

धर्मसन्देश Dharma Sandesh

a quarterly newsletter of Bharatiya Mandir, Middletown, NY

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः। Let noble thoughts come to us from everywhere. RigVeda 1.89.1

नमस्ते Namaste

ॐ – OM. With the blessings and grace of the Supreme Spirit (परमात्मा), we present yet another issue of Bharatiya Mandir's quarterly newsletter "Dharma Sandesh."

Seasons continue to change. We are blessed to have had a mild winter. Soon, the spring season will be in full swing here, with the tender shoots and new leaves bringing new hope and joy to one and all.

We are eagerly counting the days to the colorful festival of Holi where all can witness the burning of Holika (representing negativity and evil) and enjoy the vibrant colors of life. Ugadi, Vishu, Baisakhi, and Gudi Padwa all usher in the New Year in March / April. Sri Rama Navami is another event that we all look forward to celebrating with great pomp and joy.

In this issue, Dr. Madhu Godsay writes about the Upadesha-Saram of Ramana Maharshi. This is a series of thought-provoking shlokas that contain the essence of the Upanishads, the Gita and other scriptures. Dr. Padma Sundaram writes about Lord Shiva. I continue to translate and interpret the shlokas from "Bhaja Govindam" of Jagadguru Sri Adi Shankaracharya. This great composition contains the essence of Vedanta. We encourage readers to read and contemplate on the shlokas.

We hope that readers will continue to enjoy reading these articles and gain some insight into our Sanatana Dharma. Let us all pray to the Paramaatma (परमात्मा) to shower His blessings upon all His children!!

Sincerely,
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सुभाषिता Subhaashitaa

In this section, we present a Sanskrit quotation and its interpretation/meaning.

न अभिषेको न संस्कारः सिंहस्य क्रियते वने ।
विक्रमार्जिता सत्वस्य स्वयमेव मृगेन्द्रता ॥

na-abhisheko-na-samskaarah-simhasya-kriyate-vane |
vikramaarjita-satvasya-svayameva-mrigendrataa ||

There is no official ceremony performed in the jungle to coronate the lion as the king of the forest. The lion becomes the king of the jungle due to his own attributes and his heroic actions.

If a person is brave or learned, then he does not need any official ceremony to become well-known in the land. His own attributes and actions are sufficient to make him well-known, popular and respected.

Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara

साई प्रेरणा Baba's Teachings

In this section, we present a teaching of Sri Sai Baba.

Sri Satya Sai Baba spoke thus – "Dwell always on lofty thoughts. When air fills a football, it takes the form of a ball. When it fills a balloon, it takes the form of the balloon, oval or spherical. So too, the mind takes the form of the objects with which it is attached. If it gets fixed on small things, it becomes small. If it is fixed on noble and grand things, it becomes noble and grand. The camera takes a picture of whatever it is pointed at, so is the case with the mind. Discriminate before you develop attachment. If your attachment is towards spouse and children, lands and buildings, bank accounts and balances, you will

experience grief when they decline. Develop sincere and steady attachment towards the Divine and you will grow in love and splendor. Devotion is not a matter of beads and beards, nor is worship signified by flowers, camphor or bell-ringing. You are judged by your spiritual discipline, thoughts and sense-control.”

Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara

ज्ञानविहार JnanaVihara

In this section, we present articles on Hinduism, Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and related philosophy.

Upadesha-Saram उपदेशसारम्

It is my great pleasure to introduce the readers of Dharma Sandesh to a great modern Vedantic text called “Upadesha-Saram” – “essence of the teachings” of Ramana Maharshi. I am mostly condensing this great work from the talks of Shri Pujya Swami Dayanandaji, to whom I am greatly indebted.

In the words of Puja Swamiji, “in this short and simple work, consisting of only thirty verses, is presented, in an essential form, the message of Upanishads, the Gita and other books.”

Ramana Maharshi was born in 1879 in Tamil Nadu as Venkataraman. Up to the age of 16 years, nothing remarkable happened in the life of this young man. However, he was greatly attracted to Arunachala, even though he did not know where it was. One day, a sudden violent fear gripped this young man – a fear of death, and he actually experienced his own death very vividly. This transformed his life forever. He realized the distinction between the perishable body and the imperishable Atman.

Soon, he abandoned his family and went to Tiruvannamalai (Arunachala) in 1896 and remained there till the day of his Maha-Samadhi for fifty-four years. He observed total silence for the first eleven years. He was looked after by the surrounding villagers as a bala-sanyasi.

