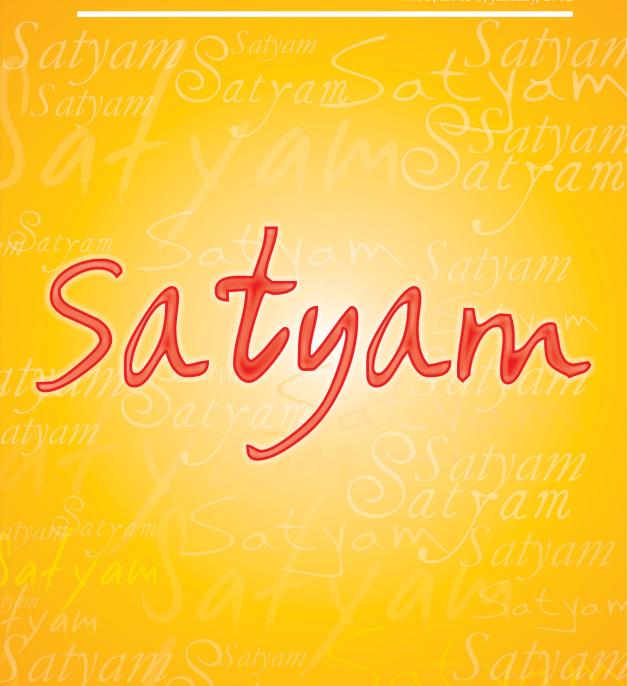
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nanagni

Vol 3, Issue 1, January, 2012



Simple, practical and experiential is the way of this gentle, unassuming sage from Annakara, Kerala. For Her Holiness, truth, dharma, ahimsa and purity have been the pillars of Her messaage.

In conversations, discourses and Upadesams, adherence to dharma has always been an important and essential teaching. With a soul dyed ochre this Jagathguru's constant refrain is – God is always on the side of dharma. To Her devotee, listener, followers and admirers, one thing is certain – dharma and its importance in dayto-day life is a timeless gurūpadeśam.

Dharma, Her timeless gurūpadeśam





With the understanding of these four principles, Dharma, Truth, Ahimsa and Purity, if you run your home, if you run your life, life will not be hard at all. Especially since with the grace of God, the blessings of God, and his protection nothing can go wrong.

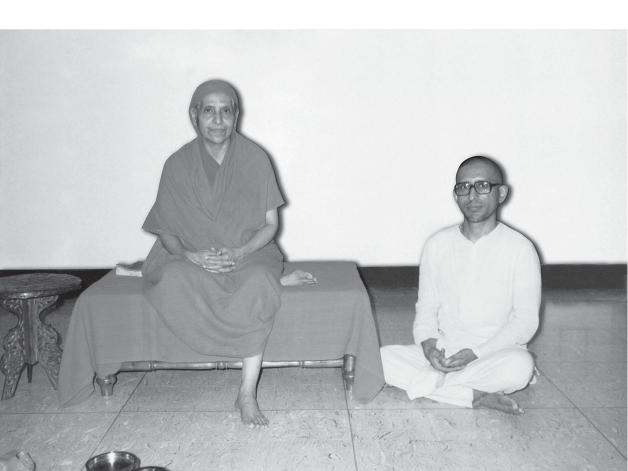
Her Holiness TheSathguru Swami Gnanananda Sarasvathi



The power to stand up for Satyam

What makes one a good student of life? Not merely the knowledge of the Sastras, Samhithas, Vedas and more. In addition to this, one needs to cultivate the traits of humility, obedience and the willingness to listen. While this is one part, the second and more difficult one is the part where one needs to 'act' on what has been seen, heard, taught and learnt. When both the parts are combined you get a true sishya. Sri Vishnu Mohan after whom the Foundation is named has more than ever demonstrated this. That with knowledge must come action. With life must come vinayam. All with an eternal allegiance to dharma and gurubhakthi. Thus will come the power to stand up for Satyam.

He did it in every waking moment. Righteous, pure and dharmic was he. This issue of Jnanagni is a reminder to us all.



