

Vedanta Sandesh

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Holi Greetings

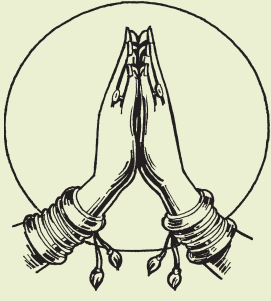
(11th Mar 2009)

Of all God's gifts to the sighted man, color is holiest,
the most divine, the most solemn. - Ruskin



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Vedanta Sandesh

Spreading Love & Light

Monthly eMagazine of Vedanta Mission

Sharing the message of Vedanta and Sanatan Dharma

On the Net since 1995

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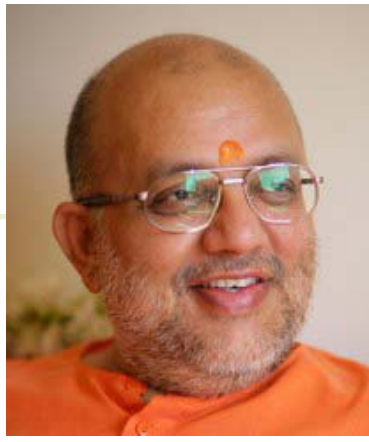
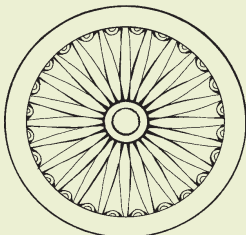
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From Poojya Guruji

Hari om!

Poojya Gurudev Sri Swami Chinmayanandaji once said that the only History which we know of is His-Story. The implication is that while the puranas do talk of events in some by-gone ages, the basic message is always some subjective spiritual truth here & now. One who is aware of this alone gets the real intended message. Thus if it is festivals like Holi, Ram Navami or celebrations like Mahashivratri, devotees should also try to discover the hidden subjective lessons in & through these mythological stories and traditions.

Lets take the example of Mahashivratri. In and through the various stories revealed in Puranas about it, which help inculcate various positive values and invoke capacities, its subjective secret is very different and interesting. It is basically a motivation to work to awake to the subjective truth within. Ratri is night and stands for ignorance in which all beings are asleep and dream. The dream of duality, limited individuality and the subsequent transmigration. Our endless compulsive seeking is all a dream, imagination of an ignorant mind. As long as this exists, our samsara shall continue, irrespective of any prosperity or experiences here. We need to wake up to that which is not a product of mind. That alone is timeless and auspicious. Mandukya Upanishad calls our Turiya state as Shiv. So the real Shivratri is to awake to the Shiv-Tattva within. The word Ratri also stands for the deep-sleep like state of non-projections. Lets simulate the deep-sleep state consciously and keep aside all play of mind as in our waking and dream states. When the mind is thus quiet, we need to discover 'what is'. That 'me' which exists when the mind is quiet alone is that which is not a product of mind, its the real 'me'. Awakening to that alone is the real celebration of this day.

With Love & om,

Swami Atmananda Saraswati

Sloka No 2 onwards we have seen that ignorance is the root cause of all suffering and that self-knowledge is the direct means of moksha, whereas other means like rituals, tapas, daana, including action have initial and preparatory roles in our spiritual journey.

In the previous sloka the acharya explained how knowledge being in direct opposition to ignorance, like darkness is to light, can be the only means to liberation, and never any action whatsoever. In fact knowledge is possible only when all actions cease. In the next sloka the Acharya says that for knowledge to dawn, it is extremely necessary that the diagnosis of our sufferings is very clear, then alone our priorities are set right and focus is clear.

परिच्छिन्न इवाज्ञानात् तन्नाशे सति केवलः।
स्वयं प्रकाशते ह्यात्मा मेघापार्ये अंशुमानिव!!

**Parichhinna iva agyanat tannashe sati kevalah
Swayam prakashate hyatma meghapayemshumaniva**

Parichhinna iva: As though limited; **agyanat:** out of ignorance; **tan-nashe sati:** on its destruction; **kevalah:** the one sole; **Swayam prakashate:** shines by itself; **hi:** verily; **atma:** Self; **meghapaye:** on the dispelling of clouds; **amshuman iva:** like the sun.

The Self appears to be finite just because of ignorance. When ignorance is destroyed there is just that which is 'one without a second'. The self-effulgent Atma reveals itself, just like the Sun when the clouds pass away.