Ramana Maharshi did not go anywhere, nor did he establish a Sampradaya, nor did he raise funds, nor

did he write many volumes. An ashrama grew around him. Many scholars, such as Ganapati Muni, were attracted to him. There was not much talk; people would come and sit and his mere presence was magical.

His teaching was simple and was based on his own experience and what he understood. Upadesha-Saram is the result of a request to write in essence the entire teaching of Lord Shiva. He wrote the thirty verses first in Tamil. This was later translated into many languages, including Sanskrit.

I am following Pujya Swami Dayanandaji’s talks, only condensed for this occasion. Every edition of Dharma Sandesh will contain two verses, the meaning and purport. Please read, contemplate, and try to put into practice. Hari Om!!

कर्तुराज्ञया प्राप्यते फलम् । कर्म किं परं कर्म तज्जडम् ॥१॥
karturaajnyaya-praapyate-phalam | karma kim param
karma tajjadam ||1||

The result of an action is obtained by the laws of the Lord. How can the action, which is inert, be limitless?

In all forms of ordinary penance (tapas तपः) there is an end to be achieved and there is a seeker. What is involved in them all is the gain of the desirable mind or even certain Siddhis (powers). With that kind of Tapas, you get results according to action. Since action is limited, you get limited results. By the command of Ishwara (ईश्वर), through his laws, results of actions are gained. For an effort you put forth, if you expect a result other than what is inherent in the nature of the effort, you would be disappointed. Limited effort produces limited results. Every effort is limited, and so is a series of efforts. So, any amount of effort can but produce a finite result.

What I want is freedom from limitation, that is, I want to be limitless. Is it possible for me (who is now limited) to be limitless through an effort? No. Because a limited person performing limited actions will earn limited results. This is true to the Lord’s laws. The hope to become limitless is hopeless! Karma can never be limitless nor is it opposed to ignorance. So, the only possibility is that limitlessness must be your nature. Ignorance stands between you and your nature. If limitless is (mis)taken as limited and actions are

performed, the results obtained cannot cure the original problem. Karma (action) is not only not opposed to ignorance, it is born of ignorance. Ignorance → desire → action → result. The product of ignorance cannot remove ignorance. Destruction of ignorance is possible only by knowledge.

कृतिमहोदधौ पतनकारणम् । फलमशाश्वतं गतिनिरोधकम् ॥२॥
kritimahodadhau-patanakaaranam |
phalamashaashvatam-gatinirodhakam ||2||

(Action) is the cause for (one to) fall in the vast ocean of (further) action. The result of action is limited and (hence) is an obstruction to (knowledge which is the direct means of) liberation.

Commentary: The results of your actions become a cause for you to fall in the ocean of action and result – the endless ocean of action-reaction, action-reaction... A person attempts more actions resulting in Punya (पुण्य), Paapa (पाप) and further births. This life gets wasted and he takes up another life, and so on. He gets caught up in the cycle of births and deaths. This is an obstruction to liberation.

Question: If thus the action is not helpful in liberation, why then is it said that I must perform my duties?

Answer: To gain knowledge, you need a certain frame of mind. This can be cultivated by actions performed for the sake of the Lord. I perform my duties, including the worship of the Lord, keeping in mind my place in the creation and what is expected of me. Animals, trees, etc. are programmed, but I program myself. I have a willpower which is subject to abuse resulting in my going against the existing harmony. Thus, I become a Karma-Yogi. This way, I avoid creating new likes and dislikes, but the old ones neutralized.

Sources: Swami Dayanandaji's talks on Ramana Maharshi's Upadesha-Saram.

Contributed by Dr. Madhu Godsay

SRI SHIVA (श्री शिव)

Lord Shiva (श्री शिव) is one of the most complex Gods in Hinduism. There are numerous articles on Lord Shiva by various historians and philosophers, both

eastern and western. I have taken a few of them and have tried to explain the concept of Lord Shiva in simple language.

The religious belief in the Indian subcontinent is that “the Absolute Reality is one God who appears in various forms. The Supreme Trinity (त्रिमूर्ति) of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are revered as the manifestations of the same Paramaatma (परमात्मा).

In the scriptures it is said, “All that is true, all that is good, and all that is beautiful is God” – Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram (सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरं).



