



Volume 1 Issue 2

Jagadguru Speaks: Nadopasana

Golden Charriot dedicated by His Holiness on February 3rd

From the President SVBF.....

Executive Committee of SVBF

From the Editorial Board

Sri Sankaracharya Ashtottara Satanama Stotram

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Jagadguru Speaks: Nadopasana



That the world has been projected by *Nada*, or sound, is confirmed by both *Sruti* and *Smriti*. For example, the *Sruti* says:

स भूरिति व्याहरन् स भूमिमसृजत ।

The *Smriti* also says:

नामरूपेच भूतानां
कर्मणां च प्रवर्तनम् ।
वेद शब्देभ्य एवादौ
निर्ममे स महेश्वरः ॥

In both contexts, sound means *aksharas*, not any sound.

Veda Vyasa has conveyed the same idea in his sutra:

शब्द इति चेन्नातः
प्रभवात् प्रत्यक्षानुमानाभ्याम् ।

Therefore, the practice, or *upasana* of *Nada* is an excellent means. Even those people with ordinary *samskars* can attain the best result by constantly chanting God's name, for it is endowed with such a quality.

यत्कृत्यं तन्नकृतं यदकृत्यं
कृत्यवत् तदाचरितम् ।
उभयोः प्रायश्चित्तं शिव तव
नामाक्षरद्वयोच्चरणम् ।

Two kinds of sin are incurred by anyone for doing things which

should not be done and for not doing the duties which must be performed. The antidote for both sins is only the recitation of Lord's names.

The *Bhagavata* describes nine forms of *Bhakti* (devotion), one of which is the singing of *kirtans* in praise of God. We learn from the *Puranas* that Narada and other sages always chanted the Lord's sacred names. Even though Sankara Bhagavatpada practiced the great *Advaita* doctrine (Monism), he composed a number of *stotras* on deities for the benefit of mankind. We must all therefore take up the chanting of God's sacred names and attain *sreyas*.

- Tattvaloka X(3) Aug./Sep. '87, p.7

**Golden Chariot dedicated by
His Holiness on February 3rd**



श्री शङ्करगुरुत्तंससमर्चितपताम्बुजे ।
 शारदे स्थमारोह सौवर्णं सर्वमङ्गले ॥१॥
 स्वर्गाऽदिसुखसंदात्रि स्वर्णसच्छायविग्रहे ।
 स्वर्णस्यन्दनमारुह्य सर्वान् पालय शारदे ॥२॥
 भक्तिप्रिये भद्रदात्रि भक्तानाभयप्रदे ।
 भक्त्या समर्पयाम्येनं जांबूनदमयं रथम् ॥३॥
 हिरण्यगर्भवामाङ्गि हरिदशवाऽदि सेविते ।
 हिरण्यस्थमारोह हिताय जगतां सदा ॥४॥
 कनकाभरणैर्युक्ते कविताविभवप्रदे ।
 कार्तस्वरमयं मातः आरोहस्थमुत्तमम् ॥५॥



His Holiness in front of the Golden Chariot



His Holiness on the Golden Palanquin



Ravi Subrmanian and Yegnasubramanian offering Guru Vandanam to His Holiness



From the President, SVBF

Dear friend:

Greetings. We are very glad to present to you the second issue of *Paramaartha Tattvam*, the spiritual journal of SVBF.

The Foundation is in a strong growth track with the blessings of the Sankaracharya of Sringeri Sharada Peetham, His Holiness Sri Bharti Tirtha Maha Swamiji. We take every effort to live up to the salient elements of our mission by following the tenets of Sanatana Dharma as closely as we could ! As you may well appreciate, it is a big challenge, and we are sure that, by the Grace of Sri Sharadamba and His Holiness, we will meet our objectives. Your continued support is the key element to our progress, and together, we can accomplish our spiritual goal of gaining peace and harmony in our endeavors.

Some of us had the blessed opportunity to participate in the celebrations to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Monkhood by His Holiness at Sringeri. On this occasion, a golden chariot was dedicated to Sri Sharadamba by His Holiness. The details of the festivities and some pictures are included in this issue along with other events of the Foundation.

We have formulated coordinators for various tasks. I take this opportunity to welcome them and introduce them to our fellow devotees. We are also constituting regional coordinators of the Foundation and will keep you informed.

With prayers for the Grace of Sri Sharadamba and the blessings of His Holiness to be with us all, always,

S. Yegnasubramanian



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From the Editorial Board

*P*aramaartha Tattvam is growing - thanks to the overwhelming support and feed-back from several of our readers ! We are systematically working towards enhancing the quality of material contained in the Journal to cater to the spiritual interests and learning experience of our readers, of all ages !

This issue includes several thematic articles on Nadopasana. They were chosen from an earlier (1987) issue of Tattvaloka, the spiritual magazine of Sringeri Sharada Peetham.

We also have included prize-winning essays by children/youth on topics announced earlier. We will actively promote and encourage participation by our children. Book review is a new addition. Sanskrit lessons, not only address the elements of the language, but also include verbal communication, cross-word puzzles etc., that make it more interesting.

We invite your opinions and suggestions; they will help us orient our efforts better. Please visit our website www.asanet.com/sringeri.

Jaya Jaya Sankara,
Editorial Board



श्रीशङ्कराचार्याष्टोत्तरशतनामस्तोत्रम् ॥

Sri Sankaracharya Ashtottara Satanama Stotram Sri Vidyaranya

श्रीशङ्कराचार्यवर्यो ब्रह्मानन्दप्रदायकः।
अज्ञानतिमिरादित्यः सुज्ञानाम्बुधिचन्द्रमाः॥

SriSankarAcAryavaryO
brahmAnandapradAyaka: |
ajnAnatimiraditya:
sujnAnAmbudhicandramA: ||

(1) Sri Sankaracharya, the bestower of Brahmic bliss, shines like the moon rising over the sea, dispelling ignorance.

वर्णाश्रमप्रतिष्ठता श्रीमान्मुक्तिप्रदायकः।
शिष्योपदेशनितो भक्ताभीष्टप्रदायकः॥

varNAShramapratishthAtA
ShrImAnmuktipradAyaka: |
SishyOpadESaniratO
bhaktAbhIssthapradAyaka: ||

(2) He has firmly established the institution of Varanasrama. Ever engaged in instructing his disciples, he fulfills the desires of his devotees and confers liberation.

सूक्ष्मतत्त्वरहस्यज्ञः कार्याकार्यप्रबोधकः।
ज्ञानमुद्राञ्जितकरः शिष्यहृत्तापहारकः॥

sookshmatattvarahasyajna:
kAryAkAryaprabOdhaka: |
jnAnamudrAnjcitakara:
SishyahruttApahAraka: ||

(3) A knower of profundities of wisdom, he holds chin mudra, the symbol of wisdom in his hand, and instructs the devotess about the ordained and prohibited acts.

