



WHAT IS INSIDE

AMMAJI'S MESSAGE

SRI DHIRAJI'S ARTICLE

SRI DHIRAJI'S POEM

DISCIPLINE IN SPEECH

CHILDREN'S CORNER

ONLINE EVENTS

ASHRAM EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

EDITORIAL TEAM MESSAGE



AMMAJI'S MESSAGE

SWAMINI PRAMANANDA

**anudvegakaram vākyaṃ satyaṃ
priyahitaṃ ca yat svādhyāyābhyasanam
caiva vānmayam tapa ucyate (Bhagavad
Gita, Chpt 17, Verse 15).**

Words are a gift from the Divine. They are a powerful tool that we constantly use in our interaction with the world around us. They can either make, amend or break relationships. Our shastras have consistently emphasised on the importance of Vāk śuddhi (purity of speech) and to avoid mechanical and impulsive talking.

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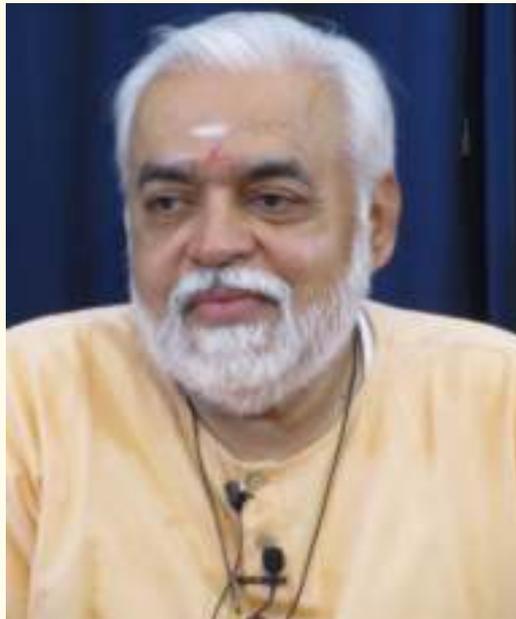
Sri Sankaracharya says in Vivekachudamani, verse 368 “yogasya prathamadvāram vāñnirodho'parigrahaḥ”; The first doorway to Yoga is discipline of speech. Sri Krishna in Bhagavad Gita, Chpt 17, verse 15 expounds on how one’s quality of speech should be.

Lord Krishna mentions that the first quality is anudvegakaram (verbal ahimsa) where one should ensure that the words uttered do not cause hurt or turbulence in another. There should be no bitterness in the speech that will make others despise us. The 2nd quality is satyam (speak the truth). Speech should be transparent; truthful and there should be no hidden or double meaning in what one says. The intent needs to be clear and there needs to be alignment of mind and words. 3rd quality is priyam (love) where choice of words, the way it is said, and the non-verbal language needs to be gentle. One needs to make an effort to present unpleasant news in a pleasant manner. The fourth quality is hitam (usefulness) where one needs to observe that their speech is beneficial to the other and one needs to refrain from gossip.

In today’s world, social media has changed the way we are able to communicate and behave with each other. Speech now refers to not just face to face interactions but to words expressed via social media and technology such as whatsapp, twitter, facebook, email etc. Are we alert to how one’s language is when it is expressed through these various platforms and the consequences it produces? We must ensure that we are responding and not reacting to conversations, situations or people and that we are aligned with our thoughts and speech. How one speaks is as important as what one says! May we not abuse this divine gift that has been bestowed upon us.

Religious Belief, Faith and Practice

Sri Dhira Chaitanyaji



Part 2 of 3

A belief is defined as a state of mind in which an individual holds a particular proposition or premise to be true. A belief may be true or false. A false belief is not considered to be knowledge even if it is sincere. For instance a sincere believer in the flat earth theory may think he knows the earth to be flat but his 'knowledge' is erroneous.

We generally use the term belief with respect to what we accept as facts that cannot be verified by perception or inference. A fact that can be verified by perception or inference, we generally accept as knowledge.

Religious faith usually implies acceptance of particular set of beliefs with conviction and commitment. There are religions in the world that have their basis in faith, in other words in acceptance of a particular set of beliefs as established by their proponents. The source of their beliefs is usually a founder of the faith along with the scripture which outlines their particular beliefs. The content of a particular scripture is mostly looked upon as revealed to a particular individual by a divine source. This is true for religious traditions practiced by most people in the world.