Lord Shiva's abode is Mount Kailash in the Himalayan mountains. His consort is Devi Parvathi. She is also called Haimavathi as she is the daughter of Himavaan, the king of mountains. Lord Shiva is the father of Lord Ganesha and Lord Karthikeyan or Murugan (as he is known in South India). In

Vishnudharmottara Purana of the 6th century, the face of Lord Shiva is described. The story goes that in a small village called Jejuri in Maharashtra, there was a community of farmers and cowherds who worshipped a deity called Khandoba as a form of Shiva. The features of that Murthi has been attributed to Shiva by poets like Kalidasa, Manikyavachakar, and Nayanmar, and sages like Veda Vyasa, Vasishta, Patanjali, and Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya.

In the scriptures, Lord Shiva is described as a handsome young man immersed in meditation or dancing (tandava) upon Apasmara, the demon of ignorance. Lord Shiva is inseparable from Shakti (शक्ति cosmic energy), another name for Devi Parvathi.

Shiva means “The Auspicious One” or “The Good One.” He is the Creator and the Destroyer. He has

gentle as well as fierce forms. He is static and dynamic. He is the source of fertility in all living beings. He has no beginning (अनादि anaadi) and no end (अनन्त anantha). He is the Pure One, not affected by the Gunas (properties) of satva, rajas and tamas. He is the one who purifies anyone who utters His name. He has the goodness and humility that all human beings should have.



Lord Shiva sits on a tiger skin, has a deer in his upper left hand, a trident (त्रिशूल) in his lower right hand, and a Damaru (डमरू drum) in the upper right hand. He has a crescent moon on his head. He has matted

hair, the color of melted gold, from which flows Ma Ganga. He wears a garland of skulls and has five serpents as ornaments. He is pressing with his left foot the head of the demon Muyalaka (a dwarf holding a cobra in his hand). He has a Third Eye on his forehead and is sitting facing the South. He is therefore known as Dakshinamurti (दक्षिणामूर्ति).

Each of the above attributes has a special significance:

Deer – the deer is a very restless animal and it moves all the time. By holding it in His hand He signifies that He has conquered the restlessness of the mind.

Tiger Skin – the tiger represents lust. By sitting on the tiger skin He has conquered lust.

Trident or Thrishulam – it is an emblem of sovereignty, not affected by satva, rajas and tamas.

Damaru – is the Shabdhahbrahma (शब्दब्रह्म) from which the sound OM (ॐ) evolved.

Third Eye – in Sanskrit Ambaka means eye. Lord Shiva is called Tryambaka (त्र्यम्बक) – one with three eyes. With His third eye, Lord Shiva burnt Kama (desire).

Nandi (नन्दि) is the Lord's vehicle (vaahana) and is always facing the Lord. He is Dharma Devata

(धर्मदेवता), the protector of Dharma. The Ganas are the attendants of the Lord in Mount Kailash. The Moola Mantra (मूलमन्त्र) for the Lord is Om Namaha Shivaya (ॐ नमः शिवाय).

The five mantras that constitute the Lord's body are Sadyojatha (सद्योजात representing earth, the sense of smell, the power of procreation and mind), Vamadeva (वामदेव representing water), Aghora (अघोर representing fire), Tatpuruasha (तत्पुरुष representing air), and Eeshana (ईशान representing space and air that cannot be seen).

The Purana of the 6th century has described the five faces of Lord Shiva as Madhava (माधव representing earth), Bhairava (भैरव representing fire), Nandi (नन्दि representing air), Uma (उमा representing water) and Sadashiva (सदाशिव representing space).

I will continue to talk about the other forms of Lord Shiva in the next issue of Dharma Sandesh. I will talk about Shiva Linga in detail as there are many different opinions even among sages and saints. After that, I will bring to the readers the consorts of the Lord.

Sources: Works of Gavin Flood, Works of R.K. Sharma, Wikipedia, Templenet.

Contributed by Dr. Padma Sundaram.

Bhaja Govindam (Moha Mudgara)

भज गोविन्दम् (मोह मुद्गरः)

(composed by Jagadguru Sri Adi Shankaracharya, continued from the previous issue)

Bhaja Govindam is one of the great compositions of Jagadguru Sri Adi Shankaracharya. The essence of Vedanta lies in each and every shloka in this composition. It is called Moha Mudgara – the “hammer of delusion” because, like a hammer, it strikes at the very heart of delusion, obsession, and other negative qualities of man and instructs him to seek the path of the Parabrahman (परब्रह्मन् – Supreme Lord).

