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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Hari Om

'Freedom from the Known' is one of the famous books written by the great Jiddu Krishnamurti, who was one of the foremost mystics to have graced our times. What he hinted at is that the human mind is incapable of generating any original insight, as every thought is a derivative of the subtle impressions or *vāsanās*, that are left behind by the myriad experiences that have gathered over the many lives that the *Jivātmā* passes through. Similarly, every question that plagues the sharpest minds today, has been pondered over by the best intellects in the past too, to arrive at answers and we stand to gather much wisdom through the study of the lives of great men.

Under our feature 'The Beacons', there is the inspiring life-story of Madhusudana Saraswati who had considered the great debate between the paths of Bhakti and Jnāna during his time and its resolution through a rare blend of devotion to Lord Krishna and mastery of Advaita philosophy.

In his article under the series 'Perceiving Phoenix', Swāmi Chidānanda addresses the popular misconception that becoming spiritual sucks out all the fun quotient of life.

Under our series 'Places that Beckon', we are taking you to a picturesque Devi *kshetra* in the coastal belt of Karnataka, namely Kollur, that has been sanctified by great sages like Kola Rishi and Āchārya Shankara.

The pandemic that has gripped the world has put in motion a chain of events that are probably irreversible and a vast many in the East and the West are looking at Indian spirituality for answers. One of the famous ambassadors of Indian spirituality in the US is the much-loved author, teacher of meditation and Fulbright scholar Shri Eknath Easwaran. Swāmiji recounts his meetings with this gentle giant under our series 'Fleeting Moments, Enduring Impressions'.

We are hopeful that the issue will bring the much needed succour that all of us are in need of, by acting as the medicine that cures the 'worldliness' that has been compared to a disease (*bhavaroga*).

For Swāmi Chidānanda
Cdr HC Guruprasad (IN, Retd)



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WE ARE LISTENING

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

Please email us at : innerflame@fowai.org

Cover design of this issue: Rashmi Hande

The creative graphic has the 5 deities (pañchāyatanas)
namely Vishnu, Shiva, Devi, Ganesha and Surya.

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The Beacons

Madhusudana Saraswati - A Champion at Combining Bhakti with Jnāna

- Compiled by Dakshu Mansukhani

The way to overcome the ego

Madhusudana Saraswati, the undisputed guru of all *jnānis* in Varanasi, was holding court at the Gopal Math in Chausatti Ghāt.

Sitting on his high seat, he was giving a discourse on the finer points of philosophy, when there walked in an unknown *avadhuta*¹. Walking straight up the central aisle, looking neither left nor right, the *avadhuta* came and sat down on the empty seat reserved for honourable guests. Such guests would normally be invited by the Guru himself, but the *avadhuta*¹ waited for no such invitation. A hush fell over the throngs of *sannyāsis* and *brahmachāris* at the show of *lèse-majesté*!

The Guru also fell quiet, and in that moment of silence, the *avadhuta* called out, "Madhusudan!" Again, a shocked silence fell over the crowd. How arrogant! Who dared address the great Madhusudana Saraswati without the preamble of 'Shripad' or some other honorific? But again, the *avadhuta* declaimed in a commanding, stentorian voice, "Madhusudan!"

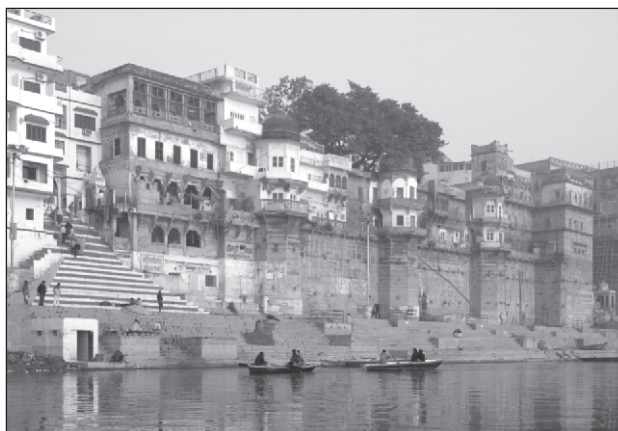
Madhusudana humbly acknowledged the *avadhuta*, signalling to the now-agitated audience to sit still and let the stranger have his say. The *avadhuta* said, "Madhusudan, with all your knowledge, do you still take pleasure in defeating someone in debate? Does that give you pride?" The emperor of *sannyāsis* bowed his head silently, and then admitted to the truth of the accusation.

"And do you feel distress when you do not find the perfect argument with which to counter someone else's argument in debate?"

Again, Madhusudana Saraswati acquiesced. And then the *avadhuta* told him to go and take initiation in

the Krishna mantra, for, until he had overcome his *ahamkāra*, all his knowledge was worthless.

The story goes on of how Madhusudana had to do intense *purashcharana*² of the *mantra* three times before attaining *siddhi*, but when he finally did, he had a vision of Krishna, playing his flute. And this is how he came to write his famous verse,



varṣī-vibhūṣita-karānnava-nīradābhāt
pītāmbārādaruṇa-bimba-
phalādharauṣṭhāt |
pūrṇendu-sundara-mukhādaravinda-
netrāt
kṛṣṇāt paraṁ kimapi tattvam ahaṁ na
jāne ||

*With a flute adorning his hand,
(his lustre being comparable with) the
colour of a new cloud, dressed in a
yellow cloth and with lips as red as dawn
or the bimba fruit, with a face as beautiful
as the full moon and eyes like lotuses,
I know of no truth higher than Krishna.*

Early Life

Madhusudana's outstanding personality, as seen through his writings, eclipses the lack of availability of details regarding his early life. In the late 12th century, his ancestors, escaping religious persecution by foreign invaders, are said to have migrated from Uttar Pradesh to a village named Unasiya in the Kotalipada district of Faridpur (now in Bangladesh). Around 1540, a child was born in this lineage to Pramodan Purandarāchārya. The child was one of five brothers and the brightest among them. He was given the name Kamalanayana. As a small child, he learned Sanskrit grammar, poetry, etc. from his father. It is believed that he left home early, perhaps as early as at age 10, desiring to meet the famous Sri Mahāprabhu Chaitanya. He went to Navadvip, but could not meet Mahāprabhu. Mahāprabhu either refused to meet him or perhaps, the great Krishna devotee had already left

Navadvip. Kamalanayana then turned his attention towards gaining knowledge in the *Navya-Nyāya* (the Neo-logical *darshana* of Indian logic and philosophy), a tradition prominent in Navadvip. He studied under reputed, erudite scholars of those days, such as Harirāma Tarkavāgisha and Mathuranāth Tarkavāgisha. He became so accomplished in *Navya-Nyāya* techniques that it was said about him:

नवद्वीपे समयाते मधुसूदनवाक्पतौ
चकम्पे तर्कवागीशः कातरोऽभूद्रदाधरः

*When Madhusūdana, the master
of speech, came to Navadvipa,
Mathuranāth Tarkavāgisha (who was the
foremost navyanyāyika during those
times) trembled (with fear) and
Gadādhara (another logician of great
repute) became afraid.*

At the same time, though he was still unable to meet Shri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Kamalanayana also deeply imbibed the devotional teachings of Sri Chaitanya with which Navadvip was vibrant.



