. portals of experiences and actions in the dual world.
Year stands for Time, the enabler of experiences and actions in dual world.

Every action within us is actually done by one of these agents of action, though we may falsely identify with it and think "I did this".

Anything that happens within us at the gross, subtle or astral level, any interactions with the rest of the world and even the very notion of a changing Time that enables duality, are all works of these beings (Fire, Wind etc) who operate through all of us.

Now how do all these agents of action arise and operate?

Action arises in the Supreme Being to due to subtle motion of His Prana shakti (aka Prakriti). Fire, Wind, Sun, Moon, Stars, Indra and Year arise and operate due to that divine action of Supreme. They then permeate various other beings (like you and me) and seem to act through them.

We are not the experiencers and doers of anything. It is Fire, Wind, Sun etc that experience and act. Strictly speaking, even those are instruments and it is the Supreme Being who experiencers and acts.

Knowing the correct doer of actions and remaining clear about it at all times establishes one in 'reality'.

If one is established in reality, various agents of action may still act through one, under the influence of Prakriti. But one remains free and "well-established in reality", by seeing the Lord as the doer and experiencer.

Thus, this hymn is the essence of entire Veda and the primacy accorded to it in all rituals makes perfect sense!

[Old writing edited and improved]



Book of Rituals and Mantras

अगस्तिरुवाच ।

उभाभ्यामेव पक्षाभ्यां यथा खे पक्षिणां गतिः ।

तथैव ज्ञानकर्मभ्यां जायते परमं पदम् ॥ ७ ॥

Jnana (wisdom that all is Self) and Karma (rituals and actions in general) are two wings with which the bird of individual self flies into the infinite sky of Absolute Self, as Maharshi Vasishtha taught Lord Rama in "Yoga Vasishtham". Neither suffices and both are equally needed!

Rituals in Kali Yuga

6th April 2013

Based on Dharma Shastra guideline for this age, there is a HUGE difference between doing rituals by oneself & engaging a priest.

In Satya yuga, Manu Smriti was the authority for dharma matters. In Treta yuga, Goutama smriti was the authority for dharma matters. Maharshi Parasara, father of Veda Vyasa, is said to be the dharma shastra authority in Kali yuga.

A classic dharma shastra called "Parasara Madhaveeyam" says that a ritual such as homa performed in one's name by one's own disciple is 100 times more powerful than a ritual performed in one's name by a priest; a ritual performed in one's name by one's own progeny is 100 times more powerful than a ritual performed in one's name by a disciple; and, a ritual performed by oneself is 100 times more powerful than a ritual performed in one's name by one's progeny.

In other words, a ritual such as homa performed by oneself is 1,000,000 times more powerful than a ritual performed in one's name by a priest! The bottomline is that one is on one's own as Kali deepens and priests will be limited in their ability to give a material and spiritual uplift to others.



Following the recommendations of scriptures

18th Sep 2013

Here's something I wrote on <deleted> facebook forum giving my 2 cents on following the recommendations of scriptures.

Following "shastra vihita karmas" can be tricky, for shastras are not one monolith, but an amalgam of different - sometimes contradictory - instructions. Rishis are compassionate and have given several options for people at various levels and having various constraints. Still, some people miss the main point in an instruction and make unwise tradeoffs, instead of following some other instruction that is more applicable to them.

Shastras have 2 portions. One is generic and absolute teachings. The other is specific and relative teachings. The first kind is often not directly usable (i.e. needs some interpretation and application), but the second kind is ready for use.

I compare the first kind to raw grains, which can't be eaten directly (i.e. need some cooking) but remain fresh for a long time. I compare the second kind to cooked grains, which can be eaten directly but get rotten quickly.

When taking very specific teachings of great men literally and following them, kindly be aware of the distance in desa-kala-patra which may render the instructions useless (like cooked grains getting rotten in time).

This is a big drawback faced in many religions. Because of their insistence on following one text (or few texts) and taking words verbatim, they end up eating, figuratively speaking, rotten food cooked long back by a great cook!

In contrast, Sanatana Dharma (aka "Hinduism") is not based on any one text of specific do's and don't's or one single prophet. While other religions have one prophet, Sanatana Dharma has a rich layered methodology and a stream of interpreted and applied knowledge (i.e. cooked grains!) close to our own desa-kala-patra, coming from a continuous line of realized souls.

Instead of taking X or Y shastra to be absolute and following verbatim (while possibly missing the essence!), I humbly suggest giving preference to the words of a recent great soul that you feel attraction for (e.g. Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Samartha Ramadas, Trilinga Swami, Jnanadeva, Shirdi Baba, Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Chandrasekhara Saraswati Mahaswami, Bharati Tirtha Mahaswami etc).

Of course, in the end, one's own conditioning may block one from digesting and applying the knowledge wisely. But, atleast, picking someone close to one's desa-kala-patra maximizes the chance of wise trade-offs in one's own case.

Post 2:

I am repeating what I posted on <deleted> facebook forum, on the subject of Brahmana supremacy, for the benefit of those who are not its members:

I'll make a few loose points. Those disagreeing with my 2 cents may kindly ignore me.

(1) The word varna² comes from the root vRN, meaning "to please". Varna shows what pleases one and what one likes - the basic nature of one's values and desires. One wanting Brahman (Self) is brahmana. One wanting to be powerful, dominate and protect others is kshatriya. So on.

No wonder Vishnu Sahasra Nama phalasruti says "vedAntago brahmaNaH syAt kShatriyo vijayI bhavet..." (Brahmana will learn vedanta [by chanting this], kshatriya will become victorious [by chanting this]...).

(2) Qualities of different varnas are clearly defined by Lord Krishna in Srimad Bhagavatm 11.17. You can read Prabhupada's translation at <http://vedabase.net/sb/11/17> (esp 11.17.16-11.17.21). If you apply the criteria given by Lord, most people who pride themselves of being brahmanas today are not even brahmanas really. Same with other varnas.

In fact, 99% of today's people may not qualify to be called even shudras and are chandalas based on their nature. Don't take my word for it, but do carefully read what Lord taught.

(3) Today most brahmanas calling themselves brahmanas is merely like a great software engineer's great great grandchildren calling themselves "software engineers" though they may be illiterate!

(5) As society becomes more open and varna sankara increases (due to piling up of kaarmik debts between varnas), many with brahmana samskaras will be born elsewhere and people with other samskaras will be born in brahmana families.

(6) I personally love and respect brahmanas, but not mere jati (by birth) brahmanas.

For example, I know some lower caste people doing a homa daily (using manuals at <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/>) becoming seriously interested in Self-knowledge and making progress. I see them as better brahmanas than many jati brahmanas who are running after all kinds of things and love/respect them.

(7) Different varnas are indeed not equal/same. They are different. There is no need to compare & judge them, however (it's like apples vs oranges).

As Purusha sooktam says, Brahmanas who seek wisdom and Self-realization are the head (seat of wisdom) of Cosmic Being. Kshatriyas who rule society with dharma and protect others are the shoulders (seat of power) of Cosmic Being. Those who serve others dharmically are the feet

² Refer related articles [“Who is a Brahmana?”](#) and [“Varna System”](#)

(support) of Cosmic Being. It is not that feet are inferior to shoulders or vice versa. They play different roles and there is balance overall.

(8) A true brahmana does not care whether or not others respect him or abuse him. Whenever something "undesirable" happens to him, he resolves to do more sadhana to remove distinction in the mind between the desirable and the undesirable. Otherwise, how can one become perfectly equanimous and be established in Self?

(9) When you see a true brahmana (or one trying to become one), bow to him and serve him, **IRRESPECTIVE** of his jati (by birth) varna.

If you were born as a brahmana (like I was), don't think of it as a privilege and be proud, but use the opportunities to make spiritual progress.

My friends, human birth is very valuable. Such a birth in an environment where there is some exposure to spiritual teachings (true for most brahmana born) is unbelievably lucky. However, if you waste it in being proud or gossiping or activism or any actions that do not result in more equanimity (sthita prajnata), you are wasting it. Who knows what will be the next birth? It may not even be as a human being.



Following rules vs enjoying a spiritual practice(Part 1)

3 Sep 2016

Like vacuum that is there inside every object, molecule, atom and sub-atomic particle and yet cannot be seen, God is everywhere and yet cannot be seen. There are **no** formulas for connecting with the Divine! Various rituals and religious practices merely attempt to provide a **structure** to that pursuit, designed for some *desa-kala-patra*. No rule or technicality is absolute.

While leaving all rules leads to chaos and confusion in one's spiritual pursuit, rigid adherence to all rules can constrict and suffocate one and one may never **enjoy** the practice! One needs to strike a balance between adhering to rules and enjoying the practice.

The whole world is based on a balance between the "push" instinct represented by Pingala nadi (solar channel of consciousness, internal day) and the "pull back" instinct represented by Ida nadi (lunar channel of consciousness, internal night).

The former causes "yashti" or burning, while the latter causes "pushti" or nourishment. [Note: Those familiar with "Sree Sooktam" may recall a couple of riks at the end with yashti and pushti and Surya and Chandra.]

If you push too much and pull back too little, it is like only day and no night - you generate much heat and burn yourself. If you push too little and pull back too much, it is like only night and no day - you get stagnant and, figuratively speaking, "fat".

In **every** activity, including spiritual pursuit, it is **vital** to find the right **balance** between push and pull back instincts!!!

When it comes to spiritual sadhana, the hot solar channel (push instinct) governs following rules and procedures and having a good structure. The cool lunar channel (pull back instinct) governs enjoyment and spontaneity.

Those with a dominant left brain have a stronger Pingala nadi and like structured thinking. Those with a dominant right brain have a stronger Ida nadi and like intuitive and unstructured thinking.

However, direct perception of the Divine comes through the middle Sushumna nadi. That requires a balancing of Pingala and Ida. Thus, those who are too structured need to become more spontaneous and those who are too intuitive need to follow some structures, so that the dominant tendency gets balanced.

Many spiritual seekers and even priests do poojas with a lot of fear and rigidity. They do not care about having the right bhava (feeling) when doing various practices. They do them mechanically and with pride and place too much stress on technicalities, not realizing that these technicalities keep changing from time and to time and place to place and are not absolute.

Of course, don't start off without any rules. That will lead to utter chaos, unless you are a great soul ready to take off! But minimize rules and pick some basic ones that allow you to have some structure and yet feel some freedom and enjoy the practice.

Also try to steer away from your inherent nature, to find better balance. If you tend to be rigid, try to be more spontaneous. If you are wayward, try to follow some structure.



[PVR] It is tricky with vows and promises to guru. Let me share a parable.

Once a guru asked a sishya to stay at the foot of a hill and never leave, hoping that he would one day climb it if he stayed there long enough and did not go back to his hometown. Though it was hard, sishya resisted the temptation to leave the place and go back to his town. After a while, he became fascinated with the idea of climbing the hill, but stopped from doing it because he "promised" that he will stay at the foot always! :-)

Sometimes, sticking to the "letter" of a rule makes one break the "spirit" of the rule.

However, it is better to follow one's vows, until one is certain it is better to break it.

In the end, remember one thing: *everything* is a baggage post certain point - rituals, mantras and deities included..

Bottom line, try and step outside your comfort zone

[PVR] Well put. But it is tricky. Though very vital, balance is so difficult to achieve..

While one gets stagnated if one remains in one's comfort zone, the whole thing may just collapse if one pushes too hard. Thus, one needs to create a series of achievable challenges and find a realistic and sustainable path that takes one from one's comfort zone to a neutral zone where all zones converge and where no zone is favored or disfavored!

I need more sadhana and energy! But unable to do anything about it at the moment, hopefully some Divine help will materialise!

[PVR] Rituals performed purely at a mental level can be more effective, after mental visualization is developed fully. In fact, external objects are just a proxy for developing that feeling and visualization, as we don't have it naturally.



Enjoying Rituals vs technicalities

5th Sep 2016

I recently wrote about enjoying rituals vs technicalities. While some people do get bogged down by too many rules, some people on the other extreme *look down* upon rituals altogether. They say, "all is Self. You are already free. Just realize it" and consider meditation superior. They do not realize that meditation is also a mechanical *ritual* for most people!!

Being free from all mental conditioning is very very difficult, though it is very easy to just keep repeating theory, even as likes and dislikes very much remain in one's conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious minds!

In the end, to become free, one needs to keep on pushing the boundaries of one's *comfort zone* while still *enjoying* what one does. Only after that effort goes on long enough can one's comfort zone be expanded infinitely, making one free from all conditioning and likes/dislikes!

While there are many many sadhanas taught by wise Masters, worshipping the Divine in Fire is a very effective path, as discovered by many cultures, civilizations and religions, including Hindus, Buddhists, American Indians, Mayans, Incans, Greco-Romans etc. The first verse of Rigveda starts with "agnim". Agni is the first Preceptor and Purohita. In this age of money-minded, influence seeking and unenlightened gurus, Holy Fire is ever more relevant. Invite Holy Fire into your life and see what this Original Preceptor can do to your consciousness!

Thousands of people are now doing a daily or weekly homa using the free simplified manuals we created almost a decade ago (<http://www.vedicastrologer.org/homa>). Some are doing religion agnostic variation "Fire Yoga" (<http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/fire>). I want to say a couple of things to some of them here.

Many start off with Ganapathi homa and switch to a different homa after a few months. In some cases, it is because the seeker feels attachment to some other form (e.g. Krishna, Shiva, Lakshmi, Chandi, Hanuman, Narasimha, Bhairava, Vishnu etc). But, in some cases, it is based on wrong perception that they need to "graduate" from Ganapathi, who is too "basic". Because you worship Ganapathi at the start of any deity's homa, people tend to see Ganapathi homa as an 'appetizer' or a 'snack' and other homas as a 'full meal'! But that is wrong. Ganapathi homa *can* be a 'full meal' as well!

If you read Ganapathi Atharvaseersham, you'll see that he is lauded as the supreme Being from whom Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and all worlds appear! It is possible to reach the Supreme through

any form, because all forms spring from the Supreme and Supreme is beyond all forms. Ganapathi homa is capable of giving material and spiritual progress and even liberation in the end.

If one feels attachment to that form, one can stick to it for one's entire life and need not switch to some other deity!

Some people are doing Chandi homa or homa to Mahavidyas (e.g. Kali, Tara, Chhinnamasta, Bagalamukhi etc) thinking that they need something "very advanced", carried away by the adjective "maha".

My friends, Rama, Krishna, Narasimha, Hanuman, Vishnu, Lakshmi and Ganapathi are as capable of giving *anything* material or spiritual, including liberation, as are Mahavidyas. In fact, they are safer and more suitable for most people.

These 'standard' deities balance material and spiritual lives and slowly expand one's comfort zone. A Mahavidya like Chhinnamasta may work faster, but Her way is to destroy one's comfort zone, uproot one's material life and force one to deal with many hurricanes. If one is prepared and has very light conditioning, it can speed up one's spiritual progress. But, if one is densely conditioned (like most of us now-a-days), it can lead to utter chaos. Why try to jump too high and break limbs? 🤪;-)

It is better to stand and drink water than to run and drink milk (and spill most of it).

Worship a deity that you feel attachment to. Don't be *hasty* and *greedy*. Don't approach a deity because you think he/she is 'superior' or gives things 'faster'.

A 4-year old child will only learn abc's and spelling whether you give him/her a storybook with pictures or a textbook on string theory. In fact, the former may be much more effective!

You don't race to liberation. Working your way out of your possibly dense conditioning is a gradual process and don't be hasty and greedy.

Standard deities are standard because they are suitable for all. Don't belittle them. Ideally, pick one of them whose qualities appeal to you and develop attachment.

If there are such rinas, they may eventually lead you to some other deity, at the right time. Let that happen naturally though. A Mahavidya may come to you Herself, when you are prepared.

Hope you all had a happy Ganesha Chaturthi!



[PVR] I forwarded the above write-up to a very learned man whom I respect very much and who wrote a popular book on Aghora.

He wrote back:

"I believe that I can endorse all of your sentiments - I especially liked "It is better to stand and drink water than to run and drink milk (and spill most of it)."

It amazes me that people can imagine that Sri Ganesha, lord of the Earth Element, the senses, and all the ganas, is somehow less "powerful" than some more dramatic deity - I suppose drama is fundamental to the human personality"

Since two years I am doing mahalaxmi homa with sri sukta.I thought that I have to do something more.I learned Sapta shathi and started Chandi Homa. After 3 to 4 months I feel that I am reading it like a parrot.Again I shifted to Sri Sukta which is very comfortable and I am enjoying it.All it goes to Sri Narsimha Rao guru ji and Dr. Manish Pandit guru ji. Thank you ,Sir.

[PVR] I am glad you enjoyed Mahalakshmi homa with Sri Sukta. Most Vedic Suktas bring an indescribable peace and bliss, if one's pronunciation is reasonable.

Whether one uses short or long mantras, Vedic or Pouranik mantras, it is very important to enjoy one's sadhana. Of course, there may be some struggle in the beginning of anything and one may have to hang in there. But, once things stabilize and things start to flow naturally, there should be a sense of peace and happiness.

[Manish Pandit] the thing is that once you are embodied, the shadripus are going to be there in your mind no matter what you do.

Yes, one may reduce the amount of hold they have on one's mind and occasionally even eliminate them for periods of time, but it is unlikely that anybody living can completely eliminate these from ones existence and in fact from your personal experience of life.

These are therefore limitations imposed by a human existence.

Nevertheless the magic of Fire is such that sadhakas may be enabled to experience at least a moment of what the Rishis actually experience and realise in what is their existence in time and space.

In my opinion, to be human means that we all try and live, we all experience joy (and sadness howsoever much we may try to minimise these things) and we all try and protect our loved ones from calamity, catastrophe and troubles.

Shakti can change the meaning of "our loved ones" quite significantly in magnitude and quality from immediate loved ones to a somewhat more expanded idea.

All we need to now do is to expand our definition of "our loved ones" and that will itself reduce our limitations in some small way.

Vasudeva Kutumbakam.

Lokan samastan sukhinoh bhavantu.



Clash of contradictory desires/sankalpas.

27 Feb 2014

Best wishes for Maha Shiva Ratri on Thursday night!

I want to say a couple of words on clash of contradictory desires/sankalpas.

Some may wonder why some people get immediate benefits from rituals and pilgrimages, while some people's sankalpas do not get fulfilled despite sincere sadhana. One friend was asking about it and I want to share my response with all.

Associating actions with fruits is not easy, especially when the pipeline of actions is deep and contains contradictory actions, undertaken with contradictory sankalpas - spoken/unspoken.

Nature carries various souls to the final goal of Freedom, thru various paths. Nature considers all the desires a soul entertained in the past, assesses the momentum they are carrying through their karmas and finds the best path through which those desires either get fulfilled or stand the best chance. Nature puts one on such a path. As one traverses the path, however, one may entertain new desires and that may force Nature to re-adjust things again. Until one overcomes all desires, Nature keeps re-adjusting one's path.

If a sankalpa of yours is not getting fulfilled, there are 2 possibilities: (1) there isn't enough force behind that sankalpa or associated action, (2) this sankalpa is at loggerheads with another sankalpa from the past that has too much momentum going for it already!

I may wish for liberation in one moment and for fame in another. The chain reaction of fruits set in motion by the 2 sankalpas may be at loggerheads.

Rituals do work for some simple people. I know of 5 cases in which people out of job (for months in 2 cases) sat through my monthly Full Moon Satya Narayana vratam and got a job within 2 weeks.

Of course, this is not my doing. For all you know, those people may have a high level of surrender to god and faith that the ritual may help them and they may get a result, even though my own faith may be weak and does nothing for me!!! In other words, one actually performing the ritual may not see any benefit, but one attending it may! Thus, my pooja is just a proxy or external symbol that merely helps them connect to god within their own consciousness, who is the actual giver of things!

Of course, even if my own faith is strong, what I want may be more difficult (e.g. liberation). So it may seem like I am not getting any result (because I am making slow progress on a long path). Or

I may want something simple, but it may not be granted as it is against something else I asked for before (and which is on its way already).

For some people who are sufficiently evolved spiritually and have a strong momentum towards liberation already in place, fulfilling some mundane desires may be difficult, except when they do not mess with pre-existing momentum towards liberation. Otherwise, no amount of sadhana may really be sufficient..

Just one word of common sense. deities are not self-centered persons who becomes happy when people praise them or talk about them. Contemplating the greatness or qualities of deities (who are personifications of beneficial aspects of our own consciousness) enhances those aspects of our consciousness by resonance. After all, what your mind contemplates, you tend to absorb some of those qualities over time.

[PVR] One can learn to recognize and *accept* the sequence of fruits that has already been triggered and unchangeable now. One can learn not to disperse mental energy *now* by letting mind run after every thought (by nature, it does run after contradictory thoughts at different times!). By controlling mind now, we can at least ensure better focus and consistency in our life journey in future.



Right Attitude

18th July 2015

Reading books can improve one's knowledge, when one has the right attitude. When done mechanically and out of obligation or as a show-off, however, it doesn't do much.

Similarly, performing religious rituals does help with internal spiritual transformation, when one has the right attitude. When done mechanically and out of obligation or as a show-off, however, it doesn't do much.

In the end, it is mental activity that brings about internal transformation. Rituals are meant to provide a framework/template to facilitate conducive mental activity. As this mental aspect is de-emphasized or ignored, rituals are reduced to mechanical physical actions that do little.

Though mechanical approach of most ritualists does justify the dismissive attitude of many intellectuals and philosophers towards rituals, rituals do serve a purpose.

One may know theoretically that a movie one is watching is not real and yet get scared when a scary scene comes or be revulsed when a disgusting scene comes or be enamoured when another scene comes.

Similarly, one may theoretically know that all is Self and yet be scared, disgusted and enamoured by various apparent manifestations of Self!

Deeply ingraining the theoretical knowledge that "all is Self" in every action, thought and instinct, takes a loooooo of conscious effort.

Watching dancing Fire consume everything offered and reducing to ashes may make one appreciate how Self manifests as zillions of things and how wisdom of Self-knowledge reduces all of them back to Self.

Worshiping Shiva can make one contemplate the qualities of Shiva and how he is detached and has everything at his disposal and yet needs nothing.

Worshiping Vishnu can make one contemplate the qualities of Vishnu and he how upholds balance in the world.

Meditating with a mantra can make one contemplate a sound/image and experience how other vibrations of mind are transient and can be silenced.

Various rituals and sadhanas were designed by rishis, yogis and gurus to take mind away from its regular preoccupations, expand its outlook and focus it more on the all-pervading Truth rather than its various, varying and transient reflections.

However, these rituals may be mechanically done out of obligation and one may be relieved at the end of the ritual everyday that one has finished one more day.

Or they may be done with much fear that one may be making mistakes and breaking rules and technicalities. One may be anxious throughout the ritual.

Or rituals may be done with a great sense of pride that one is doing terrific sadhana and one is going to get great material benefits or moksha.

When a mind is burdened by pride or frustration or anxiety, rituals do not help much.

Pick what you can do comfortably and without obligation. Do it because it genuinely interests you. Rules should provide a structure and not become suffocating constraints. Don't be afraid of God and rules. Don't be anxious about errors. Enjoy the ritual, but do not entertain pride and be grateful that God has inspired and enabled you to do it!

One word of caution: Lethargy is an important characteristic of Tamas. So it may be necessary in the beginning to force oneself to do something one does not enjoy. But, eventually, one has to start enjoying it. If that never happens, one should probably re-evaluate and change the sadhana or work on one's attitude.



The Cat

1st jan 2015

A guru who did fire ritual everyday had a cat and tied it in a corner so that it would not jump around and disturb. When he passed away, his sishya wanted to continue the tradition of daily fire ritual based on what he observed and learnt. But he had no cat. So he bought a new cat and tied it in the corner! 😊:-)

Today's rituals (fire rituals as well as others) are replete with many such figurative "cats" that various people ended up introducing at various times.. 😊:-)

Have a minimal focus on the technicalities and focus more on cultivating respect, love and understanding of Agni and a sense of surrender and wonder towards the Divine therein. Use ritual and its objects as tools to reach the Divine, rather than getting bogged down with their details.

Of course, just repeating "all is God" does not make one imbibe that understanding in one's thoughts and deeper instincts. Towards that end, some actions and rituals *are* needed initially (even aatma vichar or contemplating "what is Self" is only a *ritual* initially). But do progress beyond rituals!

Jnana (wisdom that all is Self) and Karma (rituals and actions in general) are 2 wings with which the bird of individual self flies into the infinite sky of Absolute Self, as Maharshi Vasishtha taught Lord Rama in "Yoga Vasishtham". Neither suffices and both are equally needed!!!



How to empty these cats and fill the rituals with spirit. I guess much of work that you and Dr. Manish Pandit ji are doing with DIY Homa movement is that reversal of cats with spirit. My naman and pranam for that!

[PVR]: It is the Mother who makes people add more and more cats to rituals. It is the Mother who inspires some at some stage to remove those cats for others. It is the Mother who makes some accept and some reject that. It is the Mother who adds back many cats after some more time. It's all Her play



On Effort vs Results

27 Feb 2018

Something I posted a few years ago on spiritual practices, results and clash of contradictory desires is still relevant.

Some may wonder why some people get immediate benefits from rituals and pilgrimages, while some people's sankalpas do not get fulfilled despite sincere sadhana. One friend was asking about it and I want to share my response with all.

Associating actions with fruits is not easy, especially when the pipeline of actions is deep and contains contradictory actions, undertaken with contradictory sankalpas - spoken/unspoken.

Nature carries various souls to the final goal of Freedom, thru various paths. Nature considers all the desires a soul entertained in the past, assesses the momentum they are carrying through their karmas and finds the best path through which those desires either get fulfilled or stand the best chance. Nature puts one on such a path. As one traverses the path, however, one may entertain new desires and that may force Nature to re-adjust things again. Until one overcomes all desires, Nature keeps re-adjusting one's path.

If a sankalpa of yours is not getting fulfilled, there are 2 possibilities: (1) there isn't enough force behind that sankalpa or associated action, (2) this sankalpa is at loggerheads with another sankalpa from the past that has too much momentum going for it already!

I may wish for liberation in one moment and for fame in another. The chain reaction of fruits set in motion by the 2 sankalpas may be at loggerheads.

Rituals do work for some simple people. I know of 5 cases in which people out of job (for months in 2 cases) sat through monthly Full Moon Satya Narayana vrata of a person I know and got a job within 2 weeks.

Of course, this may not be his doing. Those people may have a high level of surrender to god and faith that the ritual may help them and they may get a result, even though this person's own faith may be weak and does nothing for him!!! In other words, one actually performing the ritual may not see any benefit, but one attending it may!

Thus, the pooja is just a proxy or external symbol that merely helps them connect to god within their own consciousness, who is the actual giver of things! And, what that actual giver gives various people is based on their karmik pipeline and the strength of desire!

Even if one's faith is strong, what one wants may be more difficult (e.g. liberation). So it may seem like he is not getting any result (because he is making slow progress on a long path). Or he may want something simple, but it may not be granted as it is against something else he asked for before (and which is on its way already).

For some people who are sufficiently evolved spiritually and have a strong momentum towards liberation already in place, fulfilling some mundane desires may be difficult, except when they do not mess with pre-existing momentum towards liberation. Otherwise, no amount of sadhana may really be sufficient..

The best way to optimize one's results is to not analyze what and why of the results and just focus on the practice. Secondly, one can try to maintain some clarity and focus in what one desires, though it is not easy.

Just one word of common sense. deities are not self-centered persons who becomes happy when people praise them or talk about them. Contemplating the greatness or qualities of deities (who are personifications of beneficial aspects of our own consciousness) enhances those aspects of our consciousness by resonance. After all, what your mind contemplates, you tend to absorb some of those qualities over time.



Is a sankalpa always necessary for a result to materialize?

[PVR] An implicit thought can also act as a sankalpa (and not necessarily an explicit action/statement). However, if you want to be sure, you can make it explicit.



Push vs Pull

30 June 2018

Everything in life is a delicate balance between "push" and "pull back" instincts. In Yogic parlance, these two are linked, respectively, to the solar and lunar channels of subtle body. In modern medical parlance, these two are also linked, respectively, to the sympathetic nervous system (associated with "fight and flight" response) and parasympathetic nervous system (associated with "rest and digest" function).

You burn yourself with too much push. You become stagnant with too much pull back. You need to strike the right balance! This applies to EVERY aspect of life, physical and subtle.

Take personality development as an example. You become stagnant if you don't challenge yourself to change/evolve your core. But there will be instability and chaos, if you change too much or too fast. You need to strike a balance between change and stability.

Take raising children as an example. They get spoiled if you are not strict with them and discipline them. But they will be psychologically broken if you are too strict always and there is no fun. You need to strike a balance between discipline and fun.

Take management at work as an example. If there are no rules, processes and structures in place, things become confusing and chaotic. But too many rules and processes can be suffocating. You need to strike a balance between process and flexibility.

Take spiritual sadhana as an example. If you do not force yourself to take up some sadhana, you become lazy. But, if you are always forcing too much, you may never enjoy it and benefit. You need to strike a balance between force and enjoyment.

Always, in all aspects of living and being, be mindful of how the forces of "push" and "pull back" are working on/in you. Make sure to never give one of them a free run. That will be disastrous. Always strive to strike a fine balance between them!



Can these be attributed to one's innate combination of Sattwa,Rajas and Tamo Gunas ?

[PVR] Gunas are different from the Ida/Pingali classification.

For example, contentment and laziness may be Ida (pull back instinct) in action under saattwik and taamasik influences respectively.

An equanimous person's war, a passionate warrior's fights and drudgery by a dissatisfied worker may be Pingala (push instinct) in action under saattwik, raajasik and taamasik influences respectively.

Is it possible for someone to show mystic siddhis to increase one's faith in the process

[PVR] Yes. However, it happens naturally and spontaneously. While some may try to do magic or talk smooth and impress others, those with genuine mystical abilities keep them hidden and use only for the right cause - when they are inspired from within.

For example, Ramakrishna Paramahansa touched Vivekananda's chest with his foot in their second meeting and Vivekananda experienced a type of samadhi.

In my own case, my spiritual guru made me experience a profound state of being at the beginning of my sadhana, from thousands of miles away. That played an important role since then.

I am an overly analytical and unnecessarily smart person with a hyperactive mind - not ideal for spiritual progress! Yet, I am not worried about the pace of spiritual progress or moksha. Thanks to that experience, I confidently know that all this is just a play and can (will) be transcended in a split second.

So I go about doing what I see as my dharma and not worry much about spiritual progress.

[PVR] The issue is not just too much sadhana, but also too much force needed in sadhana. Without pushing, one may never start. But, if one is always pushing and not enjoying, perhaps something is amiss.



Advice on how to do Sadhana/Ritual/Pilgrimage

25 Feb 2018

When you do some sadhana or a ritual, don't be in a hurry or under pressure to do it perfectly. Do whatever you can, but calmly. Don't be in a hurry - relax and enjoy! Sadhana is not a complex exercise, but a simple break from the complexities of life! Sadhana is not a race, but an attempt to slow down and possibly still the mind!

When you visit a holy place, don't be greedy and in a hurry that you should see all the attractions there. See some, but find some nice place you like, stay there for a while and contemplate God. Don't be in a hurry - relax and enjoy! Pilgrimage is not about accumulating a lot of nice photos and memories, but to let go of some possessions and preoccupations and become lighter!

Whether in sadhana or in pilgrimage, you are searching for God. So make it about "God", who is very subtle, and NOT about "your process of search".



God is within you and everybody, not that we cannot find gods in temples or silent hilly spot, just saying.

[PVR] Oxygen is everywhere. But there are some places with high concentration (e.g. an oxygen cylinder). Some temples are like that.

And then, there are cylinders that used to have oxygen, but leaked out and have just regular air now. But, people think it is a cylinder with oxygen concentration.

Some temples are like that. Unfortunately, at several temples, there is too little real sadhana going on and too much commercialism.. :-(

Recently, Manish ji gave the example of one temple that is jagrut. How to find such temples in the area where you live?

[Manish Pandit] The process of identification of such temples wasn't the reason for my post. Some people may take years to learn the process or some may stumble onto it and learn just like that, but what is more important is to somehow try and maintain a long term constant sadhana, clear one's karmic debts towards Pitrus and people and try non reaction (which will be useful to prevent further accumulation of karma)... rest anyway God looks after even the birds and animals.



Weapons of Deities in Hindu Iconography (repost)

15th feb 2017

Various Hindu deities are shown holding various weapons. Just as scriptural stories are metaphors for the interactions between various good and evil forces within us, weapons of deities also have a symbolic meaning.

To illustrate this, let us take the weapons carried by 2 graha devatas (planetary deities) - Mangala (Mars) & Sani (Saturn). Mangala carries a gada (mace), while Sani carries bow and arrows. (Note: Some people show Sani with a trident, but his 108 name prayer says "shara tUNIra dhAriNe".)

Now, think of how the 2 weapons are used. Gada is used in close combat where heavy blows may be exchanged. Thus, it involves boldness, risk taking and aggression. THAT is the nature of Mangala! After all, Mangala is a personification of qualities within us such as aggression, boldness, energy, drive and taking initiative. No wonder the weapon reflects that.

In contrast, Sani is the planet of patience, focus and persistence. Accordingly, his weapon is bow & arrows. After all, that does not require close combat. One can stand at a distance or even hide and fight. Killing with a bow and arrow requires focus and patience - one waits for the right time to shoot an arrow and needs good focus to shoot the target. Accordingly, Saturn is not the planet of aggression and bravery, but of patience and focus.

Lord Vishnu governs doing one's dharma in the universe and dharma is the basis of sustaining oneself. Doing one's dharma requires the ability for patient waiting game as well as bold confrontations. So Vishnu carries both Gada and bow. In addition, he carries Sankha and Sudarsana Chakra. Sankha or conch symbolizes clearly declaring intention. Doing one's dharma also requires a clear vision of what is permanent and what is impermanent. Sudarsana (literally, "good vision") chakra stands for cutting off attachments and agendas and seeing one's role in the world with absolute clarity. Thus, Vishnu's weapons represent, seeing one's dharma clearly, declaring one's intentions loud & clear, fighting obstacles boldly, aggressively and also patiently.

Lord Ganesha rules over Mooladhara chakra or earth element, i.e. stability and groundedness, which come from being able to resist and overcome disturbances, distractions and obstacles. He carries noose (paasha), elephant goad (ankusha) and axe (parashu).

Noose symbolizes attraction and focus on something, which is key to stability and focus. Attraction to something, whether mundane or spiritual, causes the "gravity" to pull one to it, keeps one engaged and causes stability.

Elephant goad symbolizes controlling and directing the mighty force of groundedness. Lazily sitting on the sofa is one kind of groundedness (but tamasik) and doing an important work with focus, enjoyment and stability is another kind of groundedness. The mighty elephant of groundedness needs to be controlled and directed. Elephant goad symbolizes it.

Axe (parashu) has a dual role. Like a sword, it can cut off distractions. In addition, like a chisel, it can be used to shape and fine-tune. Cutting off distractions and fine-tuning the desirable aspects enhance stability and groundedness.

If one takes Matangi (one of Dasa Mahavidyas), she wears a veena (stringed musical instrument), a parrot, a sword and a skull. Veena is a symbol of skill and ability. Parrot symbolizes external speech. Sword is for cutting off attachments. Skull shows destruction of ego (lifeless head!). Matangi is similar to Saraswati, goddess of learning. While Saraswati holds veena and book (skill & knowledge), Matangi wears a skull and sword too, like Kali and Tara. She shows learning and good ability to speak (or write), but with detachment (sword) and with a depleting ego-sense (skull).

One can ponder over the weapons of various deities like this. Before closing this, let me take a more complicated example.

The "Pradhanika Rahasya" (main secret) of Durga Saptashati describes the supreme Mother of 3 Gunas, who divided Herself into 3 supreme goddesses. This "original goddess" wore a few interesting weapons in her arms - fruit, mace, planet, wine bowl, serpent, male genital, female genital and king's head.

As She is the source of duality and division in Self, her weapons have to reflect the forces that create and maintain duality and division in Self. I'll leave it to you to ponder what the 8 items mentioned above symbolize!



Why should a deity have weapons?

[PVR] Weapon is really a generic and misleading word. Basically, hands are the organ of action corresponding to manipulation. They symbolize how one acts to manipulate other objects in the field of duality. Things held in hand are instruments used for that purpose. They basically show how a deity acts to manipulate one's consciousness!

What about Vishnu's fifth weapon, Nandaka khadga? Since the Chakra already cuts the attachment, what does the khadga represent?

[PVR] My 2 cents on your great question!

Vishnu's Nandaka khadga represents aakasa tattva as you said. What is aakaasa? It is "space" that is everywhere, but you cannot perceive it. Solids, liquids, fire and air are superimposed on it and space is the underlying reality of all matter, but you cannot perceive it.

Every molecule is made up of atoms and a lot of space. Every atom is made up of sub-atomic particles and a lot of space.

Space is what connects all of us. The entire cosmos is ONE CONNECTED uniform space, with distinct mini-waves of energy superimposed on space here and there and creating a notion of division in one reality!

Nandaka khadga cuts off whatever is superimposed into pieces so that ONE underlying reality remains!

Sudarsana chakra cuts the head (ego). It represents agni tattva and symbolizes sacrificing egosense in the fire of wisdom, to see things for what they are. Our egosense clouds our vision. Instead of seeing that supreme being is doing everything and how different agents created by supreme being (e.g. Indra, Prajapati, Agni, Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Chandra etc) are acting through various beings and engaging in various interactions, we think WE are doing something to others and others are doing something to us and we become happy and sad. Sudarsana removes those confusions.

Nandaka goes further than seeing things for what they are. It stands for cutting things into pieces and perceiving the underlying oneness. Nandaka literally means "that which gives ananda (bliss)", i.e. the bliss of being immersed in the underlying oneness.

Remember how Ramakrishna Paramahansa kept seeing Kali in his mind whenever he tried to go into nirvikalpa samadhi, after being taught Adwaita by Tota Puri, and how he cut Her asunder with the sword of wisdom to enter samadhi? THAT is Nandaka khadga.

Why can't silence be a weapon?

[PVR] silence IS indeed a powerful weapon.

Bagala, one of 10 Mahavidyas, is depicted fiercely holding the pulled out tongue of a demon tight. Thus, She is seen by some as the goddess of stambhana (making something immovable) and used for such prayogas.

But, IMHO, holding the tongue stands for silence, i.e. restraint of speech.

In the initial stages, this is restraint of vaikhari level of speech (i.e. external audible speech). Later, restraint can be extended to madhyama level of speech (i.e. thoughts not uttered externally yet and being mentally fit into a madhyama or medium, i.e. a language and words). Later restraint can be extended to pashyanti level of speech (i.e. thoughts *visualized* in the mind, which are independent of language and words - they too vibrate the mind and can be "heard" by another mind). Finally restraint can be extended to para level of speech (i.e. seeds of thoughts that are beyond even visualization and perception!).

If one silences that level also, one will be in sat-chid-ananda! Thus, this deity takes one to the supreme through the path of self-restraint and silence.

Please remember that Mahavidya means supreme knowledge & wisdom. Mahavidyas are deities to hone self-control and self-mastery of someone close to self-realization. They are for self-realization.

Unfortunately, people worship them for petty purposes. There are many who worship Bagala for success in court cases. Quite immature..

IMHO, bagalaa is a corruption of "valгаа" (literal meaning: bridle/reins), mentioned in Veda. Valгаа became vagla, vagala and bagala. She stands for holding the reins of mind and controlling it.



