



Chinmaya Mission San Jose



e-Newsletter

Chinmaya Vibhuti & Jnana Yagna

Volume 2 Issue 5

May-June 2007

Touched by the Master

With Hanumanji's Help



This is an excerpt from the book **"At Every Breath, A Teaching,"** by **Rudite Emir**

When Chinmaya Mission obtained a piece of land donated by a devotee in Sidhabari, Himachal Pradesh, India, Gurudev planned for the construction of an ashram there. He called for engineers and construction crew to begin the work. Once the contractors had reached the place and actually commenced the work, they found that it was completely inappropriate, even impossible to build on the site. The land was on a small hillock overlooking a vast open plain skirting the high Himalayan peaks. Strong hurricane-like winds could lift entire buildings away.

Sri Gurudev was passing that region one day and visited the site to evaluate progress. The contractors plainly told him about the impossibility of the project.

Gurudev remained long in meditation at the site. When he opened his eyes, he said, "We will have an ashram here. But first let us bring Sri Hanumanji. When the father sees his son, Vayu Bhagavan will calm down." And so it happened. Once the 40-foot Hanuman idol was installed, the winds stopped.

Jnana Yagna – Bhagavatam Canto 1

The wheels of our cars and our minds headed towards and stopped at the Jain Temple in Milpitas, our **Naimisaranya** for a week beginning April 9th, 2007. We listened enthralled, to the timeless and purifying stories of the Lord and his devotees from the first Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, related in lucid detail and utmost devotion by our Acharya Prabodh Chaitanya in his first Jnana yagna in San Jose.



Bhagavatam

The same theme and essence of the Vedas that is present in the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita is presented in a simplified form in the Bhagavatam. It gives an opportunity for the highest good to the greatest number; hence it is a Mahapurana!

The introduction to Srimad Bhagavatam is given by another Purana, the Padmapurana where the Mahathmyam or glory of Srimad Bhagavatam is described in the form of a dialogue between Suta Maharishi and a group of rishis led by sage Shaunaka. Two captivating stories are used to describe the glory of the Bhagavatam – the first is the story of a young mother bhakti and her two old unconscious sons who are revived after listening to a Bhagavatam Saptaha. This story illustrates the importance of all three- jnana, bhakti and vairagya for realization. The second story of Gokarna upakhyana, which shows the purifying abilities of this Mahapurana, concludes the Mahathmyam portion of the first canto.

The first canto of the Bhagavatam is also known as the *adhikari skandha* because it deals with the requisite qualifications of a good student whose ultimate objective as a human is to seek moksha or liberation. The Bhagavatam reveals the method to achieve this supreme goal. It is through listening to the Lord's glories and thus developing love for the Lord. As a result of this love, all doubts are removed, all knots become untied and all accumulated karmas ended.

We meet the great king Pareekshit, the grandson of Arjuna, who through his impeccable lineage, divine birth, and righteous actions shows us who an ideal student is. As his name suggests, he constantly enquires about the truth and hence becomes qualified to receive it.

He receives the divine knowledge of the Bhagavatam from none other than sage Sukadeva, the son of Veda Vyasa, who composed the Bhagavatam out of compassion for his fellow humans. Having received this knowledge in seven days, King Pareekshit is ready to cast off his mortal body. In symbolic terms we are all Pareekshits, because we also will die in seven days- from Monday through Sunday! This is what makes the Bhagavatam so relevant to us. With bhakti and satsang, we too can achieve greatness, even at the time of death.



The Jain Temple hall was filled with several hundred participants who listened to the Jnana Yagna lectures intently.



Many of them sponsored the Arati that was offered to Lord Krishna and to the teachers.



Every participant got an opportunity to meet the Acharya on the final day of the evening programs – April 13th – to offer respects and receive the Blessings and the Yagna Prasad.

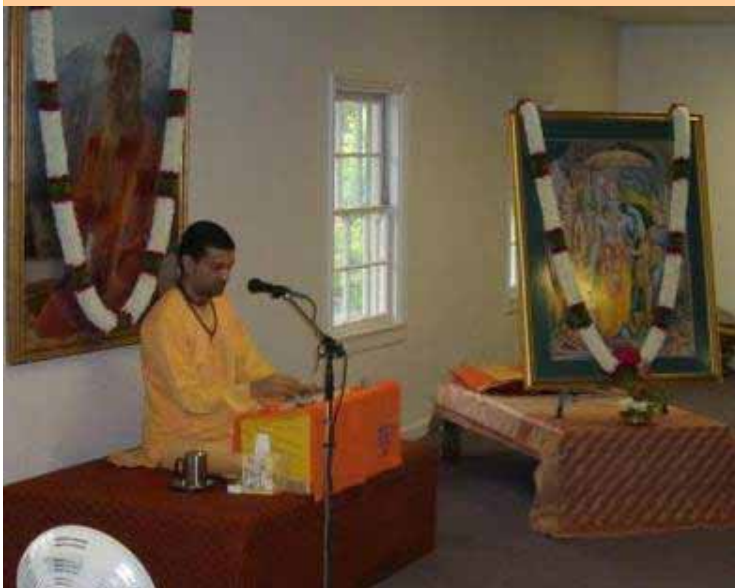


With the Grace of the Lord, Blessings of Pujya Gurudev, teachings from our Acharya Br. Prabodh Chaitanya and hard work of the volunteers below, the Jnana Yagna was very successful!