Life at Kāshi

Kamalanayana then proceeded to Kāshi (Vārānasi) to grasp the intricacies of the Advaita teachings. His aim was to finally refute these teachings with *Nyāya*'s logic and to establish *Nyāya*'s superiority over that of Advaita! He went to Kāshi even though non-*sannyāsis* were not really permitted to study the Vedānta in those days. On completing this course of study under Rāma Tirtha, he felt that a command of the *Mimāṃsā* philosophy too was necessary to become a complete scholar. He was fortunate to have been accepted as a student of *Mimāṃsā* by the knowledgeable *Sannyāsi* Mādhava Saraswati. But his hunger to study deeper was not quenched; he went on to tackle the *Advaita* philosophy. The more Madhusūdana studied Advaita, the more he became convinced of the validity of its being the final frontier of knowledge. He later confessed to his Guru, Rāma Tirtha that he had originally come to defeat Advaita in order to refute it; and now wondered if there was any *prāyashchitta*³ for him. Rāma Tirtha is said to have asked Kamalanayana to accept *sannyāsa* as the *prāyashchitta*. Eventually, even in the field of Advaita Vedānta, Kamalanayana, now going by the name Madhusudana Saraswati, came to be a towering giant among Advaitins:

मधुसूदनसरस्वत्याः पारं वेत्ति सरस्वती पारं वेत्ति
सरस्वत्याः मधुसूदनसरस्वती

(Only) the Goddess of Learning,
Saraswati knows the limits of

(knowledge of) Madhusūdana Saraswati. And Madhusūdana Saraswati knows the limits of (knowledge of) Goddess Saraswati.

Originator of the Nāgā sect

While he was at Benares, Madhusudana had got acquainted with the works of Tulsi Dās, the composer of the Hindi *Rāmacaritamānasa*. Inspired by Tulsi Das's scholastic discussions on the scriptures, he composed a poem on him. When Emperor Akbar (1542-1605) came to know about his scholarly qualities, he honoured him with a title. A historically important event at Benares in those days has been recorded by Prof. J.N. Farquhar: One of the notorious practices of the Muslim priests, 'as good Muslims' was to frequently 'attack and kill' the Hindus, both lay and monastic, especially at pilgrim centres such as Benares. Those priests were protected by a faulty law that exempted them from any legal punishment. So the hapless Hindus approached Madhusudana to do something to stop this injustice. Since he was well-known at the durbar of Emperor Akbar (1556-1605), he met the Emperor through Rājā Birbal and narrated to him the religious atrocities at Benares and other places. As a solution, the Emperor suggested that Madhusudana should organize a militant band of *sannyāsis* to defend Hinduism and its followers. At the same time, he promulgated a law that thenceforth, the Hindu *sannyāsis* too, like the Muslim priests, were outside the purview of legal action. Thus was born at the hands of Madhusudana, the much

feared and respected Nāgā sect of Vedāntic *sannyāsis*. They lived in monasteries called *Akhādā*, (lit. gymnasium) and were trained in martial arts.

What was the fruit of all these strivings - for himself and later, for those hungry for knowledge? He blossomed into a great lover of God, yogi of a high order and realized soul who attained the state of perfection and he stimulated the spiritual growth of devotee-seekers, through a total of twenty-one books which have been ascribed to him.

Literary works

Ānandamandākinī is an original poem of more than one hundred *slokas* in praise of Lord Krishna. This work was his maiden attempt. One can easily appreciate the fervent devotion of the author to Sri Krishna. His *Vedāntakalpāṭikā* is a small treatise on the Advaita Vedānta. He has discussed the nature of the Absolute, refuted the concept of liberation according to other schools, explained how *avidyā* ceases to exist by the direct apprehension of Brahman arising out of hearing the *mahāvākyas* and ultimately explained the concept of *moksha* according to Advaita. The *Siddhāntabindu* is a commentary on Shankara's *dashashloki* and is written by him for the benefit of his pupil Balabhadra. In this work, he has refuted the views of other schools, established the views of the Advaita School and has also presented the views of the various Advaitic Āchāryas on important concepts of Advaita without

going into details. His commentary on the *Samkshēpashāriraka* is known as *Samkshēpashāriraka sārasamgraham*. Madhusudana has expressed his views on the *Brahma sūtras* by commenting upon *Sarvajñātmā Muni's Samkshēpashāriraka* which is a brief but lucid commentary in verse on Shāṅkarabhāṣya on the *Vedānta-sūtras*. *Advaita-siddhi* is his masterpiece. This work was written mainly to refute the charges raised against Advaita by Vyāsātīrtha. His other famous works include a commentary on *Mahimnah-stotra*, a Sanskrit composition on devotion to Shiva and *Bhakti-Rasāyana*, an explanation of *bhakti* from the Advaita point of view.

But Madhusudana's best gift for both pundits as also for the not-so-scholarly majority of spiritual aspirants is his 'Bhagavad Geetā with the Annotation *Gudhārtha Dipikā*' (the Lamp illumining the profound meaning) wherein Madhusudana has "lucidly discussed at the appropriate places, the principal Indian philosophical doctrines, and also dealt with the practical steps necessary to attain Self-Knowledge". The highest accolade is given to it by Swāmi Atmārāmānanda in the introduction to Swāmi Gambhīrānanda's English translation of this gem. He writes: "it stands next only to Sri Shāṅkarāchārya's commentary on the Bhagavad Geetā as regards clarity, depth and originality. It is an epitome of Madhusudana's vast learning and mastery of the different schools of Indian Philosophy and religion

and also of his great spiritual achievement.”

Gudhārtha Dipikā is a masterpiece on the synthesis of *jnāna* and *bhakti*, evidence of which is scattered all over it. For example, he proclaims his devotion to Sri Krishna, ‘blessed son of Nanda’, in his introduction to Chapter 7, entitled ‘Brahman as an object of Knowledge and Meditation’:

“I salute that blessed son of Nanda who is supreme Bliss through and through, without devotion to whom there can be no Liberation, and who is the object of worship of all the yogis.”

In his summation to Chapter 15, ‘The Supreme Person’, he says:

“I do not know any reality other than Krishna whose hands are adorned with a flute, whose lustre is like that of a new rain-cloud, who wears a yellow cloth, whose lips are reddish like the bimba-fruit, whose face is beautiful like the full moon and whose eyes are like lotuses.