Ugra Vs Soumya Devatas

20 Sep 2017

Suppose someone who lived in a dark cave for his entire life comes out for the first time during mid day and sees Sun. Sun may feel unbearably fierce and cruel to that person. But, for someone else, the same sun is the giver of light, heat and life!

The state of consciousness represented by ugra devatas like Kali, Bhairavi, Chinnamasta etc is like the ultra-bright mid-day Sun. It is full of the light and illumination of Self. Most of us, normal human beings, are like someone who dwelled in a dark cave for the entire life, without any exposure to, or awareness of, such a pristine state of consciousness.

For one who has been confined to the pitch darkness of a physical body and limited mental notions of who one is and what one needs, the illumination of all-pervading Self is equally fierce and unbearable.

That is what their iconography captures!

Some deities have multiple iconographies. For example, there are several dhyanas of Ma Tara. Though most of them depict her as holding scissors and skull, other details vary.

For example, in one dhyana, she wears white clothes and shines brightly with the pleasant and soothing light of Moon. In another dhyana, she wears red clothes and is very energetic. In another dhyana, she is dark, scary and wears severed hands as clothes.

Akshobhya (literally: unshakable or imperturbable) stands for the equanimity coming from non-distinction of the pleasant and the painful. His consort is Tara (literally: one who carries across). The energy associated with such equanimity does carry one across.

But that energy seems different to different seekers, based on their conditioning and underlying gunas.

If one is predominantly tamasik, the energy of equanimity that carries one across may seem very fierce and scary.

A predominantly rajasik seeker with much active practice may conceive the same energy as a passionate, energetic and mighty force that works powerfully to kill one's weaknesses.

A predominantly saattwik seeker may view the same energy as a source of peace and calmness.

While the form for tamasik seekers holds sword also, which is used for large scale cutting off of undesirable qualities, this form for saattwik sadhakas holds only scissors and skull. Scissors are used for finer trimming and severing subtle nooses. Even a saattwik person is tied by the subtle noose of good character etc and some subtle attractions and aversions. The energy of equanimity that carries one across destroys I-sense (skull) and severs subtle nooses (scissors).

If one (or one's guru) can *honestly* assess one's gunas and one ends up using an appropriate form based on one's nature, it will work better. The symbolism of an iconography does work on

parts of one's mind that one is not conscious of. The same mantra may work better when a better form is visualized.

Best wishes for Nava Ratri!

[PVR] Ugra devatas are like coming into mid-day Sun directly from a pitch dark cave and soumya devatas are like coming out of cave at dawn and slowly getting used to Sun.

The path and speed are different, though the end goal may be the same.



Ramblings On Pratyangira Devi

30th April 2016

Someone asked in another thread: "For Pratyangira Homa, can we follow Chandi Homa procedure but with Pepper, Dry Chillies..?"

First of all, I do not recommend using non-saattwik substances like pepper and chillies in ANY homa, though some people unfortunately use them in Pratyangira Homa.

Secondly, let us see what Pratyangira represents. Pratyangira means "towards/approaching Angiras". Angiras are a group of rishis.

The main Angirasa is the father of Brihaspati. Brih means "to shine light on something and speak clearly". Brihaspati is a metaphor for the conscience, wisdom, judgment and discretion that speaks from within with clarity to guide us. Of course, Brihaspati is the teacher of Devas, who are metaphors for various good qualities within us. No wonder our wisdom always advises and works for the victory of our good qualities over our weaknesses (asuras within us!).

Angiras means "brilliant sparks of illumination". Angiras are a metaphor for brilliant sparks of deep and clear insights that illumine and animate our consciousness. Judgment, wisdom, conscience and discretion arise from them!!

Pratyangira means "towards/approaching those deep sparks of brilliant illumination". She is a metaphor for the intense and subtle force that causes/animates those brilliant sparks of illumined insight within our consciousness.

Of course, she is also the force that pacified an extremely fierce Narasimha after he killed the demon. But understanding the symbolism of that story requires us to understand the symbolism of Lord Narasimha. Let us leave it for another day.

To someone who is born and spends whole life in a dark cave and comes out into light for the first time, even the Sun feels extremely fierce and unbearable. Similarly, our awareness operates on the surface of our emotions and objective logic. Being aware of the intense force that drives deep insights within that inform our conscience and wisdom can feel fierce and deeply unsettling. No wonder she is seen as a very fierce deity.

When you are driving fast, you may observe some basic characteristics of a house you pass by. You may see that it is of so and so shape, so and so color etc. If you go slowly, you observe more details. If you stop and watch it for a while, you observe more.

Similarly, there are many things WITHIN OURSELVES that we do not know well. Our awareness is stuck on the surface. We are aware of our emotions and objective logic etc. If we slow down hectic mental activity and focus inwards, we may become aware of the voice of conscience and wisdom. If we focus further deep, we may become aware of the sparks of deep insight that inform conscience and wisdom. But delving deeper within and becoming aware of the inner force that animates those insights may not be easy at all.

Very few sadhakas who have overcome all conditioning and see no distinction between temple and bar, between pooja and quarrel, between jaggery and chillies and between pleasure of pain, may worship the Divine in either "sacred" Jatavedas fire with auspicious substances or in "impure" Kravyaada fire with any substances. Such a person may use a homa kunda or a chitaagni (funeral pyre). Such a person may even see the animated consciousness as a fire and see all good and bad experiences and all constructive and destructive actions as offerings in that fire.

Most of us are not at that level of evolution and it is useless to pretend to be. Then, better use Jatavedas fire and offer saattwik and auspicious materials.

In any case, it is not that Pratyangira wants chillies and pepper. It is some people's conception/ understanding. She is a very subtle deity that is extremely auspicious and unsuitable for most people because of Her subtle nature.



Initiation for mantras

24th March 2016

On whether initiation is required for Siddha Kunjika stotra and other powerful mantras (reply to a mail on vedic-wisdom yahoo group):

Some powerful mantras are said to need "initiation" by a guru. There are several reasons for it.

- (1) Some mantras have great potency to give certain results. In such cases, they are intentionally coded. An initiating guru can help one decode it.
- (2) Just as a millionaire father can open a bank account for a son with a few thousand dollars, a guru with spiritual achievement with a mantra can give a jump start to one's practice with it.
- (3) Some powerful mantras can give Kundalini awakening and mystical experiences easier than other mantras.

Kundalini essentially is one's self-awareness. Awakening it may destabilize one's current self-awareness ("I am this body"). If one does not become self-realized right away, it can leave one neither here nor there and self-awareness can feed on new delusions. After all, "I am this body" is just a low level delusion. Once it ascends, there are more sophisticated delusions that self-awareness can feed on!

If one is under the supervision of a guru, guru can help one overcome those delusions.

As for (1), most powerful mantras have *intentionally* been "disabled" or "re-purposed" in Kali yuga. It is kind of like rendering a gun unusable except as a stick to hit someone directly.

So even a powerful mantra is to be simply chanted as a prayer. So it becomes just a vessel for your devotion. In such a case, you can just pick up a book and teach yourself. Initiation is not required.

As for (2), one is very unlikely to find a guru who has a good level of achievement with a mantra, who is capable of transferring it to others and who is motivated to transfer it to a specific person.

If that is destined, such a guru may indeed come to one. But waiting for that is not a good strategy. One is better off just picking a book and starting by oneself.

After all, son of a millionaire can waste money and become pauper and a pauper starting with zero bank balance can become a millionaire with own effort! Similarly, one may not achieve with a mantra even if initiated by a good guru and another starting with a mantra by his own may achieve!

As for (3), most people now-a-days are unlikely to experience it. With the food, lifestyles etc of today, it is almost ruled out.

Though I know several people who experienced it in the last decade and know it is not impossible, it is very unlikely.

Of course, Kundalini can rise without doing any specific mantra also, if time comes for it.

If you do homa on a regular basis and build a relationship with Holy Fire, I am hopeful that He will protect and lead you in the correct direction.

Siddha Kunjika stotra is not one mantra, but a collection of several related mantras that may be used for various purposes. In order to decode and use the mantras embedded within it properly, one may indeed need a guru. However, I can almost guarantee you that you will not find such a guru on earth now.

So, as I said above, just use it as a prayer with devotion, initiation or not.



It is very often said and observed too , when a person puts his own effort in mantra sadhana "without initiation". He faces a lot of hurdles in sadhana , which he may not be able to overcome on his own. please correct me if I am wrong

[PVR] Hurdles in sadhana are needed to overcome weaknesses. Even those initiated by a great guru face them (e.g. sishyas of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, one of the greatest gurus of the last 2 centuries!). Even if you start by yourself, don't think that you're alone. Unseen Sadguru IS with you. In fact, you started only because of the blessings and inspiration from Sadguru!!!!

Why does one need to chant complex and possibly 'dumbed down' or 'repurposed' mantras to express or practice devotion.

[PVR] Indeed a simple mantra may be as good as a complex mantra/prayer. However, based on desires entertained in the past and rinas established, one gets attracted to various things and one cannot escape them.

Importance of pronunciation

[PVR] If one uses a gun as stick, technicalities like how to press the trigger and how to hold it are irrelevant. Similarly, if one uses a powerful mantra as a vessel for one's devotion, technicalities such pronunciation are irrelevant.

Of course, if one is attached to the notion that pronunciation is important, the interferes with one's mental state and stops one from developing focus and surrender. In such a case, do try to perfect your pronunciation and, at the same time, try to overcome that notion.



On Rishi, Chhandas, Beeja, Shakti, Keelaka & Nyasas

First posted: 24 April 2015

Written form of a mantra we learn from books or from someone orally, is only the tip of the iceberg. Each mantra really represents a particular mental vibration - a state of mind, which is much more than what is written, read, uttered or heard.

When one repeats a particular sound combination over time, initially only external sound waves are replicated. It is only after much practice that the internal mental vibrations and thoughts patterns associated with a mantra may be replicated in the mind!

Rishi of a mantra is a seer whose mind stilled completely at some time in the past and resonated with the vibration represented by the mantra. By mentioning the name of rishi before mantra japa, we express gratitude and try to establish some subtle connection with that mind. The external sound that can be communicated orally or in writing is our connection to the state of mind experienced by seer! Just as we use words (tangible/external) to communicate meaning (intangible/internal), we try to use the sounds to recreate a mental state.

Chhandas (e.g. Gayatri, Jagati, Brihati etc) is a deity personifying the rhythm of the vibration of that mantra.

Beeja is the seed that can give rise to the vibration represented by the mantra over time, just as seed is the shorter form or potential of a tree! Shakti is the energy that nourishes the seed and aids in its transformation into the vibration represented by the mantra. Keelaka unlocks the transformed end result.

If a successfully created mental state/vibration of mantra is like a newborn baby, then beeja is the zygote in womb, shakti is what nourishes it and turns it into a baby in womb and keelaka is what makes it break out of the womb.

Anga nyasa and kara nyasa represent vibrations in various parts of one's being, when mind is filled with the real vibration of a mantra. Let me give a crude but useful analogy.

When Sachin Tendulkar (a legendary cricket batsman) plays a glorious cover drive, his left foot, right foot, left knee, right knee, head, left palm, right palm, left elbow and right elbow may be in particular positions. If vibration of a mantra is like his glorious "cover drive", nyasa sounds are like these positions and sound of the mantra is like moving the bat towards cover. Just by practicing those positions and moving the bat towards cover, you may or may not get an equally glorious cover drive - you may not even connect the ball. 😊:-) There is something intangible behind his glorious shot. But, by replicating the tangible portions, you hope that you can one day replicate the intangible aspect too! Same holds with mantra japa.

When you think of Tendulkar and drive shots (or pull shots or cut shots), it evokes some mental images. Similarly, when you think of a rishi and chhandas, it may evoke some mental images. Then, practicing certain positions and bat movement may one day result in a great shot. Similarly, practicing nyasas and the main mantra may one day result in absorption in the mantra. However, one may not be able to play the glorious cover drive consistently enough. It may happen once in many attempts. Similarly, a nice mental state may occur occasionally, but not always. Practice perfects things..

Bottomline: Think reverentially of the rishi, Chando devata. Chant beeja, shakti and keelaka with some focus and imagine various body parts vibrating with respective nyasa sounds. Then start chanting the main mantra and try to get lost in it.

But note that stillness is NOT achieved by running towards it frantically! 😊 So be patient and don't expect any magic or miracles or some kind of experience created in the mind by what you may have read and speculated. Even if you experience something (e.g. feel some bliss, hear some strange sounds, see some strange colors or sights), do NOT be distracted or think about it and keep the focus on the mantra. And be patient. I know I am repeating, but it's a test of patience.



This is the only way to perfect a mantra, still the mind and replicate the mental state of the seer of a mantra.

BTW, I was in Santa Clara area for 2 days this week on work. During Sukla Tritiya evening on April 20, I was in a flight that started an hour before sunset at Boston and landed in San Francisco a little more than an hour after sunset there. As I was going west, it was like a prolonged sunset that lasted several hours. If you ever get such an opportunity, it is a nice opportunity for mantra japa.



[Additional comments]

A somewhat related (and yet complementary) writeup by Dr Manish Pandit: <https://mmpandit.wordpress.com/2021/04/25/the-tantra-of-being-that-part-1>

Would it be prudent to comment in (this article or) another future article why there are adhikara or restrictions on specific mantras for general chanting by anyone?

[PVR]: Will write more on this loaded question later. But, one thing is true. Those who really want to reach God care about God more than technicalities and adhikara. They put in their best effort irrespective of how others may judge their "adhikara". Those who harp a lot on adhikara may or may not really get anywhere. The real adhikari is God and we are all beggars.

Some low level energies can be manipulated just by following certain technicalities (i.e. without any bhakti). But most such sadhanas are already encrypted and out of circulation. The higher level divine energies have a lot more intelligence and do not fall in undeserving hands. Even when they appear to (e.g. Shiva giving boons to rakshasas), it is part of a divine plan for the long-term welfare of the world!

Bhakti is a LOT more important than rules when working higher level energies. No question about that.

Chanting mantra dedicatedly every day at same time same place may not be possible with work , in that case for purashcharnam how can I go about it

[PVR]: In that case, chant whenever you get a chance, without worrying about hitting any milestones. Nothing ever goes waste in this creation!!!

If memory serves me right Kularnava tantra states that only a truly realized Guru has the authority to impart Mantra to shishya and if that not be so the mantra does not become, fruitful

[PVR]: Well, an aspiring businessman can succeed easier if he starts business with a big capital inherited from an elder! But one starting from zero can also succeed through own effort.

In this age of confusion, greed and deceit, one is better off relying on own effort (and God's grace!!) rather than pursuing large capital and taking the risk of falling prey to a ponzi scheme.

BTW, I intentionally hid my blunt message behind a financial analogy here.

I want to have your clarification on whether one should also do karanyasa, anganyasa, Swarropadhyana, Pancha puja before doing the Gayathri mantra as part of thrikala Sandhya vandhana?

[PVR]: It is a pretty good idea to do nyasas, even if no panchopachara pooja is done. For the standard Gayatri mantra, Rishi is Viswamitra. Chhandas is Gayatri, Devataa is Savitaa. Beeja, shakti and keelaka are bhUh, bhuvah, suvah. Anga and kara nyasas can be done with the same 3 words repeated

My mantra was given to me by my Guru which I do Japam with. In this case, what should be the Chhandas, Beeja, Shakti, Keelaka & Nyasas?

[PVR]: If your Guru gave them along with the mantra, use them. If not, just chant the mantra and don't worry about the rest.

Can we chant- Shree Rama Rama Rama in place of Vishnu sahasranamam?

[PVR]: Yes chanting "Sree Raama Raama Raama" (the 7-letter Amrita mantra) with a focused and pleasant mind is equivalent to chanting 1000 names



Mantra Shakti

19 April 2015

Some people believe that mantras have an inherent power and make things happen magically. Though there is some truth to it, it is not entirely accurate.

Mantra literally means "that which shields/protects mind". There are 3 types of benefits from mantras: (1) Mental discipline, (2) Material results, (3) Spiritual progress. Let us look at how each comes.

As repeating mantras with some level of focus engages the mind and protects it from harmful activity, it is clearly a tool for disciplining the mind and channeling the mind's abilities and powers.

Repeating different mantras creates different vibrations in mind. Normally mind vibrates with thousands of thoughts in addition to the mantra one is chanting. Though vibration of a mantra may not completely eliminate other vibrations, it will dominate them after some practice.

As that happens for a sufficient duration, the power of that mind gets channeled through that vibration. That may bring some material results.

It must be remembered though that the power is in the mind and not the mantra. Mantra just channelizes that power.

Suppose a chaotically flowing river floods surrounding villages often. Suppose we construct a dam and hold that water in a big reservoir. It avoids the flood and allows us to use the water better. Mind is like a chaotic river and mantra is like the dam!!

Of course, the dam has to be strong enough. Similarly, one has to do enough sadhana to generate force needed to channel the power of a mind.

Will mantras give material results or spiritual results?

It depends on the mind that is doing the mantra. Even if someone pretends to oneself that one only wants "spiritual progress", there may be some material desires hidden in the layers of mind. Then the mind will work on fulfilling them.

As the power of a mind gets channeled, the mind tries to fulfill its desires. But then, the world is filled with many minds with many desires. And each desire has a different force behind it, determined by the intensity of the desire and how well the power of the desiring mind is channeled. Depending on the balance between various forces, some of one's desires may be fulfilled.

As one makes more and more spiritual progress, overcomes desires (not at the level of external pretension, but at the level of inner reality!) and develops surrender to Lord, one's mind becomes more stable. Things that normally excite, irritate, repel and scare one do not shake that mind that much. Such a stable mind catches the vibrations of mantras better.

Such a mind has a lot of power to fulfill any desires, but ironically it has far fewer desires than us. This is a stabilizing negative feedback loop that Nature has created - it makes it easier for one with very few desires to fulfill them!

How important are rules and technicalities, when it comes to fulfilling material results?

After all, using the dam analogy above, dam needs to be constructed well and water needs to be taken from the reservoir efficiently. Similarly, many rules were designed to maximize the ability of a mind to channel its power.

Various deities are personifications of different powers of mind. Though they are all essentially Brahman, Brahman manifesting as different deities and beings has different agendas, likes and dislikes. That cannot be ignored. Thus, there are some rules designed to maximize the ability of a mind to tap into any of its powers.

However, our understanding of the purpose/essence of rules is mostly corrupted. So most of us end up following the letter and not the spirit.

If one has a guru or mentor that one has faith in, one may follow the rules set by him, whether or not they make sense. Even otherwise, it is better to follow rules as far as possible, instead of taking a chance or letting guilt or apprehension distract the mind.

Though all rules can eventually be transcended, that has to happen through sattwa and not through the tamas of laziness.

If one has a desire, it is better to accept it and work towards fulfilling it even while trying to genuinely (not just for pretension) overcome the desire by surrendering to Lord or at least transform it into something less self-centered and more expansive. One can make progress through a combination of honesty, sense of purpose and unshakable clarity about the end goal.



[Manish Pandit] The power of the mind is no doubt behind Mantra fructifying in various ways. Nevertheless I will describe the process in a different way:

The mantra first creates an image of the deity which is inherently present within the mantra.

That image when strong enough to take a life of its own "shields the mind"

The image starts finally getting replaced for moments at a time with the actual Devatha. Depending on the mind's desires and the nature of the Devatha.... the desires of the chanter get fulfilled. The way in which the results fructify depends on the nature of the Devatha which has been attracted: Soumya or Ugra.

After this, the thing changes somewhat:

The more the sadhaka who has managed to attract a certain Devata on occasion... repeats that mantra... the more the Devata starts to descend into the consciousness of the sadhaka. The sadhaka changes and his or her mind and personality slowly start getting replaced with the personality of the Devata in question.

Finally on a day to day basis, the sadhaka can become capable of calling the Deity at will just by thought, the mantra is just not needed.

The crucial thing which is not said in the write up above is that "**The mantra is but the verbal incarnation of the Devata**"

That must be remembered.

Is there any way by which one can find if particular mantra acts on ida or pingla nadi?

[PVR] Here are some methods to judge the working of beejas. However, experience from an unbiased experiment for a long enough time is the best way to judge!

Most beejas are in the form of "consonant(s) + r/l + vowel + bindu". The consonant is the body, r/l is the breath (r:pingala, l:ida), vowel is prana. For example, "kreem", "krom", "kshroum" etc with "r" supposedly work through pingala, while "kleem", "dhleem", "bloom" etc with "l" work through ida.

However, don't assume that pingala means fire and bad for pitta people. In general, fire is not always pitta or bad for pitta people. For example, many pitta people do homa and that does not cause any problems for them.

Fire becomes tejas (energy) when channeled well and pitta dosha when poorly channeled. Similarly, water & earth become ojas (stamina) when channeled well and kapha dosha when poorly channeled. Air and ether become prana (life force) when channeled well and vata dosha when channeled poorly. Each element can be a source of strength or weakness..

Should one completely satisfy his materialistic pursuits and then go for spiritualism?

[PVR] while suppression of desires can backfire later on and hence one should work towards fulfilling desires, one can spend millions of lives fulfilling desires! After all, new desires are always born while fulfilling a desire! That is why working towards fulfilling desires AND being clear

about the end goal and working on surrendering to Lord and overcoming desires should go hand in hand..

How do we find out which mantra is suitable for us?

[PVR] There is no reliable way. There are some guidelines in astrology, but that knowledge is badly corrupted by now and quite unreliable. If you have faith in a guru or mentor, follow them. Otherwise, experimentation is your best tool.

In any case, standard sattwik mantras of Vishnu, Shiva, Lakshmi, Durga etc are generic enough and suit all people and purposes. One can make much progress with them. If some other specific form of a deity and mantra are required for specific purposes, that knowledge will come to one at the right time.

If you need to find a specific address in Vrindavan, first take a train to Mathura and a bus to Vrindavan. You can search for the address at the end! Most people are GREEDY to find the perfect mantra, perfect deity and perfect guru for them, and do not benefit from what they have access to right now!!

Just as you don't go to the next level in a computer game until you finish the previous level, Nature will not set you up for something until you benefit from what Nature has already arranged!



Curses on Powerful Mantras

5th April 2015

Most powerful mantras available to us today are "cursed". Scriptures teach shaapa vimochana mantras, i.e. mantras that relieve curses. Examples are Gayatri mantra and Chandi navarna mantra (moola mantra of Saptashati).

These stories are metaphorical representations of things to watch out for and things to keep in mind, as one does sadhana with a mantra. Essentially, these curses are like blessings that limit the use of mantra devatas for unworthy purposes!

Take Savitru Gayatri mantra for example. It extolls the supreme effulgence of Paramatma (supreme soul), which lights up and impels every perception and awareness in everyone's consciousness.

One-pointed focus on that mantra and on the supreme effulgence of Paramatma can give one realization of Self, by shifting attention from specific perceptions and specific perceived objects to the Supreme Being who is animating it all.

But, if one with a strong desire for a specific thing becomes adept at that mantra, the dual focus on the desire and mantra can result in obtaining one's desire. Thus, Gayatri mantra can also fulfill desires. However, one using Gayatri mantra to get limited things is wasting its power. It is really meant for self-realization.

Curses on a mantra are essentially blessings on mantra devata to limit the underuse of mantra (I find the word "underuse" more appropriate than "misuse").

Gayatri mantra has 3 curses. Take the one from Vasishtha for example.

The word Vaishtha comes from vasu and means "the purest and the most excellent one". If an impure one, i.e. one with desires of a limited I-ness, is chanting it, there is a curse from Vasishtha that blocks the mantra.

Shaapa vimochana mantra given in tradition for Vasishtha's curse basically says, "I am the light that fills the entire comos, I am Shiva" etc.

Some people may chant the mantra thinking "I, a good scholar, need people's praises", "I, this body, needs to be healthy" etc.

The curse basically implores a seeker to shed the limited I-ness and desires and seek the higher Self.

Take Vishwamitra's curse on Gayatri mantra.

The word Vishwamitra means "friend of all worlds", i.e. one who does not distinguish between various beings. It is meant to block one who has bheda bhava and belittles creation while pursuing Self!

The shaapa vimochana mantra given in tradition for Vishwamitra's curse basically says, "I extoll auspicious Gayatri whose womb contains the worlds and various deities who create those worlds".

Some people try to run away from the world and belittle it and see Self as something "beyond" this world and saves one from the nuisance from this world. Such attitude gives a boost to spiritual sadhana in the beginning, but one will never realize Self that way.

Self or supreme being is beyond perception, experience and conceptualization. This creation is the only perceptible, though limited, manifestation of Self or supreme being! Seeking the former while belittling or hating the latter is unproductive!

The curse basically implores a seeker to seek the Absolute Reality without aversion for relative reality and actually see absolute reality even within relative reality!

If one merely chants a shaapa vimochana mantra, it is akin to chanting "Advil stops headache". Chanting that does not stop headache - one needs to actually take Advil! 😊:-)

Similarly, mere mechanical chanting of shaapa vimochana mantra is of no use. One needs to imbibe the meaning of the shaapa vimochana mantras, in order for the original mantra to work fully and perfectly.

The shaapa vimochana mantras elucidate the pitfalls, how to avoid them and what attitude to have, in order to have the realization represented by the original mantra!

Bottomline:

Please do not think that your mantra or ritual is not working because it is cursed and that it will magically work if you chant a shaapa vimochana mantra.

Rooting out of conditioning though CONSTANT contemplation enables one to do a better sadhana with any ritual or mantra. The time spent in ritual or mantra japam enables one to contemplate better and eliminate conditioning faster. The external sadhanas and the internal contemplation aid each other.

When one's attitude is pure enough, all mantras become possible. Mantras chanted by an impure, limited and selfish mind have all kinds of curses on them and yield no results.



[PVR] Leaving powerful mantras meant for higher purposes such as Gayatri mantra and Navarna mantra aside, there ARE many that work well for simple purposes in this age. Apart from Aditya Hridayam (my and my father's favorite too!), Vishnu sahasra nama stotram, Lakshmi ashtottara shata nama stotram and Chandipath are awesome for mundane problems. There are many others for specific purposes (e.g. Narayana kavacham and Chandi kavacham for physical problems).

Some may over-emphasize one or two based on their own experience..

Should we chant long stotras or short mantras

[PVR] This is my thumb rule: Long stotras are good for most people as they improve one's patience and discipline.

As one's mind becomes well-disciplined and highly focused, repeating a short mantra many times may be more rewarding. If one closes eyes, keeps back straight, and tries to be physically still, it may be even better. But, when one's focus is limited, long stotras may be better.

Whether a stotra or a mantra, it may give some material benefits to some, channel one's energy and trigger some attitude change. But the true power of most mantras is beyond what one can imagine and can only come after sufficient internal purification and evolution.

While many mantras may be like stones or arrows thrown at an enemy, Veda mantras like Gayatri mantra and siddha mantras like Navarna mantra are like missiles. They are far more powerful, but more difficult to employ. Of course, you can also use a missile as just a heavy stone. But that's not the real power of a missile.

BTW, you may realize one day that true surrender to Lord is neither weakness nor complacency..

[Manish Pandit] the reason you may find stotras better is because chanting aloud destroys Tamas easily.(temporarily).



Corrections in Sri Sooktam & Chandi

15th Nov 2014

In the well-known Saptashati yantra used with Chandipath, there is a 24-petal lotus encircling the inner 8-petal lotus & 2 triangles. The deities invoked in 24 petals are Vishnumaya, Chetana, Buddhi, Nidra, Kshudha etc. One familiar with the text can recognize that these deities come in the 5th chapter (Mahasaraswati), in a section with verses like:

yA devI sarvabhUteShu | <XYZ> rUpeNa saMsthitA |
namastasyai namastasyai | namastasyai namo namaH ||

Meaning: Which goddess is well-stationed within all beings in the form of <XYZ>, to Her, to Her, to Her we bow.

Here things like awareness, intellect, kindness, contentment etc are covered and so are sleep, hunger, thirst, shame etc.

One can note that deities come in the same order in 5th chapter as in the yantra! However, there are only 22 instead of 24, i.e. 2 deities are missing. The missing ones are dhRti & puShTi (i.e. forces that cause firmness and nourishment, which are quite important).

These must have been left out of the text by mistake by someone long back and everyone else must have followed. To those who do Chandipath or Chandi homa daily or weekly, I strongly recommend adding these 2 also.

Add "dhRti" after "lakShmI" and add "puShTi" after "tuShTi". This gives 2 additional verses, but, in any case, how we get to the count is 700 is quite arbitrary - there are many commissions and omissions and people somehow justify 700 count.

A couple of verses towards the end of Sree Sooktam are controversial. People switch a few words in various combinations in the following verses:

ArdrAM puShkariNIM puShTiM | suvarNAM hema mAlinIM | chandrAM hiraNmayIM
lakShmIM jAtavedo ma Avaha ||

ArdrAM yaH kariNIM yaShTiM | piMgaLAM padma mAlinIM | sUryAM hiraNmayIM
lakShmIM jAtavedo ma Avaha ||

People switch around various words in these 2 verses, but I am sure the above is correct.

The lunar channel of awareness (aka Ida nadi) is cool, golden hued and like a garland of gold. It causes puShTi, i.e. nourishment. So chandra, suvarNa, hema mAlinI, puShTi should go together.

The solar channel of awareness (aka Pingala nadi) is hot, reddish hued and like a red lotus garland. It causes yaShTi, i.e. burning/sacrifice. So sUrya, piMgaLa, padma mAlinI, yaShTi should go together.

Once some of these words are mixed up between the 2 verses, it loses its real meaning.

I am not 100% sure if it is wise or unwise to share this publicly, for this powerful Vedic prayer may have been corrupted for a purpose when Kali yuga started. But I'll take a chance. Please remember that Sri Sooktam is not just about money and material prosperity, but an all-round sense of well-being.

But, as far as Chandipath is concerned, the forces of Chandi are quite active on earth right now and many good sadhakas are doing homa to Her everyday. So I feel inspired to share the above publicly.

[PVR] you can find the complete text of the corrected version of Sree Sooktam in "Sri Mahalakshmi Homa Manual" at my website: http://www.vedicastrologer.org/homa/regular/mahalakshmi_r_sans-.pdf (sanskrit version) or http://www.vedicastrologer.org/homa/regular/mahalakshmi_r_eng.pdf (english version)



Gopi Jana Vallabhaya

6th Sep 2014

One learned friend privately asked me the meaning of "gopi jana vallabhaya" (as in the mantra "कृष्णाय गोविन्दाय गोपीजनवल्लभाय स्वाहा"). I'll answer publicly, for the benefit of others.

First literal/superficial meaning: gopa=coherd, gopi=cowherd's lady, jana=people, vallabha=beloved/desired. Overall expression means "to the beloved of the ladies of cowherds". This alludes to all the ladies of cowherds running after Krishna.

Now, on to the subtle meaning. The word "go" means cows and stars and is used as the code word for "senses" in Veda. We nourish and enrich ourselves with various experiences of the world through our senses at one level. At another level, we nourish ourselves with milk, yogurt, butter, ghee etc from cows. At yet another level, our experience of the world is enabled by the light from stars and celestial bodies. Senses show us the world like stars. They feed us like the cows.

Gopa means one who controls "go". Gopas stand for internal subtle entities that control various kinds of perceptions and sensations through outward and inward senses. Gopis stand for the energy that animates these internal subtle entities, i.e. Gopis are the energies that enable various perceptions and sensations through outward and inward senses. Jana indicates multitudes of these energies. Vallabha means one who is sought after.

When the energies that cause various experiences, perceptions and sensations of the world around us actually seek and run after the Supreme Being or Self, it brings balance and equanimity in a Yogi! Krishna is being extolled here as that Being!

Some may look at Krishna's play with gopis as a modern playboy's escapades with many ladies. But it is a symbol of the energies that animate all our sense experiences of this world being truly dedicated to the Supreme Being, i.e. a person offering each experience of the world to the Lord and think of Him as the enjoyer of that experience.



Symbolism of Mother Maatangi

26 Nov 2020



I said many times that the imagery used in Hindu scriptures has deep symbolism. Even the names of persons and places have symbolism. Today let us briefly look at Mother Maatangi, one of Dasa Mahavidyas (10 supreme knowledge goddesses).

First, look at her weapons. She holds a veena (stringed musical instrument), a parrot, a sword and a skull.

Saraswati, goddess of learning, also holds veena and book (skill and knowledge). Though Maatangi is similar, she also wears skull and sword, like Kaali and Taaraa (making some see her as a "Tantrik goddess").

Veena is a symbol of skill and ability. Parrot symbolizes external speech. Sword is for cutting off attachments. Skull (lifeless head!) shows destruction of ego.

Thus, Maatangi shows learning, skill and excellent command over speech (or writing - basically external expression), but with detachment and with a depleting ego-sense (I-ness)!

Learned see Maatangi as a personification of pure, captivating and divine speech. Let us look at this etymologically.

The Sanskrit word "mata" means thought, opinion or intention. The suffix "ga" (from the root "gam", meaning "to go") means "something that follows".

Matanga means that which follows one's thoughts, opinions and intentions. Sage Matanga is a personification of external expression of thoughts. After all, one's words and/or external expressions follow one's thoughts and views.

Side note: Some may know that another meaning of "matanga" is an elephant. The word "matanga" can also mean "one that goes as it wishes". After all, elephants are mighty and go around as they wish. And, sometimes the words we speak also tend to wander freely!

It is also interesting to note that Sage Matanga is a Chandala (outcast). It makes some symbolic sense, as one's instincts, agendas, desires etc stay deep within the core of one's being, while spoken words and *external* expressions leave the core and get out. THAT is the meaning of Sage Matanga being an outcast.

Matanga did penance and got a boon that Divine Mother Herself would be born as his daughter. Thus, his daughter Maatangi stands for very pure, sublime and divine speech.

One more small thing. Sage Matanga did tapas at Rishyamukha mountain. As rishya means an antelope, Rishyamukha means "face/mouth of an antelope"(it may have looked that way).

But let us go deeper. The word rishya comes from the root "rish", which means "to glide and move very quickly". Antelope sure moves fast and so do thoughts! So rishya can also mean thoughts and Rishyamukha can mean "mouth of thoughts". Visualize the mouth (entry point) of thoughts as a mountain and speech as a person who seeks perfection and goes into deep meditation there. Isn't it sublime?!

As spoken/written words are so important in the world in influencing others, no wonder Maatangi is seen as a deity that gives control/influence over others. She is not any speech, but pure, divine and captivating speech coming from a seeker with good detachment!



“Vichche” in Navarna Mantra

9 Oct 2016

Best wishes to all for Shaarada Nava Ratris!

A friend asked me the meaning of the word "vichche" in Navarna mantra that comes in Durga Saptashati (aka Chandipath).

The word "vit" means "to know/understand/perceive/grasp/be aware". The same root is behind words like "vidya", "vidvaan", "vidmahe" etc.

The word "cha" means "and".

The long vowel "ee" stands for Shakti or kinetic energy that causes movement in consciousness and makes things happen. This is why many Shakti beejas have the vowel "ee" in them (e.g. shreem, hreem, kleem, kreem etc).

The mantra basically says "the creation (aim), sustenance (hreem) and destruction (kleem) of various entities/objects is for the Divine Mother's (chaamundaayai) awareness (vit) and (cha) play (ee)".

Though there is only Self, which is both Shiva (cosmic potential energy) and Shakti (cosmic kinetic energy), and nothing else in the cosmos, many objects (worlds and beings) are created, sustained and destroyed, just because Shakti wished to be aware of those objects within Herself and play with them. That is what this mantra is basically saying. That is why this mantra is considered to be very powerful and equivalent to Gayatri mantra. This mantra is the essence of Veda and Vedanta.

BTW, some people mistakenly read this as "vichchai", but it IS “vichche”.



Chandipath without "initiation"

27 Sep 2014

Namaste friends,

Happy Vijaya Dasami!

(1) I do not share Dr Choudhary's opinion about reading English translation instead of Sanskrit verses if one is not initiated.

(2) Initiation serves two purposes:

(2a) As in the analogy I gave earlier, a rich father may open a bank account in a son's name with a starting balance of one million dollars. Similarly, a guru with some achievement in a mantra can transfer some of it to a disciple. However, one without a rich father is still better off opening a bank account with a zero balance and building it up slowly with one's own hard work. Similarly, one not finding a guru can still do sadhana with famous mantras and build one's own spiritual account. If you find a guru to initiate you (not as a formality, but truly initiate you), get initiated. Otherwise, just go ahead and do it.

(2b) Mantras and rituals are used for two purposes - (i) for getting specific material results and (ii) as tools of increasing surrender and making spiritual progress. In the case of (ii), initiation is not that important. But, in the case of (i), there are pitfalls and a guru can prepare one sufficiently. One can get in trouble otherwise.

However, as I said several times, there are very few people who can do (i) now-a-days. Nature has destabilized the whole system, for a reason, as Kali progressed. I suggest doing mantras and rituals only for increasing surrender, getting whatever material results god wants to give and making spiritual progress. If one is meant to do rituals for begetting *specific* material results (for oneself or others or society/universe in general), Nature will make arrangements for one to get correct knowledge of such rituals. But, as one starts, one should start with the attitude of (ii).

(3) If you want to do Chandipath or any mantra or any ritual or any homa, do it with the attitude of "I have several material desires, but I do not know how to fulfil them. Because of this ritual, god may give any material results or spiritual results and not necessarily fulfil my desires. I will accept whatever god gives. I want to increase my devotion and surrender and make spiritual progress". You are then SAFE. Initiation is not required. That attitude itself is an initiation!

(4) Gentle deities give good results slowly, but there are fewer hiccups. Fierce deities give results fast, but there may be some hiccups. I gave this analogy earlier also. Imagine that a person is taking rotten fruits from a fruit basket and throwing them in garbage and trying to retrieve one good fruit from under them. If the person is gentle, one may do it gently and the spillage of rotten fruits on the floor will be minimal. If the person is aggressive, one may do it fast and there

may be more spillage of rotten fruits on the floor. But the good fruit stuck under the rotten fruits will be retrieved faster. Similarly, phala of your karmas is in a basket. The deity is trying to take bad fruits and throw them in garbage and give you a good fruit to eat. There may be some spillage. A gentle deity like Ganapathi, Vishnu or Lakshmi may take more time to get out the good fruit, but the spillage will be minimal. A fierce deity like Chandi or Bhairava or Kali or Narasimha may have more spillage, but the good fruit comes out faster.

At the end, remember that these fruits are not deity's creations, but fruits of your own actions. Without sadhana, you would've had to eat each of those rotten fruits before eating the good fruits!

Nevertheless, one unable to take some of the spillage of rotten fruits is better off avoiding fierce deities such as Chandi and staying with gentler deities. If initiation is made mandatory, one can be assessed by a guru before starting a practice. If you realize the above, you can start mantras without initiation. If some bad results occur, you have to realize that it is a fruit of your own actions and the deity is trying to accelerate good results. If you are weak-hearted, stick to gentler deities.

(5) Some people who never lit a lamp in their life and were ignorant of rituals, are doing daily homa now. Some people who took several hours to read Saptashati for the first time just 2-3 years back are now doing Chandi homa with entire saptashati everyday. I know that some of them have transformed a lot and have experienced some things too. Obviously, they have done sadhana with fire and sadhana of the Fierce aspects of Divine Mother in some past lives.

(6) In this age of ignorance and rank materialism, if someone has even a faint idea that spiritual progress is important, is looking for god and is attracted to a specific advanced sadhana (e.g. Chandipath), that person obviously has some good karmas and good vasanas. That person has done that sadhana in the past. Previous life's sadhana itself is one's adhikara.

(7) If you have a good understanding of what is what, how things work, why one should do something, how to do it, what is more important and what is less important, that is what initiation is all about!

