

Navaratri ended with Kumari Puja at Uttarkashi ashram



Bhubaneswar/Uttarkashi: Navaratri, in Sanskrit, stands for 'Nine nights'. In these nine nights, nine different forms of Mother Durga is worshipped. One of the significant rituals of this festival is Kumari Puja. Going by the legends, Goddess Durga was incarnated as a young girl to defeat the demon *Kālāsura*. Hence, the little girls are worshipped as they are believed to be the universal creative forces. Kumari Puja is mainly performed on the eighth or ninth day of Navaratri where nine girls are worshipped as nine forms of Goddess Durga i.e. *Navadurgā*.

This year Navaratri started on Thursday 7th October and ended on Friday, 15th October. Swami Ananda Saraswati performed Special Puja on all these nine nights at Yoga Vidya Gurukulam, Uttarkashi.

As the conclusion of this, on Vijayadasami day, Kumari Puja happened at Swami Ananda Saraswati's ashram at Ganeshpur, Uttarkashi. Kumaris were decorated with new dress and garland. Special Puja including *Lalitā Trisati* Archana and *Pāda* Puja was performed by Swamiji and others who were presented during Kumari Puja.

'When the Hindu awakes, the world will awaken': RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat

Bhubaneswar/Uttarakhand: The chief of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Mohan Bhagwat has said that young Hindu girls and boys undergoing conversions for petty reasons like marriage is wrong. He added that there is a need to instill in them a pride about their own religion and traditions.

"How do conversions happen? How do Hindu girls and boys adopt other religions for petty selfishness, for marriage? Those who are doing it are wrong but it is another matter. Don't we nurture our children? We need to give them these values at our home," Bhagwat said in his address to RSS workers and their families at an event in Haldwani in Uttarakhand.

He urged the people to answer their

children's questions. "Answer the questions if they come. Do not be confused. We should prepare our children and for that we need to learn," said Bhagwat. The RSS chief spoke about preserving traditional family values and traditions. He also urged people to visit Indian tourist sites, consume home-grown food and wear traditional outfits.

Bhagwat said that the six 'mantras' to stay connected to the roots of Indian culture include language, food, devotional songs, travel, dress and house. Even while he appealed to the people to never forget their roots, he emphasized that untouchability should be abandoned. "Do not differentiate on the basis of caste. There should



be no untouchability. Society is habituated to guessing religion from names. Differentiation of people should be completely removed from the heart. When the Hindu awakes, then the world will awaken," he said.

Hindus to be selected for colleges financed by Hindu temples



Bhubaneswar/Chennai: The Tamil Nadu government informed the Madras High Court that only Hindu staff can be recruited in educational institutions that are fully financed by Hindu temples. A writ petition was filed in the Court by a 37-year-old Muslim man A.Suhail challenging the appointment of only

Hindus to teaching as well as non-teaching posts at the Arulmigu Kapaleeswarar Arts and Science College in Chennai.

While arguing the case before the Madras High Court, the State advocate general R Shunmugasundaram clarified that the recruitment of non-Hindus in educational institutions run by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Department was prohibited under the HR&CE Act. Justice C Saravanan had accepted the petition of Suhail and directed the Tamil Nadu government to file a counter to his petition. Suhail had alleged that he was not allowed for a walk-in interview for the post of office assistant.

In his petition, he argued, "It is a Constitutional mandate that a state cannot

discriminate on the ground of religion. The term 'specific endowment' will not include an educational institution where no religious instruction can be taught to the students. It is clear from the preamble to the Constitution that the state is secular and cannot choose any religion to spread its ideologies." Suhail had claimed that the mandate of the HR&CE Act applied only to temples or Departments involving the affairs of the religion and was not applicable to the post of office assistant of an educational institute. He also stated that religious institution as defined in section 6(18) of the HR&CE Act meant only Mutts or Temples or specific endowment which included institutions maintained for a religious purpose.

EDITORIAL



“Whether you accept or reject it, God’s love for you is permanent.”

Swami Chinmayananda



“Give the world the best you have, the best will come back to you.”