The mind that is ever merged in the state of constant Bliss removes (all) mentation, (and) by eradicating the sorrows consequent on (repeated) births and deaths it attains at once the Reality transcending cause and effect.

I am that supreme Auspicious One in whom get identified all the followers of Siva, of the Sun, of Ganesha, of Vishnu, and the worshippers of Shakti.

Those fools go to hell who cannot

tolerate the wonderful glory of Krishna which is ascertained through the valid means of knowledge as well.”

And in Chapter 14, ‘Three Gunas of Prakriti’, he eloquently closes with the following words:

“I adore the great Light, the son of Nanda, who removes the bondage of those that salute (Him), who is the supreme Brahman in the form of a human being, and who is all that is the essence of beauty.”

Love for Lord Krishna

While Madhusudana's philosophy is obviously very expansive and subtle, his love for Krishna is openly proclaimed, as is evidenced at the beginning of the commentary to the 13th Chapter, “Discrimination between the ‘Field’ and the ‘Knower of the Field’”:

*dhyānābhyāsa-vaśīkṛtena manasā
tannirguṇaṁ niṣkriyaṁ
jyotiḥ kimcana yogino yadi paraṁ
paśyanti paśyantu te |
asmākaṁ tu tadeva locana-
camatkārāya bhūyācciraṁ
kāḷindī-pulīneṣu yat kimapi yannīlaṁ
maho dhāvatī ||*

If the yogis see the supreme truth as quality-less, inactive and light alone through their minds controlled by the practice of meditation, so be it.

Let them see what they see.

But, for filling our eyes with astonishment, let there be forever that indescribable Blue (Light) alone which runs about hither and thither on the sands of the Kālindi (Yamunā)!

Moreover, what makes the Gudhārtha Dipikā more precious to the seeker is Madhusudana's own introduction of 46 shlokas which, while giving a brief summary of the Bhagavad Geetā, also gives an excellent resume' of the stages of liberation he/ she has to pass through.

Madhusudana was well known beyond the Vedānta circle as well. His sincerity and knowledge was acknowledged by Sri Vallabhāchārya, a philosopher who founded the Krishna-centered *pushti* sect of Vaishnavism in the Braj region of India., In the life of Vallabhāchārya, it is mentioned that once Sri Vallabhāchārya went from Vārānasi to Prayāga where he stayed for a number of days performing the *pārāyana* of the *Bhāgavata Purāna* and there he happened to meet a very learned *sannyāsin* named Madhusudana Saraswati, who was not only an advocate of *māyāvāda* (doctrine of illusion) but also an ardent devotee of Sri Krishna and who showed him his work called *Bhaktirasāyana* and his commentary on Shankara's *bhāshya* on the Geetā. Greatly impressed by the great qualities of Madhusudana, he entrusted his son Vitthalnath to the care of Madhusudana for studying the various *shāstras*.

Championing the synthesis of Bhakti and Jnāna

The question has to be asked: How can an ardent follower of Sankarāchārya who believed and proclaimed that there is only one ultimate

reality, that is, the *nirguna* Brahman, which is devoid of any attribute, also be an ardent devotee of Sri Krishna? To many, it is a wonder as to how the learned monk, Madhusudana Saraswati, who established the supremacy of the Advaita school of Shankara by writing one of the accepted masterpieces of the Vedānta philosophy, the *Advaita-siddhi*, for refuting the objections raised against Advaita by Vyāsatīrtha, a follower of the dualistic school of Madhva, can proclaim Lord Krishna as the ultimate reality, or in other words, that there is no other ultimate reality except Sri Krishna.

The path of knowledge or *jñānamārga* has been accepted to be the only direct path leading to salvation by the sage Bādarāyana and his large followers of the Advaita school beginning with Āchārya Shankara, who revealed the identity of the individual soul with the supreme Self by properly explaining the correct meaning of the scriptural texts which appear to be mutually contradictory. All the Advaitins have accepted that the ultimate Reality is *nirguna* or attributeless. But Madhusudana considered Sri Krishna as the Ultimate Reality and as the incarnation of the *nirguna* Brahman. Can anyone by any stretch of imagination consider Sri Krishna to be *nirguna* or attributeless? Has Madhusudana given up the path of knowledge and become the advocate or the follower of the *bhaktimārga* or the path of devotion? Or, should we take it that he was the follower of the

bhaktimārga preached in the *Bhāgavata Purāna* till he became the follower of Shankara's Advaita School later in life when he could have probably been very enthusiastic to establish the supremacy of the Advaita School by producing the most popular works like *Siddhāntabindu*, *Vedāntakalpalatikā*, *Advaita-siddhi* and *Advaitaratnarakshana*?

While each aspirant, based on individual understanding and experience, will come to his/her own conclusion, it has to be admitted that according to him, there is nothing incompatible between the attributeless monism of Shankara and the ardent devotion to Krishna who is no other than the Supreme Being Itself. He has synthesized the *bhakti* school and the path of knowledge and thus inculcated a new line of thought or approach in the Advaita school, *sagunabrahmopāsanā* or meditation on the Supreme Being with attributes which has been prescribed by Advaitins as a preliminary step for self-realisation. Precedence had been set: Shankarāchārya himself composed a number of devotional hymns, though he considered and established the Supreme Being as devoid of attributes. His successors adorning the five mutts established by him in the different parts of India are performing daily puja to the Lord *Chandramaulisvara* and the goddess *Tripurasundari*. All the *sannyāsins*, many of whom are realised and yet alive (*jivanmuktas*) are uttering the name of Sri Nārāyana. So there seems to be absolutely no contradiction

in being a devotee and at the same time, being a follower of the path of knowledge to realise the Supreme Being as identical with the self.

Madhusudana's ardent devotion for Sri Krishna was not at all affected by his belief that Brahman which itself took incarnations did so through *māyā*. The incarnations were those of the *nirguna* Brahman itself, but they were all unreal. Madhusudana criticised all those who held the view that Brahman is eternal and yet assumes real incarnations, as unreasonable and groundless. He fully concurred with Shankara's conception of *jagat*, *jivātmā* and *paramātmā* and also the path of knowledge as directly leading to *moksha*. In the synthesis of *bhaktimārga* and the path of knowledge, he followed the famous *Sarvajñātmāmuni*, the author of *Samkshepasāriraka* who has offered salutation to *nirguna* Brahman called *Murāri* in the very first verse of his work which is a summary, in verses, of Shankara's *Brahmasutra-bhāshya*³. So *nirguna-bhaktimārga* cannot be called a new innovation of Madhusudana.

In the firmament of Advaita philosophy which was getting light only from Shankara who was resplendent like the sun, Madhusudana shone like the moon excelling all the other philosophic stars and enlightening the people with ambrosial teachings worthy of his name.