Best regards
Narasimha



Vishnu sahasra nama stotra to nakshatra padas

3 Nov 2016

When Swami Satha Sivom posted the link between Vishnu sahasra nama stotra to nakshatra padas, I wrote a comment on his wall. I thought I'd post it on my wall to reach more people.

Many scholars, priests and religious gurus teach chanting ONE verse of Vishnu sahasrana nama stotra repeatedly, based on one's nakshatra and pada. The 108 verses (starting from "Vishvam Vishnur Vashatkaro" and ending in "Vanamaalee Gadee Saarngee") are linked to 108 nakshatra padas.

Traditionally, people start counting from Aswini 1st pada and end in Revati 4th pada (i.e. first 4 verses are linked 4 padas Aswini and so on). However, I am sure it is incorrect, like many practices of Kali yuga.

Counting should start from SRAVANA nakshatra owned by Lord Vishnu and NOT from Aswini nakshatra.

So "Vishvam Vishnur Vashatkaaro" verse is for Sravana 1st pada. "Pootaatmaa paramaatmaa cha" verse is for Sravana 2nd pada. And so on.

The 108th verse ("Vanamaalee Gadee Saarngee") is for Uttarahadha 4th pada (which is also known as Abhijit mostly).

For example, I am born with Moon in Poorvabhadra 3rd pada. You count 4 padas each for Sravana, Dhanishtha and Satabhishak ($3 \times 4 = 12$) and 3 more padas for Poorvabhadra and get 15. So the 15th verse is the one for me (i.e. "Lokaadhyakshah Suraadhyaksho Dharmaadhyakshah").

In some border cases, one may not know one's pada or even nakshatra confidently. After all, Lahiri ayanamsa used by most astrologers today is quite off from what Varahamihira used and what most Indian astrologers used for millennia! Lahiri ayanamsa is a relatively new idea that became popular towards the end of last century for mostly political reasons. It is quite likely that most people's calculations of planetary longitudes are off by a degree or so!

So there can be an error in pada for several people. So, if you pick "the most ideal" verse for you based on this formula, you may be picking a wrong one.

This squares back to what I always say - stop worrying about formulas and technicalities and simply surrender. In Kali yuga, most formulas and technicalities are corrupted. Even if you get one formula right, some other formula will be wrong. Do NOT count on maximizing results through technical perfection and formulaic short cuts!

Of course, to be safe, one can chant all 108 verses, as it does not take that long. Also, as Lord Shiva taught Mother Paravati, just chanting the 7-letter Amrita mantra "SreeRaama Raama Raama" with *focused* mind is equivalent to chanting all 108 verse.

If one is not sure of one's star and pada (or even if one is!), one can use this simple alternative. But the key is to have a focused mind! Simple, isn't it? 😊



[PVR] it is NOT about chanting this single verse. In fact, this verse is saying that chanting "SreeRaama Raama Raama" (the 7-letter Amrita mantra I gave above) with a focused and pleasant mind is equivalent to chanting 1000 names! Instead of chanting this verse, chant that mantra.

If a verse says "Take Lavana Bhaskara choorna to increase appetite", please take the choorna instead of repeating that verse!

[PVR] you can continuously recite that verse as many times as you can. Another great option is to do samputikarana of 108 verses with that signal verse!!

Also, samputikarana of Vishnu sahasrana nama stotra with "Sarva Mangala Maangalye" sloka is exceedingly auspicious!!

Samputikarana is done like this:

Samputikarana sloka/mantra

First verse

Samputikarana sloka/mantra

Second verse

Samputikarana sloka/mantra

Third verse

....

Samputikarana sloka/mantra

108th verse

Samputikarana sloka/mantra



Shani Mantram interpretation

Sorry for posting this a bit late, but it is Krishna Shani Trayodashi today (Saturday & Trayodashi tithi in Krishna paksha) - a very auspicious day for worshipping Saturn. You can do a Shani homa yourself using the manuals at <http://www.vedicastrologer.org/homa/download.htm>.³

On this occasion, I want to give my interpretation of Shani mantra recommended by Maharshi Parasara to appease Saturn. Unlike the literal interpretation given by other Veda commentators, my interpretation is subtler and better explains why this mantra was recommended for Saturn! Mantra is here:

shanno devIrabhiShTaya aapo bhavantu pItaye |
shaMyorabhisravantu naH || (YajurVeda 36.12)

First let me give the literal meaning by Swami Dayananda Saraswati of Arya Samaj (<http://www.aryasamajjannagar.org/yajurveda/yajurveda.htm>).

Word breakdown:

devIH=divine/auspicious, abhiShTaye=for fulfillment of desires, pItaye=to drink, aapaH=water, bhavantu=may become, shaM=pleasant, naH=for us, shaMyoH=various comforts, abhisravantu=may flow towards, naH=us.

Meaning:

Those who perform yajnas (divine/auspicious rituals) and use pure substances like water, they beget great comforts and well-being always.

IMHO, this is very superficial. Also, one wonders why this mantra was recommended by Maharshi Parasara for appeasing Saturn.

As I explained earlier in my interpretation of "[mantra pushpam](#)" and Mars mantra (agnirmUrdhaa divaH), the words apaH and aapaH are used for action and inspired action throughout Veda.

³ Various manuals for Lord Shani can be found under section "Planetary deities" in the website

Just as water flows from a mountain, action flows from consciousness. Just as water is the basis of all physical life, action is the basis of all animation of consciousness.

This is my word breakdown:

shaM=auspiciously, naH=our, aapaH=inspired actions, devIH=divine, abhiShTaye=for fulfillment of will, bhavantu=may be, pItaye=for protection, shaMyoH=peace and balance, abhisravantu=flow towards, naH=us.

Meaning:

May there auspiciously be our inspired actions for the fulfillment of divine will (may we be willing pawns in the hand of divine, engaging in hard work for divine agenda without resistance or resentment). For our protection (as we engage in inspired actions), may peace and equanimity flow towards us.

In other words, may we perform inspired actions to fulfill divine agenda, with peace and equanimity!

All planets are personifications of various aspects of our being (e.g. Mercury=spirit of comprehending and adjusting with world, Venus=spirit of enjoying, materially or even spiritually, things around us)

Saturn is a personification of the spirit of hard, disciplined and impassioned work, within us. So the spirit captured by this mantra is pretty consistent with what Saturn represents!!

As I mentioned many times, all commentaries on Veda we currently have are pretty superficial. The only meaningful insights I have seen are from Sri Aurobindo, in "Secret of the Veda". Though he did not give a complete commentary, he gave great insights and a few samples of how to interpret.

Veda, like most advanced scriptures, is not to be taken literally. It is a coded text and there are layers of meanings that reveal themselves to a seeker as one does sadhana.



In word-by-word translation, there is "devIH=divine". Does it refer to feminine aspect of divine (devīh)?

The masculine aspect of divine stands for stillness in consciousness and the feminine aspect for animation in consciousness. All agenda and play is due to the latter!!!



Keelita Mantra

27th October 2016

One person asked me on Twitter if Sree Sooktam is keelita (locked) and how to do Utkeelana (unlocking). As people know, many mantras are keelita (e.g. Gayatri mantra, Chandi moola mantra).

Sree Sooktam, the powerful Vedic hymn to goddess Mahalakshmi, is not keelita. However, the text was purposely corrupted by Sages before the advent of Kali yuga, so that it is not misused by all and sundry.

Towards the end, there are two riks that have Pushti-Yashti, Suvarna-Pingala and Chandra-Surya. Scholars and priests use various permutations and combinations of those words, but hardly anyone uses the right combination!

Though the correct combination is actually quite obvious if one thinks for a moment and applies oneself, the intent of Sages who corrupted this text is too powerful for most seekers to think clearly and arrive at the correct text.

Basically, Ida nadi is associated with cool Moon (Chandra), causes nourishment (pushti) and is golden-hued (suvarna). Pingala nadi is associated with hot Sun (Surya), causes burning/sacrifice (yashti) and is red-hued (pingala).

Bottomline: This is Kali yuga. Mantras, procedures and all technicalities are either locked or corrupted, so that powerful tools do not fall into the hands of the undeserving. Stop chasing technical perfection and become a helpless and clueless child in front of God. THEN something good can happen.



Can women chant Sree Sooktam ?

[PVR] Women can of course chant it, though some people mistakenly believe otherwise. In fact, another powerful sooktam called "Devi Sooktam" was first heard internally by a woman rishi and shared with the world!

One siddha purusha had told us that sage Vishwamitra had started creating the 2nd heaven by mixing Shree Sooktam & Purusha Sooktam in a particular way

[PVR] Another excellent combination is that Durga Sooktam has 8 riks and Sree Sooktam has 16. One can *interleave* them and use. Also, samputikarana of Vishnu sahasra nama stotra with "Om sarvamangala mangalye" verse and samputikarana of Lakshmi ashtottara sata nama stotra with "Om sree rama rama rameti" verse are very powerful.

If all the mantra are keelita, how can an ordinary person having interest in religion get rid of troubles and attain peace of Mind.

[PVR] By begging god for it.

It seems incomprehensible that a sage would purposely corrupt anything divine

[PVR] Just like a mother hides a candy jar from the kid with no self-control.



Nature and Importance of Fire

6 Nov 2016

Fire is the most enigmatic of five elements (bhutas). Solids, liquids and air are simple to understand. The 4th element of space is everywhere - it is the base that other elements fill.

The 5th element fire comes into being due to friction between other elements. Once it comes into being and is large enough, it consumes whatever it comes in contact with and/or transforms them. It sustains itself as long as there is something for it to consume. After it consumes everything it can, it withdraws from existence.

When fire is restricted to a container (e.g. a fire pit or a homa kunda), it consumes everything in that container and then retreats.

Life is similar!!!

When restricted to one's annamaya kosha (sheath of matter), the fire of "life" consumes all food one eats. When restricted to one's pranamaya kosha (sheath of vitality), it consumes all breaths one takes. When restricted to one's manomaya kosha (sheath of mind), it consumes all of one's instincts, feelings and thoughts. When restricted to one's vijnanamaya kosha (sheath of wisdom), it consumes all of one's insights, knowledge and wisdom. When restricted to one's anandamaya kosha (sheath of bliss), it consumes all bliss and contentment one experiences.

Some materials isolated from fire or dumped without enough oxygen supply in a homa kunda may not burn. If one moves them around or re-arranges, fire can consume them faster. Similarly, some food one consumes may not be consumed well by the fire of annamaya kosha and cause ill-health. Regulating diet and physical lifestyle may help. Some breaths one takes may not be consumed well by the fire of pranamaya kosha and regulating exercises such as pranayama may help. Some life experiences, thoughts and vasanas may not be consumed well by the fire of manomaya kosha and mind control and regulating mental habits may help.

While other elements are always there and just change form, fire comes and goes when its job is done. There is something "life like" about it!!!

The world runs on the principle of resonance. When we are in the company of a spiritual person, we think spiritual matters. When we are in the company of a politician, we think politics. When we are in the company of a film buff, we think films. The company we are in resonates to a part of our consciousness and makes it stronger.

Similarly, when we spend enough time in the company of Fire, various fires in our being resonate to it and become stronger.

Fire is Life. Fire is the Force of God. Regular company of Fire strengthens the life force within us and helps us digest our vasanas and life experiences better. It helps us trace our way back to our source.

No wonder almost every worthwhile religion and culture discovered the importance of Fire to connect with Divinity! Veda starts with a hymn to Agni (Fire). Hindus did (and do) fire rituals. Buddhists did them. Ancient Greco-Roman Pagan religions worshiped God in Fire. Bible has references to offerings in Fire. Incans, Mayans and native Americans did Fire rituals. Zoroastrians worshiped Fire and saw it as God's representative on earth, just like Vedic seers did!

Introduce Fire into your life. With respect and love, introduce Fire into a container, tend to Him, make him strong enough, make enough offerings and meditate sitting in front a bright Fire with closed eyes and see what Fire does to your consciousness! You don't need to take my word for it (or words of some "Scripture"). You can try it for yourself for a few months.

While various religions came up with various procedures, procedure is secondary. The key is to install Fire, tend to Him till He is strong enough, offer enough materials to Him, arrange them in a convenient way (from Fire's point of view, to consume) and then meditate in front of Him. You can imagine any deity in that Fire and meditate with any sacred chants of any deity, any religion.

You can go to <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/fire> and download a simple "Fire Yoga" manual there. It has a minimal procedure that internalizes some basic Vedic deities and includes offerings to them. It gives simple Sanskrit mantras as well as English translations that you can understand. You can visualize the deities as internal forces while making offerings. Then pick a deity and sacred chant of your choice (of any religion!).

Let Fire be the vehicle that transforms your current state of consciousness to an elevated state corresponding to a form of Divinity you believe in!

Once you see the power of Fire, tell people about Fire Yoga and spread it in the world!

Perhaps due to the intention and blessings of some Seers established in higher realms of awareness, some of us did our part and established the "Fire" of "sadhana with fire" in the container of this modern world. We tended to Him in the initial years and made this Fire large enough now. Now thousands of people are doing regular homa or Fire Yoga.

He is now unstoppable and will consume whatever comes in His way!!! He will withdraw only after consuming all that is available to him. This Fire will continue to grow further and burn for a few centuries.

Let your consciousness become an offering in this large, long global Homa. Play your part, help the world and help yourself in the process.

Agnimeede purohitam!



Isn't it "Agni-milay purohitam"?

[PVR] When I chant that verse in my daily homa, I do pronounce it as "L". But, if I write "l", most people will read it incorrectly. So, I used "d" as a better approximation of the sound.

In any case, I firmly believe that the right thought is a lot more important than pronunciation (though, personally speaking, my own rational mind is inclined to always discriminate, draw conclusions and implement them!).

Whether you say "Fire, I extoll you" or "Fire, I egtoll you" is less important than whether you are actually "extolling" Fire in your *mind* while saying it!!! Whether you say "honey, I love you" or "honney, I luv ya", what is really important is whether your honey *feels* your love! :-)

As I always say, chanting "taking Lavana Bhaskara choorna increases appetite" thousand times does NOT increase one's appetite - actually taking the choorna does!

[Compiler] Readers may like to read the views of Shri Manish Pandit on sadhana via Homa at <https://www.facebook.com/manish.pandit.5209/posts/10227553041909149>
<https://www.facebook.com/manish.pandit.5209/posts/10227556331671391>

Also readers might like to view Shri Narasimha Rao's youtube elucidation at [this link](#) or read the article "[Importance of Doing A Fire Ritual by Oneself](#)"

Dr Svoboda has a brief introduction on Agni [at this link](#)



Fire tongs for Homa Kunda

13 Oct 2013

IMHO, it is perfectly fine to use other sticks or even tongs to move a burning stick/coconut/materials from one part of homa kundam to another. Many yogis who maintained fire with them carried tongs also. For example, you can read in "Ramakrishna and His Disciples" that Tota Puri (Ramakrishna's Vedantic guru) threatened to hit with his tongs a servant who wanted to light a pipe from his fire pit.

Yes, god is in fire, but it is that aspect of god that your consciousness is able to manifest in that fire. Depending on the state of your consciousness will be the strength and nature of fire in your homa kundam.

See, fire is too powerful when free. When free and strong enough, it can burn forests and towns also. But, when fire inside a homa kundam is constrained with a badly arranged pile of materials, it may struggle to burn even those materials. Similarly, divinity is too powerful and can transform anything/anybody when free to act. However, when the divinity inside a person is constrained with a badly arranged pile of vasanas (conditioning), it may struggle to remove that conditioning.

By rearranging things so that fire can burn things better, you are not disrespecting god. Just as enabling the divinity within yourself to remove more conditioning is good, so is enabling the fire in your homa kundam to burn more materials.

Shastras (e.g. Vishnu Dharmottara Purana) are clear that fire in homa kundam should be bright and in a majority of the area. Low fire and smoke should be restricted to a smaller portion of homa kundam and a higher portion should have bright fire. In fact, shastras ascribe bad results to any homa done with low fire and a lot of smoke.

That keeping a reasonable amount of fire burning in most of the homa kundam is quite important.

BTW, people think of the guru-shishya play between Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, but don't realize that the guru-shishya play between Tota Puri and Ramakrishna was not any less interesting! In the incident I referred to above, Tota Puri became angry with the servant for his "sacrilegious" act of wanting to light his pipe from Tota Puri's fire pit. Tota Puri threatened to hit him with his tongs and the servant ran away. Ramakrishna laughed until he rolled on the ground and said, "Oh, for shame, you forgot already". When Tota Puri remarked indignantly that the servant was insolent, Ramakrishna elaborated, "Oh yes, he was insolent. But you were forgetting your

knowledge of Brahman! Weren't you just telling me that there is nothing but Brahman and that a knower of Brahman can't be deceived by Maya? Yet the next moment, you forget all that and you are ready to beat one of Brahman's manifestations! You see, Maya, which you despise, is stronger than you think. Maya is omnipotent."

An alert shishya will benefit himself as well as the guru..

As Ramakrishna aptly pointed out above, Maya is much stronger than anyone may imagine. In fact, all that one may imagine or think or conceptualize or understand, whether about the material world or about spiritual notions or even the concept of non-duality, are still within the domain of Maya! While it is perhaps possible to overcome Maya, every action one undertakes in the process of either understanding or accepting or overcoming Maya is still governed by Maya and in the domain of Maya.

While I appreciate the concepts of Adwaita as taught by rishis in Upanishads etc, all I can do is to bow to Mahamaya with humility and awe.



Homa Esoteric Meaning

24 Dec 2017

An esteemed friend inquired about the esoteric meaning of a few standard offerings made before/after homa and I want to explain it today.

Let us first take the initial steps before any ritual. We sit down in a stable asana and that channels the earth element in Mooladhara chakra (stability). Then we sip water during aachamana and that channels the water element in Swadhishtana chakra (harmony and creativity). Then we light a lamp and that channels the fire element in Manipura chakra (will power). Then we breathe in and out during pranayama and that channels the air element in Anahata chakra (control). Then we declare our intent during sankalpa and that channels the space element in Visuddhi chakra (being). These steps are intended at channeling and purifying the 5 elements before any ritual.

Then we worship Ganapati and Varuna in most Vedic rituals. Ganapati gives us stability and solid planning, to avoid obstacles and problems. But, if we encounter some problems, Varuna gives us persistence and discipline to face and solve them.

Specifically in homa, we make a few initial offerings after starting fire. These are to 5 aspects of Divine:

- (1) One aspect of Prajapati lives in the center of Mooladhara chakra and binds our awareness to a small portion of this physical world when we are born.
- (2) Indra is the aspect of god that frees our awareness to experience various physical, mental and spiritual realms by ascending via the middle channel of direct inspired perception.
- (3) Agni is the aspect of god that frees our awareness to experience various physical, mental and spiritual realms by ascending via the solar channel of reasoning (constructive analysis and logic).
- (4) Soma is the aspect of god that frees our awareness to experience various physical, mental and spiritual realms by ascending via the lunar channel of feeling (intuition, emotion and creative thinking).
- (5) Another aspect of Prajapati controls the creation of various physical, mental and spiritual realms.

Then we worship the deities we want to worship in fire. In the end, we make offerings to thank a few aspects of Divinity controlling the experiences of our awareness during the practice - Fire, Wind, Sun, Prajapati, Vishnu and Rudra.

The physical, mental and spiritual realms are controlled by Fire, Wind and Sun gods. Fire, the transformer, creates the physical reality by processing the elements through the physical senses and transforming them into physical experiences. Wind, the mover, creates the mental reality to by moving the notions and concepts in mind. Sun, the shiner, shows the spiritual reality by throwing light on the Divinity in everything.

Every being of this universe, every object, every experience and every notion is created, sustained and destroyed by the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer aspects of god. So we thank them too.

These esoteric meanings were well-explained in the "Fire Yoga" manual that was created *after* the homa manuals. In fact, most of the text above was cut & pasted from there! Homa manuals do not have these esoteric explanations. I'll try to add them in the next revision. I recommend that spiritual seekers should check out the "Fire Yoga" manual (<http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/fire>).

For some people, it is better to just do things mechanically without understanding the meaning. For some people, understanding the meaning and trying to feel it, may enhance the practice. I'll let people judge it for themselves.

But, one thing is certain - most ancient spiritual practices were designed very carefully and thoughtfully by highly elevated and compassionate souls.



Agni Mantra Interpretation

9 Dec 2020



Those of you who do the longer version of homa may recognize this mantra used just after starting fire, to salute Agnideva. I wanted to share my independent interpretation, along with the standard interpretation people use.

BTW, this mantra is from RigVeda (4.58.3). Rishi of this rik is a distant ancestor of mine - Vamadeva Gautama.

Mantra:

chatvAri shringAstrayo asya pAdA dve shIrShe
sapta hastAso asya |

tridhA baddho vRShabho roravIti maho devo
martyA{M} Avivesha || RV 4.58.3

Literal Meaning:

The mighty being with 4 horns, 3 feet, 2 heads and 7 hands is tied 3 ways and the great god animates all living beings with a mighty roar.

Standard Interpretation:

According to Sayanacharya, celebrated commentator of Veda, the 4 horns of Agni are the 4 Vedas. The 3 feet are the 3 daily sacrifices of morning, noon and evening (some say they

refer to the three fields of time - past, present and future). The 2 heads are the Brahmaudana and the Pravargya ceremonies (some say day and night). The 7 hands are the 7 metres of the Vedas (some say the 7 rays of light). The 3 bonds are the three sub-divisions of the Vedas - Mantras, Brahmanas and Kalpas (some say they are the 3 lokas - bhuh, bhuvah, svah).

My Independent Interpretation:

As I always say, subtle teachings of rishis (such as Veda) have *layers* of meaning, going from gross physical level to the subtlest level! I have a different and subtler interpretation.

As I see it, this mantra describes the great being Agni who *pervades* all beings and *animates* them, i.e. facilitates all experiences and actions by them. This great being can also be viewed as "soul" or as Kundalini.

The 4 purusharthas are what bring us glory and those are the 4 horns.

The 3 sareeras (sthoola, sookshma and kaarana sareera) are what ground/support our awareness and those are the 3 feet.

Doership and experiencership are what give us an identity and those are the 2 heads.

Our animated awareness works through 7 chakras/lokas (realms of being) and those are the 7 hands.

The 3 granthis (knots - Brahma granthi in mooladhara chakra, Vishnu granthi in anahata chakra and Rudra granthi in ajna chakra) bind the infinite awareness to a limited existence and that is the 3-way tying.

Thus bound, this great being animates all living beings and makes them have an individualized identity and experience and act.



Can this mantra be used in Agni Pratisthaapana while doing the simplest version of homa(in a circular homa kunda)? And is pronunciation of this mantra very important?

[PVR] If you feel comfortable with it, sure, why not? The goal of the simplest and simple manuals was to really simplify and remove barriers for those who are not comfortable with Sanskrit or long mantras/procedures.



Can women do homa?

27th April 2020

Though some women are doing a homa by themselves using our manuals, some women are held back by the prohibition in *modern orthodoxy* against women doing a homa. Today I will share a CLEAR reference from Ayodhya Kanda of Valmiki Ramayana and a quote from Swami Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, previous Kanchi Paramacharya, on that.

BTW, Mother's command when She appeared to my guru during a Shata Chandi homa in 2006 at Chennai was to simplify fire ritual and enable *anyone* interested in dharma and spiritual progress to do it by themselves, *irrespective* of race, gender, caste, creed etc.

Though gross bodies of men and women are different, their subtle bodies are identical. The need for purifying the subtle body is identical. Women can also do homa.

Here is a clear reference in Valmiki Ramayana about queen Kausalya doing a homa and making offerings in fire with hymns:

vardhayitvaa prahRSTaaH taaH pravishya ca gRham striyaH |
nyavedayanta tvaritaa raama maatuH priyam tadaa || 2-20-13
kausalyaa api tadaa devii raatrim sthitvaa samaahitaa |
prabhaate tu akarot puujaam viSNoh putra hita eSiNii || 2-20-14
saa kSauma vasanaa hRSTaa nityam vrata paraayaNaa |
agnim juhoti sma tadaa mantravat kRta mangalaa || 2-20-15
pravishya cha tadaa raamaH maatur antaHpuram shubham |
dadarsha maataram tatra haavayantiim hutaashanam || 2-20-16

Meaning: Then those delighted women greeted Rama with good word of success, quickly entered the house and informed Kausalya about the lovely arrival of Rama.

At that time, Kausalya, having spent the whole night with steadfastness, was performing Dawn worship to Vishnu, for the welfare of her son.

Appearing auspicious in a white silk saree, Kausalya was, as part of her daily rituals, making offerings in Holy Fire, by reciting hymns.

Then Rama entered mother's auspicious quarters and saw her making sacrificial offerings in holy fire there.

Hope orthodox people of today will not say Lord Rama's mother was doing adharmā! 😊😞

BTW, Bala Kanda of Valmiki Ramayana says that every citizen of Ayodhya performs homa and it does not specify males only.

We will leave the question of whether women can do homa for others as priests (I am not interested in that at all). But, when it comes to personal fire worship (aupāsana), there is NO doubt that women can do it, with or without husband.

Here is a direct quote from Swami Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, previous Kanchi Paramacharya. This is from a book called "Hindu Dharma" containing translations of his speeches.

"Aupāsana is the only Vedic right that a woman is entitled to perform on her own."

"Even when the husband is away the wife must perform it by offering unbroken rice grains in the sacrificial fire. The Vedas themselves have given women such a right."

"I said [in an earlier talk] that members of all castes must perform aupāsana."

BTW, there may be a reason for the traditional bias against women doing homa and other serious rituals such as Gayatri mantra japa. Intense spiritual practices can awaken Kundalini (self-awareness) and make it flow in the nadis (channels in which awareness flows) through chakras (realms of consciousness). While that is desirable normally, Kundalini flow in a pregnant lady has the potential to harm a fetus if the soul in it is unprepared. Of course, if the soul is prepared, it can result in the birth of a siddha also.

However, practically speaking, Kundalini awakening does not happen in 99.9999% people. Even if it happens in a pregnant lady, it is not necessarily a bad thing as explained above.

So, using that point to have an outright ban on women doing homa is unwise.

Though *modern* orthodoxy holds that women cannot do fire ritual by themselves or chant Vedic hymns, some learned gurus dismissed it.

Upasani Maharaj, a learned scholar of 4 Vedas during early 20th century, a self-realized master and the guru of Meher Baba, took a clear stand against incorrect orthodoxy of his time. He taught Veda and Yajna to ladies.

If you go to Sakori (near Shirdi) and see the temple he established (it is soooo pleasant and has such saattwik energy even today!), you can see women chanting Veda mantras and performing Yajnas and Homas even now!

Practically speaking, women do more poojas, fasts and spiritual sadhanas these days, compared to men. They can be much more sincere in doing spiritual sadhanas for their and their family's well-being. It will be unfortunate to deprive them of the MOST POWERFUL ally in spiritual

sadhana - Holy Fire!! Anybody who tried homa will know that meditation is much more intense, powerful and serene when performed in front of Holy Fire.

Already, thanks to Divine Mother's blessings, many women are doing homa as a personal spiritual sadhana. I am confident that **MANY MORE** will take it up in coming years. In fact, Women will be the **BEST** for taking "do homa yourself" movement forward with utmost sincerity in coming years and it is **VERY** important to remove this misconception that women cannot do it.



Poornahuti

9 Dec 2017

A friend asked me what one can offer as poornahuti when you do homa/havan in a very small pit/vessel. As others may have the same question, I'll answer it here.

Though it is customary to offer a whole coconut or some whole fruit as poornahuti, to symbolize the head or ego, it is not necessary. One can offer a small piece of copra (dried coconut) as well. One can also offer a raisin (kismis) or an almond. Even if the fire is small, those dry things burn well.

I know a priest with excellent pedigree (his family have been main archakas at the Meenakshi temple in Madurai for generations), who offers just a spoonful of ghee as poornahuti when doing a small scale homa!

Poornahuti means complete offering or total surrender. You offer a substance that facilitates visualization that you completely surrender your ego. Without good visualization, even the best substance is useless. With good visualization, any substance will work!

This is the thing with all rituals. As you use the external to transform the internal, every step is designed to facilitate some visualization. These days, many people mechanically follow the process and the complexity hinders any visualization. Sadly, they feel reluctant to drop or simplify any steps to improve visualization..

I once attended a public homa on an island off Boston. The learned gentleman who conducted it was excited to do a homa on an island! Just before poornahuti, he excitedly lectured on how he got 64 auspicious substances from India for that extremely rare and auspicious poornahuti he was about to offer and how lucky we all were to witness it! I was amused by this attitude, which is the exact opposite of the attitude that poornahuti symbolizes!

On an unrelated note, it was interesting to meditate on that island. Homa finished in the morning, but we all stayed there the whole day. Away from other partying homa attendees that afternoon, I meditated for an hour or so. I had interesting and strange experiences.

Ever loving and caring Swami Satha Sivom was also with us that day. He perceived some disturbing energies there, was concerned about my safety and stood guard near me for much of the time I meditated. He did not feel good about the place and developed a big headache that day. I too felt some strange energies there, thought my perception was not as well developed.

After coming home, I searched on the internet and found that that island was the site of several ship wrecks in the previous centuries (including the 74-gun French warship *Magnifique* in 1782)! No wonder it had all those strange energies. May all stuck souls find some way forward..

Most priests put a lot of standard homa materials and a half copra in a cloth, tie it and offer that as poornahuti. Some make it so big that it does not even burn fully.

I personally prefer offering various materials during the course of homa and just a **WHOLE** dry coconut as poornahuti.

To me, homa symbolizes the process of life. In the fire pit of life, to the fire of life force, you offer various thoughts and actions (mantras and materials) and overcome various desires and conditioning. In the end, you surrender the ego (whole fruit) to the fire of life force and transcend (life and death).

In many homas, priests finish after poornahuti and leave. I prefer to meditate as poornahuti burns and get up only after the fire goes away. One can often have excellent meditation that way.

One more tip for people who regularly do homa and have a relationship with fire, and miss it while traveling or during peak winter.

When I cannot do homa during travel, I sometimes do it mentally. I can vouch that it is also quite nice!

The procedure is simple. Sit in a comfortable posture with back, neck and head straight and eyes closed. Do whatever you do in your regular homa, but chant mantras mentally. Imagine any actions (e.g. sprinkling water along 4 edges). Imagine a square homa kunda at your bottom (base of spine). As you offer ahutis and chant the mantras, imagine that you are feeding the column of fire burning brightly in that homa kunda.

Everything is silent, mental and imaginary. But, it can still be very invigorating and effective.



Forcible extinguishing of fire

22 July 2019

There is one corrupt and misguided practice I saw at several temples, which I really wish could be stopped.

As a part of the upacharas (services) offered to gods at several temples, they employ multiple lamp stands containing various numbers of deepas and show them to gods. It looks nice.

However, an unfortunately common practice is to show a lamp and then hand it off to a volunteer to **FORCIBLY** extinguish the fire. Forcibly extinguishing Agni - whether in a homa kunda or in a deepa - is a **TERRIBLE** karma. Please do **NOT** do it. Let it go away naturally when the fuel is finished.

The normal reason given is that the lamps burn for a long time otherwise. So be it! If you don't want it to burn for too long, use very little oil in the first place.

Some people suggest that it is ok to extinguish a homa fire by pouring milk and extinguish a deepa by pressing a soft flower on it.

Neither is ok - after all, you should not kill someone by drowning in milk or by suffocating with a soft pillow. It is not any better than other ways of killing.

The tradition of lighting and blowing candles for a birthday is also unwise. But, it is particularly problematic when one brings fire to life for a holy purpose (e.g. offering to god or as a medium to make offerings to god) and extinguishes it forcibly.

In general, the only time it is ok to extinguish fire is when it is out of control, not contained and destructive. Contained fire used for a holy purpose (constrained to a homa kunda or a lamp stand) that is happily consuming the fuel offered to it, should not be extinguished forcibly.



I do my homa indoors in a very restricted condition. So the flame is very small. While trying to maintain the fire, I sometimes accidentally extinguish the fire then I apologize to the fire god and put the flame back again. will this be considered a bad action too.

[PVR] It is ok - small flame being accidentally extinguished and revived is different from intentionally extinguishing fire.

Is this applicable to match sticks used to lit deepa and after lighting incense sticks we forcibly blow it out ? In these cases extinguishing is correct right?

[PVR] IMHO, the fire was lit to consume the incense stick and not the match stick. Once you transfer fire from the match stick to incense stick, fire is still alive and slowly consuming the intended offering (incense stick). So it's fine.



Homa at Sri PVR Narasimha Rao's ancestral home, 2016





Srisailam 2016



San Jose , 2016



Simhachalam , 2014



Daily homa , Boston USA, 2013



Arunachala , 2016

Meditation during eclipse

20th June 2020

Meditation and homa during an eclipse are extremely powerful for spiritual progress. Try to make use of the solar eclipse this weekend.

Some people wonder why temples remain closed during eclipses, if spiritual sadhana during a homa is effective. Let me explain the reasoning behind both, before sharing my thoughts on what this eclipse may bring geopolitically.

Sun is the supporter of life and giver of light. He represents individual soul within us, which creates and sustains duality. Moon is the waxing and waning reflector of Sun's light. He represents mind within us, which *experiences* the duality. Lagna (earth) represents the actor within us, who *acts* within duality.

Rahu and Ketu are the intersection points of earth's orbit around Sun and Moon's orbit around earth, i.e. actor's orbit around facilitator (soul) and experiencer's orbit around actor.

Within us, Rahu represents the spirit of breaking barriers and getting things somehow, while Ketu represents the spirit of detachment and freedom from wants.

When the facilitator, experiencer and actor are all aligned in the macrocosm, it promotes a similar alignment within us. After all, we are all microcosms of cosmos.

Thus, that time is conducive to (1) acting to ensure we get what deeply want and (2) being free from wants and being able to act and experience freely without any strings attached. Either is possible based on one's current spiritual momentum.

Whether one wants spiritual progress or fulfill some material desires, meditation during eclipse is very powerful. Some shastras say that meditation during eclipse is 1000 times more powerful than at regular times. No wonder because eclipse time is conducive to mind aligning with soul and that is after all the key to success in meditation!

If there is a wish in mind and it is reasonably dharmik, it is not a bad idea to take a specific sankalpa and get it fulfilled. There is no use in having a desire and pretending to be desireless. But, even as one fulfills desires, one should attempt to overcome desires. Suppression works only in the short term. Overcoming is the key.

Of course, one can just meditate without a sankalpa also. Focus the mind on the sound of the mantra or the imagery associated with a deity or a conceptual understanding of a deity (or whatever is natural for you) and try to forget the surroundings, the body and other regular pre-

occupations of the mind. The chance of success in forgetting other things and achieving "union" (yoga) with Mantra is maximum during an eclipse!!

Some people ask about whether it is auspicious to watch an eclipse. It is not considered to be auspicious. But, more importantly, getting carried away with the physical phenomenon stops one from experiencing the corresponding internal phenomenon. This is really a time for sadhana.

BTW, while lunar eclipses that are not visible where one lives are not effective, solar eclipses are effective times for sadhana irrespective of where one lives. After all, mind/experiencer (Moon) has a limited range of impact, but facilitator/soul (Sun) has infinite reach!

As pointed out above, eclipse time when Rahu and Ketu over-power Sun and Moon are suitable for sadhanas for moksha (liberation - Ketu) or kaama (fulfilling desires - Rahu), but not regular dharma that is represented by Sun and Moon.

Sun and Moon are the keepers of dharma, i.e. regular balance and order in the world. The time when they are overpowered is not suitable for dharmik activities. That is why temples close during that time. After all, the purpose of temples is to maintain some religious order in society.

One more point is that closing temples allows priests who dedicate much of their time to helping maintain collective dharma, to focus on their own individual spiritual sadhana and accumulate more punya and adhyatmika shakti (spiritual energy)!

This 3 eclipse period (June 5-July 5) with 4 retrograde planets is dicey, with people's judgment clouded and emotions running high. I know that some friends are worried about the possibility of an Indo-China war.

My expectation is that tensions will run high for a while, but China and India will succeed in stopping this from escalating into a major war. I will also not be surprised if this is smoke for a fire that China plans to start elsewhere.

India' leader Narendra Modi is the kind who excels in crises. This standoff with China will not weaken him, but will strengthen his hand domestically and internationally. And, he is not a fool to misuse that hand. THIS is his time to make well-calculated moves in the national interest.

I am more concerned about a natural disaster and an upward tick in the pandemic, across the world, than a major Indo-China war.

It is actually possible that US will start to prepare for a military adventure after this eclipse, though that makes no logical sense, i.e. nothing happening right now points in that direction.

In US, the political chaos and unrest that started a few weeks back may continue.

As mentioned earlier, these 3 eclipses are not good for President Trump and come around the time he changes dasa (life phase transition) from a terrific dasa to a terrible dasa. He will find himself in more and more troubles. Though he seemed invincible and infallible till recently, that will change and he will be vulnerable.

The peak of the eclipse is around 12:10 pm IST in India. As mentioned, this is a great time to do a homa or japa. Any mantra is fine, but mantras of Ugra devatas are particularly better. Even if you have never performed a homa (fire ritual) by yourself, this is a good occasion to do one. In fact, great Vimalananda used to initiate his disciples into homa during eclipses. There are several manuals on my website.

If you have not done before or not good with Sanskrit, consider doing the simplest possible homa by yourself. Simplest homa manuals for various deities and a short 8-minute video illustrating the simplest homa with the simplest set up, are at <https://vedicastrologer.org/homa/simplest.htm>.⁴

If only you see the video on that page ONCE, you will get FULL confidence that you too can do it!!

Though this procedure is highly simplified and my full homa video is only 8 minutes, you can still do it for a long time if you want and spend time chanting the mantra.

If you want recommendation, I suggest homa or japa to Narasimha or Durga or Hanuman. Simplest homa manuals to all of them are available at the link I shared.

You can find various homa manuals at <https://vedicastrologer.org/homa/download.htm>



⁴ Readers who prefer the slightly longer format (listed under Regular Manual) might also be interested in the Ganapthi homa video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wfl_gnA5vkI

Swami Satha Sivom

30th Nov 2014



The same Swami Satha Sivom, who does Chandi homa with a big fire and many materials normally, did a few homas in small silver bowls normally used by people to keep akshatas or other stuff at Indian homes. He did this at the apartments of some people, when he visited Boston a few weeks back. He just used small dry coconut (copra) pieces and some sesame seeds and a few nuts.

Seeing that it hardly releases any smoke, a few people were inspired and started doing regular homa at their apartments after his visit! They use a simple procedure (<http://www.vedicastrologer.org/homa>) and do a small homa in a small silver bowl with just copra, nuts and sesame seeds. There is hardly any smoke. Towards the end, some smoke may come and they place the bowl under an exhaust fan.

Fire worship on mass scale is going to transform the planet in coming decades! These are just the early days.

Seeing Shapes in Homa

21 June 2020

A friend did a Durga homa during eclipse and saw Krishna and Hanuman in the photos taken. When he asked me about it, this is what I told him. This may be relevant/useful to others and so posting here.

"Various deities may appear in Holy Fire, irrespective of what homa you do. Some may not even be captured by any photos taken! You are better off not thinking much about that, as it does not matter. It does not matter how many cricketers and how many great shots you saw on TV or live - what matters is if any of that affected your own batsmanship!"

A deity's energy affecting your consciousness is far more important than if a photo of fire looks like a deity.



Thanks for sharing. It's common to search meaning in surrounding, we like to feel special.