Swami Dayananda Saraswati



“Devotion is not a task, it is a state of mind”

Swami Ananda Saraswati

Ridicule of Hindu practices by corporates

Ahead of Deepavali festival in 2021, an apparel brand named FabIndia came up with a collection named “Jashn-e-Riwaaz”, which in Urdu means “Festival of Traditions”. FabIndia claimed that the collection was to “welcome the festival of love and light and pay homage to Indian culture”. In advertisements, models were shown without wearing traditional attire and Bindi on their foreheads. After a major controversy erupted that FabIndia was trying to use their brand to secularize Deepavali and trivialize its religious moorings, FabIndia withdrew their campaign. In 2020, ahead of Dhanteras, Jewellery brand Tanishq put out and later withdrew an Ad that depicted a pregnant Hindu daughter-in-law expressing gratitude to her Muslim mother-in-law for “allowing” her to celebrate her baby showers in Hindu customs. In 2021, Tanishq came up with a collection named Rivaah ahead of Deepavali. Their ads for Deepavali showed models without the traditional Bindi or Tilak on the forehead. Ahead of a Hindu festival Karva Chauth, where women fast for the well being of their husbands, an FMCG company named Dabur India came up with an Ad about a same-sex couple celebrating the same.

The underlying intent and purpose behind these incidents is to ridicule and trivialize the religious practices behind our festivals, and secularize them. When there is an outcry on the sly insults and trivialization of Hindu rituals and festivals, members from other communities typically hide behind excuses that they are showcasing broad mindedness of our festivals, and that these festivals belong to everybody, and therefore are open for their interpretation. If this is so, why can the same broad mindedness not be applied to festivals from other communities too? And why do members from other communities interfere in Hindu religious events? Is that not against the spirit of secularism? It is common and unfortunate that a number of educated Hindus do not understand or appreciate the significance behind their own festivals, nor do they have any respect for them. These Hindus are the first defenders to divert any sensible response from the Hindu community.

When firecrackers are banned during Deepavali in various states of India against Supreme court ruling, the same firecrackers were burst for the release of Shahrukh Khan’s son, who was arrested for alleged possession of drugs. Virat Kohli, captain of the Indian Cricket team campaigned against bursting firecrackers for Deepavali in 2020. Despite a supreme committee report finding no evidence that Deepavali causes significant increase in pollution, Virat Kohli came up with a tweet campaign in 2021 to “educate” people on how to celebrate Deepavali.

All the above begs this question - Do ordinary Hindus really have the right to celebrate and observe their religious practices with dignity and freedom?

Guest Editor: Gautham Kumar

The greatness of Adi Shankaracharya

Sri Shankaracharya, the great Indian philosopher and social reformer who lived during the 8th century, was born in a tiny village called Kalady in the Ernakulam District of Kerala, India, located on the banks of famous River *Pūrṇā*. In his short lifespan of 32 years, he became one of the greatest teachers of the Vedas.

He was born to a devout Brahmin couple, Sri Sivaguru and Aryamba, as a result of their ardent prayers for a child to Lord Shiva at the famous Vadakkumnatha Temple, Trichur. Pleased with their prayers, God appeared in their dream and enquired what type of a child they wanted: whether they wanted a short-lived, good son, or a simpleton with a long life. They chose the first option.

A child was born to them in the *Vasanta ṛtu*, or the spring season, at noon in the auspicious *abhijit Muhurta* and under the constellation *ārdrā*. They named the baby boy Shankara.

Young Shankara showed remarkable scholarship, mastering the four Vedas by the age of eight. From the beginning, he was attracted towards spirituality and *Sanyāsa*, and wanted to lead a meaningful life free of worldly pleasures. When he was three years of age, he lost his father, and his widowed mother Aryamba raised him on her own.

One day Shankara's mother fainted after walking three kilometers for her daily bath in the River *Pūrṇā*. Feeling helpless, little Shankara prayed to Lord Krishna. Moved by his prayers, God appeared in front of him and blessed him by saying, "The river will flow where your little feet mark the ground." The river took a new course towards the place marked by the little boy's feet. Since then, the town came to be called Kalady. Translated

to English, the word Kalady means “footprint.” Prior to this event, the village was called Sasalam. Shankara then installed Lord Krishna into the present temple, and marked the occasion by reciting his famous *acyutāṣṭakam*.

Shankara travelled all over India, and met the leaders of the different schools of thought. At Kashi, he had a strange experience: When he was going to have his bath in the River Ganges, an outcaste came from the opposite direction with four dogs and obstructed the way. Shankara ordered him out of his path. To his surprise, the outcaste retorted, "O, venerable Guru! You are a preacher of Advaita Vedanta and yet you make a great difference between man and man. How can this be consistent with your teaching of Advaitism? Is Advaita only a theory?"

