

धर्मसन्देश Dharma Sandesh

a quarterly newsletter of Bharatiya Mandir, Middletown, NY

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

नमस्ते Namaste

ॐ – OM. With the blessings and grace of the Supreme Lord (परमात्मा), we are proud to start our sixth year of the publication of Dharma Sandesh.

Summer is in full swing here. After the brutal winter, we welcome the warmer weather with open arms and full smiles. People are making vacation plans and children are happy that school is almost over.

Many children are graduating from high school and college, and they are excited to move on to new and exciting programs and endeavors in their lives. The Mandir, as it does every year, has arranged for a Puja by all the graduating students on Sunday, July 6. All graduates are invited to participate in the Puja and seek the blessings of Paramatma (परमात्मा).

We will be performing Akhand Ramayan Paath (अखण्ड रामायण पाठ) under the guidance of Swami Sri Madanji of Panchavati Ashram on June 28 and 29.

With the arrival of the holy month of Shravana (श्रावण / सावन) in August, we will celebrate Sri Vara-Maha-Lakshmi Vratam (श्री वरमहालक्ष्मी व्रतम्) on Friday, August 8, Raksha Bandhan (रक्षा बन्धन) on Sunday, August 10, and Sri Krishna Janmashtami (श्री कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी) on August 17. Then, on Friday, August 29, we will celebrate Sri Ganesh Chaturthi (श्री गणेश चतुर्थी).

In this issue, I write about Paramatma (परमात्मा), the Supreme Being and Lord Dattatreya. I also write about the festival of Raksha Bandhan.

We hope that readers will continue to enjoy reading these articles and gain some insight into our Sanatana

Dharma. Let us all pray to the Paramatma (परमात्मा) to shower His blessings upon all His children!!

Sincerely,

Your Editorial Board

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सुभाषिता Subhaashitaa

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

संरोहति अग्निना दग्धं वनं परशुना हतम् ।
वाचा दुरुक्तं बीभत्सं न संरोहति वाक् क्षतम् ॥

samrohati- agninaa-dagdham-vanam-parashunaa-hatam |
vaachaa-duruktam-bibhatsam-na-samrohati-vaak-kshatam||

A forest burnt down by a fire will eventually grow back. A forest cut down by an axe will eventually grow back. But wounds caused by harsh and inappropriate words will never heal.

Wounds caused to the trees in the forest by the fire or by the axe will heal and the forest will spring back to life eventually. Similarly, physical wounds on a person will heal with time. But the wounds caused by someone berating another person with inappropriate words will never heal. These are wounds caused on the psyche.

One should be careful when using words. It is said that the tongue has no bone to hold it straight; hence it moves in all directions without any thought. Many a time, we criticize another person so harshly that the person is wounded for life. We may not realize that it is a big deal and sometimes we even forget about it, but the affected person suffers forever.

We should think before we speak, especially when we are angry or upset, because at that time, our words are particularly sharp and severe. If we calm down before we speak, all will be better off in the long run.

Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara

साई प्रेरणा Baba's Teachings

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

Sri Satya Sai Baba spoke thus – “In the Solar System the Earth is a miniscule entity. Asia is small in comparison to the Earth. Within Asia, India is just one country and within India, the district of Anantapur is still smaller; and Prasanthi Nilayam within Anantapur is tinier in comparison. Within Prasanthi Nilayam, you perhaps stay in one room. Then, why should you have an ego that is bigger than the Universe in its totality? This is totally an act of delusion, arising from ignorance. In fact, a great scholar, devotee and role model on the path of spirituality from ancient yore, Bhartruhari stated, “Out of ignorance I behaved like an elephant in rut thinking that there is no one superior to me. Because of the Divine Vision of sages and their teachings, I learnt the truth. Just as a disease can be cured by taking appropriate medicine, the fickle mind can be subdued by the Darshan and the teachings of sages and scholars.” - *Divine Discourse, 'My Dear Students', Vol 2, Ch 10, Jun 26, 1989*

Contributed by Dr. Vijaya Dasari

ज्ञानविहार JnanaVihara

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

Paramatman (परमात्मन्)

Paramatma (परमात्मा) or Paramatman (परमात्मन्) refers to the Supreme Being, the Supreme Self, the Supreme Soul, or the Supreme Spirit. Parama (परम) = supreme; Atma (आत्मा) = soul, self, or spirit. Paramatma is also known as Parabrahman (परब्रह्मन्) or Brahman (ब्रह्मन्) (not to be confused with Lord Brahma, the creator, one of the Trinity Gods).