Jnana Yagna – Ashtavakra Gita Chapter 1

For five mornings starting from April 10th, our Acharya Br. Prabodh Chaitanya conducted another session of the Yagna, teaching the Ashtavakra Gita Chapter 1. These sessions were also well attended. The Ashtavakra Gita is a dialogue between Ashtavakra, the Guru and his disciple, the king-seer Janaka. This is an advanced text, and requires repeated listening and contemplation. The talks are available on MP3 CDs for those who missed the sessions, but want to study the text.



Verse 15

Addressing Arjuna as *Rishabha* meaning “bull”, someone who has enormous strength and nobility, Lord Krishna explains that when one has mental equipoise, s/he can go beyond the various experiences of life. Such an individual alone is fit for immortality-*amritatvam*. The bull, which is the vehicle of Lord Shiva, is also a symbol of righteousness-*dharma*. An individual with these qualities of a bull is strong and balanced in the face of joy and sorrow-*samadukha sukha*. He has patience and strength to remain balanced in the ups and downs of life. As mentioned in verse 13 such an individual is a wise man- *dheera purusha*.

A calm continued existence is a prerequisite for attaining the knowledge of the true Self. Such an existence with endurance will lead to dispassion and help individual to rise above the temporary vicissitudes of life, and seek the eternal, which is permanent. The Supreme is indicated here as *Purusha*-all complete. Thus, one who attains this knowledge of his true Self is all complete-*Purusha*. The method to seek the real Self is through studying scriptures-*shruti*, using logic-*yukti* and through experience-*anubhuti*. An individual is known as an enjoyer/sufferer-*bhoktha* when s/he is identified with this physical body and sense organs. Using logic-*yukti* one understands that the joys and sorrows are impermanent by nature. By experience-*anubhuti* we see that the identification with this physical body, desires, joys, sorrows etc., is only in the waking state that is when the intellect is awake. In deep sleep-*sushupti* all these experiences are not available. Hence they are impermanent, and our true Self is all bliss and beyond all the above experiences.

Verse 16

This is one of the powerful verses of the Bhagawad Gita. Here, Bhagawan distinguishes between what is unreal-*asat* which has no existence, and that which is real-*sat*, which never ceases to exist. The knowers of the truth have understood the difference between existence and non-existence.

The unreal-*Asat* is conditioned by space-*desha*, time-*kaala*, and objects-*vastu*. When an object exists in one place at a given time and not in another place at the same time, it is said to be conditioned in space. That which is true now, but was not true earlier in time nor will be true in future, is conditioned in time and when an object conditions another object, it is conditioning of the object. Taking our physical body as an example we see it is present here and not there so, it is conditioned in space. This physical body undergoes modifications-*vikaras*; it was an infant at one time, is youth now and will grow into adulthood, old age and finally result in death; hence it is conditioned in time. Finally this body is not somebody else's body or an object and hence it is conditioned as an object. As the body undergoes changes at every moment, so does the

mind. It constantly evolves and the intellect grows with it. Therefore these conditionings are finite, limited and constantly changing and are hence unreal-*asat*.

On the other hand *Sat* is that which defies all changes and remains the same in all periods of time: past, present and future. It is not conditioned in space, time or as an object. Thus, that which is changing, the objects are *asat* and the existence which is constant in all is *Sat*. This is deathlessness-*amrittvam*. This is the truth. This is “I” the Self.

Verse 17

In this verse Bhagawan goes on to describe the real-*Sat* to be everlasting by which all this-*idam* (the world of names and forms) is pervaded. None can cause destruction of this imperishable-*avinashi*, Infinite-*ananta*, and Changeless-*avikari*-the *Atma*.

Space, time and objects cannot destroy this *Sat* or *Atma*, it being imperishable. Not having any boundaries, it has no worldly or chronological limitations. Neither does it have any limitations of purpose or intent. *Sat* being the absolute substratum, is witness to all changes-*vikaras*. It continues to exist in the absence of the body, mind, intellect and the sense organs as seen in deep sleep-*sushupti*. Therefore, even *Ishwara* cannot destroy this *Sat*-the Self.

Verse 18

In this verse the Lord elaborates on what *asat* is. Bhagawan says, the indwelling Self-*Atma* is incomprehensible, changeless, eternal-*nithya* has no beginning and therefore it has no end. This *Atma*, which is the same in all, is enveloped by a physical form made of the five elements (space, air, fire, water and earth) – *pancha mahabhuta* and mixing of these five elements -- *panchikarana*. This physical form is finite, ever changing and has an end. Therefore, everything else other than *Atma* has an end-*antavanta*. This is unreal. It is *asat*.

The attainment of this physical body-*deha* is due to ignorance-*avidya* of the true Self. Ignorance does not have a beginning but it has an end. Desires-*vasanas* arise due to this ignorance. These desires prompt us to perform actions. The actions performed result in fruits thereby causing more desires. This vicious cycle is the cause for the birth of this physical body. Only when the true Self is known that the ignorance-*avidya* will end.

This true Self cannot be known through the organs of perception since it is not an object, rather it is the very subject-*aprameya*. Using scriptures as the means of knowledge-*Pramana*, *Atma* is indicated as one's own true Self. Therefore Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to fight the war since the whole or even partial destruction of the Supreme is not possible.

(Pramana -- scriptural authority that cannot be contradicted)