Leaving the mortal coil

Despite his great contributions to Hindu philosophy and to the protection of

priests, Madhusudana, it seems, was hounded out of Benares by the *pandās* (Hindu priests at pilgrim centres) during his later years, for some unclear reasons. As a result, he had to go away to Haridwar where, it is believed, he passed away at the ripe age of 107 (in AD 1697, according to some). Another story

claims that towards the end of his life, he returned to Navadvip from Benares; here he was given a reception for his monotheistic philosophy. He died in Māyāpuri while meditating. This version claims he lived to a ripe age of 100 years, leaving his body in 1640.

Notes:

1. *Avadhuta/Jivanmukta*: One who gives his insight to others and teaches them about his realisation of the true nature of the ultimate reality (Brahman) and the Self (Ātman).
2. *purashcharana*: repeating a mantra a particular number of times and for a period of time
3. *prāyashchitta*: atonement, penance, expiation.

Sources:

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Everything that irritates us about
others can lead us to an
understanding of ourselves.

Carl Jung



Perceiving Phoenix

Does Yoga make us Dry and Emotionless?

- Swāmi Chidānanda



Is it wrong if we are pleased when someone praises us? Do we fall spiritually if somebody's criticism of our ways hurts us? What is bad with the various emotions that are natural to life? Why do they say, in spiritual literature, that we must remain 'equal' in success and failure, during praise and insult, etc.? Does not this 'equal-mindedness' make us dry, devoid of the richness that emotions bring to human life?

Who wants a prison?

A yogi, like any other person, feels happy when praised and unhappy when criticized. The difference is just that these instances of happiness and unhappiness do not throw him off-balance. The key point here is that he does not depend on others' praise to keep himself going and he does not

allow others' criticism to bring him to a halt. Therefore, we say that he remains equal in praise and insult, while, to be precise, he does recognize the different ways in which people treat him and corresponding emotions do arise in him. These emotions are, however, held in check and they remain moderate; they do not succeed in jeopardizing his balanced outlook and objective assessment of the situation.

Dependence is a prison. "Do not keep the key to your happiness in somebody else's pocket," said Swāmi Chinmayānandaji. We must not dance to the tunes that the society plays. Our life should be guided more by timeless values than by 'whether people will appreciate us or denounce us'. In no way does this mean that we are obstinate and pay no heed to constructive criticism. On the contrary, the state of equanimity enables us to listen to criticism with due attention and, if need be, change our course of action according to the good suggestions people might give to us.

A yogi is a good human being

Certain enhanced awareness marks us when we become yogis, and this awareness ensures that we do not get hijacked by the 'feel-good' factor.

To everyone, from the cradle to the grave, sugar tastes sweet. To everybody, from his birth to his death, bitter gourd tastes bitter. A yogi too,

perceives situations as pleasant or unpleasant as everybody else does. In small and big matters of life, it is thus natural that genuine emotions arise in our bosom. We get elated when our boss tells us that the report that we handed in was a superior piece of work. We feel good when a colleague of ours tells us that the shirt we are wearing looks nice and suits us. We feel a quiet sense of pride when a total stranger admires our new car. Of course, we do. There is nothing wrong with this, is there?

We must, however, recognize that each time we 'feel good' because someone praises us or what we have done or what we own, we are giving that person a little bit of power over us. That person partially determines the emotional domain in which we dwell. What it means is that we tend to do those things more and more, which are likely to make our boss, our colleagues and even strangers give us compliments. We begin to alter our behaviour so we get more nods of appreciation.

We change our mental modes to accommodate those from whom we wish to receive acknowledgement and applause.

And this is how we build the prison that we then call 'home'. This is how we give our power away. This is how we give the keys to our well-being and happiness to others.

Why, O Why, would we ever do this?

To live in a prison is not good
for others too

When we lose our objectivity and behave in such ways that others are somehow pleased, it soon becomes an unsustainable way of living. It is interesting to note that everybody who wants us to do things for them (following which they will praise us) is not comfortable to know we are listening to people other than them too! "Why do you do whatever they ask you to?" they say loudly. Knowingly or unknowingly, they are saying, in their own hearts, "Please do only the things that I ask you to do!"

We must know that 'dependence' weakens the camps of both those who depend and those on whom (on whose praise) they depend. The exploited and the exploiters both suffer in due course of time. A society, where people have lost their objectivity and have thrown values to the winds for temporary gains, will surely come to suffer. The former camp should realize that they should have a vision of their own and goals that they truly value. The latter camp should understand that, when they weaken certain people by praising them and getting things done, they will actually end up getting nothing after sometime. The situation will be similar to the fable of Aesop, where the hen that was laying golden eggs could simply not give anything when the greedy owners cut its belly open!

Let your moral compass show the True North always

Yoga is against pampering of the ego in us, which is a false construct of thought. The Vedānta says the ego is a

false 'I' and urges us to realize the true 'I'. Our whole life is a battle of wits between the self (the false I, the ego) and the Self (the true I, *shuddha ātmā*). Truth alone prevails (*satyam eva jayate*) at the end but the unwise among us pay a heavy price before that!

Moral values like truthfulness, non-violence and self-control (*satya*, *ahimsā* and *brahmacharya*) take us closer to the Self, and wean us from the ego. Just as a sailor's compass helps him navigate his ship properly on the vast sea, a deep understanding of and a strong commitment to values act like a moral compass, which will show to us the way to go. We meet with victory and defeat in life and some emotions of elation or dejection are understandable. We must quickly get off those emotions and try to understand why we won or lost, what lessons we have to learn, and how we must take things forward.

Treating joy and sorrow as though they are the same has been a longstanding virtue in Eastern Wisdom. We do find echoes of this value in certain Western poets too. Rudyard Kipling articulated a sentiment in his poem 'If.'

If you can meet with Triumph and
Disaster

And treat those two impostors just
the same;

The word impostor above is similar to Vedanta calling the domain of the body, the mind and the intellect (BMI) false. Are we truly hurt when we feel hurt? Or is it just the ego that is hurt? Are we on cloud nine when people praise

us? Or is it the ego in us that is celebrating? The ego is indeed an impostor making us lose sight of our true nature.

