

Message from the Teacher

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Truth - Satya

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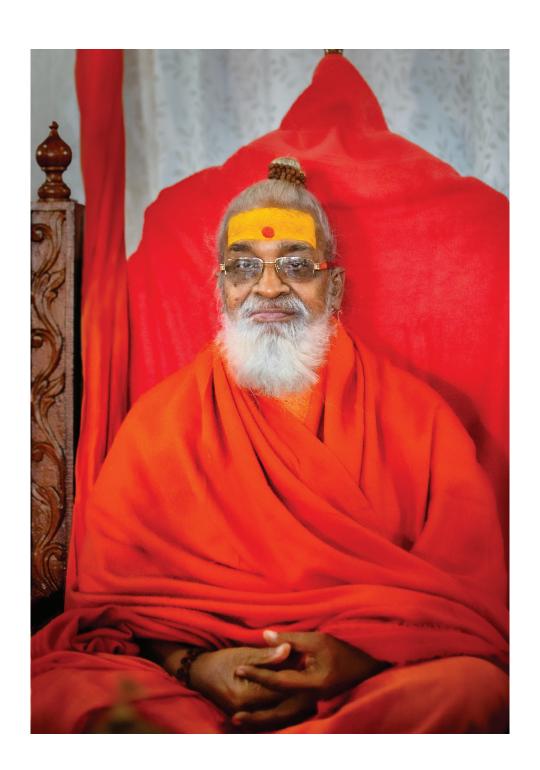
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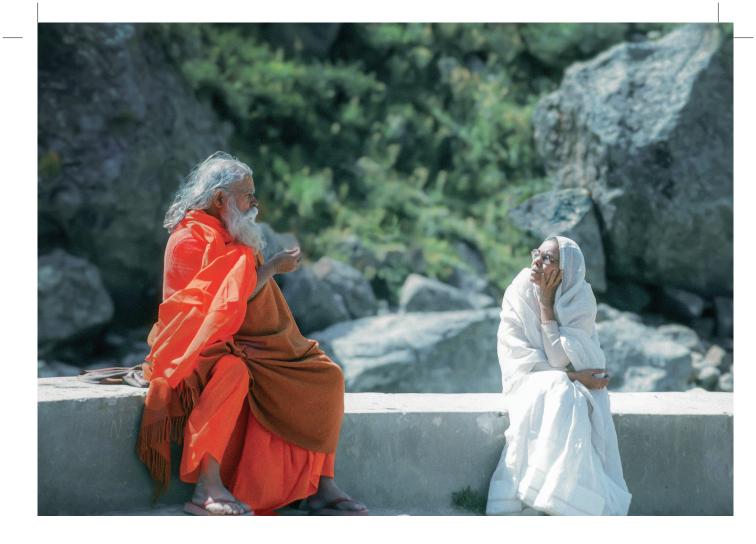
The union of the Sanskrit characters OM and ŚRĪ is a recurring motif throughout the Śrī Śankarācārya Āśram in Prayagraj. It appears in bronze as a centrepiece on the front of the main building; in polished stone at the apex of the inner temple; and in wood on the back of the Teacher's throne. It represents the union of śaktimān and śakti, the powerful and power manifest. OM is śaktimān, absolute truth. ŚRĪ is śakti, truth shining in time and place. It is only through the manifestation of the śakti that one comes to know śaktimān, and then one comes to know that the śakti is also the śaktimān. OM and ŚRĪ are one.



Tradition 2024

THE OCEAN OF TRUTH





Whatever has been given from 1962 till now, that should be given widely to everyone, be it children, adults, or the elderly. Through that the teaching will spread and everyone will benefit.

Mahārāja Śrī Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī 8 February, 2024

।। योग वासिष्ठ । वैराग्य प्रकरण।।

Yoga Vāsiṣṭha, Vairāgya Prakaraṇa¹

यतः सर्वाणि भूतानि प्रतिभान्ति स्थितानि च । यत्रैवोपश्रमं यान्ति तस्मै सत्यात्मने नमः ॥१॥

yataḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni pratibhānti sthitāni ca yatraivopaśamaṃ yānti tasmai satyātmane namaḥ

ज्ञाता ज्ञानं तथा ज्ञेयं द्रष्टा दर्शनदृश्यभूः । कर्ता हेतुः क्रिया यस्मात्तस्मै ज्ञप्त्यात्मने नमः ॥२॥