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Satyam Viśiṣtādvaita Perspective T. K. Parthasarathy

The term 'Dharma' can be said to mean the path of realization of the symbiosis between self and the universe. We are a part of the universe and we share a symbiotic reciprocal relationship with it. The universe sustains us and we in turn have to sustain the universe. This realization and its manifestation in action is dharma.

Buddhist Concept of Truth and Reality 90 Phramaha Somphong Unyo

The purpose of human life is to work to become what we really are. Will, Wisdom and Love is our real nature. This real nature needs to be expressed through our personality of thought, desire and action. Love should inspire Will and Will must direct the Wisdom and Wisdom then enables one to act according to his own Dharma.

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A historical contextualization of Dharma in the Sangam literature. This article in Tamil with its well-researched and reasoned approach will have knowers of dharma reaching out to new windows in history.

Saint Tyāgarāja's71concept of 'Satya'Dr. M. Premeela Gurumurthy

Dharma, though emerged from *Pūrvābhaga* of Veda or *Pūrvamīmāmsa*, comes a long way, nourished and modified, reaches this present age which serves as a central chord on which this medley of existence is woven. Dharma can be equated with the all-powerful entity that controls this chaotic universe. Our scriptures are full of eulogy for dharma.

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"Strike off thy fetters" is a clarion call to us from one of India's greatest *Sanyāsins*, Swami Vivekananda. "The Song of the Sanyasin" is a lyrical poem that flows with inspiration from the first line to the last and is sustained by immense power and grandeur. *Sanyāsa dharma* explained.

Discovering Satya -Truth 116

S. Kulandaisamy

The expression dharma is well known to many of us and is being used in several senses. According to some it is used in the sense of one's own 'duty' - karma. Others equate dharma with '*ahimsā*' (non-cruelty) in accordance with the statement *ahimsā paramo dharmaḥ*. Some others hold that truth, that is, satya is dharma. Thus each and every system or faith holds different views regarding dharma.

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Smt. Anuradha Sridhar

We have to interact with each other, with the animals, with the trees and with the world. Relating is living, one cannot live in isolation. Therefore one has to always respond to what one relates to, one's responses can be right or wrong based upon common norms called as Order of dharma. In a given situation, what is proper and needs to be done is dharma.

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Mrs. Radha Burnier All *Darśanas* adhere to the concept of dharma, though they differ in detail. The thousand names of the Lord contain five names for the Lord Viṣṇu with dharma. Moreover dharma is one of the or rather the first goal and objective of all human endeavours according to Hinduism. It is a *puruṣārtha*.

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Satyam – a pillar of our life

raj mohan tella

Satyam or truth is a transformational thought.

In its womb are resting many a challenge faced by humankind. It is also a weighty word with several descriptions. Thinkers, researchers, philosophers, seers and more have put forth a rich treasure house of interpretations. It is, if one were to take some editorial liberty also a way of life and a lofty ideal. When one hears words such as, " live a good clean life", it has taken the form of an exhortation. Inherent in that advice is also resting Satyam? Truthfulness is also cleanness. Purity, a life lived in adherence to dharma, aren't these too descriptions, rather logical extensions of the deep-rooted concept of Satyam?

Truth when rendered as 'Satyam' for the oriental mind gains even more significance. History, folklore and the exponents of sacred texts on one hand and the wisdom that has been passed through the spoken word on the other, have expounded the eternal relevance of Satyam. In individual lives, and in society's stated laws of endearment and community living, Satyam has always played a pivotal role. While we all know the meaning and import of Satyameva Jayate, the following part in that line of verse makes the thought of Satyam even more forceful and an absolute essential - Satyameva Jayate Naanritam. 'Naanritam' meaning 'not falsehood'. Devoid of ambiguity, it is a clarion call for living a life of principles and of the highest standards of integrity and dharma.

> सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः । येनाक्रमन्त्यृषयो ह्याप्तकामा यत्र तत् सत्यस्य परमं निधानम् ॥

satyameva jayate naanritam satyena pantha vitato devayanah yena aakramanti rshayo hi aaptkaamaa yatra tat satyasya paramam nidhaanam

It is, we are all aware from the Mundaka Upanishad. But for many of us seekers of the meaning of Satyam, it is perhaps the quintessential breath of life. An ongoing journey of self-discovery and *jivan* dharma. In fact, Satyam when practiced is the fundamental framework of endearment and living in harmony. Satya Yuga, while we are familiar with, Satyam also seems to be a universal emotion and aspiration. "Pravda vítìzí" roughly meaning ("Truth Prevails") is the motto of the Czech Republic and its predecessor Czechoslovakia.