Yoga begins with will but culminates in understanding

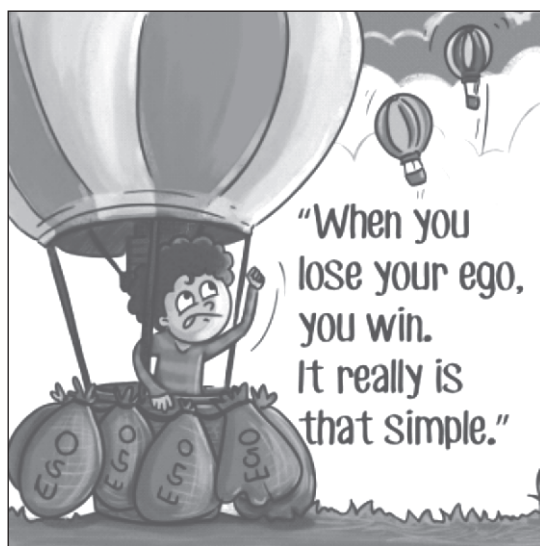
The will (*sankalpa-shakti*) is an asset in everyone of us. They say a man would die soon if he loses his will to live. In day-to-day activities, our willpower enables us to overcome laziness or lack of focus and work towards certain cherished goals. Similarly, the will has a role to play in early stages of yoga or spirituality. Though it may be rising from limited intelligence, it provides the fuel to get going. Our will helps us practise yoga and, as we practise, the spiritual exercises further strengthen our will, as reflected in less tardiness at work or in less of getting distracted while executing various tasks.

The negative side of will is a certain indifference, if not insensitivity, that it carries with it. Mere will is often seen to promote personal ambition and that necessarily turns a blind eye to the needs of others. Leave alone the needs of others, the operation of will prevents us from understanding ourselves in all respects. In contrast, the operation of unshackled intelligence can bless us with total perception. Thus, as we grow in yoga, we have greater understanding of the subtler aspects of life. This understanding makes us engage more in *jnāna-yoga*, the discipline of knowledge (wisdom, right understanding). A major difference between the two operations of will and

intelligence is that there is effort in the former and no effort in the latter. Conflict between what we are trying to do and what our desire-ridden mind wishes to do marks the domain of will. Since right understanding washes away our impure

desires, the operation of intelligence makes possible, spontaneous right living where there is no inner struggle.

On higher planes of understanding, therefore, remaining equal towards loss and gain happens effortlessly.



Everything changes once we identify with being the witness to the story, instead of the actor in it.

Ram Dass



- Osho

Once upon a time, a poor hungry man was caught stealing and was ordered to be hanged by the king. On the way to the gallows he said to the governor, who was in charge of carrying out the execution, that he knew a wonderful secret, and that it would be a pity to allow the secret to die with him.

He also said that he would like to disclose the secret in front of the king.

The poor man told the governor, further, that the secret would allow someone to bury the seed of a pomegranate in the ground and then make it grow and bear fruit overnight. Well, the governor thought this sounded wonderful; so, the thief was brought before the king and all of the king's high officers of state.

Standing before these powerful men, the poor man dug a hole in the ground and said, "Here's the secret: this seed must only be put in the ground by a person who has never stolen or taken anything which did not belong to him. I being a thief cannot do it."

So the thief turned to the prime minister who, frightened, said that in his younger days, he had retained something that did not belong to him. Next the thief turned to the treasurer who said that while dealing with such large sums of money, he might have at one point or another entered too much or too little.

Finally, the thief turned to the king, who embarrassedly admitted to keeping a necklace of his father's without his permission.

Then the thief said, "You are all mighty and powerful men who lack no material comfort, and yet you cannot plant this seed, while I, who have stolen a little because I was starving, am to be hanged."

The king, pleased with the shrewdness of the thief, pardoned the man.

Source :

Based on a story from a book of collected works - The Example of the Rabbis



- Compiled by Ratna Viswanath



Kollur, a town in the district of Udupi in the state of Karnataka, is believed to be one of the seven *kshetrams* (pilgrimage centres) created by sage Parashurāma. The Mookāmbikā Temple in Kollur is dedicated to Devi (the Mother-Goddess). It is an ancient temple, considered more than 1200 years old and is situated in the foothills of Kodachādri hills, on the southern bank of the river Souparnikā.

The main deity of the temple is the Swarnarekhā *lingam* - a *swayambhu* (self-manifested) *lingam* with a vertical golden line. The left half of the *lingam* represents the *tridevis* (the three Goddesses, the consorts of the Trinity) and the right half represents the *trimurtis* (the Trinity). An idol of Goddess Mookāmbikā is also installed. The idol is made of *panchaloha* (an alloy of five metals).

Shri Mookāmbikā Temple has been an abode of *Shākta* (of *Shakti*) worship for centuries. In an ancient inscription (dated 1481 A D) found here,

the source of the *Shakti* has been described. Shri Mookāmbikā Devi in the form of *lingam* is the *Ādi Shakti*, the creator and protector of all forms of life.

The Legends associated with the kshetram

The importance of Kollur *kshethram* is described in the Skanda Purāna. Kola Maharshi is believed to have meditated in the *kshethram* and thus, it got the name Kolapura, which later became Kollur. Kola Maharshi was shown the Swarnarekhā *lingam* by none other than Lord Shiva. When the saint asked Shiva how he could worship the *lingam* without worshipping Devi, Lord Shiva replied that on the left side of the *lingam*, all the three manifestations of the Goddess – Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Pārvati - will be present.

It is also stated in some sources that Kola Maharshi was fascinated to see a cow pouring milk onto a *lingam* from her udder and he began worshipping the *lingam*. The symbol of the hoof of the cow can be seen on the *lingam*.

There lived a demon Kaumhāsura who got a boon from Lord Shiva that he could not be killed by any male. He started misusing his supernatural powers by troubling sages and gods. He disrupted the penance of Sage Kola who was performing worship to the Shiva *lingam*. The sage prayed intensely to

Devi Pārvati, who then incarnated as Thrishoolanāyaki. Kaumhāsura came to know that his death was approaching and that it would be at the hands of a lady. He again undertook a strict penance and prayed to Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva appeared before him and asked the demon for his wish. Sensing the danger, Devi took away Kaumhāsura's faculty of speech. Kaumhāsura was then known as Mookāsura which means 'the mute demon'. Mookāsura became furious and wanted to take revenge against the *devas*. The *devas* could not withstand his menace and sought refuge from Devi. In response, Devi integrated the powers of the *trimurtis* and all the *devas* into her to put Mookāsura to death. With the assistance of Veerabhadra, she slayed Mookāsura. Devi then assimilated into the *lingam*. She came to be known as Mookāmbikā (Mookāmbike in Kannada). The spot where Devi killed Mookāsura, came to be known as Māranakatte.

Ādi Shankarāchārya had a vision of Devi Shri Mookāmbikā. Devi appeared before Ādi Shankarāchārya, asking him to state his wish. He revealed that he wished to install the *vigraha* (idol) of Devi in a place in Kerala. Devi granted his wish but put forth a condition that she would follow Shankara and that he should not look behind till he reached his destination. But to test Shankara, Devi deliberately muted the sound of her anklets when they reached Kollur. Shankara then turned and looked behind. Devi then asked Shankara to install her *vigraha* at that very location at Kollur. She also agreed to present Herself at

Chottānikkara temple in Kerala in the morning hours and to return to Kollur by midday.