The Pranava (प्रणव) sound and symbol Om (ॐ) is used to represent Paramatman or Parabrahman. The Upanishads declare ॐ इत्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म - meaning the single syllable Om is Brahman (*Kathopanishad, Chandogya Upanishad, Mundaka Upanishad, Bhagavad Gita*).



Paramatman is pure spirit or pure consciousness, with no material forms, qualities, traits, or attributes. Hence Paramatman is known as Nirguna

Brahman (निर्गुण ब्रह्मन्) – the one without any gunas (गुण) or attributes. Paramatman is Nirakara Brahman (निराकार ब्रह्मन्) – the one without any forms. Paramatman can also be known as Pure Truth, Pure Consciousness, and Pure Knowledge.

On the other hand, the terms Bhagavan (भगवान) and Ishvara (ईश्वर) refer to the Sakara Brahman (साकार ब्रह्मन्) and Saguna Brahman (सगुण ब्रह्मन्) – the one with a form and attributes. When we refer to Lord Vishnu or Lord Shiva or Goddess Durga, we are referring to the Brahman with form and attributes. This way, we can relate to and form a personal connection with the Supreme Being.

The term Paramatman is found in several places in the Upanishads. According to Advaita (अद्वैत – non-dualism of Adi Shankaracharya (आदि शङ्कराचार्य)), Ishvara is Brahman associated with Maya (माया – illusion) in its excellent aspect. As the empirical reality it is the determinate Brahman; Ishvara has no reality apart from Brahman. Bhagavan or Ishvara is the Paramatma or Brahman.

The Swetaashwatara Upanishad (श्वेताश्वतर उपनिशत्) developed the conception of a personal God, who is Bhagavan or Ishvara. The Kathopanishad (कठोपनिशत्) states that never has any man been able to visualize Paramatman by means of sight, heart, imagination, or mind. The Anandamaya-kosha (आनन्दमयकोश) – Seat (or Core) of Supreme Bliss – is the Ishvara of the Upanishads.

Gaudapada (गौडपाद), the Guru of the Guru (Grand Guru) of Adi Shankaracharya, called duality Maya, and non-duality as the only reality. Maya (illusion) is the Cosmic Nescience (अविद्या Avidya or ignorance) that has in it the plurality of subject and object and, therefore, Ishvara is organically bound with the world. Beyond the Prana or Ishvara is the state of the Infinite Limitless Brahman, which is why in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Chapter VII, shloka 24, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna –

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥

“not knowing my unsurpassable, imperishable, immutable, undecaying and supreme nature, the ignorant people (those with poor understanding) think of Me, the Unmanifest, as having manifested and assumed a finite form through birth.”

Paramatman and Jivatman:

The Upanishads talk of two different souls – the Paramatman and the Jivatman (जीवात्मन्) or Jivatma. Jivatman = Jiva + Atman.

Both the Paramatman and the Jivatman, being transcendental to the material energy (matter), are called Atma. Both have this term “Atma = pure consciousness or self” in them. When this “I” is seen to have a sense of limitation and a sense of enjoyer-ship and doer-ship, then such an “I” is referred to as the Jivatman.

A Jiva is someone who sees himself to be limited by space and time – he is at one place alone and not everywhere, and his existence is, at a particular time, alone and not at all times. When these senses of limitations are inquired upon and are realized to be an error, then this sense of limitation drops and the same “I” is seen to be free from these limitations of time and space. At that time, this very “I” is referred to as the Paramatman.

