

Science in Sanatana Dharma

The Vedas – the cornerstones of Sanatana Dharma – are timeless, and are considered to be the very breath of the Supreme Lord. The greatest part about our scriptures is that they were not written by any particular person. Sage Veda Vyasa, who is credited as the compiler of most major works of Sanatana Dharma, and other great Rishis, absorbed through their penance the eternal knowledge (Vedas and other scriptures) of the Universe and presented it to humanity. What we now call ‘science’ is an integral part of the Vedas and other scriptures of Sanatana Dharma, but interestingly, not the most important part.

Science in our scriptures, although ubiquitous, is only a subsidiary issue; a passing mention. Just like a professor explaining theories in quantum physics might mention, in passing, the pen in his hand.

Our Shastras contain information about physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, astronomy, engineering, mathematics, geography, warfare, social laws, ethical rules and several other ‘sciences’.

It took deep contemplation on the fall of an apple from a tree for Newton to determine that things are attracted to the Earth. Our Vedas and Shastras talk elaborately about God in the form of ‘Sankarshana’ supporting the Earth. This word arises from another Sanskrit word, Aakarshana, which means attraction. Sankarshana implies that it is the nature of the Earth to attract things to its core, in other words, gravity. Till date, we don’t know really why the Earth attracts objects to its center (that it is a property of mass is not the right answer as we cannot explain why mass itself has that property). But by just labeling the concept as gravity, we believe that we have completely understood the phenomenon. In any case, Rig Veda speaks about the concept of gravity well before Newton’s ancestors were born.

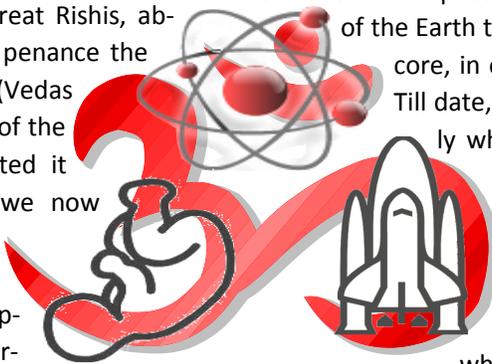
The composition of water is explained in the Vedas too. They say “prAnan ekam, anya dve”, meaning water is made of 1 part of oxygen and 2 parts of another gas. The other gas would be hydrogen, of course, the most abundant element on

Earth.

The development of the fetus in the womb is spoken of in [amazing detail in Srimad Bhagavatam](#), a work dated at least 5000 years ago before modern scientists came up with the Carnegie Stages of development of the fetus. Ayurveda, the ancient form of medicine and healing practiced even today, has its roots in the Vedas and includes surgical procedures and treatment of complex ailments.

The Vedas talk about heliocentrism, the speed of light, the exact diameter of the heavenly bodies like the Sun, Moon and planets, the distances between them, the color of rocks in those distant worlds, and other innumerable such pieces of information that have later been ‘validated’ by modern science. It makes one wonder if ‘science’ is simply reinventing the wheel.

The fact that Science is not the main theme of our scriptures should clue us in to the true purpose of life. More importantly, when the scientific portions of our scriptures – the secondary issues – are accurate, is it not obvious that their primary message must be true? That the very purpose of life is to attain the Supreme Being!



Srimad Bhāgavata Saptaha Maha Yagna in Houston

Poojya Poornima Kumarasamiji is currently enthraling hundreds of Houstonians in a seven-day Srimad Bhāgavata Saptaha Maha Yagna being held at Shri Radha Krishna Temple (22-28 Nov). She is spreading the bliss of Bhagavat Bhakti with her discourses and kirtans on the charithras of Bhāgavatas and the Leelas of Bhagavan as narrated in Srimad Bhagavatam, the crown jewel of the Puranas.



Other daily programs like Prabhodanam, Srimad Bhāgavata Parayanam, Mahamantra Sankirtan, Dolotsavam and DivyaNama Kirtan are also being performed during the week as part of the Yagna. The complete report of the Katha Yagna will be published in the next issue. For information about attending the daily events, please contact Narayan Dave at (832) 243-6036..

For other reports on Poornimaji’s satsangs in Houston and California, please see Page 4.

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Tête-à-tête with Richard

Richard Lovatt, a resident of the United Kingdom, is an ardent follower of Sanatana Dharma. We recently had the opportunity to converse with him about his beliefs, his practice of Sanatana Dharma and his quest to find a Guru...

How were you first introduced to Sanatana Dharma? What attracted you to it?

I was blessed enough to be introduced to Sanatana Dharma at a very early age. I was a naturally religiously inclined child, and was brought up with broadly Christian beliefs. When I was about 8 (early 1970's), I came across a well known magazine called 'Man, Myth and Magic'. I read an article about Sri Ksumaharanath. As I read it there was some kind of recognition. He was considered a partial incarnation of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and asked people to chant the Name of Krishna. This absolutely electrified me for some reason. I would watch programs about India and holy men and I knew that I wanted to be like them. The idea of reincarnation, religious dedication - all strongly resonated with me even at that young age. When I was 12, I first practiced meditation, but my in-depth study of Sanatana Dharma began when I was 15.