The original temple where Ādi Shankara meditated and where Devi appeared before him is at Kodachādri peak, at a distance of about 21 kms from Kollur. The peak is visible from Shri Mookāmbikā Temple. The Kodachādri mountain ranges are considered as part of the Sanjeevani mountain ranges. It is said that, when Shri Hanuman was moving across the sky with great speed, a small portion of the mountain had broken and fallen down and came to be known as the Kodachādri ranges. It is believed that the mountain is full of medicinal plants, creepers and roots.

Mookāsura is believed to have sat for meditation at / near the entrance to the Ganapati cave in Kodachādri ranges. Pleased by his consistent meditation, Lord Brahmā appeared before him. He sprinkled water from his *kamandala* onto the face of the demon, to wake him up from his meditation. Then Mookāsura woke up from his deep meditation and

drank the entire water from the *kamandala*. While he was drinking, the excess water flowed down like a torrent into the tunnel and sprang up near the Ganapati Cave. This place is believed to be the source of the Souparnikā river. Souparnikā river is named after the eagle Suparna, who undertook penance by meditating on Devi and thereby attained *moksha*.

Architecture and layout

The architecture of the Kollur Temple is of the Keladi period. The kings of the Keladi dynasty patronised the temple and made huge donations for its upkeep and renovation. They also always celebrated their victories over their enemies by offering their success to Shri Mookāmbikā.

The sanctum sanctorum of the temple is a quadrangle. The tower above is known as *vimānagopura* and is built in Dravidian architectural style. The tower is covered with gold which was donated by the local king centuries ago.

The idol of Shri Mookāmbikā is in a sitting posture in '*padmāsana*' (lotus-pose) with a gentle smile on her face. She has four arms – one holds the *shankha* (conch) and another, the *chakra* (discus). The other two arms are held in *abhaya* (protective) and *varada* (blessing) *hastha* respectively. The *Swarnarekhā lingam* is in front of the idol.

The main entrance to the temple is from the eastern side. As one enters from here, one can see the gold-plated *dhwajasthambha* or flag post and behind that, the *deepasthambha* or the lamp

post. The Ganapati sculpted on this pillar is called '*Khambhada Ganapati*' or 'Ganapati of the pillar'. The devotees can enter the temple only after offering their salutations here.

Dashabhuja (ten-armed) Ganapati is on the southern side of the sanctum sanctorum. The *Nāga Prathisthā* can be seen on the south-west.

The Ādi Shankarāchārya Peetha can be seen to the west of the sanctum sanctorum. The legend is that Ādi Shankarāchārya had meditated here. It is believed that one can attain the peak of knowledge by worshipping and meditating at the Peetha.

Around the sanctum sanctorum, in the outer circle, are the 'retinue' deities. There is Shri Veerabhadra Swamy and then, Shri Subrahmanya. The Saraswathi *mantapam* is on the southern side of the outer circle. On the western portion of the outer circle, the smaller temples for Shri Prānalingeshwara, Shri Pārtheshwara, Shri Panchamukha Ganapathi, Shri Chandramouleeshwara, Shri Nanjundeshwara, Shri Ānjaneya, Shri Venkataramana and Shri Thulasi Gopālakrishna are there.

Festivals and rituals

Chandi Homa is performed in the temple daily.

Navarāthri is celebrated with great devotion and fervour for nine days, concluding with the *rathotsava* (Car Festival) on the ninth day and the Vijayadashami celebrations on the day after.

The Annual Festival is held during March-April for nine days. Daily worship and special processions are conducted. Street festivals take place in the evenings and nights. The *Mahā Rathotsava* or the Chariot / Car Festival is held on the 8th day. Festivities with the Devi seated on the *doddatte* (a decoration akin to the aura around the Devi) are also celebrated. On the 9th day, the *Okuli festival* (a festival of colours - in some ways, similar to *Holi*) and the Boat Festival (*Theppotsava*) are held on the Souparnikā river.

Mahāshivarātri and Ugādi are celebrated every year. Street festivals or *beedhi utsavas* are also held during Mahāshivarātri.

Nearby places of spiritual importance

There are many other temples nearby which are dedicated to Shri Choudeshwari, Shri Sampre Ganapati, Shri Siddheshwara, Shri Balamuri, Shri Gopālakrishna Temple, Shri Māriamma Temple and Shri Gadi Mastiamma.

In Kodachādri, there are the Parvatheshwara, Kālabhairava and Pārvathi Devi temples.

As one climbs up from the Ganapati Cave, the *sarvajnapeetha* becomes visible. This is a sacred spot founded by Ādi Shankarāchārya, who had done meditation here. Even to this day, many saints are seen praying at this *peetha* to attain *siddhi*. It is said that any one who sits here and prays for at least an hour can achieve satisfaction and peace of mind.

On climbing up from the



sarvajnapeetha and proceeding further through a narrow path for about 200 feet, one can see another sacred place known as Chitramoola. Many sages and saints have attained *siddhi* here. Kola Maharshi and Ādi Shankarāchārya are believed to have been in meditation at Chitramoola.

Coming down the hill from Chitramoola, a wide forest called Ambavana comes into view. There is a *Bhagavathi* temple here. It is believed that during midnight hours, renowned sages, ascetics and great musicians roam around in Ambavana. They are visible only to *siddhapurushas*.

Devi Mookāmbikā is believed to have performed *māranahoma* at Māranakatte after killing Mookāsura. There is a temple to Shri Brahma Lingeshwara at Māranakatte, which is about 25 km from the Mookāmbikā temple.

There are quite a few ancient and prominent temples situated within a radius of 30 – 80 km from the Mookāmbikā temple.

Other nearby places of tourist interest

These include Arasina Gundi falls, Anejari, Belakal Thirtha, Mudagal, Barkur Fort, Maravanthe beach, Mookāmbikā wildlife sanctuary, etc.

How to reach there

The nearest international airport is at Mangalore which is at a distance of 136

km from Kollur. One can travel by train to Udupi, Byndoor or Mangalore and then travel by road to Kollur.

Sources:

www.Kollurmookambika.org

www.Gotirupati.org

www.templenet.in



A leader...is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind.

Nelson Mandela



Fleeting Moments, Enduring Impressions

He Picked the Best Flowers from Many Gardens Reading Easwaran was Most Delightful

- Swāmi Chidānanda

My getting connected to Sri Eknath Easwaran was perhaps ordained by the Divine, for within 30 days of my leaving my home country for the first time and within 30 days of my landing in the United States, Arvind Halliyal placed the book, 'Meditation, An Eight Point Program for Daily Spirituality' by Prof. Easwaran in my hands. Reading that book was very uplifting, soothing and delightful.