परिव्राजाश्रमोद्धर्ता सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रधीः।
अद्वैतस्थापनाचार्यः साक्षाच्छङ्कररूपभृत्॥

parivrAjAShramOddharta
sarvatantrasvatantradhI: |
advaitasthApanAcArya:
sAkshAcchankararoopabhurut ||

(4) An uplifter of the order of Sannyasis, he has unfettered sway over Tantric lore. An incarnation of Siva, he has established the tenets of Advaita.

षण्मत्स्थापनाचार्यस्वयीमार्गप्रकाशकः।
वेदवेदान्ततत्त्वज्ञो दुर्वादिमतव्रण्डनः॥

shaNmatasthApanAcAryas-
trayImArga prakASaka: |
vEdavEdAntatattvajnO
durvAdimatakhaNDana: ||

(5) Having initiated six modes of worship, he has shed light on the vedic path. A knower of subtleties of Vedas and Vedanta, he has refuted the doctrines of false religions.

वैराग्यनिरतः शान्तः संसारार्णवतारकः।
प्रसन्नवदनांभोजः परमार्थप्रकाशकः॥

vairAgyanirata: SAnta:
samsArArNavatAraka: |
prasannavadanAmbhOja:
paramArthprakASaka: ||

(6) Dispassionate, peaceful, serene, a navigator for the struggling souls in the samsaric sea, he illuminates the ultimate truth.

पुराणस्मृतिसारज्ञो नित्यतृप्तो महाञ्जुचिः।
नित्यानन्दो निरातङ्गो निःसङ्गो निर्मलात्मकः॥

purANasmrutisArajnO
nitatruptO mahAnjSuci: |
nityAnandO nirAtankO
nissangO nirmalAtmaka: ||

(7) The unattached blemishless master, ever content, of absolute purity, having known the essence of Puranas and Smritis, is ever in untrammelled bliss.

निर्ममो निरहङ्कारो विश्ववन्द्यापदाम्बुजः।
सत्त्वप्रधानः सद्भावः संख्यातीतगुणोज्ज्वलः॥

nirmamO nirahankAro
viShvavandyapdAmbuja: |
sattvpradhAn" sadhbhAva:
samkhyAtItaguNOjjvala: ||

(8) He is devoid of "I"ness and "mine"ness. His lotus feet are worshipped by all. He is full of sattva. He shines with myriad qualities of head and heart.

अनं: सारहृदयः सुधीः सारस्वतप्रदः।
सत्यात्मा पुण्यशीलश्च सांख्ययोगविचक्षणः॥

anaga: sAahrudaya:
sudhI: sArasvataprada: |
satyAtmA punyaSIlasca
sAnkhyayOgavicakshaNa: ||

(9) He is sinless, wise and high souled. He is the bestower of eloquence. He is truthful, meritorious, and a knower of yoga and sankhya.

तपोरशिर्महातेजाः गुणत्रयविभागवित्।
कलञ्जः कालकर्मज्ञस्तमोगुणनिवारकः॥

tapOrASirmahAtEjA:
guNatravibhAgavat |
kalighna: kAlakarmajnas-
tamOguNanivAraka: ||

(10) A store house of tapas; effulgent; the discriminator of sattva, rajas, and tamas; timeless, knower of timely actions, and dispeller of tamas which deludes all.

भगवान्भारतीजेता शारदाह्वानपण्डितः।
धर्माधर्मविभागज्ञो लक्ष्यभेदप्रदर्शकः॥

bhagavAnbhAratIjEtA
SAradAhvAna paNdita: |
dharmAdarmavibhAgajnO
lakshyabhEdapradarSaka: ||

(11) He is the Bhagavan who has won over Bharati, wife of

Mandana Misra. He invited Sarada to stay in Sringeri. He knows the demarcations between dharma / adharma. He shows the way to realisation.

नादबिन्दुकलाभिज्ञो योगिहृत्पद्मभास्करः।
अतीन्द्रियज्ञाननिधिर्नित्यानित्यविवेकवान्॥

nAdabindukalAbhijnO
yOgihrutpadmabhAskara: |
atIndriyajnAnanidhir-
nityAnityavivEkavAn ||

(12) He is the knower of nada, bindu and kala. He shines as the sun, in the lotus hearts of the yogins. He is a store house of supersensory knowledge. He is a discriminator of the eternal and ephemeral.

चिदानन्दश्चिन्मयात्मा परकायप्रवेशकृत्।
अमानुषचरिद्राढ्यः क्षेमदायी क्षमाकरः॥

cidAnandScinmayAtma
parakAyapravESakrut |
amAnushacaridrADya:
kshEmadAyI kshamAkara: ||

(13) A reveller in pure consciousness, he knows the art of entering other's bodies. Cast in superhuman in mould, he is a bestower of felicity. He is forgiving.

भव्यो भद्रप्रदो भूरिमहिमा विश्वरञ्जकः।
स्वप्रकाशः सदाधारो विश्वबन्धुः शुभोदयः॥

bhavyO bhadaprdO
bhoorimahimA viShvaranjaka: |
svaprakASa: sadAdhArO
viShvabandhu: SubhOdhaya: ||

(14) He confers auspiciousness. The excellent one of expansive glory, he gives joy to all. He is self luminous. He is a support to the holy. He is a universal friend and harbinger of felicity.

विशालकीर्तिर्वागीशः सर्वलोकहितोत्सुकः।
कैलासयात्रसंप्राप्त चन्द्रमौलिप्रपूजकः॥

viSAlakIrtirvAgISa:
sarvalOkahitOtsuka: |
kailAsayAtrasamprApta
candramouliprapoojaka: ||

(15) Of great fame, eloquent and a well-wisher of all, he brought Chandra-moulisvara from Kailas for worship.

काञ्च्यां श्रीचक्रराजाख्ययन्त्रस्थापनदीक्षितः।
श्रीचक्रात्मकताटङ्कतोषिताबांमनोरथः॥

kAncyAm ShrIcakraAjAkhya
yantrasthApanadIkshita: |
SrIcakraAtmakatAtanka
tOshitAtmbA manOratatha: ||

(16) He has installed a Sri Chakra in Kanchi and pleased with the Divine Mother by giving her earrings in the form of Sri Chakra.

श्रीब्रह्मसूत्रोपनिषद्वाच्यादिग्रन्थकल्पकः।
चतुर्दिक्चतुराम्नायप्रतिष्ठता महामतिः॥

SrIbrahmasootOpanishat
bhAshyAdi granthakalpaka |
caturdikcaturAmnAya
pratishthAtA mahAmati: ||

(17) He has authored the commentary on Vyasa's Brahma Sutras. In four directions, he has established four great seats of learning.

द्विसप्ततिमत्च्छेत्ता सर्वदिग्विजयप्रभुः।
काषायवसनोपेतो भस्मोद्धूलितविग्रहः॥

dvisaptatimatOcchetthA
sarvadigvijaprabhu: |
gurubhoomaNDalAcAryO
bhagavatpAdasamjnaka: ||

(18) Having uprooted false religions, he has achieved victory in all directions. Clad in ochre robe, he is smeared with ashes.

