

Voice of Jagadguru

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CHODANAA

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36th Aradhana of 35th Peedathipathi of Śri Sringeri Sharada Peetham Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Śri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahāswāmiji (14th September 2025)

20th Oct 2025 108th Jayanthi Mahotsava of 35th Peedathipathi of Śri Sringeri Sharada Peetham Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Śri Abhinava Vidya Teertha Mahaswamigal (1917-1989)

Search Without Dismantlement

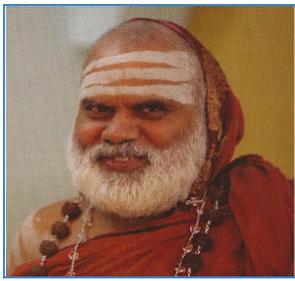
A person had a harmonium. When he played it, melodious tunes flowed out of it. Hearing the enchanting sound, another man thought, "How does such sweet music come out of this? Probably, these sounds are present inside this instrument." Getting very curious, he dismantled the harmonium and searched for the sounds in every nook and corner. However, no matter how much he toyed with the internal parts, he could not get the original music out of nowhere".

While there are numerous other techniques, one should analyse the Atma without actually taking it apart the body which it



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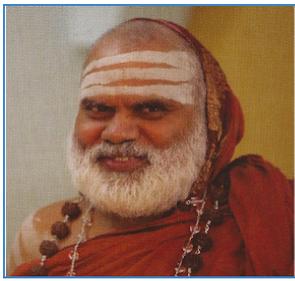
Superficial Knowledge



A certain philanthropist offered a sum of rupees fifty thousand to anyone who knew well all the four Vedas. After a couple of days, a young man approached him and asked for the award. "Are you familiar with the four Vedas?", queried the philanthropist. The seeker of the prize answered, "I am aware of the fact that there are four Vedas." The donor was stunned by the reply and asked, "Is that all?" The young man said, "Sir, I know that the Vedas are four in number. Is that not sufficient?" Well, what was the philanthropist to do? He just sent away the young man.

Just as the man's superficial knowledge was inadequate to fetch him the prize, superficial or indirect knowledge of the Truth cannot bring about emancipation. Direct realization of the non-dual Supreme is what annihilates ignorance and results in

liberation from transmigratory existence.



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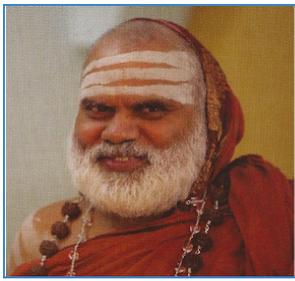
Overlooking What is Immediate

Once, ten fools forded a river. After reaching the opposite bank, they wished to ascertain whether all of them had crossed. One of them started to count. He listed all except himself and so concluded that one of them had drowned. This caused him much grief. Another fool made the same error and confirmed that one person was missing. Consequently, all of them began to weep.

A well-wisher happened to pass that way and sought to know what their problem was. One of the fools said, "Ten of us set out to cross the river but now we are only nine." The well-wisher was amused. He told the leader, "Please count and let me know how many of you are here." As the others had done before him, he arrived at the answer, "Nine". The well-wisher announced, "No. The tenth man is not dead." The fools experienced some relief. Quickly pointing at the man who had counted, he continued, "You are the tenth man." The significance of the well-wisher's words dawned on the fools. Exultation replaced their grief.

Each fool forgot to count himself; we have forgotten our true nature of being the non-dual Supreme. Playing a role like that of the well-wisher of the story, the Sadguru tells his disciple, "You are not the limited, miserable person you imagine yourself to be. You are the Supreme that is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss." A very pure-minded disciple promptly





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becomes enlightened. A disciple of a lower calibre has to serve his Guru for long and sincerely practise spiritual disciplines to rid himself of defects such as uncertainty and misapprehension. Thereafter, he obtains direct realization of the Truth.

God's Merciful Justice

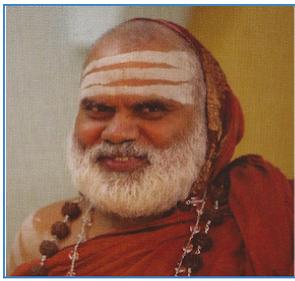


One day, when Rama and Sita were dwelling on the north-eastern base of the Chitrakoota mountain, not far from the Ganges, a crow pecked at Sita. The vicious crow was actually Indra's son. She sought to drive the bird away by hurling a clod of mud at it but it defiantly remained

in Her vanity. Sometime later, while Rama slept on Her lap, the wicked bird sharply attacked Her breast. Again and again, it tore at Her bosom. Her blood wet Rama. She woke up Rama and, on seeing Her injured chest, He demanded to know who was responsible for it. He then Himself beheld the crow closely in front of Sita, with its talons stained with blood. The bird quickly hid itself in the ground.