I had arrived in San Francisco in the first week of November 1993 and we had, beginning on the 4th Thursday of that month, a Spiritual Retreat at Krishnalaya, Piercy, some 150 miles north of the old city of San Francisco. Arvind, from SF Bay Area, was a participant at this 4-day Retreat (during the Thanksgiving long weekend of US) and he, being an avid reader of philosophical works, had a vibrant discussion with me. (He later introduced me to many famous spiritual writers and authors like Ken Wilber, Jean Klein, Jon Kabat-Zinn etc. and remains a good friend even now, telling me every time about yet another amazing writer he has come across!)

For the first two years of mine in California, I used to spend almost equal time in San Jose and Los Angeles. While at the residence of Drs Ashok and Shobha Naimpally in LA, I managed to

get more books of Easwaran and it was a treat for me to go through his thoughts. His vast exposure to Hindu, Christian, Jewish, Sufi, Buddhist and other works and his harmonious interpretation of the major works of these wisdom traditions of the world were just what I was aspiring towards. The wisdom traditions from around the world were like different gardens for him, and he joyously collected the most fragrant flowers from all these gardens. His English was marvellous, his humour terrific and, above all, his appeal for peace and harmony was very powerful.

Reading more books of his and meeting him

The Naimpally couple took me to Easwaran, which became the first of my three meetings with this saintly scholar. This was perhaps in late 1994, and the three of us made it during our return from Piercy after another 4 days' Retreat at the headquarters of Chinmaya Mission West. Ramagiri Ashram in Tomales where Easwaran lived, not far from the city of Petaluma, was a little detour on our way back from Piercy to San Jose.

I was already an admirer of this professor-turned-teacher of meditation. This visit added to my admiration. His wife Christine and a number of other residents of the Ashram were, it seemed, excited to receive a Hindu Swāmi. I

would imagine that they had thought here was an orthodox monk coming to their place that day. What makes me think so is the fact that all the ladies – of the white community – were in Indian saris and received me, accompanied by the Naimpallys, with some air of formality. After they discovered that I was not all that orthodox, they perhaps relaxed. In fact, during my second and third visit – in 1996 and in 1998 – most of these ladies were in Western dress and were totally at ease!

Here he was now – the beloved author whose books had made a great impact on me – in flesh and blood before me. I was really touched by his simplicity, humility and gentle interactions. I was, as you would expect, already quoting a lot from his works (which I do even now, to a lesser extent) and I shared with him certain points, remarks or observations of his, that had truly touched me. He, on his part, gave all the credit to the mystics and seers of different traditions of the world.

The second visit

In the summer of 1996, Swāmi Tejomayānandaji was in Santa Rosa and I was assisting him in conducting a



Spiritual Retreat, which was 7 days long. In the middle of this Retreat, we decided to pay a visit to Sri Easwaran. With prior appointment, of course, some 12 of us went to meet the Fulbright Scholar and former English professor of Berkeley. Smt. Lolita and Shri Pranji Lodhia took care of the logistics. As this larger number sat around Christine and Easwaran, at a long dining table, the discussion obviously went to many spiritual themes. Easwaran also fondly remembered Pujya Gurudev Swāmi Chinmayānandaji. He gifted to us a bunch of Gurudev's photographs (in negative film form) – of Gurudev speaking at an academic institution in the San Francisco Bay Area with great gusto. What especially touched me during this visit was how he ensured that he had a word with every one of his twelve visitors that day. When a bunch of people visit some famous man, it generally so happens that two or three dominate the discussion and others hardly get a chance to talk to the man. Easwaran somehow managed to exchange a word or two with everyone of us, leaving all happy and satisfied.

The third and last visit

It had been decided that I was to return to India, after spending 5 years in Uncle Sam's country. I was to take a flight to Mumbai on August 10, 1998 and I had a desire to see Easwaran once more before leaving North America. About ten weeks before I flew, I took the help of Venkatesh family in the Bay Area and paid my last visit to the wonderful founder of the 'Blue Mountain Center for

Meditation'. Young girls – Humsa and Brinda (both of them with Ph. D. now) – and their parents – Suma and Venkatesh, took me to Tomales, and, as before, Easwaran made our visit most worthwhile with his pleasing ways of asking how we were doing, his clear and crisp answers on meditation and general spirituality. We paid our respect to the elderly couple, Christine and Easwaran, took their blessings, and after bowing down before the idol of Shri Krishna, which was in the next room, we returned with great joy in our hearts.



The third and last visit, May 25, 1998

During those years of mine in the US (November 1993 thru August 1998), Eknath Easwaran and Stephen Covey would find a place in most of my lectures, along with Ramana Maharshi and Ramakrishna Paramahansa. I wrote an article on Easwaran, which got published in the Chinmaya Mission West Newsletter. People at the BMCM were pleased to know and to get a copy of the article.

All good things come to an end

Little did I know, when I took leave of this pious, great soul in the summer of 1998, that he would pass on the very next year. When the sad news reached me in Mumbai, I wrote (and sent by FAX) a condolence letter. I came to know that they read it out during the 'memorial services' held in his honour.

I truly cherish the memory of my meeting Sri Easwaran thrice and consider that as a special blessing in my life.

Every time I visit Chennai these days, I join the 'Easwaran Satsangs' anchored by Ms Ranjini Manian in RA Puram on Saturdays.

~

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy.

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so
much seek*

To be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand,

To be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

*It is in dying to self that we are born to
eternal life.*

St. Francis of Assisi (c. 1181-1226) is probably the most universally loved of Catholic saints. This passage is published in Easwaran's spiritual anthologies, 'God Makes the Rivers to Flow' and 'Timeless Wisdom.'

May rivers of good thoughts
Wash our minds clean.

May we lift our vision
To see God the great source.

May the guidance of Masters
Bless us with higher understanding.

May Chinmaya and Easwaran
Fill our lives with Light and Joy.

15 August 2000



(Pujya Swāmi Chidānandaji, the Āchārya of Vedānta Course-11, distributed one of Sri Easwaran's books to all his students at the Ashram in Powai, Mumbai in August 2000, with this note as above.)

PS: Eknath Easwaran (1910 – 1999), for those who have not heard of him, was the originator of Passage Meditation and the author of 40 books on spirituality. Hailing from Palakkad in Kerala, he had been the head of department of English in Nagpur University. He then left for US on the famous Fulbright scholarship. He continued to teach at the University of California at Berkeley for ten years. Along with Shakespeare, he would make references to Ramakrishna and Ramana. He wrote a book on Gandhi during his years in Berkeley.

Please see <https://www.bmcm.org/about/about-eknath-easwaran/> for more details on this remarkable personality.



- By Late T N Seshan

This is the narration of a personal experience that the former Chief Election Commissioner, Late Shri TN Seshan, shared in a Management Seminar.

He was travelling in Uttar Pradesh with his wife for a picnic while he was the Chief Election Commissioner. On the way, they saw a large mango plantation filled with sparrow nests.

Seeing this, they went down there and his wife wanted to take two nests home.