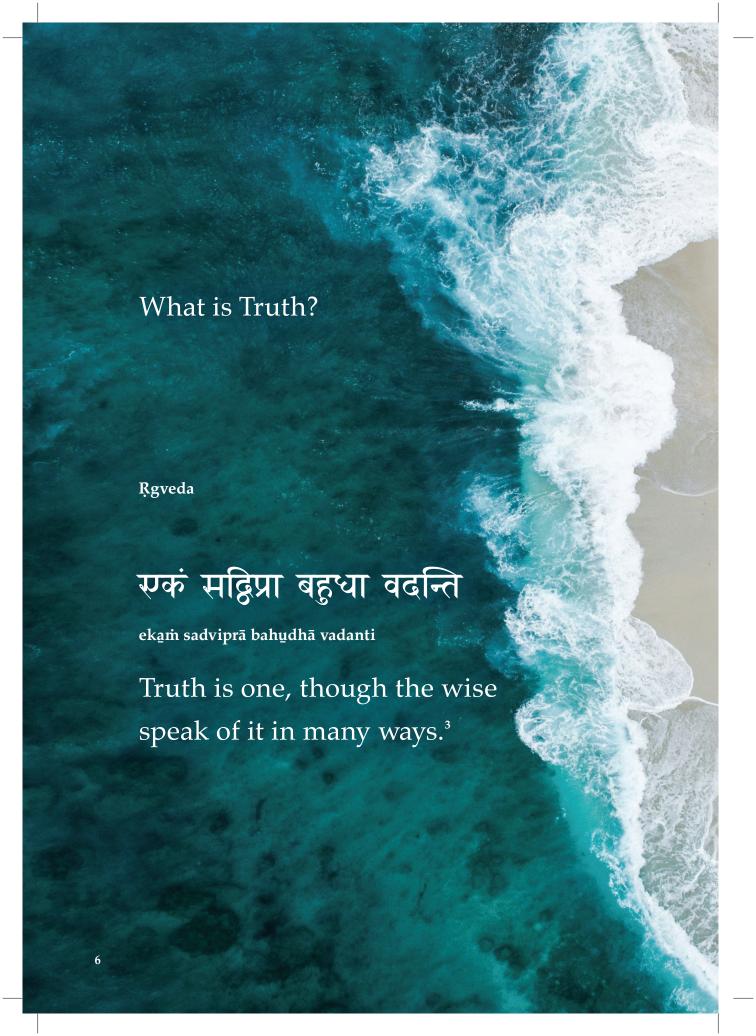
jñātā jñānaṃ tathā jñeyaṃ draṣṭā darśanadṛśyabhūḥ kartā hetuḥ kriyā yasmāttasmai jñaptyātmane namaḥ

स्फुरन्ति सीकरा यस्मादानन्दस्याम्बरे ऽ वनौ । सर्वेषां जीवनं तस्मै ब्रह्मानन्दात्मने नमः ॥३॥

sphuranti sīkarā yasmādānandasyāmbare ' vanau sarveṣām jīvanam tasmai brahmānandātmane namaḥ

Yoga Vāsistha 1.1.1-32

- 1. Salutations to that reality (satya) in which all the elements, and all the animate and inanimate beings shine as if they have an independent existence, and in which they exist for a time and into which they merge.
- 2. Salutations to that consciousness (jñāna) which is the source of the apparently distinct threefold divisions of: knower, knowledge and known; seer, sight and seen; doer, doing and deed.
- 3. Salutations to that bliss absolute (ānanda) which is the life of all beings, whose happiness and unfoldment is derived from the shower of spray from that ocean of bliss.



Upaniṣads, Bhagavadgīta and Śaṅkarācārya

In the philosophy of Advaita, truth is satya. The Absolute Itself is satyam jñānam anantam, 'truth, knowledge, infinite',⁴ and to the Absolute belongs the highest secret name of satyasya satyam, 'the Truth of truth'.⁵

Satya is Brahman, and Brahman is satya.⁶ Satya is 'the supreme Reality';⁷ 'one Existence, without a second';⁸ 'great, vast, adorable and first-born';⁹ 'the projector of everything';¹⁰ the self of each and all.¹¹ Satya is 'That which is the quintessence of all, and That which is birthless, immortal, fearless, auspicious, and nondual'.¹²

This is truth at the absolute level of existence.¹³ Absolute truth never changes.¹⁴

At the relative level of existence, in the world of empirical experience, truth shines as multitudinous names and forms, ¹⁵ luminous and golden; a diverse and ever-changing resplendence which can conceal the face of truth Itself. ¹⁶

Having been taught the absolute truth, and before a student leaves the āśram for the relative world of empirical experience, the preceptor prepares the student with an instruction to 'speak the truth', and that 'there should be no inadvertence about truth'.¹⁷