Angry, Rama invoked the Brahma-Astra in a blade of Dharba grass and hurled it at the hidden son of Indra. The bird flew as swiftly as it could all over the world but was unable to shake off the missile. Indra, the Devas and the sages refused succour. So, finally, it sought refuge in Rama. Though the crow deserved to be killed, Rama compassionately offered it protection. He told the bird, which had arrived helpless, "The Brahma-Astra cannot be rendered futile. Hence, you yourself suggest a way out." The crow replied, "Let Your arrow destroy my right eye." Rama acceded to its plea and hence the Astra blinded its right eye but spared its life.

Rama thus meted out justice and yet exhibited great compassion. It is noteworthy that mercy did not cause Rama to reduce the death penalty to some unjustly minuscule punishment



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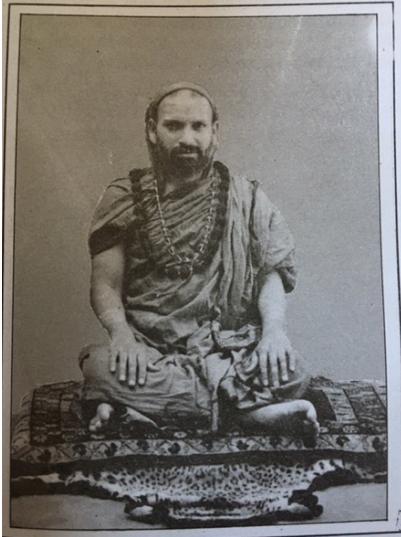
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such as the loss of a single feather. The heinous act of Indra's son is an example of the saying, "He who is in the grip of lust neither feels ashamed of himself nor fears the consequences of his behaviour. Such is the ruinous nature of lust.

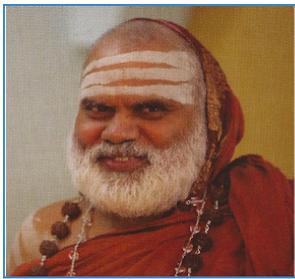


There was a judge whose misguided compassion caused him to pardon even hardened criminals. He felt that as a votary of Ahimsa, he ought not to subject even murderers and rapists to the prolonged suffering of life imprisonment or deprive them of their lives. On an occasion, a man who was guilty of repeated, armed robbery and murder was brought before him. The prosecution's case against the man was iron clad. Yet, the judge ruled that the prosecution had not established its case beyond reasonable doubt and set the man free with a warning. The unrepentant criminal did not waste much time before commencing his despicable acts.

A few days later, he broke into the judge's house itself. He managed to open the safe containing valuables. As he was getting ready to decamp with his loot, the judge's wife, who had been awakened by sounds, saw him and tried to raise an alarm. Without a moment's hesitation, the dacoit strangled her to death and escaped. All this would not have happened if the judge had not discarded justice in favour of his thoroughly misguided compassion.

No physical, verbal or mental sin committed by a person either in this or an earlier birth fails to fructify in the form of suffering experienced by the doer. Scripturally-prohibited behaviour indulged in this birth often yields its consequence only in a future birth and so some mistakenly imagine that God lets off wrong-doers. The current prosperity of a debased individual stems from his Punyam of an earlier birth and is like the inherited property of a wastrel. God, being just, awards punishment to a sinner but, being compassionate, mitigates the suffering awarded to a penitent man to the maximum extent possible without making a travesty of justice. His functioning is not foolish like that of the judge of the example considered. Just as repentant first-time wrong-doers are looked upon leniently by judges but unrepentant, habitual offenders are severely punished by them, God is lenient towards those who unknowingly commit a misdeed on multiple occasions or knowingly commit it once but comes down hard on those who knowingly and repeatedly sin.

It is said, "The sin of an earlier birth troubles the doer in the form of disease in the present birth. It is neutralized by recourse to medicines, gifts, sacred recitation, Homas and worship of God." Further, "There is expiation for a sin committed unknowingly or once with knowledge. However, what remedy is there for a misdeed repeatedly performed with attention?" While a



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person may be able to escape the arm of the law of the land, he cannot ever escape God's law of Karma. Justice and compassion find perfect consummation in God.