The police escort called a young boy who was grazing cows in the fields and commanded him to bring the nests down and offered to pay him Rs10. He refused, so Seshan raised the offer to Rs.50.

The policeman asked the boy to do it as Seshan was a big officer. The boy told Seshan and his wife 'Saabji I will not do it for whatsoever you will give.' He

continued, 'inside those nests, there will be baby sparrows; if I give those nests to you, in the evening when the mother-sparrow returns with food for the babies and does not find them there, she will cry. I do not have the heart to see that'. Hearing this, Seshan and his wife were shocked.

Seshan says, "My position and the IAS melted away in front of that little boy. I was in front of him like a mustard seed." They gave up their wish and after returning, this incident continued to haunt him with guilt for days. Education, position or social status can never be the yardstick for measuring humanity.

Knowledge is to know nature. We don't achieve anything by gathering a lot of information. Life becomes blissful when you have knowledge, sense and wisdom.

#World Environment Day



What do we learn from the Upanishads?

This Worldly Life is a Noisy Tree (Kathopanishad 2.3.1)

- Swāmi Chidānanda

ऊर्ध्वमूलोऽवाकशखः
एषोऽश्वत्थः सनातनः ।
तदेव शुक्रं तद्ब्रह्म
तदेवामृतमुच्यते ।
तस्मिँल्लोकाः श्रिताः सर्वे
तदु नात्येति कश्चन । एतद्वै तत् ॥२.३.१॥

Here is the peepul tree (ficus religiosa), with roots above and branches below. That (source of this tree) is pure. It is Brahman. They say It is immortal. All the worlds rest in it. Nothing transcends It. This verily is That.

Explanation: It is the common experience of one and all, that everything around us, which our senses experience, changes, gets modified and is destroyed. There is a lot of chaos, crying and laughing about this change. A person who is a little thoughtful has the question - is there something which is changeless, peaceful, pure, indestructible?

Here the mantra, in one sentence, describes the whole changing world as a tree with roots above and branches (including leaves, flowers, fruits, birds, their nests, etc.) below. The tree represents the world, which is ephemeral. Its roots however, stand for That which is Changeless, pure, peaceful, indestructible. The whole of the tree comes from That, is sustained by That and there is nothing 'above' it. The mantra affirms, This is That only.

The metaphor here gives us a complete picture of the world, where there is a lot of excitement over every small thing. A wise person 'goes above' this noisy world and finds eternal peace. The message in a nutshell is, "Turn your attention to the auspicious truth behind this sorrow-ridden world."

The whole 15th chapter of the Bhagavad Geetā is an elaboration upon this Upanishad Mantra. The first 5 verses, in particular, describe this tree of worldly living. We are asked to use the sword of detachment to cut this tree. We are advised to seek that Divine Being from whom everything has risen.



- By Anthony de Mello S.J.

The Master set out on a journey with one of his disciples. At the outskirts of the village they ran into the Governor who, mistakenly thinking they had come to welcome him to the village, said, "You really didn't have to go to all this trouble to welcome me."

"You are mistaken, Your Highness," said the disciple. "We're on a journey but had we known you were coming we would have gone to even greater pains to welcome you."

The Master did not say a word. Towards evening he said, "Did you have to tell him that we had not come to welcome him? Did you see how foolish he felt?"

"But if we had not told him the truth, would we not be guilty of deceiving him?"
"We would not have deceived him at all," said the Master. "He would have deceived himself."



Knowing is not enough, we must apply.
Willing is not enough, we must do.

Bruce Lee



काव्यशास्त्रविनोदेन,
कालो गच्छति धीमताम् ।
व्यसनेन च मूर्खाणाम्,
निद्रया कलहेन वा ॥

Intelligent persons enjoy their time in studies of the literature and philosophy,
whereas, unintelligent persons spend their time in bad habits like sleep, quarrel or
some addiction.



I Opened a Book

"I opened a book and in I strode.
Now nobody can find me.
I've left my chair, my house, my road,
My town and my world behind me.
I'm wearing the cloak, I've slipped on the ring,
I've swallowed the magic potion.
I've fought with a dragon, dined with a king
And dived in a bottomless ocean.
I opened a book and made some friends.
I shared their tears and laughter
And followed their road with its bumps and bends
To the happily ever after.
I finished my book and out I came.
The cloak can no longer hide me.
My chair and my house are just the same,
But I have a book inside me."

— Julia Donaldson

Amrita Pritam

Fully conscious and in good health I am writing today my will ...

After my death
Ransack my room
Search each item
That is scattered
Unlocked
Everywhere in my house

Donate my dreams
To all those women
Who between the confines of
The kitchen and the bedroom
Have lost their world
Have forgotten years ago
What it is to dream

Scatter my laughter
Among the inmates of old-age homes
Whose children
Are lost
To the glittering cities of America

There are some colours
Lying on my table
With them dye the sari of the girl
Whose border is edged
With the blood of her man
Who wrapped in the tricolor
Was laid to rest last evening

Give my tears
To all the poets
Every drop

Will birth a poem
I promise

My honour and my reputation
Are for the woman
Who prostitutes her body
So her daughter can get an education

Make sure you catch the youth
Of the country, everyone
And inject them
With my indignation
They will need it
Come the revolution

My ecstasy
Belongs to
That Sufi
Who
Abandoning everything
Has set off in search of God

Finally
What's left
My envy
My greed
My anger
My lies
My selfishness
These
simply
Cremate with me





ETERNAL VIBRATIONS

GOD IS THE CENTRE OF OUR LIFE, OF OUR UNIVERSE



तद्यथा रथनाभौ च	<i>tad-yathā ratha-nābhau cha</i>
रथनेमौ च	<i>ratha-nemau cha</i>
अराः सर्वे समर्पिताः ।	<i>arāḥ sarve samarpitāḥ</i>
एवमेवास्मिन् आत्मनि	<i>evam-evāsmiṁ ātmani</i>
सर्वे देवाः समर्पिताः ॥	<i>sarve devāḥ samarpitāḥ</i>

All divine principles depend on the *ātmā*, just as all the spokes in a wheel connect to the hub and to the rim of the wheel.

बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद् / Brihadāranyaka Upanishad 2.5.15

Using the word *ātmā*, the mantra above refers to the Supreme Truth, and declares that everything will fall into place if we set our eyes on the *ātmā*. If we have everything else – wealth, power, position, talent, etc. – but lose sight of God, we are on the slippery slope. In contrast, if we are with God and everything else seems to be away from us, we will soon rise and shine. The original mantra has all the living beings (*bhūtāni*), worlds (*lokāḥ*) and forms of energy (*prāṇāḥ*) also as depending on the *ātmā*.

Such mantras urge us to strive towards spiritual awakening on the one hand, and towards a life of integrity and moral excellence on the other.





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.

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