In this variable world of ephemeral appearances, satya 'is that which is reduced to practice through speech and bodily action'. 18 Satya is 'the highest discipline', 19 described in the Gītā as austerity of speech, and explained by Śaṅkarācārya as 'that speech which causes no pain, which is not hurtful to creatures, which is true, agreeable and beneficial with regard to facts seen or unseen.'20

Śaṅkarācārya defines truth at the level of empirical experience as 'giving utterance to one's own actual experience of things, as heard or seen'; and as 'speaking of things as they are, without giving utterance to what is unpleasant or false'. 'Satya means freedom from deceit and crookedness in speech, mind and body'. ²²

In the world of multiplicity, at the transactional level of empirical experience, 'Truth alone wins, and not untruth'.²³

Truth is 'the dwelling place (satya āyatanam) where the secret teaching resides'.²⁴ Without truthfulness in the world of multiplicity, there is no access to the secret teaching.

Absolute Truth

Satya

Although truth appears in different forms in different situations, its import remains the same. From this it follows that truth is Absolute. We call it satya because it is liable to prevail always.²⁵

Truth is the Absolute

That which never changes is the truth. Truth is the substance of the whole creation. Truth is the Absolute out of which the whole creation has emerged, and into which the whole creation will return.²⁶

Visualising the Truth

The reality of the Brahman is the truth, and truth has been defined as satyam jñānam anantam brahma. ²⁷ This Brahman is the truth and this Brahman is the consciousness and it is also limitless or eternal; one can explore as much as one can, and it operates through the laws which one can see through the creation. One can visualize the Brahman as if:

मत्यतः इमानि भूतानि मत्येन जातानि जीवन्ति मत्यम् प्रयन्त्यभिसम्विशन्ति मत्यम् ब्रह्म

satyataḥ imāni bhūtāni satyena jātāni jīvanti satyam prayantyabhisamviśanti satyam brahma

The genesis of all beings is from truth, and having originated from truth, they have their existence in truth, they have life in truth, and they re-establish in truth again at the end of the creation.²⁸

The Substratum

The unlimited is pervading everywhere and there is no end to it, and this is what does exist in reality. This is the substratum. It always remains the same and always remains one. It has no division. Therefore it is called 'akhaṇḍa' (unbroken, entire, whole). This is the real state of consciousness, the primordial state. It is what is 'sat', that which exists in truth.²⁹

The Essence

Truth is only one. Truth is the essence; it is the ātman, and everlasting. Laws can only proclaim the truth. Even when an untrue or unlawful act is victorious and tolerated as an exception, it cannot be substituted for truth. Whether one believes in a Vedic god, a Christian god or an Islamic god, or even rejects the existence of gods altogether, one still needs to stand by truth. Untruth, as a compromise, compulsion, or exception, can never be proclaimed as a principle or rule.³⁰

The Truth of Existence

The truth of existence is that the puruṣa or ātman is the Absolute: within this the universe has its existence. Human imagination presumes the self to be very small, hidden within the vaults of this body and antaḥkaraṇa. This presumption leads to wrong conclusions and useless actions; for all this is an illusion.³¹

Truth in the World

The Human Law

To perceive that which really exists, to conceive the truth as it ought to exist and to speak the truth as it does and has existed in the mind is the aspect of the human law, the dharma. To deviate from the truth is against the law.³²

Harmony in Mind, Speech and Action

Without truth, there is no possibility of steadfastness, strength and prosperity through any action. One can stay with truth all the time. Therefore, one must be truthful in thinking, reflecting and when engaged in action. Truth is much involved with manas (perception and thinking), vāṇī (speech following true perception with exact expression) and kriyā (action exactly as spoken or promised). When there is total harmony in mind, speech, and action, then there is appropriate truthful response from other beings in the world. One must try, success will follow sooner or later. Obstacles will go in due course.³³

The Unseen Helping Hand

Truth in itself is the expression and embodiment of paramātman itself. Anyone who goes the way of truth, it will be there to lend a helping hand if the resolution is total. But in the initial stages, all the forces of the world will turn against them to compromise. This is only to indicate that the path of truth is rather difficult and, secondly, how else can the test of truth be ascertained if it is not bitterly tried? If aspirants hail these encounters with resolution, only then the unseen helping hand comes to their rescue and any even casual blessing against the laws of nature opens a way to turn to the true.34

Perfected Speech

If speech is perfected through purification and always resorting to stating the truth, the truth may become a siddhi (accomplishment, attainment). If, in compassion, such people bless someone for redemption of some ailment or evil, it happens truly, for their word will never fail. Even today such mahātmās (great souls) are found just as the story of Gurujī who took over the pains and suffered himself.³⁵ Nature thus takes over to sustain the truth, even if it happens to be against the norm.³⁶

The Key to Universal Natural Life

The self (consciousness) is svaprakāśa (self-luminous). It automatically illuminates the truth within. If what arises in the heart and mind is expressed without fear in the universal consciousness of the guru and the group, all impurities will eventually be purified, and all actions will be reasonable. The key to universal natural life is enshrined in the following precept: 'Speak truth in gentle form, do not resort to gentle untruth'. 37

Who Goes to Hell?