Truth (satyam) is all of humankind's foundation.

Not dwelling more on this common understanding and aspirations, let us shift focus and understand what academicians, philosophers, seers and saints have been telling us about? For a moment, let us also be agnostics, rationalists, humanists and delink Satyam (truth) from its canonical and ethical context. Merely view it as righteousness, honesty, justice, or as a simple social agreement between individuals and society. This may actually and interestingly lead us to a variety of concepts and paradigms. To bring all of these facets under one umbrella, mesh them into a self-transformational mantra for proper living is the effort of this issue of Jnanagni (the third in the series). Its theme 'Satyam' to many readers may come across as being an obvious and well understood concept. Temper this understanding with expansiveness and this issue of Jnanagni will shine through with novel insights. It brings to the reader expositions from a rich assortment of scholars, academicians, legal luminaries, Vedic pundits and commentators on public life.

While you take in every word of this collection, my mind veers towards that unassuming and gentle sage of Annakara who has a God-gifted knack of simplifying the loftiest of truths into simple understandable thoughts. Her Holiness The Sathguru Gnanananda Sarasvathi of Sri Gnana Advaitha Peetam, Chennai, says

"Right makes might, might is not right. It may appear to be so but ultimately Truth will triumph. Satyameva Jayate Naanritham. Truth alone triumphs not untruth (or falsehood). But it does not happen in a day, the Pandavas had to go through so many years of suffering. But they held on to Dharma with tenacity and ultimately they triumphed. Similarly we must hold on to Dharma, with all the strength we have, regardless of the temptations or threats held out to us for not following dharma. Then slowly we will see the victory of Dharma in our lives."

Simple and revealing it is perhaps a clarion call to each one of us to evolve from readers into doers. Truth and its practice need patience and forbearance. Openness and humility. Having said that, let us read, discover, and understand the essential import of Satyam. But not halt our strides merely with intellectual engagement. Let us also goad our minds and guide our actions to be truthful and dharmic. That perhaps in my opinion is the eternal quest of mankind's to decode the meaning of Satyam. If we understand it, perhaps sooner than later it will become a pillar of our life.

Srisathguru arpanamasthu

January 2012

Value of Truth

Dr. Goda Venkateswara Sastry

Truth is an abstract thing and thus understanding the same is very difficult. One can easily perceive an error when it exists on the surface and can easily be seen. Truth on the other hand lies in the depth and so is very difficult to perceive. Hence one has to thus make effort to find what Truth is. Certain standards and rules to judge the accuracy of Truth are seen in standard works. The first parameter is the fact of existence. A True thing or object never gets contradicted. If contradicted, it ceases to be Truth. The second is the theory of correspondence. When a claim of an individual corresponds with the real object, then it is taken as Truth. It is like Mount Kailas is in Himalayas. Every one who goes to the Himalayas can find the Mount Kailas there. Thus an idea corresponding with the reality is taken as Truth. The third is consistency. That is the reason why the same question is put many a time to an accused at different times and in different ways and if the answer is consistent then it is taken as true.

Truth leads one to the Absolute. This has been explained by the story of Nachiketas in Mahābhārata and Kathopanishad. According to the Anuśāsana Parva of Mahābhārata, Nachiketas was a son of Uddālaki. Uddālaki was a sage of earlier days. He lived for a long time in the asrama serving his father, who

devoted his time in performing various sacrifices for the benefit of the society. Nachiketas was once sent to the forest by his father to fetch flowers etc. However, Nachiketas did not find them anywhere there and returned to the asrama without them. His father became angry and cursed him to be taken to Yamaloka. He accordingly went to Yamaloka and waited to meet Yama who was out of station. When Yama appeared, he sang praises on Yama and learnt various śāstras. When he returned to his father, Uddalaki was very much pleased by his scholarship.

