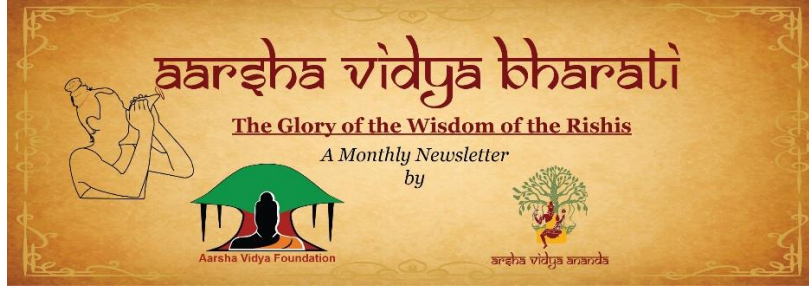


---

# Aarsha Vidya Bharati - March 2023

Phalgun - Chaitra 2079

A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



---

This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [March 2023 issue](#) or read any of [the articles](#).

## Vedanta Camp - Narrative of A First-Time Attendee

By Jahnvi Mukundan, Mumbai

About forty of us were fortunate to attend a Vedanta camp from 20-24<sup>th</sup> February, 2023 at Swami Dayanand Ashram, Rishikesh. Swami Brahmadevananda ji unfolded *Advaita Makaranda* by Lakshmidhara Kavi and Swamini Brahma-prajnananda ji unfolded Sri Rudram.

### Some Take-Aways

The *Advaita Makaranda* or 'Nectar of Non-Duality' by Lakshmidhara Kavi talks about how 'you' are but a witness, 'Sākṣi' to your ego and proceeds to prompt thinking as to whether you really are the witness, or you just are?

This nectar of non-duality says; 'स्वरूपमेव मे ज्ञानं', *svarūpameva jñānam* - 'consciousness alone is my nature' and 'अहमेव सुखं नान्यद', *ahameva sukham nānyada*, 'happiness alone is my nature'; emphasizing that consciousness and happiness are not 'attributes' but simply 'you' – the limitless consciousness.

The explanation of 28 verses of this text took place over 5 days and truth be told, words like 'प्रत्यभि ज्ञानम्' and 'सच्चिदानन्दलक्षणम्' are words I am still learning to read and pronounce, but as Swamiji very lovingly said in one of our classes, 'don't worry if you are struggling, you have good company'!

For me, hearing the statement, 'happiness is not an experience, we sometimes put conditions to our happiness and say – "I will be happy when" – only to realize that you ARE!' is something I will spend a lot of time thinking about before I am able to grasp it fully.

Sri Rudram was unfolded by Swamini Brahma-prajnananda ji. Divided into 11 'Anuvāka-s' or 'sections', it is a prayer to the all-encompassing Lord Shiva.



---

The opening *anuvāka* is a supplication to Lord Rudra, requesting for his compassion and generosity. The subsequent *anuvāka*-s, spanning from the second to the ninth, comprise of salutations to Lord Rudra in his various forms - as the essence of all existence, the sustainer of inner order and the master of the universe. [The word ‘*namah*’ is used three hundred times in the first nine sections of the Rudram]

The tenth *anuvāka* involves prayers addressed to the Lord, while the eleventh *anuvāka* invokes the Lord in the forms of numerous *devatā*-s, responsible for diverse domains of human experience.



We were blessed to be a part of Puja Swamiji’s ‘*Adhiṣṭhāna* Puja’ and also be a part of a ‘*bhandara*’ organized for 100 sadhus as well as the Ganga puja.

For some of us, an important highlight was going river rafting! Overall, the setting of the ashram, by the Ganga, in a place where we were making no decisions, enabled us to focus on our learning.

***Some more takeaways from other participants –***

*I learnt how much the identities I had created around my likes and dislikes as well as roles I play, were making me feel alienated plus fearing rejection. Letting those identities drop off is giving me an abiding sense of connection and freedom. All of the various forms in which we learnt to see Bhagavān while studying Sri Rudram is really helping me to deal with every day situations with a whole new perspective and ease. – Shilpi Banerjee, Delhi*

*Being an online student from UK, I wanted to have an in-person immersive experience & no better place than Puja Swamiji’s ashram being the fountainhead of knowledge in Rishikesh in the lap of mother Ganga. Studying Advaita Makaranda & Sri Rudram, interacting & bonding with my fellow classmates & long-time students in*

*the ashram was a transformative experience. My Gratitude to Swamiji & Swaminiji for organizing this camp with every little attention to detail. - Nirmala Iyer, UK*

*By slowly going along with the words of Advaita Makaranda and recalling the unfolding, contemplating on the same, I can see systematically and logically, what I am (by negating what i am not) By seeing the details of this beautiful prayer of Sri Rudram, I am inspired to be more awareful of all things, persons, circumstances in my life and of my life, and see each and every minute detail as Bhagavān and The Divine Order..which makes me infinitely more accepting of everything and everyone..dulls the 'sting' of my papa karma – Bharati Chandiramani, Mahabaleshwar*

*I am so blessed that my dream of gaining knowledge on the banks of Ma Ganga by my Gurus came true. Got some drops of Jnanaganga as well as tirtha from Ma Ganga which*

---

*will purify my mind and body. It was amazing. Thank you Swamiji and Swaminiji for giving this opportunity and grace to all of us – Sanjeevani, Mumbai*

*My biggest take away in this is that how ignorant I am when I repeatedly think of bringing Īśvara into my life when there is never a moment or place Īśvara is not there. He is all pervading in all forms including my body, mind. All my actions, feelings including my ignorance are an expression of Rudra so how can Īśvara be brought in my life( I am Īśvara) but I don't feel so because of ideas and concepts of myself and Īśvara. The recognition of Īśvara as everything, everywhere both within me and outside me. My salutation to Rudra. My prayerful prostration unto Īśvara whose mere glance removes the ocean of delusion( the endless cycle of birth and death). Aham asmi. Sadaa bhaami (I am, I know). Everything rises in me and resolves in me just like waves rise and disappear in ocean or clouds appear and disappear in sky. I illuminate the whole world .infact all concepts and ideas are illumined by me.*

*Body is dependent on me and not vice versa recognized while doing yoga, playing football etc. Body and mind both are instruments ( glory of Īśvara) for performing various functions. I am the changeless and the only truth. All changes happen in form. - Sheela Surendran, Mumbai*

- 1. Immersive camp in which Rudram unfolded the auspiciousness of Shiva.*
- 2. Advaita makaranda clarified doubts,*
- 3. One drops roles, even that of the seeker*
- 4. The ashram with its purity and grace helped to contemplate.*
- 5. Everything was comfortable and taken care of. Enjoyed the ride. – Dr Bina Nangia, Delhi*