In those days when I was living in the forest alone, once I stopped in a temple near Riwa, on the bank of the river in the forest. A village stood nearby. A man from there came and he worshipped in the temple, and he came and

asked me, 'Mahāraj, knowers (jñānis) attain liberation by the power of their knowledge. Devotees (bhāktis) cross this ocean of the world by the power of their devotion, and the destitute resort to the help of Bhagavān who protects the oppressed. So which people go to hell?' I told him, 'I'll give you the answer tomorrow morning.'

The next morning, the man returned. He went to the temple and started praying before Bhagavān, saying, 'I am sinful. My self is sinful. I commit evil actions,' and so on. When he had finished, and was approaching me, I told a Brahmacāri, 'Throw this sinner out. How has such a sinner come before us this morning? No one should see his face. Remove this evil person quickly far away from here.'

After moving a little away from me, he started telling the Brahmacāri, 'I am not as great a sinner as Mahāraj thinks.' When I heard this, I called to him and said, 'I am not calling you a sinner; I am answering your question from yesterday.'

'When I called you a sinner, you felt very unhappy. From this it can be understood that you do not really consider yourself a sinner. But every morning you come before Bhagavān and start saying, 'I am sinful, I commit evil actions.' You were speaking this way before Bhagavān, but in your own mind you don't consider yourself to be a sinner. These type of people who believe one thing but say

another, go to hell. Keeping one thing in your mind, you say something different. And this is the answer to your question. People should keep the inside and outside the same; as one thinks, so should one speak, and so should one act; only then will you deceive nobody, and you also will experience happiness and peace.'38

Being Honest

The honest are those who do exactly as they say, and say exactly as they feel with universal emotions, and not just personal.³⁹

No Language of Untruth

If one resolved to speak truth all the time, one could easily manage to speak truth; but if one resolved to speak lies all the time, then it is not possible, because there is no language of untruth and all communications have to start with language, which is basically designed in truth. Untruth has no basis. That is why it cannot stand against time.⁴⁰

Truth Keeps the Wheel of the World Turning

Suppose someone has the idea that to follow the line of truth is not profitable. Then suppose one takes two people and asks one of them to follow the line of truth and the other the line of lies for a whole day – and carry out their jobs. By the end of the day you will find the one who speaks lies cannot communicate and deal with the world at all; while the man who

stuck to the truth has been able to sail along well, although he would experience certain drawbacks in the beginning. Once he establishes the truth in his relations with others, and people feel sure that he will stick to it, then all his losses in the early stage will be recovered because of the trust in truth which is common to all people in the world.

To prove that speaking a lie renders one unfit to deal in the world, one can take any lies and exercise them in an extreme form, and one will see that one is not suitable for any activity in this world. So it is only 'a touch of lie' that appears to work fairly well for people and then only in some cases. In the majority of cases, it is the truth which keeps the wheel of the world turning smoothly.

Those who want to practise truth should have a little more courage and stick to the truth. They will find that some losses may occur at the beginning, but ultimately, they will be the winner.⁴¹

Culture of Truth

Truth is the form of the Absolute and therefore always appears with bliss. Truth and bliss co-exist as in saccidānanda. The scriptures say that one should always speak truth such that it produces bliss. One should not speak truth that curtails the bliss. A culture of truth is very important in spiritual development. It is necessary to emphasise the need for truth very strongly.⁴²

Truth is the Prerogative of the Self

Whenever one speaks the truth, one does the will of the Absolute. Those who prefer to speak untruth, have to conceal, pretend, make faces, justify and deceive. They never seem happy, for they know full well that they are not doing right. Right or true is always the prerogative of the Self. With truth, one feels free and happy and satisfied.⁴³

Need for Example and Knowledge

To sum up: realise yourself, learn the truth and display freely. Societies do want to improve. Everyone is eager to realise the self, only if there is an example and knowledge available.⁴⁴



The desire for truth is like a river, the river Ganges. She starts somewhere with a small beginning, facing all sorts of high mountains which hold her up; but she fills up and flows over them, intertwines around them for nearly two-hundred miles of high, low and deep mountainous ranges, and she finds her way to the ocean to which she belongs. These mountains are also there in search of truth but have now become established as traditions and cannot move. Even in their earnest they become obstacles, like all the traditions of philosophical or religious thought. They lead to a point and stop.