जानात्मैककदण्डाढ्यः कमण्डलुलसत्करः।
गुरुभूमण्डलाचार्यो भगवत्पादसंज्ञकः ॥

jnAnAtmkaikadaNDADhya:
kamaNDalulasatkara: |
gurubhoomaNDalAcAryO
bhagavatpAdasamjnaka: ||

(19) He has a staff of wisdom in one hand and a water pot on the other. He is a teacher of teachers, known as Bhagavatpada.

व्याससन्दर्शनप्रीतो ऋष्यशृङ्गपुरेश्वरः।
सौन्दर्यलहरीमुख्य बहुस्तोत्रविधायकः॥

vyAsasandarSanapriTO
Rushyashruna purEShvara: |
soundaryalaharImukhya
bahustOtravidhAyaka: ||

(20) He rejoiced when he saw sage Vyasa. He is the ruler of Sringeri and has composed several hymns such as Soundaryalahari.

चतुःषष्टिकलाभिज्ञो ब्रह्मरक्षसमोक्षदः।
श्रीमन्मण्डनमिश्राख्यस्वयंभूजयसंनुतः॥

catu:shastikalAbhijnO
brahmarAkshasamOkshada: |
ShrImanmaNDanamiShrAkhya
svayambhoojayasamnuta: ||

(21) He is an adept in the 64 arts. He gave liberation to a brahma rakshasa. He has been extolled as the victor over Mandana Misra alias Svayambhu.

तोटकाचार्यसंपूज्यः पद्मपादार्चिताङ्घ्रिकः।
हस्तामलकयोगीन्द्र ब्रह्मज्ञानप्रदायकः॥

tOtakAcAryasampoojya:
padmapAdArcitAnghrika: |
hastAmalakayOgIndra
brahmajnAnapradAyaka: ||

(22) He is worshipped by Totakacharya. Padmapada worshipped his feet. He bestowed Brahmajnana on the doyen yogin, Hastamalaka.

सुरेश्वराख्यसच्छिष्य संन्यासाश्रमदायकः।
नृसिंहभक्तः सद्वत्तगर्भ हेरंबपूजकः॥

surEShvarAkhya sacchishya
sanyAsAShrama dAyaka: |
rnusimhabhakta: sadratnagarbha
hErambapoojaka: ||

(23) He gave sannyasa diksha to his excellent disciple Suresvara. He is a devotee of Nrisimha. He worships Ratnagarbha Ganapati.

व्याख्यासिंहासनाधीशो जगत्पूज्यो जगत्गुरुः।
इति श्रीमच्छङ्कराचार्य सर्वलोकगुरोः परम्॥

vyAkhyAsimhAsanAdhISO
jagatpoojyO jagatguru: |
iti ShrImacchankarAcArya
sarvalOkagurO: param ||

(24) He is the world teacher, revered by all people. He has ascended the Vyakhyana Simhasana. He is Sankaracharya, the supreme teacher.



Sri Gurubhyo Namaha

Vedic Chanting – a Perfectly Formulated Oral Tradition

Dr. S. YEGNASUBRAMANIAN

Our tradition believes that the Vedas are the breath of God Himself!

यस्य निश्चितं वेदाः।

With that belief, our Rishis exercised enormous care to preserve the Vedas in its original form without the infiltration of any errors. Especially in the absence of writing, and through only an oral transmission from father-to-son or teacher-to-disciple, for thousands of years, this is an accomplishment of unimaginable proportion! Considering the vast magnitude of mantras contained in the vedas, such a preservation, with built-in safeguards, is mind boggling!

It is believed that the complete benefit of Veda mantras could be achieved only when the following conditions are met:

.. Correct pronunciation of letters (words)

– अक्षर शुद्धिः

.. Correct duration for utterance of letters (words) –

मात्रा शुद्धिः and,

.. Correct intonation of letters, स्वर शुद्धिः

Our Rishis prescribed several fool-proof methods to correctly recite the veda mantras. Six ways of recitation were considered incorrect and they are :

गीती शीघ्री शिरःकंपी तथा लिखितपाठकः।

अनर्थज्ञः अल्पकण्ठश्च षडैते पाठकाधमाः॥

One who chants in a sing-song fashion (गीती), who chants fast (शीघ्री), who nods his head up and down without actually raising or lowering the pitch (शिरःकंपी), who reads from a book (लिखितपाठकः), who chants without knowing the meaning (अनर्थज्ञः), and who chants in a feeble voice (अल्पकण्ठः), are considered

incorrect (*lowest ! अधमः*).

They believed that altering the pitch even (without any change in words and duration), might lead to diametrically opposite effects, as related in the story of Vrtra who, instead of killing Indra, got killed by Indra by just a change in the intonation alone of the mantras chanted by Vrtra's father, Tvashta.

The rules of correct pronunciation and articulation of sounds are given in the *Vedanga*, known as **Seeksha**.

शिक्षां व्याख्यास्यामः। वर्णस्वरः। मात्रा बलं।
साम सन्तानः। इत्युक्त शिक्षाहायः॥

Seeksha deals with *varNa* (letters), *svara*: (pitch); [there are essentially three *svaras*, namely, *anudatta* (gravely accented or low pitched), *udatta* (high pitched or acutely accented), *svarita* (circumflexly accented)] *maatras* (duration – a prosodial unit of time); *balam* (strength or force of articulation); *saama* (uniformity); and *santaana*: (continuity) during recitation.

Our ancestors devised unique methods to protect and maintain the basic Veda mantras in its original form through various patterns and combinations of recitation. The basic mantra is called *vakya or samhita paatha* (वाक्य or संगित पाठ) which is a full sentence.

Splitting them word by word is known as *pada paatha* (पद पाठ), which gives the knowledge of each word to the student. Next is *krama paatha* (क्रम पाठ), where the first word of the mantra is added to the second, the second to the third and so on, until the whole mantra is completed. This method enables the student not only to know individual words but also how to combine words in recitation and the changes in *svara* that occur as a result of such combination. Both *Pada* and *Krama* methods of chanting retain the natural order of words of the *samhita paatha* and so, are known as *prakrti* (प्रकृति) or natural. For example, if we take sentence consisting of six words a-b-c-d-e-f, in *samhita paatha*, it will be chanted as six separate words a, b, c, d, e and f in *pada paatha* will be recited as a-b, b-c, c-d, d-e, and e-f in *krama paatha*. Actually, a reciter proficient in chanting in the *krama* format is honored as a *kramavit* (क्रमवित्)!

