

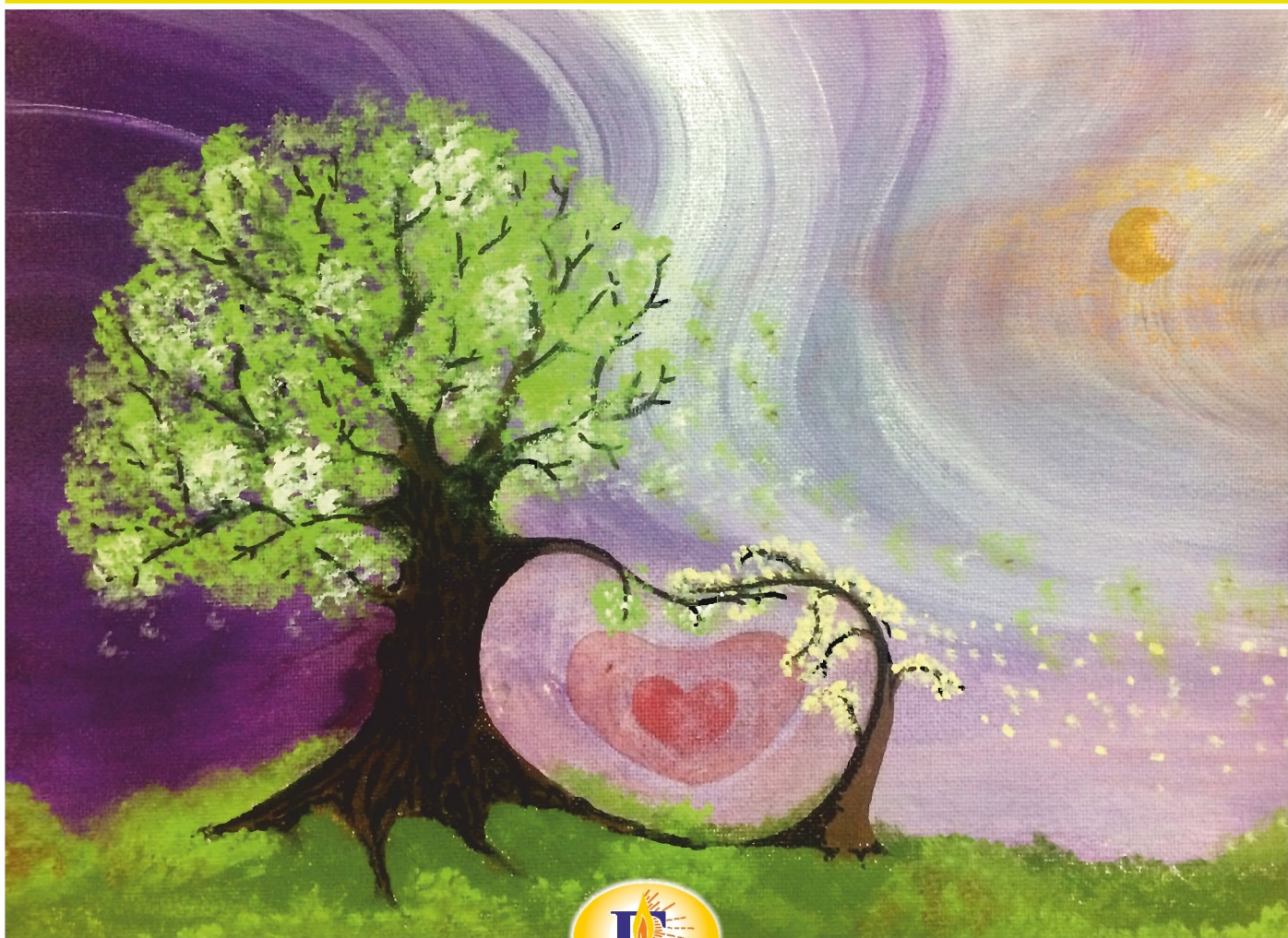
₹ 25/-

Inner Flame

Volume VIII

Issue 3

FEB - MAR 17



Fowai Publications

8/53, Verma Nagar, Andheri (E), Mumbai - 400 069

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

DEVELOPING HEAD AND HEART

The front cover of this issue shows a big tree and a smaller one coming closer to touch each other; between the two, you see the 'heart factor'! Intelligence and compassion need to come together to make our life a true blessing. By intelligence we do not mean dry scholarship. Obviously, compassion is not emotionalism or sentimentalism.

The liberating transformation in human consciousness defies understanding. All of us are striving, in various ways, to 'change'! Alas, it is 'groping in the darkness' for most people! However, we have no other option than to continue the search, and to keep trying because we are like patients with an ailment. Nobody can tell us to give up looking for a doctor or for the right medicine!

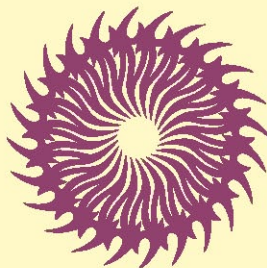
This issue presents the inspiring life and teachings of Swāmi Vidyāranya, a colossus among saints of India. A multi-faceted personality, he tremendously influenced philosophical thought processes of his countrymen and also shaped the socio-political contours of the land of his time.

The famed Sun Temple of Konārṅk is covered under Places that Beckon. I visited the place, for the first time, in December last year. It is indeed a remarkable monument that appeals to the heart and stimulates the head.

We at Inner Flame respect diverse schools of thought from all over the world. In that spirit, we also share the wisdom of Zen in this issue. Judgmentalism or 'remaining opinionated' is discussed in this article; how it is a barrier to freedom is shown.

Once more, we hope you will enjoy the contents.

Swami Chidananda



Inner Flame

Established in 2009

CONTENTS

Volume VIII Issue 3 Feb - Mar 17

Editor

Swami Chidananda

Published and Printed by:

Brni.Vibha Chaitanya

on behalf of

Fowai Forum® (Trust)

From: 8/53, Verma Nagar,

Azad Road, Andheri (E),

Mumbai - 400 069. India

Owned By:

Swami Chidananda

Printing Press:

Color Print,

Byculla Service Industry,

Byculla (E), Mumbai - 400 027.

SUBSCRIPTION

Annual Rs. 130 (for a year, 6 issues)

Two Years Rs. 250 (for 2 years, 12 issues)

Three Years Rs. 360 (for 3 years, 18 issues)

Life Rs. 1100 (for 10 years, 60 issues)

(cheque in favor of FOWAI FORUM-1)

WE ARE LISTENING

Help us improve Inner Flame. We welcome your feedback, suggestions and ideas on layout, coverpage, content and more.

Please email us at :
innerflame@fowai.org

Cover design of this issue: Rashmi Hande

FEATURED

Vidyāranya Swāmi

.....1

PERCEIVING PHOENIX

Be Strong If You Wish To Help Others

Swāmi Chidānanda.....7

VALUE BASED MANAGEMENT

Leadership Challenges In The V.U.C.A. World

Pablo Tovar.....9

PLACES THAT BECKON

Konārka, The Sun Temple

Compiled by Dakshu Mansukhani.....11

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THE UPANISHADS?

Swāmi Chidānanda.....13

STOP OPINIONS

Foyan Quingyuan.....14

RISHIS OF INDIA

Maharishi Atri

Compiled by Vijayalakshmi Menon.....16

LOVE NEEDS NO ETHICS

Sudhākar Deshpande.....19

STORY TEACHES

When Your Ego Dies, You Are Free

Swāmi Rāmdās.....21

RHYTHMS FOR THE SOUL

From Prison

Richard Lovelace.....22

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

.....23

SNIPPETS OF WISDOM

Eckhart Tolle.....10

Swāmi Rāmdās.....22

ETERNAL VIBRATIONS

Time Management



Introduction

At the dawn of the 14th century in India, dharma, which had received a rude shock under Muslim rule in Northern India, found a bulwark in the South under an ascetic-cum-administrator who is remembered

today as Śrī Vidyāranya or Vidyāranya Swāmi. The reemergence was on all fronts. On the political front, Śrī Vidyāranya's grace helped in the formation of the Hindu Vijaynagar Empire. On the socio-religious front, worship that had been suspended in several temples, including the famous temples of Srirangam and Madurai was restored and encouraged by him. In the field of spiritual literature, following the mighty footsteps of Adi Shankara, significant texts were presented for thinkers and students of various levels. Among them, three stand out: Sarvadarshanasangraha, a compendium of all the known Indian schools of philosophy, Panchadasi, a profound, 15-chaptered comprehensive manual of Advaita Vedānta and Jivanmuktiviveka, a scriptural work which is seen by some to be "unique in the favour it finds with the *samnyāsin-s* of India"

As a child Śrī Vidyāranya had been named Mādhava, by his poor but learned Brahmin parents. His father Mayanācharya had settled in Pampā Kshetra (modern Hampi in Karnataka) and lived peacefully and happily teaching his disciples. His

mother, Srimati Devi, was of an equally quiet and pious nature. For a long time, the couple had no children. They went on pilgrimage to many holy places; they performed many rituals and religious ceremonies with devotion. At last they had a son, in about the year 1268 and after observing the necessary rituals, they named him Mādhava. After his birth, they had two more sons named Sāyana and Bhoganātha and then a daughter whom they named Simhala /Singhala.