In the previous issue, I had provided 5 shlokas. I continue here with the 6th shloka. I will provide brief explanations to each of the shlokas. Devotees can

provide their own interpretations based on their outlook and experiences, similar to how one would read and interpret the Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

यावत्पवनो निवसति देहे तावत्पृच्छति कुशलं गेहे ।
गतवति वायौ देहापाये भार्या बिभ्यति तस्मिन्काये ॥६॥

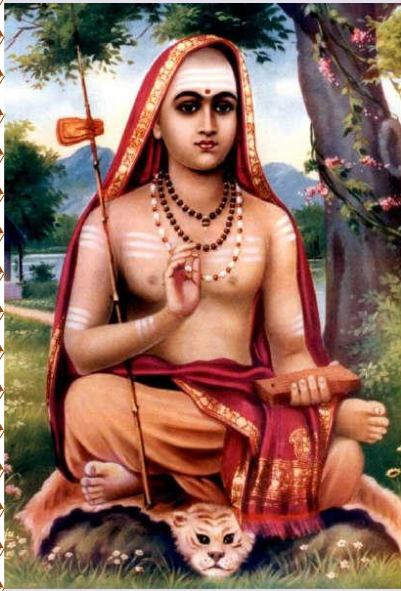
yaavat-pavano-nivasati-dehe-taavat-prucchati-kushalam-gehe |
gatavati-vayau-dehapaye-bharya-bibhyati-tasmin-kaye ||6||

As long as the body is breathing, everyone in the household enquires after the person. When the life-force (प्राण Prana) leaves the body and the body becomes lifeless, no one wants to even touch the body. Even the person's family members, including his wife, become afraid of that body. Why then should we be so enamored of this perishable body instead of devoting ourselves to the feet of the Lord where we can find peace and tranquility?

अर्थमनर्थं भावयन्त्यं नास्ति ततः सुखलेशः सत्यम् ।
पुत्रादपि धनभाजां भीतिः सर्वत्रैषा विहिता रीतिः ॥७॥

arthamanartham-bhavaya-nityam-nasti-tatah-sukhalesha-satyam |
putradapi-dhana-bhajam-bhitih-sarvatraisha-vihita-ritih ||7||

Hoarding wealth is not good. The truth is that there is no trace of happiness associated with it. The hoarder fears for the safety of his wealth even from his own sons. This is sadly the way of the world everywhere.



Adi Shankara does not criticize wealth. If a person works hard and earns money to feed his family and live comfortably, there is nothing wrong with it. The Acharya criticizes the person who hoards excessive wealth by legal and/or illegal means. Money does not buy happiness contrary to what

many people think. Instead it will just increase the level of greed for more money. There is no end to this greed. In the process, the hoarder does not even trust his own children. He always fears that his children

will steal his wealth and property from him. So he is constantly worried instead of being happy.

बालस्तावत्क्रीडासक्तः तरुणस्तावत्तरुणीसक्तः ।

वृद्धस्तावच्चिन्तासक्तः परे ब्रह्मणि कोऽपि न सक्तः ॥८॥

baalas-taavat-kridaasaktah-tarunas-taavat-taruni-saktah |
vruddhas-taavat-chintaasaktah-pare-brahmani-kopi-na-saktah ||8||

As a child, a person is always interested in play. As a young man, he is always infatuated with girls. As an old man, he is always consumed with anxiety and worry. Alas, at no stage in life is man concerned with the Supreme Lord.

At each stage of a person's life, he (or she) is immersed in something worldly. A person has no time to devote to God and spiritual pursuits. People think that it is a waste of time to pursue God or spirituality. After all, one can hardly earn fame and money or attract people of the opposite sex by immersing oneself in God!! By the time a person turns to God, death is at his door and it is too late.

का ते कान्ता कस्ते पुत्रः संसारोऽयमतीव विचित्रः ।

कस्य त्वं कः कुत आयातस्तत्त्वं चिन्तय तदिह भ्रातः ॥९॥

ka-te-kanta-kaste-putrah-samsaroyamativa-vicitrah |
kasya-tvam-kah-kuta-aayata-tat-tvam-cintaya-tadiha-bhratah ||9||

Who is your wife? Who is your son? This mortal world is very strange. To whom do you belong? Where have you come from? O brother, please ponder over this.