Shankara soon realized that the outcaste (*Caṇḍāla*) was none other than Lord Shiva, who took this form to teach him a lesson. He immediately fell prostrate at Lord Shiva's feet. Right then and there, Shankara composed five Slokas, called the '*Maniṣā Pancakam*'. Every Sloka ends thus: “He who learnt to look on the phenomena in the light of Advaita is my true Guru, be he a *Caṇḍāla* or be he a Brahmin.”

He founded four Shankaracharya *Piṭhas* (monasteries), called “*Mathas*,” in the four corners of India to uphold his spiritual teachings. These are *Sāradā Piṭham* at Sringeri (Karnataka), *Sāradā Piṭham* at Dwaraka (Gujarat), *Jyotir Piṭham*, Badarikashrama (Uttarakhand), *Govardhana Piṭham* in Jagannath, Puri (Orissa). These peethas are amongst the most revered pilgrim destinations in the country.

Guest Editor: Yeshwant Bhargav

PM Modi greeted in Italy by chants of *Śiva Tāṇḍava stotram*



Bhubaneswar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, landed in Italy on 29th October, to participate in the G20 Summit. He was welcomed by chants of ‘*śiva Tāṇḍava stotram*’ and ‘Bharat Mata ki Jai’ by the members of the Indian diaspora. A video shared by the Union culture and tourism minister G Kishan Reddy

on Twitter showed PM Modi surrounded by security personnel while being greeted with cheers by the members of the Indian diaspora. The video also showed the members waving Indian flags while the prime minister stood with folded hands listening deeply to the hymns. PM Modi was also seen engaging in conversations with the members, standing with posters of the top leader.

Before meeting people from the Indian diaspora, PM Modi paid floral tributes at the bust of Mahatma Gandhi at Piazza Gandhi. He also had an interaction with European council president Charles Michel, and European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen.

PM Modi had an hour-long meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican City and invited him to visit India. Although the meeting between PM Modi and the Pope was scheduled for only 20 minutes, it went on for nearly an hour. Both

are reported to have discussed a wide range of issues aimed at making the planet better, including fighting climate change and removing poverty. This is the first visit since 1999 when Atal Bihari Vajpayee met Pope John Paul II. He was accompanied by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr S Jaishankar.

The PM’s trip to Rome, and Glasgow in Scotland ended on November 2. After participating in the G20 Leaders’ Summit in Rome, he headed to Scotland to meet with “other G20 leaders in discussions on global economic and health recovery from the pandemic, sustainable development, and climate change,” according to a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO). This is the first in-person G20 Leaders’ Summit since the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic struck in 2020.

International University of Vedic Wellness launched in Chicago



Bhubaneswar: An International University of Vedic Wellness is being established in the greater Chicago area by local Indian American community member Mrs.Santosh Kumar, on the occasion of her father Shambu Dayal Kulshresthra’s 48th death anniversary. The mission of the university, she said in a press statement, is to teach, preserve and advance the ideals and values of Sanatana Dharma by integrating the ancient practices with the global Hindutva philosophy in this digital age.

Mrs.Kumar said that this brick-and-

mortar university is being built on a 38-plus acre campus and will offer certification, associate, bachelor, masters, and Ph.D. degree courses in a formal setting. Initial funding for the university will come from her late husband Pramod Kumar’s Trust fund and her family personally, she added.

Physician Dr.Vijay Prabhakar, the President of the American Association of Multi Ethnic Physicians, announced a contribution of \$100,000 to establish an Inter-Faith Chair to teach the Hindu philosophy of religious tolerance and the basic tenets of other faiths at the university.

Navaratri bridges India’s cultural and spiritual alignment with Sri Lanka

Bhubaneswar: Navratri is one of their most important festivals celebrated by Hindus across the world, especially in India and Sri Lanka. Because of the geographical proximity, cultural similarities and economic interdependence, India and its southern neighbour Sri Lanka have always been each other’s topmost priorities.

In Sri Lanka, which is home to many Hindu shrines, the Navaratri festival is celebrated with utmost devotion. This is a time of great joy for the Hindu community. The Navaratri and Sivaratri festivals are celebrated in the ancient

temples—Munneswaram; Koneswaram in Trincomalee; and Naguleswaram in Keerimalai. During the Navaratri festival, these temples really come to life. Sri Lankan devotees partake in religious rites singing bhakthi Geetha, while offering sweets, fruits and flowers to the goddesses.

The bilateral ties between the two neighbours India and Sri Lanka go back to more than two millennia. The most vital aspect for India and Sri Lanka is to find the common interest in the sphere of cultural diplomacy which looms large presently.