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Hindu tradition like other religious traditions looks upon the content of its scripture as revealed-not to one person but to men and women of wisdom called Rishis or sages who then passed it on to others in society in the form of an oral teaching tradition that has been maintained unbroken to this day. The compilation of this knowledge is what constitutes the Hindu scripture called Veda. While the scripture is looked upon as being revealed the validity of its essential content is to be verified by what is called as yukti and anumana. Yukti is a process of reasoning. By anumana is meant one's personal experience. In other words what is said in the scripture must not be unreasonable or illogical and it should be recognized as being true and recognized as empirically real in one's personal experience.

In this regard I would like to point out that in Hindu religious tradition we recognize some scriptural statements to be verifiable in the present, in one's lifetime. Then there are other statements in the scripture that are unverifiable by perception or experience. Those that are unverifiable fall under the category of belief and those that are verifiable fall under the category of knowledge. In other words the statements are or are not available for personal experience during one's lifetime. However in both cases they are expected to be within reason. In other words they should not appear to be unreasonable to an average human being.

To give an example, statements concerning heaven going are viewed as unverifiable by perception or experience during our lifetime. What happens after death can only be verified after death and so will remain unverifiable to us during our life. So too issues such as the law of Karma and rebirth. Statements in the scripture concerning God, the essential nature of oneself and the Universe and the connection of the individual to God are considered verifiable in one's life.

In other words, the Truth of oneself and God has to be verifiable and thus available to be known by us while we are living as a fact. Truth of oneself and God is thus not a belief to be verified in the unknown future in the hereafter but an evident fact that needs to be recognized during ones present lifetime.

When it comes to acceptance of beliefs such as the presence of heaven which is unverifiable by personal experience during one's life, it is considered to be a matter of belief. Its acceptance or non-acceptance in and of itself is not viewed as a measure of one's faith and non-acceptance is not judged as blasphemous.

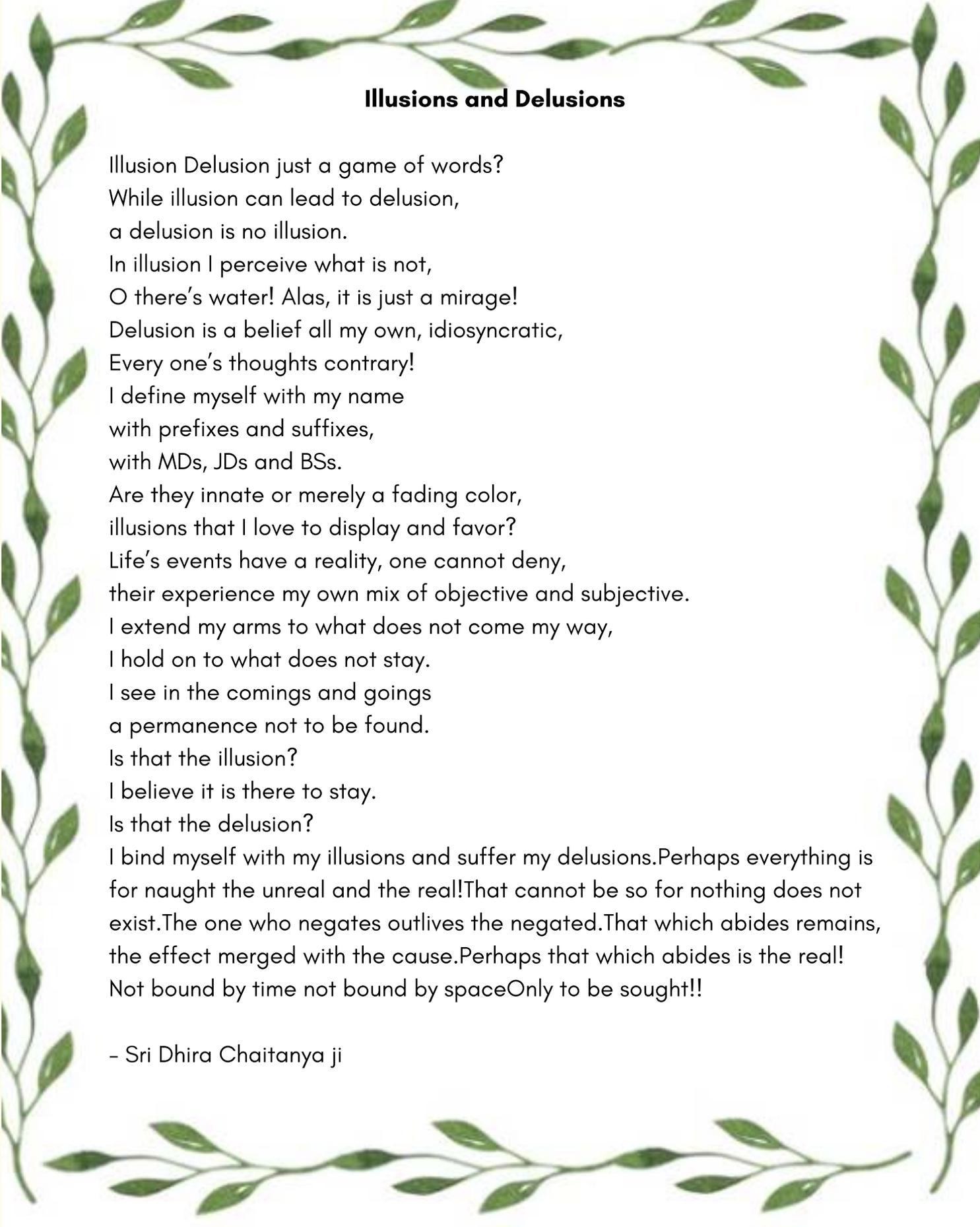
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In Hindu tradition the word used for faith is Shraddha. It is understood as giving the benefit of doubt to scripture pending understanding and personal experience. It means having an open mind and not drawing conclusions prematurely until one has given one's mind a chance to process the information fully. Needless to say this definition of Shraddha implies that a person is permitted to have doubts and questions about what is being said by scripture. Having doubts and asking questions with a view to gaining knowledge is not in itself looked upon as a sign of lack of faith.