In this mortal world overcome by Maya (माया the power of illusion), we obsess over our relationships. While caring about our family and friends is good and even required for everyone in this world, obsessing over them as if they were immortal and permanent is foolish. Only ParaBrahman (परब्रह्मन्), the Supreme Lord, is permanent.

सत्सङ्गत्वे निस्सङ्गत्वं निस्सङ्गत्वे निर्मोहत्वम् ।

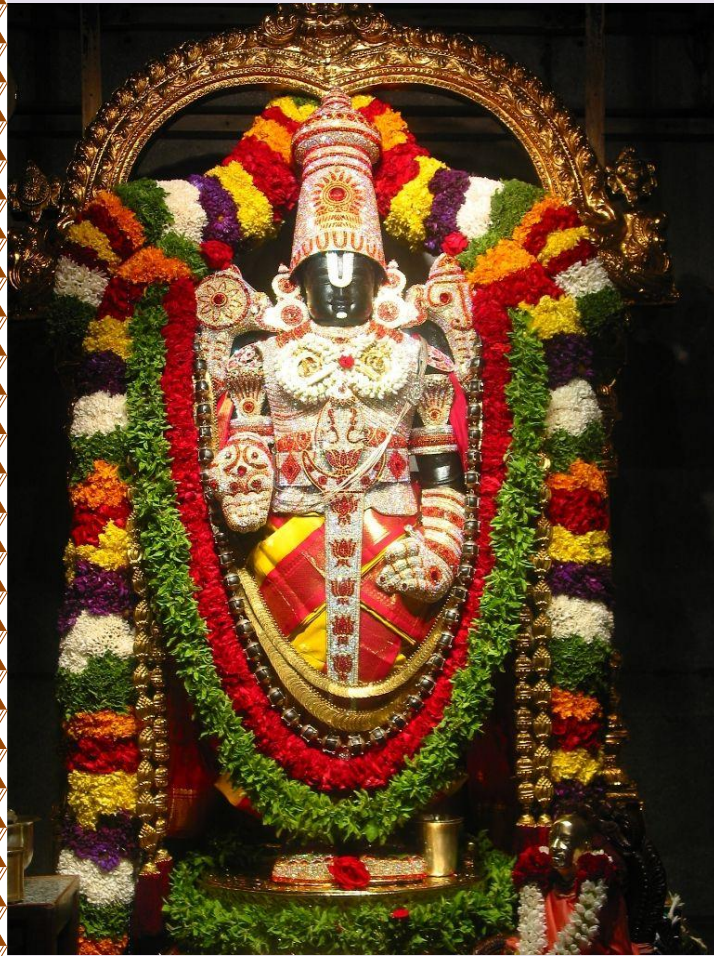
निर्मोहत्वे निश्चलतत्त्वं निश्चलतत्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥१०॥

satsangatve-nissangatvam-nissangatve-nirmohatvam |
nirmohatve-nischalatatvam-nischalatatve-jivan-mukti ||10||

Association with good things and good people brings about detachment from worldly pursuits. This detachment leads to freedom from delusion and obsession. That leads to stability and constancy of the

mind. This stability leads to liberation or salvation and peace of mind in life.

Environment plays a very important role in shaping the behavior of a person. If a person keeps the company of bad person, he/she is very quickly influenced by the others' bad habits and he/she picks up those habits and behaviors. Similarly, if a person keeps the company of a good person, he/she is very likely to pick up good habits and behaviors. If the person associates with people immersed in God and spiritual matters, then he or she will slowly, but surely, get detached from worldly matters. Over time, this will result in an unwavering firmness of mind devotion to the Lord. This will lead to liberation from troubles and salvation, and the person will attain peace of mind.



वयसि गते कः कामविकारः शुष्के नीरे कः कासारः ।

क्षीणे वित्ते कः परिवारो ज्ञाते तत्त्वे कः संसारः ॥११॥

vayasi-gate-kah-kamavikarah-shushke-neere-kah-kasarah |
kshine-vitte-kah-parivaro-jnate-tatve-kah-samsarah ॥11॥

What lustful pleasures can a person have when he has grown old? How can a lake be a lake when the water has dried up completely? When a person's wealth has been exhausted, how can he have any followers? When the Ultimate Reality is known, how can there be worldly affairs anymore?

We should understand that all worldly affairs are temporary and illusory. Only the Supreme Lord is permanent and true.