What do you think is unique about Sanatana Dharma?

To me the uniqueness of Santana Dharma is its inclusiveness and its acceptance, its unmatched depth and profundity. India is the spiritual heart of the world. Sanatana Dharma is the stream that waters so many faiths. I studied the New Testament and found that Christ's teachings accord with Sanatana Dharma, 'The eternal law'.

How did you learn of Sri Muralidhara Swamiji?

I have known of Sri Swamiji for about 10 years now. I came across the Madhuramurali website (www.madhuramurali.org) in 1998. I was drawn strongly to it and to Sri Swamiji. I had previously been involved with a well known spiritual organization, but there was no personal contact with the Guru. I used to lead bhajan sessions. But somehow deep down, I knew that this wasn't the final path for me. I felt I needed to have initiation and guidance from a living Uttama Guru. In 1999 I left the organization and decided I had to find more direct guidance. I had an email correspondence with Swami Satchidananda of Anandashram. The guidance and blessings of that great Mahan were invaluable to me.

About 14 months ago (August 2007) I had a strong impulse to seek initiation from Sri Muralidhara Swamiji. I was initiated by him via telephone and then things changed. From that point it was like being on a spiritual express train! I knew that this was the Sadguru that I had been waiting for. A series of powerful inner experiences this year confirmed this beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Do you chant the Divine Names of the Lord? If yes, why do you do it?

I love to chant Nama. I am blessed to have always had an attraction to the 'Hare Rama' Mahamantra. I chant with the Bhava that it is to please and serve the Guru, and that it is by grace of Guru that the chanting takes place. Nama is Krishna Himself, so we take Nama and live in Krishna's presence.

When another westerner asks you to explain your beliefs, what do you say?

Generally, many westerners have a problem un-



derstanding the Guru-Sishya relationship and the need for a Guru. I try, to the best of my ability, to clear up the misconceptions. They usually accept that a Guru shows the way, but they find it hard to accept that the Guru IS the way. If I am asked about the path I follow I explain the philosophy of Nama, the Guru-Sishya relationship and the basics of Sanatana Dharma.

Looking at the pace of the world today, what would you recommend to your commoner-friend as an optimal way of balancing spirituality in day-to-day living?

The pace of the world is fast. We have so many responsibilities. The way to balance spirituality with daily life is to 'divinize' daily life. Our beloved Guru has shown us the way - chanting Nama as much as we are able; seeing God in everyone and everything and serving Him in those forms; and remembering God at all times by acknowledging that everything happens by His will alone. In this way no matter what we are doing or whatever condition we are in, all the faculties of the body and mind are focused on Him. Nama can be chanted at all times, not just at special times, and does not cost anything.

Finally we should pray that our lives are surrendered at the lotus feet of the Sadguru and that we are able to spread the Holy Nama in a world that needs its light.

It is said that the 'ucchishtam' (food remnants) of Jnanis and great mahans is capable of bestowing Bhakti and Jnana. Srimad Bhagavatam is the ucchishtam of so many Mahans and Jnanis. The slokas of Bhagavatam have been read by so many great Mahans, starting from Brahma himself, Narada, Vyasa, Shuka, down the ages to Madhvacharya, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Vallabhacharya, Bodendra Swamigal, Thiyagaraja Swamigal, Alangudi Periyava, Mayavaram Periyava and so on. Is it not the greatest ucchishtam that we can ever partake of?



Kids' Quiz — Srimad Bhagavatam Trivia

Answers and beyond... Spiritual questions answered by Sri Muralidhara Swamiji

Q: I always like to keep on listening to Bhagavatam when rendered by someone, but I am unable to do japa or meditation. What am I to do?

A: It is enough if one can keep listening to Srimad Bhagavatam. Did not Parikshit attain liberation just by listening to Bhagavatam narrated by Sri Shuka? Parikshit did not do any meditation. Similarly, brahmarakshas DunduKari got liberated just by listening to the Bhagavatam. Hence, sincere listening will suffice .

Q: However much I try, I am unable to experience Bhakti. Why?

A: Devotion that is deep within is covered up by lust and worldly desires. We shall be blessed with true devotion only when these are cast off.

Q: Many people lead a secure life even without a Guru? This makes me wonder about the real need for a Guru.

A: There are wealthy people in this world. There are also those who are poor. Even these poor people do get some food, clothing and a place to live in. Yet does not everybody feel that to be wealthy is to live in comfort? An educated and an illiterate, too, live in this world. But then can one question about the need for education? Likewise, a Guru's actions in removing one's ego, pride and sins may seem to create problems. Each and every action of the Guru carries a deep meaning and is meant only to elevate us. Hence, it is only but joyful to live in the shelter of a Guru.

For more such answers by Sri Sri Swamiji, or to ask a question of your own, please visit the Nama Dwaar website at www.namadwaar.org.