To Critique or Not

Based on the book “Perennial Wisdom through Stories” by Swami Ananda Saraswati

The Sun was at his shining best over the valley. Three friends weary from their journey in the forenoon were seeking respite from the immense heat. Two of them, who were a few steps ahead, took shelter under a leafy tree. Moments later once the shade cooled their mind and body, they started chatting.

Traveller 1: What sort of a tree is this? Does it produce fruits?

Traveller 2: No, I don't think so. Even the timber looks weak.

Traveller 1: No fruits, no timber. Not of much use, I think.

Their third friend entered the shade as this conversation was taking place. He dropped his backpack, touched the tree with gratitude and reverence. After a moment of silence, he asked – if the tree is indeed useless whose shade are we enjoying now?

The other two realising their mistake, bent their heads slightly as an act of apology and gratitude to the tree. A gentle breeze followed and a leaf silently fell to the ground as if acknowledging the change in their attitude.

The path towards Freedom is to acknowledge the existence of bondage, understand its source and act to relieve ourselves from the Bondage.

Criticize no one as useless. Every being has a reason for its existence.



Compiled by Anantha Padmanabhan

The Value of Values

The Twenty Values of Jñānam

Arjuna Asks : What is Jñānam?

The values necessary to prepare the mind for knowledge are set out in the Bhagavad Gita in response to a question by Arjuna. The **13th Chapter of the Gita** begins with this three-part request for instruction addressed by Arjuna to his teacher, Lord Kṛṣṇa :

अर्जुन उवाच

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।

एतद्वेदितुमिच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च केशव ॥ 13.1 ॥

arjuna uvāca

prakṛtiṃ puruṣam caiva kṣetraṃ kṣetrajñameva ca.

etadveditumeccāmi jñānam jñeyam ca keśava..

Arjuna said:

Oh, Lord, I would like to learn about: *prakṛti* (insentientcy or matter) and *puruṣa* (sentientcy or spirit); *kṣetra* (the field, which indicates the body, or insentientcy) and *kṣetrajña* (the knower of the field, which indicates that which is conscious of the body); *jñānam* (knowledge) and *jñeyam* (that which is to be known).

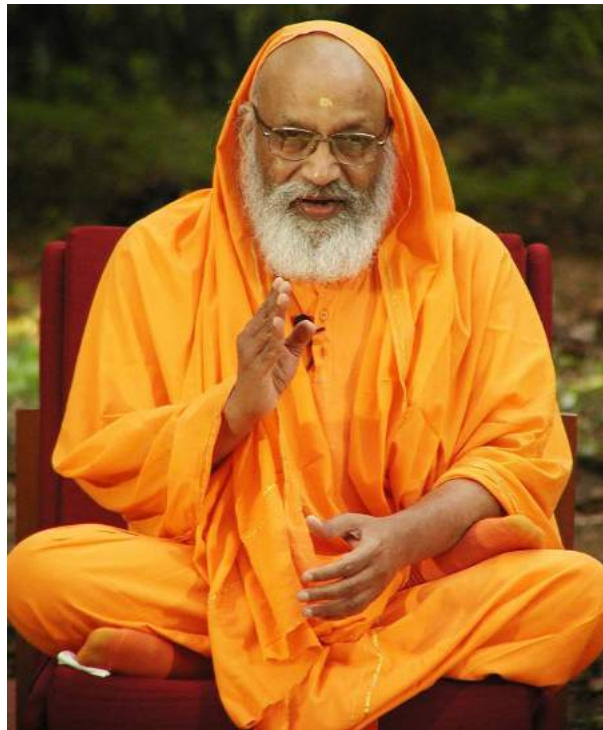
In some Gita manuscripts the opening verse is not found. In answer to the third part of this request, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* lists **20 qualities of the mind** which He terms *jñānam* or knowledge:

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।

आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ 13.8 ॥

amānitvam adambhitvam ahiṃsā kṣāntirārjavam.

ācāryopāsanam śaucaṃ sthairyam ātmavinigrahaḥ..



1) *amānitvam* – absence of self-worshipfulness

2) *adambhitvam* – absence of pretence

3) *ahiṃsā* – non-injury

4) *kṣāntiḥ* – accommodation

5) *ārjavam* – straightness

6) *ācāryopāsanam* – service to the teacher

7) *śaucaṃ* - cleanliness

8) *sthairyam* – steadiness

9) *ātmavinigrahaḥ* – mastery over mind

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहङ्कार एव च ।

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ 13.9 ॥

indriyārtheṣu vairāgyamanahaṅkāra eva ca.

janmamṛtyujarāvyaādhiḍukhadōṣānudarśanam..