The parents decided to get their sons educated by good teachers. There was a learned saint called Shankarānanda who lived on the banks of the river Tungabhadra. Mayanācharya took all three sons to Shankarānanda and begged him to accept his children as his disciples. Even though Shankarānanda accepted students very selectively, when Mādhava, Sāyana and Bhoganātha prostrated at his feet, he accepted them immediately. The children, who were intelligent and devoted to learning, studied under him for many years. After a few years, Shankarānanda felt that he had taught them all that he could. One day he said, "Children, you have learned all that I have taught all these years with devotion. Now you must go to my teacher, the revered sage Sri Vidyā Tirtha. He lives in Kanchi. I shall request him to accept you as his disciples."

Mādhava himself was eager to learn more as he felt, even during his childhood, that he was born to achieve great things. He felt that he was not born just to get educated, to marry, beget children and to meet his end as usual like others. He was right in feeling so.

His ability to broaden his vision was greatly perfected by his teachers. Along with his scriptural knowledge, his character showed deep signs of patriotism, firmness, and service-mindedness, practical sense, tolerance towards other religions, righteousness, political awareness and the desire to work for the good of the world.

To that end, with the blessings of their now-widowed Mother, they took Shankarānanda's letter of introduction and went to Kanchi where the great Teacher Vidyā Tirtha himself took them under his wing to guide them. At that time, Kanchi was famous as a great centre of learning in Dvaita, Advaita and Vishishtādvaita systems of philosophy. There were competent teachers in different centres of learning who taught all the six systems of philosophy. Having heard of the fame of the teachers there, students from far-off places came to learn at their feet. Besides being the centre of learning and culture, Kanchi was the capital of the Pallava kingdom also. Here, along with his brothers, Mādhava studied the six systems of philosophy, literature and art and became an expert in the Vedas and the Upanishads.

Not much is known about the personal life of Mādhava but hints of his future as both a teacher and administrator, of his insight and leaning, while still a youngster, can be gathered from a recorded incident during his studentship. One morning, Srī Vidyā Tirtha, the immortal Guru, was seated among his disciples. The ācharya decided to test the ability of these disciples. He put the same question to every one: "What is the ambition of your life?" Each student answered the question differently.

One said: "I wish to seek the patronage of a king at his court."

The disciple named Venkatanātha said: "I have decided to popularize the teachings

of Sri Rāmānujāchārya. I want to write commentaries on his works. I have also decided to become a teacher of the Vedas and the Upanishads." Another student, Sudarshana Bhatta replied: "I wish to go to Srirangam and devote the rest of my days in the worship of Sri Ranganātha."

"Bhoganātha, tell us about your plans." "I wish to become the king among scholars."

"Sāyana, what is your desire?" "When I grow up I wish to write commentaries on the four Vedas. The aim of my life is to collect the essence of all the systems of philosophy."

The Master finally asked Mādhava: "Tell me what your ambition is."

Mādhava said: "Gurudeva, it is difficult to give an answer to your question."

"Why is it difficult, child?"

"As long as the insolence of ego survives in man, it is difficult to achieve anything. But God willing, I would like to spend my days in the service of mankind, the visible expression of God. I wish to utilize my life to awaken the power of the nation, which is now put to sleep as a result of ignorance. I wish to devote my life for the protection of my country and my religion and the freedom of my country," said Mādhava.

When Vidyā Tirtha heard these words, he felt proud of Mādhava. He embraced his disciple, blessed him profusely and said, "Child, it is sacred to devote one's life for the good of others, for one's own country and religion, and for protection of the freedom of the country. Be successful in your ideal. May the world be better because of your service!"...and surely it was.

Mādhava was also troubled by one particular idea: "I must try to remove the dangers which Hinduism and its culture are facing in South India. I must establish a kingdom in the Kannada soil by the grace of Goddess Bhuvaneshwari; I must establish a

kingdom in the South and drive out all invaders. There is nothing greater than *tapas* to fulfil my ambition. Therefore, I must worship Bhuvaneshwari and receive her blessings,” he thought. He shared his desire with his teacher who said: “Child, you are not an ordinary man. You are born to perform a great deed. You will serve and save the land and the language.”

In this way, Mādhavācharya spent the days at Kanchi, then said farewell to his Teacher and returned to Pampā Kshetra. The sons had taken the responsibility of looking after their mother and sister. Mādhava got his sister Singhala/Simhala who had come of age, married to a suitable young man. He himself married Vaitihotri, the daughter of Veetihotri. He worked as a priest to earn a living, besides earning a little by teaching. But he was discontented with this kind of living. Again and again, the ideal which he had declared before his teacher Vidyā Tirtha beckoned him.

In pursuit of fulfillment, Mādhavācharya went back to Srī Vidyā Tirtha who, in 1331, readily gave him *sanyāsa dīkshā*, naming him Srī Vidyāranya, meaning ‘verily a forest of knowledge’. He then went on pilgrimage, reaching Kashi and later Badrikā, where he was initiated into Srī Vidyā. Returning south, he retired to Māhill, near Hampi, where he immersed himself in intense meditation. At Hampi, near the Virupā temple, Srī Vidyāranya built a Mutt for his use. In the meantime, his younger brother had already been ordained by Srī Vidyā Tirtha, and was given the name Srī Bhārati Krishna Tirtha. Now, though younger than Vidyāranya, he became his senior by virtue of his earlier ordainment into sanyāsa āshram and was appointed as the Pontiff of Sringeri from 1333 to 1380 when he attained Videha Mukti. Srī Vidyāranya, who was a close confidant and who assisted the Pontiff in all

Peetham administration, assumed charge of the Sringeri Mutt and reigned as Jagadguru for six years till 1386.

In South India, Bukkaraya and Harihara were two brothers who were sharing the responsibilities of ruling the Vijayanagar Empire; they were marching from victory to victory. In 1346, they had celebrated getting the blessings of the Pontiff Srī Bhārati Krishna Tirtha by giving a land grant to him. After his assuming charge of the Mutt, Srī Vidyāranya initiated the emperor-brothers into the mysteries of Advaitic meditation. Shortly after this event, Harihara visited Sringeri and founded. The *agrahāra* of Vidyāranyapura in memory of the guru. [*agrahāra* the name given to the Brahmin quarter of a heterogeneous village or to any village inhabited by Brahmins.]

The versatile Vidyāranya Swāmi was not only Guru to Harihara I and Bukkaraya, founders of the Vijayanagar Kingdom, but he also served as their Prime Minister. His advice and guidance laid the firm foundation of the empire with piety and righteousness as its cornerstones. During the reign of Bukkaraya he guided the kings properly by imparting correct knowledge regarding religion and faith. After the death of Harihara, there was a conflict between the Jains and Srivaishnavas of Vijayanagar because of some difference of opinion. Vidyāranya solved their problem by advising Bukkaraya to call the leaders of both religions and tell them that there was perfect freedom to all people to follow the tenets of their religion as prescribed in their religious books; he had a royal proclamation issued which became the law of the land. It fostered a feeling of tolerance among different religions in the Vijayanagar Empire.

Under his direction, the emperors made endowments to Mutts founded by him or by

Srī Bhārati Krishna Tirtha in different parts of South India, some of which rose to importance as branches of the Sringeri Shāradā Peetha or as subordinate monastic establishments. Of the new temples built during this period, the Vidyāshankara temple was the grandest. The Bhārati Ramanatha temple was built over the samadhi of Srī Bhārati Krishna Tirtha as was the Vidyāvishveswara temple. Srī Vidyāranya made grants for the worship of Gopinātha in Pashchimavāhini, a few furlongs from Sringeri on the westward bend of the Tungā, and consecrated lingams and Sri Chakras in several places.