[PVR] It is ok to feel good and feel proud in the beginning. Just as it is ok to take a break in the middle of a long journey. But, one has to commence the journey again.



Mahalaya Amavasya/ Pitru Paksha/Tarpanam

17 Sep 2016

Added on Sept 29 night: Today/tomorrow is Mahalaya Amavasya and the BEST day for this! Try to benefit. You can do this very simple ritual yourself!

Pitri paksha (fortnight of ancestors) has just started. Next 15 days are a perfect time for offering Pitri Tarpanas. One can do this very simple ritual of offering water oblations, by oneself! Regular, short and super-short manuals are available at <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/tarpana>.

Our minds resonate to unfulfilled thoughts and desires of our ancestors, which linger in space long after they are gone and affect our minds and lives considerably, based on karmik debts and connection through genes and vasanas. Flow of sesame water on some key energy centers in the palm, accompanied by a strong intent to free us of these influences, is mutually beneficial.

The manuals were created in a generic manner by referring to deceased relatives in various lives, without specifically referring to relatives of this life or any one life. These generic offerings were designed to be suitable for all, whether or not one's parents or other relations are alive.

In addition, if one wants to offer Tarpana to a specific deceased person (e.g. an uncle who died at a young age, a grandfather one was close to, a teacher one was close to etc), a template was given with some blanks, with words for various relations provided. One can use the template to make offerings to specific people.

There are some misconceptions in this area. I want to clear a few.

WHEN FATHER IS ALIVE

Some people believe that one cannot offer Tarpanas if one's father is alive. This is wrong. Suppose one is closer to one's grandfather, than one's father is. One may have a stronger connection of genes and/or vasanas to one's grandfather, than one's father does. In such a case, one can offer more effective Tarpana to one's grandfather, than one's father can! Also, the nature of connections and rinas of a deceased person may be different with different people. So, all of them can offer Tarpana and relieve of specific connections and rinas.

This misconception stems from a rigid tradition of treating father, grandfather and great grandfather as Vasu, Aditya and Rudra and always making Tarpanas to them specifically by names. Under that rigid tradition, it makes no sense for a person whose father is alive to offer Tarpanas.

In this rigid tradition, they assume that 3 generations are always stuck in Pitri loka and move on to heaven after a man in the 4th generation dies. They specifically move the newly dead person to Vasu, previous Vasu to Aditya, previous Aditya to Rudra and they perform a "swargarohana" (heaven climbing) ritual for the previous Rudra.

This tradition is arbitrary. It is possible for a person to go to heaven (or even be liberated!) right away and it is possible for tens of generations to be stuck together in Pitri loka. Any tradition that assumes a rigid formula (e.g. 3 generations) is simply arbitrary.

Many of these customs and traditions are more socio-cultural constructs than Dharmik (religious) or Adhyatmik (spiritual) realities.

If one is either (a) making generic offerings to specific relations from various lives without specific names or (b) making offerings to specific dead people without compulsively including father-grandfather-great grandfather trio, then there is no need to hold back if one's father is alive.

The manuals were designed such that anybody can use them, including those with father alive.

WOMEN

Some people believe that women cannot offer Tarpana.

Women's minds are equally (if not more!) influenced by thoughts and desires lingering in space, that our genetic and/or karmik connections make us susceptible to! So Tarpana that frees us from these influences is equally important for women.

In old days, men may have done spiritual sadhana for themselves and their wives, while women served them whole-heartedly. These days, there are hardly any men who do sufficient spiritual sadhana for themselves, let alone for their wives!

In fact, whenever you go to a pooja somewhere these days, you see all ladies doing pooja and chanting things, while men sit in the living room and gossip about gadgets, electronics, politics, films, sports etc! Women are better off offering Tarpana to their ancestors themselves.

Women have a higher caliber and inclination for spiritual sadhana than men these days (sorry men!). As a society, it is **UTTERLY FOOLISH** of us to discourage women in our society from doing Homa, Tarpana etc.

Those who are interested can download the manuals from the website I mentioned above and perform it everyday (or every weekend) during the next 15 days. It can really help one's material and spiritual progress. This simple ritual has the potential to relieve one of problematic mental conditioning. Do give it a try if you are so inclined!



[PVR] I sent this writing to a highly learned and wise man whom I tremendously respect and who wrote a popular book on Aghora. His guru learnt so much directly from Mother Tara and was an *authority* on these matters.

He wrote the following:

"I strongly believe that:

one CAN offer Tarpana if one's father is alive; I do not accept the rigid tradition as I do believe there is no reason for people to be arbitrarily stuck together in Pitri loka

women CAN offer Tarpana

Thank you for being firm on these opinions, and best wishes for Pitri Paksha!"

[Compiler's Note] Please refer to "[Queries on Sadhana](#)" for clarifications on Tarpana



On Tarpanam

15 July 2018

I will answer here some questions on Tarpana someone forwarded from a student, so that others also can benefit.

1) In Tarpana we offer water oblations from three position on the hand ?Can you please explain the significance of this

Narasimha: Thumb shows ego or sense of "I". Other fingers show various purusharthas (purposes fulfilled by living beings).

Ring finger, middle finger, little finger and index finger respectively show dharma (rules obeyed), artha (work accomplished), kaama (desires fulfilled) and moksha (freedom attained).

The 3 parts of each finger stand for 3 gunas. Top 1/3rd shows sattwa, middle 1/3rd shows rajas and bottom 1/3rd shows tamas. The tips of all fingers show that purushartha under the influence of the purest sattwa.

The mounts under these 4 fingers are ruled by Sun, Saturn, Mercury and Jupiter respectively.

Devas (various deities) and saptarshis (7 sages whose play creates deities and worlds) engage in all purusharthas under high saattwa. To please their highly saattwik and subtle pursuit of all purusharthas, we offer water (stands for harmony) via the the tips of 4 fingers.

Logical thinking and the sense of achieving something in society are shown by the mount of Mercury at the bottom of little finger. We make an offering to other sages and divinely inspired human beings (divya manushayas) via that mount. This will activate logical thinking and the sense of achievement that provokes desires (little finger) in them and leads to the good of the world. They may build temples or organizations, start movements and do such important missions in the world.

The sense of moksha (liberation) arises from the intellect/wisdom. It is shown by Jupiter mount at the bottom of index finger (moksha). We make an offering to pitris (ancestral manes) via that mount and via thumb. This will activate wisdom that provokes the sense of liberation and that affects one's sense of self (thumb).

In other words, we want to activate wisdom and pursuit of liberation in ancestral manes, activate desires driven by a sense of achieving some mission in divinely inspired human beings and let deities and saptarshis do everything with the purest and clearest sattwa.

2) *I live at the beach, if I do the ritual directly at the sand, the offering can be done directly on the ground or even there we have to use a plate to collect the water oblations?*

Narasimha: I see no issue with offering directly in the sand.

3) *At the end of the regular and short procedure we have a prayer starting with "narakesu..." what is the meaning of this prayer?*

Narasimha: Here is the meaning of those verses at the end of procedure ("narakeshu samasteshu ... idamastu tilodakam"):

Whoever are placed in various states of suffering in various hells (undesirable and lower realms of consciousness), this water is being offering by me for their relief, welfare and gladness.

Whoever are not my relatives or my relative or my relatives in other lives, may all of them be satisfied.

Whoever were born my lineage and stranded without someone to offer pinda and/or without wife/children, for those is given this unlimited sesame water.

From Brahma (Creator) to a blade of grass, various beings such as gods, rishis and ancestral manes, may all those be pleased, including mothers and maternal ancestors.

For forgotten zillions of lineages living in various realms of being, starting from Brahma loka to various lokas, is this sesame water.

[Compiler's Note] Please refer to "[Queries on Sadhana](#)" for clarifications on Tarpana



Queries on Sadhana

[These queries have been compiled from comments on various Facebook posts of Shri Narasimha Rao]

On Homa

I want to do my first homa soon, it will be my first time. Which mantras can I chant during the homa?

[PVR] I recommend starting with the *simplest* Ganapati homa manual here: <https://vedicastrologer.org/homa/download.htm>. It has very simple mantras. If you are drawn to another deity (e.g. Vishnu, Krishna, Shiva, Durga etc), you can use their simplest manual.

There are so many homa manuals. Which one should I start with?

Whichever deity you feel attracted to or whichever deity your gurus/elders recommend to you. If not sure, it is always a great idea to start with Ganapati!

Which homas are useful for health ?

As for which homas are particularly useful for health, I can suggest some (though all deities can help in some way or the other). You can pick whichever deity appeals to you the most.

Overall health and vitality	Surya homa
Remove fear and fear of death	Narasimha homa (especially "ugram veeram" mantra)
Ward off diseases and pay off karmik debts	Mangala homa (especially "angaaraka mahiputra" mantra)
Ward off evils and create a protective layer	Sudarsana homa
Overcome weakness and disease	Sani homa
Overall protection	Durga homa
Better discipline and energy	Kartikeya homa
Getting a job and for career	Ganapathi homa is good for various material things, including job, and for removing obstacles. Also, as Mercury signifies career and as Vishnu is for dharma and sustenance, Vishnu homa can be beneficial. I will suggest those two in general.
Facing acute financial issues	Mahalakshmi homa can help.

You can get manuals (including the mantras referred above) at <https://vedicastrologer.org/homa/download.htm>.

Is it safe to use a clay pot(Terracotta) as havan Kund which is circular instead of square?

[PVR] I see no problem with it.

If we are unable to get a copper havan kund, is it okay to use an Aluminium tray as a makeshift havan kund for a couple of months?

[Manish Pandit] Please do not use an iron/aluminium homa kunda. Not advisable.

Can we do homa for multiple deities in one go ? Can the avahanam be simultaneous or should we invite the deities one after another ?

[PVR] You can call one deity in fire, make offerings with her/his mantra, then call another deity, make offerings with his/her mantra and so on. Then do uttarangam (final offerings to Fire, Wind, Sun etc) and then say all deities' mantras sequentially and make one poornahuti. Then meditate on whoever you want to.

Can I do homa by taking sankalpa in the beginning for three deities

[PVR] You can take sankalpa for a homa to those 3 deities at the beginning. Initial and final portions are common. You can invoke each deity and offer their mantra, in a row. After common uttarangam (final offerings to Agni, Vayu, Surya etc), you can offer a poornahuti together. Chant the mantra of each deity and then offer it.

There are multiple ways to do homa to multiple deities. You can take sankalpa for one deity's homa and just make offerings to the other deity as a part of that homa. You can also take a longer sankalpa to do homa to both deities and then do them. The initial and final offerings to standard deities (Prajapati, Indra, Soma, Vishnu, Rudra etc) need not be repeated. Poornahuti can also be combined. You can say the mantras of all deities and then offer poornahuti. For meditation at the end, you can pick any one mantra.

What should we do with the content in the havan kund after the homa is over.

[PVR] Traditionally, it is disposed off in moving water (e.g. river or ocean). It can also be buried (or dispersed) near the root of a tree or plant.

If one does homa every day or weekend, one can do homa in the old ashes/coins, occasionally filter and take the fine powder for use (apply on forehead or body as a blessing) and leave the coins for further homa on top of them.

Question on pieces (ember) left over of copra and one small cashew in homa kunda vessel. Can we reuse it for next time? Or burn it out completely or put it in plants?

[PVR] You can use the remnants of a homa as the base for next homa, i.e. add materials on top of it for next homa. If one does regularly, one can occasionally filter the contents, take all the fine powder aside (can be applied on body, including forehead) and use the rest as base for further homa's.

Can we do two homa in eclipse and what's the procedure?

[PVR] You can do pradhana homa for one deity. Then invoke the other deity, do upacharas, do pradhana homa to that deity. And so on. At the end, do uttaranga (offerings to Agni, Vayu etc) and then do one poornahuti together. Say mantras of all deities and offer poornahuti.

Can you explain how to do Deepa homa

[PVR] Place a ghee lamp in front of you. Also place melted ghee in a small cup and a spoon. Keep it next to lamp. Do the homa as per the manual, but imagining god in the fire in the lamp. For example, when it is time to light fire in homa kunda, light the lamp instead. Whenever an aahuti is made in fire, instead say the mantra with swaahaa at the end and offer a drop of ghee in the lamp (not on the fire directly). Everything is the same as a standard homa,

Should homa be done in the morning only? Or can we do it in the afternoon or evening? Do we take a bath and have that outer saucham too?

[PVR] Anytime is fine, though morning and evening are particularly good (In general, times around sunrise and sunset are particularly good for spiritual sadhana.) . It is better to take a bath and feel clean.

Should the timings of Homa be same everyday or it can vary on day to day basis.

[PVR] same time and same place makes it better, if possible.

As a beginner I don't know how much to put in the fire

[PVR] If one starts with a small fire (just a few copra pieces), it is easier to control fire. Later, one can experiment with other options.

How important are hora muharat and does homa timing matter?

[PVR] Finding the best time will very slightly enhance the homa. But, most often, it is not worth worrying about such things.

Is it better when doing homa to chant the mantras aloud, or should it be done silently?

[PVR] It is better to chant silently. If one needs to make sound, make it as low volume as possible.

Can women do a Hanuman Homa?

[PVR] Yes, madam. If a woman asks him to give strength, wisdom and humility, he is happy to give it to them.

You said during an eclipse time “Any mantra is fine, but mantras of Ugra devatas are particularly better.” Why is this so?

[PVR] Because soul and mind (Sun and Moon) are under the influence of kroora grahas Rahu and Ketu. Ugra devatas can better channel the energy of kroora grahas.

During eclipse should I continue with my regular homa or should I switch to an ugra devata ?

[PVR] You can continue with homa for the deity you regularly do.

I am interested in doing homa, but am worried about using incorrect material or incorrect procedures and whether it would cause any problem.

[PVR] All rules and guidelines are meant to provide a meaningful structure to what one does and certainly NOT to suffocate one or outright stop one from doing!

One doing a ritual for greedy reasons like destroying or attracting someone, needs to be wary of technicalities. One just expressing gratitude to God through divine fire needs to just relax, make sure fire is able to consume all offerings and enjoy the divine presence in fire.

Cultivate gratitude for divine homa fire and devotion to God expressing in that fire and just enjoy!!

Is it okay to take a sankalpam of MahaKaali homa and also invoke Grahas and other Devatas without a formal sankalpam and poornahuti?

[PVR] It is ok to offer aahutis to grahas and various devatas, as a part of your Mahakali homa. After all, we do make aahutis to Prajapati, Indra, Agni, Soma, Vayu, Surya, Vishnu, Rudra etc in every homa. Adding a few more is no issue.

Is it okay to use red sandalwood (raktachandan) powder instead of normal sandalwood in homa offerings?

[PVR] Yes

I have observed people getting bad results and mantras backfiring , and even people going to particular deities temples give more bad results based on their charts. None of them had no malefic intention towards the gods.

[PVR] When one not used to exercise starts exercising, body will ache for a few days. This is like that. One can either stop exercising or continue in spite of body aches and things will get better then.

What is the significance of using samitha (from Banyan Trees), only for homa? Are there alternates like dharbha grass

[PVR] Logs/twigs from various trees can be used, though some trees (like banyan) are particularly auspicious. When Maharshi Rishyasringa taught Rajarshi Janaka which materials are the best for homa, he listed the auspicious ones, then said, "if these are unavailable, use any wood. If no wood is available, use any dry leaves, if not available, use any dry grass" etc. Even with ghee, he said cow ghee is the best, if not, use buffalo ghee, if not, use goat ghee, if not use sesame oil, if not, use any oil.

In general, rishis are compassionate and give infinite options, instead of saying xyz is essential!

When we do Durga homa, can we add the section II of initial offerings given in Lakshmi Homa which starts with "Atra Aagaccha Aavahita Bhava"? 2) "Aavahito Bhava and "Aavahita Bhava". Is there any difference between these (ending letter 'o' and ending letter 'a'). I have seen "Aavahito' in Ganesh Homa and "Aavahita" in Lakshmi Homa.

[PVR] (1) Yes. (2) For male deities, it is "aavaahito bhava". For female deities, it is "aavaahitaa bhava". For a male and female deity together (e.g. Parvati and Shiva), it is "aavaahitau bhavathaH". For 3 or more together (e.g. Saptarshis or Pitris), it is "aavaahitaaH bhavatha".

Can you explain the meaning of "Vaushat" "swaha" used in homa

[PVR]

Namah simply refers to bowing to a deity.

Swaahaa is from the word su. It refers to hailing a deity and surrendering to the deity. It is used when making offerings to various deities.

Swadhaa is from the root swad, which means to taste and fulfill a desire. It is used when making offerings to pitris (ancestors), who have strong unfulfilled desires.

Vashat is from the root vash, which means to control and command. It is used when one wants to control the energy and channelize it.

Hum refers to creating a cover. It is used when seeking a protective cover of some nature.

Vaushat is also like vashat. It is used when one wants control over one's vision and observation.

Phat is the sound of leaving an arrow. It is used when seeking something specific and leaving a mantra towards the target like an arrow.

Some mantras ending in phat also have a hum and end with "hum phat". It is used when one seeks to strike a target while protecting self.

Mantras ending in Vashat and Phat should be used carefully. They are inappropriate for most people in this age.

While meditating after homa, is it necessary to repeat a mantra as well as imagine a particular form of God? Or is it okay to do either of the two?

[PVR]: one can just repeat a mantra and focus the mind on the (unheard) sound/vibration of the mantra. One can just focus on a specific form of a deity. One can focus on visualizing a particular color. One can focus on a specific quality of a deity. One can focus on anything. The key is to focus the mind on SOME thing. Given the strange nature of mind, the thing that one can really focus on well, may change from person to person and time to time. That is why rishis gave so many options!

How do you keep you a contact of 108 times for mantra

[PVR]: One can have mala in the left hand and make offerings with the right hand. I also use another approach without mala. I make offerings in a specific order - in the eastern portion of homa kunda, southeast, south, southwest, west, northwest, northeast (i.e. go around 8 corners in clockwise direction), center-east, center-south, center-west, center-north (4 times in the center in clockwise). This makes 12 offerings. If I do such a sequence 9 times, it becomes 108. I can keep count without much distraction and also it ensures that offerings are going into all parts of homa kunda uniformly! Sometimes, people tend to dump all offerings in one part (typically the closest point to them) and it doesn't burn perfectly. This avoids that too.

How effective it would be to perform homa mentally , just in case we are not able to do it physically due to some reason?

[PVR] It can be effective based on the strength of the internal fire. BTW, as digestive fire is strong enough in many anyway, one can turn eating food into a fire ritual. One can chant a mantra with each bite and imagine that fire will send the essence to god.

Fire is that which transforms things into more useful things to life! True for all fires within one, including digestive fire

I can't sit down as I had knee surgery , can I sit in chair and do the homa ?

[PVR] It is perfectly fine to do like that if one's knees don't cooperate with sitting down.

Is the homa required to be performed at South East part of the premise?

[PVR] While the southeast portion ruled by Agni is particularly good, it can really be done anywhere.

Is it advisable to also fast the entire day if one chooses to perform Homa in the evening?

[PVR] fasting is dicey - it is good for kapha people and bad/destabilizing for pitta and vata people. More than fasting, it is useful to eat simple food in moderation. Either feeling too full and heavy, or too empty and acidic/gassy, will stop one from enjoying spiritual sadhana.

In the regular homa manual, in the section called "Final offering in the fire", while chanting "om pārṣadebhyo namaḥ", 6 pieces of fruits are said to be offered to the ethereal associates of deity. Where should I offer the 6 pieces of fruits, on the floor or in the fire.

[PVR]

On the floor outside the homa kunda, in the locations mentioned in the manual. You can place directly on the floor some people also put plates or leaves and place the offerings on those.

While doing multiple homas at the same time, should poornahuti be offered one by one or separately.

You can do one poornahuti at the end. You can say mantras of all deities sequentially and then offer poornahuti in fire.



Mantra Sadhana

Can you please explain the meaning of beejaksharas of some of the Devatas

[PVR] It is possible to rationalize the significance of various sounds present in a beeja mantra. But, rest assured that it works on your consciousness even without knowing that. The component sounds resonate with specific aspects of consciousness. In fact, too much rationalization (which I am guilty of, being a Virgo lagna person) HINDERS your ability to get lost in the sound of a beeja mantra. The real key to experiencing bliss is finding oneness with something, with other distractions in mind suspended temporarily.

Regarding mantra you suggested one should recite mentally or in a very low voice (I think in some other post). Is it true for all mantra that we can recite mentally?

[PVR] Any mantra is better chanted silently. But, if one is more comfortable chanting loud, one can do that too. The idea is that you want to vibration of mantra to go from the grossest level (vaikhari) to subtler levels.

Isn't active mental focus dharana and not dhyana?

[PVR] They all go together and do not exist in a vacuum. Pratyahaara (prati+aahaara=depriving of food) cuts off what feeds the mind. It is about cutting off outer/inner senses, i.e. inputs to mind. Dhaarana (holding) is about filling the mind with one thing. Dhyana (contemplation) is about contemplating that one thing you filled the mind with. Finally, one day, it will hopefully result in samadhi (perfect concentration).

Is Mantra Japam better during eclipse or Meditation

[PVR] Whatever sadhana one's mind is drawn to and whatever sadhana one is likely to do with good focus, is the sadhana one should do!

What is best Narasimha mantra?

If there is one best mantra, sages would've taught only that and left out others! 😊 There are different mantras that appeal to the taste, attitude and conditioning of different people. Personally, "ugram veeram" mantra is MY favorite.

When saying general mantras is it better to skip OM if we are repeating any mantra a lot number of times?

Om symbolizes Brahman, while other sounds stand for other forces. That is why they say Om is to be said only a pure state. But that purity is internal and not external. In general, Om is not a suitable mantra for most, when it is alone. When added to other mantras, it is fine.

In fact, it is a bad idea to remove Om from any mantra.

How would you differentiate between reciting a mantra and a stotram?

all have their own potency and effect. One can pick what works for one, i.e. what one is able to focus mind on. After all, it is not without a reason that compassionate rishis gave so many options.

For those who have very little focus, chanting long stotras may work better. That instills mental discipline. One with more focus may enjoy silently meditating with a short mantra.

Stotras like Vishnu sahasram and Durga Saptashati are ever green and universally applicable. Even those who have great mental focus can still enjoy them and benefit. But, some may enjoy meditating with smaller mantras more. In the end, one knows what is working for one.

In the end, it is a tradeoff. If one tries something and gives up because it does not feel natural or one does not enjoy it, one will forever be stuck in laziness. One needs to push oneself enough, but not too much.

The whole world is based on a balance between the push instinct (pingala nadi - Sun) and the pull back instinct (ida nadi - Moon)

What do Hridaya stotras and Karavalamba Stotras actually mean?

hridaya is heart - the seat of soul and sensations, i.e. essence of one's existence. A deity's hridaya stotra tries to capture the essence of that deity. Karalavamba stotras are a cry for help - like "I am stuck, please lend me a hand and save me God".

Is the beej mantra sound hraam, graam, or hraang, graang! An astrologer mentioned that ending with "mm" is incorrect and it should be "ng". Please advise

both are correct and work differently.

In beejas like kreeng or hreeng ... is 'g' silent or is pronounced as kreem or hreem ?

In some variations of mantras, ng is used instead of m. The g is indeed silent. In other words, n there is the sound of n in "king".

There was a superstition that anything that is started on this day (Akshaya Tritiya) lasts forever like donation, new business, spiritual practice to gather punya but not sure about the reality

It is not really a superstition. Akshaya means "undecaying". The probability of something started today lasting long is higher than on most other days.



On Tarpana

I do pitru tarpana everyday and the water which gets collected I put it in the balcony and pigeons drink it. Is it ok or should I pour the water collected in trees?

[PVR] Yes, it is absolutely fine.

I have one question about aadi amavasya. Kindly help me .They say it's very effective if you do tarpana to pitrus tomorrow but can anyone having parents still do pitru tarpana as few say only those without parents can do

[PVR] Your rinas to your ancestors are different from those of your father's to them. Each works on freeing their own rinas. Unfortunately, there is a misconception that one with father alive cannot do it. That is wrong.

This is like saying "one whose father is alive cannot work in a job and only one's father should work".

Obviously, you do not offer Tarpanas to your current life father specifically, when he is alive. But the generic procedure still applies.

Is there any specific muhurtha for offering tarpana or anytime during the amavasya tithi sir.

[PVR] No suggestions. Do it when it works for you.

If you divide the time between sunrise and sunset into 5 equal parts, then the 4th part is particularly good for Tarpanas. However, if it does not work, do when convenient. No time is forbidden for it.

The manual has mantras for only father grand father and great grandfather and nothing related to mother grand mothers. Was it just an example or is there no need to mention mother's? Your manual includes mother grand mother great grand mother etc

[PVR] This is completely scalable. You can include less or more people. Normally, 3 generations of elders on father's side are considered important. But, scriptures do mention various relatives. In fact, if you feel connection to a very distant relative, it may be more beneficial to include that person than even those that are normally considered more important.

You mentioned in the manual that we shouldn't perform the offerings inside home " ideally not in the living area of one's house where people may sleep". Please clarify the intent here.

[PVR] Tamas accumulates in the place where we sleep. It is not an ideal place for Tarpana or any other spiritual activity, as the Tamas weighs down on those activities! Only exception is if one does so much sadhana there that it outweighs the Tamas generated by sleep. That is unlikely for most of us - we spend a lot more time in sleep than in sadhana!

Is Tarpanam offered to souls of deceased children as well? Can a mother perform a tarpanam ritual for the child that passed away? Or is it done only for the ancestors?

[PVR] Of course, yes. You can also do it for any specific person you know, who may not be related to you at all. In fact, standard procedures in tradition includes an oblation to satisfy "all souls stuck in various worlds with desires, who may be born or my or any other lineage".

Actually, you need not stick to human beings. A highly learned and wise man I tremendously respect, who wrote a popular book on Aghora, told me he offers Tarpanas to a few dogs also.

Thank you for the homa manuals and tarpanam manuals. Wish more people can perform it for the wellbeing of the world. Too much orthodoxy in hinduism is ruining the beauty of its essence. Namaste

[PVR] the procedures themselves (given in the manuals) are rooted in tradition. But, the interpretation, rules, restrictions etc have been updated for our desa-kala-patra. Some useless orthodoxy has indeed been eliminated. But then, this happened many times in the history of Sanatana Dharma and will happen many more times.

Yes, it will be nice if many more people perform these things, for the well-being of the world. But there is a Divine Plan and we need patience and perseverance. Lakhs of people WILL perform Homa and Tarpana using material we leave behind, but it will take more decades. Let us just do our part and leave the rest to Him.

Can we do tarpana during Chandra grahan(lunar eclipse)?

[PVR] Yes



Kundalini

26 July 2015

I wrote bits and pieces on Kundalini here and there before, but want to capture key points in a single writing.

Some people known to me experienced Kundalini awakening in the last few years and I expect some more doing homa to experience it in coming decades. With much misinformation and indisciplined lifestyles, this age can be quite confusing for the few rare seekers experiencing it.

The intention of this writing is to provide some guidance and perspective to such seekers. Some may need to refer to this later.

Some people think that Kundalini rises in only people who do specific practices (e.g. so-called Kundalini yoga or Kundalini tantra etc).

For brain to work within one, one need not know or think about brain. It just is there and does its work. Similarly, for Kundalini shakti to work within one, one need not know or think about it. It just is there and does its work!

In most people, Kundalini is "asleep" (we will later see what it means) and yet works all the time. In some people, Kundalini wakes up and works differently. Kundalini awakening does not require awareness of Kundalini or thinking about it or following a specific path. It CAN happen in anyone.

Also, it is not an "achievement" of some kind or a trophy award for sadhana. Lucky is one whose Kundalini never rises till the end of life and rises all the way then!

Kundalini is nothing but the *force* that makes one identify with something as "I". It is the force driving one's self-identification and "I-sense"!

Though Scripture unequivocally declares that I am actually all-pervading Brahman, I identify with this specific body that is sitting in a couch and typing this. I identify with a notion of a scholar/sadhaka/engineer/person called "Narasimha Rao", who does various things including typing this.

It is Kundalini shakti that limits/restricts one's self-identification to a body and notions like that.

Due to its limiting/restrictive action, it is symbolically represented as a suppressed coil/spring.

We blindly identify with a body and various notions, without any kind of questioning at all. That is why Kundalini, force of self-identification, is depicted as being asleep.

When Kundalini awakens and rises, it is like a suppressed spring being released. The force of self-identification frees itself from the body and other notions that it was tied down to for a long time.

One's identification with (and awareness of) body and other mental notions of oneself completely evaporates (albeit temporarily). One experiences oneself as several other things.

At the end, one is Brahman/Self that has no appearance or form and is devoid of attributes/qualities. That Self also manifests as everything that exists. So there is no limit to what one can experience oneself as!

When awakened, the force self-identification may traverse the space of infinite possibilities in an unstructured manner. As a result, one may experience oneself as anything in the universe, or, at the extreme, even as the Supreme Being in whom the entire cosmos exists, or even as a state where there is absolutely NO notion of this is "I".

While all this sounds cool, one has to realize that it can be quite ***unnerving*** to have one's self-identification cut off from the body and other normal notions of self.

Just imagine: If you suddenly have no body and have nothing to identify with, will you be ok with it?

Body and other notions of self provide security and grounding. If that ground is removed, that can unnerve and shake one up.

Of course, it is supposed to bring Infinite Bliss and it indeed can.

Suppose one has zero attachment to body, zero sense of "I need to accomplish so and so work", zero desires and cravings and, more importantly, 100% (and not just 99.9999%!) confidence that "I am infinite Self which is not limited to any object, which is never born and never destroyed and which will continue to exist for ever".

When Kundalini rises in such a person, the force of self-identifications rises all the way without clinging to anything in the path and identifies with Infinite Self in the end. One is established in pure and limitless Sat-Chid-Ananda.

But Kundalini goes all the way to Infinite Bliss only if one lets go of all desires. If there is any latent desire, it changes things.

If the force of self-identification leaves its normal attachments, starts its journey and yet not prepared to go all the way due to some desires left, then it can desperately cling to something on the way and that can cause much discomfort, fear and anxiety. It will then come back and cling to body and other previous notions.

To give a crude analogy, a satellite leaving for deep space will need enough speed and correct direction. If not, it will fall back to earth and break into pieces (more later on the risks after coming down).

Imagine one stuck in a room with infinite mirrors at various angles, used to seeing one's own reflection in a specific mirror for a looong time and thinking that that is oneself. If one looks

around and sees reflection in another mirror, one can easily get deluded that now one is seeing the true oneself! It is just another reflection and not oneself!

Some gurus, babas and Swamijis describe Kundalini experience as a pleasant sensation with light of certain colors in certain areas of the body. That is not Kundalini. Flow of prana can cause such sensations, visions and experiences.

As long as one thinks "I am this body. There is a shakti at the base of spine. It is moving along the spine to so and so place within my body and it is right now at so and place within my body", one's self-identification is still WITH the body. Then Kundalini is still at the base of spine (corresponding to Mooladhara chakra or Bhuloka, i.e. physical realm).

When Kundalini rises, especially in the beginning, there may indeed be a sensation of large current flowing up the spine. But that only means that the force of self-identification (Kundalini shakti) is preparing to rise. Once it *actually* leaves Mooladhara chakra at the base of spine and rises up, one's self-identification is NOT in the physical realm anymore. One's identification with (and awareness of) physical body is cut off.

Exactly what one experiences as Kundalini rises is variable. It is dependent on the path Kundalini takes, which in turn depends on one's prior conditioning (i.e. desires and views entertained and actions performed, in the past).

There are nadis or subtle channels of awareness, in one's subtle body. There are "impurities" or blockages in these nadis as a result of conditioning. There are also chakras or realms of awareness that are at different levels of equilibrium.

Of course, one's body is a microcosm for macrocosm (i.e. entire cosmos). These nadis and chakras within symbolize entities in the external cosmos.

An awakened Kundalini works its way through these nadis and chakras. Depending on the nadis traversed, the experience may be different.

Often, there is a strange experience that seems physical (though not) and then connection with the physical body is cut off.

One may experience that one is rotating at a tremendous speed (though people around one may see him as being still) and then lose regular awareness of physical body. One may experience that one is shooting up vertically at a tremendous speed and then lose regular awareness of physical body. One may experience that one has tilted to the back or a side and then shoot up and then lose awareness of physical body. One may experience a tremendous bolt of electricity in the spine and then lose regular awareness of physical body. One may experience that one is shooting up and experience oneself as a form of light or some new entity and vividly see or hear some things or beings. One may hear sacred sounds that one never heard before, that one may later verify in some scriptures! One may see forms that one never saw before, which one may later

verify described in some scriptures. One may see and hear non-physical beings and interact with them in various ways.

One may experience great pleasure and calm. One's fears, sorrows and anxieties may take a back seat for a while.

These experiences are completely internal and others cannot see them. In a rare case where there are conducive rinas and desires from the past, they may rub on others (but one has to remember that this is NOT an achievement or something special).

To give an example, I know a newly awakened seeker who felt that he was floating in air while meditating one day and a visitor sitting with him felt the same way at the same time (without knowing what was happening to the first person)! I know a seeker who was meditating in front of fire after a lady's homa and spontaneously thought "let me take others with me and leave this realm" just before his Kundalini rose. The lady who finished homa and was meditating, felt like Her life force was being forcibly squeezed out of the cave of her heart, felt like she was dying and experienced tremendous anxiety.

On that note, Kundalini rise is similar to death! When one dies, the force of self-identification is forced to cut off from the body. When a yogi meditates and Kundalini rises, it is like a dress rehearsal of death.

Of course, just as an actor may act very well in all rehearsals and freeze in the actual performance, a seeker may navigate Kundalini rise well many times and yet, when the final moment comes, may get stuck with some desire that makes one stuck and take birth again.

Should one make an effort to *force* Kundalini rise?

First, is it possible to force Kundalini to rise?

Kind of. If one sits still and meditates for a long time and ignores physical discomfort, it urges the force of self-identification to detach from the physical body. In addition, there are some bandhas like Moola bandha, Uddiyana bandha and Jalandhara bandha that may serve as catalysts for a Kundalini rise if there is good focus in the first place.

Second, is it useful to force Kundalini to rise?

Of course, not. As pointed out earlier, Kundalini rise is not the "be all, end all" of spirituality.

If Kundalini rises after one has overcome all desires, one can reach Infinite Bliss. But, if Kundalini rises before one is prepared, the force of self-identification will desperately cling to something or the other at some stage and there can be fear or anxiety. Eventually it will come down. Based on what it clung to before coming down, one can develop some delusions or establish new desires/attachments that are very difficult to overcome!

Instead of focusing on Kundalini rise, one is better off focusing on overcoming desires and developing 100% (and not 99.9999%) faith that "I am infinite Self which is not limited to any object, which is never born and never destroyed and which will continue to exist for ever" or that "I completely surrender to the power of Supreme Being. Whatever happens to me is his wish and his blessing, whether I like it or not. Whatever I do is an offering to Supreme Being and I have to do it as perfectly as I can."

Suppose one never experiences Kundalini rise throughout one's life and overcomes most of one's desires and achieves an equanimous mind. That is far better than any mystical experiences.

After all, the force of self-identification will anyway leave the physical body at the end of life. If one has no major desires or cravings or misgivings, the force of self-identification can ascend quite high in the cosmic hierarchy and one can end up being liberated or in a very high realm of being!

Let me give a crude analogy. Instead of asking the teacher to give you a test, just study and prepare for the test. At the end of the year, you will anyway be given a test! Instead of praying for a test everyday, just prepare the whole year for the test that will anyway be given at the end of the year!

In fact, if one is given intermediate tests during the year and does well, it may make one proud, give false confidence and one may fail the year end test!

Similarly, one who experiences Kundalini rise may look at it as an achievement or an entitlement and feel proud of it.

This is quite ironic: Kundalini rise is after all about the force of self-identification transcending a limited identity. Unfortunately, if it does not go all the way and comes back, whatever it did will be used to enhance and densify the same limited identity that it tried to transcend in the first place!!!

From this point of view, one whose Kundalini does not rise before one is fully prepared, is fortunate.

When one experiences Kundalini rises, it is vital to keep telling oneself that it is NOT an achievement or an entitlement or a trophy.

Why does Kundalini rise before one is fully prepared?

The reason is simple: One desired it in the past!

Nature gives what we want, when we put in enough effort. If one desired mystical experiences in the past and if one's karmas allow it now, Nature will give it to one.

From this point of view, it is very important to NOT desire or fantasize Kundalini rise or mystical experiences. If one desires enough, it may come. If one is not prepared, it can destabilize one's spiritual journey.

Instead of reading about how heart works and fantasizing a healthy heart, which does NOT make one's heart any healthier, one should just eat healthy food that makes one's heart healthy. Similarly, instead of reading about Kundalini or fantasizing a Kundalini rise, which does not make one's Kundalini rise, one should just focus on understanding the Scriptural teachings and imbibing them into actions, thoughts and instincts.

Leave Kundalini alone and focus on attitude and internal transformation.

A few practical tips in case someone experiences Kundalini awakening:

(1) Do NOT think of it as an achievement or entitlement. It is a proof that what you cling to as "I" and "mine" are transcendable and transient, including the physical body and all mental notions of "I am so and so person - engineer, sadhaka, scholar etc".

Do NOT fall into the trap of letting the experiences amplify those very notions!

(2) You may think "I controlled my Kundalini shakti. It rose and went to so and so area. I experienced so and so thing". But your very thoughts and notions are brought about by the force of your self-identification, i.e. Kundalini shakti.

Just as a person sees his own photo and says "this is I", your Kundalini shakti makes you think that you are controlling your Kundalini shakti or making it do something. Your Kundalini shakti is behind anything you do or think and even behind your very being!

Instead of looking at Kundalini shakti as something within you or something you control, think of it as the Supreme Cosmic Power that is controlling you and which you are a part of.

It is also useful to personify it as a form of divine Mother that you can visualize. Think that she is controlling you and letting you transcend your limitations.

(3) When Kundalini shakti awakens, rises and comes back, it changes the equilibrium of the subtle and physical bodies. In the physical body, nervous system is especially affected. Irrespective of your original prakriti (ayurvedic body type), vata will be deranged heavily. Take precautions and keep vata under check. This is very very important, if you have more years to live.

(4) In the first several months after Kundalini awakening, mystical out-of-body experiences may happen spontaneously. They may happen even when you are not meditating or doing anything conducive. They may randomly and spontaneously happen.

There is no need for panic or anxiety on one end or anticipation on the other. When something happens, let it happen. Tell yourself constantly that "I am infinite Self which is not limited to any object, which is never born and never destroyed and which will continue to exist for ever" or that "I completely surrender to the power of Supreme Being. Whatever happens to me is his wish and his blessing, whether I like it or not. Whatever I do is an offering to Supreme Being and I have to do it as perfectly as I can."

Let experiences come and go and do not cling to them or be fascinated by them.

(5) Eat moderately and try to eat saattwik food. Avoid vata aggravating food. Eat food that grounds you. Create habits that ground you and provide structure and security to your life.

(6) Spend some time thinking of your physical body and focusing attention on various body parts. As the force of self-identification is trying to totally detach from the body, this will force it to re-attach to the body.

This is particularly useful if you intend to spend some more years in that body.

Of course, even as you do what you can to sustain the body for more time, be genuinely prepared to let go of the body ANY moment.

Do your best to sustain it and yet be prepared to leave it!

(7) Remember that Kundalini awakening is only the beginning. The real challenge is after that. This is particularly true if some problematic conditioning and desires are still left.