मा कुरु धनजनयौवनगर्वं हरति निमिषेत्कालः सर्वम् ।

मायामयमिदमखिलं हित्वा ब्रह्मपदं त्वं प्रविश विदित्वा ॥१२॥

ma-kuru-dhana-jana-yauvana-garvam-harati-nimishet-kalah-sarvam |
mayamayamidam-akhilam-hitva-brahmapadam-tvam-pravisha-viditva ॥12॥

Do not be arrogant and proud because of your material wealth, friends and family, or your youth. Time can take these away in a second. All of this is nothing but Maya, the power of illusion. Abandon all attachment to this illusory world and attain the state of ParaBrahman (परब्रह्मन्) through knowledge of the reality.

When a person is young, wealthy and powerful, he thinks that he is immortal and nothing can happen to him. That person can lose everything in the blink of an eye. Everything in this universe is temporary; only the Supreme Lord is permanent.

दिनयामिन्यौ सायं प्रातः शिशिरवसन्तौ पुनरायातः ।

कालः क्रीडति गच्छत्यायुस्तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशावायुः ॥१३॥

dinayaminiau-sayam-pratah-shishira-vasantau-punarayatah |
kalah-kridati-gacchatayayus-tadapi-na-munchatyasha-vayuh ॥13॥

Night follows day, evening follows morning, the winter and the spring seasons come again and again. Time keeps on playing its game and life runs out. But the force of desires never weakens.

People know that this mortal life is temporary and that death is inevitable. But the force of desire never weakens in them. Even though a person is old and feeble, his desire for material and worldly things is still strong. Alas, that is the way of the world.

द्वादशमञ्जरिकाभिरशेषः कथितो वैयाकरणस्यैषः ।

उपदेशोऽभूद्विद्वानिपुणैः श्रीमच्छङ्करभगवच्चरणैः ॥१४॥

dvadasha-manjirakabhirasheshah-kathito-vaiyakaranasyaishah |
upadesho-bhud-vidya-nipunaih-srimat-shankara-bhagavat-
caranaih ||14||

This bouquet of twelve shlokas was instructed to the grammarian by the highly learned Jagadguru Sri Adi Shankaracharya.

Note: The first shloka is an introduction to the composition. Shlokas 2 through 13 are the twelve shlokas composed by Adi Shankara. Shloka 14 is an acknowledgement to the great Adi Shankara. The next 14 shlokas have been composed by Adi Shankara's disciples, one shloka each. The Acharya then composed 5 more shlokas to complete the composition. Some renditions of the composition still account for the initial 12 shlokas composed by the Acharya, followed by the 14 shlokas composed by the disciples, and 5 shlokas composed by the Acharya again, but differ in the sequence. What is important here is the essence of the teachings of the Bhaja Govindam, not the sequence of the shlokas.



का ते कान्ता धनगतचिन्ता वातुल किं तव नास्ति नियन्ता ।
त्रिजगति सज्जनसंगतिरेका भवति भवार्णवतरणे नौका ॥१५॥
kaa-te-kanta-dhana-gata-chinta-vatula-kim-tava-nasti-niyanta |
trijagati-sajjana-sangatireka-bhavati-bhavar-nava-tarane-nauka ||

This shloka was composed by Sri Padmapadacharya.

Who is your wife? Why are you so engrossed in hoarding wealth and in worldly matters? Don't you have a guide to restrain you from doing so? In all the three worlds, only the company of good people will

serve as the boat that can take you across this ocean of samsara (bondage) unto salvation.

जटिलो मुण्डी लुञ्छित केशः काषायाम्बर बहुकृतवेषः ।
पश्यन्नपि च न पश्यति मूढो ह्युदरनिमित्तं बहुकृतवेषः ॥१६॥

jatilo-mundi-lunchita-kesah-kashayambara-bahukruta-veshah |
pashyannapi-ca-na-pashyati-mudho-hyudaranimittam-bahukruta-
veshah ||16||

This shloka was composed by Sri Totakacharya.

There are people with matted hair; there are people with shaven heads; there are people with plucked hairs; there are people wearing saffron robes. These are all different disguises. No one knows what they see and even that person does not know what he sees. This is all foolish. All these various forms are just ways to fill the person's stomach.