In his long periods of meditation, Vidyāranya did not ask for personal happiness or power from Bhuvaneshwari but begged for wisdom and the power to renounce the world. It was not to draw away from human suffering that he became a saint, but so that he might reach the highest point of enlightenment as well as effectively warn the people who had lost the sense of dignity and self-respect so that they might together build a mighty empire. By the time the empire of Vijayanagar was firmly established, he had already adorned the Sringeri Shāradā Peetham as its head. He made over the merit of his *tapas* to the newly-founded empire and guided the Kings in the proper administration of the empire. He made the Kings understand that they should administer the State with the sole object at heart being that of the welfare of the citizens. He guided the people to give up hatred and jealousy. He gave very good support for all the learned people. Through this work, he also learnt many things. He became the true devotee of Shāradā. He was a saint only as far as his personal life was concerned; he practised renunciation, loyalty, and fidelity to his religion. But in public life he joined hands with kings and common men to work for the

welfare of the people. In the case of this great saint who had renounced everything there was a proper blending of both militancy and otherworldly approach. After the founding of the Vijayanagar Empire, he felt that the mission of his life had been fulfilled. Having rid the state of both the internal and external enemies, he returned to Sringeri and adorned the Shāradā Peetham by becoming its chief.

Till this period in the history of the Sringeri Shāradā Peetha, the Jagadgurus had been concentrating on imparting Brahmayāgyā to the elect, and on training spiritual aspirants. With and since the reign of Srī Vidyāranya, the Jagadgurus also took upon themselves the tasks of prescribing proper modes of divine services in temples and guiding the socio-religious activities of the millions of disciples so as to bring them under the discipline of religion. Srī Vidyāranya is rightly considered as one of the brightest jewels in the illustrious line of Sringeri Guru Paramparā. Though Srī Vidyāranya was the head of the Sringeri Mutt for only a short span of six years, with his association with Srī Bhārati Krishna Tirtha (his predecessor Jagadguru and *pūrvāshrama* brother) for over five decades, he left an indelible mark on the spiritual life of his times. The Bhārati Krishna Tirtha - Vidyāranya epoch marks the rise of the Shāradā Peetham to the highest of eminence and led to the emergence of the spiritual institution as the torchbearer in sustaining Sanāthana Dharma.

Engaged as he was in both administrative and spiritual teachings, Srī Vidyāranya still found the time and energy to write for the benefit of future seekers, texts studied even today. He wrote commentaries on the four Vedas and the Upanishads. He enriched the world of learning by writing works like Panchadashi, Jeevanmukti

Viveka, Anubhuti Prakāshikā, Parāshara Mādhaveeya, Devi Aparādha Kshamāpana Stotra, among others. These are celebrated works on Advaita philosophy. He dealt with the essentials of fifteen Ragas in his Sangeeta Sāra and thus became the founder of the Karnataka style of music.

According to Swāmi Krishnānanda of The Divine Life Society, there is no subject on which Vidyāranya Swāmi has not written. The scope of his knowledge included aesthetics, ethics, civics, morality, Dharmashāstra, religion, medical science, anatomy, physiology, metaphysics, and astrology and in every field, his book is the best, accepted as the standard. This praise is authenticated by copper plates made in the 14th century, two of which read:

“Sri Vidyāranya’s powers of exposition are more wonderful than those of Brahmā; he can make (by his dialectics) the eloquent dumb and (by his teaching) the dumb eloquent (Copper Plate May 1384)”. Another tablet reads: “Can he be Brahmā? We do not see four faces; can he be Vishnu? He does not have four hands; can he be Shiva? No oddness of the eyes is observed; having thus argued for a long time, the learned have come to the conclusion that Vidyāranya is verily the Supreme Light Incarnate.” (Sringeri Plate of Harihara II May 1386).

That Vidyāranya Swāmi’s march towards liberation started in previous births and found fulfilment in this birth, much like Bhagwān Ramana Maharishi later, was once explained by the Maharishi’s attendant and devotee, Annāmalai Swāmi. He was asked about how and why Self-realised *jnāni*-s often suffered body problems, getting very sick, despite the mandatory rigorous *tapas* done and *pūnya* enjoyed by them. He replied: “Most *jnāni*-s have gotten rid of most of their *karma*, both good and bad, before they even start on their last life. They have

done *tapas* in their previous lives. By the time their last life starts, they often have very little *karma* left. Only a few like Vidyāranya Swāmi have a lot of *pūnya* to enjoy” Vidyāranya Swāmi lived several centuries ago. In one lifetime, when he was very poor and hungry, one of his gurus initiated him and told him to do *upāsana* of the Goddess Lakshmi. He did that *upāsana* for years, hoping to get rich. But no wealth came to him in that lifetime.

“In one of his subsequent lifetimes, he received initiation from a *jnāni*, did a lot of meditation and finally realised the Self. After realisation, he was established in a state of total desire-less-ness. It was only after his realisation that his previous *upāsana* on Lakshmi started to bear fruit.

“Sometime after his realisation, gold started falling from the sky unto the city where he was living. Vidyāranya Swāmi realised that this was happening because of his previous meditations but because he no longer had any desires, he no longer had any interest in accumulating money or gold. He told the king that the golden rain was falling on account of his previous *tapas*. He also made it clear that he did not want any of the gold for himself. The king announced that the people in the city could keep any gold which had fallen on their own property. He reserved the gold which had fallen on public property for his own use. The king later used his own share of the gold to build new temples and tanks.

“The king took the gold which had fallen on the streets and made gold bricks out of it. In order to test whether Vidyāranya Swāmi was really desire-less, the king put some of these bricks outside Vidyāranya Swāmi’s house. Then he and his wife secretly watched to see what he would do with them. Eventually, Vidyāranya Swāmi came out of his house, saw the bricks and squatted on them while he defecated. Because he no

longer had any interest in money that was the only useful thing he could do with them.”

[Extracted from “Living by the Words of Bhagwan” by David Godman.]

There are many incidents that reveal the divinity of Srī Vidyāranya. When he was living in a cave in the Vindhya Mountains, a Brahmarākshasa named Sringi came to him and said: “Holy one! I am suffering from hunger and thirst. Won’t you give me something to eat?” (A Brahmarākshasa is a spirit. When a very learned person fails in his duty to impart knowledge to others and lives an irreligious life, he is said to become Brahmarākshasa after death and suffer pangs of hunger and thirst.) The saint said, “I am a sanyāsi; how can I provide enough food for you?” Sringi said: “Sir, I shall take you to Sage Vyāsa at Varanasi. You can learn from him all the shāstras and the mystic lore. In return you can feed me.” Vidyāranya agreed and the two went to Varanasi. On the way, Sringi pointed out Vyāsa who was proceeding to Varanasi. Vyāsa was disguised as a hunter leading four dogs. The dogs were the four Vedas. Vidyāranya made his obeisance to Vyāsa and requested him to impart holy knowledge to him. Vyāsa blessed Vidyāranya and took him to Badarikāshrama where he taught him all the

great truths. He also initiated him into Srī Vidyā worship of the Mother Goddess. After teaching all this knowledge, Vyāsa disappeared. Subsequently, Srī Vidyāranya wrote a treatise on Srī Vidyā called Srī Vidyārnava Tantra, which is an encyclopaedia on Srī Vidyā.

It is said that Sringi, the Brahmarākshasa, is fed even today at Sringeri. In his last days, when he was probably 118 years of age, Srī Vidyāranya entered a cave at the Vindhya hills and merged into the Supreme Mother. People of Karnataka have shown their respect for this great saint and founder of Vijayanagar by installing his idol in the temple of Virupāksha in Pampākshetra (modern Hampi). Even today, we can see this statue of Vidyāranya in the temple of Virupāksha at Hampi.

विद्याविद्याविवेकेन पारं संसारवारिधे : ।
प्रापयत्यनिशं भक्तान् तं विद्यारण्यमाश्रये । ।

Homage to this serene Vidyāranya who holds aloft the torch of discrimination, Knowledge of the Real from unreal and helps the devoted cross the sea of birth!