“Param” means that which is free from all limitations of time, space and objectivity, that is that which is there at all times, in all places, and in all objects.

Thus, the word “atma” which is the common denominator in both these words shows that God is always realized as the very subjective essence of a person and not as some objective reality.

The Rig Veda (ऋग्वेद) has a very famous mantra (I.164.20) that was revealed to Rishi Deerghatamah Auchatyah (ऋषि दीर्घतमाः औचथ्यः). This mantra has been borrowed by Mundaka Upanishad (मुण्डक उपनिषत्) in mantra III.1.1. The mantra is as follows:

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वन्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥

For many centuries, many scholars have attempted to translate and interpret this mantra from their respective viewpoints, for example, Advaita (non-dualism) philosophy, Dvaita (dualism) philosophy, Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) philosophy, etc. I will give a brief translation of this holy mantra and then attempt to give the different variations of the interpretations of the mantra.



The translation of the mantra is as follows:

“There are two beautiful birds sitting on the same branch of the same tree. These two birds are companions and friends. Of these two birds, one bird is enjoying the fruits of the tree

and the other bird is just witnessing everything that is going on.”

The first bird is the Jivatman, who is eating the fruits of its own Karma. The second bird is Paramatman, who is the witness (साक्षी) of its friend’s actions. The tree is the insentient Universe, which is Samsara (संसार), Maya (माया) or Avidya (अविद्या) component of existence.

Interpretation according to Advaita: According to Adi Shankaracharya, who propounded Advaita (अद्वैत non-dualism), Jivatman and Paramatman are one and the same; there is no difference between the two. In his famous treatise Viveka-Chudamani (विवेकचूडामणि - the Jewel of Discrimination – 580 shlokas), Adi

Shankaracharya writes the essence of Advaita in half a shloka:

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ।

Brahman is Satya (Truth); The Universe is unreal; The Jiva is Brahman itself, not different from or beyond Brahman.

Brahman (the Absolute Paramatman), who is Changeless Existence, is the only Truth. The world (jagat) is only relatively real because it is constantly changing. Jagat is united with Brahman, but it seems fleeting and unreal because of the superimposition of Maya on the Jiva, which become limiting conditions. The Jiva identifies itself with the body, mind and senses (and becomes filled with ego and the “I” complex) when it is deluded by Avidya or Maya. When Brahma-Jnana (ब्रह्मज्ञान – knowledge of the Absolute) dawns upon the Jiva through destruction of Avidya, then it is freed from its individuality and finitude (limitations) and it realizes its essential Sat-chit-ananda (सत्-चित्-आनन्द Absolute Truth – Absolute Consciousness – Absolute Bliss) nature and becomes one with Paramatman.

Just as a bubble on the ocean surface seems to be in its own world, but becomes one with the ocean the moment it bursts, so does the Jivatman realize its unity with Paramatman and become one when it gets knowledge of Brahman.

So, in the case of the two birds, the first bird (Jiva or ego) seems engrossed in eating the fruits (of its karma) while the second bird (Paramatman) witnesses the actions without any interference. When the first bird realizes the futility of its engrossed eating of the fruits of its karma and understands its true nature through knowledge, it turns to the other bird (Paramatman). Ego vanishes and the Jiva becomes one with Paramatman.

Interpretation according to Dvaita: According to Sri Madhvacharya (श्री मध्वाचार्य), who propounded the Dvaita (द्वैत - dualism) philosophy, Jivatman and Paramatman are two distinct entities and realities, never becoming one. Jivatman is *chit* (चित्) – the sentient, and Paramatman is Ishvara. Both have the same attributes, and Jivatman is always dependent on

Paramatman, but is always distinct from Him. Both these birds are present together on the same branch of the same tree, which is *achit* (अचित्) – the insentient or the gross Avidya (अविद्या) component of existence.