Hindu tradition understands Truth as something that needs to be applicable equally and universally to all beings. It needs to be verifiable by personal experience and while it may be beyond the scope of reason it cannot be opposed to reason. In other words it cannot be unreasonable to the human intellect. Thus it cannot be biased and exclusive but needs to be universal and inclusive.

There are three factors that form the basis of religious study and pursuit. These are known as Sruti, scripture, Yukti, reasoning and Anubhava, direct personal experience. The essential nature of oneself the subject, the cause or source from which everything (the universe and its living beings) has originated, the relationship between the two are all understood to be unknowable by the human mind by a process of sense perception and inference. Scripture is looked upon as the source by which one gains knowledge of the above. Since truth is factual, it cannot contradict human reason and therefore what is conveyed by scripture has to be reasonable to a human mind. And being factual it has to be experienced as a fact on a personal level. When these three come together they culminate in the fulfillment of a person's spiritual quest.

.....to be continued



Illusions and Delusions

Illusion Delusion just a game of words?

While illusion can lead to delusion,
a delusion is no illusion.

In illusion I perceive what is not,
O there's water! Alas, it is just a mirage!

Delusion is a belief all my own, idiosyncratic,
Every one's thoughts contrary!

I define myself with my name
with prefixes and suffixes,
with MDs, JDs and BSs.

Are they innate or merely a fading color,
illusions that I love to display and favor?

Life's events have a reality, one cannot deny,
their experience my own mix of objective and subjective.

I extend my arms to what does not come my way,
I hold on to what does not stay.

I see in the comings and goings
a permanence not to be found.

Is that the illusion?

I believe it is there to stay.

Is that the delusion?

I bind myself with my illusions and suffer my delusions. Perhaps everything is
for naught the unreal and the real! That cannot be so for nothing does not
exist. The one who negates outlives the negated. That which abides remains,
the effect merged with the cause. Perhaps that which abides is the real!

Not bound by time not bound by space Only to be sought!!

- Sri Dhira Chaitanya ji

Discipline in Speech

Vāk-tapas is the discipline of proper use of one's speech. The word 'tapas' means a religious discipline that is self-imposed for one's own benefit. In the process of developing mastery over speech, one inevitably develops a capacity to master the mind, as speech and the mind are intimately connected. Speech being an instrument of expression, like any instrument, it must be properly handled with alertness.

Speech is not an involuntary function. It is subject to will and therefore can be controlled. Due to habit or lack of alertness, however, it can appear to be mechanical. When speech is mechanical, there is minimum use of will to control or modify it. Whatever thought comes to mind is expressed without regard to propriety or concern for consequences. Careless speech can result in poor communication, hurt feelings and misinterpretations.

The first step in vāk-tapas is being alert to one's speech. As words once spoken are irretrievable, it is important to be certain of what one wants to say before speaking. If one's thoughts are vague or confused, they need to be sorted out before one tries to communicate. Then one will not find oneself saying, "I did not mean what I said". Although it is important that one's speech be in keeping with what one thinks, it is not necessary to verbalise everything that one thinks. Speech should be the finished product of one's thinking, not the raw material.