Sources: <http://www.sringeri.net/jagadgurus/sri-vidyaranya/biography>



- Swāmi Chidānanda



Only the strong can be truly compassionate. The weak run the risk of a 'spiritual fall,' if they try to help others. When we do not have sufficient self-control, any effort to offer service to the society will, before long, lead to our getting

entangled in the complexities of money, power, pleasure, etc.

We need to be spiritually robust. Scriptures provide advice on the way to gain such inner strength. No wonder an expression came into use during the 1990s – VUCA – to describe our challenging times! They say we are living today in the VUCA world! Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous! It is indeed an irony that, even as we claim to have achieved greater control over Nature, our life is getting more stressed than ever before.

Practice of Compassion

People try to practise a lot of things but they fail miserably when there is no real preparedness. "There is nothing as strong as true gentleness and nothing as gentle as true strength," somebody has rightly remarked. The inner and the outer are intimately connected. Eastern religions are said to emphasize inner growth and Western ones are considered as giving greater importance to service to humanity. Each actually has both the components – the inner and the outer. Without study, prayer and meditation –

the tools of inner development – our attempts at service outside can lead to a mere show if not hypocrisy or even fraud. Without reaching out to those in need – the outer fragrance of spirituality – our personal practices may go dry, if not get wasted away in a form of escapism.

The Indian tradition has spoken of "steps to rise" and "ways of fall". On the levels of the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect and the speech, numerous practices have been prescribed for us to evolve inwardly. Our tradition has respected the fact that people are made up in different ways, and therefore, depending on their personality type, the paths – *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *jñāna* – have also been recommended. Most of us, of course, are composite personalities. We, therefore, make a judicious combination of the four '*mārgas*' to design our spiritual practices.

Life is a slippery slope

Just as water goes from a higher level to a lower one, human nature has a strong tendency to deteriorate. Somebody went away for two months from his nice apartment in Hyderabad, forgetting to close the glass shutters of the windows of his home. His residence was by a main road, and moreover, there was some construction work going on in the neighborhood. So without his doing anything – a whole lot of dust got collected inside his pretty home, and when he returned, he was horrified to see how dirty the place had become. Very much like that, we will slip from *sattva* to *rajas*, and then from *rajas* to *tamas* - without our doing anything – just due to "certain forces at work"

which are, as though waiting for us to get negligent.

Deteriorating without our doing anything? Is it not a logical contradiction that 'doing nothing' (*abhāva*, absence) leads to some harm (*bhāva*)? Quite so. Therefore, the Vedānta tradition explains this 'fall' in a different way. There is our own 'past karma' (*upātta-durita*), which is in operation. When we apparently 'do not do anything,' these past karmas get a free ride! Therefore, our scriptures have prescribed certain 'nityakarmas' (rituals that we need to do daily, regularly), which continuously prevent the harm¹ or clean up the place. So the past karma (*bhāva*) leads to the harm (*bhāva*), 'not doing the nitya karma' (*akaraṇa*, *abhāva*) is just a 'revealer' of the harm, and not a producer.

Fall takes place in two ways

We may do wrong things out of ignorance or immaturity and that leads to our fall. This is called the error of commission. We may 'not do' our duties, which need to be done, and that also leads to our fall. This second error is of omission. A famous verse in Manu-smṛiti² declares,

*Not doing prescribed duties,
Performing prohibited acts,
Indulging in sense pleasures,
A man meets with his downfall.*

The first line above is '*akaraṇa*' (omission) and the second and the third line indicate '*karaṇa*' (commission). As explained before, however, the 'past karma in operation' is the culprit in the case of "harm coming to us when we do not perform duty" (*akaraṇe pratyavāyah*).

We, therefore, have to be careful both ways. We must do 'what needs to be done' and we must avoid 'what is prohibited'. If we are properly exposed to the Vedic ways, it is so much the better. Even otherwise, we must stay on the right path to the best of our

knowledge. Today, there is a lot of ignorance about right living as per the Rishi Culture because of the huge amount of westernization, beginning with our education. An eminent teacher³ recently remarked with a touch of poignant humour, "*sandhyā-vandanam*, you see, has become an endangered species!" There is a lot of confusion with regard to *nitya-karma*. People wish to jump to Vedānta and they would like to shut their eyes and ears to things like *japa*, *tapah*, *Anuṣṭhāna*. No wonder we find today Tom, Dick and Harry talking about Vedānta but hardly anybody having the inner peace or strength of true spirituality.

Learn continuously and practise firmly

As one of the interpretations of the expression, "*jñāna-yoga-vyavasthithi*," (*Geeta* 16.1) goes, we need to keep an open mind, and continuously learn (*jñāna*); and we must practise (*yoga*) what we have come to appreciate. We are not to turn away from Vedic learning, saying we have studied the high stuff – Upanishads – and everything else is not relevant to us! Various practices (karma, rituals etc.) will naturally leave us when we actually ascend to greater heights of consciousness. Till then, humility and self-discipline are a must.

Notes:

1. Therefore, in many rituals (like *sandhyā-vandana*) or *pūjās*, we have a phrase as part of the *sankalpa*, "*mama-upātta-durita-kṣaya-dvārā Śrī parameshvara-prīti-artham*..", "I perform this pūjā to please the Supreme Lord by first causing my bad past karma to be washed clean.."

2. *akurvan vihitam karma
ninditam cha samācaran
prasajyanscha indriyārtheṣu
naraḥ patanam-rcchati* (Manu-Smṛiti 11.44)

3. Swāmi Paramarthānanda, in his talks on Taittiriya Upanishad Bhāṣya.

- Pablo Tovar



I work with many outstanding leaders with extraordinary competencies; they are brilliant people from whom I have learned a great deal. I am grateful and privileged to be able to work with people like this.

Almost every one of them says they are overwhelmed and worried about not living up to their responsibilities. They are bombarded with emails, meetings, and expectations that are almost impossible to meet. They are experiencing increasing demand from multiple directions, with challenges that do not stop growing in size and scope. Many have not heard of VUCA, but all suffer from it. I believe it is very possible that leading today, in the presence of VUCA, is the biggest challenge that humans have ever faced.

The VUCA concept seems to have been first introduced in the early 90s by the US Army War College to refer to the multilateral world that emerged after the end of the Cold War and was characterised as being more Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous than ever before.

In a business context, the VUCA concept took off after the global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009. Since then, it has featured heavily in the development of leadership skills in various organisations. The concept describes a business environment characterised by:

Volatility: A brutal increase in four dimensions of the changes that we face today: the type, speed, volume, and scale.

Uncertainty: As a result of the Volatility, we are unable to predict future events.

Complexity: Widespread confusion, with no clear connection between cause and effect, affects all organisations nowadays.

Ambiguity: There is a lack of precision, and the existence of multiple meanings within the conditions surrounding us.

We are dealing with a world where change is ever greater, where the future is less predictable, where the options increase exponentially, and the way we think about these options has undoubtedly changed. Today, leaders must make decisions faster, processing huge amounts of information, and where everything is more interconnected than ever before. We may think that this has been the case for every generation for every period in history; surely the feeling must be the same.

One of the big problems is that for many centuries, we have been raised in a context in which we believe the world is predictable. We now need to work with a different mind-set, where the important thing is not to focus on what is probable, but what is possible.

Again, how does one prepare for it? How do we change this mind-set?

Our brain loves to categorise and learn from the past to secure our future. This has worked well for thousands of years. Without this ability to predict the future based on the past, to identify risks, we would have disappeared as a species. This complex internal evolutionary system has done an incredible job of protecting us and allowing us to prosper for millennia, but right now, it is beginning to fail and limit us.

One of the key failures is to lead us to find what is probable rather than what is possible. The VUCA environment means that we must focus on what is possible (because anything can happen) rather than on what is likely to occur (which is determined by what happened before).

Making this change, where we must go from trying to figure out what is most likely, to seeing the possibilities that lie before us, is easier said than done. Research repeatedly shows this is something that does not please our brain. Our general pattern is to cut, reduce and simplify information. To achieve

this change, we need to create new habits and new patterns. We need to talk to each other differently, collect information differently, and develop different strategies and plans for the future.

There are four habits that can help us evolve and improve our ability to deal with higher levels of complexity. These four habits are easy to implement:

- Ask different types of questions
- Take on multiple perspectives
- Develop a systemic vision
- Look at the whole picture; take a step back to see what's possible

This challenge is so critical that our survival depends on it. I believe there are strategies to learn not only to survive, but also to thrive in our environment. We may as well enjoy it while we change our mind-set. That's what leadership development and coaching is actually about.