Interpretation according to Vishishtadvaita:

According to Sri Ramanujachara (श्री रामानुजाचार्य), who propounded the Vishishtadvaita (विशिष्टाद्वैत - qualified non-dualism) philosophy, Ishvara (who is Vishnu or Narayana) is the only Truth, but is characterized by multiplicity. Ishvara is the Universal Soul of the pan-organistic body of sentient beings (Jivas) and the insentient Universe (Jagat).

Ishvara (Vishnu or Narayana or Krishna) is the Supreme Cosmic Spirit, who maintains complete control over the Universe and all the sentient beings, which together form the pan-organistic body of Ishvara. The triad of Ishvara along with the universe and the sentient beings is Brahman, which signifies the completeness of existence. Ishvara is the substantive part of Brahman, while Jivas and Jagat are its modes (also secondary attributes), and Kalyana Gunas (कल्याण गुण - auspicious attributes) are the primary attributes.

Ishvara is Parabrahman endowed with innumerable auspicious qualities (Kalyana Gunas). Ishvara is perfect, omniscient, omnipresent, incorporeal, independent, the creator of the universe, its active ruler and also its eventual destroyer. He is causeless, eternal and unchangeable, and is yet the material and the efficient cause of the universe and sentient beings.

When Ishvara is thought of as the indweller of all beings, he is referred to as the Paramatman, or the innermost self of all beings. When Ishvara is thought of as the all-encompassing and the residence of all beings, that is, all beings reside in Ishvara, he is referred to as the Parama-Purusha (परमपुरुष).

Vishishtadvaita maintains that although Jivatma is an integral component of Brahman and they are inseparable (similar to Advaita), Brahma-Jnana (True Knowledge of the Absolute) – the identification of Atman with Brahman is only an intermediate step in the self-realization process. Only Bhakti (भक्ति devotion) can lead to the realization of Paramatman as

the indwelling God and that leads to Mukti (मुक्ति) or liberation of the Jiva.

Sources: Upanishads; Srimad Bhagavad Gita; Wikipedia; Shankaracharya.org; advaita.org;

Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara

Raksha Bandhan (रक्षा बन्धन)

The Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan celebrates the immaculate and chaste love and affection between brothers and sisters. Raksha Bandhan (*Sanskrit* for “the knot of protection”) falls on the Full Moon Day (पूर्णिमा Purnima = Full Moon) of the fifth Hindu month of Shraavana. This festival is observed by Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs. On this day, the sister chants a prayer and ties a sacred thread called *Rakhi* (राखी) on her brother’s wrist, and the brother, in turn, promises to protect his sister and take care of her under any and all circumstances.

Raksha Bandhan finds prominent mention in the holy Hindu scriptures. In the *Mahabharata*, Queen Draupadi ties the Rakhi to Lord Krishna and the Lord protects Draupadi in her time of need. In the Puranas, there are other references to Raksha Bandhan and the tying of the Rakhi between Lord Yama, the God of Death, and his sister, Yamuna, the holy river.



Raksha Bandhan is primarily celebrated by brothers and sisters, but over the centuries, it has evolved to celebrate the filial

affection between men and women who are biologically unrelated but who consider the other person as a brother/sister. According to one legendary narrative, when Alexander the Great invaded India in 326 BCE, his wife Roxana (*Bactrian*: Rokhsana or Roshanak) sent a Rakhi to King Porus (*Sanskrit*: Puru; *Greek*: Poros), asking him not to harm her husband in battle. In accordance with tradition, Porus, a Hindu Rajput king, gave full respect to the *Rakhi*. On the battlefield, when Porus was about to deliver a final blow to Alexander, he saw the Rakhi on his wrist and restrained himself from attacking Alexander personally.

Many Hindu Rajput queens have sent Rakhi to Mughal kings addressing them as “brother” and establishing familial ties and peace between kingdoms.

Some women make their own Rakhi with simple cotton thread, while other women buy decorated silk or cotton Rakhis. These days, there are Rakhis with gold and silver threads, beautifully crafted



embroidered sequins, and studded with semi-precious stones. Whatever be the type or cost of the Rakhi, the underlying emotions are the same.