One need not be lured by high peaks nor sink into deep ravines, but keep going. One day truth will be found. No attraction, howsoever lofty, no obstacle howsoever deep, could force a spirit to stop if the search for truth is true. Spirit will find the truth one day.⁴⁵

Discovering Truth by One's Own Hand

One must have one's own desire for truth and freedom. Those who have the good fortune of their own grace (inspired for truth and freedom) will make proper use of śāstrakṛpā (grace of scriptures) and gurukṛpā (grace of teacher).

Take, for example, the superimposition of snake over rope which agitates the mind and creates fear. If some light is thrown upon the rope, then one can come out of the agitation and fear. Or if someone speaks from personal experience and example to show that the snake is the rope by lifting it with his own hand, then the ignorance disappears, superimposition dissolves and fear and agitation vanish just by themselves, and one becomes normal again. But if one has no desire to see and hear what scriptures and teachers have to offer, life will be prolonged in ignorance, superimpositions, and agitations arising due to saṃskāra. Therefore, ātmakṛpā (grace of self) is the most important grace required to appreciate truth and experience freedom through śāstrakṛpā and gurukṛpā.46

How Truth is Received, Perceived and Conceived

Through satsanga (good company) and sādhanā (disciplined life), the process [leading to bondage] can be reversed. Then satsankalpa (true notions) will arise in manas, buddhi will rationally examine what is most reasonable through examples of the sages, and citta will hold enlightened ideas with pure emotional force behind resolution, and the sadahankāra (true ahankāra) will act rightly all the time. This should lead one towards realization. Realization of the self depends on purification of all four aspects of the antaḥakaraṇa; only then truth is received, perceived and conceived to proceed towards self-realization.⁴⁷

Truth as the Paramount Activity

The search for truth is the paramount activity during satsanga. Everything else is peripheral. Truth manifests as good, pure, and just. Those who manage to have a glimpse of the truth are flooded with sadbhāvanā (pure feelings). Sadbhāvanā is the pure stream of advaita. Those who merge and swim in this stream are fully purified in mind, speech and action and they are transformed into icons of sadācāra (just action) and in bliss they exemplify sadācāra in the world. Satsanga, sadbhāvanā and sadācāra are the only true friends for you.⁴⁸

Moving Freely

The knowledge is provided to transcend all which is temporary like pain, pleasure, attachment, sorrow, wealth, power, position and victory. Those who carry on with the search for truth leave these possessions behind and then move freely in the light of the glory of the self which is constant and eternal. It has truth, consciousness and bliss.⁴⁹

Truth Cannot be Avoided

The truth assumes the form of knowledge and bliss and this brilliant exposition of the universe is the līlā (play) of the Brahman itself, which is ever pure and conscious. This līlā is its nature which remains to be transcended through education first and then viveka. Truth is no void; therefore it can't be avoided.

Viveka can transform this world into living consciousness and bliss which is totally devoid of bondage and misery.⁵⁰

The Truth About Everything is Reasonable 51

The Truth is advaita and it can best be presented through anvaya and vyātireka. Anvaya describes the glory of the creator and vyātireka eliminates attachments to the glories.

What ultimately remains is the Brahman, the self in each individual, the same everywhere. In realization of this advaita, misery is eliminated for ever and bliss is available eternally, which is the true statement of fact.⁵²

Become Truth

To know the truth is to experience It and become Truth; to know the Absolute is to experience It and become Absolute. Short of this, all is only information, not realisation.⁵³

Truth Alone Remains

Let internal and external be the same. Only truth and nothing but the truth can make internal and external the same because truth alone remains the same.⁵⁴

The Jyotirnidhi Nyasa Trust

Chairman's Statement

For the first time, the annual Tradition booklet can show pictures of the completed new building in the āśram at Prayagraj (Allahabad). The building now has a lift, living quarters for His Holiness, and fine meeting rooms with beautiful traditional decorations and exquisite carvings. The āśram is known as 'brahmā nivās', the abode of Brahman.

Following the formation of the UK Jyotirnidhi Trust by Mr Jaiswal in 1999, members of Schools around the world have been able to send £1,977,000 to the Indian Jyoti Trust.

As mentioned in previous booklets, our donations were used to help finance various projects including the construction of the temple and help with the āśram's running costs. We are honoured to have played a part in this important project.

Sadly, with the change of government regulations in India in 2020, the ability of foreign bodies like ours to send money to India has become difficult. Despite Śrī Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī being President of the Indian Trust, it still has not been possible to obtain the necessary permissions. We shall keep trying. We have over £400,000 on deposit waiting to be sent.