{Courtesy: Internet/Oxford Leadership}



SNIPPETS OF WISDOM

Sometimes surrender means giving up trying to understand and becoming comfortable with not knowing.

- Eckhart Tolle

- Compiled by Dakshu Mansukhani

"...here the language of stone surpasses the language of man". So wrote the great poet Rabindranāth Tagore referring to the famous Konārḱ Temple, also well-known as The Sun Temple. An architectural marvel of Eastern India and an outstanding symbol of India's heritage, Konārḱ Sun Temple, commonly known as Konārḱ, is situated in the state of Odishā (earlier known as Orissa) and is one of the most eminent tourist attractions. It houses a massive temple dedicated to Surya, the Sun God. The outstanding detailing at three different sides of the temple show three images of Surya, the Sun God, positioned in the proper direction to catch the rays of the sun at morning, noon and evening. The word 'Konārḱ' is a combination of two words: 'konā' means corner and 'arka' means sun; when combined it becomes 'Sun of the Corner'. This is so because the temple is situated in the north-eastern corner of Puri and is dedicated to the Sun God. It is also known as *arka kshetra*.

Built from Khondalite rocks in the middle of the 13th century, Konārḱ is a massive conception of artistic magnificence and engineering dexterity. King Narasimhadeva-I, the great ruler of the Gangā dynasty had built this temple, with the help of 1200

artisans within a period of 12 years (1243-1255 A.D.). Since the ruler used to worship the Sun, the temple was considered as a chariot for the Sun God wherein it was designed in the form of a gorgeously decorated chariot mounted on 24 wheels, each about 10 feet in diameter, and drawn by 7 mighty horses. It is challenging to accept that this huge temple, every inch-space of which was wonderfully carved, could have been completed within such a short time. Whatever that might be, the Konārḱ temple

even in its present ruined state, is still a wonder to the whole world. The original temple had a main sanctum sanctorum (*vimāna*), which was supposedly 229 feet (70 m) tall. Due to the weight of the superstructure and weak soil of the area, the main *vimāna* fell in 1837. The audience hall (*jagamohana*),

which is about 128 feet (39 m) tall, still stands and is the principal structure in the surviving ruins. Among the other structures, which have survived to the current day, are the dance hall (*nata mandira*) and dining hall (*bhoga mandapa*).

The Konārḱ temple is also known for its erotic sculptures of *maithunas*. According to local folklore, Narasimhadeva-I had hired a chief architect called Bisu Mahārānā to build the temple. After a period of twelve years,



with a workforce of twelve hundred, the construction was almost finished. But the workers failed in their attempts to mount the crown stone. The impatient king ordered the temple to be finished in three days or the artisans would be put to death. At the time, Bisu Mahārānā's twelve-year-old son, Dharmapada arrived at the site. (Bisu Mahārānā had never seen his son as he had left his village when his wife was still pregnant.) Dharmapada proposed a solution to mount the crown stone which was successful. But the artisans were still apprehensive that the king would be displeased to learn that a boy succeeded where his best artisans failed. Hearing this, Dharmapada climbed onto the temple and leapt into the water to save his father and his co-workers. According to local legend, stated by a guide - the solution offered by Dharmapada was to place a strong magnetic rod in the dome at the top, which attracted the iron ore laden rocks and kept them stable. Additional local legend has it that the collapse was caused by the removal, by Portuguese sailors, of the strong magnetized rod at the centre which was keeping the temple structure erect. The strong magnetic waves emanating from it were interfering with the ships compass and had resulted in quite a few ship wrecks! In 1627, the then Rājā of Khurda had removed the sun idol from Konārka and moved it to the Jagannāth temple in Puri.

Two smaller ruined temples have been discovered nearby, one of them located southwest from the entrance of the main temple. Dated to the late 11th century, earlier than the main temple, it is presumed to have been dedicated to Māyā devi, one of wives of the Sun god. The other one belongs to some unknown Vaishnava deity. Sculptures of Balarāma, Vārāhā and Trivikram have been found at the site, indicating it to be a

Vaishnavite temple. Both temples have their primary idols missing. A collection of fallen sculptures can be viewed at the Konārka Archaeological Museum which is maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India.

According to ancient texts, Bhavishya and Sāmba Purānas, there may have been a sun temple in the region earlier than the current one, dating to the 9th century or even earlier. The books mention three sun temples at Mundira (possibly Konārka), Kālapriya (Mathura), and Multan. In the Sāmba Purāna, it is stated that Sāmba, the son of Krishna, was cursed with leprosy. A sage advised him to worship the sun god to cure his ailment. Sāmba underwent penance for 12 years in Mitravana near the shores of Chandrabhāgā, where the Sun Temple is situated. Both the original Konārka temple and the Multān temple have been attributed to Sāmba. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (1st Century CE) mentions a port called Kainapara, which has been identified as current day Konārka.

Konārka is an outstanding testimony to the 13th-century kingdom of Orissa and a monumental example of the personification of divinity, thus forming an invaluable link in the history of the diffusion of the cult of *Surya*, the Sun God. In this sense, it is directly and materially linked to Brahmanism and Tantric belief systems. The Sun Temple is the culmination of Kalinga temple architecture, with all its defining elements in complete and perfect form. It is a masterpiece of creative genius in both conception and realization, embellished as it is with sophisticated and refined iconographical depictions of contemporary life and activities.

The Sun Temple's authenticity of form and design is maintained in full through the surviving edifices, their placement within the complex, structures, and the integral link of sculpture to architecture. The various

attributes of the Sun Temple, including its structures, sculptures, ornamentation, and narratives, are maintained in their original forms and material. Its setting and location are maintained in their original form, near the shore of the Bay of Bengal. In preserving the attributes as stated, the Sun Temple, Konārṁ repeatedly evokes the strong spirit and feeling associated with the structure, which is manifested today in the living cultural practices related to this property, such as the Chandrabhāgā festival (a five-day international Sand Art Festival).

The monument was also called the Black Pagoda (kāḷā pagodā) by European sailors of the time. In contrast, the Jagannāth Temple, also in Puri, was called the White Pagodā. Both temples served as important

landmarks for the sailors.

Described by UNESCO as “...one of the outstanding examples of temple architecture and art as revealed in its conception, scale and proportion, and in the sublime narrative strength of its sculptural embellishment”, the temple is a UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE and has also been featured on various lists of Seven Wonders of India even though a major part of the structure is now in ruins. The temple is 35 km from Puri and 65 km from Bhubaneshwar and can be reached by road transport from either city.

Sources:

<http://whc.unesco.org/www.thekonark.in/and>
[Wikipedia](#)



What do we learn from the Upanishads?

THE WAY TO HEAL YOUR HEARTBURN

The seed for the celebrated teaching of Karma Yoga in the Bhagavad Geetā is found in the Upanishads¹.

Do your duty; give your best; let your attention be on action, and not upon its result.

In relationships, our heartburn is when we feel, “We have done so much for her; she has not reciprocated even one tenth of it!”

What we have done for the other person is **karma** (action). What the other person has done for our sake is **phala** (result). Our agitations are because we are brooding over “**phala**”.

The Upanishad proclaims to the effect, “You can regain peace in all relationships when you let go of the emphasis on ‘what you get’.”

Note: 1. *na karma lipyate nare* —Ishā-2

Swāmi Chidānanda

Stop Opinions

- Foyan Quingyuan (1067-1120)

The Third Patriarch of Zen said, "Don't seek reality, just put a stop to opinions." He also said, "As soon as there are judgments of right and wrong, the mind is lost in a flurry." These sayings teach you people of today what to work on.

When you read his saying, "don't seek reality," you say there is no further need to seek-this means you are still entertaining opinions and are in a flurry of judgments; after all you have not reached a state of mind where there is no seeking, and are just making up an opinionated interpretation.

People who study Zen nowadays are all like this; reading a transformative saying and reaching an insight into the words, they then try to apply it to all sayings, thinking they are all the same. Keeping this in their hearts, they think of it as their own attainment; far from realizing they have lost their minds by entertaining an opinionated understanding, they cling to it and will not let go. What ignoramuses!