Parichhinna iva agyanat: We as well as the world do appear limited. This perception is deceptive, it is false. When we go into the truth of anything, the subject or the objects, then all limitations are discovered to be superficial. The truth of everything is one timeless, limitless divinity. It is only the ignorant ones who take the limitations as real and keep playing the endless game of hide & seek. Because all our presumptions about duality are baseless and false, therefore any plan of action based on taking these limitations and multiplicity as real never fulfills. No experience ever liberates, inspite of all heavenly comforts, the sense of limitation never goes, and we end up hanging on to our comforts, wealth and pleasures. When the very diagnosis is wrong no medicine can ever free us from our dis-

eases and pain. When the very limitation is not there, there should be no question of any action to remove it. Resorting to actions is only after taking the limitations to be real.

Just as in any action, knowledge too requires profound dedication, in fact it requires all the more higher degree of dedication. A loose, half-hearted effort can never culminate in knowledge. In order to be blessed with right knowledge one needs to give ones heart & soul for this knowledge to dawn. One should be ready to burn ones bridges, ready for self-effacement and not aim for some special self-fulfillment. This endeavor has to be not only intense & holistic, but even humble. For such a state of mind to come, it is necessary that we appreciate the nature of our problem very clearly, so that we remained

focussed. When the problem is plain & simple ignorance, then the solution is only & only by knowledge. Let there be no dissipation of energy.

Tan-nashe sati kevalah: So the teacher says that just work to eliminate the ignorance. There is nothing to do, but just to know everything with deep insight. The importance of teacher (guru) is just because knowledge alone liberates, and the one who helps the knowledge to dawn is Guru. Guru reveals the secrets of Upanishads, and it is the dedicated Sravana, Manana and Niddidhyasana of the message and vision of scriptures which helps the valid knowledge to dawn. Proper diagnosis conserves our time & energy and helps us to attain our objective soon. So it is important that we understand that we don't have to liberate ourselves, but just know that we were always liberated. No words, which are always limited, can ever reveal the limitless. Even the word limitless, simply means absence of limitations., it is not a positive, but a negative word. Negative words just negate, and what is it which can be negated? That which is extraneous alone is negatable. We don't have to reveal the Self, but just negate the entire gamut of all that is anatma (not Self) and its

causal ignorance. Anatma is negated just by knowing it to be anatma, so it's a process of unloading the various superimpositions on our Self. Having negated this we just have to awake to the truth, which is right in front. It is self-revelatory.

Svayam prakashate hi atma: Atma is self-fulgent. Even when we have notions about ourselves being limited, then also that limited Self is being revealed effortlessly. The nature of limitations vary as per our whims, fancies and conditionings, but that which is seen variously is a common substratum. We may have to put efforts to 'be rich' etc, but we never have to put any efforts just to 'be'. That is the self-fulgence of the self. It is always revealed, all what we need to do is to negate all baseless superimpositions about ourselves.

One who thus aims to work for this specific objective shall awake to one's truth. The Atma shall reveal itself as effortlessly as the Sun reveals itself when the clouds are removed. **Meghapaye amshuman eva.** Just unveil this curtain of misunderstanding and ignorance to reveal and revel in the glory of your own Self, thunder the vedantic scriptures.

The Wooden Bowl

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year-old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered.

The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth. The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess.

'We must do something about father,' said the son.

'I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor.'

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor.

He asked the child sweetly, 'What are you making?'

Just as sweetly, the boy responded, 'Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up.'

The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents so that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done.

That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

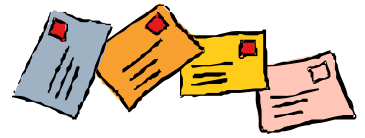


Nature Quotes

A sensitive plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
and closed them beneath the kisses of night.

~ Percy Bysshe Shelley

Cutting the Knots



(Reply of Poojya Guruji in the 'International Vedanta Society' Discussion Forum in Facebook)

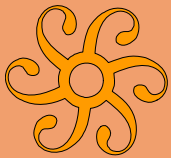
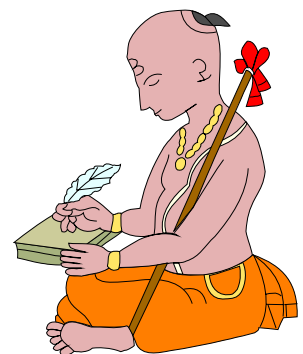
Greetings Charles!

Bondage and Liberation are indeed both of and by the mind alone. However, it is not enough to say that therefore 'dont identify', because the possibility of identification of the Self with the mind is borne out of our perception of the Self to be 'susceptible to identification'. This susceptibility indicates that the Self it being taken as Saguna. One guna alone can identify with other guna. This misconception of taking ourself to be having some unique attributes alone opens the gates of all identifications, and its subsequent consequences. The mind has to appreciate that all attributes being presumed on the Self are mere superimpositions. The moment this appreciation is brought about no identifications are possible.