On the day of Raksha Bandhan, the sister performs Puja (worship) to the Lord and then applies a red Tilak (vermilion mark) on her brother’s forehead. She then ties the Rakhi on her brother’s right wrist and chants a prayer for his health, prosperity, happiness, and general well-being. The brother then makes a solemn pledge to care for his sister and protect her always, in every circumstance.

The sister then feeds her brother with sweets and savories. The brother, in turn, gives gifts to the sister.

In 2014, Raksha Bandhan falls on Sunday, August 10.

Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara

Lord Dattatreya (श्री दत्तात्रेय)

Lord Dattatreya is known as Gurudeva Datta. He is the Guru of all Gurus. He is the Supreme Guru. As an incarnation of the Paramatma or Supreme Spirit, Lord Dattatreya came down to earth to spread the universality of true religion. He descended on this earth to establish Satya (सत्य - the universal truth), Rta (ऋत - the cosmic order), and Dharma (धर्म - the perennial principles) in all their entirety.

Lord Dattatreya is an ancient incarnation of the Trinity Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva. He is a complete and perfect manifestation of the three primordial energies and the three primary Gunas (qualities) of Sattva (positivity, goodness and wholesomeness), Rajas (passion, energy and movement), and Tamas (negativity, lethargy, darkness and ignorance). He

encompasses all these Gunas and, at the same time, transcends all these Gunas.

Lord Dattatreya is an Avadhuta (अवधूत), the Supreme Philosopher and ever-anchored in Spirit. He is Avadhuta, he who has shaken off from himself all worldly feelings and obligations. He is dispassionate and detached from the worldly goings-on and assumes the form of a total and supreme recluse.

Lord Dattatreya incarnated on this earth as the son of the great sage Maharshi Atri (महर्षि अत्रि) and his wife, the lady Anasuya (देवी अनसूया). "Datta" = "given" and "Aatreya" = "son of Atri". Therefore, "Datta + Aatreya" means "given as the son of Atri".

The Shaandilya Upanishad (शाण्डिल्य उपनिषत्) (3.2) states: What is the reason for the Supreme Lord to be referred to as Dattatreya? There has to be a reason. The great Maharshi Atri performed severe penance to appease the Supreme Lord and beget a son. Pleased with the Maharshi's penance, the radiant and illustrious Supreme Lord, out of His own accord, donated Himself to Maharshi Atri as the fruit of the sage's austere penance. That blessing emerged as a son to Maharshi Atri and his wife Anasuya. That is why the Supreme Lord is known by the name of Dattatreya.

The form of Lord Dattatreya



Symbolically, Lord Dattatreya is depicted with three heads, six arms, and standing under an Audumbara (औदुम्बर fig) tree. He is surrounded by a cow and four dogs, who are his constant companions. In His hands He holds a Shankha (शङ्ख conch),

Chakra (चक्र discus), Damaru (डमरू drum), Trishula (त्रिशूल trident), JapaMala (जपमाला rosary), and Kamandalu (कमण्डलु water bowl). He wears His hair

in matted locks and wears a tiger-skin as His only garment. His body is smeared with Bhasma (भस्म holy ash). The three heads of Lord Dattatreya represent the three primordial energies of तेजस् - Tejas (brightness, illumination, knowledge and fiery energy representing Lord Brahma), ओजस् - Ojas (lustre, vigour, vitality and action representing Lord Vishnu), and तपस् - Tapas (religious austerity, stringency of penance, severe meditation and sacred learning representing Lord Shiva). The three heads also represent the सृष्टि - Srishti (creative energies), स्थिति - Sthithi (sustaining energies) and लय - Laya (annihilating energies) associated with the Trinity – Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva respectively.

Lord Dattatreya holds the Shankha and Chakra representing the aspects of Lord Vishnu, the Damaru and Trishula representing the aspects of Lord Shiva, and the Japamala and Kamandalu representing the aspects of Lord Brahma.