(8) Appetite may reduce a lot (partly due to deranged vaata) over months. Spend some time praying to Fire as Jatharagni (digestive fire) and visualize fire burning in the stomach and digesting food.

(9) **IMPORTANT:** The basic nature of the force of self-identification is to amplify anything that enhances the notions one identifies with. If one identifies with "I am a great scholar", "I am a special soul born for a great mission", "I am meant to become famous" etc, Kundalini will try to amplify those notions and any mystical experiences one has may be used for that purpose! This can slow down or distract one's spiritual progress.

So keep some people around you (guru, wife, husband etc), who are **HONEST** and **BLUNT** with you and feel free to criticize you. **ENABLE** them to watch for signs of ego inflation and give you a piece of their mind. Do not suppress their voice and take them seriously. Pick someone who is thoughtful and not frivolous.

(10) As Kundalini rises to different places, some special abilities **MAY** develop. It may give clarity and confidence in some matters. It may attract some people to one.

But do **NOT** crave for following or respect or demonstrating anything to anyone. Even if you want to work for Dharma and share some knowledge in the society, do it without any expectations and without a sense of self-importance.

After all, many awakened people make some progress, deceive themselves that they are now enlightened, get carried away by some mystical happenings, impress some people around them, create a following, get attached to it, deceive themselves that they are a great soul born for a great mission, let their ego get inflated and their spiritual journey gets distracted. They may do something useful in the society, but their ego gets inflated in the process and their spiritual journey derailed.

(11) If you can, install a watchdog at the back of your mind. It should analyze your actions, words and thoughts for hidden motivations and alert you when the motivation comes from desire, anger, greed, jealousy etc.

(12) Do not discuss your experiences with all. Pick one (or a few) that you trust and respect and discuss with only that person.

(13) Do NOT get attached to the experiences. Though they may feel nice and special, they are as fleeting in nature as the physical reality.

If Kundalini rises and you have some mystical experiences, so be it. Use the guidelines above to take care of yourself and to benefit from it rather than letting it derail your spiritual journey.

If your Kundalini has not yet risen, do not worry about it (be glad in fact!) and work on your attitude. Prepare yourself to go all the way when Kundalini finally rises. Even if that happens only once, i.e. at the end of life, that is perfectly alright. It is perhaps even desirable.



Without a guru, it is so much easier to get lost in our own ideas about what is happening, and that we are actually making spiritual progress towards brahman while instead we are making our sense of self-identification stronger

[PVR] It is definitely good to have a guru. But, I am certain that many people will experience spontaneous Kundalini awakening in coming decades/centuries and navigate it well without a physical guru by their side.

Having brainwashed oneself with some basic notions can serve as an insurance! If one is trained to NOT see Kundalini awakening or rise or experiences as signs of spiritual progress, it can help!

Regarding the increased sex drive after Kundalini awakening in some, the problem is that the 2nd chakra of Swadhishtana rules over water element, which shows harmony when well-channeled and also sex impulse when poorly channeled. When Kundalini amplifies the notions of that chakra, that drive may increase depending on prior conditioning.

Similarly, 3rd chakra of Manipoora rules over fire element. When poorly channeled, fire can show irritability.

I don't understand this ! Why sit straight if one does not need to care about kundalini or rise of kundalini ? Why silence post poornahuti ? One can recite mantras or kirtan instead of silence with even a mrdanga or kara-tala swinging and swaying the body.

[PVR] You can of course do what gives YOU a clear, peaceful and blissful state of mind. Nothing wrong at all with singing, dancing etc.

In general, silent and still meditation does calm the mind (relatively at least) in most people. It is an effort to connect to the sat-chid-ananda within one.

Sitting still and meditating does not ensure Kundalini awakening - it happens in perhaps 0.000001% people. But it does give some calmness and peace to others. So it is worth it overall.

In the 0.000001% where Kundalini rises, it CAN result in some stagnation or even fall. I was trying to caution against it.

Kundalini rise is neither good nor bad. By itself, it is not bad and a necessary step in liberation. But, looking at it as a trophy or a sign of spiritual progress tends to be bad.

On the way to liberation, all of us have to experience Kundalini rise all the way. But, the best strategy is to let it happen naturally and without any unnatural obsession.

Secondly, even if one has no obsession now, it may come to one prematurely as a result of previous obsession. Some mental preparation MAY help one deal with it better.

[Manish Pandit] The wise should cultivate the properties of the Sun which actually does provide the entire world nourishment but never says that “I will only give sunlight to the Sattvic and not to those with Tamas and Rajas and so on”. The Sun does not have arrogance even though it is immortal unlike humans and is eternal from our time frame.

Secondly, the post is written from a somewhat Advaitic point of view. Let me make a slightly different case for point of view of Divine Mother worshipper.

One should not attempt to make Kundalini rise but in case it does, one should try and perform as much sadhana of a form of Divine Mother... soumya forms may be easiest.

The exceptional ability of an awakened Kundalini to make the seeker go to wherever they want will achieve the rest.

Thirdly, worship of Ganapati must be done. I cannot stress it enough for neophyte seekers... please do mantra japa/homa of Ganesha (a decade of Ganesha worship would be best if not more, but at least 6 months to two years would be bare minimum).

Fourthly do not bother about “Moksha “... I have explained elsewhere why... the idea of Moksha has been thoroughly marketed for monetary gain as if it can be bought in the market... this is useless, very very few if any are getting Moksha... in any case don't desire something which you know absolutely nothing about but think to be a commodity.

Fifthly stick to a practice for a good year or two before giving up on it as not productive. Preferably a decade is useful.

Sixthly, please please enjoy your life and moments of happiness and see the hand of Bhagwan in all of that. Death can come at any point and make you feel rather foolish.

Seventh, practise kindness in thought and actions. People suffer the triwidha tapaaa in this world and are unable to comprehend what we are saying. Understand that this ignorance is also Bhagwati's play BUT the suffering is as real as any spiritual progress one may have made. In other words, clothe the naked, feed the hungry and practice compassion. Since all of the Universe is an emanation of Divine Mother and that Kundalini too is actually just HER, and She can make your journey to "I" or Shiva much much easier therefore understand that Kundalini is within and without. So practice compassion to all. They are also "you"

Jai Shri Rama and stay safe.



Sarve janāH sukhino bhavantu

6 March 2020

At the end of most rituals, we say "sarve janaaH sukhino bhavantu", meaning "may all people have pleasures/comforts". Wishing for that did not make much sense to me. When I expressed my discomfort to Dr Robert Svoboda, he told me how his guru Aghori Vimalananda explained it to him. The beauty of that explanation really opened my eyes!

Though the word "sukha" is understood now as "comfort or pleasure", that is only a gross/superficial meaning. The original meaning is subtler.

As "su" means "good/auspicious" and "kha" means vacuum/space, the word "sukha" originally meant "auspicious space element within one".

Space element is the subtlest and the one that *supports* other elements. It stands for the sense of just being, which is present in all of us, albeit unseen, and supports everything within us that is seen.

While wishing for everyone to have pleasures is unwise, wishing for the sense of just being in everyone to be in a pure/auspicious/pristine state IS a noble idea for the upliftment of the world.

Similarly, though duHkha is taken to mean sadness, its real meaning is a bad sense of just being.

Though some Sanskrit words have lost their original meanings, we can derive the original meanings from their etymology. Using the original meanings of words will help us understand the teachings of sages better!



Book of Songs



Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare
Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare

adrijAsuputrakaM - Verse on Ganesha

11th December 2011

Metre: SudhaaDhaaraa (stream of nectar)

adrijAsuputrakaM marditAsushatrukaM|
rudrashUlakhaNDitaM bhadrashIlamaNDitam|
aibhavaktrashobhitaM shaivabhakitoShitaM|
bhrAmavighnavArakaM staumi taM vinAyakaM||

अद्रिजासुपुत्रकं मर्दितासुशत्रुकं ।
रुद्रशूलखण्डितं भद्रशीलमण्डितम् ।
ऐभवक्त्रशोभितं शैवभक्तितोषितं ।
भ्रामविघ्नवारकं स्तौमि तं विनायकं ॥

Meaning:

The good son [suputrakaM] of Parvati, daughter of the mountain Himalaya [adrijA], one who has squeezed [mardita] the life force [Asu] of enemies [shatrukaM], one who was cut [khaNDitaM] by the Shoola [shUla] of Rudra [rudra], one who displays [maNDitam] gracious [bhadra] disposition [shIla], one who is adorned with [shobhitaM] an elephant [aibha] face [vaktra], one who is pleased [toShitaM] by devotion/attachment [bhaki] to Shiva [shaiva], one who restrains [vArakaM] unsteadiness [bhrAma] and obstacles [vighna], I praise and contemplate [staumi] that [taM] Vinayaka or great leader [vinAyakaM].

Commentary:

Squeezing the life force of enemies is a reference to elephantine strength. When it comes to being pleased by devotion/attachment to Shiva, Shiva stands for supreme Self at Sahasrara. Devotion and attachment of Kundalini in Mooladhara to Him pleases Ganesha. When Kundalini awakens and wants to go up, it pleases Ganesha and he opens the door at the bottom of Sushumna. Obstacles seem bigger if one is unsteady, so unsteadiness is a bigger problem than obstacles themselves. Ganesha removes both, being the lord of earth element, i.e. the principle of stability.



shrI raaghavaaShTakaM

8th March 2015

Metre: Toonaka (quiver of arrows)

श्री राघवाष्टकं

भानुवंशभूषणं विभानुमद्विभासितं । इन्दुलग्नजातमिन्दुसुन्दरं मनोहरं ।
कोसलाधिपात्मजासुनन्दनं क्रतूद्भवं । राघवं विदेहजामनोहरं सदा भजे ॥
श्रीवसिष्ठकौशिकादिबोधितं महामतिं । ताटकादिदैत्यकूटमर्दने कपर्दिनं ।
आर्षयज्ञरक्षकं सुशक्तियुक्तधीवरं । राघवं विदेहजामनोहरं सदा भजे ॥
मैथिलीस्वयंवरे पिनाकतोडकं दृढं । जामदग्न्यदर्पताडकं प्रियंकरं हरिं ।
जानकीमनोहरं धरासुताहृदालयं । राघवं विदेहजामनोहरं सदा भजे ॥
गौतमादिपूजितं जटायुमुक्तिदायकं । योगिचित्तरंजकं प्रदुष्टदैत्यभंजकं ।
कीशवीरसंघमार्गदर्शकं सखं प्रभुं । राघवं विदेहजामनोहरं सदा भजे ॥
सेतुबन्धकं कपीशवृन्दनायकं विभुं । कुम्भकर्णमेघनाथदानवेश नाशकं ।
वीरविक्रमं महापराक्रमं रिपुंजयं । राघवं विदेहजामनोहरं सदा भजे ॥
लक्ष्मणानुगम्यमानमंजनासुतेडितं । जाम्बवद्विभीषणादिवेदितं निवेदितं ।
मौनिवृन्दभावितं निषेवितं सुरार्चितं । राघवं विदेहजामनोहरं सदा भजे ॥
त्यागशीलिनं च राजधर्मवर्तकं प्रभुं । जानकीप्रियावियोगपीडितं नरोत्तमं ।
वल्मिकोद्भवेडितं तनूजयुग्मवत्सलं । राघवं विदेहजामनोहरं सदा भजे ॥
आदिपूरुषं हरिं वरं परं परात्परं । वायुसूनुसेवितं महारिहं महामहं ।
ब्रह्मरुद्रवासवादिसेवितांघ्रिवारिजं । राघवं विदेहजामनोहरं सदा भजे ॥
श्री राघवाष्टकं पुण्यं ये जपन्ति नरोत्तमाः ।
ते सर्वे मुक्तिमायान्तु रामचन्द्र प्रसादतः ॥

shrI raaghavaaShTakaM

bhAnuvaMshabhUShaNaM vibhaanumadvibhaasitaM|
indulagnajAtamindusundaraM manoharaM|
kosalAdhipAtmajAsunandanaM kratUdbhavaM|
raaghavaM videhajAmanoharaM sadA bhaje||
shrIvasiShThakaushikAdibodhitaM mahAmatiM |
taaTakaadidaityakUTamardane kapardinaM|
aarShayaGYarakShakaM sushaktiyuktadhIvaraM |
raaghavaM videhajAmanoharaM sadA bhaje||
maithilIswayaMvare pinAkatoDakaM dR^iDhaM |
jaamadagnyadarpataaDakaM priyaMkaraM hariM |
jAnakImanoharaM dharAsutAhR^idaalayaM |
raaghavaM videhajAmanoharaM sadA bhaje||
gautamaadipUjitaM jaTaayumuktidaayakaM |
yogicittaraMjakaM praduShTadaityabhaMjakaM |
kIshavIrasaMghamArgadarshakaM sakhaM prabhuM |
raaghavaM videhajAmanoharaM sadA bhaje||
setubandhakaM kapIshavR^indanaayakaM vibhuM|
kumbhakarNameghanaathadaanavesha naashakaM|
vIravikramaM mahAparAkramaM ripuMjayaM|
raaghavaM videhajAmanoharaM sadA bhaje||
lakShmaNaanugamyamAnamaMjanAsuteDitaM|
jAmbavadvibhIShaNAdiveditaM niveditaM|
maunivR^indabhAvitaM niShevitaM suraarchitaM|
raaghavaM videhajAmanoharaM sadA bhaje||
tyAgashIilinaM ca raajadharmavartakaM prabhuM|
jaanakIpriyAviyogapIDitaM narottamaM|
valmikodbhaveDitaM tanUjayugmavatsalaM|

raaghavaM videhajAmanoharaM sadA bhaje||
aadipUruShaM hariM varaM paraM paraatparaM|
vAyusUnusevitaM mahaarihaM mahaamahaM|
brahmarudravaasavaadisevitaMghrivaarijaM|
raaghavaM videhajAmanoharaM sadA bhaje||
shrI rAghavaaShTakaM puNyaM ye japanti narottamaaH|
te sarve muktimaayaantu raamachandra prasaadataH ||



Narasimha Pancharatna Stotram

13 June 2015

श्री नृसिंह पंचरत्न स्तोत्रं

सिंहवक्त्र वज्रदन्त दानवान्त त्राहि मां । वज्रदंष्ट्र तीक्ष्णवीक्ष दुर्निरीक्ष्य पाहि मां ।
स्तम्भसम्भवेश भीष्म दिव्यसिंह त्राहि मां । उग्रवीर सुप्रदीप्त श्रीनृसिंह पाहि मां ॥
यातुवीरहन्तृमुख्य दैवताख्य त्राहि मां । वैरिवृन्द विप्रतीप सुप्रताप पाहि मां ।
रौद्रवेष दैन्यनाश भक्तपोष त्राहि मां । उग्रवीर सुप्रदीप्त श्रीनृसिंह पाहि मां ॥
भक्तवत्सलेश दैन्यनाश दिव्य त्राहि मां । भक्तसुप्रसन्न खिन्नरक्ष भव्य पाहि मां ।
शिशुमार पाशहार श्रीनिवास त्राहि मां । उग्रवीर सुप्रदीप्त श्रीनृसिंह पाहि मां ॥
देववन्द्य सिद्धपूज्य मौनिसेव्य त्राहि मां । आभिधेय सुप्रतीक राण्ड्यरूप पाहि मां ।
योगिभाव्य योगवेद्य भव्यरूप त्राहि मां । उग्रवीर सुप्रदीप्त श्रीनृसिंह पाहि मां ॥
विश्वपाल त्रैगुणात्म निर्गुणेश त्राहि मां । सर्वमन्त्रतन्त्रसार वेदवेद्य पाहि मां ।
भक्तगम्य शाक्तगेय मुक्तपेय त्राहि मां । उग्रवीर सुप्रदीप्त श्रीनृसिंह पाहि मां ॥
पंचरत्नं नृसिंहस्य । ये पठन्ति नरोत्तमाः ।
ते सर्वे मुक्तिमायान्तु । नारसिंह प्रसादतः ॥

shrI nR^isiMha paMcaratna stotraM

siMhavaktra vajradanta daanavaanta traahi maaM | vajradaMShTra tIkShNavIkSha durnirIkShya paahi
maaM |
stambhasambhavesha bhIShma divyasiMha traahi maaM | ugravIra supradIpta shrInR^isiMha paahi
maaM ||
yaatuvIrahantR^imukhya daivatAkhya traahi maaM | vairivR^inda vipratIpa supratApa paahi maaM |
raudraveSha daityanAsha bhaktapoSha traahi maaM | ugravIra supradIpta shrInR^isiMha paahi
maaM ||
bhaktavatsalesha dainyanAsha divya traahi maaM | bhaktasuprasanna khinnarakSha bhavya paahi
maaM |

shIMshumaara paashahaara shrInivaasa traahi maaM | ugravIra supradIpta shrInR^isiMha paahi
maaM ||

devavandya siddhapUjya maunisevya traahi maaM | Abhidheya supratIka rANDyarUpa paahi maaM |
yogibhAvya yogavedya bhavyarUpa traahi maaM | ugravIra supradIpta shrInR^isiMha paahi maaM ||
vishvapaala traiguNaatma nirguNesha traahi maaM | sarvamantratantrasaara vedavedya paahi maaM |
bhaktagamyaa shaaktageya muktapeya traahi maaM | ugravIra supradIpta shrInR^isiMha paahi maaM
||

paMcaratnaM nR^isiMhasya | ye paThanti narottamAH |
te sarve muktimaayaantu | nArasiMha prasaadataH ||



Blissful Ignorance

4th-June-2011

I am ignorant -

I did not read any scriptures

But is that a big problem really

For I have a conscience

That tells me my duty loud and clear

I am ignorant -

I do not know any mantras

But is that a big problem really

For I know Lord by one nice name

And that name feels like a mantra to me

I am ignorant -

I do not know any rituals

But is that a big problem really

For each action I undertake feels like

A ritual that is offered to Lord

I am ignorant -

I do not have any purpose in Life

But is that a big problem really

For an interesting task is brought by

Every minute that passes by

I am ignorant -

I do not even know what I really want

But is that a big problem really

Desires arise in heart like bubbles by themselves

And burst up quickly when their time is up

I am ignorant -

I don't know what moksha or liberation is

But is that a big problem really

For there is nothing I want to be liberated from -

I see every thread that binds me as a beautiful form of god

*I am ignorant -
I do not know how god looks like
But is that a big problem really
For I convince myself that god is not limited to one form
And is present in each and every thing around me
I am ignorant -
I did not read many books and learn much
But is that a big problem really
For when I started to read books
New confusions started and my bliss ended!*



“śrīsatyadevāṣṭakam”

श्रीसत्यदेवाष्टकम्

श्रीसत्यलोकपरिपालक हे कृपाळो । देवर्षिमौनिगणभावित सत्त्वमूर्ते ।
श्वेताम्बरावृत रमेश रमाविलोल । श्रीसत्यदेव मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ १

ॐकाररूप गुणवर्जित विश्वयोने । हे पंचभूतपरिपालक लोकरक्ष ।
सम्पूर्णचन्द्रसमये समुपासितव्य । श्रीसत्यदेव मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ २

गौरीशिवाच्युतगणेशपितामहैश्च । खेटैर्नवैः क्रतुशतादिदिगीश्वरैश्च ।
देवैस्सदा सहित शाश्वत लोकपूज्य । श्रीसत्यदेव मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ३

आद्यन्तवर्जित सुरार्चितपादपद्म । श्रीखण्डचर्चित सुवर्चित शोभनांग ।
श्रीपुण्ड्रमण्डितललाट विराटस्वरूप । श्रीसत्यदेव मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ४

श्रीमत्स्यकूर्मधरणीधरनारसिंह । श्रीवामनेशजमदग्निजरामचन्द्र ।
श्रीकृष्णरूपधर अच्युत विष्णुमूर्ते । श्रीसत्यदेव मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ५

क्षीराब्धिजाप्रिय मनोहरवेषधारिन् । दीनार्तिछेदकर मोदसुभाग्यदायिन् ।
भक्ताघनाश कलिपाशविमोचकारिन् । श्रीसत्यदेव मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ६

कामं च क्रोधमदमात्सरलोभमोहान् । घोरारिषटकविततिं परिमर्दय त्वं ।
सत्त्वं च शान्तिमतुलं विनयं च देहि । श्रीसत्यदेव मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ७

मद्वाचि मूर्ध्नि हृदि वासय सत्यरूप । लक्ष्म्या च देवततिभिस्सह त्रैगुणात्मन् ।
सत्येन दिव्यसुधया भरितोत्तमांग । श्रीसत्यदेव मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥ ८

सत्यदेवाष्टकं स्तोत्रम् भक्त्या पठति यो नरः । तस्य पापानि नश्यन्तु सत्यदेव प्रसादतः ॥

śrīsatyadevāṣṭakam

śrīsatyalokaparipālaka he kṛpāḷo | devarṣimauniḡaṇabhāvita sattvamūrte |
śvetāambarāvṛta rameśa ramāvilola | śrīsatyadeva mama dehi karāvalambam | | 1

omkārarūpa guṇavarjita viśvayone | he pañcabhūtaparipālaka lokarakṣa |
sampūrṇacandrasamaye samupāsitaṅvya | śrīsatyadeva mama dehi karāvalambam | | 2

gaurīśivācyutaḡaṇeśapitāmahaiśca | kṣeṭairnavaiḡ kratuśatādidigīśvaraiśca |
devaiśsadā sahita śāśvata lokapūjya | śrīsatyadeva mama dehi karāvalambam | | 3

ādyantavarjita surārcitapādapadma | śrīkhaṇḍacarcita suvarcita śobhanāṅga |
śrīpuṇḍramaṇḍitalalāta virāṭsvarūpa | śrīsatyadeva mama dehi karāvalambam | | 4

śrīmatsyakūrmadharaṇīdharanārasimha | śrīvāmanesaśajamadagnijarāmacandra |
śrīkṛṣṇarūpadhara acyuta viṣṇumūrte | śrīsatyadeva mama dehi karāvalambam | | 5

kṣīrābdhijāpriya manoharaveśadhārin | dīnārtichedakara modasubhāgyadāyin |
bhaktāghanāśa kalipāśavimocakārin | śrīsatyadeva mama dehi karāvalambam | | 6

kāmaṇ ca krodhamadamātsaralobhamohān | ghorārīṣaṭkavitatiṁ parimardaya tvaṁ |
sattvaṁ ca śāntimatulaṁ vinayaṁ ca dehi | śrīsatyadeva mama dehi karāvalambam | | 7

madvāci mūrdhni hṛdi vāsaya satyarūpa | lakṣmyā ca devatatibhissaha traiguṇātman |
satyena divyasudhayā bharitottamāṅga | śrīsatyadeva mama dehi karāvalambam | | 8

satyadevāṣṭakaṁ stotram bhaktyā paṭhati yo naraḥ | tasya pāpāni naśyantu satyadeva prasādataḥ | |

Sri Satya Devashtakam

Eight Verses in Praise of the Personification of Truth

(1) You are the ruler of *Satya Loka* (abode of Truth). O kind one, you are thought of by groups of Divine Sages and saints. You are the personification of *Sattva guna*. You wear white clothes. You are the Lord of Mother Rama (Lakshmi) and you are controlled by Mother Lakshmi. O God of Truth, please give me a hand [and rescue me]!

(2) You take the form of the Om sound. You are devoid of any *Gunas* (attributes). You are the *Yoni* (source) for the entire universe. O ruler of the five elements, you are the protector of the worlds. You are to be worshipped at the time of Full Moon. O God of Truth, please give me a hand [and rescue me]!

(3) You are always accompanied by Gouri, Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesha and Brahma (*pancha loka palakas*), by the nine planets and by Indra and other rulers of directions (*dikpalakas*). You are the permanent one and you are worshippable by the worlds. O God of Truth, please give me a hand [and rescue me]!

(4) You are devoid of beginning and end. Your lotus feet are worshipped by gods. You are smeared with sandalwood and you have a splendid and auspicious body. Your forehead is adorned by the auspicious vertical lines. You are the supreme being. O God of Truth, please give me a hand [and rescue me]!

(5) You have taken the forms of Matsya, Koorma, bearer of earth (Varaha), Narasimha, Sri Vamana, son of Jamadagni (Bhargava Rama), Ramachandra and Sri Krishna. You are Imperishable. You are Lord Vishnu. O God of Truth, please give me a hand [and rescue me]!

(6) You are the beloved of the daughter of milky ocean (goddess Sri Lakshmi). You have a charming appearance. You break the misery of helpless devotees and give happiness and great fortune. You destroy the sins and impurities of devotees and deliver them from the noose of *Kali* (strife). O God of Truth, please give me a hand [and rescue me]!

(7) Please crush the six terrible enemies called desire, anger, wantonness, jealousy, greed and delusion. Please give me *sattva guna* (purity of consciousness), peace and humility. O God of Truth, please give me a hand [and rescue me]!

(8) O personification of Truth, please come and reside in my speech, in my head and in my heart, along with Sri Maha Lakshmi and other gods. You are endowed with all the three gunas. You have a superlative body/existence that is filled with the divine nectar of Truth. O God of Truth, please give me a hand [and rescue me]!

CONCLUSION: Whoever reads this prayer composed of eight verses for Lord Satya Deva - the God of Truth - with devotion, may that person's sins be destroyed by the blessings of Lord Satya Deva.



tārā maṅgalāṣṭakam

This prayer consists of eight verses composed in *Sanskrit* language in *Anushtup* metre for Mother *Tara's* benediction. Please feel free to enjoy it, use it and share it. The meaning is given at the end.

PVR Narasimha Rao
2012 November 12
Aswayuja Krishna Chaturdasi

तारा मंगलाष्टकम्

तारायै दौष्ट्यनाशिन्यै रक्षोघ्नायै च मंगळं ।
तारायै शैष्ट्यशासिन्यै अक्षोभ्यायै च मंगळं ॥ १

तारायै भवतारिण्यै शीघ्रायै चास्तु मंगळं ।
तारायै अघहारिण्यै उग्रायै चास्तु मंगळं ॥ २

तारायै रागशोषिण्यै चण्डिकायै च मंगळं ।
तारायै द्वेषभंजिन्यै व्यंजितायै च मंगळं ॥ ३

तारायै ज्ञानतोषिण्यै कान्तायै चास्तु मंगळं ।
तारायै मातृरूपिण्यै शान्तायै चास्तु मंगळं ॥ ४

तारायै भक्तिवश्यायै सुव्यक्त्यायै च मंगळं ।
तारायै व्यक्तसत्त्वायै तत्त्वज्ञायै च मंगळं ॥ ५

तारायै विस्तरायै च सूर्यायै चास्तु मंगळं ।
तारायै दुस्तरायै च तुय्यै चास्तु मंगळं ॥ ६

तारायै भेदपारायै मेदस्विन्यै च मंगळं ।
तारायै वेदसारायै तेजस्विन्यै च मंगळं ॥ ७

तारायै युक्तिदायै च योगज्ञायै च मंगळं ।
तारायै मुक्तिदायै च अव्यक्तायै च मंगळं ॥ ८

tārā maṅgalāṣṭakam

tārāyai dauṣṭyanāśinyai rakṣoghñāyai ca
maṅgaḷam ।
tārāyai śaiṣṭyaśāsinyai akṣobhyāyai ca
maṅgaḷam ॥ 1

tārāyai bhavatāriṇyai śīghrāyai cāstu
maṅgaḷam ।
tārāyai aghahāriṇyai ugrāyai cāstu
maṅgaḷam ॥ 2

tārāyai rāgaśoṣiṇyai caṇḍikāyai ca
maṅgaḷam ।
tārāyai dveṣabhañjinyai vyañjitāyai ca
maṅgaḷam ॥ 3

tārāyai jñānatoṣiṇyai kāntāyai cāstu
maṅgaḷam ।
tārāyai māṭṭrūpiṇyai śāntāyai cāstu
maṅgaḷam ॥ 4

tārāyai bhaktivaśyāyai suvyaktāyai ca
maṅgaḷam ।
tārāyai vyaktasattvāyai tattvajñāyai ca
maṅgaḷam ॥ 5

tārāyai vistarāyai ca sūryāyai cāstu
maṅgaḷam ।

tārāyai dustarāyai ca turyāyai cāstu
maṅgaḷam | 6

tārāyai bhedapārāyai medasvinyai ca
maṅgaḷam |
tārāyai vedasārāyai tejasvinyai ca
maṅgaḷam | 7

tārāyai yuktidāyai ca yogajñāyai ca
maṅgaḷam |
tārāyai muktidāyai ca avyaktāyai ca
maṅgaḷam | 8

Meaning:

Tara Mangalashatakam (Eight verses for Mother Tara's benediction)

(1) Benediction to Tara, the destroyer of wickedness and the slayer of demons. Benediction to Tara, the governor of wisdom and culture and the consort of Akshobhya (the imperturbable one).

(2) Benediction to Tara, carrier across the worldly existence and the swift one. Benediction to Tara, dispeller of sins and impurities and the fierce one.

(3) Benediction to Tara, one who dries up attractions and attachments and the ruthless warrior. Benediction to Tara, the breaker of aversions and the clearly visible one (clearly visible when attractions, aversions and conditioning are overcome).

(4) Benediction to Tara, one who is pleased with knowledge and understanding and one who is dear and pleasing. Benediction to Tara, one

who is of the form of a mother and one who is tranquil and gentle.

(5) Benediction to Tara, who can be charmed through devotion and one with a clearly manifested form. Benediction to Tara, who is the vital essence of all manifestation and the knower of the absolute Truth.

(6) Benediction to Tara, the all-pervasive one and the one relating to Sun. Benediction to Tara, the invincible one and the one beyond the three states of awareness.

(7) Benediction to Tara, who is the shore/bank/boundary of duality and one who is strong and robust. Benediction to Tara, who is the essence of Veda (sacred knowledge of the Absolute and its Manifestation) and who is splendid and bright.

(8) Benediction to Tara, the giver of the state of Oneness and one who can be known only through the state of Oneness. Benediction to Tara, the giver of emancipation and the imperceptible one (one beyond perception).



dasha mahA vidyA stotram

15 July 2012

Metre: Anushtup

Verse:

kAlIkAMbAM kAlamUlAM kAlAtItAM kharUpiNIM|
AdyAM sarvAshrayAM devIM mahAvidyAM namAmyahaM|| 1

taaraAMbAM dustaraAM turyaaM akShobhyAM abhayapradAM|
sahasrabhAnubhAsAbhAM mahAvidyAM namAmyahaM|| 2

shoDashIM cakrabindusthAM trijagatparipAlinIM|
laliTAMbAM surArAdhyAM mahAvidyAM namAmyahaM|| 3

shubhadAM jagadAdhArAM trailokyasthitikAriNIM|
varadAM bhuvaneshyaMbAM mahAvidyAM namAmyahaM|| 4

jIvalokakShayakarIM layakarIM punaHkarIM|
bhairavyaMbAM dayApArAM mahAvidyAM namAmyahaM|| 5

ChinnamastAMbikAM devIM piNDabrahmaNDatulyakIM|
vajravairocanIM nityAM mahAvidyAM namAmyahaM|| 6

jyeShThAMbikAM nirAkArAM cinmudrAM varadAyinIM|
dhUmAvatIM anIshAM tAM mahAvidyAM namAmyahaM|| 7

valgAMbAM bhargasaMyuktAM aShTapAshavimocanIM|
ShaTChatrunAshanakarIM mahAvidyAM namAmyahaM|| 8

trailokyamohanakarIM vANIM pashuvashaMkarIM|
mAtaMgyaMbAM mahodArAM mahAvidyAM namAmyahaM|| 9

shubhadAM varadAM lakShmIM vasudAM ca hiraNmayIM |
kamalAMbAM vibhUtisthAM mahAvidyAM namAmyahaM|| 10

दशमहाविद्यास्तोत्रम्

कालिकांबां कालमूलां कालातीतां खरूपिणीं।
आद्यां सर्वाश्रयां देवीं महाविद्यां नमाम्यहं॥ 1

तारांबां दुस्तरां तुर्यां अक्षोभ्यां अभयप्रदां।
सहस्रभानुभासाभां महाविद्यां नमाम्यहं॥ 2

शोडशीं चक्रबिन्दुस्थां त्रिजगत्परिपालिनीं।
ललितांबां सुराराध्यां महाविद्यां नमाम्यहं॥ 3

शुभदां जगदाधारां त्रैलोक्यस्थितिकारिणीं।
वरदां भुवनेश्यांबां महाविद्यां नमाम्यहं॥ 4

जीवलोकक्षयकरीं लयकरीं पुनःकरीं।
भैरव्यांबां दयापारां महाविद्यां नमाम्यहं॥ 5

छिन्नमस्तांबिकां देवीं पिण्डब्रह्माण्डतुल्यकीं।
वज्रवैरोचनीं नित्यां महाविद्यां नमाम्यहं॥ 6

ज्येष्ठांबिकां निराकारां चिन्मुद्रां वरदायिनीं।
धूमावतीं अनीशां तां महाविद्यां नमाम्यहं॥ 7

वल्गांबां भर्गसंयुक्तां अष्टपाशविमोचनीं।
षट्छत्रुनाशनकरीं महाविद्यां नमाम्यहं॥ 8

त्रैलोक्यमोहनकरीं वाणीं पशुवशंकरीं।
मातंग्यांबां महोदारां महाविद्यां नमाम्यहं॥ 9

शुभदां वरदां लक्ष्मीं वसुदां च हिरण्मयीं ।
कमलांबां विभूतिस्थां महाविद्यां नमाम्यहं॥ 10

Meaning:

(1) I (ahaM) pray (namAmi) to [the personification of] Supreme Learning (mahAvidyAM) Mother Kali (kAlIkAMbAM), who is the root of Time (kAlamUlAM), beyond time (kAlAtItAM), of the form of great void (kharUpiNIM), the initial one (AdyAM), the divine one (devIM) who is the

refuge for everything and everyone (sarvAshrayAM).

(2) I (ahaM) pray (namAmi) to [the personification of] Supreme Learning (mahAvidyAM) Mother Tara (taaraAMbAM), who is invincible/uncrossable (dustaraAM) [also means: one who makes one cross], who is the supreme one beyond 3 states (turyaaM), who is the consort of Akshobhya, the unperturbable one (akShobhyAM), one who removes fears (abhayapradAM), who radiates the lustre of thousand Suns (sahasrabhAnubhAsAbhAM).

(3) I (ahaM) pray (namAmi) to [the personification of] Supreme Learning (mahAvidyAM) Mother Lalita (laliAMbAM), who manages the 16 parts (shoDashIM), who is stationed in the central point of Sri Chakra (cakrabindusthAM) [the source of various energies that run the cycle of this universe], who rules the three worlds (trijagatparipAlinIM), one who is worshipped by all gods (surArAdhyAM).

(4) I (ahaM) pray (namAmi) to [the personification of] Supreme Learning (mahAvidyAM) Mother Bhuvanesi (bhuvaneshyaMbAM), who gives auspicious things (shubhadAM), who supports the animated universe (jagadAdhArAM), who causes the sustenance of three worlds (trailokyasthitikAriNIM), who grants great boons (varadAM).

(5) I (ahaM) pray (namAmi) to [the personification of] Supreme Learning (mahAvidyAM) Mother Bhairavi (bhairavyaMbAM), who causes decay/destruction (kShayakarIM) of beings and worlds (jIvaloka), causes oneness (layakarIM), causes renewal (punaHkarIM), who has unbounded compassion (dayApArAM) [the compassion that results in decay of the weakened and its renewal].

(6) I (ahaM) pray (namAmi) to [the personification of] Supreme Learning (mahAvidyAM) Mother Chhinnamasta (ChinnamastAMbikAM), the divine one (devIM), one who causes the equality of microcosm and macrocosm (piNDabrahmANDatulyakIM), who illumines like [the unbreakable] diamond (vajravairocanIM), eternal one (nityAM).

(7) I (ahaM) pray (namAmi) to [the personification of] Supreme Learning (mahAvidyAM) Mother Jyeshtha (jyeShThAMbikAM), who has no form, i.e. beyond form (nirAkArAM), who shows chinmudra, the seal of pure awareness (cinmudrAM), varadAyinIM (gives great boons), one made of smoke (dhUmAvatIM), one without a Lord (anIshAM), that one (tAM).

(8) I (ahaM) pray (namAmi) to [the personification of] Supreme Learning (mahAvidyAM) Mother Valga (valgAMbAM), well-joined by (saMyuktAM) splendor (bharga) [also means a Rudra], one who liberates from the eight bondages (aShTapAshavimocanIM), one who causes the destruction of six enemies (ShaTChatrunAshanakarIM).

(9) I (ahaM) pray (namAmi) to [the personification of] Supreme Learning (mahAvidyAM) Mother Matangi (mAtaMgyaMbAM), who enchants/attracts the three worlds (trailokyamohanakarIM), who is speech/vibration personified (vANIM), who brings ignorant beings under control (pashuvashaMkarIM), who is highly generous (mahodArAM). [Matangi represents speech and that represents all vibration/thinking at all levels, which vibrates the mind and engages it with the world.]