10) *indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam* – dispassion towards sense objects

11) *anahaṅkāraḥ* - absence of egoism

12) *janma - mṛtyu - jarā - vyādhi - duḥkha - doṣānudarśanam* - reflection on the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain.

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।

नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ 13.10 ॥

asaktiranabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putradāragṛhādiṣu.

nityam ca samacittatvam iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu..

13) *asaktiḥ* – absence of sense of ownership

14) *anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putra - dāra - gṛhādiṣu* - absence of fast attachment to son, wife, home, etc.

15) *nityam samacittatvam - iṣṭā - niṣṭā - upapattiṣu* – constant even-mindedness in the occurrence of desirable and the undesirable

मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।

विविक्तदेशसेवित्त्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ 13.11 ॥

mayi cānanyayogena bhaktiravyabhicāriṇī.

viviktadeśasevittvamaratirjanasamsadi..

16) *mayi ananya - yogena bhaktiḥ avyabhicāriṇī* – unswerving devotion to Me characterized by non-separatedness from Me

Festival of the Month - *Dīpāvalī*



Dīpāvalī is celebrated around the globe. Outside of India, it is more than a Hindu festival; it's a celebration of South-Asian identities. If you are away from the sights and sounds of *Dīpāvalī*, light a lamp, sit quietly, shut your eyes, withdraw the senses, concentrate on this supreme light. Deepawali, *Dīpāvalī*, or Diwali is the biggest and the brightest of all Hindu festivals. It is the festival of lights: *Dīpa* in Sanskrit means "light" and *āvalī* "a row" to become "a row of lights." *Dīpāvalī* is marked by four days of celebration, which literally illuminates the country with its brilliance and dazzles people with its joy.

The *Dīpāvalī* festival is usually celebrated during late October or early November. It is celebrated from the *Kṛṣṇa Trayodaśī* in the month of *aśvina* and *Śukla Dvītīya* in the month of the *Kārtika*. Hence the calendar date of *Dīpāvalī* varies every year. *Dīpāvalī* marks the onset of winter and the beginning of all things new, both in nature and humanity.

Five days celebration of *Dīpāvalī*

Each of the five days of Diwali have their own significance and designation. The **first day** - *Dhana Trayodaśī* (or Dhanteras), is a celebration of wealth and prosperity. It is celebrated two days before Diwali. It is considered that Goddess Lakshmi came out from the ocean of milk during the churning of

the Sea, also known as "Samudra Manthan". The god of wealth *Kubera* is worshipped on this day.

The **second day** - *Naraka Chaturdaśī* marks the defeat of the demon *Naraka* at the hands of Lord Krishna and his wife Satyabhama.

On the **third day** - *amāvāsyā*, devotees pray to the Goddess Laxmi, as many believe that she is in a most benevolent moon during this period and often grants wishes to her followers. On *amāvāsyā*, people also narrate the story of Lord Vishnu, who took on the incarnation of a dwarf and banished Bali to hell. Only during the festival of lights is Bali permitted to roam the world again, to spread Lord Vishnu's message of love, compassion and knowledge, and also light diyas (oil lamps) along the way.

On the **fourth day** - *Kārtika śuddha Prathami*, Bali steps out of Hell and rules the earth as per the boons given to him by Lord Vishnu. The **fifth day** - *Yama Dvītīya*, also known as Bhai Dooj, is observed, and is associated with sisters inviting their brothers into their home.

Spiritual significance of *Dīpāvalī*

Beyond the lights and fun, *Dīpāvalī* is also a time to reflect on life and make changes for the upcoming year. With that, there are a number of customs that revellers hold dear each year.

Give and forgive

It is common practice that people forget and forgive the wrongs done by others during *Dīpāvalī*. There is an air of freedom, festivity, and friendliness everywhere.

Rise and shine

Waking up during the *Brahma-muhurta* (at 4 a.m. or 1.5 hours before sunrise) is a great blessing from the standpoint of health, ethical discipline, efficiency in work, and spiritual advancement.

Unite and unify

Dīpāvalī is a unifying event, and it can soften even the hardest of hearts. It is a time when people mingle about in joy and embrace one another.