Samhita paatha

ओषधयः सं वदन्ते सोमेन सह राज्ञी ।

Pada paatha

ओषधयः। सं। वदन्ते। सोमेन। सह। राज्ञी॥

Krama paatha

ओषधयः सं। सं वदन्ते। वदन्ते सोमेन ।
सोमेन सह। सह राज्ञी। राज्ञेति राज्ञी ॥

In addition, they devised eight other combinations which do not follow the natural order, and are known as *vikriti* (विकृति) or artificial order. The *vikritis* are given in the following verse:

जटा माला शिखा रेखा ध्वजो दण्डो रथो नः।
इत्यष्टा विकृतयः प्रोक्ताः क्रमपूर्वा महर्षिभिः

They are, *jataa*, *maalaa*, *sikhaa*, *rekhaa*, *dhwaja*, *danda*, *ratha* and *ghana*. Among these only *jataa* and *ghana* are prevalent (or, only !) practices in the Krishna Yajur Veda which is mostly predominant in the South. In Sukla Yajur Veda, which is mostly predominant in Banaras and in the North, (the Madhyandina and Kanva schools) all the eight *vikritis* were practiced. However, today, there may not be any scholars at all who might know all these *vikritis*

Jataa (braid) paatha

In the above example, the six words in the line, when chanted in the *jataa* format becomes, a-b-b-a-a-b; b-c-c-b-b-c; c-d-d-c-c-d; d-e-e-d-d-e; e-f-f-e-e-f and so on. As can be seen, the forward-reverse-forward arrangement of words resemble the way ladies braid their hair, and so this practice of chanting is termed *jataa*!

ओषधयः सं सं ओषधयः ओषधयः सम् ।
सं वदन्ते वदन्ते सं सं वदन्ते ।
वदन्ते सोमेन सोमेन वदन्ते वदन्ते सोमेन ।
सोमेन सह सह सोमेन सोमेन सह ।
सह राज्ञा राज्ञी सह सह राज्ञी ।
राज्ञेति राज्ञी ॥

Maalaa sikhaa, rekhaa, dhwaja, danda, and ratha paathas

Two types of *maalaa* (garland) exist: a) *krama maalaa* and b)

pushpa maalaa. This is simialr to krama paatha in that two-word units with the characteristic overlapping are the foundation. *sikhaa* (top knot) is similar to *jataa* except that, instead of two words being repeated forwards and backwards, three words are linked. Recitations in *rekhaa* (row), *dhwaja* (flag), *dand* (staff), and *ratha* (chariot) are more complex and the reader can refer to Wayne Howard [2] for details. Mention can be made here that there are three of *ratha*, namely, *dvipaada* (two wheels), *tripaada* (three wheels) and *catuspaada* (4 wheels). Each wheel corresponds to a quarter verse (*paada*) of the text. Among these, *dvipaada catuspaada* varieties are the *ratha* types most widely cultivated today.

Ghana (bell) paatha

This is one of the most popular format of recitations and requires years of learning and practice by the student. A scholar proficient in recitation in this format is honored as a *ghana paathi*

(घन पाठी). Here the arrangement of words take the shape of a bell.

For example, the group of words a-b-c-d-e-f mentioned earlier, when chanted in the *ghana* format will be, a-b-b-a-a-b-c-c-b-a-a-b-c; b-c-c-b-b-c-d-d-c-b-b-d; and so on.

The earliar illustration of six words, when written in ghana format will appear as follows:

ओषधयः सं सं ओषधयः ओषधयः सं वदन्ते
 वदन्ते सं ओषधयः ओषधयः सं वदन्ते ।
 सं वदन्ते वदन्ते सं सं वदन्ते सोमेन
 सोमेन वदन्ते सं सं वदन्ते सोमेन ।
 वदन्ते सोमेन सोमेन वदन्ते वदन्ते सोमेन सह
 सह सोमेन वदन्ते वदन्ते सोमेन सह ।
 सोमेन सह सह सोमेन सोमेन सह राज्ञी
 सह राज्ञा राज्ञी सह सह राज्ञी ।
 राज्ञेति राज्ञी ॥

Please note that, what was originally six words in the *samhita*, evolve in to about sixty words in the *ghana* format – a ten fold increase in this case – that gives an idea of how complex the chanting can become with larger sections of the mantras !! We can now appreciate the rigor a *ghana pathi* has to go through in his education to learn, by heart, the thousands of mantras, to be able to recite in *ghana* format.

Our Rishis devised all these elaborate and complicated system of chanting in order to preserve the purity of the sound, word, pronunciation, intonation, pitch and sound combination of the veda mantras which are the foundation for our *sanaatana dharma* itself. Also, repetition of words in many ways, the correct tally of words was also maintained which ensured the purity. They also believed that higher merits (*punya*) accompany greater complexities in chanting – for example, a ghana recitation is several orders higher in merit than *jataa* recitation, which is higher in merit than *krama* recitation and so on.

Wayne Howard [2] noted in the preface of his book, "Vedic Recitation in Varanasi", "The four Vedas (Rg, Yajur, Sama and Atharva) are not "books" in the usual sense, though within the past hundred years each veda has appeared in several printed editions. They are comprised rather of tonally accented verses and hypnotic, abstruse melodies whose proper realizations demand oral instead of visual transmission. They are robbed of their essence when transferred to paper, for without the human element the innumerable nuances and fine intonations – inseparable and necessary components of all four compilations - are lost completely. The ultimate authority in Vedic matters is never the printed page but rather the few members ... who are today keeping the centuries-old traditions alive."

It is unfortunate that there is very little subscription to this education these days and it is an important duty of all of us to ensure that this education is encouraged and adequate support is given to promote and propagate it.

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Feature Article of Next Issue

The Vedangas

(Organs of the Vedas)



Worship of Nada Brahman

T.S. PARTHASARATHY

The real aim of Indian music has always been to attain self-realization and through music practiced as Nadopasana, this is achieved much sooner.

Music ranks as the highest of the fine arts; as the one which, more than any other ministers to human welfare. Even Westerners feel that "music is more intimately connected, than any other art, with the hidden soul in us; the incognisable part of our minds which it stirs into activity that at once fills us with delight and passes understanding." A Hindu philosopher would have applied this description for what is known as *Brahmanubhava*.

Although, in the West, music was not considered as an *Upasana* to attain the Supreme, music and devotion to God went hand in hand. Composers like Bach were intensely religious men and the bulk of their work was church music. Bach's music has a serenity which comes from confidence in God and eternal salvation. This common feature between the master composers of Western and Indian music is remarkable.

Music was never looked upon in India as a form of entertainment to the people; not even as a fine art, but as a means for attaining eternal beatitude (*moksha, apavarga, svarga, etc.*). This accounts for the large number of saints, evolved souls and devotees among its best exponents and composers.

Origin Traced to "Vedas"

The origin of Indian music is traced to the *Sama Veda* and music itself is styled as the *Gandharva Veda*, one of the *Upa Vedas*. From time immemorial, God has been conceived as *Nada Brahman* (embodiment of sound) and the practice of music as spiritual *sadhana*, as *Nada Vidya* or *Nada Upasana* (Worship of God through sound). In one of his kritis Tyagaraja calls it *Sangita Upasana* (worship through music).