(10) I (ahaM) pray (namAmi) to [the personification of] Supreme Learning (mahAvidyAM) Mother Kamala (kamalAMbAM), who gives auspicious things (shubhadAM), who gives great boons (varadAM), Lakshmi (lakShmIM), who gives prosperity and well-being (vasudAM) and (ca) filled with the pure gold essence of Supreme Soul (hiraNmayIM), who is stationed in the state of abundance and prosperity (vibhUtisthAM).



navagraha karāvalamba stotram

Written in 1996 in Sanskrit language in
the classical metre of Vasanta Tillakam,
by PVR Narasimha Rao

नवग्रह करावलंब स्तोत्रम्

ज्योतीश देव भुवनत्रय मूलशक्ते ।
गोनाथ भासुर सुरादिभिरीड्यमान ।
नृणांश्च वीर्यवरदायक आदिदेव ।
आदित्य वेद्य मम देहि करावलंबम् ॥

नक्षत्रनाथ सुमनोहर शीतलांशो ।
श्रीभार्गवीप्रियसहोदर श्वेतमूर्ते ।
क्षीराब्धिजात रजनीकर चारुशील ।
श्रीमच्छशांक मम देहि करावलंबम् ॥

रुद्रात्मजात बुधपूजित रौद्रमूर्ते ।
ब्रह्मण्य मंगल धरात्मज बुद्धिशालिन् ।
रोगार्तिहार ऋणमोचक बुद्धिदायिन् ।
श्रीभूमिजात मम देहि करावलंबम् ॥

सोमात्मजात सुरसेवित सौम्यमूर्ते ।
नारायणप्रिय मनोहर दिव्यकीर्ते ।
धीपाटवप्रद सुपंडित चारुभाषिन् ।
श्री सौम्यदेव मम देहि करावलंबम् ॥

वेदांतधीतिपरिषिक्त बुधदिवेद्य ।
ब्रह्मादिवंदित गुरो सुरसेवितांग्रे ।
योगीश ब्रह्मगुणभूषित विश्वयोने ।
वागीश देव मम देहि करावलंबम् ॥

उल्लासदायक कवे भृगुवंशजात ।
लक्ष्मीसहोदर कलात्मक भाग्यदायिन् ।
कामादिरागकर दैत्यगुरो सुशील ।
श्रीशुकदेव मम देहि करावलंबम् ॥

द्वेषैषणारहित शाश्वत कालरूप ।
छायासुनंदन यमाग्रज क्रूरचेष्ट ।
कष्टाद्यनिष्टकर धीवर मंदगामिन् ।
मार्तांडजात मम देहि करावलंबम् ॥

मार्तांडपूर्णशशिमर्दक रौद्रवेष ।
सर्पाधिनाथ सुरभीकर दैत्यजन्म ।
गोमेधिकाभरणभासित भक्तिदायिन् ।
श्रीराहुदेव मम देहि करावलंबम् ॥

आदित्यसोमपरिपीडक चित्रवर्ण ।
हे सिंहिकातनय वीर भुजंगनाथ ।
मंदस्य मुख्यसख धीवर मुक्तिदायिन् ।
श्रीकेतुदेव मम देहि करावलंबम् ॥

मार्तांडचंद्रकुजसौम्यबृहस्पतीनाम् ।
शुकस्य भास्करसुतस्य च राहुमूर्तेः ।
केतोश्च यः पठति भूरि करावलंब ।
स्तोत्रम् स यातु सकलाम्श्च मनोरथारान् ॥

ॐ शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः
ॐ तत् स्त्

navagraha karāvalamba stotram

jyotīsa deva bhuvanatraya mūlaśakte |
 gonātha bhāsura surādibhirīḍyamāna |
 nṛṇāmśca vīryavaradāyaka ādideva |
 āditya vedya mama dehi karāvalambam ||

nakṣatranātha sumanohara śitalāmśo |
 śrībhārgavīpriyasahodara śvetamūrte |
 kṣīrābdhijāta rajanīkara cāruśīla |
 śrīmacchaśāṅka mama dehi karāvalambam ||

rudrātmajāta budhapūjita raudramūrte |
 brahmaṇya maṅgala dharātmaja buddhiśālin |
 rogārtihāra ṛṇamocaka buddhidāyin |
 śrībhūmijāta mama dehi karāvalambam ||

somātmajāta surasevita saumyamūrte |
 nārāyaṇapriya manohara divyakīrte |
 dhīpāṭavaprada supaṇḍita cārubhāṣin |
 śrī saumyadeva mama dehi karāvalambam ||

vedāntadhītipariṣikta budhadivedya |
 brahmādivandita guro surasevitāṅghre |
 yogīsa brahmaguṇabhūṣita viśvayone |
 vāgīsa deva mama dehi karāvalambam ||

ullāsadāyaka kave bhṛguvaṁśajāta |
 lakṣmīśahodara kalātmaka bhāgyadāyin |
 kāmādirāgakara daityaguro suśīla |
 śrīśukradeva mama dehi karāvalambam ||

dveṣaiṣaṇārahita śāśvata kālarūpa |
 chāyāsunandana yamāgraja krūraceṣṭa |
 kaṣṭhādyaṇiṣṭakara dhīvara mandagāmin |
 mārtaṇḍajāta mama dehi karāvalambam ||

mārtaṇḍapūrṇaśaśimardaka raudraveṣa |
 sarpādhinātha surabhīkara daityajanma |
 gomedhikābharaṇabhāsita bhaktidāyin |
 śrīrāhudeva mama dehi karāvalambam ||

ādityasomaparipīḍaka citravarṇa |
 he śimhikātanaya vīra bhujāṅganātha |

mandasya mukhyasakha dhīvara muktidāyin |
 śrīketudeva mama dehi karāvalambam ||

mārtaṇḍacandrakujasaumyabr̥haspatinām |
 śukrasya bhāskarasutasya ca rāhumūrteḥ |
 ketośca yaḥ paṭhati bhūri karāvalamba |
 stotram sa yātu sakalāmśca manorathārān ||

om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ
 om tat sat



Verse on Lord Hanuman

Composer: P.V.R. Narasimha Rao

Date: 2011 September 2

Metre: Saardoola Vikreeditam (tiger's play)

Verse:

tejaHpuMjanibhaM prabhaMjanasutaM shrI aMjanAraMjanaM.
kausalyAtanyAMghrivArijagataM mattaM mahendindiraM.
rakShojAlavidArakaM bhayaharaM laMkApurIdhvaMsakaM
sItAshokavidUrakaM kapivaraM shrIrAmadUtaM bhaje..

तेजःपुंजनिभं प्रभंजनसुतं श्री अंजनारंजनं।
कौसल्यातनयांघ्रिवारिजगतं मत्तं महेन्दिन्दिरं।
रक्षोजालविदारकं भयहरं लंकापुरीध्वंसकं।
सीताशोकविदूरकं कपिवरं श्रीरामदूतं भजे ॥

Meaning:

One who shines like [nibhaM] a beam of [puMja] brilliant fire [tejaH], son [sutaM] of wind god [prabhaMjana], delights [raMjanaM] mother Anjana [aMjanA], an intoxicated [mattaM] big [mhA] bee [indindiraM] placed on [gataM] the lotus [vArija] called the feet [aMghri] of the son [tanaya] of Kausalya [kausalyA], one who rips apart [vidArakaM] the snare [jAla] of demons [rakSho], remover [haraM] of fears [bhaya], destroyer of [dhvaMsakaM] the city [purI] of "laM"ka (Mooladhara chakra) [laMkA], one who sends away [vidUrakaM] the distress [shoka] of Sita [sItA], great [varaM] monkey [kapi], I pray to [bhaje] the envoy [dUtaM] of Lord Rama [shrIrAma].

Comment:

The expression "sItAshokavidUrakaM" can be interpreted as done above, i.e. one who makes distant [vidUrakaM] Sita's [sItA] distress [shoka]. There is another way to interpret it. We can split it as sItA + ashoka + vidUrakaM, i.e. one who makes Sita leave the "Ashoka" garden of Ravana.



Verse on Lord Shiva

2nd July 2011

Metre: Matta Kokila (intoxicated nightingale)

Verse:

jaGgamaM triguNAtmakaM saguNaM ca nirguNamacyutaM|
brahma-randhra-gata-shmashAnasamAsthitaM gurumavyayaM|
sthAvaraM tripurAntakaM cidananta-satya-susaMsthitaM|
IshvaraM jagadIshvaraM haramAshraye paramaM varaM||

जंगमं त्रिगुणात्मकं सगुणं च निर्गुणमच्युतं।
ब्रह्मरन्ध्रगतश्मशानसमास्थितं गुरुमव्ययं।
स्थावरं त्रिपुरान्तकं चिदनन्तसत्यसुसंस्थितं।
ईश्वरं जगदीश्वरं हरमाश्रये परमं वरं॥

Meaning:

The ever-moving one [jaGgamaM], one who is the essence of 3 gunas [triguNAtmakaM], one who has qualities [saguNaM] and [ca] beyond qualities [nirguNam], imperishable one [acyutaM], who sits in [samAsthitaM] the cemetery [shmashAna] that is in [gata] Sahasrara chakra [brahma-randhra], the preceptor [gurum], un-decaying one [avyayaM], one who is fixed and unmoving [sthAvaraM], one who ends [antakaM] the three cities [tripura], one who is well-established in [susaMsthitaM] the infinite [ananta] Truth [satya] of just being [cit], one who is the supreme being [IshvaraM], one who is the lord of [IshvaraM] the moving universes [jagat], one who takes away [haram], one who is absolute [paramaM], one who is excellent [varaM], I seek refuge from him [Ashraye].

Commentary:

In the first line, Shiva is described as the consciousness that takes many forms. Consciousness is ever-moving and taking many forms. It takes many forms with many qualities and yet beyond qualities. Though different ripples arising on the surface of ocean have different qualities, ocean itself is beyond the qualities of all those ripples.

Shiva is popularly described as sitting in smashana. In the second line, that imagery is elevated to the highest level. Shiva is described as the supreme consciousness at Sahasrara chakra. Sahasrara

chakra or Brahma randhra is compared to a smashana (cemetery) and Shiva is described as sitting in that smashana. Smashana is the place where dead people are laid to rest. All conditioning, all notions, all ideas, all desires, all likes and dislikes, all attractions and aversions, all agendas, all objectification are burnt and laid to rest, when self-awareness (shakti) reaches sahasrara chakra and merges with consciousness (Shiva).

In the third line, this is described further. Shiva is sthavara or absolutely still, like the base of the ocean. Ending 3 cities is a reference to the 3 realms of awareness - physical, mental and spiritual. Shiva destroys all realities perceived by self-awareness at the physical, mental and spiritual realms.

In the 4th line, he is described as the supreme Lord and also the lord of all universes. The words parama and vara means absolute one and excellent one. But parama can also mean the chief one or centre and vara (from the root vR^u, i.e. surround) can also mean the perimeter. Parama can refer to the centre, i.e. Brahman (base of ocean in the ocean analogy) and Vara can refer to the perimeter, i.e. Maya (surface of ocean in the ocean analogy). So the last two words say that Shiva is the source of all and also all manifestations as well! He is the centre of the circle, as well as the perimeter.



Verse on Mother Chandi

28th May 2011

Metre: Bhujanga Prayaata (serpentine motion)

Verse:

parAshaktimAdyAM parAM bhaktivedyAM.
cidAkAsharUpAM ahaMpAshayUpAM.
jaganmUlahetuM cidAnandasetuM.
avidyAdikAntAM bhaje caNDikAM tAM.

पराशक्तिमाद्यां परां भक्तिवेद्यां।
चिदाकाशरूपां अहंपाशयूपां।
जगन्मूलहेतुं चिदानन्दसेतुं।
अविद्यादिकान्तां भजे चण्डिकां तां॥

Meaning:

Who is the Supreme Energy [parAshaktiM], who is the original being and source [AdyAM], who is beyond anything manifest [parAM], who can be understood through devotion [bhaktivedyAM], space of cosmic consciousness [cidAkAsha] is whose form [rUpAM], who is the sacrificial post/pillar [yupAM] to which is tied the rope of egosense [ahaMpaAha], who is the root cause [mUlahetuM] of the univese [jagat], who is the bridge [setuM] to the bliss of cosmic consciousness [cidAnanda], who ends [antAM] ignorance etc [avidyAdika], I pray [bhaje] to THAT [tAM] Chandika [caNDikAM].

Commentary:

This is a prayer that envisages Chandika as the supreme form of the divine Mother and sees Her as the supreme energy. This is more Vedantic in nature, focus and treatment. This sees Her as the root Prakriti rather than the externalized symbolism such as a lady with n hands, killing demons etc.

Most of the things above are stright-forward and obvious and there is no need to elaborate. The only unusual expression is "ahaMpAshayUpAM". This expression kind of came to me by itself in an inspired moment. It fits nicely from the angle of sound and shabdalanckaras, as it double rhymes with "cidAkAsharUpAM" (---Asha---UpAM!). It also fits nicely from the angle of

meaning and arthalankaras. I did not dissect it too much and accepted it as soon as it came to me in a flash of inspiration.

Sacrificial animal is tied to a pillar/post (yUpa) by a rope. It is later killed and sacrificed. I am likening the egosense (sense of this is "I") to a rope. Perhaps the animal tied to it corresponds to everything we see as "mine" (e.g. body, name, fame, properties, wealth etc). It may even correspond to the very perception and experience of objective reality by the egosense. First we tie the egosense (rope) to the divine Mother (sacrificial post) and then sacrifice the animal. So divine Mother is the one we focus our mind on, as we sacrifice (let go) our sense of "mine", our conditioning and experience of the conditioned objective reality.



Verse on Mother Kaali

6th June 2011

Metre: Bhujanga Prayaata (serpentine motion)

Verse:

anIshAM vidhAtrIM manIShApradAtrIM
aghAshAniyantrIM mahAmohahantrIM
mahATTATTahAsAM vinaShTAShTapAshAM
mahAkAlakAntAM bhaje kALikAM tAM

अनीशां विधात्रीं मनीषाप्रदात्रीं।
अघाशानियन्त्रीं महामोहहन्त्रीं।
महाट्टाट्टहासां विनष्टाष्टपाशां।
महाकालकान्तां भजे कालिकां तां॥

Meaning:

Who is the supreme of all [anIshAM], the source of all [vidhAtrIM], bestows [pradatrIM] wisdom [manIShA], restrains [niyantrIM] evils and sins [agha] and desires and expectations [AshA], kills [hantrIM] great delusion [mahAmoha], has a supremely loud laughter [mahATTATTahAsAM], destroys [vinaShTa] the eight [aShTa] bondages [pAshAM], is the consort of [kAntAM] Mahakala or Great Time personified [mahAkAla], I pray to [bhaje] that [tAM] Kalika [kALikAM].

Commentary:

Most of the things above are obvious. The Mother is being extolled as the supreme beyond all and the source of all. She bestows great wisdom that allows one to control one's evil tendencies, conditioning and expectations. She destroys the great delusion with which one's mind is infatuated.

The third line needs some commentary. The reference to "supremely loud laughter" is not just indicative of the fierce personality of Kalika, but also represents the primordial sound at the source of time and space. As one enters samadhi and reaches a state where there is no space, time and qualities, one crosses over the source of space and time. The great sound there is kind of like the "big bang" postulated by modern scientists. The mahAnAda at the source of space and time is likened here to the laughter of Kalika, the consort of the great Lord of Time. When she is happy, she takes you to the source of space and time!

Tantra refers to "Ashta Pasha" or eight nooses - ghR^iNA (aversion), lajjA (shame), bhaya (fear), sha~NkA (doubt), jugupsA (disgust), kula (attachment to a group based on activity), jAti (attachment to a group based on birth) and shIIa (good character and modesty!!). Kalika destroys the eight nooses so that one can be liberated. Please note that even modesty is a bondage that blocks liberation. However, it is a good idea to keep that bondage and work on others first. It can be the last bondage to overcome, like in the case of Ramakrishna Paramahansa!



Verse on Mother Kalaratri

29th June 2011

Metre: Chaamara (plume)

Deity:

Kalaratri literally means deep darkness. Kalaratri is one of the divine Mother's forms. Kalaratri symbolizes the state of Shakti where there is no activity in Aatman, i.e. all the objects within manifested Aatman have merged back in Aatman and lost individual identity they had before.

Verse:

shaMkarIM shubhaMkarIM kiMkarAbhayaMkarIM|
traijagad-vashaMkarIM staumi kAla-sharvarIM||

शंकरीं शुभंकरीं किंकराभयंकरीं।
त्रैजगद्वशंकरीं स्तौमि कालशर्वरीं॥

Meaning:

To the beneficent one [shaMkarIM], to the one who brings auspiciousness [shubhaMkarIM], to the one who protects and causes fearlessness in [abhayaMkarIM] her servants/slaves [kiMkara], to the one who brings under control [vashaMkarIM] all the three worlds [traijagad], I pray [staumi] to that Kalaratri [kAla-sharvarIM].

Commentary:

The expression "kiMkarAbhayaMkarIM" needs some elaboration.

We are all slaves of Shakti. Though we are all parts of Aatman, we consider ourselves to be different individuals, we perceive many beings/objects within un-dividable Aatman, find some attractive and some repulsive, develop desires and notions like happiness and sadness, etc. All this is under the tremendous power of Shakti or divine Mother. When the big force within ocean (which is not different from ocean) causes waves and ripples on its surface, a ripple may think of itself as a ripple separate from ocean and look at ripples around it with attraction/repulsion and may want to move closer to one ripple or get away from one ripple etc. As it tries to move in specific ways, its agenda may clash with the agenda of the oceanic force and it may move here and there and become disoriented. Just as these ripples and waves are slaves of the oceanic force, we are all slaves of Shakti/Prakriti/Mahamaya.

When Mother Kalaratri takes control over the cosmos, it is like the oceanic force calming down and all waves and ripples becoming still. All beings (slaves of Shakti) cease activities and lose their fears and other agendas. They are all in bliss. She takes control of all the worlds. Of course, this applies to Mother Kalaratri taking control over the inner cosmos as well!



Verse on Lord Vishnu

Date: 2011 July 10

Metre: Totaka

Verse:

varadaM karadaM sukhadaM shubhadaM| bhujage shayanaM trijagannayanaM|
parayA sahitaM munibhirviditaM| asurAntakaraM tu smaraami hariM||

वरदं करदं सुखदं शुभदं।
भुजगे शयनं त्रिजगन्नयनं।
परया सहितं मुनिभिर्विदितं।
असुरान्तकरं तु स्मरामि हरिं।।

Meaning:

Giver of boons, giver of hand, giver of comfort, giver of auspiciousness, who lies on snake, who runs 3 worlds, accompanied by the supreme cosmic energy, understood by sages, one who brings end to demons, I remember that Hari.



Verse on Lord Narasimha

Composer: P.V.R. Narasimha Rao

Date: 2011 August 20

Metre: Anushtup

Verse:

jvAlAparivR^itaM binduM mAyAbhinduM cidagnibhaM|
bhIShaNaM dhiShaNAM vande nR^isiMhaM ripushoShaNAM||

ज्वालापरिवृतं बिन्दुं मायाभिन्दुं चिदग्निभं।
भीषणं धिषणं वन्दे नृसिंहं रिपुशोषणं॥

Meaning:

A "point" [binduM] surrounded by flames [jvAlAparivR^itaM], breaker [bhinduM] of unreality [mAyA], beam of light or lustre [bhaM] from the fire [agni] of consciousness [chit], terrifying [bhIShaNaM], intelligent/wise [dhiShaNAM], one who destroys/drains [shoShaNAM] enemies [ripu], I salute [vande] to that Lord Nrisimha [nR^isiMhaM].

Commentary:

The Lord is described as the point, i.e. the essence and the source of all. This symbolises the Truth. While the center or point or bindu is the source of all, the surrounding area represents layers of Maya. Narasimha is described as the point surrounded by flames. The fire of wisdom represented by him destroys illusions and one is focused on the source.

Mars is the fire arising in consciousness (chit). The lustre of this fire is Narasimha (that is why Parasara equates Mars with Narasimha, when equating planets with Vishnu's incarnations). That is what "chidagnibhaM" means.



Verse on Supreme Being

Date: 2011 August 20

Metre: Chaamara (plume)

Verse:

advitIyamadbhutaM nirvikalpamacyutaM|
puShkaleShkaraM paraM niShkalaMkamAshraye||

अद्वितीयमद्भुतं निर्विकल्पमच्युतं।
पुष्कलेष्करं परं निष्कलंकमाश्रये॥

Meaning:

I take refuge in [Ashraye] the one without a second (one containing all) [advitIyaM], marvellous [adbhutaM], free from modifications [nirvikalpaM], imperishable [acyutaM], one who sets in order [iShkaraM] the manifold manifestations/variety [puShkala], absolute [paraM] & the stainless (perfect) [niShkalaMkaM].



Verse on Lord Krishna

Date: 2011 August 20

Metre: Somarji (crescent of Moon)

Verse:

hariM mohahAraM ihAnIhapAraM|
parApArasAraM bhaje.ahaM vrajेशaM||

हरिं मोहहारं इहानीहपारं।
परापारसारं भजेऽहं व्रजेशं॥

Meaning:

To Vishnu, the remover of evils [hariM], remover of [hAraM] delusion [moha], the other bank reached by [pAraM] those indifferent to [anIha] the ocean of this material world [iha], essence [sAraM] of the Supreme [para] and boundless manifestation [apAra], I [aham] pray with reverence [bhaje] to the lord of the land of Vraja (land where Krishna grew up - Mathura etc) [vrajेशaM].



Verse on Lord Dattatreya

Date: 2011 December 11

Metre: Indravajra (Indra's invincible weapon)

Verse:

saMsAra dAvAgni vimUDhacittAn|
GYAnAmbuvR^iShTyA parirakShayantaM|
muktaM viraktaM cidanantasiktaM|
atreH suputraM gurudattamIDe||

संसार दावाग्नि विमूढचित्तान्।
ज्ञानाम्बुवृष्ट्या परिरक्षयन्तं।
मुक्तं विरक्तं चिदनन्तसिक्तं।
अत्रेः सुपुत्रं गुरुदत्तमीडे॥

Meaning:

One who rescues (parirakShayantaM) those whose minds are bewildered (vimUDhacittAn) by the forest fire of (dAvAgni) this material world (saMsAra) by pouring streams of (vR^iShTyA) the waters of (ambu) wisdom (GYAna), one who is liberated (muktaM), dispassionate (viraktaM), soaked (siktaM) for ever in the infinite (anantaM) of pure consciousness (cit), who is the good son (suputraM) of Maharshi Atri (atreH) I praise (IDe) preceptor (guru) Dattatreya (dattam).



Searching for Mother

13th July 2012

Like a mad man, I was searching for Mother

Here and there, Everywhere

I read many books,

I contemplated so much,

I saw many scholars,

I saw many saints,

But I did not find Her

Like a mad man, I was looking for Mother

Here and there, Everywhere

I went to many temples,

I did many rituals,

I tried many spiritual paths,

I did much meditation,

But I did not find Her

Like a mad man, I was looking for Mother

Here and there, Everywhere

Then I realized what was wrong

I was restricting Mother

To what my mind could conceive -

A specific form with so many arms,

A specific type of Light,

A specific type of Energy,

A specific ability to do this or that.

While looking for that form,

I missed out on Her

Though She was right in front of me

And in fact all around me

In so many beautiful forms -

Some simple, some complex

*What makes a plant grow
And give flowers and fruits,
If not Her energy?
What makes a flower bloom
And attract the bees,
If not Her energy?
What attracts the bees
To the blooming flower,
If not Her energy?
What makes earth and
Planets go around Sun,
If not Her energy?
What makes electrons in atoms
Go around the nucleus,
If not Her energy?
What makes zillions of beings,
Zillions of atoms in them,
And zillions of sub-atomic particles
Exist in a harmonious balance,
If not Her energy?
What makes the us crave things,
What makes the us do things,
What makes the us understand things,
If not Her energy?
Isn't She in the contentment of a baby
Who just received milk from Mother?
Isn't She in the love of Mother
Who just fed her baby?
Isn't She in the curiosity of a young toddler
About what is on the other side of a door?
Isn't She in the laughters & cries,
Hunger & contentment, pleasures & pains
Of zillions of beings in this cosmos?*

*Now when I look around me,
I see Her all around me.
I marvel at every little thing,
And every big thing,
As things of Her doing
And as signs of Her presence.
I realized my mistake now..
If you restrict Her to this or that definition,
You may not find Her however hard you may try
She is the Force that creates, sustains & recycles
Every being, every aspect of every being
And every notion in the consciousness of every being
In this limitless cosmos!
I realized my mistake now..
You don't search for air with a microscope,
Air is all around us,
You just open your lungs to air and breath it!
Same with Mother!
She is all around us,
Just open your heart to Her!*



Sri P.V.S. Achalapathi Rao

28 June 2020



My father was a courageous, sometimes stubborn and highly dharmik man who felt free to break any conventions that he found meaningless. He lived life on his terms and always did what he thought was dharmik. He never wore a 'mask' and spoke his mind freely.

He had a great level of vaagbala that ensured that he NEVER made a wrong prediction. That perhaps came from NEVER speaking a lie. Very specific things he said, sometimes without any astrological reasoning, came true. Of course, he would do his prayers for hours sometimes.

He would sit for 2-3 hours at a stretch and chant various stotras. Ashtottara sata nama stotras of MahaLakshmi, Brihaspati, Shani, Mangala and other grahas were his favorites. He also liked Lord Narasimha's Karavamba stotra and Mantra Raja Pada Stotra. He was a devotee of

MahaLakshmi, Narasimha, RamaChandra and VataPatraShaayi.

He was not ritualistic and did not do elaborate external rituals. He just lit an oil lamp, chanted stotras for hours, offered raisins (kismis) as naivedya and did haarati with camphor. He strictly enforced one thing though - he followed external purity (maDi in Telugu) and would wear clean and washed/wet clothes after bath and would not allow anybody to touch him until his pooja was done.

His needs were simple. He wore a years-old short towel for most of his life. Though some people around him were embarrassed by it, he never was. He wore that towel even while giving audience to some VIPs. Apart from the towel, he wore just one or two pairs of clothes and always slept on the floor.

He walked many miles everyday and never rode a bicycle or a motor cycle. He used bus and train when he really had to. Even in a big city like Chennai or Hyderabad, he walked far (e.g. train station to house). He used bus and train only for town to town travel.

He never ate outside and ate food cooked by himself or a handful of people. When travelling, he mostly lived on fruit, milk and yogurt (curds). And he used to travel for 6 months a year and see places!

He loved going to temples. He went to Tirumala every few months. He went on pilgrimages alone for months at times. He loved seeing different parts of India. He even went to Ladakh and Leh and went to the place where Kargil war was fought. Among the places he visited, he particularly liked a Balaji temple maintained by TTD in Hrishikesh and a temple in Chittooregarh where Meera Bai merged in Krishna. He also loved Shani temple in Amritsar. He loved several temples in Indore. He also absolutely loved Narayana Vanam and Srinivasa Mangapuram (not Aivelu Mangapuram) near Tirumala. He loved several Narasimha temples.

I said he was not ritualistic. Even the way he performed our upanayana was different and quite simple. He took me and my younger brother to Tirumala. We had darshan of Lord Venkateswara and went back to the cottage. He chanted prayers for a couple of hours, till muhurta. Then he said the Gayatri mantra to us right in the room. There were just 3 of us there and no ritual (not even a lamp). He asked us to repeat it a few times. We were then done and left. As simple as that! Normally, it is a long and elaborate ritual. He saw no point in it and did what really mattered.

Also, he was supremely confident and felt absolutely free to break rules and conventions that did not make sense to him. For example, doing upanayana to 2 sons at the same time is avoided in tradition and is supposed to even "bring death". But he had no fear at all while breaking that rule.

He was once at a griha pravesha ceremony in a second floor apartment. Because the ritual consists of making a cow drop cowdung in the middle of the room, they were trying to force a cow to climb stairs. They were using violence and it was crying. My father became mad at the priest and the homeowner and yelled at them, "If you use violence against a cow, do you think you will get blessings for it? You fools will suffer for this sinful violence" and left the place angrily. He sat outside, trembling with anger and sadness. Sadly, the priest continued with the "ritual".

After all, this is deep Kali yuga and many people are foolish enough to follow the "letter" of rules while torturing the "spirit".

In weddings in the AP state, bride and bridegroom apply a paste of jaggery and cumin seeds on the heads of each other at the muhurta time. The mangala sootra is tied an hour or hour and half later. My father said that tying mangala sootra is the key moment of wedding and that should happen at muhurta. Once he decides something, he is supremely confident and there is no "doubt" in his mind!

So, at our weddings, he forced the priests to cut the ritual short and do the jaggery-cumin part and mangala sootra part within the 14 minute window of lagna navamsa.

I got married during Meena lagna with Jupiter in 7th. My brother got married with Mercury, Jupiter and Venus in 7th. Standard rule for wedding muhurtas is "saptama suddhi" (literally, cleanliness of 7th house). Tradition is to keep no planet in 7th house in a wedding muhurta (i.e. empty 7th house).

My father dismissed the tradition saying "clean and empty are different. Empty house is not necessarily clean. How can anything be cleaner than having Jupiter".

Whether in astrology or spirituality, most are busy conforming to various silly traditions, either out of fear or lethargy. But he boldly reformed the rules in his own practice. But he did not seek limelight and restricted his reforms to his own practice and that of people close to him. But he was happy to live a life of solitude and help a few people he came in touch with.

With the few people he picked, however, he guided them regularly. At the time of key transits, he would call someone by himself and ask to do a specific prayer at a specific time on a specific day.

He had a tremendous amount of will power, self-belief and resilience. He would not eat for days together and still be fine. Once an auto-rickshaw crushed his toes at Tirupati. He refused help from a concerned driver (who wanted to take him to a nearby hospital) and walked 2 miles to an ayurvedic store. He bought some medicines and treated himself.

A motor cycle hit him, made him fall and went over his stomach and lungs about 5 years back. He treated himself.

He did not use allopathy throughout his life. He used homeopathy for himself and us till 1990s. Then he switched to ayurveda.

I clearly remember an incident a few years before his death.

It was 2-3 am in India then and I was at work in greater Boston. He was alone at home. He felt extremely weak and felt like life force was withdrawing from him. Astrologically also, he thought gochara was bad and there was a danger to life.

When alone and facing a crisis, most people would've panicked, called a doctor or at least called someone. My father just lied down on the floor and started mentally chanting various storas. His thinking was "if I go now, let me go in peace thinking of God and not in panic". If he left the body and people did not find the lifeless body for several days, it meant nothing to him. He did not make any effort to inform anyone and just focused his mind on God and leaving in peace.

After an hour, he felt better and got the sanguine feeling that the danger had passed. Then he got up, had some water, made some ayurvedic medicines, had them and called me to report it. He told me not to tell my mother, sister etc, because they would be worried for him and think twice before leaving him alone (and he loved being alone). He said I was an astrologer and so the data of a close brush with death could be useful in my researches.

THIS is the right attitude when it comes to death. All of us have to go, some day or the other! Live and enjoy the life, give what you can to others and take what others have to give you, enjoy every experience and action, but be prepared to go ANY time. When death comes, go in peace and not in panic or in regret. That can come if one has FULL confidence that death is not "the end" but only an "interval"!

He lived a simple and austere life. He had very few weakness. He loved old (really old) Hindi movies from 1930s and 1940s. Prithviraj Kapoor was his favorite actor and he loved the movie "Sikandar", which he showed me on his computer at Mathura. He loved old film songs and classical Carnatic music even more.

His other weakness was cricket, which he enjoyed till the end.

He never spoke or wrote a lie and had a vrata of speaking Truth. He was a lecturer at a Christian college and there were times when he wanted to take leave from college to watch a cricket match. He neither wanted his Principal to find out why he was taking time off nor did he want to lie. So he wrote a leave letter in archaic Telugu language that made no sense to Principal. While granting leave, he requested to write leave letter in English next time.

Even when writing in English, my father used flowery, indirect and archaic style and uncommon complex words and successfully hid the real meaning from the principal, without saying anything untrue! His principal did not understand even the English letter and gave up and told him to use whatever language he wanted.

My father knew many languages, including several Indian languages. He was particularly fond of Punjabi and Russian. Though he never visited Russia, he visited Punjab MANY times and had special love for Amritsar and the Shani temple there (outside the Golden Temple).

One classmate recounted an incident when he visited my residential college in Nagarjuna Sagar. My friend's surname was Sharma and he looked a bit a Punjabi to my father. When he asked for an autograph, my father made a small note and signed in Punjabi 😊

He was an excellent astrologer and once correctly predicted (in print and ahead!) the number of seats NTR's party would get in state assembly elections. He only used rasi chart, navamsa chart, Vimsottari dasa and gochara and made many amazing predictions.

We know rationally that there aren't enough degrees of freedom in those parameters and having enough degrees of freedom requires using several other Jyotish teachings of rishis. But it was the vaagbala and intuition that he developed by leading a simple and austere life that made him predict with uncanny accuracy.

There were times when he gave a muhurta, said there would be heavy rain for many hours before muhurta, but it would stop just before muhurta and the event would go fine. It would happen exactly like that.

There were times when he gave predictions without even knowing the chart. For example, he saw a friend of my wife in street once and told him he would go to US soon. He wasn't even trying then, but ended up coming to US and stayed here since then.

He saw the chart of an influential govt official and suspected he had an affair. When the lady with whom he had affair also visited my father separately later, he connected the dots. He confronted her and she confessed. He then confronted the man on a street and told him to not ruin the lives of 2 ladies and forced him to resolve the matter.

I was born 11 years after my parents married. Relatives ridiculed my mother for being childless, but my father was never concerned. He knew he had children in his chart. During an eclipse a couple of years before my birth, he meditated at a Rama temple, prayed for a dhaarmik son with devotion to God and wrote down the names of 3 children - one son, one daughter and one son. We were born in the same order and he gave the same names (with a minor change with the daughter).

Though very learned, he was essentially a simple person who followed his heart and did not care about societal conventions and formalities.

When I was doing masters in US, he received charts of a couple of girls for me. He particularly liked one chart, thought she was highly saattwik and prayed that she should be my wife (she is. BTW, those who know Padmaja may wonder why my father thought she was "highly saattwik". To my father, saattwik did not mean gentle or artificially sweet. Even an aggressive or fierce person can be saattwik!).

One fine afternoon, he suddenly felt it was the perfect muhurta to see the girl. Without informing her family, he just walked to their house (just a few houses away from ours). My wife's parents were out of town and only her grandmother was home. My wife was in a night dress and tutoring some engineering students. He barged in and talked to (interviewed) her. He did not care about what they'd think or various standard formalities related to seeing a girl for a match. He talked to her, asked various weird questions and confirmed the nature and temperament he saw in the chart. When she sang a devotional sang, he corrected grammatical errors in the text. But he enjoyed it so much that he regularly talked about it till a few weeks before he left!

He was straight-forward and guileless. When it was decided that I was not coming to India for wedding, he returned the photos and told my wife's parents "your daughter will definitely get married by the end of Sravana month this year. So start seeing other matches". They were not

looking for any matches and were perplexed by the unsolicited prediction. In the end, I ended up coming back and we got married on Sraavana Pournima!

In Sept 2014, I decided to go to India for 3 weeks in Dec 2014 (after 6.5 years!) and spend all that time with my father. I told him, "I'll stay in Hyderabad if you want me to. I'll come to Machilipatnam (native town) and stay there if you want me to. I'll accompany you on any pilgrimage if you want me to. YOU decide how we should spend the time." He decided that we will travel. I asked him to fix a schedule.

He asked for 10 days to decide that and, without telling me, went to all those places once again (he had been there before!). He said he did it to ensure that those places were still fine after the Uttarakhand floods and good enough for my visit!

As I knew he was much weaker than before, I was concerned if I was unnecessarily tempting him to do something that could take a physical toll on him. But he did a dry run even before I went! His resilience and consideration for my [perceived] convenience were just amazing and touching.

Then we bought the tickets. He wanted to travel by second class trains and that is what we did.

During the pilgrimage, I once told him "why do you keep talking about children and grand children so much? Time has come to stop thinking about all of us and focus the mind on God and God alone. The last thought is crucial for deciding the next life and it better be on God." He dismissively laughed and said, "My mother Mahalakshmi will take care of me". But, when he went back, he remembered my words and mentioned them to a sishya.

He passed away in May 2015.

He used to compose free-style (i.e. un-metered) poetry in Sanskrit everyday. It would talk about us (his children and grandchildren) and yet apply to Gods. For example, he would write "padmajA ramaNa veMkaTa rAma narasiMha prappanosmyaham". It can mean "I seek Venkata Rama Narasimha (my name), husband of Padmaja (my wife)" or also "I seek the lord of Lakshmi, who is also Venkateswara, Rama and Narasimha".

Of course, a true bhakta may seem to be engaged and attached to various people and things till the last minute, but still mind may be focused on God. God's ways are strange and He is the giver of bondage as well as freedom in the end! It takes an attosecond for God to free you.

My father told my niece many years back that he would not cross 82 years of age (would've done on 2015 July 15).

He marked the dates of his death, cremation and asthi sanchaya in his panchanga before his death. He gave several subtle indications to people around him in the weeks before leaving.

He always ate simple food cooked by himself and did not need look for any special treats. A few days before his death, he asked one of his sishyas to make pakodies for him and bring, in a totally unusual request. That person took bath and made pakodies/pakorras with "maDi" (external purity) and took them to my father. My father was very pleased and told my mother about it on the phone.

When his brother living in the same town visited him 2 days in a row, he asked, "why did you come again today? Do you want to check if I am alive? I am still alive."

He told a sishya when returning from Tirumala a few weeks before death that he came to this world naked and would leave naked.

He left body while sitting in his father's old chair without clothes. He was alone in the house at that time, by his choice. He kept the back door of the house open (so that people could come in without breaking doors) and laid out some locks and keys on a table nearby. There were some blood drops from ears and nose and a crack at the top of his head, which is a sign of life force leaving through brahma randhra.

In happiness or in sadness or in anger, he was like a child, especially towards the end of his life. Being a worshipper of Lord Narasimha, he did exhibit short temper in some situations. But he was always guileless and there was no "filter" in his brain that made calculations and changed his words and behavior based on the situation.

He highly minimized his needs and gave much more than he received. He led a very simple and austere life. He never spoke a lie. He did not fear anybody or anything or any situation and said what he believed was Satya and did what he believed was Dharma.

He felt happiness, sadness and anger in several situations and expressed them without holding himself back or putting on a "mask" for the world. But, he was completely devoted to his mother Mahalakshmi and was supremely confident that She would take care of him in the end. Even a couple of days before he left, he talked to a sishya in detail about how Mahalakshmi controls everything in this universe and how even Neela Shakti is an aspect of Mahalakshmi!

[Manish](#), who met my father in 2006 during Shata Chandi Homa in Chennai (where the seeds for the "Do Homa Yourself" movement were sown), said in his first words to me after the news: "It is the end of an era."

He belongs to a very rare class of bhaktas and yogis and Mother Mahalakshmi must indeed have taken care of him.



Jatala Sadhu

6 Jan 2015



On my India trip in Dec 2014, I visited Simhachalam. I had the fortune of visiting the ashram of Sri Rama Viswambharadas, popularly known as "Gayatri Baba" or "Jatala Sadhu" (<http://www.jatalasadhu.org>). He did sadhana at Simhachalam for more than 100 years of his 400+ year lifespan. He was a Savitru Gayatri worshipper and used to do Gayatri homa everyday. He was the person referred to as Aghori Vimalananda's "Junior Guru Maharaj" in the "Aghora" series of books.

When doing homa in front of the cave where he did his sadhana for decades, I got this sanguine feeling that he is behind the "do homa yourself" movement that we started in 2006 by publishing homa manuals, that he will

ensure that it takes the right leaps at the right times and that millions of people will benefit from it after a century, transforming the planet.

Ram ji was a worshipper of Sun (fire!) and did Gayatri homa (fire!) everyday at a kshetra of Narasimha (fire!). One of his missions is to re-popularize fire ritual as a daily sadhana. So he planted the thought in Sri Vimalananda ji's mind. Vimalananda ji mentioned in the Aghora series books that daily homa will one day be done in every corner of every city and that his

children will popularize it. That may have inspired my guru Dr Manish Pandit, who may see himself as a child of Vimalananda ji.

Many people (including me) may think that they are doing some important part of this work, but I got a clear feeling that it is all the work of Sri Rama Viswambharadas and we are all mere instruments. With the direction and enthusiasm I got, I am going to reorganize the manuals and also add several more deities, over the next few years.

Those who have never tried it, please consider visiting <http://www.VedicAstrologer.org/homa> and see if any manuals are interesting. Fire ritual is the chosen sadhana of rishis. Veda starts with a prayer to Agni. Agni is the original priest of Veda. Worshipping the divine in Fire was a sadhana practiced by many religions and cultures in the past! Millions will again do it daily in the coming centuries.

If I may, one small word though. As you do daily/weekly homa and enjoy it, do not direct any praise and gratitude towards me or my guru Dr Manish Pandit or other gurus in the parampara such as Sri Tembe Swami and Sri Gulwani Maharaj or other gurus who inspired such as Sri Vimalananda and Sri Rama Viswambharadas. Spreading the tradition of regular fire worship needs no heroes - Agni is the original priest and the original hero. Just direct your praise and gratitude towards Agni and cultivate a relationship with Agni.

Let us merely be the ones who introduce Agni to you and let *Agni* be the hero, priest and guru. Most institutions that place individuals on a high pedestal fall by the wayside in the long run, no matter how great those individuals were. The purpose of homa movement is neither to build an institution nor to place anybody on a high pedestal. We just want to enable many sadhakas who form a relationship with Agni and benefit from Him.



Yogananda Lakshmi Narasimham

5 May 2018

I want to write a few words about a great and inspiring personality I remembered this morning, who in a way enabled my works in astrology and spirituality.

There was a Sanskrit teacher called Yogananda Lakshmi Narasimham in my hometown, whom we fondly called Yoganandam master or KYLN master. Outside of his regular job at a school, he rode a bicycle to many parts of the town every morning and evening to conduct free Sanskrit classes at various schools. Some just learned for the regular courses at school and some prepared for special exams conducted by "Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan".

