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Dedication to Our Lineage

This magazine is created with deepest gratitude to our spiritual teacher, our Guru and guide, Acharya Shunya, who is disciple of her Guru, Baba Ayodhyanath, who is disciple of his Guru, Paramatman Shanti Prakash. These eminent teachers, from Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India are bearers of sacred knowledge of Advaita Vedanta, as expounded in the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and Brahma Sutras.

This magazine is a humble reflection of the non-dual Truth Acharya Shunya’s students have received from her live discourses in her Vedic Spiritual Studies Program at Vedika Global - Acharya Shunya’s wisdom school in Emeryville, California.
Welcome to Issue 8 of The Hamsa Magazine

Have you ever held a stone that has become smooth from being under flowing water? There is something hypnotic about running one’s fingers across the surface of a rock that has been worn with time and persistence into a refined texture. When we sit quietly with a stone like this in our palm, the mind may wonder at how something so hard, so difficult to break, could be moulded by something as soft as water.

Yet we are internally experiencing this every day as students. As we let the voice of our teacher pour the wisdom of Advaita Vedānta through our consciousness, the seemingly immovable set-ups of samsāra (subjective reality) are methodically worn away to dust. By choosing to submerge our minds in a river of wisdom, the transmission of Self knowledge through the parampara (spiritual lineage) teachings reshapes our false identities which we ignorantly thought were built in stone.

One highlight in this issue is Shreyas’ personal reflection on his childhood spent among sandcastles which reveals truths about our unlimited capacity to build and consciously re-build our default actions. Another is an article on the Kleshas summarizing Acharya Shunya’s teachings from Sage Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras about the sources of suffering in the mind and how we can systematically deconstruct these ignorant thought patterns to burn out the seeds of suffering.

To give more opportunities to stay soaked in transformational wisdom, The Hamsa Magazine is launching a new platform, called The Hamsa Bulletin. The purpose of this more frequent email publication is to offer one or two articles to keep you inspired towards deep mananam (contemplation) between The Hamsa Magazine releases. Topics will range from lineage teachings selectively taught by Acharya Shunya from the oral tradition, to pieces that require some background context to grasp, so the The Hamsa Bulletin will be sent only to ongoing enrolled students.

Enjoy this issue. Allow it to invite you back to the river of wisdom. Let it remind you to stay exposed to the transmission of Self knowledge, and watch how ignorance effortlessly washes away by the flowing power of Shāstra (sacred texts revealing the Self), Guru and Parampara.

In Service of Truth,

Ishani Naidu
Editor in Chief
How to burn away the Kleshas?

Acharya Shunya,

The klesha is the root of all evil. We cannot be happy unless we get rid of them. The kleshas are the threefold poisons of the mind: ignorance, pride and hatred. Ignorance causes us to be unaware of our true Self, which is pure consciousness and Oneness.

Meditation

Meditation is the most powerful tool for burning away the kleshas. It helps in dissolving the ego and cleansing the mind of the shadows of the kleshas. Finally, when a person attains Self-realization, the fear of death can be met straight on.

Face it down

For those who are crippled by fear of death, a beneficial experience is to lie down and visualize something falling down on you. Acharya Shunya described the occasion of Baba’s death – how he calmly got up and ended his day.

- True Self

The true Self has no agenda. No matter if a situation requires a delicate conversation, strong statement or silent action, the true Self acts in accordance with the circumstances.

Who is acting?

How to know if a decision or feeling is coming from the true Self or the false self? The false self gives rise to feelings of agitation, even when saying or doing nice and kind things. The authentic Self, which is the true Self, acts with deliberate selflessness and choosing to act according to duty over desire.

Dispelling the ego

The stronger the rāga, the more likely the ego will compromise all else in life to chase it. This is how ethics are born out of sloth.

How to burn away the Kleshas?

Acharya Shunya, in the Uttarādbhuti Upanisad, says, “The one who faces mortality with equanimity truly understands the limitedness of the body and the spirit remains. In this way, the fear of death can be met straight on.”

The fear of death can lie dormant for a long time, and it may even appear that a person has rid themselves of it. The fear of death cannot be abolished by knowing that the body is temporary and the soul is eternal. The Niyama Yoga of Ēśwarānanda Giri defines tapas as “burning away the kleshas.”

Five Kleshas

Klesha is the Sanskrit word for “affliction.” It has been translated as “disturbance” or “influence” since it is a state of mind that disturbs the mind of a person. The kleshas are the threefold poisons of the mind: ignorance, pride and hatred.

Ignorance

Ignorance is the root of all evil. We cannot be happy unless we get rid of ignorance. The kleshas are the threefold poisons of the mind: ignorance, pride and hatred. Ignorance causes us to be unaware of our true Self, which is pure consciousness and Oneness.