Would you like to attain a state of mind where you seek nothing? Just do not conceive all sorts of opinions and views. This non-seeking does not mean blanking out and ignoring everything. In everyday life twenty-four hours a day, when there is lack of clarity in the immediate situation, it is generally because the opinionated mind is grasping and rejecting. How can you get to know the nondiscriminatory mind then?

Thus when an ancient sage was asked if the created and the uncreated are different, he said they are not. Sky and earth, rivers and seas, wind and clouds, grasses and trees, birds and beasts, people and all living things living and dying, changing right before our

eyes, are all called created forms. The uncreated way is silent and unmoving; the indescribable and unnameable is called uncreated. How can there be no difference?

Grand Master Yongjia said, "The true nature of ignorance is the very nature of enlightenment; the empty body of illusions and projections is the very body of realities." These two are each distinct; how do you understand the logic of identity? You have to experience the mind without seeking; then they will integrate and you will get to be trouble-free.

In the ten stages of enlightenment, the fifth is the stage Difficult to Conquer, which means that it is extremely difficult to attain equality of real knowledge and conventional knowledge; when you enter this stage, the two are equal, so it is called the state that is difficult to conquer. Students of the path should take them in and make them equal twenty four hours a day.

And do you know they are drawn up by your nondiscriminatory mind? Like an artist drawing all sorts of pictures, both pretty and ugly, the mind depicts forms, feelings, perceptions, abstract patterns, and consciousness; it depicts human societies and paradises. When it is drawing these pictures, it does not borrow the power of another; there is no discrimination between the artist and the artwork. It is because of not realizing this that you conceive various opinions, having views of yourself and views of other people, creating your own fair and foul.

So it is said, "An artist draws a picture of hell, with countless sorts of hideous forms. On setting aside the brush to look it over, it's bone chilling, really hair-raising." But if you know it's a picture, what is there to fear?

In olden times, when people had clearly realized this, it became evident in all situations. Once when the great teacher Xuansha was cutting down a tree a tiger bounded out of the woods. The teacher's companion said, "It's a tiger!" The teacher scolded him and said, "It's a tiger for you."

Another time, when he saw a seeker performing prostrations, Xuansha said, "It is because of the self that one can bow to the other." These expedients are in profound accord with the intent of Buddha.

The great teacher Fayen once pointed to a dog right in front of him and said, "An engraving." When you look at this, do not look to the dog itself for clarification; you must see it in your own experience before you can get it. Only then will you understand the saying, "As soon as there are judgments of right and wrong, you lose your mind in a flurry." I hope you get the point!

Independence

What do you people come to me for? Each individual should lead life autonomously—don't listen to what other people say. An ancient declared, "I knew how to lead life by the time I was eighteen." You people must learn to live independently.

You say, "Lead what life?" Just do not seek elsewhere. Most people today are compulsively active; this is already not knowing how to lead life. This is called abandoning home, scattering the family, and becoming a drifter. Clearly this is not understanding. Just searching and seeking, studying a bit of intellectual knowledge, memorizing a few sayings is called "hauling manure inside".

When you get here, our actions have to be truly accurate; eventually it will sink in thoroughly, and then you will understand. An ancient said, "Everywhere is you. Go east, and it's you; go west, and it's you. Who are you?" If you say, "Me," this is emotional and intellectual consciousness, which you must

pass through before you attain realization.

In ancient times Vasubandhu asked Asanga, "Elder brother, when you went to the inner palace, what teaching did Maitreya expound to you?" Asanga replied, "He expounded this teaching." Now tell me, what teaching is this? You must be able to discern it before you can realize it.

Don't fix recognition on this. Many people have been fooled by the term this.

In Tune

Don't say what is speaking right now is it; that's not quite right. As soon as there is an affirmation, then there is a denial. That is the reason why it is said, that no verbal expressions correspond to this reality.

What you must do is live in harmony with it. This matter is not in another; but are you in tune with it? And if you are in tune, in tune with whom?

If you say you are in tune with the ancients, the ancients are gone. If you say you are in tune with a teacher, a teacher has no connection with you.

This is why the sages compassionately told us to tune into the source of our own minds. Now tell me, what is the source of mind, to which one tunes in on one's own?

If you mindfully try to tune into the mind, you will definitely be unable to tune in. You have to tune in with mindless mind.

(excerpted from Instant Zen – Waking up in the Present, translation by Thomas Cleary)

[Foyan Qingyuan (1067-1120)

Shigui came from the town Linglong near modern Chengdu in the province of Sichuan.

Also known as Longmen Qingyuan

At age 14, he left home and joined the Order. Buddhist practice began studying Buddhist texts, including Winai. He respected the rules Winai

Some time later became a student of master Ouzou Fayen

Later he taught in the monasteries such as Tianning (next to the city Tianning county Jiangdu in the prov.) Jiangsu and Baochan on top of Longmen.]

- Compiled by Vijayalakshmi Menon

Bhārat the great holy land of ours has withstood the onslaught of foreign invaders since time immemorial . In spite of this it has retained its ancient glory and is even today known as the Sanātana Pūnyabhūmi. The Vishnu Purāna, one of the oldest amongst Purānas refers to Bhārat as *dhanyastute bhārata bhūmi hāge!* (Blessed is the part of the earth known as Bhārata!) This is because of the great traditions set by our revered sages. Even in the modern world Bhārat has produced sages like Ramana Maharshi Aurobindo, Shri Rāmakrishna Pramahansa and Swāmi Vivekānanda whose teachings have been the present day guiding force in the matters of social life and spirituality around the globe. In a nutshell, these sages did everything to make life on this earth worth living.

One of these sages was the great Maharishi Atri.

atreya ca namas-tubhyam,

sarva-loka-hitaiine

shuddha rūpāya satyāya,

brahmaṇe'mita-tejase || (pūjā samuccaya)

(Obeisance to Sage Atri, one who always thinks of the welfare of the world, The purest among human beings, all knowing, the most radiant and upholder of the truth)

As per our traditional beliefs, Lord Brahmā is the creator of this earth and the life on it. Sage Atri, one of the most powerful sages of Hindu mythology was one of his sons. He was married to a great tapswini called Anasūyā and they lived a divine life in an āshram in Suchindram near Kanyākumāri. Once the consorts of the trinity Brahmā,

Vishnu and Mahesh namely Saraswati, Lakshmi and Pārvati were arguing as to who was the most chaste amongst them. Each thought that the honour belonged to her. During this argument, the divine Sage Nārada happened to pass by and on seeing him, the three Devis posed this question to him. Nārada, without any hesitation, answered that there was no one as chaste as Anasūyā , the wife of Sage Atri. She was so chaste, he said, that she could even bake beans made of iron without using fire. Nobody could approach her with any improper thoughts. Such was the power of her austerity! She never swerved from her path of duty towards her husband. The Devis thought that if a mere mortal of a woman could do it, so could they. They tried to do the same but failed miserably. They were consumed with jealousy. In the end, they went back to their husbands and asked them to go to Anasūyā and get her to commit some indiscretion. So, on their insistence, Brahmā, Vishnu and Siva went to Sage Atri's hermitage, disguised as three young sages. As Sage Atri was out, Anasūyā welcomed them and asked them to have some food until the Sage returned. Now the three of them put their plan into action. They told Anasūyā that they were observing a certain fast wherein they had taken a vow that they will not eat anything unless the person serving the food was naked. Anasūyā was in a quandary as to how she could stand naked in front of these young sages and yet she did not want them to go without eating any food. By the power of her chastity and penance, she understood who these sages were.

She prayed to the Lord to get her out of this situation and to her surprise, all three turned into small babies. She then removed her clothes, fed them and then, putting on the clothes once again, continued with her household chores. When Sage Atri returned, he was surprised to see the three babies. Anasūyā explained to him how the three Gods had come to test her virtue and their strange condition. Sage Atri fully approved of what she had done and upon his request, Anasūyā turned the babies back into the three Gods. The Gods were very pleased with her and offered a boon to the couple. Anasūyā requested that the three be born as her sons. Thus was born Brahmā as Chandra, Vishnu as Dattātreya and Shiva as Durvāsā. When they grew up, Chandra went to Chandraloka, Durvāsā to the forests on the slopes of the Himālayas but Dattātreya stayed back with his parents and served them. Thus Dattātreya carries the powers and attributes of the trinity, the *nirguṇa parabrahma tattva*, he became a guru and continues to be one till this day.