Prosper and progress

On this day, Hindu merchants in North India open their new account books and pray for success and prosperity during the coming year. This festival instills charity in the hearts of people, who perform good deeds. This includes Govardhan Puja, a celebration by Vaishnavites on the fourth day of *Dīpāvalī*. On this day, they feed the poor on an incredible scale.

Illuminate your inner Self

The lights of *Dīpāvalī* also signify a time of inner illumination. Hindus believe that the light of lights is the one that steadily shines in the chamber of the inner Self. It is an opportunity to cultivate and enjoy eternal bliss. In each legend, myth, and story of *Dīpāvalī* lies the significance of the victory of good over evil. From darkness unto light—the light empowers us to commit ourselves to good deeds and brings us closer to divinity.

This year *Dīpāvalī* will be celebrated between **2nd November and 6th November 2021**.



*Yoga Vidya Group wishes everyone a very happy and blessed *Dīpāvalī*.*

The Value of Values (Contd.)

17) *viviktadeśa sevītvam* - resorting to a quiet place

18) *aratih - jana - samsadi* - absence of craving for the company of people

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।

एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ 13.12 ॥

adhyātma-jñānanityatvam tattvajñānārthadarśanam.

etajjñānamiti proktamajñānam yadato-anyathā..

19) *adhyātma - jñāna - nityatvam* - constant application of the knowledge of the self

20) *tattva - jñāna - arthadarśanam* - keeping in view, the purpose of knowledge of Truth

This is declared to be knowledgeable and what is opposed to it is ignorance. As we have seen, 'knowledge' as used here does not mean knowledge of Self but stands for those qualities of the mind (values) which must be present for the mind of the seeker to be prepared for the knowledge of the Self. (Knowledge of Self in this case is indicated by *jñānam* (knowledge) and *jñeyam* - that which is to be known.

Jñānam indicates those qualities of mind which must be present for the *vastu*, the Truth (that which is ultimately Real; that which cannot be resolved into anything else), to be known.

We have seen in the previous discussion that

for values to be personally valuable they must be discovered through knowledge (seen as valuable by the value-holder) and not simply impressed from without. Therefore, the term *jñānam* is quite appropriate. The list of values constituting *jñānam* is long but the qualities are interrelated, defining a harmonious frame of mind in which knowledge can occur. Each of the terms used by Lord *Kṛṣṇa* highlights a certain attitude, the value for which must be discovered personally, in order that the attitude becomes a natural aspect of the seeker's frame of mind.

Dear Readers, this section is aimed at a simple and refreshing way to learn and recollect some of the interesting aspects of 'Hinduism' through a series of 10 trivia questions covering diverse aspects of the religion such as Philosophy, Religious Literature & Puranas to name a few.

1. _____ was the God among the trinity who bore the entire mountain 'Mandāra' by taking the form of _____ when it started to sink during the churning of the ocean of milk to get *amṛta* (the nectar of immortality) ?

- (a) Vishnu & Elephant (b) Vishnu & Giant Tortoise
(c) Shiva & Snake (d) Shiva & Elephant

2. As per 'Varṇāśrama' Dharma, which stage is dedicated to *Tapas* (Penance) to come out of all worldly attachments?

- (a) *Gr̥hastha* (b) *Vānaprastha*
(c) *Brahmacarya* (d) *Sanyāsa*

3. When trying to understand or reflect on the outcome/result of an action which aspect of Vedanta is used?

- (a) *Brahman* (b) *Puruṣārtha* (c) *Prārabdha* (d) *Paramātmā*

4. In a Jiiva, what are the 3 triangular nodes which constitute the body-mind complex?

- (a) *Vāsana* - *Cintā* - *Kriyā* (b) *Vāsana* - *ahaṅkāra* - *Kriyā*
(c) *Vāsana* - *ahaṅkāra* - *Cintā* (d) *Cintā* - *Kriyā* - *ahaṅkāra*

5. Which revered Hindu king (also the son on King Parikshit & Madravati) violated the words of his guru the great sage Vyasacharya at every step and which thus led to his demise?

- (a) Chitrasena (b) Ugrasena (c) Vaishyampayana (d) Janamejaya

6. It is in this shrine that the sun's rays fall on the presiding deity 'Lord Shiva' throughout the month of Margazhi (December - January) and is extremely powerful to cure physically and mentally challenged disabilities in people - Which place are we talking about?