Since thoughts and speech are so intimately connected, alertness to one's speech also brings about an alertness to one's own feelings and process of thinking. To effect change within oneself, one needs to be aware of one's thoughts and emotional patterns. One also needs to be alert to the consequences of what one says, as one's speech can have a lasting impression on others. Discipline in speech implies truthfulness backed by sensitivity towards others.

In vāk-tapas, one avoids talking simply for the sake of talking. Talking serves various functions. It can be a means for getting to know people and interacting with them. However, in the practice of vāk-tapas, one deliberately avoids un-productive conversation such as gossip about the affairs of others which are irrelevant to oneself. People indulge in gossip to kill time and satisfy idle curiosity. It can also be destructive, as the information passed on is often coloured by distortions and misconceptions. Having passed through many idle minds, gossip is as far from the truth as it is from its source.

One can also indulge in talking as a way of dealing with loneliness and escaping from one's own uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. When talking becomes a form of escape and avoidance, it may be of use momentarily, but in the long run does not lead to inner growth.

Types of Discussion

Speech in the form of discussion is an important instrument for learning. By discussion, one can develop thoughts more fully and clarify doubts. Unproductive discussion, however, should be avoided. The Vedic tradition describes three types of discussion:

1) Jalpa - In this form of discussion, the proponents on each side firmly stick to their position and try to convince their opponents, refusing to see the other viewpoint even if it appears more reasonable. The purpose of the discussion is not to seek what is true, but to impose an opinion on others. It is like a discussion between believers of different religious groups or political parties.

2) Vitaṇḍā - In this form of discussion also, each side sticks firmly to their view, but they argue by contesting and debating everything that the other side says. The intent is to disagree, and not to reach an understanding regarding the matter discussed. This type of discussion reflects a clash of personalities and egotistical behaviour.

3) Vāda - In this form of discussion, those on each side may take a position, but their main purpose is to understand the truth. Each side is willing to listen to the other and change their viewpoint to what seems reasonable. This type of discussion is appropriate for those who follow the discipline of vāk-tapas and who are open minded and ready to learn.

By practising vāk-tapas, one develops an alertness to one's speech and thoughts. One also becomes aware of one's process of thinking, which helps in developing clarity of thought. This clarity is a powerful aid to emotional growth.

Children's Corner

'Thoughtful Diwali' - by Srainya Arakal



DIWALI AT MY HOME

It is during our darkest moment of this pandemic situation that we must focus to see the light, Diwali is one such festival that gives me an opportunity to light my house with "light of goodness".

I am planning to celebrate Diwali at my "Home sweet Home" with my father and mother. I have painted 30 Diya's myself with colorful design and will be placing them in-front of God in a design of OM and light them, one diya in front of tulasi and few on the veranda and front of my house.

I have thought of a Rangoli floral design to be drawn in front of my house.

I will be wearing a new dress and jasmine flowers on my head.

I will help my mother to prepare paysam and prasadam to God. We will do our prayer to God for betterment of everyone.

by-Niharika Thada

Online Events

Gita Jayanti

Gita Jayanti each year brings for us a renewal of our commitment to the study and reflection of the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. After the beautiful Gita-Parayanam morning with Swamiji, Ammaji and Arulji conducted as an online event, the closing prayer-ritual was followed by Ammaji's message on the importance of the Daily study of the Gita to face the daily challenges of Life with peace and wisdom. The Launch of the weekly online Gita Classes along with monthly Gita-satsang was also announced for people to register.



Ashram Events

Silent and Radiant with Light was how Deepavali shone at Purna Vidya Foundation while a number of disciples and students joined the Online-Ashram space to receive Ammaji's Message on Lighting the Inner Light of Life on Deepavali.



Ashram Events

Deepavali sunset at Tapasyalayam, Himlayas!