Mother Anasūyā's unstinted devotion for Maharishi Atri and her unmatched spiritual power of *tapas* brought her great divine power. This made both Maharishi Atri and mother Anasūyā worthy of being worshipped. -'sapatnīkam prapūjayet' says our Purānās when they refer to them. Thus worshipping our great sages, getting to know about their lives and following in their footsteps have become a great part of our tradition. It is only by doing this that we satisfy our obligation known as *ṛṣi-ṛṇa* and become blessed.

Once, sage Atri was engaged in *tapas* along with his followers. During this time a severe famine occurred. All living beings lost hope of survival. They even began killing animals for food. It was at this time that Shaibya, son of Emperor Shibi decided to

perform a yagna and invited Sage Atri for it. He was offered villages, eatables, animals, gold and gems, etc. by the king as dakshinā. But Sage Atri was an exception and would not even look at them, for he felt that when people were dying around him because of the famine, it was not right for him to accept free gifts. Instead, he asked the king to distribute all that amongst his people. *ārthibhyo dīyatām sarvam*. Thus he continued his journey with his followers to the forest to collect fruits and roots to eat. When the king heard about what Sage Atri had done, he was livid. He sent his people laden with fruits stuffed with precious stones and jewels. When the Sage came to know of this, he left for an unknown destination without telling anyone. This made the king even angrier. Using Witchcraft, he decided to perform a yagna from which a female demon Yatudhani appeared; she was given the job of destroying the Sage and his followers. On discovering the location where the Sage and his followers were, she created a beautiful lake with plenty of lotus in it. On seeing this, the Sage and his followers soon came to collect the lotus stems, which was to be their food but soon realized that as they had not finished their daily chores, (nityakarma) they could not eat just then. So they left the lotus stems by the side of the lake and went to finish their chores. In the meantime, the chief of Gods Devendra passed by and saw this heap of lotus stems. He understood that they belonged to Sage Atri and his followers. Just to test them, Devendra hid the lotus stems. When the starving sage and followers came to collect the lotus stems, which was to be their food, they found them missing. Instead of getting furious and cursing, they kept their cool and made sure that this incident did not disturb them in anyway specially during their meditation. It is said that seeing this, Devendra was so happy with their

forbearance and self control that he took them to heaven, Devloka.

Our great epics, The Rāmāyana and The Mahābhārata, have sung praises of Atri Maharishi and Anasūyā Mātā in glowing terms. In Rāmāyana, it is said that when Śrī Rāma, son of king Dasaratha, visited Maharishi Atri's āshram during his fourteen years of vanavāsa, it was there that Sitāji requested and learnt the innermost secrets of pativratā dharma from Mātā Anasūyā who showed her that it was possible to be divine and yet lead a normal life as per human values, in this world.

In the Mahābhārata, when Drona was made head of Kaurava family after Bhishma's fall, dead bodies piled up and provided a feast for the birds of prey. In this carnage which went beyond all human estimation, Drona stood out like a demonic hero. Sage Atri was very worried that if Drona continued in this manner, it would cause human misery, such as never seen before. Sage Atri felt sorry for Drona and consoled him saying that Drona by now should have realized that this war was taking place because he had all along done things against dharma. He being a Vedic scholar should have known the repercussions. He pleaded with Drona to give up this fight and fix his mind on sanātana dharma. Hearing the great sage's advice, Dronāchārya stopped killing and began meditating on Lord Vishnu. If Maharshi Atri had not counseled Dronāchārya, he would have destroyed the battlefield. Thus Sage Atri appears a number of times in the Mahābhārata wherein he guides a number of people with his wisdom, experience and timely advice. His role is that

of a redeemer of pain in this world.

Sage Atri is among the three main seers who propounded the sacred thread (after Brahaspati). This thread has three strands symbolizing creation – Brahmā with the letter A, sustainability-Vishnu, with the letter U and dissolution-Shiva, with the letter M. Together, these three strands show the vow a Brahmin takes to adhere to AUM, the cosmic sound.

The Rigveda has mandalas or sections. Sage Atri, the great discoverer of mantras of Hinduism and other members of his gotra were the people to whom the fifth mandala was revealed. In the Atri mandala, there is a graphic description of the earth and the great love and respect for her. According to it, she is a Devatā and her greatness is glorified. Sage Atri is also attributed to being the first to predict solar eclipse and its duration. Rigveda also describes the Sage's powers to dispel the eclipse.

The word Atri means one who has transcended the three *gunas* namely *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* making him a *trigunātita*. Anasūyā means one who is purest among pure. They together represent pure *purusha* and pure *prakṛiti*. Nārada Bhakti sutra says

*tīrtham kurvanti tīrthāni
sukarmī kuruvanti karmāni
shāstrī-kurvanti shāstrāni*

Meaning great people make holy water more holy or sacred, they turn deeds into sacred deeds and render *shāstras* virtuous and venerable. They are the people who make the whole world a worthy place to live in!!



LOVE NEEDS NO ETHICS

- Sudhākar Deshpande

| *kim karma kim akarma iti*
kavayo'pyatra mohitāh |

Even the learned are bewildered with regard to right action and wrong action! (Geeta 4.16)

With all the philosophical edifices built around it, the issue of “right versus wrong” continues to be a moot point. Tradition has hurled around systems of ethics – the Panchasheela, the Pancha-mahāvratas, the pancha-yamas and so on. However, though these systems may gag the pestering mouths for a while, they are, by no means, an appropriate answer to the seething query of the skeptical seeker. What a genuine seeker wants is not a temporary pain-killer, but an absolute remedy which would uproot the malady. It is to be greatly regretted that mediocre people, who happened to be at the helm of affairs, did all their best to check the unbridled skepticism which was a threat to their religious positions. So they invented the concept of ‘faith’, which later became a pivotal concept in all traditional religious systems. And, alas! People lost track of that exquisitely wonderful inquiry – the tool of doubting.

Let us take a very common place example to illustrate this subtle issue. Suppose a child goes on asking his father as to why he should go to school and what all this business of education is. The father, who himself does not know the answer, gets irritated and says in a dictatorial voice, “Just go to school, and don’t ask such silly questions...” In a similar vein, mediocre religious teachers have prescribed certain moral disciplines for the novices, and they

have succeeded in gagging the mouths of the latter for a little while. This is, however, not the resolution of the issue.

Try as you like to smother the volcanic eruption of inquiry, you will never succeed in that effort. For it is that Divine Intelligence, which is inspiring from within to question, to doubt, to be skeptical. Blessed indeed are they who have this blessed spirit of sceptical inquiry, for they shall come upon Truth, rather than the ‘faithful’ ones. Let the mouth of skepticism be wide agape, and the Truth would, of itself, fall into it! What you need to come upon Truth is not any ‘knowledge’ about it but a total absence of all knowledge whatsoever. It is the innocent mind which comes upon Truth, and not the mind, cluttered with the garbage called knowledge.

Belief is a garbage which has been used time and again to make good the abyss of ignorance. But that has never helped man to come upon Truth, Love, Compassion and Peace. It has rather resulted in the emergence of animosity, hatred, ill-will and self-centred ambition – lending support to the vicious ideal of victory, in place of peace and goodwill.

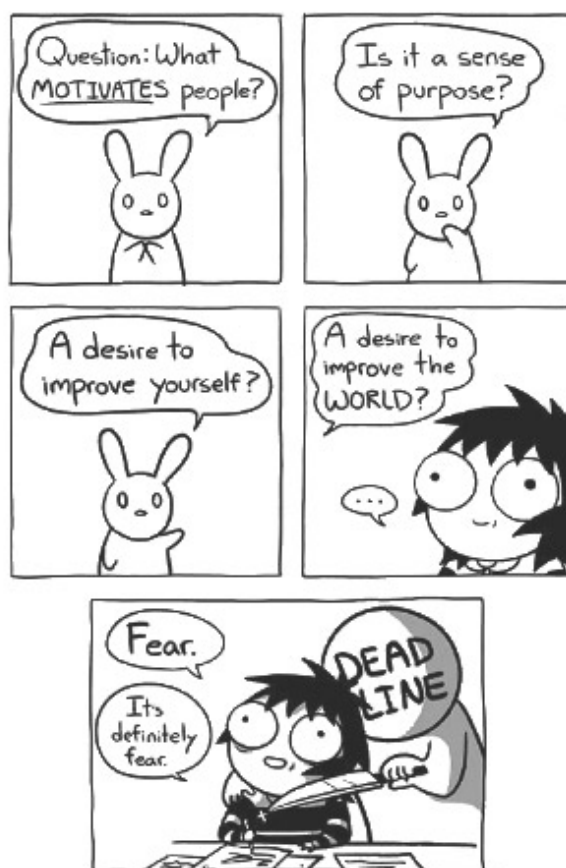
With this prelude, let us go back to our original question – what is action? What is – not reaction or wrong action – but just action?