- (a) Vadakunnathar in Thrissur (Kerala)
(b) Amarnath in Jammu and Kashmir
(c) Swayambulingaswamy in Uvari (Tamil Nadu)
(d) Pasupathy Nath in Nepal

7. The Shanmuga Kavacham a powerful hymn of 30 verses in praise of Lord Murugan was composed by which great Swami?



- (a) Vallalar (b) Pamban Swamigal
(c) Paramahansa Yoganana (d) Ramana Maharishi

8. The dialogue between the great sage Yajnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi on the concept of Atma is featured in which Upanishad of Advaita?

- (a) Mandukya (b) Taittiriya (c) Chandogya (d) Brihadaranyaka

9. A householder and a Mimamsaka, this person renounced his life and became a sanyasin after being defeated in a debate by Adi Sankaracharya - Who is he?

- (a) Padmapadacharya (b) Totakacharya
(c) Sureshvaracharya (d) Hastamalaka

10. Vedantin's following Advaita Vedanta take ___ symbolizing that there exists only Brahman and nothing else?

- (a) *Ekadaṇḍa Sanyāsa* (b) *Tridaṇḍa Sanyāsa*
(c) *Dvidaṇḍa Sanyāsa* (d) None of these

For answers please look into the last page of this edition!!!

Compiled by Karthik Ganesan



The Guru knows

In heights of happiness and depths of despair, the Guru knows
When it is dark and when it is light, the Guru knows
Towards the goal or away from it, the Guru knows
In pain and in pleasure, the Guru knows
In anger and in surrender, the Guru knows
This life and those before and after, the Guru knows
What is truth and what is not, the Guru knows
To do or not to do, the Guru knows
The Guru simply knows, in fact
He is the one who truly knows

Poem by Karthik Sundaram



Gautham Kumar

Technologist @ Amazon

Core Member - Yoga Vidya Gurukulam

How did you get introduced to Yoga and Vedanta?

I was initially exposed to Vedanta in my childhood, through various speakers in Chennai. I also had exposure to Vedic chanting in my childhood, learning a few Vedic texts under a Ganapadigal. Growing up, Vedanta was always a fascinating subject for me. It seemed to have depth, but at the same time, contain contradictions, without an end or conclusion. When watching speakers enunciate about Vedanta in seminars, I used to critically analyze how they behave on and off stage. There was always a big gap in their words and action, which used to be a cause of conflict. I was exposed to basic Yoga practices during college.

When and how did you happen to meet Swamiji?

I came to know about Swamiji through a Yoga class in Chennai in 2003. Swamiji was taking a class on *Tattva Bodha* in the same place, and I had the opportunity to participate in the same. Initially, a number of questions I had were directly addressed through the class, which initially drew me in. Later, I and a friend of mine used to regularly meet Swamiji after college and during weekends at his place of stay in Chennai. We used to discuss all topics under the sun, which Swamiji used to patiently and graciously answer. I discovered that Swamiji was very transparent, direct and open. He also led a conflict free and contented life, though he did not have many material possessions,

which was an eye opener for me. I also had the opportunity to see how Swamiji lived his life up and close during this time, which was a blessing. This association helped me see Vedanta as more than just a curious interest. Also, I got exposed to practices like *Pūjā* and *Japam*, which have helped me immensely.

How do you become a part of Yoga Vidya Gurukulam?

When me and my friend met Swamiji, he was interested in sharing his teachings through an institution. Yoga Vidya Gurukulam was established in 2007 for the same. Due to my association with Swamiji, I also started to become associated with Yoga Vidya Gurukulam, and started contributing in whichever way I could.



How is association with Swamiji and Yoga Vidya Gurukulam helping you in your personal life?

Through my association with Swamiji, I have come to value *āstika buddhi*, honesty and transparency in life. Swamiji always emphasizes that “Teaching is more important than the Teacher”, which has become a value for me. A number of personal conflicts have been resolved over a period of time due to the association. I have also benefited immensely from practices such as *Pūjā* and *Japam*, due to my association with Swamiji. I also learnt the benefits of Yoga.

Tell us about your experiences working for the Light of East.

I initially started working on the Light of East in 2010, when I started transcribing articles. I later had the opportunity to contribute to the magazine for a couple of years, and interact with Swamiji during this process. This was a learning experience for me.



How does *Pūjā* help in your personal growth?

Due to my association with Swamiji, I got exposed to *Pūjā* and *Japam*. I was able to see the meaning and value behind Vedic rituals because of this. Also, my association with Swamiji helped me improve my attitude and understanding towards the teaching tradition and rituals.