In the winter of my 4th grade, he started early morning classes at my school also. I stopped attending his class after a few days, as my father did not want me to get up so early and ruin my health. 😊 But I loved Sanskrit and, as suggested by my father, continued self-study (helped by my mother Rama Syamala) and appeared for the exams.

Yoganandam master was not at all disappointed that I stopped attending his class. Like with any genuine and selfless giver, there was no attachment or possessiveness in his giving!! He encouraged me to study and appear for the exams. After a couple of years, I had the "Sanskrita Bhasha Kovida" diploma, equivalent to a BA in Sanskrit.

I thoroughly enjoyed learning Sanskrit. It was very natural and felt like I knew it from before. That familiarity with Sanskrit developed at a young age is what really enabled me to interpret Jyotish classics independently or look at various homa procedures, distill the essence and create simple homa manuals. If anybody finds any of my spiritual writings insightful, that too was enabled by a deeper understanding of Sanskrit at a young age.

In fact, one without a deep understanding of Sanskrit is handicapped when it comes to understanding the teachings of rishis. Of course, if and when they choose to bless, one can overcome that handicap.

If anybody benefited from my astrology teachings or software or homa manuals or spiritual writings, a small part of that punya will go to Yoganandam master, because of his enabling role! And, I am not the only one he enabled. There must be good karmas by many others, in which he had an enabling role.

This is the "pay it forward" way of Sanatana Dharma. You do your dharma and enable others to do their dharma in the process. As time goes on, punya multiplies and you receive a lot of good karma.

The greed and selfishness we see these days in persons pursuing and teaching knowledge of rishis, is NOT the way of Sanatana Dharma.

Some love and respect me for giving my astrology software, teachings and homa manuals etc for free. However, to put things in perspective, I am materially blessed and earn well at a large US semiconductor company. My spending a little time and energy on free giving, is NOTHING compared to what Yoganandam master (and many like him in the 'old dharmik India') did!

He rode a bicycle to different corners of the town everyday, spent as much time (or more) in free classes as he did at his work. Though Sanskrit teachers at schools make very little money, he never wanted a paisa from students. Even when offered, he refused to take. On the contrary, he gave them gifts and sweets when they accomplished something. A large-hearted man who knew how to give!!

He was a jovial man, with a great sense of humor. I got to know him personally, when he spent a few days at our house. Against the wishes of elders, he married a girl of a different sect within Brahmanas. My father stood by them, helped with the marriage and they stayed at our house for a few days after wedding. He was a very jovial and easy-going man, and with various other normal human emotions.

Don't know which loka he is in - he passed away a few years back. But his memories can still inspire those who know him.

May there be more people like him, helping re-establish Sanatana Dharma in India and the world!

Om Tat Sat.



Sri M

10 Sep 2017

I attended a public satsang in Livingston, New Jersey yesterday evening. I immensely enjoyed the 2-hour freewheeling talk by Sri M, covering various aspects of spirituality.

Spiritual talks by modern gurus, swamis, bhagavans, paramahamsas and babas often disappoint me, for their superficial and/or half-baked understanding. But this man dressed in a simple pant and shirt with no religious paraphernalia, displayed perfect mastery of the nuances of various facets of Sanatana Dharma!

Yet, he simplified subtle concepts to make them accessible and relevant. He was witty, eloquent, down to earth and regaled us with nice stories. He was also brutally frank, without losing his balance or hurting anyone, when asked provocative questions.

It is such a pleasure to meet a genuine saint, who does not show off or engage in image/aura building, who is clearly at peace with himself and the world around him, who gives freely and who gives what is useful to others (as opposed to what one is obsessed with giving).

My favorite quote of the evening came when he was discussing self-realization and self-inquiry (aatma vichaar). He said, "self-realization is NOT projecting your own ideas of Self and then realizing them". He explained that self-inquiry starting with an imagined notions of Brahman is useless. He explained how it should start with accepting who one is, where one currently stands, what one wants and why. He made Shankara's "neti neti" approach very practical.

He also insisted there are no shortcuts for spiritual progress and one needs to work hard and be patient.

Sri M was born in a muslim family in Kerala state of India, spent years in Himalayas at a young age with his master from Nath tradition (Maheshwarnath Babaji), practiced Kriya yoga for years and then came back into regular material life. You can read more about him at:

<http://satsang-foundation.org/the-founder-sri-m/>

Apart from his clarity of understanding and simplicity of expression, I also liked him perhaps because of many references to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, M (the other M, who wrote "Gospel of Ramakrishna") and Swami Vivekananda. It seems like he loves Ramakrishna and so do I. I view the "Gospel of Ramakrishna" as a modern Upanishad, with a holistic and complete teaching for our age.

Thanks to the wonderful evening, several ideas that I had intellectually understood before but not yet internalized into my heart came a little closer to that..

[Added later]

Ajit Krishnan shared a link to the live streaming video of this satsang:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoL1zaYNth0>



Book of Practical Knowledge

Protecting environment is the HIGHEST dharma of our times and should be the main religion we adhere to!

- PVR Narasimha Rao (2021)

Annapurna and Bhoomi

22nd Feb 2017

Food is god and one should never waste food. This is especially true now-a-days, when global population is exploding, food production is saturating and wastage of food (raw and cooked) in modernized parts of the world is rising at an alarming rate.

On the other side of the coin, some people eat more than their bodies can handle, simply because they bought it or served it and don't want to throw it away and "waste" food. But then, there is no difference between throwing away food into a trash can or into a body that is better off without it!!! In both cases, food is NOT put to a proper use, i.e. it is "wasted"!

The latter is perhaps worse, for any food that is not fully and properly digested becomes toxins inside the body. After all, one's own body is the closest temple to one and overeating (however noble the justification may be) is akin to dumping toxic trash in that temple!!!

One should always try to reasonably estimate how much one can consume. One should accordingly buy, cook and serve only that much. If it reduces wastage overall, it is perhaps ok to err on the LOWER side, i.e. not have enough to eat on some days because one did not buy, cook or serve enough.

In places where it is easy to find people to give away unused food to (which may be the whole world in a few decades!), one should try to distribute unused food to those who can put it to good use.

It is not very easy to balance the dharma towards oneself, people around one and society at large. Blind thumb rules can fail one. One requires some application of intelligence and, more importantly, some STRICT DISCIPLINE.



I have seen mothers fussing over and force feeding children a mound of heavy food that is supposed to keep them healthy.

[PVR] I've seen it too. People are more obsessed with dumping food in the body and pay less attention to what it does to the body (and mind).

Too much and too little of anything is not good. One needs to strike balance.



Advice for parents

17 March 2019

I routinely hear complaints from parents upset about their teenage child turning to atheism or agnosticism. I often advise them to relax and take it easy!

It is very normal, and healthy, for young people to be rebellious and be skeptical about things they are told to just believe. Moreover, it is more important to behave well in the world created by God, than to believe in God with a specific name or form or faith structure. After all, it is less important to know or believe in theories about how heart works, than to eat food that is healthy for heart!

In my own case, I had atheistic tendencies during my BTech at IIT, Madras. Though I was religious in childhood, mainstream notions of God no longer made no sense to me when I was 17 and developed over-confidence in my intellect and judgment. However, I came around after wandering for a while. And that phase did not harm me, but actually made me stronger!

Even great Swami Vivekananda questioned popular concepts of God and religion, until Ramakrishna answered all his questions satisfactorily. Sri Aurobindo was brought up in UK with no exposure to Hinduism, but the seeds of Vedic wisdom present within him sprouted once he returned to India from UK in his twenties.

Do not overly worry if your child questions your religious beliefs and/or practices. If the seeds are there, they will sprout at the right time. It is ok if they downplay religion and spirituality. Let them focus on their studies, career etc.

First, you should have faith in God that your child will be taken care of! Second, you should have faith that you brought them up well and planted the right seeds that will not go waste. It is just a matter of time.

One more important point: Sanatana Dharma describes multiple paths to God and atheism is actually one of them!!!

Swami Vivekananda wrote in "Raja Yoga", one of his best works: "If there is a God we must see Him, if there is a soul we must perceive it; otherwise it is better not to believe. It is better to be an outspoken atheist than a hypocrite."

In Sanatana Dharma, it is important to be selfless and fair to others around one, than to follow a set of rules or believe in God with a certain name or form or set of rules.

God does NOT hold it against you if you do not follow a set of rules or even question His/Her very existence!!

God is just a grand witness to all that you do to others in the world and an enforcer of the Kaarmik rules of fairness ("what you do to someone else shall be done back to you by someone else").

In addition, God also gives breaks to a few selected ones who are in a position to help others and serve an important purpose in the world. But again, that is not based on whether one believes in an intangible God, praises that God or follows a set of rigid religious rules. Instead, it is based on how one treats others around one (who are the *tangible* manifestations of God!!!).

So, it is far more important to be fair to others and help others to the extent possible, even while taking care of one's own needs and interests.

If you boil down religion to being fair and responsible, youngsters with intellectual discrimination are more likely to get it. And, that is what really matters!

Above it, when/if destined, they may even embrace formal religion and/or spiritual practices. Have faith, be patient and follow a positive and productive strategy, instead of fighting an unproductive battle, putting counter-productive pressure on them and emotionally suffering yourself.

Each soul has its own kaarmik momentum and from it arise its relationship with God and its evolution.

While a parent has some initial role in shaping those, it will be counter-productive to over-estimate one's own responsibility, and more importantly ability, to do so.

Do what is in your hand and leave the rest to God! In the end, God is in charge for all of us. We can only play our *limited* roles to the best of our ability and have faith in God to do the rest!!!



Adversity is the greatest teacher!

26 August 2019

I was sick with body aches and pre-fever and pre-cold conditions when I woke up yesterday (feeling much better today though). I realized yesterday how difficult it is to FOCUS mind during meditation under such conditions!!!

This is why it is important to do sadhana with good focus when we are well. If we wait till troubles strike, we will not be able to do much sadhana.

Also, people (and even we) may think (and say) all kind of amazing things about us, but our real mettle gets revealed when we are under great adversity and pain. Adversity is a true reality check!



Guruji, you were generous in letting people touch your feet and left the consequence to mother to decide on what happens thereafter; I felt it could be the reason, not sure though !

[PVR]

A learned man told me the same thing; so you may be right.

Surrendering to Lord and seeing him as the doer and experiencer through all of us is the ultimate thing in sadhana. But we have to be in it wholly and it's not easy. When it is selective and for convenience, we'll not pass His testing!!



Negative energy from Idol at home

5th Jan 2014

Reply to a question in vedic-wisdom yahoo group⁵ on whether negative energy comes into the house if one has a shiva linga (or an idol) at home and does no pooja to it and whether one should get rid of it in that case:

There is so much pride and fear in religious adherence of this age!

This is kind of like saying, "if you have a piggy bank at your home and don't put money in it every month", your finances will be spoiled. Well, probably my finances ARE spoiled if I am not putting money in the piggy bank. 😊:-) But not putting money in piggy bank itself will not cause any problems.

Shiva lingas, idols etc are just like piggy banks that store money. Originally they are just stone/metal/glass/whatever. There is god in them, in the sense that there is god everywhere. There is no special/concentrated divine presence. As people reverently imagine divine presence in them regularly, slowly a real divine presence is formed and grown in them. Over time, a considerable divine presence is formed, which can actually help one in a time of spiritual need. This is just like how a piggy bank is empty in the beginning and slowly each cent and dime and quarter adds up and there is a decent amount of money that can help one in a time of financial need.

Just as one may experience some temporary physical disturbance if one stops doing a physical exercise that one does regularly, similarly one may experience some temporary spiritual disturbance if one stops doing a spiritual exercise (sadhana) that one does regularly. But that is internal. There is no need to fear any "negative energy" coming from the shiva linga into the house (just as no negative energy comes from a treadmill into the house if one stops walking on it everyday).

Of course, you can just pour a few drops of water on Shiva Linga while saying "OM namaH shivaaya". It should not take much time. Pooja need not be this long or that long or have this step or that step.

Having said that, I'll repeat my usual disclaimer in these matters. If one indeed feels some fear or guilt in not doing any pooja to a shiva linga or an idol, that is enough to cause problems. Shame, guilt etc affect one internally and that effect sometimes spills externally. In such a case, better follow the "rules" one fears. Most rules can be dropped as one overcomes fear/shame/guilt associated with them and one understands the original purpose and essence of the rules and feel genuinely comfortable breaking their superficial parts.

⁵ Yahoo-group is no longer available. One can download a compilation his responses in the forum from https://vedicastrologer.org/articles/vedic_wisdom_1.pdf



[PVR] Yes, the shape of the wire does affect the field created when it conducts electricity. But until you connect it to a battery or some electric source (of sufficient power), it has no field. Similarly, different objects have different ability of holding divine energy (after all, some of us who do a daily homa know that fire holds a tremendous ability - better than any idol or chakra - to concentrate and hold divine energy!).

That way, a Shiva Linga is not the same as a coin or a table or any object. I never intended to imply that. But my main point was that YOU slowly charge that object (whatever it is) with divine energy by imagining god in it everyday.

[PVR] Shiva has several forms - ranging from extremely fierce to very benign/kind to stoic/dispassionate. Even Kali has several forms.

It all depends on how you visualize the deity in your mind - either consciously or otherwise! When you meditate/pray, your conscious and subconscious thoughts dig up some aspect of cosmic consciousness that lay buried within your consciousness to the surface and vibrations of that aspect affect you and also resonate in the object you focus on (idol/linga/fire).



Pronunciation

24th Oct 2015

In Kali yuga, every practice and convention is corrupted. But, there are enough clues to correlate and derive Truth.

Some Tantrikas use beejaksharas ending with "ng" instead of "m" in mantras and insist that that is the correct way (e.g. "hreeng", "aing" instead of "hreem", "aim").

Compare it with how Veda mantras use "(g)m" before y, r, l, v, sh, shh, s, h and vowels. For example, it is "si(g)mha" and not "simha" or "sinha" in Veda mantras. Even in long Gayatri mantra, we say "om bhuh om bhuvah o(g)m suvah".

Also, compare it with how people in some regions say "singha" instead of "simha" or "sinha".

These conventions may have arisen from the same principle. The nasal "m" is pronounced from lips (just like, p, ph, b and bh). The nasal "n" is pronounced from teeth (just like t, th, d, dh). The sounds k, kh, g, gh and the nasal that comes before them are pronounced at the back of mouth.

The sounds y, r, l, v, sh, shh, s, h and vowels are also pronounced from the back of the mouth rather than lips or teeth. So, in order to pronounce those sounds without a break after a nasal, that nasal has to be close to the nasal that comes before k and g.

Though many Veda panditas pronounce the "(g)m" sound in Veda mantras "gum" or "gam", I reckon that there should not be any explicit g sound or vowel and it should be close to how we pronounce "n" in "king" or "monk".

Though some Tantraikas use "ng" in every beeja, I reckon that it should be based on the next letter in the mantra and also "g" should not be explicit, i.e. like "n" in "king" or "monk".

Suppose a vowel or y, r, l, v, sh, shh, s or h comes immediately after a beeja in a mantra. Then replace "m" at the end of that beeja with "ng", with g being silect.

Take a hypothetical mantra "om hreem shreemaatre namah". Instead try "ong hreeng shreemaatre namah", with g being silect.

In other words, start to pronounce "ong" and stop just before g sounds starts. Then, without a break, start to pronounce "hreeng" and stop just before g sounds starts. Then, without a break, say "shreemaatre".

If you try the standard version and this version for a while, you will know if there is a difference! While I always maintain technicalities are a small factor in reaching the divine and devotion is more important, technicalities have a role too. Different sounds and images work differently on

mind. Though the end destination of all journeys is the same, what one encounters on the way depends on the path chosen.

There is infinite variety to be experienced on the way to undifferentiated divinity. There are many clues and categorizations left for us by sages and evolved seekers before us.



Meditation during an eclipse

26 Sep 2015

Meditation during an eclipse is extremely powerful for spiritual progress.

There is total lunar eclipse on Sunday night (Sep 27) from 9:07 pm to 12:27 am (Boston time). Particularly, 10:11-11:23 pm is the total eclipse time. If you live elsewhere, convert the timezone. Boston timezone is 4 hrs west of GMT.

Moon and Sun represent mind and soul. One's mind and soul resonate to external Moon and Sun, though the exact nature and magnitude of that resonance varies from person to person. That is why some people's moods are correlated to lunar phase.

Rahu and Ketu are the points where Moon's orbit around earth intersects earth's orbit around Sun. When Sun, Moon, Rahu and Ketu line up, then earth, Moon and Sun line up. This is conducive to either channeling the mind and deriving strength from soul or just silencing mind completely.

Whether one wants spiritual progress or fulfill some material desires, meditation during eclipse is very powerful. Some shastras say that meditation during eclipse is 1000 times more powerful than at regular times. No wonder because eclipse time is conducive to mind aligning with soul and that is after all the key to success in meditation!

In tradition, worship during eclipse is forbidden and all temples remain closed during eclipses. One reason is to ensure that particularly potent times are not misused.

The other reason is that Sun and Moon are the keepers of order and dharma. When they are over-powered by the spirit to bend rules and achieve what one wants (Rahu) OR the spirit of total detachment and not distinguishing between any actions or fruits (Ketu), it is not conducive to orderly religious activities.

While such times are good for focusing the mind and achieving something material or increasing detachment, they are not good for regular orderly religious activities.

So, consider postponing/preponing any rituals you do, such as Satya Narayana vrata, Sri Chakra pooja, Sri Meru pooja, shodasopachara pooja to an idol/kalasha etc.

But feel free to do a homa or, even better, a japa. Any mantra is fine, but mantras of Ugra devatas are particularly better.

My late father believed that meditating during an eclipse and explicitly writing down a wish on paper results in it being fulfilled.

I was born 10 years after my parents were married, which was unusual in those days. Relatives ridiculed my mother for being childless, but my father was always confident.

On an eclipse day, he meditated at Bhadradri Rama temple and prayed to Lord Rama for a spiritual and devoted son. On a paper, he wrote down the names of 3 children he should beget. We were born in the same order and I was born the next year.

On 1995 April 15, I watched a lunar eclipse from window in a South Korea apartment and meditated for a couple of hours. I wrote down a wish to get a child with a specific horoscope. In February 1996, my daughter Sriharini was born with exactly the same horoscope, including Moonsign and lagna!

Of course, I had some idea where Jupiter, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu would be next year, but did not look at panchanga for other planets and plan a particular date. I just asked for a horoscope and got it exactly. She was born in Virgo lagna, with Jupiter in moolatrikona in 4th and Venus in exaltation in 7th and all planets (except nodes) lying between those 2 Mahapurusha yoga giving planets. She was also born after exactly 108 Fridays of chanting Lakshmi's 108 names 108 times every Friday.

I tried the same thing 2 more times and the wishes happened then too. However, I changed later and stopped asking for anything - big or small - when I prayed or meditated. There was only one exception, when I was specifically asked by my guru to do a series of Chandi homas with a specific geo-political sankalpa.

If there is a wish in mind and it is reasonably dharmik, it is not a bad idea to ask and get it fulfilled. There is no use in having a desire and pretending to be desire-less. But, even as one fulfills desires, one should attempt to overcome desires. Suppression works only in the short term. Overcoming is the key thing.

So one can just meditate without a sankalpa also. Focus the mind on the sound of the mantra or the form of a deity (or whatever is natural for you) and try to forget the surroundings, the body and other regular pre-occupations of the mind. The chance of success in forgetting other things and achieving "union" (yoga) with Mantra is maximum during an eclipse.

Hope some of you take advantage of this total lunar eclipse.



Out-sourcing Poojas vs Doing by Oneself

23 Aug 2015

For dharma shastra guidance in different yugas, there are different authorities. Manu was the authority in Satya yuga. Gautama was the authority in Treta yuga. For the current Kali yuga, Parasara is the main authority.

As per "Parasara Madhaveeyam", a pooja or a homa or any ritual performed BY ONESELF is 1,000,000 times more powerful than one performed in one's name by a priest!

This is what it says: Compared to a ritual performed in one's name by a priest, a ritual performed in one's name by one's own disciple is 100 times more powerful. Compared to that, a ritual performed in one's name by one's own progeny is 100 times more powerful. Compared to that, a ritual performed by oneself is 100 times more powerful.

The bottomline is that one is on one's own as Kali deepens and priests will be limited in their ability to give a material and spiritual uplift to others. Such priests are rare and one is better off doing some sadhana by oneself rather than depending on others.

The reason priest, shishya, progeny and oneself are mentioned in increasing order of effectiveness has to do with attachment and the ability to empathize with one. In general, a son may be able to empathize with his father and pray from his heart for father more than a priest can.

However, subjective factors cannot be ignored. For example, if an estranged son hates father, a more attached shishya or even an outside priest may be more effective. The formulas given in shastra are for general guidelines and apply in a typical case. There will always be exceptions.

Unfortunately, people are scared to do poojas by themselves. They are scared that they will make a mistake and something bad will happen.

If one is doing a ritual for a selfish and dangerous goal such as killing someone, controlling someone, creating hatred among 2 people etc, one indeed needs to be scared.

If one is doing a ritual for the well-being of oneself and family, i.e. for one's basic dharma, then there is no reason to be scared. Moreover, God is not an angry boss who is looking to find faults and punish you. He is a loving father, who wants your good. If only you show some signs of responsibility, he is eager to do you much good! Even when he punishes you, it is to teach you something valuable. He is like a loving, and yet strict, father waiting for son to grow up, become responsible and establish oneself.

In any case, even if a priest does a ritual for you, don't assume that he will do a perfect job. Many priests also don't know the real purpose of various steps and end up sticking to many inconsequential details while compromising what matters. It is very common to stick to the letter while breaking the spirit. Also, bhava (feeling) is missing in many rituals.

Compared to a long and elaborate ritual with many technicalities strictly followed, but without much feeling, one is better off performing a simple ritual with much feeling.

Of course, if we say "just pray from heart", it becomes too open and possibly chaotic. Rules are there to enforce discipline and provide some structure. But, if there are too many rules, the same thing that is intended to provide structure to the ritual can become constricting and suffocating. The suffocation may eliminate all feeling from the ritual.

Based on one's desa-kala-patra, one has to find the right balance between rules (Pingala, solar channel) and emotion (Ida, lunar channel). One should follow some rules that provide a structure without suffocating one and allow one to add emotion to the ritual. Then one can make a connection.

Some astrologers and priests are good at scaring customers into submission and exploiting their vulnerability for their profits. They tell that terrible things will happen unless a specific ritual is done. I will later give an example, where they shamelessly tried to exploit a really wise and pious man who himself selflessly guides others!

Though it takes some courage and conviction, one is better off ignoring such money-minded astrologers and priests.

In their next life, such astrologers and priests will themselves be born with many troubles and run after astrologers and priests to solve their problems..

Now the story I referred to above:

A gentleman I know teaches poojas to people freely and organizes mass homas where hundreds and sometimes thousands of people do homa together, guided by him. He gave some discourses on TV and was appointed as the next head at a peetha.

Now he lives in India, but he was living in US several years back. During one of his India visits, he called me to discuss an urgent matter.

He showed his daughter's chart to an astrologer in the eastern part of AP state, who told him that his daughter has "Maha Karkotaka Kala Sarpa Dosha" and Rahu homa has to be done immediately.

This gentleman asked, "is it with the 'kayaanaschitra aabhuvu' mantra of Rahu? How many times? I can do it."

The astrologer immediately shot back, "no no no. Only my sishya has to do it. Then only it will work" and demanded a lot of money. He threatened that her life will be in ruins soon if it is not done.

Though a very learned man, he was quite worried and immediately called me!

I saw the chart and clarified that the astrologer is just exploiting. First of all, Kala Sarpa Yoga is not mentioned by rishis. Secondly, it is not the deadly yoga it is made out to be. After all, "Maha Karkotaka" adjective was thrown in to just make it sound deadlier!

Third, there are 2 variations based on whether Rahu is ahead or Ketu - Kala Sarpa Yoga (KSY) and Kala Amrita Yoga (KAY).

His daughter actually had KAY! Starting in mid-40s, life will transform, she will become more spiritual and fulfill the purpose of life! And this astrologer was trying to scare them and make a lot of money.. 😞:-(

Of course, doing a homa to Rahu is a good thing nonetheless. But he can definitely do it himself. Moreover, it is more likely to work then. Due to his attachment to his daughter, there will be more feeling in his homa than that by that money-minded priest/astrologer.

He was seriously worried and considered paying them as demanded! After talking to me, he was relieved and dropped the idea.

If a wise and spiritual man who shows spiritual path to thousands can be scared by a businessman exploiting Jyotish and rituals, imagine how a layman would react!

Astrologers and ritualists who sell services and scare people are better ignored. It is better to not even consult such commercial people.

Pick some ritual or sadhana (pooja to an idol, pooja to a kalasha, homa, chanting of a mantra, singing bhajans, singing and dancing, silent meditation with a mantra, silent meditation without any mantra, etc) and do it, whether for yourself or someone you are attached to. Try to create a structure for the sadhana, which allows you to infuse some feeling.

Balance between the need for a structure and the flexibility needed for infusing feelings. Do not go to one extreme. That will be a trap.



I have one question about this. I agree when it comes to personal sadhana, puja done by oneself is optimal. But what if, like in Satyanarayana Vrata, one is doing it for a group of people? I know my Sanskrit uccharan is incorrect. If the puja is to be performed for a group of people, is it not better to have it done correctly and properly by a purohit rather than by an individual (like me) who may have good intentions but will get some of the steps / mantras technically wrong?

[PVR] doing sadhana for oneself is one thing and doing a pooja for others is another. Of course, even in the latter, one needs to strike a balance between structure and emotion. However, you need to take into consideration their expectations and comfort. If they think some mistakes are happening and start to feel nervous, it will mess up their thoughts and bhava. Unless you know them well and all are of the same wavelength, you should think twice.

Secondly, even when a priest is engaged, you can still be *mentally* fully involved in the ritual and then Parasara's 1,000,000x formula applies. In other words, even if priest is doing the ritual, it can become equivalent to a ritual done by oneself, IF one is actively participating and with right bhava!!!

Suppose I am doing a pooja with perfect pronunciation, mudras and other technicalities, but devoid of bhava. Suppose someone observing me uses my pooja as a template and visualizes that he is serving the lord with various upacharas and has the right bhava. It may work far better for that person than me!!!

Dharma is quite subtle.



Uninvited Guests

25 July 2015

<<name deleted>> asked in a different thread: "Are there any dangers from doing a homa yourself, for example, inadvertently inviting unwelcome entities (instead of just the deity you are doing the homa for) into your home?"

My Answer: Whether we are aware or not, we are always under the influence of various physical and non-physical beings with various agendas.

This is true irrespective of whether one is worshipping an idol or just meditating or just sitting and doing nothing!!!

There are always various vibrations in cosmic consciousness that surround one and exert influence.

But, the beauty of homa is that Fire has a very unique and powerful vibration that will filter and modulate all those influences!!!

That is why Fire is considered the original Priest and foremost Guru in Veda.

That is also why the divine was worshiped in Fire by countless civilizations - Hindus, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Pagans, early Christians, Jews, Incans, American Indians, and so on.

Through experience, many ancient civilizations discovered the efficacy of Fire in blocking problematic vibrations and connecting with the Divine and tapping the Divine within.



On Death

30 May 2015

Many of you expressed condolences and I appreciate it.

Death is nothing to fear, though the instinct to preserve body is the most deeply ingrained one in us. As Gita teaches, soul leaving one body and entering another is like removing torn clothes and wearing new ones.

I am reminded of when my father called me one evening a few years back after an interesting event.

It was 2-3 am in India then. He was alone at home. He felt extremely weak and felt like life force was withdrawing from him. Astrologically also, he thought gochara was bad and there was a danger to life (BTW, he is extremely strong mentally and tolerated major crises in his life. For example, an auto crushes his toes once and he walked 2 miles with a lot of blood coming out his toes to find an ayurvedic store to treat himself!).

When alone and facing a crisis, most people would've panicked, called a doctor or at least called someone. My father just lied down on the floor and started mentally chanting various storas. His thinking was "if I go now, let me go in peace thinking of God and not in panic". If he left the body and people did not find the lifeless body for a while, it meant nothing to him. He did not make any effort to inform anyone and just focused his mind on stotras and leaving in peace.

After an hour, he felt better and got the sense that the danger had passed. Then he got up, had some water, made some ayurvedic medicines, had them and called me to report it. He told me not to tell my mother, sister etc, because they would be worried for him and think twice before leaving him alone (and he loved being alone). He said I was an astrologer and so the data of a close brush with death could be useful in my researches.

THIS is the right attitude when it comes to death. All of us have to go, some day or the other! Live and enjoy the life, give what you can to others and take what others have to give you, enjoy every experience and action, but be prepared to go **ANY** time. When death comes, go in peace and not in panic or in regret. That can come if one has **FULL** confidence that death is not "the end" but only an "interval"!

As long as there is a desire to experience the world or perform actions in it, one **WILL** be reborn again and the drama **WILL** continue, albeit on a different stage in a different town amid different actors and audience!

We never want to lose the company of people near and dear to us. But God knows better, knows how to balance the desires of all people in the world and makes a master plan. We have to accept God's plan when someone leaves us and move on with our lives.

Let me give a metaphor.

We may enjoy the company of some co-passengers in a long train journey. If one of them gets off at a station, we may start worrying what happened to him. The person may have waited a bit, got on another train and started enjoying the company of new co-passengers in that train. But we may be stuck wondering what happened to him and if he is ok. Such worrying is pointless.

Don't get me wrong. There is nothing wrong in remembering the times we spent with that person and being joyous and grateful. There is nothing wrong in hoping or even praying that he is ok and found his next train smoothly. But it is useless to keep worrying about him at the cost of not enjoying the remaining journey!

This is a lesson that those who lost a near one should try to learn quickly.

My father had a great level of vaagbala that came from never consciously speaking a lie. Very specific things he said, sometimes without any astrological reasoning, came true. Of course, he would do his prayers for hours sometimes.

He was a courageous, sometimes stubborn and highly dharmik man who felt free to break any conventions that he found nonsensical. He lived life on his terms and always did what he thought was dharmik. He never wore a 'mask' and spoke his mind freely. I may write about some incidents from his life later on.

My brother did the dahana samskara. I was on a business trip in California without my passport when I got the news. I am leaving for India tonight with my wife, for the rest of rites and to support my family. I'll be offline for the next 2 weeks.



Resuming rituals after death of close one

2 July 2015



Missed last month's Full Moon as I was in India for my late father's rites. I did it mentally on the day. I had also done a short procedure in fire a few days earlier, i.e. made offerings to all parivara devatas and to the Lord, as an addendum to daily homa. I had done it just in case I'd have an issue during the vrata on upcoming Full Moon night.

Today, I am about to start in a short while. It is nice to do it again in the regular manner!

BTW, some people hold that rituals like Satya Narayana vrata cannot be done for up to 1 year after father passes away. I respect their view (and those who are swayed by them may kindly follow them).

But I personally believe firmly that spiritual sadhana done without specific personal desires and meant just for increasing Dharma in the world can and must go on, as long as one feels comfortable and happy doing it. My daily homa and monthly Satya Narayana vrata are done without a personal sankalpa and just for the pleasure of the respective deities and as my dharma towards the world.

After my father left, I did not stop eating food or breathing air. If I can continue with my dharma towards this insignificant physical body, I can surely continue with my dharma towards the world!

Dharma is sookshma. Some broad rules set in one desa-kala-patra may not apply to a different desa-kala-patra. Following one's dharma correctly requires subtle judgment, made by one's guru or oneself.

May the unborn and indestructible seat of Absolute Truth that resides in all of our hearts fill our entire being and break the 8 bondages that tie us! Jaya Satya Deva!



As per the information with me is any thing done by kartha (son) in the year will go to the pass away person just like donation given in 12th day

[PVR] Good point! Apart from health and wealth, the real issue is that of spiritual energy. It can take a lot of spiritual energy to help a soul cross over to the higher realms (and it is in fact the spiritual energy that does the job and rituals are just a channel to harness it and express it!).

In order to avoid dispersion of spiritual energy, tradition asks one to focus single-pointedly on making the deceased parent cross over.

However, "one size fits all" approach can never be perfect. Just as our journeys when embodied on earth are significantly different, our journeys after leaving body **MUST** also be significantly different.

One person may reach a higher realm immediately and another person may need much help.

Also, one person may need to focus on one thing to do it well and another person may be able to do 10 things simultaneously and still well.

Normally we will not be in a mood to celebrate any festivals either as you will be remembering your father at each moment

[PVR] If the logic is that one should not do vratas when one is sad, there are so many other things that make one very sad.

Moreover, one can argue that that spiritual sadhana calms one's agitated/sad mind and in fact needed much more when one is agitated/sad!



Approach to Guru

19th March 2016

On the 2 paths related to whether one should have blind faith in guru or maintain some skepticism and independent thinking:

(1) Path where Ida dominates:

If one is capable of maintaining absolute faith and surrender to guru, no matter what circumstances may arise in future, then God and Sadguru manifests through that faith and guides one. Even while following a possibly unrealized (or even fake) guru, one can become realized oneself.

After all, an innocent and faithful child is never abandoned by parents. Even if the child is being looked after by a corrupt servant while parents are away, parents have enough control over the servant to ensure that the child is safe and well. One just needs to become that innocent and faithful child!

However, it is a tough path. Some challenging circumstances may arise that make it difficult to keep one's faith. If one's faith breaks, one becomes disillusioned and can get lost.

(2) Path where Pingala dominates:

One follows guru, but retains skepticism and has faith in one's own judgment.

But this path is also difficult, for one's judgment may not be perfect and one may not be 100% honest intellectually, especially when analyzing and judging one's own hidden motivations in various matters.

After all, the main purpose served by an external guru is to throw light on one's blind spots, steer one clear of the dark alleys that one's vasanas and hidden agendas tend to lead one to!

The internal guru (conscience!) can also serve that purpose, but it is not strong enough in most sadhakas. The voice of conscience is over-powered by the voice of conditioning (vasanas) in many. That is the whole reason you need an external guru.



How to recognise a Guru

2nd April 2017

Someone asked in a different thread how to recognize a "Realized Guru". I'll give my 2 cents on this.

First, short answer: (1) You can never recognize a realized person confidently. (2) Even if you do, it may not be of any use. (3) If a realized Guru is to guide you, HE will find you and guide you, irrespective of whether or not you recognize him! (4) Just make sure you benefit from whatever guidance is available to you right now. If you do, trust Nature to arrange for the next step!

Now the long answer.. 😊:-)

A realized person engages in spontaneous actions based on the momentum of prior karmas and views Lord as the doer of those actions and himself as a mere instrument. He (or she) has no agenda to steer his karmik path. His prior karmik momentum steers it for a while. As that momentum winds down, his karmik path is steered & carved more and more by Cosmic Rhythm (ritam).

In the case of normal people, individual agendas and conditioning compete with Cosmic Rhythm to steer and carve the karmik path and there is much friction. There are 2 voices within us - one of conditioning and one of conscience - always competing.

After one becomes realized and prior karmik momentum ceases, that friction disappears and one is more and more in tune with Cosmic Rhythm.

But you cannot recognize such a person from what he does. It is not actions that distinguish, but the attitude in them, specifically lack of sense of doership. We have to get inside someone's mind to judge it! It can never be confidently judged from external words and actions.

One likely quality is that there will be a sense of purpose behind actions and frivolous and egoistic actions and distractions are unlikely.

However, if prior momentum is still considerable, any action - even frivolous one - is possible (but it will be done without sense of doership and with surrender to Lord).

Even if prior momentum has ceased and one is completely guided by Cosmic Rhythm, the actions may not always seem purposeful to us. After all, Cosmic Rhythm works with a highly long-term agenda and may not make sense in short term!

A set of seemingly random, frivolous, mad or purposeless actions may serve a great purpose in long term!

Apart from actions being driven by a sense of purpose and inherent calm, another hallmark will be acceptance of karma phala. Whatever comes one's way, one accepts it calmly and without protesting.

Again, we are talking of mental acceptance here. One may externally act like one has accepted and is peaceful, but may be seething with anger or frustration within. Another may have accepted it completely within, but acting upset for some purpose (e.g. test someone or get rid of someone or impart a lesson).

Even if one successfully recognizes a Realized Guru and spends much time with him, it may not do anything.

If a budding cricketer or tennis player spends a lot of time with Sachin Tendulkar or Roger Federer, he may not become a better player himself. It is more useful to spend time with a good coach and master the basics, before one is able to observe nuances from a maestro and integrate them into one's game!

Similarly, an unprepared seeker will not get anything by running after a Realized Master. One is better off honing one's basic skills such as discipline, patience etc.

In any case, most people seeking a realized guru do so out of greed and impatience!

Instead of wasting time seeking a Realized Master, one is better off benefiting fully from whatever guidance is currently available to one, from a person or books or whatever.

When one has benefited from what Nature has given one, trust Nature to arrange for the next step!

Moreover, if a Realized Master is destined to guide you, trust him to find you himself and guide you! Sometimes, that may happen without you even knowing! There is no point searching everywhere for a Realized Master.

Irrespective of whether one's guru is realized or not, one can progress if one keeps faith in guru and serves selflessly. However, that faith should be unbreakable!

If one develops faith in a pretender, it may one day become very very difficult to sustain that faith!

If one's guru is scandalized and one's heart still has faith, one should of course ignore all scandals and stick to guru sincerely.

But, even after one's heart knows one erred in keeping faith in that guru, some try to pretend that they still have faith and prolong it. That often does not help - such pretended faith cannot be sustained for long. It is better to let it break earlier.

Someone said in the same thread, "have unquestionable faith in the saints". But, there are many saints and many many more pretend saints. It is neither necessary nor useful to "have unquestionable faith" in all of them.

More useful is to have faith in one (or few) that one has dedicated oneself to. Even more useful is to have faith in the voice of one's own conscience.

THAT is the representative of God within one; THAT is the real Guru within one; and, THAT is one's passport to Realization.

As one is more under tamas, that voice is not even heard. As one is more under rajas, that voice is heard feebly now and then. As one is under sattwa, that voice is clearer.

Learn to listen to the voice of conscience within you and you will cross the sea of world appearance.

Unfortunately, there are 2 voices within us - voice of conscience and voice of conditioning. Often the latter overpowers the former. But the great thing with the former is that it never gives up and keeps repeating itself.

If you go by the latter, the former will still keep pricking you. You'll have sustained peace only when you go by the former and suppress the latter.

Some commercial spiritual gurus and their sishyas hype up an aura around them and try to amass following and wealth and build large organizations. Such gurus are unlikely to be realized. But, even in that case, it is tough to be 100% sure!

We can criticize specific actions or words (e.g. saying that Lord Ayyappa born to Vishnu and Shiva is an example of homosexuality, selling pranayama for exorbitant prices, characterization of freezing in a televised debate as equanimity or sattwa etc).

While one can make confident comments on specific actions and words, one cannot confidently comment on spiritual stature and realization status. In fact, it should be irrelevant to us!

One last word:

A very wise and equanimous man I had the privilege of knowing (like his guru, he does not try to amass followers) was asked if he was realized. He thought for a moment and replied honestly, "I don't know."

If you have been able to be detached and equanimous for a long time, perhaps it was because your detachment and equanimity did not face circumstances that were challenging enough. Mahamaya can perhaps delude ANYONE if She so wills!

Perhaps Realization is not a single point but a continuum..

[Comment] I don't want anybody to be under the delusion that I am a Sadguru or a realized person. I am certainly not one.