The Yajnavalkya *Smriti* is perhaps the oldest treatise which mentions that a mere votary of absolute music viz. music without words, attains salvation.

Another verse equally oft-quoted in this context is attributed to Lord Narayana Himself:

"Naaham vasaami Vaikunthe na yogi hridaye ravau Madbhaktaah yatra gaayanti tatra tishthami Naarada".

"I dwell not in Vaikuntha nor in the hearts of yogins, nor in the Sun (but) where my devotees sing, there I be."

Even before Sarangadeva wrote his 'Sangita Ratnakara' (13th Century) devotees like the Alvars and Nayanmars of the Tamil country, several of whom were qualified vocalists and instrumentalists, conceived of God as the embodiment as well as the fruit of music (*Isaiyay, Isaippayanay*).

Voice of God

In the very first *sloka* of his monumental work, Sarangadeva pays homage to Lord Sankara as 'Nada Tanu,' i.e. 'one whose body is sound'. This led to music itself being described as 'Brahmanaada' or the voice of God. Sarangadeva later proceeds to give a long list of gods and goddesses who were votaries of music and adds "Saama Vedaadidam gitam samjagraaha Pitaamahah" (Brahma created this music from the *Sama Veda*).

Nada Vidya or *Nadopasana* is the worship of Nada which is not mere sound but musical sound. The whole subject of music relates to *Nada*. *Nada* gives rise to *srutis* which give rise to *svaras* and they in turn become the source of *ragas*. Nada admits of the division of *Ahata* and *Anahata*, the former being the sound produced by the conscious effort of man and the latter, the nada that is heard without conscious effort like the music of the spheres.

Anahata Nada includes the Nada emanating from the *Muladhara* part of the human body. Tyagaraja, the greatest *Nada Yogi* of recent times, refers to the *Muladhara Nada* in his kriti "Svara raga sudha". The *Anahata Nada*, being devoid of aesthetic beauty, does not afford pleasure to the mind. Hence *Ahata Nada* alone is studied and meditated upon by humans.

Emanation of Nada

An interesting description of how Nada is caused in the human body is furnished by Sarangadeva and other writers. The *Atma* or soul, desiring to speak or sing, stirs the mind; the mind strikes the fire abiding in the body; the fire strikes the wind; the wind abiding in *Brahmagranthi*, rising along the upward path, manifests sound in the navel, the heart, the throat, the head and the mouth.

Nada is thus produced by the combination of *Prana* and *Anala*. This description may appear somewhat fanciful to moderns but Tyagaraja, who must have experienced the emanation of *Nada* in this form, describes the process graphically in his *kritis* 'Mokshamu galada' and 'Sobhillu saptasvara.'

The supreme aim of music is to realize the essence that shines

behind music. So, the *ragas* have been conceived as the media for the realization of that essence which is the source of all knowledge, all intelligence and all bliss. Tyagaraja describes it as "Sangita jnanamanu brahmananda sagaramu" (the ocean of supreme bliss called musical knowledge).

Tonal Forms Deified

The seers of music felt within themselves the necessity for animating the material structures of the *ragas*. They conceived the idea of the tonal forms possessed of flesh and blood like human beings and thus deified the ragas. Then the invisible ragas became visible in material forms. This idea is developed in a poetic manner by Tyagaraja in his *kriti* "Naada sudha rasambilanu".

"The ambrosia of sound has assumed a human form", he exclaims: "It is the basis of *Vedas, Puranas, Agamas* and *Sastras*. The seven notes are the bells of His bow, the *Kodanda*, which is none other than *raga*. *Ghana, naya* and *desya* are the strings, *talagatis* the arrows and *bhajana* the supreme reward." All true musicians desire permanent peace of mind through the practice (*sadhana*) of music and through concentration and meditation upon the ideal of music.

Sarangadeva's Thesis

Highly abstruse descriptions of the source and the nature of sound are found in *Matanga's Brihaddesi* (5th - 6th Century), in Yoga treatises and Tantra works. Sarangadeva, who synthesizes all these doctrines in his *Sangita Ratnakara*, has elaborately discussed the divine nature of the causal sound. He says that when the causal sound manifests at the level of the heart, it is known as *Mandra*; at the level of the throat as *Madhya* and at the base of the tongue as *Taara*. The three levels are known as Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara. Such descriptions have a deep meaning and spiritual significance. The philosophical foundation of music rests upon the solid rock of the realization of the immortal soul of music, namely *Nada*.

According to the philosophy of music, the divine psyche or *Atman* is the foundation (*Adishthana*) of music. The psyche sings eternally the immortal song of absolute music, which is formless and colorless in essence and yet represents the infinite. The feeling distilled in sound becomes itself an independent object. It assumes a tune form which is definite but a meaning which is indefinite.

Spiritual "Sadhana"

Thus music is looked upon as a spiritual *sadhana* which elevates and animates the level of man's consciousness and kindles in the cave of his heart the perpetual light of divine knowledge. The

intuitive authors of the music of India were fully conscious of this secret and have made music the best and purest means for attaining God-realization.

Among the composers of Karnataka sangita, Tyagaraja alone has composed a group of 15 *kritis* exclusively dealing with the art and science of music and prescribing it as a *sadhana* to attain the Supreme. Other composers like Purandara Dasa and Dikshitar have, no doubt, made passing references to music like ten *gamakas*, 22 *srutis*, etc., but have not devoted an entire group of *kritis* to music as Tyagaraja has done.

A scrutiny of these songs shows that Tyagaraja was a confirmed votary of absolute music and his object of composing these *kritis* was to impress upon mankind that *Nadopasana* was spiritual *sadhana*. He presents his ideas in beautiful musical garb. He first pays homage to the divine sage Narada whom he describes as the "bee that hovers round the lotus called Nada" (*Nada sarasiruha bhringa*). He calls the seven notes as 'beautiful deities' who shine in the *Vedas* like Rik and Sama, in the *Gayatri Mantra* and in the hearts of gods and Brahmins. He asks his mind to drink the deep nectar of *raga* and get edified. To him, *ragas* are not mere groups of notes but have an ethos and to those who do *sangita upasana*, 'they assume the most pleasing forms and dance before them with their anklets jingling' ("Sripapriya").

Role of Bhakti

The question might be asked why if sound (Nada) alone can constitute music and ensure salvation, have we thousands of musical compositions with *sahitya* in almost every Indian Language. Why has *Bhajana* or *Sankirtana* or *Hari Kirtana*, as it is called in different parts of India, been prescribed as an unfailing *sadhana* for spiritual elevation? The answer is that the worship of pure *Nada* as emanating from the *Muladhara* etc can only be done by duly initiated *Yogins*. If music is to serve the aspirations of the uninitiated multitude, it should be combined with devotion (*bhakti*) and made accessible to every aspirant.