Upcoming Events

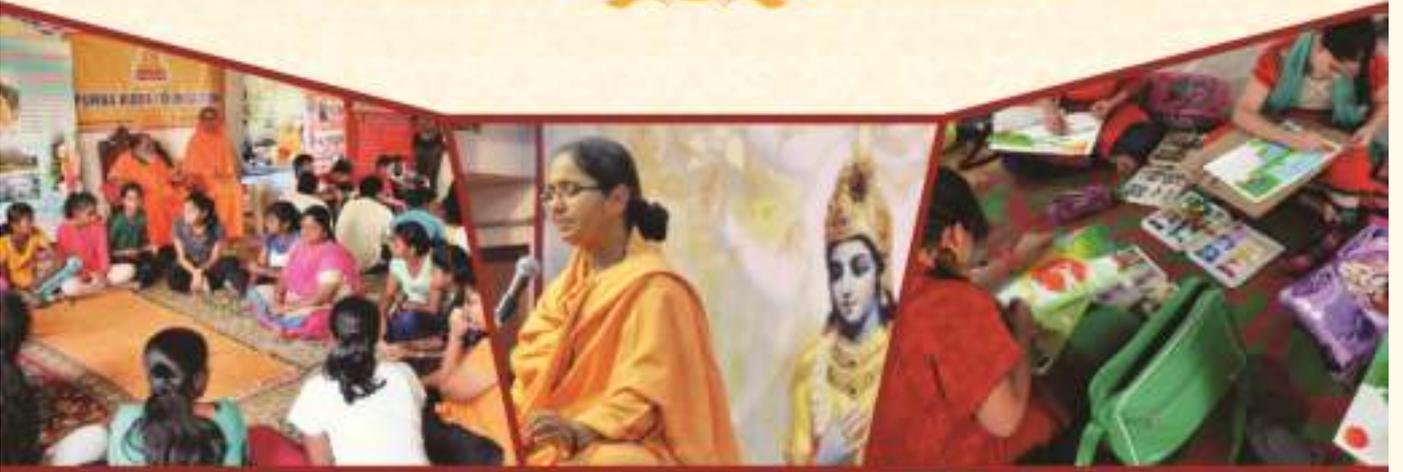


Purna Vidya Utsav 2020

An Annual Event for Cultural Awakening

WE'RE GOING ONLINE THIS YEAR !!!

November- December 2020
Via Zoom



More details at www.purnavidya.org

For participation Registration is free but compulsory
Last Date for Registration : 27 Nov, 2020

All Participants will be awarded
Participant Certificate

CATEGORY 1 (Classes 3 to 5)

1

Shloka Chanting, Sarada Shlokam
Competition on
1st & 2nd December 2020

e-Greeting card preparation for
Functions and Religious Festivals based on Sanatana Dharma.
Closing Date - 12th December 2020



CATEGORY 2 (Classes 6 to 8)

2

Shloka Chanting, Lingashtakam
Competition on
5th & 6th December 2020

e-Poster on
Environmental Protection
Closing Date - 12th December 2020



CATEGORY 3 (Classes 9 to 10)

3

Recitation of Bhagavad Gita Chapter 15
Competition on
8th & 9th December 2020

PowerPoint presentation
on Coronavirus awareness
Closing Date - 12th December 2020



CATEGORY 4 (Classes 11 to 12)

4

Recitation of Hanuman Chalisa
Competition on
10th & 11th December 2020

Short movie or short animation on History
of Pandemics in the world over the span of 25 years
Closing Date - 12th December 2020



For information and donation schemes contact



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Upcoming Events



VEDIC HERITAGE & CULTURE TEACHERS TRAINING

Part 9 - 12 (8 Sessions)



CURRICULUM

Introduction to Vedic Heritage & Culture (Parts 9 to 12, 8 sessions)		
Part 9 – Sanatana Dharma		Dec 8 Tue Dec 9 Wed, Dec 10 Thu
Part 10 – Human Development & Spiritual Growth	1:30 to 3:00 pm IST	Dec 15 Tue Dec 16 Wed, Dec 17 Thu
Part 11 – Vedic Knowledge		Dec 22 Tue, Dec 23 Wed
Part 12 – Introduction to the Bhagavad Gita		
Conclusion		

Register at : purnavidya.org/vhttp/

Download and install the Zoom app from Playstore or App Store

For information and donation schemes contact



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Message from Editorial Team

Namaste Dear Friends!

In today's context, one needs to be more cautious and mindful of vāk śuddhi as our communication mode has changed drastically through the use of social media. Let us recollect, reflect and examine our interactions with those around us. We have to ask ourselves if our interactions have been filled with anudvegakaram (verbal ahimsa), satyam (truth), priyam (love) and hitam (usefulness). These parameters are even more needed by people due to the greater sense of freedom of expression when using social media to express themselves. One needs to be mindful that they are not abusing this freedom.

The following filters can be considered when expressing oneself. They are:

- 1) Is what we are saying in keeping with what actually is?
- 2) Is what we are saying useful to the other person?
- 3) Is what we are saying causing pain to the other person?

If anything we say does not pass these three filters, it is not worth saying. May we keep these points in mind when we interact next and may our language be peaceful, gentle, soft and pleasant.

We hope that you have enjoyed this volume of our newsletter. We warmly welcome your feedback and contributions through purnavidya@gmail.com

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