Pride

Pride is the state of pure consciousness and Oneness. In this state, the mind is free from the kleshas. When we face it down, we become free of many other fears automatically.

Hatred

Hatred is the state of pure consciousness and Oneness. In this state, the mind is free from the kleshas. When we face it down, we become free of many other fears automatically.

What happens when the kleshas are burned away?

When the kleshas are burned away, the mind becomes clear and calm. The mind becomes free from the kleshas, and the person becomes free from the bonds of maya, the illusion of this world.

1. Ajnāta – Ignorance

Ignorance is the root of all evil. We cannot be happy unless we get rid of ignorance. The kleshas are the threefold poisons of the mind: ignorance, pride and hatred. Ignorance causes us to be unaware of our true Self, which is pure consciousness and Oneness.

2. Asmitā – Ego

Ego is the state of pure consciousness and Oneness. In this state, the mind is free from the kleshas. When we face it down, we become free of many other fears automatically.

3. Abhinivesha – Fear of Death

Fear of death is the state of pure consciousness and Oneness. In this state, the mind is free from the kleshas. When we face it down, we become free of many other fears automatically.

4. Rāga and Dvesha – Attachment and Aversion

Attachment and aversion are the state of pure consciousness and Oneness. In this state, the mind is free from the kleshas. When we face it down, we become free of many other fears automatically.

5. Abdhikāra – Fear of Change

Fear of change is the state of pure consciousness and Oneness. In this state, the mind is free from the kleshas. When we face it down, we become free of many other fears automatically.
One night, Baba and I sat inside watching the monsoon rains pouring down, he said, “Shunya, within your body lies buried the rare and potent ability to regenerate.” That year, the monsoon came after a tremendous delay. Everything that had to flower blossomed. Every river rose. Even some rivers that flowed through towns, so small that I would have to pluck the flower or the fruit, would almost walk almost all the way across the road to the river bed. Of course, the house water tank was running empty and I was almost afraid to take a bath; I was almost afraid to shine the water on my face. Ferric chloride was not available at home; a small amount of water I could almost steal, as if making up for this lost trip. I try to describe it metaphorically because landscapes that shaped across the horizon. Ominous and gigantic clouds were moving with devastating impacts above our house. In my hometown, whenever the thunderclouds bellowed, we children stood in house,Is the concept of sacredness everywhere.

“I am, in fact, not the one to expound or preach sacredness even though I don’t use this term.”


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The Hamsa Magazine

THE HAMSA MAGAZINE
The Invitation of a Spiritual Name

As members of a traditional Vedic lineage (known as a sampradāya), we member-students are given the opportunity to receive a Vedic name. This name is chosen by Acharya Shunya, our spiritual teacher and lineage holder, to offer us an inner invitation. This invitation is not one-time, rather, to continue to shape our spiritual practice. As one of our fellow sadasyas (member-students) explains, “This name is an invitation to open up our faculties and potential to make true understanding possible. These names are representative not only of their individual symbolic meanings, but a kind of rebirth into a new stage of life.” Some of these names are of Deity (God), others offer a challenge, while some are simply a reminder. A curious beauty emerges like that of Mount Hood, when a name touches and touches the life of a sadasya in a profound way.

For Tuere, her Vedic name of Janya served as a source of inspiration. Janya is the Sanskrit word for “to flower, unfold, or be born.” This name has been an aide to her studentship. “Vidya” is a reminder of the importance and power that comes with spiritual discipline. Her name holds many layers, and these many meanings have presented themselves to Tuere through her spiritual practice.

For Amy, her Vedic name Janya is a reminder of the importance and power that comes with spiritual discipline. Her name holds many layers, and these many meanings have presented themselves to Tuere through her spiritual practice.

After talking to Janya, Aparna and Vidya, here is what I feel: The spiritual path is, at times, a clumsy dance. We do our best to be strong and to implement what we know is right, but due to our unconscious behaviors, relationships, or communication. Over the years, I have gone from pridefully clashing with my teachers to now seeing them as my allies—listening, acting, and listening for a deeper meaning. For me, at this moment, to be a name to others, and to offer the opportunity to receive a Vedic name. This name is chosen by Acharya Shunya, our spiritual teacher and lineage holder, to offer us an inner invitation. This invitation is not one-time, rather, to continue to shape our spiritual practice. As one of our fellow sadasyas (member-students) explains, “This name is an invitation to open up our faculties and potential to make true understanding possible. These names are representative not only of their individual symbolic meanings, but a kind of rebirth into a new stage of life.” Some of these names are of Deity (God), others offer a challenge, while some are simply a reminder. A curious beauty emerges like that of Mount Hood, when a name touches and touches the life of a sadasya in a profound way.