Thus it is not action of detachment but knowledge of our being attributeless which cuts the knots.

Lots of Love & om

Swami Atmananda



It is not action of detachment but knowledge of our being attributeless which cuts the knots.

- Poojya Guruji





Foreign Tour of Poojya Guruji

Poojya Guruji shall arrive in the **UK** on 29th April for about a six weeks tour. Before that he is likely to visit **Canada** for 15 days.

- | | | |
|---------|---|----------------------------------|
| 9th Apr | - | Leave for Canada |
| 12-18 | - | GGY at Niagara |
| 29 | - | Arrive in UK from Canada |
| 1st May | - | Satsang at Luton |
| 2 | - | Peterboro |
| 3-9 | - | GGY Wellingboro |
| 10 | - | Vishnu Sahasranama Archana |
| 12 | - | Satsang at Reading |
| 16 Morn | - | Leicester, Satsang (Luton group) |
| 16 Eve | - | Leicester, S.Dharma Mandir |
| 17 Morn | - | Gita Bhawan, Loughboro |
| 17 Eve | - | Leicester, Hindu Mandir |
| 21-22 | - | Lake Dist |
| 23 | - | Gloucester |
| 24 | - | Satsang nr London |
| 25 | - | Oxford |
| 26 | - | Birmingham |
| 28-30 | - | Leicester, Gita Gyana Yagna |
| 31 | - | Vishnu Sahasranama Archana |
| 2nd Jun | - | Leave for India |



The colorful festival of Holi is celebrated on Phalgun Purnima which comes in February end or early March. Holi festival celebrates the triumph of 'good' over 'bad'. The colorful festival bridges the social gap and renews sweet relationships. Holi is also the advent of spring season - the chill of the winter goes and the nature smiles with beauty all around. Fields are full with crops, good harvest is round the corner, and flowers bloom colouring the surroundings and filling fragrance in the air.

Holi has various legends associated with it. The foremost is the legend of demon King Hiranyakashyap who demanded everybody in his kingdom to worship him and not Lord Vishnu, but his pious son, Prahlad, became a devotee of Lord Vishnu. Hiranyakashyap wanted his son to be killed. He tried various methods but unfortunately all failed, so he finally asked his sister Holika to enter a blazing fire with Prahlad in her lap, as Holika had a boon which made her immune to fire. But strangely again Prahlad was saved by lord himself for his extreme devotion and on the contrary the evil minded Holika was burnt to ashes, for her boon worked only when she entered the fire alone. Since that time, people light a bonfire, called Holika-dahan on the eve of Holi festival and celebrate the victory of

umph of devotion to god. Some also celebrate the death of evil minded Pootana. The ogress tried to kill Lord Krishna as an infant by feeding it



ing the plan of Kansa, Krishna's sucked her blood and brought her

end. It is said that later the naughty and mischievous Lord Krishna started the trend of playing colours. He applied colour on Radha to make her one like him. The trend soon gained popularity amongst the masses. No wonder, there is no match to the Holi of Mathura, Vrindavan and Barsana - the places associated with the birth and childhood of Radha and Krishna.

In South India, people worship Kaamadeva- the god of love and passion, who shot his powerful love arrow on Lord Shiva to revoke his interest in the worldly affairs in the interest of the earth. However, Lord Shiva was enraged as he was in deep mediation and opened his third eye which reduced Kaamadeva to ashes. Though, later on the request of Rati, Kaamadeva's wife, Shiva was pleased to restore him back in a formless way.

In Gujarat and Orissa gratitude is expressed to Agni devata, by offering gram and stalks from the harvest. Ash left from this bonfire is also considered sacred and people apply it on their foreheads to protect them from evil forces.

In this manner Holi marks the spirit of love and brotherhood amongst people of all communities.



Nature Quotes

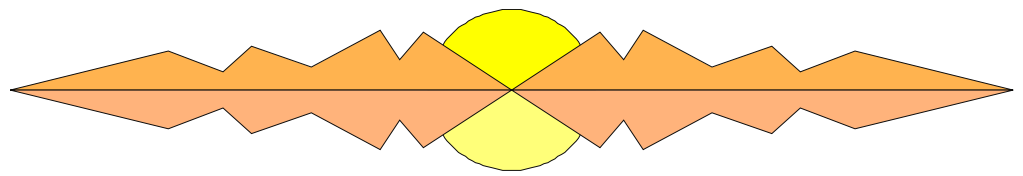
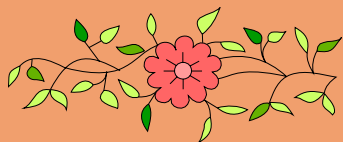
There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more.