The Shankha (conch) is used to sound the ॐ (OM) – the primordial sound and the first word of the Hindu scriptures. The rotating Chakra (discus) is a round circle with no beginning and no end, and like the universe it is constantly moving and in a state of flux. Holding the discus in His hand, Lord Dattatreya is the controller of time though He is beyond the cycles of time – past, present and future. The Lord uses the Chakra to destroy the karmic bonds of His devotees.

The Damaru (drum) is used to awaken those souls who are still sleeping in the slumber of ignorance. The Trishula (trident) indicates that Lord Dattatreya has transcended the three Gunas of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and He uses the Trishula to vanquish the ego and ignorance of all creatures.

The Japamala (rosary) is symbolic of yogic energy and prosperity. While the Lord uses the Japamala to liberate one soul after another when that soul contemplates on Him with true devotion, it is also an indication for devotees to constantly chant the Lord's name in order to seek emancipation from this illusory world. The Kamandalu (water bowl) holds the nectar of pure wisdom with which the Lord revives the souls thirsty for knowledge, liberating them from the endless cycle of births and deaths.

The cow represents Kamadhenu (कामधेनु), the all-wish-fulfilling celestial cow and the Audumbara tree represents Kalpa-Vriksha (कल्पवृक्ष), the all-wish-fulfilling celestial tree. Both these elements grant true devotees fulfilment of all their wishes and desires. Lord Dattatreya is always found under the shade of the Audumbara tree next to the divine Kamadhenu.

The four dogs surrounding Lord Dattatreya represent the four Vedas – Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda – watchdogs of the Ultimate Truth and the repositories of Spiritual Wisdom.

The tiger skin symbolizes potential energy. Lord Dattatreya, wearing a tiger skin, illustrates the idea that He is the source of the creative energy that remains in potential form during the dissolution of the universe. Of His own divine will, the Lord activates the potential form of the creative energy to project the universe in endless cycles.

Lord Dattatreya is दिगम्बर - Digambara – the one with an unclad body. The unclad body symbolizes the transcendental aspect of the Lord. Since most things reduce to ashes when burned, ashes symbolize the physical universe. The ashes on the unclad body of the Lord signify that Dattatreya is the source of the entire universe that emanates from Him, but He transcends the physical phenomena and is not affected by it.

Lord Dattatreya is the master of yoga. The three matted locks on the head of the Lord convey the idea that integration of the physical, mental and spiritual energies is the ideal of yoga. Lord Dattatreya is glorified as the upholder of Dharma. The Sattvata Samhita (12.109-114) states: He is Jnana-Murti (ज्ञानमूर्ति), the form which personifies spiritual wisdom. He directs men and Gods along the path of spiritual progress. He protects the Vedas and regulates the conduct of people.

The philosophy and teachings of Lord Dattatreya

Lord Dattatreya was a great philosopher. He had several esteemed disciples, including Lord Parashurama (the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu), Patanjali (the author of the Yoga Sutras) and the thousand-armed Kartaveerya Arjuna, the king of the Yadus. The Markandeya Purana (मार्कण्डेय पुराण) states that Lord Dattatreya taught Patanjali the

Ashtanga Yoga (अष्टाङ्ग योग - the eightfold path of Yoga). Patanjali later coded the works into the Yoga Sutras (योगसूत्र).



Lord Dattatreya wrote the Avadhuta Gita (अवधूत गीता), a text of eight chapters on the Advaita (non-dualistic) Vedanta (philosophy). Lord Dattatreya sang this Gita spontaneously after purifying Himself in meditation and becoming absorbed in the uninterrupted bliss of Brahman (ब्रह्मन् – Supreme Consciousness). The Avadhuta Gita guides one to seek God and immerse oneself in God-consciousness. It is the highest knowledge on the Self and is meant for the seekers of self-realization.