For Tuere, her Vedic name of Janya served as a source of inspiration. Janya is the Sanskrit word for “to flower, unfold, or be born.” This name has been an aide to her studentship. “Vidya” is a reminder of the importance and power that comes with spiritual discipline. Her name holds many layers, and these many meanings have presented themselves to Tuere through her spiritual practice.

After talking to Janya, Aparna and Vidya, here is what I feel: The spiritual path is, at times, a clumsy dance. We do our best to be strong and to implement what we know is right, but due to our unconscious behaviors, relationships, or communication. Over the years, I have gone from pridefully clashing with my teachers to now seeing them as my allies—listening, acting, and listening for a deeper meaning. For me, at this moment, to be a name to others, and to offer the opportunity to receive a Vedic name. This name is chosen by Acharya Shunya, our spiritual teacher and lineage holder, to offer us an inner invitation. This invitation is not one-time, rather, to continue to shape our spiritual practice. As one of our fellow sadasyas (member-students) explains, “This name is an invitation to open up our faculties and potential to make true understanding possible. These names are representative not only of their individual symbolic meanings, but a kind of rebirth into a new stage of life.” Some of these names are of Deity (God), others offer a challenge, while some are simply a reminder. A curious beauty emerges like that of Mount Hood, when a name touches and touches the life of a sadasya in a profound way.

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From ancient times, Vedic spiritual communities have had their own distinct patterns of cultural behaviors, called Vinaya, which frame a proper approach to engaging with the teachings (shāstra), the teacher (Acharya) and the community (kula) itself. The literal translation of Vinaya is ‘humility/humbleness.’ Ultimately, Vinaya is a reflection of our own respect for this path, and our internal commitment to Self knowledge. When we cultivate humbleness, we are able to soften and open like a flower into a deeper trust (shraddha) in this ancient process. We become more able to absorb the teachings from the teacher and shāstra.

This column is an ongoing resource to explore this rich topic of Vinay – from explanations of concepts to common cultural etiquette requirements, to more detailed teachings on tapasya (austerity practices), daily dharma (social ethics), etc. Please read, contemplate and (for student members) share your experiences and questions on our L2O community.

Vinaya
Baba’s 3 Vinaya Practices for Shishyas

Welcome to the Vinaya Column

Baba’s 3 Vinaya Values to Transform Your Student Journey

By Aparna Amy Lewis, Dean of the Vedic Spiritual Studies Program

We continue our study of Vinaya with this special lineage teaching from our paramparā, taught to Acharya Shunya by her teacher (our great teacher) Baba Ayodhyanath Sinha. I received this teaching from Acharya Shunya during a one on one satsangha in March 2017, and I am grateful to be able to share the words of our teachers with you all.

In Baba’s gurukulam, his students became shishyas (disciples) as they came to embody the following three Vinaya values. These Vinaya practices apply the teachings of Jñāna Yoga to our everyday behaviors. Baba knew that when students practiced these vinaya protocols in their daily lives, whether they were sitting at Baba’s feet, doing sevā (selfless service) in the community, managing their households, or being by themselves, they were fundamentally transforming their consciousness.

These three values are a little challenging to embody in one’s life, but when we apply these values as guiding principles in our life, we become “Uccha koti” – highest quality students.

OUR PRACTICE then is to remember Satyam – that underneath all of this is Brahman and Ātman – the non dual supreme Truth. When we continually evoke this Truth, we dispel all illusion.

These three vinaya practices enable us to overcome the three main obstacles to Self knowledge – our material attachments, our tendency to “slack off” with sensory distractions, and the great Māyā that happens in Fear. Become Uccha Koti students of Baba and Acharya Shunya by starting these practices today!

Love and light,
Aparna
THE HAMSA MAGAZINE

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Love and light,
Aparna
THE HAMSA MAGAZINE
The Limitless Sand

Personal Reflection

VOL. 1 ISSUE 8

THE HAMSA MAGAZINE

AUM

There really is a deep conditioning going on.

The spiritual path has been an ongoing process of remembering and forgetting, with each turn a new opportunity to make a choice. Every encounter, every situation, every day, and every season. What should I remember? What should I forget? The choice is made but the question remains whether I am the One who chooses, or whether my Action chooses for me.

The spiritual path has been an ongoing process of doing and undoing, with each turn a new opportunity to make a choice. Every situation, every thought, every judgment, and every action and decision, How do I make this decision? The choice is mine when I decide to do the work, and choose to no longer choose my actions.

My spiritual teacher Acharya Shunya said, "If I go of shame." Her Guru Bahafo Apeladi Nah (who we call Raha) said, "I may not say the word and never say it again". Now I realize that shame is a choice. It's a choice to remember or not, an identity that can and can't be, a memory which I hold, but not of me.