Pūjā helped me understand what *Īśvara* is, and see *Īśvara* as not just an abstract concept, but as someone who can be related through *Pūjā*. Swamiji used to emphasize that most people simply worship *Īśvara* through various rituals, but do not relate with *Īśvara*. This prevents them from really tapping God’s grace. Swamiji also used to emphasize that the purpose of *Pūjā* is to bring *Īśvara*, who is the Totality in our lives. Similarly, during our interactions, Swamiji has spent considerable time explaining how a *Pūjā* place needs to be set up and maintained. All of these helped me develop *Pūjā* as a natural part of life over a course of time. *Pūjā* has helped me gain objectivity and understanding in life, and is a source of joy and happiness. *Pūjā* has also helped me bring some discipline in my life.

What are your future plans?

I don’t have any specific plans to share at the moment. I would like to contribute something back for what I have learnt so far. I also want to continue my association with the Teaching and tradition. I would like to learn Yoga systematically and possibly become a Yoga practitioner in the future.

Namaste



स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।

नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलोऽभ्यनुनादयन् ॥ १९ ॥

sa ghoṣo dhārtarāṣṭrāṇāṃ hrdayāni vyadārayat.

nabhaśca pṛthivīm caiva tumulo-abhyanunādayan..19..

Chapter I

अथ व्यवस्थितान्द्रुष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।

प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसम्पाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥ २० ॥

हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ।

atha vyavasthitāndrṣṭvā dhārtarāṣṭrān kapidhvajah.

pravṛtte śastrasampāte dhanurudyamya pāṇḍavaḥ..20..



Even though Duryodhana is fighting in the Mahabharata war, the name Dhritarashtra comes up again and again. When your boss wants that his ego be satisfied, you have to present yourself related to the boss. If you are smart enough, you need to say those things that are related to the boss which will create fear within himself. You need to have a stable mind to praise and also to point out the limitations of your boss using the words that are related to the

boss. Generally people what they do is either they praise or they criticize instead of pointing out the limitations. You need to constantly remind your boss where he has gone wrong so that he starts listening to you. This has to be handled very tactfully.

Sanjaya says, O king ! by seeing the son of Dhritarashtra in the battle field, the war is supposed to start and already conch has blown. Generally war is supposed to be done keeping with dharma, as per vedic culture. In Mahabharata war, the war can take place only in the daytime. Once the sun sets the war has to stop immediately and resume the next day. The war was meant to protect dharma.

Sanjaya very carefully uses his words and narrates to Dhritarashtra that the son of Pandu, Arjuna is having a chariot. There is a flag on top of the chariot. The flag has Hanuman in a seated posture. Hanuman is believed to be one of the Chiranjeevi (one who never loses his youth). Hanuman is not that easy to defeat. Sanjaya tries to point this out to Dhritarashtra to indicate that if Hanuman is being seated on the flag, the chariot will always be protected. Sanjaya communicated to his boss in a subtle way.

When you have to handle your boss, you need to have a clear picture of the project. You should communicate in such a way that you are just giving information and are neither

pouring out your frustration nor expressing your insecurity. When you are working under the boss, never ever talk to your boss pointing out the points directly. Here, for instance, Dhritarashtra is always scared and careful about Krishna. Wherever Lord Krishna is there anything can happen at any moment. Sanjaya is aware of this fear of his boss and doesn't bring out the topic of Krishna directly. He first narrates that Lord Hanuman is there in the flag. After pointing out Hanuman, Sanjaya talks about Lord Krishna and mentions that Arjuna is talking to Krishna. Dhritarashtra becomes more curious to know what they are talking.

At the start of the war Arjuna aspires to do big things and feels he has all the resources to be successful. However, he has not seen the limitations of his resources. With this he becomes arrogant and thinks he is the boss. He forgets that Lord Krishna is elder to him, has got a lot of powers, and he himself as pleaded Lord Krishna to become his charioteer. Since Arjuna has not seen the limitations he thinks the resources are everything. Arjuna thinks he can achieve anything and everything with his resources. Arjuna orders Lord Krishna to take the chariot and place the chariot in between the two armies. He tells Lord Krishna that he wants to see his opponents who are fighting against him.

Compiled by Krithika Sanjeevi

Answers to Our 'Hinduism' & 'Mythology' – Trivia

1. (b) 2. (b) 3. (c) 4. (a) 5. (d)
6. (c) 7. (b) 8. (d) 9. (c) 10. (a)



Swamiji's Gangotri trip - October 2021