Kathopanisad gives a detailed story about Nachiketas. According to it Vājaśravas is a great hermit, who used to perform many sacrifices. Once he performed a sacrifice in which the fees prescribed was áall that he ownsâ. When he accordingly gave away good things, the turn of old cows came. They were toothless could milk and could chew their food. They were so old that it would be difficult to maintain them, but he had to give all of them too. When their turn of giving away came, Nachiketas thought that by giving such things the giver will get only sin and not any merit. Being a dutiful son, he thought that somehow he should bring only good to his father. He thought a plan and approached his father. He asked his father as to whom he would be giving him since he too belonged to him. Though Vājaśravas kept calm, Nachiketas pressed him by asking many a time. Vājaśravas got disturbed and chided him that he would give to Lord Yama or the Lord of Death. Surely he did not mean it. But those words came out of his mouth in a fit of emotion.

Nachiketas was now on the horns of dilemma. He wanted to save his father from the sin of giving away useless things as fees. He could get merit when he gives him, a youth, well-educated, highly useful to others. But his father, in a fit of anger has directed him to death. If he goes to the kingdom of death, naturally being a father he will be in deep sorrow. On the other hand, if he does not visit death, his words in a sacrifice would have become false leading the sacrifice a fruitless one. Nachiketas pondered over and approached his father. He asked his father to permit him to go to the kingdom of death. He had to convince his father the necessity of his leaving this world, otherwise his own words would become false and the fruit of the sacrifice might not be got. He requested him to consider how his forefathers behaved and how his contemporaries behaved. None of them broke their word. There is nothing to be gained by going back on oneas word. After all, the life of a human being is transitory. Man, like a blade of grass, dies and is born again. Death is not the end of all. Rebirth is a law of nature. A mortal ripens like corn and like corn is born again. Hence he should keep his word and send Nachiketas to the abode of Yama. He repeated

Anupaśya yathā pūrve pratipaśya thatā pare Sasyam iva martyah pacyate sasyam iva jāyate punah.

Vajasravas had no alternative than to permit Nachiketas to go to Yamaâs abode. Nachiketas took leave of his father and could go to the abode of Yama, the Lord of death, by the power of his tapas. On reaching the abode of Yama, Nachiketas came to know that Yama was out of station. He waited for three nights so that he could meet Yama on his arrival. At last Yama came on the third day. The moment Yama came, Dhumorna, the wife of Yama and the ministers of Yama came rushing and reported to him about Nachiketas. They advised him that a guest has to be honoured by all means by showing the hospitality due to him. The guest is the embodiment of the fundamental oneness of all beings. He should not be neglected. In such a case all the virtues earned by doing sacrifices, fruits resulting from good things like planting gardens, making parks, digging wells etc. will be destroyed. Hence the guest has to be entertained with hospitality.

Yama agreed and paid respects to Nachiketas. Even Nachiketas was pleased with the honour accorded to him; Yama wanted to be sure that Nachiketas was fully pleased. He had extended three boons to Nachiketas one each for a day he had waited. Nachiketas agreed and the first boon asked is "that his father Gautama who will now be with anxiety and anger should be relieved of the same. He should be gracious to Nachiketas. When Yama sets Nachiketas free and he goes to his father's place, he should recognize and greet him well". We can see the power of Truth which made Nachiketas to get maximum benefit from a single boon.

Yama agreed and Nachiketas then by the second boon wanted to know the sacrifice which will lead one to heavens, where there is no fear of death or old age. Persons in heaven overcoming both hunger and thirst, rejoice the world of heavens leaving behind all sorrows. Lord Yama was very much pleased and taught the same. Nachiketas was so intelligent and quick to grasp, that he had repeated everything to Yama back. Lord Yama was so pleased that he had given another boon apart from the three given already. He said that from this day this sacrifice will be known as *Nachiketa chayana* in the name of Nachiketas. He had also presented a beautiful chain appreciating his power of grasping quickly and correctly. Yama said that not only the fruit of Agni worship, but the fruits of various rites given in Vedas would be granted to Nachiketas. The power of quick and correct grasping is the result of leading a truthful life.

Finally Nachiketas asked about the soul which moves from this gross body after its death. Yama first tested whether Nachiketas has the requisite

qualifications for knowing that secret knowledge. After ascertaining the same, this knowledge was communicated to Nachiketas, which is the central theme of Kathopanishad. Thus the strict adherence of truth will result in achieving perfection and liberation. Let us all try to lead a truthful life.