- What is the main theme of Srimad Bhagavatam?
A. Glory of Goddess Kali
B. Glory of Lord Hari and His devotees
C. Glory of Lord Shiva and His devotees
- Who compiled Srimad Bhagavatam?
A. Sage Vyasa
B. Sage Shuka
C. Sage Valmiki
- Who inspired the sage to compose Srimad Bhagavatam?
A. Sage Narada
B. Lord Brahma
C. Lord Shiva
- What was the curse on King Parikshit?
A. He would die of a serpent bite on the seventh day from the day he was cursed.
B. He would lose his kingdom.
C. He would turn into elephant.
- How many Cantos are there in Srimad Bhagavatam?
A. Ten
B. Eleven
C. Twelve

Answers:

1-B, 2-A, 3-A, 4-A, 5-C

The Story of Narada (from Srimad Bhagavatam)

Sage Narada, in his former birth in a previous Kalpa (cycle of creation), was born to a maid. Narada's mother got an opportunity to serve the sages staying in her town for the rainy season. She urged her little son also to serve the sages and he did it sincerely. He listened attentively to their talks where they emphasized the greatness and importance of attaining the feet of the Lord and the path of devotion to Lord Hari.

Narada's mother asked him to follow the sages and bathe along with them in the river. Once, as he was very hungry, the little boy asked the sages' permission to eat the remnants of their food, unaware that partaking a sadhu's prasada can cleanse a human being of all sins and bestow Bhakti. Narada was thus soon cleansed of all sins. He started relishing the stories of Lord Sri Krishna and developed love for the exquisite, incomparable beauty of the Lord.

Soon after the sages left, Narada's mother died. Narada then set out to a forest to meditate on the Lord. As he meditated, Lord Hari appeared to his inward eye for a second and disappeared. Narada was thrilled and longed to behold the Lord again. He searched for Him again but could not see Him. The Lord

then spoke to the little boy and said that he was not yet fit to behold Him. The Lord said that Narada's services to the sages had blessed him with the short darshan and that he would be granted His vision again in the next birth. As the Supreme voice stopped, Narada bowed in reverence and began to await his end with thoughts fixed on the Lord.



During the great deluge following the end of the Kalpa, the whole universe merged with the Lord, and so did Narada. When the Lord wished to start creation anew, great sages including Narada were born. Sage Narada was blessed with constant vision of the Lord in this birth as promised by Him, as he was always chanting the Lord's name. He went around singing the exploits of the Lord in order to lift human beings from their mundane existence by listening to the glories of Lord Sri Hari.

This story shows that today if we are doing Nama kirtan, it is only because we have had many births in the past when we have had satsangs, and have performed dhyana, tapas, etc. Only then will the names of Rama and Krishna even come to our lips. Hence, the fact that we are able to chant the Names of the Lord is itself proof that we are on the right path.



Satsangs News and Events

Poojya Poornima Kumarasamiji, an expert speaker and disciple of Sri Muralidhara Swamiji, is currently visiting the US for the purpose of spreading the glory of the Lord.



California

San Francisco Bay Area experienced torrential rains of Nama Bhakti a few days before Diwali. At the Fremont Vedic Dharma Samaj, Poornimaji gifted devotees with a unique pearl necklace, with each pearl representing the life of a great Indian saint who served as an epitome of bhakti. She spoke about Sant Namdev, Goswami Tulsidas, Sant Eknath, Sant Tukaram, Sant Kabir and Meerabai, and illustrated how they remembered God in every moment of their lives without shunning the problems of household life. On the final day, devotees also had a great musical treat in the form of Meerabai's bhajans. At their request, Poornimaji also wrote an article for the temple magazine Vedic Sandesh on spirituality in today's world.



Houston

From the end of the October, Poornimaji graced many Houston temples, homes and even the radio air waves with her discourses spreading the glories of Bhagavan and the Divine Name. At Lakshmi Narayan Mandir in NW Houston, she talked on Bhakti Marga. At Sri Meenakshi temple she brought out tears from most listeners while describing Dhruva and Prahlada Charithras. At Durga Bari, she convinced the crowd about the need for temple worship to awaken the Power within. At Vallabh Priti Seva Samaj, she spoke on Sudama Charitra and at Hindu Worship Society, she spoke on Nama Mahima. At home satsangs, she talked on several topics including Krishna Leela and Nama Mahima.



(Above) Akhanda Nama Sankirtan at Chicago on Nov 8, the English birth date of Sri Muralidhara Swamiji.



(Left) Devotees dancing spontaneously to tune of the Mahamantra during the Srimad Bhagavata Saptaha Maha Yagna in Houston, TX.

Weekly satsangs are held regularly in the following cities:

- Bay Area, CA
- Boston, MA
- Chicago, IL
- Cortlandt Manor, NY
- Dallas, TX
- Houston, TX
- Los Angeles, CA
- Seattle, WA

A weekly telecon e-satsang is also held every Friday evening at 8:30 PM CST.

Email newsletter@godivinity.org for more satsang information.



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