Until the permission is granted, we shall carry on with our policy of not seeking further donations. This is a great shame, since it is a natural desire to show appreciation for the gift of the Advaita Philosophy we have received, and which has changed so many of our lives.

Finally, the Trust would like to thank the Sydney School for producing this year's Tradition booklet. It is beautiful and powerful.

Jeremy Sinclair Chairman

Jyotirnidhi Nyasa Trustees, 11 Mandeville Place, London, W1u3aj Jyotitrust.com

Āśram and Temple (overleaf)

Entrance porch with Śiva Lingā; delicate stone-worked windows and extensive carved facades; some visitors to the Āśram; the meeting room where the 2024 Audiences were held; adorned statues of Gāṇeśa and Hanumān; a detail of a few of the 18,000 Sanskrit verses from the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam embossed in gold, covering the interior walls of all three levels; the temple inside the Śrī Śāntānanda Sarasvatī Auditorium; gifts of fruit and flowers for the Teacher; the Teacher's wooden throne, with lions for arms and traditional deer-skin mats; the Āśram's main building illuminated at night.









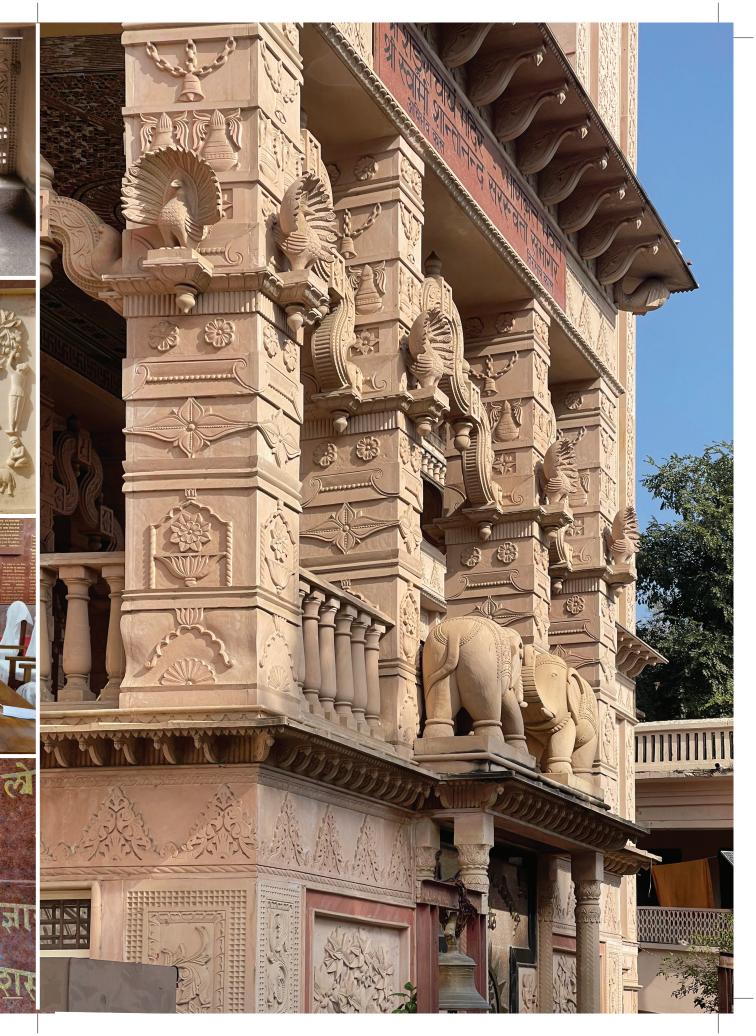


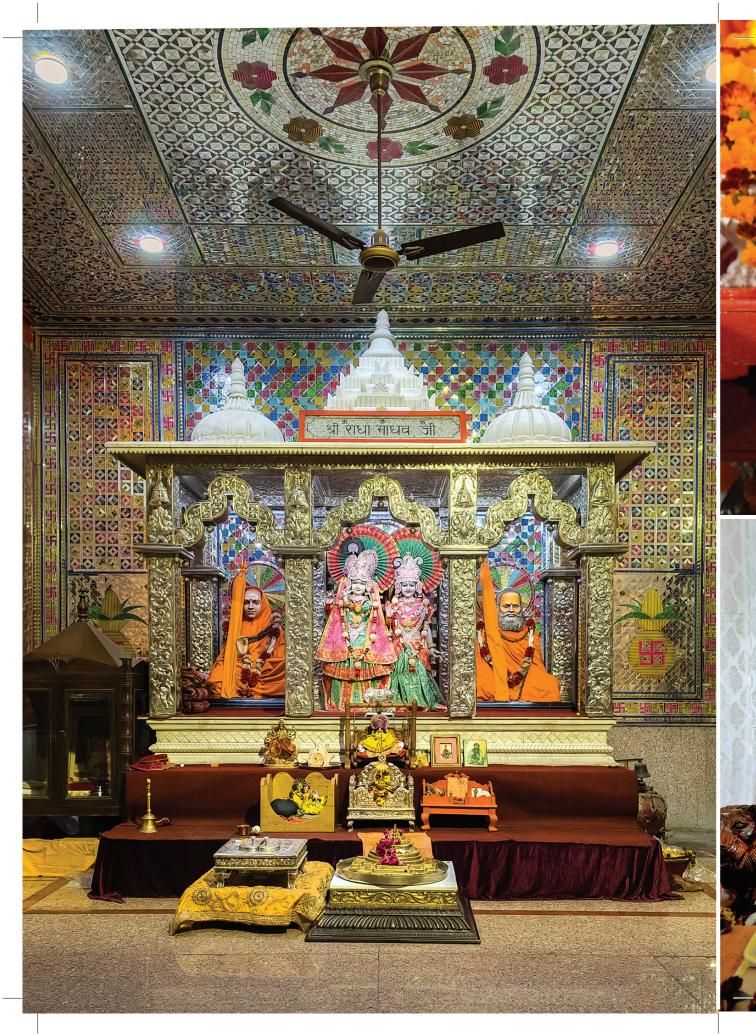


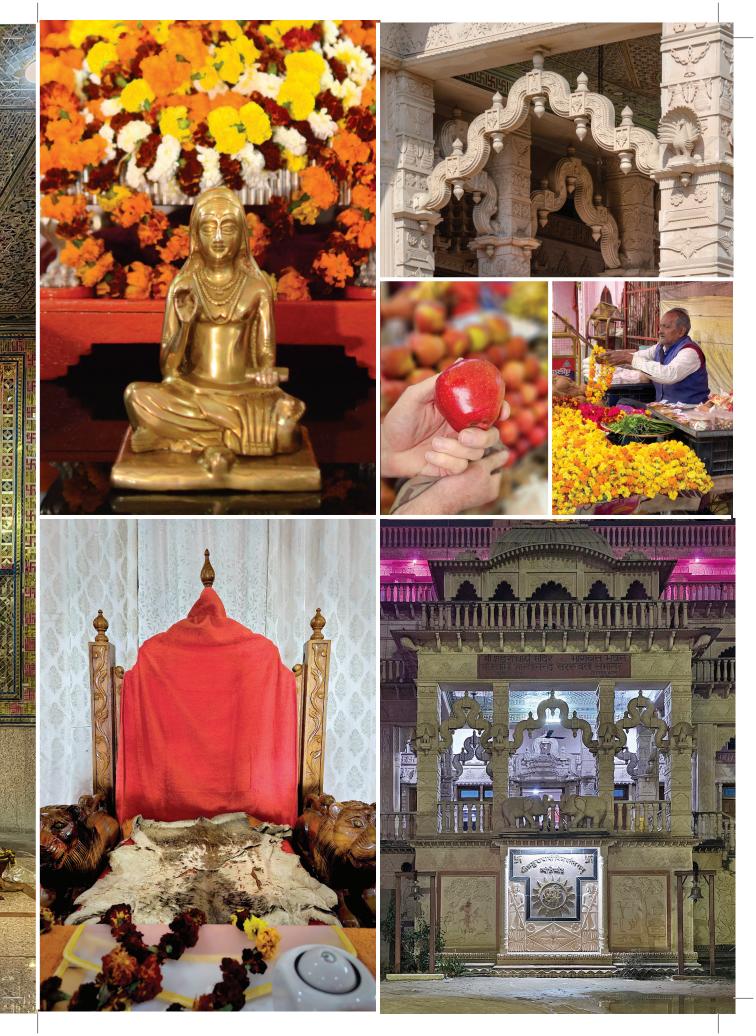


















Prayagraj is one of seventy-five Districts in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh, named after its most important city. The word 'prayagraj' is a combination of two Sanskrit words: prayāga (a place of sacrifice); and rāja (the chief or best of its kind). Amongst all other places of sacrifice, this city is the sovereign place of sacrifice, the best of its kind, Prayāg-rāja or Prayagraj, so named in the Rgveda Pariśiṣṭa. It is the place where the invisible Sarasvatī River and the visible Yamunā River join with the Ganges. It is one of India's most revered spiritual sites.