The Veda Determines What is Dharma

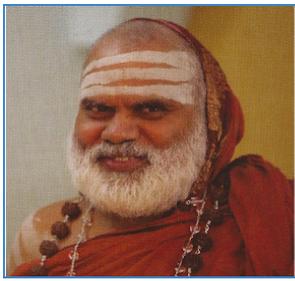


A lawyer argued, "Your Honour, my client should not be treated as guilty. It is true that he stole. But there is a reason for that. He was forced to commit the theft because his family was starving. With the stolen money, he not only helped himself but also his family. While stealing, he did not destroy any property. In fact, he did not even damage the lock as he used a duplicate key. The money that he took away was meagre compared to the rich man's hoard of black money. My client performed a service to the Government by unearthing black money. This apart, the wealthy man has so much cash that this little depreciation ought to mean nothing to him."

How would the judge respond to such an argument? He would presumably declare, "I am not interested in such arguments that ignore the law of the land. Stealing is an offence under the Indian Penal Code. Even you admit that your client did steal. So, I am duty-bound to punish him." Then he would hold the lawyer's client

guilty and send the thief to jail.

Judges determine whether an act is a punishable offence or not by relying on the penal code and not on fanciful arguments that disregard the penal code. Likewise, to determine what is Dharma and what is Adharma, a person must turn to the Veda and not to mere reasoning that is independent of the scriptures. The penal code, having been formulated by humans, may require occasional revision. However, the Vedas, which emerged from Ishwara, are ever flawless.



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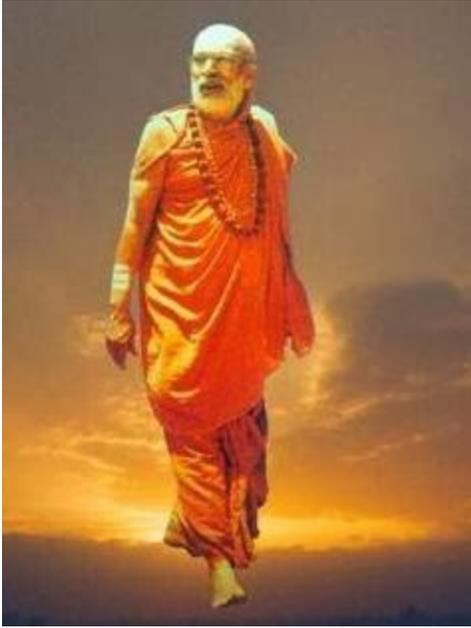
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Concentration



Dronacharya impartially expounded the nuances of archery to both the Pandavas and the Kauravas. At the end of their course, he gave them a test. "See that small bird sitting on the tree", said the Guru. "You will have to shoot it down with an arrow." He called his disciples, one by one, and asked, "What do you see now?" Each of the disciples replied, "Sir, I see the bird, the tree and also the surroundings." The Guru told them, "You have not mastered archery." Finally, Arjuna's turn came. Drona asked him the same question. Arjuna answered, "Revered sir, I see only the bird and nothing else." The master asked him to release the arrow. The disciple obeyed and the bird fell.

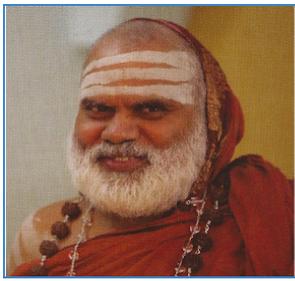
This story brings out the praiseworthiness of intense concentration on one's target or the task at hand. Focussing the mind on God during meditation is certainly very important, particularly for a spiritual aspirant. However, many say that they are unable to meditate

because their minds keep wandering. Quite often, a major reason for their poor concentration is the inadequacy of their interest in meditation.

A person was given a packet of hundred-rupee notes to count. As he was busy counting, a friend called him. He, however, did not hear the call and so did not look up. Only after he had finished his task, he noticed the presence of his friend. He told him. "My whole attention was on the notes because I knew that any error in my counting would have proved costly for me."

This man regarded his task as important and so was able to suitably direct his attention. In like manner, if a man regards meditation as extremely important and feels that he stands to lose greatly by inattention during meditation, it is likely that he will succeed in focussing his mind on God.

Note : All the above are taken from the book **EDIFYING PARABLES (HisHoliness Jagadguru Shankracharya Sri abhinavavidyatheertha Mahaswamigal)**



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