A little reflection suffices to see why we are inclined to do the so-called ‘immoral’ action. We indulge in a wrong action only when we have some desire to fulfill out of it. I want to have money and I don’t seem to get it through a truthful living. So I tell a lie. But if I don’t have the desire to get money at all, I won’t tell a lie. Thus it is desire which is at the

root of all immoral action. A desireless person can never do a wrong action.

Now, one may plead that there are good desires as well as bad ones, and that though we should shun all bad desires, we should continue to have the good ones – say the desire to help. This is a very clever trap into which man has been falling. However, there is no desire which is desirable! Desire, perse,

is evil. Even the desire to do good to humanity is evil in so far as it is desire. Doing good to humanity must spring as a spontaneous manifestation of love and compassion. And when it springs that way, it is not the outcome of my desire, but it is the creative manifestation of the Divine Intelligence. And that Divine Intelligence is Love. And Love needs no ethics!



© Sarah Andersen

In Kashmir there was a big merchant who was dealing in all kinds of goods made in Persia. Every year he would go to Persia with some merchandise for sale and return with goods purchased in that distant land for sale in his country. This was going on for several years. On one occasion he saw a beautiful talking parrot, brought it to Kashmir and hung its cage in a prominent place in his house. The parrot talked like a human being and was very much loved by its master and his family. Once it so happened that the merchant fell ill at the time of his usual annual visit to Persia for business. So he asked his secretary, who was a trustworthy man, to go to Persia on his behalf and transact business. On the day of the secretary's starting on the journey, the parrot, coming to know that he was to go to Persia in place of his master, called him and said, "Since you are going to my native place will you do me a favour? You know I am here imprisoned in a cage and denied the joy of flying about freely and cheerfully. Kindly go to the big forest lying to the east of the town which you are going to visit. On the trees of this forest are living my relations and friends. You have to report to them about my miserable condition in Kashmir, as I am imprisoned in a cage and living far off from them. Then you have to ask them on my behalf what means I should employ in order to get free from the cage. Whatever answers you receive from them, please report to me on your return."

Accordingly, after the business in Persia was over, the secretary turned towards the forest as directed by the parrot and looking up at the trees found hundreds of parrots flying from branch to branch in those trees. The secretary then spoke to the parrots, placing before them the question raised by their

brother parrot living in a cage in Kashmir. He asked the question three or four times but got no reply. He waited for some time and was about to turn away in disappointment. Just then he saw an old parrot drop down to the ground apparently dead. Of course the secretary did not attach any importance to this as he thought the parrot must have died of old age.

In due course the secretary returned to Kashmir and, presenting himself before his master, reported about his business transactions in Persia. Before going home the secretary said that he had carried out the instructions of the parrot as suggested, but in spite of his repeated questionings he got no response. But a strange thing happened, namely an old parrot fell down from the tree dead. This may be due to the sudden attack of some illness or old age, and there may be nothing strange about the occurrence.

As soon as the parrot heard the secretary's story, it fell down from its perch on to the floor of the cage and stretching out its wings and legs lay as though dead. The secretary thought the parrot must have had a stroke which caused its sudden death. He conveyed the sad news immediately to this master. The master came and noticed the prostrate condition of the parrot without any sign of life. He called a servant and asked him to take the dead parrot out of the cage and throw it somewhere far away from the house. The servant, as ordered, took the parrot from the cage and, going some distance, threw it on a heap of debris in a pit. The moment the parrot touched the ground it got up and flew away.

The soul can achieve freedom only when its ego-sense is dead.

Story told by Swāmi Rāmdās

- Richard Lovelace

Stone walls do not a prison make,

Nor iron bars a cage.

Mind, innocent and quiet,

Take it for a hermitage.

If I have freedom in my Love,

And in my soul am free,

Angels alone who soar above,

Enjoy such liberty.



SNIPPETS OF WISDOM

True freedom and joy consists in living from moment to moment in the consciousness of God through utter surrender to His will.

- Swāmi Rāmdās

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

LOOKING BACK

- Pūjyā Swāmiji joined the Annual Conclave of the Krishnamurti Foundation of India(KFI), Cuttack Centre, held at Konārṅk in the third week of December, 2016. The theme was “Relationships Matter”.

- Fowai Forum held the Retreat on Aitareya Upanishad - ‘The Supremacy of Awareness’ -at the Suvarṇamukhi Sanskriti Dham in the outskirts of Bangalore in the first week of January, 2017. Nearly 60 people attended the retreat.

- Right after the retreat, there was a three-day event at the Study Centre under the ‘Centre for Education’ of KFI, Bangalore. The theme was ‘Upanishads and Krishnamurti’; Pūjyā Swāmiji anchored several sessions of discussion and presentation at this event.

- This was followed by a two-day event on the theme of ‘creativity’ at NAIMISAM, the KFI retreat campus in the out skirts of Hyderabad wherein Pūjyā Swāmiji made presentations and anchored discussions.

- Pūjyā Swāmiji delivered talks on various themes in Mumbai in the first half of February, 2017.

LOOKING AHEAD

- **DHIMAH**I (Deriving Holistic Insights into Management from the Heritage of India) is the new wing of AUPA, which aims at imparting value education to the corporate world and to educational institutions. Various events are being planned under **DHIMAH**I for February-March, 2017. Prominent among these is an address on “Innovation and Leadership through Self-exploration (Who am I?)” at CavinKare, a very successful FMCG company in Chennai. Nearly 80 executives of the company are expected to attend this event.

Dhimahi is also organising events near Chennai in Tamilnadu, in the Hubli / Dharwad region in Karnataka and in the Delhi & NCR; Pūjyā Swāmiji will deliver lectures and anchor discussions at these events.

- Pūjyā Swāmiji is planning to visit USA from 27th April through 18th June 2017. On 29th April 2017, Swāmiji will be one of the speakers at the Holistic Living Seminar to be held at Fayetteville, North Carolina, USA. This seminar will be in honour of the late Dr. Siddharth Gautam. Details can be got from the website aupain.in.

- Fowai Forum is planning to organize a retreat at Goa in early December 2017.



ETERNAL VIBRATIONS



Time Management
In Ancient Indian Literature
A Powerful Tip from Vālmīki Rāmāyana

{Pieces of work that yield a lot of result upon investing even a little time and energy, called mahā-udayam, laghu-moolam kāryam, need to be done first, without delay. Today, they call this precisely adherence to priority!}

कच्चिदर्थं विनिश्चित्य लघुमूलम् महोदयं
क्षिप्रमारभसे कर्तुं न दीर्घयसि राघव

*kaccid-arthaṁ viniścitya
laghumūlam mahodayaṁ
kṣipram-ārabhase kartuṁ
na dīrghayasi rāghava ?
[2.100.19]*

Shri Rāma to his younger brother Shri Bharata:
O Bharata, having determined on an endeavour involving a little effort and yielding great results,
I trust you commence to execute it quickly without procrastination. Don't you?

{An excellent source of verses, word meanings, English translation and recitation (audio)
of the whole of Vālmiki Rāmāyana is www.valmiki.iitk.ac.in developed at IIT Kanpur.}



FOWAI FORUM

Wisdom for Right Action

Dissemination of spiritual and secular wisdom is the main objective of the Fowai Forum. Educational activities, human welfare and services to all life are its concerns. Insights and observations especially based on Indian culture and heritage will find expression in its activities.

This public trust came into being in the year 2006. Registered as per the Mumbai Public Trust Act of 1950, the Forum engages in organizing talks and workshops as well as in publication of books and audio-visual media.

F.O.W.A.I. = Flame Of Who Am I?

“Who am I?” is the most basic question of life. The understanding of the self, the ‘me’, can cause radical change in the quality of life. This requires turning (the flame of) attention towards thoughts and emotions. When likes and dislikes fall away, pure perception takes place. That heralds freedom.

Dates of publication : 15th of October, December, February, April, June & August

www.fowai.org

E-mail : fowaiforum@yahoo.com