The aim of life is to realize the Absolute Truth and to be eternally free. Purification of the heart is essential to this realization. Practice of Dharma (duty, virtue, righteousness), fasting, devotion to God, undertaking pilgrimages, reading of holy and sacred scriptures, breathing exercises, and other such religious practices are meant to purify the heart. Once the heart is purified and remains constantly pure, then the uninterrupted darshan (दर्शन – vision) of the Supreme Self is possible.

Constant chanting of the Lord's name, studies of the sacred scriptures, and pilgrimages all inspire people and create a strong determination and faith in them to see and realize God. Ultimately, it is the faith and true knowledge that brings about the realization of the Absolute Truth. The Avadhuta Gita contains this knowledge in its purest form.

Lord Dattatreya's primary teaching was God-consciousness. One must eternally strive to achieve it. Until one realizes God and becomes one in God-

consciousness, one must not give up, one must not stop, or break one's efforts in this path of realization. There should not be any doubt about the divinity of the Supreme Spirit. Faith and true knowledge are the means to achieving this realization.

The primary tenets of the Dattatreya tradition thus are:

1. Everyone should know oneself first and one should know one's reality, which is Paramatman / Brahman.
2. One should realize the relationship between God, man and creation, and the underlying kinship, unity and oneness of these three entities. Brahman is immanent and the all-pervading reality in all matter. It is the origin, support and sustenance of all.
3. To obtain this vision and discern this Truth, one should conquer one's ego through Yoga and renunciation.
4. The Guru's grace is indispensable. One has to surrender oneself totally and unreservedly at the feet of the Guru. His grace awakens Jnana (ज्ञान – knowledge) by which one can recognize the reality of Brahman, which is the real Self of all beings.

In addition, one should:

1. Have purity of thought, word and deed.
2. Chant the Lord's name and meditate on it.
3. Have compassion and love for all beings.
4. Render selfless service at the feet of the Guru and surrender completely and unconditionally.

In the Srimad Bhagavata Purana (श्रीमद् भागवत पूराण), the Supreme Lord Krishna (श्री कृष्ण) narrates the above to His disciple Uddhava (उद्धव). The primary teaching that arises from this discourse is God-consciousness. One must always fix his mind on God, meditate on Brahman, and not let anything or anyone lead him astray from that path. One should be completely detached from all worldly things and this physical body. Such a man is truly liberated and truly happy. Jai Guru Deva Datta!! जय गुरु देव दत्त !!

Sources: Shandilya Upanishad, Sri Markandeya Purana, Sri Guru Charitra.

This article has appeared in Dharma Sandesh before.

Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara

Special Puja by all 2014 Graduates

A Special Puja for the **2014 graduates of our community** will be held on Sunday, July 6, 2014 at 10:00 am at the Mandir. All the graduates (High School, College & Professional Schools) are invited to join. Please call Chitra Chauhan ph. (845)238-1800 or Bhautika Patel ph. (914)443-4639, if you plan to participate. If any Graduate cannot participate, their parents can sit for the Puja. A Puja Thali will be reserved for them. Please pass the word around.

General Body Meeting

The General Body Meeting of the India Temple Foundation, Inc. will be held on Sunday, July 6, 2014 after the Bhajans. The Annual Report of the activities of the Foundation will be presented for approval. Election for the seats on the Board of Directors will be held.

Some Upcoming Special Mandir Events

Akhand Ramayana Paath	Saturday, June 28 to Sunday, June 29
Puja by all graduates	Sunday, July 6
Sri Guru Purnima	Saturday, July 12
Sri Vara-Maha-Lakshmi Vratam	Friday, August 8
Raksha Bandhan	Sunday, August 10
Sri Krishna Janmashtami	Sunday, August 17
Nand Mahotsav	Sunday, August 24
Sri Ganesh Chaturthi	Friday, August 29

Mrs. Reeta and Mr. Rakesh Patel have generously sponsored the printing of copies of this issue of Dharma Sandesh. Devotees may note that all the writing of the content and the editing of the newsletter are strictly voluntary.

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

Dharma Sandesh Newsletter Editorial Board:

Dr. Narasim Banavara

Dr. Padma Sundaram