PRINCIPAL NOTE

Hindu mythology says: The seven principal notes are associated with the cries of animals and birds, and are classified as follows: *Shadja (Sa)*, the cry of peacock; *Rishaba (Ri)*, the sound made by the cow when calling her calf; *Gandhara (Ga)*, the bleat of the goat; *Madhyama (Ma)*, the cry of the heron and the tonic of nature; *Panchama (Pa)*, the note of the Cuckoo or *Kokila*, the Indian nightingale; *Dhaivata (Dha)*, the neighing of the horse; *Nishada (Ni)*, the trumpeting of an elephant.

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Muthuswami Dikshitar

T. L. VENKATARAMA IYER

Dikshitar's devotional compositions on gods and goddesses are the quintessence of Jnana.

Muthuswami Dikshitar, one of the trinity of Carnatic music, was an *advaitin*. It was his fundamental belief that all the deities are the manifestations of One Creator, Para Brahman, who transcends all names and forms and that the worship of these deities (*sagunopasana*) was only a step in the realization of the Para Brahman within oneself. Thus *bhakti* is controlled by *jnana*. And this explains many of the features of the music of Dikshitar.

The most outstanding aspect of the compositions of Dikshitar is their richness in *raga bhava*. When a composer is under the spell of emotion he naturally selects *ragas* appropriate to the emotion. He uses only such *sancharas* of the *raga* as are suitable to the sense of the composition. In other words, the melody is subordinate to the emotion. The *raga* delineation is subjective.

Intellect Rules

But where intellect rules and emotion is subordinate to it, as in the case of Dikshitar, neither the selection of the *raga*, nor its elaboration depends on the dictates of emotion. The composer will select a *raga* according to his mood, and to the time when he composes. In elaborating it, he will have regard to the form of the *raga* and give a full picture of it. In such a case, the delineation of the *raga* will be objective. That is what we find in the *kritis* of Dikshitar.

Dikshitar was well versed in the *alapana paddhati* as laid down in the treatises on music. He followed it in the elaboration of the *kriti*, which is modeled on *raga alapana* with its component parts. The picture of the *raga* presented in the *kriti* is as clear and precise as it is full. The *sancharas* given are characteristic of the *raga* and portray its true face. They range from the *mandra* to the *tara stayi* and give a complete picture of it.

If the composition is rendered in *akara*, omitting the *sahitya*, it can easily be mistaken for *raga alapana* in an epitome. The *kriti* can well be described as *raga alapana*, chiselled to fit in with *taala* and dressed in *sahitya*, which is the chief attraction in the *kritis*.

Full Elaboration

Dikshitar like Tyagaraja has handled quite a large number of ragas, rare as well as well-known. In the popular and well-known ragas he

has composed a number of *kritis* bringing out the features of each raga in all its varied aspects. For instance, *Todi* is one of the major ragas in which Dikshitar has composed several *kritis* in which the raga is fully elaborated. A notable feature of these compositions is that they give us a picture of the raga with *eduppu* in different svaras.

Solitary Splendor

There are several old ragas, such as *Mangalakaisiki*, *Ghanta*, *Gopikavasanta*, and *Narayana Goula*, to mention a few, for which we have got to resort to the compositions of Dikshitar for *lakshanas*. There are again many *ragas* which have been handled only by Dikshitar. Such for example are *Saranganata*, *Chhaya Goula*, *Poorvi*, *Padi*, *Mahuri*, *Suddhavasanta*, *Kumudakriya*, and *Amritavarshini*. In *Dwijavanti* the piece "Chetasri" stands out in solitary splendor.

Muthuswami Dikshitar has composed *kritis* in all the 72 melas. In handling the *vivadi melas*, Dikshitar has scrupulously followed the lead of Venkatamakhi and avoided unharmonious *prayogas*. Illustrative examples might include "Kanakambari" in *Kanakambari* (mela 1) "Sri Dakshinamurtim" in *Phenadyuti* (mela 2), "Kalavati" in *Kalavati* (mela 31) and "Bhaktavatsalam" in *Vamsavati* (mela 54).

O Maye!

Maye, who art thou that to this torment me subject?
Pray leave me.

Thou art but She and so merit Thy praise, therefore I
sing. Grant me bliss and thus protect.

Oh thou art elegance, loveliness and Love universal, a
repository - omniscient and omnipresent. Let the river
of thine love in perennial flow bless me, Oh mother of
Kumaresa - Maye!

*Muthuswami Dikshitar Kritis - Maye; Rag -
Sudathrangini; Tal- Adi.*

Vainika Gayaka

Muthuswami Dikshitar was a *vainika* and *gayaka*. He used to sing to the accompaniment of the veena. This latter fact is suggested in a well known *kriti* of his "Balagopala" in *Bhairavi*, wherein he speaks of the Lord as praised by Guru-Guha who was a *vainika-gayaka* ("Vainika gayaka guru-guha nuta").

To this combination of vocal and instrumental music, must be attributed another distinguishing feature of his music. His compositions are in *vilambakaala*, the slow tempo, with a few passages in *madhyamakaala* or the middle tempo at the end. Now it is possible for a vocalist to command a speed which an instrumentalist might have difficulty in following, but it is only in the *vilambakaala* that the form of a raga can be reproduced faithfully and in all its beauty.

In quick tempo, many of the delicate shades of the *raga* are likely to be lost leaving only a general impression of the *raga*. It is for this reason that *vilambakaala* is generally favored as suitable for elucidation of *raga* forms and given an important place in *raga alapana*. To his mastery of veena playing must be attributed the adoption of *vilambakaala* and the richness of *raga bhava* in the *kritis* of Dikshitar.

Rich in 'Gamakas'

Another outstanding quality in the *kritis* of Dikshitar is that they are rich in *gamakas*, which are graces imparting beauty to the songs. Their number varies, according to different authorities, from 10 to 15. Because of his mastery of the veena, Dikshitar had a command of the *gamakas* with which he enriched his songs. There is no other composer of Carnatic music besides Dikshitar in whose compositions one can see such a wealth of *gamakas*.

Dikshitar was very particular that there should be harmonious blending of music and *sahitya*. It is not unusual to find a song in which, in the singing of the piece, the *sahitya* gets distorted and deformed beyond recognition. In other words the music and the *sahitya* become mismatched. But in the songs of Dikshitar this never happens. In the rendering of his *kritis* the words come out clear and full blown; the music does not destroy the identity or beauty of the *sahitya* which conveys the *bhakti rasa* of the piece.

In one of his famous verses Kalidasa praises Parvati and Parameswara as united like a word and its meaning. Adapting it, it might be said that in the compositions of Dikshitar *sahitya* and music are in unison like Parvati and Parameswara.

- The late T.L. Venkatarama Iyer,
Jurist and erudite scholar of music
and Sanskrit, was an authority on the compositions of Muthuswami
Dikshitar. (Courtesy: "SRUTI")

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(Note: Schematics not included from original – Editor.)



Pancharatna Haripath

Dr. S. SRINIVASAN

The 'abhangs' of Maharashtra saints have a special place in India's religious life.

