



Sanskar Gurukul Weekly Update



Class Name: Valmiki

Week# 19: Feb 16th, 2014

General Assembly

We started with 3 Om's and the opening prayers. Sridhar uncle asked some questions:

We chanted Guru Sthothram. Sridhar Uncle discussed about Sage Vyaasa who split the cosmic knowledge of Vedas into four parts. He also mentioned that most of us already know some of the sholkas from the Vedas. For instance – our starting prayer Om Sahana vavtu , and ending prayer “Purna madah ..” both are Shanti Mantras and are part of the Upanishads. He then mentioned that there is one mantra that is mentioned in all the four Vedas. This is the Gayatri Mantra, which is a prayer to Sun God. Typically this mantra is taught by the father to his son during the sacred thread ceremony and this has been passed on for generations. We then chanted the mantra 28 times.

Om Bhuur-Bhuvah Svah
Tat-Savitur-Varenyam |
Bhargo Devasya Dhiimahi
Dhiyo Yo Nah Pracodayaat ||

Announcement – An email for a field trip has been sent for **Kapila, Nachiketa, Valmiki, Vasishtha and Vyaasa classes. Please make sure to RSVP and send in money.**



Class

Gita Dhyanam and Gita Values

We started the class with 3 Om and starting prayers and chanted Gita Dhyanam and the Chapter 13 verses.

In Hindu Culture book, we have been talking about the symbols, idols and temples. Idol is really an ideal and helps us to achieve our personal spiritual goal. We also talked about the 4 aspects of a deity – absolute, cosmic, incarnations and physical. Earlier, we had discussed about these aspects of Lord Vishnu. Today we discussed the same for Lord Shiva. Hansal led the discussion in the class.

Lord Brahma

- He is the creator of the universe, although he does not have many temples dedicated to him (The most famous one that he does have dedicated to him is in Pukshar, which is in the state of Rajasthan)
- He was worshiped greatly in Bangkok, Thailand
- The people of Bangkok say that since they built a temple for him and worshipped him, all of the fatal deaths and injuries were stopped because of worshipping him
- We don't invoke Lord Brahma into worship as much because when we create, we can do it easily, but when we try to get rid of, or destroy something we don't focus on Lord Brahma, instead we focus on Lord Shiva because he is the destroyer (This was explained by Swami Chinmayananda)
- This is also involves Lord Vishnu because he has to sustain our thoughts and keep them until we reach our goal
- This is why Lord Brahma isn't as highly worshipped as some of the other Gods and Goddesses

The Facets of Lord Shiva

- There are 4 different standpoints that every god and goddess can be understood by and they are:
 1. The Absolute
 2. The Cosmic
 3. The Departmental (In change of a particular aspect of creation)
 4. The Incarnation (who appeared in earth to reestablish Dharma)
- Lord Shiva's real name means Auspiciousness, and he is the formless absolute reality which is of nature of pure consciousness.
- Sava = dead body
- Shiva's presence turns the body into a beautiful and holy thing
- From the cosmic standpoint Lord Shiva is seen as the creator, the destroyer and the Sustainer (He is seen as this because we cannot actually divide out these standpoints that Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu have because you can destroy anything without creating, and you cant create without destroying so it can not be separated)
- In Lord Shivas last standpoint he is seen to have appeared in many numerous incarnations as a guru avatara (Two avataras of Lord Shiva were Sri Adi Shankaracharya, and Dakshinamurti)
- I salute Bhavni (Parvati) and Shankara (Shiva) who are the embodiments of faith, without whom even great seekers cannot realize the highest realities in there hearts



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- Lord Shiva is the faith that is essential to realize the truth
- Here is a verse given by Tulsidas on Lord Shiva in the Ramacaritamansa

Yasyanke ca vibhati bhudharasuta devapaga mastake

Bhate balavidhur gale ca garalam yasyorasi vyakarat

So'yam bhutivibhusanah suravarah sarvadhupah sarvada

Sarvah sarvagatah sivah sasinibhah srisankarah patu mam

- Sri Sankarah Patu Mam means May that Lord Shankarah protect me

- Shankara is another name for Lord Shiva
- Sama- auspiciousness, Karah- He who brings
- Yasyanke ca vibhati bhudharasuta is the first line of the verse, Saint Tulsidas salutes Lord Shiva as He on whose left side sits with the beautiful goddess Parvati and on whose head is the Goddess

Ganga (Davapaga Mastake)

The River Ganga

- It has several meanings and one of the most common is that it is the flow of knowledge from the teacher to the disciple, as we conceive of knowledge flowing into our head
- Another interpretation for it is the devotion to Lord Rama
- It is also saying that you should keep your head cool, because humans tend to be quite hot-headed sometimes and we need to remember the River Ganga

The Crescent Moon

- "Bhale balavidhur gale ca garalam": On Shiva's forehead is the crescent moon and in his neck is poison. The moon represents the nectar of life, poison is the opposite because it brings death
- Our life is a pair of opposites (Life and Death, Creation and Destruction...Etc.)
- Since the moon is associated with Lord Shiva it is worshipped along with him

The Blue- Necked One - Nilakantha

- A snake named Vasuki began to vomit a poison called Halahala Visa and people began to drink the water, so the people that lived near there went to Lord Shiva and called for his help, so he went there because he is the embodiment of Compassion (Karuna Avatara), he drank the poison and drank it, but instead of swallowing it, he kept it in his throat without letting it go to HIS stomach and this caused his neck to turn blue. He did not swallow the poison entirely because he did not become poisonous or bitter himself
- (If a person is capable of enduring suffering and of removing the suffering of another, that person should do so) –Lord Shiva

The Snake Garland

- Vasyorasi vyalarat
- Whenever we hear the word snake we think of fear, so many wonder why Lord Shiva has a snake around his neck. The image of Lord Shiva shows that he is fearless, and the snake also means Time (Kala)
- It also represents the mind that spits out its poison of negative thoughts
- So'yam bhutivibhusanah- (Lord Shiva wears) the ashes of the cremation ground smeared all over His Body. By this the lord shows that our bodies are already dead, which will turn to ashes into one day, therefore we should rise over our identification with the body even while we are living



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The Ruler of All

- Suravarah sarvadhīpā sarvada- (Lord Shiva is) the best among gods and is the ruler of the entire world. Lord Shiva is the one who can destroy all the negativities such as wrong actions, temptations, fears, insecurities, and corruptions

- Sasinibah means "He whose glow is like that of the moon, and this pleases everybody's hearts"

We also concluded that the absolute form of any deity remains the same. The cosmic form is just an attribute to make it easier for us to worship and the physical form is used for meditation as we can focus and be disciplined.

Homework

1. Please read ahead Chapter 9. Urmi will lead the discussion. Please send summary by 5pm Saturday.
2. Parin will lead the discussion for Chapter 10 week after.
3. Class sevaks email is gurukul.valmiki@sanskaracademy.org