Having matted hair or a shaven head or wearing saffron robes does not make a person an ascetic. There are several people who do this to deceive others into thinking they are ascetics so that people feed them. All these are nothing but different disguises to fool people. In reality these people are themselves fools if they think that they can fool God into thinking that they are true ascetics and true devotees of the Lord. A person just needs a pure heart and sincere devotion to get closer to God. There is no need for any other external or artificial clothes or other attributes.

अङ्गं गलितं पलितं मुण्डं दशनविहीनं जातं तुण्डम् ।
वृद्धो याति गृहीत्वा दण्डं तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशापिण्डम् ॥१७॥

angam-galitam-palitam-mundam-dashanavihinam-jatam-tundam |
vrudho-yaati-gruhitva-dandam-tadapi-na-munchat-yasha-
pindam ||17||

This shloka was composed by Sri Hastamalakacharya.

The body has become weak; the hair/head has turned grey; there are no teeth left in his mouth; and the old man has to hold on to a stick in order to walk around. In spite of this, he does not let go of the lumps of desires in his mind.

This is the way of the world. Even though the body has become decrepit, lust, passion, obsession, and desire still roar strongly in a person. When then can he turn to the Supreme Lord? How can he attain salvation?

अग्रे वह्निः पृष्ठे भानुः रात्रौ चुबुकसमर्पितजानुः ।

करतलभिक्षस्तुरुतलवासस्तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशापाशः ॥१८॥

agre-vahni-prushte-bhanuh-ratrau-cubuka-samarpita-januh |
karatala-bhikshas-taru-tala-vasas-tadapi-na-munchat-yasapasah
||18||

This shloka was composed by Sri Subodhacharya.

The old man has a burning fire in front of him and the sun behind him to warm him up. At night he curls up his body to keep out the cold. In his hand he has a begging bowl for alms. He lives and sleeps under a tree. In spite of all of this, he does not let go of his desires and passions and turn to God.

कुरुते गङ्गासागरगमनं व्रतपरिपालनमथवा दानम् ।

ज्ञानविहीनः सर्वमतेन मुक्तिं न भजति जन्मशतेन ॥१९॥

kurute-ganga-sagara-gamanam-vrataparipalanamathava-danam |
jnanavihinah-sarvamatenamuktim-na-bhajati-janmashatena||19||

This shloka was composed by Sri Vartikakaracharya.



People may go and take baths in the holy Ganga. They may do several rituals and fasts or give plenty of donations to others. Yet, without the knowledge of the Self, they can never achieve salvation even after a hundred

births.

Pilgrimages, baths in the Ganga, rituals, fasts, and donations are all useful in the path of spirituality. But if a person is devoid of jnana (knowledge) of the Self, then nothing else matters. He will still be in the throes of delusion and obsession. Only with true knowledge can he realize the path to salvation.

सुरमन्दिरतरुमूलनिवासः शय्या भूतलमजिनं वासः ।

सर्वपरिग्रह भोगत्यागः कस्य सुखं न करोति विरागः ॥२१॥

suramandira-tarumula-nivasah-shayya-bhutamajinam-vasah |
sarvapari-graha-bhogatyagah-kasya-sukham-na-karoti-
viragah||20||

This shloka was composed by Sri Nityanandacharya.

Reside in a temple or under a tree. Sleep on the ground and wear deerskin clothes. Renounce everything that you ever enjoyed. Give up all attachments. Abandon all comforts. When one is blessed with such Vairagya (dispassion), how can he not be happy? When a person gives up attachments to material and worldly things and sincerely turns to the Supreme Lord, then he will become peaceful and happy. He does not have to turn to drastic measures, but every time he gives up one worldly attachment, he attains a little more peace of mind.

Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara

Some Upcoming Special Mandir Events

Holika Dahan	Wednesday, March 7
Dhuleti (Color Festival)	Sunday, March 11
Mata ki Chowki	Saturday, March 31
Sri Rama Navami	Sunday, April 1
Sri Hanuman Jayanthi	Friday, April 6
Bharatiya Mandir Anniversary Celebrations	Sunday, May 6

Dr. Prasanna and Dr. Geeta Desai have generously sponsored the printing of copies of this issue of Dharma Sandesh. Devotees may note that all the writing of the content and the editing of the newsletter are strictly voluntary.

Our quarterly newsletter is called “Dharma Sandesh” (धर्मसन्देश). “Dharma”, in simple terms, refers to righteousness, conduct, a sense of duty, virtue, and the ultimate truth. “Sandesh” means a message or news. So, Dharma Sandesh refers to a message of Dharma.

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