Truth alone triumphs

Many a time in our lives we notice that truth is eclipsed by vice. But truth alone will triumph at the end. Our national motto is aSatyam eva jayateâ meaning that Truth alone triumphs. The divine path is spread out by our great sages through truth alone. Various aspects of Truth can be listed as under:

Truth alone triumphs, Truth alone conquers, Truth alone prevails, Truth is invincible etc.

That God is Truth and Truth is God has been accepted by almost all the religions in the world. Thus we may consider that these two words are synonymous. The Divine is strict in the enforcement of the universal laws of justice, although He is merciful, kind and generous. Since God and Truth are one and the same, the omnipotent God or Truth alone will win in case of any confrontation with falsehood. Many situations can be cited from our puranic literature to show that Truth alone triumphs in the end. In the great epic Mahābhārata, Yudhisthira lost all his wealth, kingdom including his wife in the game of dice, started by Duryodhana. He became desperate. Bhimasena became angry. But Arjuna said that aAdharma sometimes will swallow the Dharma, but at the end Dharma or Truth alone will Triumphâ. We find that in spite of all obstacles and hurdles, Yudhisthira alone won. If one is faithful and committed to Truth and leads a life of Truthfulness, it will protect him. In folk literature the story of lion and cow is quoted. There lived a lion in a forest which hunted a cow. But the cow requested the lion to leave the same, as it had a calf and will return after feeding the calf. After much procrastination the lion left it. It thought that the cow might not return at all. But to its surprise the cow returned and said that it had fed his calf and made arrangements for its safety. It said that now it is free to be killed and eaten by the lion. The lion appreciated the truthfulness of the cow and let the cow go free. Thus commitment to truthfulness protects individuals.

Truth is invincible

Many persons tell that God is testing them in spite of their being in the right path. It is not the God that is testing and churning their minds powerfully. It is the test of Truth since God is nothing but the Truth. Many instances of this are available in our sacred texts. Prahlāda, the son of Hiraņyakaśipu had unflinching faith and devotion in Mahāviṣṇu, which his father being an asura could not accept. He had punished Prahlāda in many ways like throwing him down from the mountains, forcibly throwing into the oceans, forcing to drink poison, to be crushed by elephants, bitten by serpents etc. But all these did not bother Prahlāda and finally Lord Viṣṇu appeared in the form of Narasimha (Man-lion) and saved him.

The story of Hariśchandra also gives us the test of Truth. The great Hariśchandra was a king who lost everything, but not the vow to adhere to Truth. He had to undergo many troubles including selling his wife and working as a watchman in the burial ground. He never swerved from the path of Truth in spite of all these testing periods. Finally he won and got back all things he had lost. He shines in the pantheon of persons who adhere to Truth. One should understand that God or Truth does not test an individual for any other purpose. It is only to lift him up and making him pure. Gold, when got from the earth, as raw mineral, will look like a mud. But when put in fire, treated with chemicals and polished it shines and is ready for making beautiful ornaments. Similarly the sādhaka gets purified by all these tests and all his impurities are removed. God will never test a person to hurt or defeat. He gives the tests because he loves us and sees to that we achieve the goal of life.

Similarly in Mahābhaārata we find that when Yudhisthira lost everything in the game of dice played by Duryodhana; with an idea of deceiving the Pāṇḍavas, Draupadi was forcibly brought to the open hall and an attempt was made to strip her clothes. It was a difficult test for the Pāṇḍavas and at the same time a defeat to the mal-intentions of Duryodhana. Lord at the appropriate time sent bales of sarees to Draupadi and Duśśāsana who was dragging the clothes was tired and left. These tests are stepping stones for success in the path of reaching the Divine by the individual and a lesson to the mankind in general. One should carefully avoid these following seven deadly sins, so that one can stand the test of truth. They are

(i) Wealth without work;

- (ii) Pleasure without Conscience;
- (iii)Worship without sacrifice;
- (iv)Politics without principle;
- (v)Science without humanity;
- (vi)Knowledge without character; and
- (vii) Commerce without morality.