I am just an instrument chosen for spreading Fire worship in today's world. Just take that one aspect from me and practice it. That can eventually connect you to Sadguru, if you are so destined. My role is very limited.



What can a loyal follower of sanatana dharma do, if she does not have a Guru, not even on internet, and has to choose between doing only what she understands and doing it right

[PVR]: If one follows something simple and meaningful (e.g. just chant "Hari Hari Hari" for half hour everyday), that is not inferior to anything else! If one has a DEEP desire to progress and starts putting in SOME effort (even if not well-directed), please TRUST that Mother WILL at some stage send some help that person's way, to further his/her progress. I am 100% confident of this.

[Manish Pandit] If and when you find someone who actually makes you forget the mundane, learn something which raises you in stature in terms of compassion and in knowledge of the Self then that person automatically becomes your Guru.

Going further:

If that person encourages you to become a better person than what you were/are then that person has effectively fulfilled the role of a Guru in your life..

Generally a Guru is a physical person because most modern people living at this time have incessant questions which they absolutely MUST ask in Vaikhari (speech articulated aloud with the mouth/tongue)and these questions need answering in Vaikhari....

However, lastly, even lack of a physical Guru need not be a hurdle as in the case of Eklavya although he was truly special.



Artificial Sweetness

16 th March 2015

Many people think that being spiritual implies being outwardly sweet, gentle, kind and loving. That needs to be put in perspective. After all, we often miss the core essence and get stuck on the superficial aspects these days.

Unlike artificial sweeteners, natural cane sugar juice is less sweet and has sour and astringent tastes due to minerals that balance it. Similarly, natural goodness is more complex than the artificial, dumbed down and one-dimensional notions of goodness that most people aspire to in this age!

The main issue is not whether you please or hurt others. No matter what you do, you WILL please some and hurt some! It is more important to engage in actions that are driven by a sense of purpose, rather than purposeless venting on one end or image building on the other.

Though entire cosmos springs from Self, different beings in the field of duality have different natures and karmik momentum. Friction and conflict are **inherent** in the field of duality.

There is no single definition of "right" or "wrong" and there is only a balance between different cosmic forces with different dharmas operating through different beings. For example, dharma of the force of hunger instinct operating in a tiger and dharma of the force of survival instinct operating in a deer may collide.

What matters is which forces are driving your actions and how much you identify with them! You can honestly look into yourself and judge why you are doing what you are doing. Is it for survival? Is it for sense gratification? Is it for the need to be praised? Is it for the need to comply and fit in? Is it for the need to dominate? Is it for improving or sustaining your image in the minds of others? Is it for the perceived good of wife, children or family? Is it for the perceived good of extended family? Is it for the perceived good of a larger community? Etc etc.

Actions driven by a higher force can hurt others, while actions driven by a lower force can please others.

Being a conduit of a **higher** force **without** attachment or identification is the best. Being a conduit of a **higher** force **with** attachment and identification is next. Being a conduit of a **lower** force **without** attachment or identification is next. Being a conduit of a **lower** force **with** attachment and identification is the worst.

As various internal forces compete to fulfill their dharmas using you as a conduit, play a wise facilitator and unbiased referee!! See the forces in play for what they are, without getting carried away, and consciously pick the superior forces! Even as you do it, try to minimize the attachment to it. In other words, don't be too upset if that force cannot fulfill its dharma for some reason. Be flexible and adaptive.

Developing sweet and gentle exterior without honestly dealing with and overcoming problematic forces and instincts operating within oneself, is like putting perfume and jewelery on a corpse. It may look and smell good for a while, but will rot nevertheless.



Nasal cycle

29 Jan 2015

I will say a few words on a very important matter that affects all our activities. This was originally taught by Shiva to Parvati.

As we breath in and out, we can notice that both nostrils are not equally open most of the time. For a while, left nostril is more open; for a while, right nostril is more open; and, for a while, both are equally open. It automatically changes in a cycle. An awareness of this cycle and planning our activities around this cycle can improve our lives.

Though modern science does not know the full importance of this cycle, it is now aware of this "nasal cycle" and that sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems controlled by the 2 halves of brain are more active when the corresponding nostril is more open!

The left half of brain is tied to the right nostril and the Pingala nadi or solar channel. It is linked to logic, deduction, ambition and the part of nervous system that provokes and "pushes" us to do things.

The right half of brain is tied to the left nostril and the Ida nadi or lunar channel. It is linked to emotion, intuition, contentment and the part of nervous system that "pulls-back" from exerting ourselves.

The balance between these push and pull-back nervous impulses is very crucial for a balanced life. If one pushes too much or pulls back too much, it causes imbalances and destroys one over time. So balance is crucial.

However, some activities benefit from a more dominant push impulse and some from a more dominant pull-back impulse. Accordingly, we can undertake activities that our nervous system is more conducive to at a given time.

For example, physical exercise, emptying bowels, arguments etc are better done when the right nostril is more open (i.e. push impulse). Undertaking these activities during the left nostril time will be unproductive or may even cause problems and diseases.

Similarly, enjoying nice music, going to sleep, reading a nice book etc are better done when the left nostril is more open (i.e. pull-back impulse). Attempting them during the right nostril time can cause problems.

Let me call the time when our right nostril (solar) is more open as the "internal day". Let me call the time when our left nostril (lunar) is more open as the "internal night". Let me call the time when both nostrils are equally open as the "internal sandhya" (sandhya=dawn/dusk).

When one is healthy, there are 8 internal days and 8 internal nights within an external day & night (i.e. 24 hours). One will have a sandhya for about 30 minutes, day for 1 hour, sandhya for about 30 minutes, night for 1 hour, again sandhya for about 30 minutes and so on. When one is not healthy and there is no balance between push and pull-back impulses, either day or night may be much longer.

If one closes the right nostril, breathes in & out from the left nostril, then closes the left nostril and breathes in & out from the right nostril, one can judge which nostril is more open. If one does it several times, one can get a sense of the cycle. With practice, one's perception become subtle and it just becomes common sense. Being aware of one's nasal cycle and having an idea approximately when the next change occurs is very useful for planning one's activities.

What is the best time for meditation and other spiritual sadhana? Undoubtedly the "internal sandhya"!

When people say that sandhya is the most suitable time for sadhana, they normally talk about external sandhya. But that is less important than the internal sandhya. Irrespective of external time, when both nostrils are equally open is the BEST time to meditate.

By the way, certain activities such as intercourse and eating food should be avoided at all costs during internal sandhya. Those will cause serious problems.

Suppose one wants to sleep and the right nostril is more open. If one tries to sleep, one may have trouble falling asleep. Suppose one wants to exercise and the left nostril is more open. If one exercises, it may be unproductive or cause health problems. In real life, sometimes we may be forced to do a particular activity when the dominant nostril is unproductive. One can change/reset the nasal cycle in such cases, for it does come with a "reset" button. 😊:-)

If one puts pressure under the armpit corresponding to the currently dominant nostril, brain will automatically switch to the other nostril!

Suppose right nostril is more open and one wants to switch to the left nostril. One needs to apply pressure under the right armpit. There are 2 ways: (1) Lie down on the right side, thus putting pressure on right armpit. (2) Like rishis did, place a T-shaped wooden staff under the right armpit and apply pressure.

Either way, right nostril will close and left nostril will open, within 5-10 minutes. Then the cycle will continue from there, i.e. it will start to change within 1 hour and complete the change after 1.5 hours.

Due to imbalances in the nervous system, the cycle may not always be 1.5 hours of day and 1.5 hours of night (I am clubbing sandhyas with day & night here). Day or night may be longer in some cases. Please note that that is normal, though correcting it can improve one's well-being.

However, if the same nostril is open for too long (e.g. 3-4 hours), it indicates a serious imbalance in the nervous system and an impending disease. Forcing a change of nostril (see above) can often avoid the disease, unless it has deep-seated root causes that cannot be suppressed anymore.

There is a lot more taught by Shiva to Parvati in "Shiva Swarodaya Shastra". However, the above is the gist and includes most salient points. Most importantly, the teachings of sages and deities only provide a framework that intelligent persons can build upon. So understand this, contemplate further and experiment. Good luck!

[PVR] which nostril is more dominant when one wakes up can vary from day to day (based on weekday, tithi etc). But, the relative lengths of left/right nostril periods within the day should be balanced irrespective of tithi etc, if one is healthy.



Uttaraayana

14 th Jan 2015

Most Hindus consider Uttaraayana to start today, with Sun entering sidereal Capricorn (nirayana Makara raasi). However, Maharshi Parasara's teachings to Maitreya in "Vishnu Purana" make it amply clear that this tradition is a corruption of deep Kali yuga.

Uttaraayana started when Sun entered tropical Capricorn (saayana Makara raasi) on Dec 21, i.e. on the day of winter solstice.

Sidereal zodiac is to be used for the purpose of "space" and tropical zodiac for the purpose of "time". The former is to be used for casting rasi chart, divisional charts etc and the latter for reckoning ritus, ayanas, years etc.

Western astrology made the mistake of using the latter for both, while Hindu astrology made the mistake of using the former for both. Neither is 100% correct.

Though the teachings of rishis are clear, I am afraid human intelligence is eclipsed in this age.

Hopefully, we are on the verge of a renaissance in aarsha vidya..

One practical point that you can see for yourself.

If you observe Sun at mid-day at the top of the sky, he will be at his southern-most point on Dec 21, when he just enters tropical Capricorn. Then onwards, he will start moving towards north. THAT is why it is called "Uttaraayana" (moving towards north).

By summer solstice (about June 21 when he enters tropical Cancer), he reaches the northern-most point and starts moving towards south again. THAT is why it is called "Dakshinaayana" (moving towards south).

Use of sidereal zodiac for reckoning time (solar/lunar year, ayana etc) is most definitely a corruption of Kali yuga. Sidereal zodiac is only for making charts and not for reckoning time.



Uttaraayana

21 Dec 2017

Uttarayana starts today, though many in India will celebrate it after 24 days. It literally means "northern travel". One can actually see in the sky that Sun reached his southernmost point and will slowly move towards north from now on! He will reach his northernmost point around June 21 and will start his southern travel (dakshinayana).

Maharshi Parasara referred to Sun's entry into Makara (Capricorn) and Karka (Cancer) in "Vishnu Purana", when defining lunar year, ayanas and ritus to his disciple Maitreya. Sun's entry into Makara starts Uttarayana. Parasara clearly said that day is the shortest and longest when Sun enters Makara and Karkataka respectively. He defined calendar w.r.t. those events.

If we use sidereal signs, day is NOT the shortest/longest when Sun enters Makaraka/Karka (Jan 14 and July 14). That is true only for tropical signs (Dec 21 and June 21).

Sidereal signs are to be used ONLY for casting charts. For reckoning TIME and calendar, tropical signs MUST be used. Parasara was clear.

Unfortunately, Kali yuga scholars replaced tropical signs with sidereal signs everywhere. As Kali deepened, that definition became commonplace. Now, people will celebrate "Makara Sankranti" and "Uttarayana" on Jan 14. That reduces the meaning of the word "uttarayana" to a joke! 😊:- (Sun starts physically moving towards north today and not on Jan 14.

If anybody uses a long sankalpa for rituals and mentions ayana, I strongly recommend saying "uttarayana" from today. Don't wait till Jan 14.

Though I am in a very small minority today, I am 100% (not 99.99999999%!!!) sure that mainstream opinion is wrong on this topic.

Some scholars have suggested that sidereal and tropical signs coincided at Parasara's time and hence he mistakenly referred to an attribute of tropical signs (shortest/longest day), though he meant sidereal signs.

First of all, these people falsely date Parasara to a few centuries after Christ. Parasara, father of Veda Vyasa, lived around 3000 BC and sidereal and tropical signs did NOT coincide then.

Secondly, Parasara's works (e.g. Brihat Parasara Hora Sastram) demonstrate that he was of a much much higher intellectual caliber than scholars of the last 2 millennia (such as Varahamihira, Kalyana Verma, Neelakantha etc). Rishis like him use words carefully. To say that he got confused between sidereal and tropical signs, as both coincided at his time, is an insult to his intelligence.



What do you use for day to day muhurtas?

[PVR] My conclusion is crystal clear: Sidereal for charts (space) and tropical for calendar (time).
Rishis were aware of both and used both.



Price on Dharmik Activities

25th Feb 2017

Though it may offend some, I'll say a blunt truth today. It is not a good karma to put a price and sell knowledge of dharmik and spiritual nature, though we'll increasingly find respected men engaging in such activities in this Kali yuga. While there is no need to fight or criticize any individuals or groups, we can try to avoid these karmas for ourselves.

NEVER put a price on teaching divine subjects such as Jyotisha, Aagamas, Tantras or knowledge of Upanishads, Puranas etc. Also, if you know dharmik/spiritual practices such as homa, japa or different kinds of meditation, NEVER set a price for teaching them to others or performing them for others. Only take what is offered voluntarily and happily. If not having a price for your services or teachings reduces your "value" in the mind of others, so be it!

In fact, even if something being given voluntarily, reject it if you suspect there are negative emotions behind it (e.g. regret, feeling pressure etc). An example was set by Swami Brahmananda, spiritual son of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a close friend of Swami Vivekananda, who rejected a wealthy patron's donation of his entire wealth to Ramakrishna Mutt, as his intuition told him the man was doing it out of temporary disillusionment with the world and would regret it later!

People who commercialize Jyotish knowledge, readings, poojas and other dharmik/spiritual knowledge and related services are short-sighted and have NO CLUE what a MESS they are creating for their own future.

The only exception is if you have completely surrendered to a guru you believe to be enlightened and he/she explicitly ordered you to charge money for such activities.

Best wishes for Maha Shiva Ratri and upcoming Shani Amavasya!



[PVR] Sadguru works through many vessels, including dirty ones. One with a strong immunity system can drink milk from a very dirty vessel and yet not become sick and actually gain strength!!!!

A fake guru who exploits people may remain stuck, but innocent sishyas fully dedicated to the teachings may yet progress!

If someone is selling divine knowledge, it is THEIR problem. As long as you think the knowledge is genuine and worthwhile and can help you progress, you may learn.

As Kali deepens, there will be few gurus who channel Sadguru fully, i.e. most vessels of Sadguru will be quite dirty. Thus, focus less on admiring personalities and more on teachings that help you progress individually.

But in the present scenario when money and hunger has top priority and live cost has risen to sky high, if one charges for his lively hood

[PVR] Dharma towards one's own (and family's) sustenance is one of the highest dharmas of a human being. If one has no other skills and must depend on dharmik/spiritual knowledge/practices for livelihood and sustenance, then what else can one do?

However, not all commercially exploiting these subjects do it for basic livelihood or draw a line there.

[PVR] First of all, it is very tough to judge which way the sword of Kama cuts! :-)

To give a crude analogy, suppose one donates eyes to a blind man and the latter sees a pretty woman after getting those eyes and rapes her. The donor gets part of the karma, but the degree varies based on various conditions!

If one knew the evil nature of the blind person and yet donated eyes, one gets more karma. Suppose one did not know and donated to a random person, one gets less karma.

In either case, suppose one sold eyes for money. One then gets a much larger part of karma. Suppose one gave freely, but with pride of one's generosity and expectation of appreciation, one gets less karma but still more than when one gave freely and without much pride and attachment.

Bottomline is that one cannot escape Karma until one is liberated! :-) But one can try to manage the degree, with wise decisions and good attitude.

Anything free loses its value

Putting monetary price on a teaching does NOT increase its true value. If a teaching or principle or practice makes a difference in one's life, THAT increases its value to one!

As more and more people with right aptitude and preparedness engage in a practice, it increases its value to a society.

As more people see value in something, it spreads. But, this process is arduous and takes time (and more time than one may expect, IF the right time has not come yet).

By putting a monetary price, we can create an *illusion* of value temporarily and people may flock. But, that does NOT last long. Sooner or later, reality catches up with perceptions. Thus, manage reality instead of perceptions!

When the right time comes, right people will come and missing keys in the practices (which come from within) will open up for them. Then true value may be seen in a way perceptible to others.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa did his part, taught his devotees and left. Though his disciples had great potential, it took a decade or two for the inner locks to open up based on what they learnt long back and blossom fully. THEN the value of what they learnt became obvious to the world.

Many spiritual movements grow rapidly and also fall rapidly. Movements built with patience, sweat and blood, using saattwik principles, last much longer and make more *real* difference in the world.

Those who see their dharma as spreading a specific spiritual movement will perhaps do better to remove expectations of when and how it should grow and do the best in their hands at the time.

If you have only a few twigs to offer to the holy fire currently, do it and enjoy watching them burn (instead of worrying that fire is not big enough!). If the fire is meant to grow large, you (or someone else!!) will find more twigs to offer later on.

Thirdly, there is also the question of giving to the unworthy, with free giving. Giving freely to the unworthy is not much better than selling!

Luckily, most of these subjects (Jyotish, Aagamas, Tantra etc) require much individual effort and also have some inherent locks that only open with inner keys. Thank God, these safety mechanisms are in overdrive mode in Kali yuga. Hopefully, we are ok.



Eclipse Time meditation/homa/Japa

20 Aug 2017

There is a total solar eclipse tomorrow, visible in some parts of US and western hemisphere. People in Boston can experience a partial solar eclipse from 1:27 pm to 4 pm. Overall, there will be a partial or complete solar eclipse somewhere or the other, during 3:46 pm GMT to 8:02 pm GMT on 2017 August 21. While lunar eclipses that are not visible where one lives are not effective, solar eclipses are effective times for sadhana irrespective of where one lives. After all, mind (Moon) has a limited range of impact, but soul (Sun) has infinite reach!

Sun is the supporter of life and giver of light. He represents individual soul within us, which creates and sustains duality. Moon is the waxing and waning reflector of Sun's light. He represents mind within us, which *experiences* the duality. Lagna (earth) represents the actor within us, who *acts* within duality.

Rahu and Ketu are the intersection points of earth's orbit around Sun and Moon's orbit around earth, i.e. actor's orbit around facilitator (soul) and experiencer's orbit around actor.

Within us, Rahu represents the spirit of breaking barriers and getting things somehow, while Ketu represents the spirit of detachment and freedom from wants.

When the facilitator, experiencer and actor are all aligned in the macrocosm, it promotes a similar alignment within us. After all, we are all microcosms of cosmos.

Thus, that time is conducive to (1) acting to ensure we get what deeply want and (2) being free from wants and being able to act and experience freely without any strings attached. Either is possible based on one's current spiritual momentum.

Thus, eclipse times are particularly favorable for kaamyasadhanas that fulfill deep desires and nishkaamasadhanas that enhance detachment.

Some scriptures teach that sadhanas done during an eclipse are 1,000 times more powerful than sadhanas done at other times.

Sadhanas of ugra devatas are particularly effective during eclipse times, though any sadhana can be done.

Some people ask about whether it is auspicious to watch an eclipse. It is not considered to be auspicious. But, more importantly, getting carried away with the physical phenomenon stops one from experiencing the corresponding internal phenomenon. This is really a time for sadhana.

As pointed out above, eclipse time when Rahu and Ketu over-power Sun and Moon are suitable for sadhanas for moksha (liberation - Ketu) or kaama (fulfilling desires - Rahu), but not regular dharma that is represented by Sun and Moon.

Sun and Moon are the keepers of dharma, i.e. regular balance and order in the world. The time when they are overpowered is not suitable for dharmik activities. That is why temples close during that time. After all, the purpose of temples is to maintain some religious order in society.

This is the last total solar eclipse before big changes kick in, in this world we live in. Hope you can benefit from this special occasion!

May Rahu be satiated and not bother us with too many deep desires. May Ketu steer us towards freedom. May mind and soul allow us to fulfill our dharma in this cosmos



Correct pronunciation

20 June 2015

Many years back, I was passionate about correct pronunciation of various sounds in Sanskrit. I saw that correct pronunciation of each sound can be systematically and logically derived, i.e. it is not arbitrary or a matter of opinion. Also, something is not correct just because millions pronounce one way, including great scholars.

I kept correcting my pronunciation as insights kept coming. My pronunciation evolved and stabilized many years ago. But, around the same time, I experienced some things internally and my real spiritual evolution started. I very confidently realized that pronunciation and other technicalities are only 1% important and the correct bhaava (feeling) is faaaaar more important. I lost interest in sharing my findings on pronunciation.

However, God inspired me to synthesize this knowledge in this life and there must be some purpose. It would be a shame if I leave this planet without sharing that with anyone. So I decided to put my conclusions in one place and share.

Today Ravi Poruri recorded a video where I explained the correct pronunciation of various sounds using text or figures on a white board. Once the video is edited, we will upload it (hopefully in a week or two).

In the video, I tied things to Sanskrit grammar rules as well as modern linguistics concepts where appropriate, to explain the rationale. As I said, nothing is left to opinion or guesswork and everything is logically derivable in Sanskrit pronunciation! It is just that we are living in deep Kali yuga and people often follow others without thinking.

Link to youtube video: https://youtu.be/Vq_SYT2TnPo



Re-Incarnation

9 Nov 2019

Some are curious about their previous incarnation. A few (not all) yogis find out about their previous incarnation as they advance in their sadhana. Some even tell others about it. This "knowledge" often ends up being a distraction rather than help. Some are not even correct - just deluded. Some are correct but get distracted and become proud of who they were before. Some get tempted to exploit it and gain easy following or impress people.

Some try hard to behave like who they think/know themselves to be in a previous incarnation. I know a terrific sadhaka who recreated the environment of a previous life around him all over again, including adopting a new language and changing his accent in mantras he already knew. Krishna did not try to behave like Rama and Rama did not try to behave like Narasimha. They simply did their work without any distractions. And the work was totally different in every incarnation!

Some yogis publicly claim to be reincarnation of a well-known saint or yogi. It often serves no purpose and may be an immature effort at easy self-validation. Ramakrishna Paramahansa very clearly said that he will be back once more along with all that were with him. As a result, at least 2 well-known saints claimed to be his reincarnations. At least one of them was wrong, if not both!

Most people who come for important work in this world - whether politicians like Obama and Modi or yogis like Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda - will face severe obstacles and resistance from the world and undergo moments of deep crisis in confidence. They just hang in there tenaciously and do their work diligently, no matter what people say and no matter how much recognition comes their way. Looking for acceptance or easy ways of self-validation can be a distraction. Good ones just focus on their work despite trials and tribulations. Value of such important missions is recognized and accepted at a later stage, possibly after the person leaves the world.

One should simply try to decipher one's work in the current life and do it, rather than thinking of who one was before. One should also not worry about how important one's work is and its long-term impact and success. If you think it is the right work for you, just do it. Leave the rest to God! It is a BLESSING that Nature lets us forget unnecessary details about the past. Whatever we need to remember from the past lives, in order to do our current work, will be hidden within instincts, vasanas and inclinations, which will be activated at the right times! All we need is to let those vasanas bloom at the right times without confusions and distractions.

A seeker I know was taken by a well-connected priest to a Siddhar in Tamil Nadu. The Siddhar told him that he is a close associate of a specific rishi (one of Saptarshis) and will do some very important work on earth.

He was carried away for a few days thinking that he was a "special" soul.

On knowing this, his spiritual guru laughed and remarked, "isn't the identification with who you are now - a scholar, an engineer, a seeker etc - not enough baggage to overcome? Do you need to entertain and overcome additional baggage that you were so and so earlier or will do some important work?"

Wise words indeed!

It is the nature of ahamkara or I-ness to feed itself with everything it comes in contact with!! It never tires of shouting "I did it", "this is mine", "I am special" and "what I do is very important".

Unconditional surrender to Supreme Being and seeing Him as the doer & experiencer of all actions & experiences is the only way out. But it is not easy.

After all, an immature servant of the king may feel proud of carrying a jewelry box from one room in the palace to another and feel low when asked to carry garbage instead of jewelry. But a mature servant will not distinguish between the two, for all belongs to the king and he is a mere servant!

God the king to which everything in this world belongs and we are all mere servants, handling valuable things at times and junk at times!



[Manish Pandit] In fact, most if not all sadhakas go through these stages. First ego, then anger then other pashas, eventually all have to be sublimated and overcome in that birth no matter who or what one may or may not be.

Look at all the saints, they all went through these stages. Thing to remember is that on the funeral pyre, nothing will matter about all those ideas, just the sadhana and karma and any blessings will help. Hence do sadhana and forget the rest of this.

Even those wanting to know previous births and doing sadhana of a special Deity to achieve it may or may not be benefited unless the knowledge was accompanied with something else. Jai Mahakaal

I'm perpetually in the ego and anger stage and not qualified to be a Sadhaka. I want to first get material "success" before entering the Sadhana path. Any advice ?

Manish Pandit: Satisfy some desires and keep doing sadhana. What's the hurry anyway. Pranaam



Vastu shastra

18th Jan 2015

Vastu shastra is understood and practiced in a very simplistic manner now-a-days. People just go by thumb rules and often miss the *essence* and subtle nuances, which link it in a holistic manner to other arsha vidya such as Jyotish, yoga and ayurveda.

For example, suppose someone has kitchen in southwest corner of the house. Based on thumb rules, this is very bad. In fact, I know several cases where people developed health problems after moving to such houses. However, only a subtle understanding of how this works will explain corner cases and exceptions better.

Southwest direction is owned by demon Nirriti (literally, "not proper/straight-forward"). The vibrations of Nirriti released in this corner of the house will have to be absorbed by the activities in that area (i.e. cooking food) and that can afflict the food with undesirable vibrations.

However, note that Nirriti also stands for bending rules, breaking barriers and unconventional things. Suppose someone does weird experiments and cooks unconventional food items. Then Nirriti's vibrations will find expression in that spirit and will not afflict the food.

Similarly, suppose a child's bed room is in southeast. If the child not only sleeps there but studies there, the vibrations of Agni can help one transform the reading and thinking one does into an understanding of the subject. If the child studies in a different room and only sleeps there, the fire may instead disturb the sleep.

Instead of learning thumb rules from a book, one needs to understand how various energies and vibrations emanate from different parts of the house and land and balance one's lifestyle and activities with those vibrations. Arsha vidya is never meant to be a set of blind thumb rules, but meant to provide a framework for intelligently harmonizing one's life with the forces of nature - both physical and subtle.

Though there are many books that give thumb rules, which may or may not always work, the only book that impressed me for its holistic and thoughtful approach is "Vastu: Breathing Life into Space" by Dr Robert Svoboda. Dr Svoboda is one of the wisest scholars I have read and had the privilege of interacting with and his book is a bold first step into holistic and nuanced understanding of Vastu shastra.



Healthy Eating(Ayurvedic based)

1 Feb 2017

Many well-intentioned people are doing their best to "eat healthy" and yet suffering, simply because there is much misinformation about "healthy food" out there in our pop culture. I'll try to give some basic guidelines on healthy eating in simple lingo.

Measuring the quality and impact of food in calories is like judging a book from the number of pages!

Even carb, protein, saturated & unsaturated fat numbers we see on nutrition labels are only of secondary importance and not the primary factor to judge the impact of food on one. Lab testing may show certain nutrients in a food item, but their effect on YOU is decided by how YOUR body handles them, digests them, assimilates them and how various nutrients reach various body parts.

There is a millennia old framework to judge that well and do what is right for YOU!

Some fine-tuning may be needed based on trial and error, but you can start off with what is more likely to work for you, rather than blindly following pop culture fads and one-size-fits-all misinformation and helplessly getting stuck with chronic health issues.

Remember: NOTHING is universally good or bad. Every food item may be fantastic for some and terrible for some. And there is a way to know it without resorting to experiments.

Just because everyone says olive oil or coconut oil is the best, don't switch to it blindly. For a kapha person, mustard oil is the best. Sesame and canola oil may also be ok, but other oils are not good. Again, don't jump to the conclusion that mustard oil is the best for all. For a pitta person, it is like poison. Coconut oil and ghee are best then.

People think that yogurt is probiotic and very healthy. Not so fast. If you are a kapha person, dairy products (especially yogurt) are like a poison.

People think that taking too much oil or ghee is bad, but that is exactly what you need if you are a vata person!

People think that salads are healthy. Not so fast. For a vata person, raw vegetables and greens are poisonous. They'll increase vata and give chronic nervo-muscular aches, chronic anxiety, depression etc.

We are told "one apple a day keeps doctor way". That's true if you are a pitta/kapha person. If you are a vata person, one apple a day ruins your health.

Every food is good for some and bad for some. You need to know your Ayurvedic body type to know what is good for you.

There are 3 types - Kapha (weak metabolism), Pitta (strong metabolism) and Vata (variable metabolism). One can also have a combination of these. For example, one can be primarily Vata and secondarily pitta.

Proceeding to buy food without knowing ayurvedic body type is as ridiculous as going to buy clothes without knowing size! 😊;-) Unfortunately, people feel far more uncomfortable wearing clothes that don't fit them, than eating food that doesn't suit them! 😊:-(

To find out your body type, you can use questionnaires on online self-service websites. You can search on the internet for "ayurveda body type". Most of them are reasonable. They can at least tell you your primary type.

Some examples:

<https://yogainternational.com/article/view/dosha-quiz>

<http://doshaquiz.chopra.com>

<http://ayurvedadosha.org/doshas/ayurveda-dosha-test>

You can also read books to get the fundamentals. "Prakriti: Your Ayurvedic Constitution" by Dr Robert Svoboda is the best introductory book I have seen. It is a thin book written for laymen with great lucidity.

Once you know your body type, there is a nice resource. You can go to

<http://www.JoyfulBelly.com>

and see which foods are good/bad for you. Click "My food & diet" and select grains, vegetables, fruits, beans/legumes, oils, spices, dairy, nuts, roots etc. You will then see various items under the selected category.

For example, if you select "fruits" category, fruits are listed. If you look at guava in that list, it has V and K crossed out and only P is not crossed out. That means guava is bad for vata and kapha people and good for pitta people.

Even if one does not strictly avoid bad foods, one will still benefit if one predominantly eats foods that are good for one. Even when eating bad foods, one can balance them with other ingredients or spices that are good for one.

For example, suppose a vata person wants to occasionally eat arugula (greens) for some nutrients. It is good for pitta and kapha, but not for vata. So one can add some tamarind paste to reduce that vata.

Suppose a kapha person wants to occasionally eat yogurt. One can mix some spicy pickle with it to balance kapha.

Apart from what to eat, how to eat is also important!

(1) Regular habits are helpful.

(2) Do not eat unless you are hungry. If there is no hunger, it is better to skip a meal. Spices like ginger provoke jatharagni (digestive fire) and make one hungry. If liver is clogged, thus killing the appetite, detoxification may be needed. Bitter foods (e.g. bitter melon) cleanse liver. Triphala tea is a great detoxifier for the gastro-intestinal tract and safe for daily use.

(3) When there is hunger, do not suppress it for too long. Your body will be confused and lose its rhythm in long run.

(4) Most importantly, eat slowly and focus on the food when eating. Don't look at food as an object that gives calories, carbs and proteins etc. It is what **makes** you, at least physically. Have love and reverence for it and pay attention to it while you eat it.

The rituals before and after eating were designed to cultivate this attitude. But, they have just become rituals. People say mantras before/after eating, but focus on TV or talking, while eating. Whether or not you say any mantras before/after eating, be aware that the divine has manifested as that food in front of you and will nourish you. Eat each bite with reverence, love and gratitude.

It is also a great idea to imagine a fire in one's stomach and treat each bite being swallowed as an offering into that fire and utter a simple mantra mentally while swallowing.

(5) Stop eating when you feel 90% full. There is a delay in the feedback from stomach to brain. If your brain thinks you are 90% full, you are probably 100% full in reality - you will realize it in a few more minutes! 😊:-)

(6) **VERY IMPORTANT:** Take time and chew your food perfectly. By the time it is swallowed in, food must be like a smooth and flowing paste. Saliva will turn it into that, if you chew it well. Unfortunately, most people now-a-days do not chew their food perfectly, due to time pressure.

Any big or small solid pieces swallowed without converting into a paste in mouth will **NOT** give you **ANY** strength. Instead, they will rot in your stomach and intestines over a long time and become gas and toxins.

(7) Do **NOT** drink much water with a meal. Take just a few sips to soften the food being swallowed. Take a little more water if what you are eating is very dry and take a little less water if the food is liquidy (e.g. a soup or sambar rice).

For ideal digestion, food should stay in stomach for an hour or two, before going down into small intestines via osmosis. If it is over-diluted with a cup or two of water, it will leave stomach before the first stage of digestion finishes. It is like sending a 5 year old child directly to 8th grade - VERY BAD idea!

(8) Wait for an hour or two after a meal and you can drink plenty of water. Before that, it is ok to take small sips of water, but not too much water that washes food down.

About 30-45 minutes before a meal, a lot of water (e.g. a cup) can be taken to flush the system clean and stimulate the production of enzymes for digestion.

(9) Kapha people should eat less and spicy (but they hate spice). Pitta people should a few big meals and not spicy (but they love spice). Vata people should eat several small meals.

(10) Unless you are a pitta person living in hot climates, avoid cold drinks or cold foods. They destabilize your digestive system.

(11) Do not eat dinner just before sleeping. That is a terrible habit many people have. Eat dinner at least 2 hours before sleeping.

Apart from being aware of what is good for you, try to avoid processed foods with artificial ingredients and preservatives. Avoid hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils, refined sugars, sugar alternatives etc. The "sugar free" sweets are a fad taking off in India now and avoid this dangerous trend. Instead of eating sugar free sweets, simply avoid sweets or at least avoid "refined sugar" that is simply sucrose. Natural sugarcane juice has several other ingredients that make it effective. If you remove everything else and use only sucrose, it can become problematic. If you leave me with my house, wife, kids, friends, computer etc, I can do what I do now. If you deprive me of all this and take me into an isolation chamber, I cannot produce the same output I do now! So don't blame sucrose for sugar problems people have, but blame the idiocy of human race that chose to use sucrose in isolation for sweetness. Consider more wholesome sugars rather than artificial alternatives like sucralose that may flaunt "zero calorie" or "no diabetes" as benefits. It is only a matter of time before people realize their terrible dangers!

Instead of using normal white refined salt ("pure" sodium chloride), consider other salt (e.g. natural mineral salt sold by www.banyanbotanicals.com) or unrefined sea salt, which have several other minerals.

As one person put it, refined "white" sugar, refined "white" salt, refined "white" rice are the source of many diseases today. The original brown versions of all three are superior. BTW, brown rice has more nutrients and takes longer to digest and may not be suitable for some with weak digestion.

Also, in general, food cooked fresh is the best. There is a tamasik quality to old/stale food, even if the ingredients used were saattwik.

A lot of people unknowingly combine incompatible foods and that puts stress on their digestive system. For example, if you mix milk and sour fruits (e.g. strawberries), both become more difficult to digest. One may sometimes not see any external symptom due to this bad practice for a long time, but this overloading of the digestive system creates problems under the surface. By the time it boils over and shows up as an external symptom, it may be too tough to fix.

A nice list of incompatible foods compiled by Dr Vasant Lad can be found at: http://www.ayurveda.com/pdf/food_combining.pdf

Imagine a workplace where unproductive and undesirable employees are not fired, but retained. They drag everyone down - getting rid of them improves the productivity of others.

Similarly, elimination is as important as assimilation. Without proper elimination, appetite and assimilation will be weaker.

A lot of people now-a-days suffer from various levels of constipation. Please note that constipation is not just complete lack of elimination, but also a lower level of elimination than required or elimination that requires a lot of effort, thus weakening the nervo-muscular system.

Not drinking enough water, not drinking water at the right times, drinking too many cold drinks, eating cold food, eating food with many chemicals, drinking too much caffeinated drinks (they dehydrate one), irregular habits, stress & anxiety and toxic build in the digestive system, are some of the reasons.

Drinking one cup of warm/hot Triphala tea before sleeping can improve regular elimination. Triphala is the powder of 3 dried fruits (including amla/gooseberry) and readily available in Indian stores (you can also buy at www.BanyanBotanicals.com). Between 1/2 to 1 1/2 spoons of powder can be boiled with hot water and filtered like tea. The powder quantity can be fixed by trial and error, as different people need different amounts.

Eating right food, eating regularly, being in good spirits in general and especially when eating, regular exercise (however little) will improve health.

If one has bad habits, one's body may handle it fine for a long time and external symptoms of illness may not show up, especially in the first 30-40 years of one's life. As one hits 40s and 50s, problems accumulated under the surface due to bad habits will slowly boil over the surface and start showing external symptoms. By this time, the problems may be too tough to fix with simple lifestyle changes.

As they say, prevention is better than cure!

At least physically, you are what you eat. So eat carefully and wisely. Most importantly, as we live in this dark age of misinformation generated by a cacophony of phony self-interests and agendas,

even those who religiously follow what they are told is good for them by pop culture end up suffering. I strongly recommend falling back to the wisdom of rishis!



[Compiler] Interested readers might like to read couple of recipes from Narasimha garu:

Recipe for Nut Laddu : <https://www.facebook.com/pvr108/posts/10158184505353284>

Recipe for “Ragi-Oat-Sesame-Pumpkin Seed Laddu” <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10156325919608284>

Recipe for “jowar-bajra-ragi roti” <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10154175978863284>

Recipe for Kichidi "<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10152940343463284>"



As human beings, it is natural for us to appreciate some things and detest some. While we can't change our minds to appreciate everything, we can train it to focus more on what we appreciate and be thankful. Be thankful to God for giving those things through those people.

This is the greatest mantra for being happy in this material world and also making spiritual progress!



[PVR]: Though it is very difficult in some situations (such as a pandemic) to focus on what we can appreciate and remain grateful, it is even more necessary (and useful) at such times!!

What about people who don't have anything and who live so painful., so to whom or for what should they express gratitude.

[PVR]: Usually there will be something one can be grateful for and there are people worse off than anyone. In the absolute worst case, one can at least be grateful for a human birth.

But then, it may be easy to lecture sitting on a couch and gratitude may be too tough in some situations



Epilogue

Be like the Sun as far as possible. Expect nothing, trust the Divine. In any case, anything physical which anybody gives cannot be taken with you after death. Blessings is all one can eventually count on when on the funeral pyre.

Shri Manish Pandit

3rd June 2020

Some friends occasionally ask me how they can give me dakshina (donation) if they feel that they benefited from my astrological or spiritual activities and sharing. I will repeat what I said before.

In all my dharmik activities, Sun is my ideal. He burns, provides light and heat to all (without differentiation), allows people to benefit from them in the way they see fit and expects nothing directly in return from anyone. I like the same approach.

As Holy Fire is a limited representation of Sun and has resonance to Sun, each homa done on earth feeds Sun in a limited manner. Thus, spreading homa on earth is my way of paying a little back to the Sun. So, you can do the same.

Just do homa (any homa!) when you can, without putting pressure on yourself. Learn to enjoy it and do it without expectations of any results (i.e. just to pay back to Vishwaatmaa Sun). If you can, tell others about homa manuals and teach anybody who may be interested. Give confidence to people who may be bogged down by inertia and worries of technicalities, complex rules and protocols.

But never put pressure on anyone (or yourself!) to do it. Just enable people and withdraw. Also, don't use homa to promote yourself or any guru you are attached to. Holy Fire on earth and Sun in the skies are the best gurus out there in this era and this do-homa-by-yourself movement is theirs.

If you do this, you are helping us to collectively pay Sun back a little bit. THAT is the best Dakshina anyone can give me.

Personally, I have whatever I need and do not need anything else. At this point of time anyway.

Explore Vedanta and sublime interpretations of various Stotras & Hymns. Understand the nuances of fire worship and tarpana. Read metered Sanskrit poetry on various deities and gain practical tips on sadhana