~ George Gordon

Once upon
a time ...



“Feeling important
makes one heavy, clumsy
and vain. To be a warrior
one needs to be light and
fluid.”



Analstamb (Pillar of Fire)

Once while travelling lord Brahma reached the abode of Lord Vishnu. He saw Lord Vishnu resting on Shesh-Nag and being attended by Garuda and other attendants. When Brahmaji saw that Vishnu did not get up to receive him, he became very angry. Very soon, verbal dual erupted between them. It became so severe that a battle was fought between them, which continued for very long time. All the deities arrived from the heaven to watch the battle. They became very worried when they saw no sign of battle coming to an end. They decided to go to lord Shiva, to seek his help.

Though Lord Shiva knew everything, but still feigning ignorance, he asked about the well beings of the world. The deities told him about the battle, fought between Brahmaji and Vishnuji."

Lord Shiva then sent his one hundred Ganas to pacify both of them. He too went there accompanied by mother Parvati, boarded on a chariot. When Lord Shiva reached there, he saw that Brahmaji and Vishnuji were about to use their deadly weapons- Maheshwar and Pashupat respectively. Fearing the destruction, which these deadly weapons might have caused, Lord Shiva manifested himself in the form of 'Analstamba' (pillar of fire) between them. Brahmaji and Vishnuji had already released their weapons- Maheshwar and Pashupat. Both the weapons fell into that pillar of fire and got destroyed.

Brahmaji and Vishnuji were very surprised to see the pillar of fire, which was so enormous in size that it reached the sky and penetrated down the earth. Vishnuji transformed himself into a boar and went to the 'Patal' (nether world) to find the base of that 'Pillar of fire'. But he was unsuccessful in his attempt and came back.

Similarly Brahmaji transformed himself into a swan and flew up in the sky to find its limit. While going through the aerial route he met a withered 'Ketaki' flowers, which had still some freshness and fragrance left in it.

Lord Shiva smiled at the futile attempts of Shri Brahmaji and Vishnuji. As a result of his smile the Ketaki flower fell down from the branch. Ketaki flower told Brahmaji that he had been present there since the beginning of the creation, but was unable to know about the origin of that 'Pillar of fire'. The flower also advised Brahmaji against making any effort in that direction, as it would be of no use.

Brahmaji then sought the help of Ketaki flower to give a false witness before lord Vishnu, that he (Brahmaji) had been successful in seeing the limit of that pillar of fire. Ketaki flower agreed. Both of them went to Vishnuji and Brahmaji told him that he had seen the limit of that Pillar of fire. Ketaki flower gave a witness. Vishnuji accepted the superiority of Brahmaji.

Lord Shiva became very angry with Brahmaji. He proceeded to punish Brahmaji for his falsehood. Lord Vishnu requested Lord Shiva to spare the life of Brahmaji. Lord Shiva became pleased with Vishnuji and accorded him the same status as that of his own.

Feb'09 VM / VA Programs



Sanyas Deeksha of Sw. Amitanandaji:

On the occasion of the Sanyas Deeksha of Poojya Swamini Amitanandaji, she performed a Rudrabhisheka at the Gangeshwar Mahadev Temple.

Thirteen years back she was given sanyas on the banks of Narmada at Kheri Ghat on the occasion of Mahashivratri. Sanyas is giving up of all relative roles and their associated responsibilities, so that one can discover one non-relative identity. Sanyas is a religious sanction given as per the wish of the student and the pleasure of ones teacher. Sri Sankaracharya very clearly reveals that without sanyas the door of knowledge shall never open.

Mahashivratri at Vedanta Ashram, Indore:

Mahashivratri was celebrated with devotion and enthusiasm at Vedanta Ashram on 23rd Feb 2009.

The ashram was tastefully decorated with lights and flowers, and the temple area was specially decorated very lovingly. Throughout the day there were various pujas. The first abhisheka was by P.Swamini Amitanandaji on the occasion of her Sanyas Deeksha day. Later at 11.30 a samuhik puja was organized in which various devotees from Lucknow participated. The puja was conducted by Pt.Virendra Sharma.

Later the special decoration of Bhagwan Gangeshwar Mahadev started, in which mava was used for face, and dry fruits for facial features. The photos are below.