Maharashtra has a pride of place in the spiritual map of India. The land of Lord Vitthala and His countless devotees over the centuries, including saints like Jnyaneshwar, Gorakumbhar, Eknath, Tukaram, Namdev and so on, can even today boast of the continuing tradition of *keertans*, *abhangawanis* and *dindis* in the true spirit of the "warkari" or devotee who, year after year, undertakes the arduous pilgrimage on foot to Pandarpur to offer his humble prayer to Pandurang on Ashadha Ekadasi day.

The devotional song of Maharashtra is typically an "*abhang*" which is a short verse of about four lines in old world Marathi, well balanced syllabically and with beauty and melody of its own. The essence of the *abhang* is its simplicity. The appeal to Lord Pandurang is ever transparent through the few but well chosen words, which even when chanted casually can take the devout to great heights of peace and tranquillity. The text also lends itself admirably to musical compositions because of the subtle balance of words fitting well into elegant *taal* patterns. The appeal of the *abhang* to the common man is obviously unique.

Five Gems of Men

Out of virtually several thousands of *abhangs* written by various saints down the centuries, a selection of 146 verses comprises what is popularly known as *Pancharatna Haripath*. As the name indicates, these are prayers to Lord Hari or Vitthala (Vishnu in another form) sung by five gems of men. The verses selected are 29 of Sant Jnyaneshwar, 25 of Sant Eknath, 34 of Sant Namdev, 33 of Sant Tukaram and 25 of Sant Nivrittinath.

The *Pancharatna Haripath* or just *Haripath* as it is often called enjoys today a special place amidst all religious texts in any Maharashtrian family. And rightly so because unlike other *abhangs* the themes of *Haripath abhangs* relate directly to our daily lives and more importantly, they are easy to understand even for the novice.

Voluntary Samadhi

The profiles of these five men of God have been an inspiration to the people of the region from generation to generation. Sant Jnyaneshwar was the patron saint of the land and lived in the 13th Century. He wrote the all-time-great Jnyaneshwari, a commentary

on the *Bhagavat Gita* meant for the common man, which is revered even today in every Maharashtrian home as sacred text. Sant Jnyaneshwar was unique among saints in the sense that he had the inborn gift of *Jnana Yoga* in him while other saints practiced essentially *Bhakti Yoga*. Jnyaneshwar took voluntary samadhi at the age of 21 in Alandi, near Pune.

Sant Eknath lived in the 16th Century. In addition to composing *abhangs* on Lord Vitthala, he wrote commentaries on *Bhagavata* and *Ramayana*. Sant Namdev was a contemporary of Sant Jnyaneshwar. His intense *Bhakti Bhava* complemented sant Jnyaneshwar's philosophical wisdom as they traveled together across the land to carry on their mission of divine teachings.

Sant Tukaram belonged to the 17th Century. His devotion to Lord Vithoba as He is often affectionately addressed, even influenced a great ruler like Chatrapati Shivaji who was his contemporary. The sweetness and emotional fervor of his *abhangs* have endeared him to *bhaktas* in a very special way. Sant Tukaram is said to have ascended to Vaikuntha in living form escorted by Lord Vishnu himself on Garuda, in full public gaze of his townfolk in Dehu near Pune. Sant Nivrattinath was the elder brother of Sant Jnyaneshwar and was guiding force in the latter's life.

Eternally Relevant

A strong positive point about *Haripath* is that it does not preach from an ivory tower. It does not philosophize unduly nor does it tax the reader with complicated arguments of metaphysics nor force him to seek renunciation in the model of a true *sannyasin*. It does not even teach an exalted *karma yoga* at a high intellectual level like *karmanyevadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana* which involves the very difficult entity of *nishkamya karma* or action with total detachment. The theme of *Haripath* is eternally relevant because it essentially coaxes the common man to carry on with his job despite all difficulties, but seek the help of the Lord constantly to gain inner strength and peace.

Another special feature of the *Haripath* is contained in the name itself, viz. the power of *namasmarana* or the chanting of the Lord's name. References to the birth-death cycle, the transience of material possessions, the "maya" of pride and other passions that force us through the high drama of life and so on are made around the fulcrum of the redeeming power of *namasmarana*. In fact, even as we enter the computer age, the power of this exercise has to be tried and experienced to be believed.

Powers of Chant

There is also ample medical evidence to the tranquilizing powers of

the chant. The process can begin as mere *namoccharana* or utterance of the Lord's name, but as it is persisted with, one can feel the transition to the *namasmarana* or meditational stage even as one goes about with other activities.

A sub-conscious level of parameditational relaxation can be obtained through *namasmarana*, which in no way needs to interfere with or impair ongoing work. Indeed during this stage, work itself ceases to produce the anxiogenic overtones which it otherwise does. This in due course would lead to the *nishkamya karma* stage of *karma yoga*. The *Haripath* thus blends the tenets of *bhakti yoga* and *karma yoga* in a very subtle and practical fashion.

Whether or not one knows Marathi enough to understand all of *Pancharatna Haripath*, it is its spirit one needs to imbibe, namely to learn to draw from the infinite source of the divine energy through the seemingly simple exercise of *namasmarana*. It is ultimately the power of mind that moves men and matter and this power cannot exist, let alone operate, without the nourishment of the divine energy.

- *Dr Srinivasan is a medical adviser who is also a Hindustani classical vocalist participating in bhajan sammelans*

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(Note: Schematics not included from original – Editor.)



NEWS & EVENTS

Jagadguru dedicates **Golden Chariot to** **Sharadambal at Sringeri!!!**

The dedication of the Golden Chariot coincided with the silver jubilee celebrations of monkhood (sannyasa sweekaranam) by His Holiness Sri Bharati Tirtha Maha- Swamigal. To mark the inauguration of the year-long functions, a koti kumkuma archana, was started on January 22nd to seek the grace of Sri Sharada for peace and prosperity of all. The archana concluded on February 2nd. The same day Lalita Homam was also performed. Several special homams and other pujas were also conducted.

On February 3rd, the dedication ceremonies of the Golden Chariot were conducted with thousands of devotees participating in the festivities. The Rathotsavam of Sri Sharada was performed on the same day. His Holiness, seated in the golden palanquin clad in the traditional Raj Darbar attire, participated in the Rathotsavam. That evening a guru vandana function was arranged with the union minister of environment Mr. Suresh Babu as the chief guest. His Holiness gave an anugraha bhashanam (discourse) during the function and emphasized the importance of adherence to our dharma.

Several cultural programs were arranged and two books – Jeevana Charitra, a tamil version of the Inspiring Saint (His Holiness) and the fourth volume of Rig Veda Darshana, were released by His Holiness on the occasion. Mr. Ravi Subramanian, Chariman, and Dr. Yegnasubramanian, President, participated in the ceremonies and offered guru vandana to His Holiness on behalf of SVBF.

The inauguration ceremonies concluded with a spectacular display of fire works in the night on the banks of the Tunga River.