Endnotes

Unless otherwise indicated, translations of verses from the Upaniṣads and Śaṅkara's commentaries are by Swami Gambhirananda. Translations of verses from the Bhagavad Gītā and Śaṅkara's commentary are by Alladi Mahadeva Sastry.

- 1 The opening verses of the first part of the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha, entitled 'Vairāgya-prakaraṇa' (Section on Dispassion). The complete text has six prakaraṇas, 32,000 verses in total.
- 2 Translation by Swāmi Venkatesānanda Sarasvatī, 1976.
- 3 Rgveda Samhitā: Mandala 1, Sukta 164, Verse 46.
- 4 Tait. 2.1.1
- 5 Bṛh. 2.1.20 and the final sentence of Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya.
- 6 Brh. 5.4.1 and 5.5.1-4, a meditation on satya as Brahman.
- 7 Chān. Bhāş 6.8.7
- 8 Chān. Bhās 7.24.1
- 9 Bṛh. 5.4.1 and Bhāṣ. 5.5.1
- 10 Bṛh. Bhāṣ. 5.5.1
- 11 Chān. 6.8.7. The same verse is repeated seven times in Uddālaka's teaching, 'Thou art That'.
- 12 Chān. Bhāş. 6.16.3
- 13 For absolute and relative levels of existence, see *Conversations*: 1980: 6.4; 1989: 3.6; 2010: 3.1-3; 2015: 2.1.
- 14 Tait. Bhāş. 2.1.1
- 15 Brh. 2.5.19 and Bhās.
- 16 Īśā 15 and Śańkara's Bhāṣya. The same verse appears in Bṛh. 5.15.1. 'They have put a golden stopper into the neck of the bottle. Pull it, Lord! Let out reality.' (Trans. Yeats). Muṇḍaka 2.2.9 describes it as 'a beautiful golden scabbard hiding the stainless, indivisible, luminous Spirit.' (Trans. Yeats).
- 17 Tait. 1.11.1
- 18 Tait. Bhāṣ. 1.1.1
- 19 Mun. Bhās. 3.1.6
- 20 Gītā 17.15 and Bhāş.
- 21 Gītā Bhāş. 10.4 and 16.2
- 22 Ken. Bhāṣ. 4.8

- 23 Muṇ 3.1.6 'Satyam eva jayate nānṛtam'.
- 24 Ken. Bhāṣ. 4.8. The word translated as 'secret teaching' is upaniṣat, a translation which accords with Śaṅkarācārya's description in the previous verse of 'upaniṣat' as 'rahasya'. Monier-Williams also gives rahasya, 'secret doctrine, mystery', as a synonym for upaniṣad (MW 871/2).
- 25 2010: 4.4 (Vol. 7, p. 47). Satya is derived from from the dhātu 'sat', lasting or enduring (MW 1134/2-3).
- 26 1970: Study Society Record, 31st January.
- 27 Tait. 2.1.1
- 28 1999: 1.2 (Vol. 7, pp.8-9). This visualisation is a reformulation of Tait. 3.1.1.
- 29 1993: 1.4 (Vol. 4, p.169)
- 30 1980: 4.1 (Vol. 3, pp.84-85)
- 31 1987: 6.6 (Vol. 4. p.48)
- 32 1999: 3.3 (Vol. 7, p.27)
- 33 1999: 1.2 (Vol. 7, p.9)
- 34 1987: 5.2 (Vol. 4, p.34)
- 35 For the example of Gurujī, see Vol. 4, pp.17-18.
- 36 1987: 5.1 (Vol. 4, p.33)
- 37 2005: Message, 6th October (Vol. 7, p.171)
- 38 Mahārāja Śrī Brahmānanda Sarasvatī, Sweet Teachings, #90, p.140.
- 39 1978: 6.5 (Vol. 3, p.41)
- 40 1973: 7.6 (Vol. 2, p. 61)
- 41 1970: Study Society Record, 31st January.
- 42 1995: Message 19th August (Vol. 6, p.50)
- 43 1976: 5.4 (Vol. 2, p.199)
- 44 1989: 4.2 (Vol. 4, p.92)
- 45 1978: 4.4 (Vol. 3, p.26)
- 46 1999: 1.4 (Vol.7, p.12) 47 1999: 2.6 (Vol. 7, p.22)
- 48 2007: Teacher's Day Message (Vol. 7, pp.174-5)
- 49 1989: 6.4 (Vol. 4, p.112)
- 50 1982: Response to a Letter (Vol. 6, p.12)
- 51 1973: 7.6 (Vol. 2, p.62)
- 52 1987: 7.5 (Vol. 4. p.57)
- 53 1973: 7.3 (Vol. 2, p.59)
- 54 1993: 6.1 (Vol. 4, p.212)

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