Special Decoration of Gangeshwar Mahadev:

Bhagwan Sri Gangeshwar Mahadev was decorated with a local Malwi touch on the occasion of Mahashivratri. The royal human face had a Malwi pugree, and the kingly demeanor.

All around Shivji big petals made out of flower rangoli was made. Lamps decorated each petals. The eight petals stood for the eight-fold prakriti of Lord in which he presides and which he alone enlivens. In Gita Lord Krishna reveals his two fold prakriti, the Papa and the Apra. While the latter constitutes the entire gross and subtle world, the former enlivens the whole complex thus created by Apra prakriti. Apra attracts the bee-like devotees, while the real nectar is discovered in the Para. Thus a sadhaka is attracted by the colors and fragrance and slowly goes deep to discover the treasures within.



Falhari Bhandara on Mahashivratri:

Yagna, Daan and Tapas are associated with every festival and puja. Gita tells us that one should always make these a part of our life, thus no religious practice is complete without them. As such on festivals like Mahashivratri the devotees fast.

In fasting one can take a resolve to keep aside anything which is part of our daily routine and habit, so that we do not become dependent on anything and also develop inner strength. On Mahashivratri day, all the ashramites had a fast of anna, no cereals are taken on this day. Devotees can partake any other food which doesn't have cereals. Our kitchen and dining was on the second floor.

Discourse of Poojya Guruji on Mahashivratri:

In the evening after the special decoration and Aarti, Poojya Guruji gave a short discourse, revealing the mahima of Mahashivratri.

He told how this tradition has started from the days of Samudra Manthan, when Lord Shiv drank the poison. When Parvatiji saw this she caught hold of Lord's neck, and thus the poison remained there alone. Later Lord Shiv was kept under observation for the whole night and all the devates and asuras together kept praying for him throughout the night. In the morning Lord opened his eyes and blessed everyone. On this day the first jyotirlinga also manifested, and the day is also associated with the re-union of Shiv-Shakti.

Abhisheka of Shivlinga on top:

After Poojya Guruji's discourse and chanting of Om Namah Shivaya mantra, everyone went to the ashram terrace and did the abhisheka of the Shiv-Padukas. Devotees carried a kalasha on their heads and kept chanting the Om Namah Shivaya mantra and did the abhisheka. This is an annual event when everyone is allowed on ashram terrace.

On 25th Feb morning Poojya Guruji along with few devotees visited the newly constructed Surya Mandir near CAT. The complex has been established by a local astrologer for shanti of various grahas. Thus there are temples of various devatas there, and the center is of Surya devata. The idol is imposing.

Check out the detailed Photo Albums of the various functions on **VM News Blog** at <http://vmissionews.blogspot.com/>



Nature Quotes

As you sit on the hillside, or lie prone under the trees of the forest, or sprawl wet-legged by a mountain stream, the great door, that does not look like a door, opens.

~ Stephen Graham

Forthcoming Programs



Gita Gyana Yagna, Lucknow:

Poojya Guruji will conduct a week long Gita Gyana Yagna at Hariom Mandir, Lucknow from 2nd of Mar to 10th of Mar. The etxt of the discourse series will be decided soon. On the second last day of the Yagna the Mandir authorities plan to offer a grand bhandara to all the devotees.

Gita Gyana Yagna, Bhavnagar:

Poojya Swamini Amitanandaji will conduct a week long Gita Gyana Yagna at Ramdass Ashram, Bhavnagar from 1st to 8th Mar. The text of the discourse series will be Natakdeep Prakarana of Panchadasi and Gita Chapter 9.

Gita Gyana Yagna, Niagara, Canada:

Poojya Guruji will conduct a week long Gita Gyana Yagna at Hindu Temple, Niagara, Canada from 12th to 18th April. The text of the discourse series will be Gita Chapter 3. On the last day will be a Vishnu Sahasranama Archana program followed by a bhandara.

Gita Gyana Yagna, Wellingborough, UK:

Poojya Guruji will conduct a week long Gita Gyana Yagna at Hindu Temple, Wellingborough 3rd to 9th of May. The text of the discourse series will be Gita Chapter 3. On the last day will be a Vishnu Sahasranama Archana program followed by a bhandara.

Sadhana Camp, Rishikesh:

Poojya Guruji will conduct a six days Sadhana Camp at Rishikesh from 7th to 12th June 2009. The text of the discourse series will be the last section of Katha Upanishad and Gita Chapter 9.

Hari om !

Check out for other issues of Vedanta Sandesh at:
<http://www.vmission.org.in/mission/ezine.htm>



Net Publication of Vedanta Mission

Om Tat Sat