New Year (1999) and Sankranti celebrations

Special pujas with Ganapati Homam, rudrabhishekam, lalita sahasranamam etc. were performed at the Sharada Temple in Stroudsburg, to pray for a happy, healthy and harmonious New Year 1999 for all our communities.

Ganapati Homam, Navagraha Homam, Aruna parayanam and Surya Puja were performed on the occasion of Sankranti and uttarayana punyakalam.

Maha Shivaratri

Maha Shivaratri was celebrated on Sunday, February 14 at the Sharada Temple in Stroudsburg, PA. The events began with Ganapati Homam in the morning followed by Rudra Homam. Mahanyasa parayanam was performed before the commencement of the full night functions. Ekadasa vara (11 times) rudrabhishekam was performed in each of the four phases that extended all through the night. Rudra trisati, bilva ashtotra archana, rudra krama archana and siva ashtotra archanas were performed in each of the four phases respectively.



Book Reviews

The Mahabharatha I & II - A Child's View (Tara Publishing, India) by Samhita Arni gives a fresh perspective for both children and adults of the timeless epic provided by a child story-teller, twelve years of age. I highly recommend this book to children and teenagers who have a liking for mythologies, especially of Indian origin. The first volume begins with King Santanu and takes the reader up to the exile of the Pandavas. The second volume covers the thirteen years the Pandavas spent in exile, the Kurukshetra War, and concludes with the last journey of the Pandavas. Not only did Samhita write the prose, she also did the illustrations. The book is 284 pages long, but printed in an appealing 8 ½ x 11 format in quality paper.

"Many Lives, Many Masters" by Dr. Bryan Weiss (Simon & Schuster, New York) Reincarnation is very indigenous to Hindu beliefs and we (Hindus) derive considerable solace in accepting the doctrine as axiomatic truth which can only best explain disparities that permeates this world. But for a western mind reincarnation is an unsettling concept and not necessarily endorsed by Christianity or Judaism. Dr. Brian Weiss is a prominent psychiatrist (Chairman of Psychiatry Dept. Of Mount Sinai Hospital) and a graduate from Columbia and Yale University who had very little inclination toward his own Jewish faith let alone eastern religion. He was aware of research programs in parapsychology at major universities, but they seemed too far-fetched to consider seriously.

Then one day he met Catherine....., who was plagued by anxiety, depression and phobias.

For more than a year he used conventional therapy to help his young and beautiful patient Cathrine overcome recurring nightmares and anxiety attacks. When nothing worked he tried hypnosis to help her remember repressed childhood traumas. what emerged were the patient's descriptions of a dozen or so of her hitherto unknown 86 past lives, as well as philosophical messages channeled from "Master Spirits". Undergoing an astonishing series of trance states, Catherine recalled past-life memories that proved to be the causes of her problems. In the incongruously quiet, dimly lit setting of Dr. Weiss's office, Catherine spoke in clear and vivid terms of numerous lifetimes she had experienced, crossing classes and genders, centuries and civilizations. In addition Catherine also began to channel message from Masters, which contained remarkable revelations about Dr. Weiss's family and dead son.

These remarkable sessions profoundly altered the mind and soul of both patient and therapist. In a matter of months, Catherine's symptoms disappeared and she resumed a life happier and more

peaceful than ever before.

The previously non-spiritual, scientific Weiss, awed by Catherine's and the Masters' revelations, has written this book to share his new-found factual knowledge about "immortality and the true meaning of life."

- Dr. Ravi Subramanyam



Golden Words of His Holiness Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji

Value of Scriptures

- The Lord Himself has given us His commands in the eternal Vedas. We should not disobey our Scriptures. They are His breath and the fountain-head of all right knowledge.
- It is our duty to learn the scriptures and follow the commands of our sastras implicitly. Ignorance by itself is certainly no sin but it is a sin when there is a duty to learn. There is no doubt that the man who knows and yet errs is a greater sinner; but there is no satisfaction, much less an excuse for the man who prefers to continue in ignorance and in error.
- Scientists have discovered that matter is nothing but a manifestation of cosmic energy. So there exists a single cosmic energy or force which is infinite in capacity and takes on the form of matter under certain conditions. Our holy scriptures also make the same assertion.

Experience of Advaita

While all religious systems postulate the existence of "one" God who is the supreme being, some grant independent existence of matter (i.e., universe) and some grant independent existence of individual souls.

It is only in the Advaita system that the matter (i.e., universe) is denied existence independent of God, and the individual soul also is denied existence independent of God. It is only in the Advaita system that there is no second principle independent of God.

It is impossible to teach Advaita, for Advaita is beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses. Advaita cannot be learnt. It has to be experienced.

Nature of Happiness

The number of things in the world that awaken desire is infinite. If a man gets a particular thing, the mental unrest caused by the longing for that thing may cease; but it will be replaced by restlessness caused by desire for another object. This process will go on forever as there is no end to desire.

Similarly, the number of things that are undesirable is

also infinite. If you get rid of a particular undesirable object, no doubt you get mental peace for the moment; but the next moment you will become restless because another thing will start troubling you. This process will go on indefinitely as the things which gave us trouble in the world are countless.

If, therefore, we seek to remove our mental unrest by trying to secure the things which the mind asks for or to get rid of all the things which disturb it, our search for peace will be an endless one and true everlasting peace and happiness will never be attained by us.

Fate and Free Will

You are responsible for what you are today. You are responsible for your pain and suffering and misery. You cannot escape your responsibility by blaming fate, for fate is of your own making, or by blaming God, for he is but divine dispenser of fruits in accordance with the merits of your actions. You have none to blame but yourself for your present state of affairs.

Fate is nothing but the sum total of the results of your past actions.

By exercising your free will in the past you brought on the resultant fate (*i.e.*, present).

By exercising your free will in the present, wipe out the past record and work for a better future. Whether for acquiring more happiness or for reducing misery, you have to exercise your free will in the present.

Faith in Guru

- ❖ Just as we need a doctor to cure us of our illness, a guru is necessary to know what the sastras prescribe and to teach us the particular course of action suited to our qualification.
- ❖ Surrender yourself entirely to a guru. He will take you by the hand and lead you to the goal. He is not blinded by the enveloping darkness of ignorance and is sure to guide you properly. But you must have true faith in him.
- ❖ If you wish for a guru in all earnestness, he will be before you in no time. But if you require his presence only to enable you to test his competence of a guru, he will be farther off than before.

❖ Have implicit faith in the words of your guru and earnestly follow his instructions for the realization of God and you shall certainly see God.

Paths to the Goal

❖ Cold water is beneficial to a thirsty man but positively harmful to one who has fever. Similarly, what is good for one may not be good for another. So each person must follow that path for which he is best suited.

❖ Exert yourself as much as you can, adopt the right course in every effort of yours. Your will must succeed in the end.

❖ There is nothing which is unattainable. A thing may be unattainable to us at the particular stage at which we are, or with the qualification that we possess. However, if we try hard enough there is nothing we cannot attain. Ultimately we must succeed.