That's why Bahafo said the world is perfectly civilized for us to wake up and renew our understandings. Now I can learn how to get rid of the baggage, the shame, drop entirely. My internal monologue shifts away from criticism. My internal thoughts drop like a feather. My emotions come as neutral qualities: nostalgia, sweetness, even comedy too. I no longer say, "Why did I do that? Why didn't I follow?" Now that sweetness comes up to the microphone to say "Ya ha! Who knew? I knew I was just figuring it out, because I thought it was what I had to do."

That's why I go of assumption done with the notion of punishment. That's why I understate self-justification, now the undoing is done with ease. Now I feel simple to clean & decorate, because I know there's no difference between me and the other.

So what is this Mithya, this Maya, we talk about? Some call it a mind bag of myth, a shadow puppet pretending to be the real thing. Well, you can undo me like me, take me out of the picture and return my position. Then I will feel like I am better. The difference is a mirage, a mirage.

In my hometown, you have a festival. Where everyone goes to the beach. They ask who can make the most beautiful art, from only the sand and the sea. You have even see sand castles? Well, these ones would rarely impress. The sand transformed into mermaids and mermaids from the slip down to tower three.

Now I look at each of these pieces, each a separate beauty. The artificers mold the sand, push the sand, sculpt the sand, play with the sand. It's creating some what the power of memory and memory it is sand. All need to create beauty is one simple cause. The beauty comes from sand, and infinite forms it takes. Even from your inch deep sand castle, owes its beauty to that.

But what type of beauty is it, when a water could move every stone? The water, the rain comes, the birds come, the sand moves back inside sand right back up, unaltered, with no remains. The sand doesn't remember if it was a mermaid or mermaid, it doesn't particularly care. The sand doesn't say, "I don't want to be Eros's creation, because I was already Adam's." It that this what Mithya is like, sand constantly changing form. That is what Mithya is like, used becoming an imagined form. Now to our knowledge, this can cause too. Instead of less there are more, instead of less there is a feast.

Let's choose what to remember and what to forget. Let's not say I can only be this or that, and fill out a role that was defined by our own undefined expectations and action. Be a designer, embrace your design. Be an observer, witness your art. Let's be like the sand, forever molding and melting. Let's not limit our limitless sands.

AUM Shanti Shanti Shantि
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit Words</th>
<th>Glossary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anitya:</td>
<td>Ephemeral, non-eternal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abhamkāra:</td>
<td>The ego’s strong attachment to the definition of “me” based on non-eternal, external factors, (i.e. job title, social status, income, bodily appearance, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aparna:</td>
<td>Name of the Goddess, “The Leafless One,” one without karmic debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ātman:</td>
<td>The Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhaya:</td>
<td>Fear stemming from ignorance of what is eternal and what is non-eternal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahman:</td>
<td>The One Universal Consciousness that is both experiencing and manifesting all of creation as the innermost reality; the underlying spiritual reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devī:</td>
<td>Goddess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dharma:</td>
<td>Righteousness, duty, noble values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ekānta:</td>
<td>Alone, without the crutch of external supervision or outside motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gāyatri Mantra:</td>
<td>Refers to the core mantra of the Vedika lineage, it is a verse from the RigVeda which extolls the virtues of Brahman in the form of the Sun and is widely known for its power to activate the divine energies within those who chant the mantra with reverence, as it contains the essence of the Vedas</td>
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<tr>
<td>īnāmṛta nigraha:</td>
<td>A voluntary, self-controlled discipline or reigning in of the senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Īśvara:</td>
<td>God, the intelligent principle organizing all of creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jñāna yoga:</td>
<td>Path to knowing the Self through study of Vedānta scriptures (specifically Upanishads)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>klesha:</td>
<td>The deepest rooted beliefs in the mind that give rise to suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kula:</td>
<td>Spiritual family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mamakāra:</td>
<td>The ego’s ignorant seeking of security by claiming many non-eternal, external objects (house, car, partners, etc.) as ‘mine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māyā:</td>
<td>The changing reality superimposed onto objective reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mithyā:</td>
<td>Not objective reality; the qualified reality that is perceived but does not remain constant through the past, present and future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moksha:</td>
<td>Spiritual freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navratri:</td>
<td>Literally means Nine Nights, refer to a festival over nine days celebrating the many facets of the Goddess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pāpam:</td>
<td>Karmic demerits resulting from negative actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parampara:</td>
<td>Spiritual lineage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prakruti:</td>
<td>Matter, including the fluctuating thoughts in the mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pājā:</td>
<td>Ritual worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punyam:</td>
<td>Karmic merits resulting from positive actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prarūpa:</td>
<td>Similar to the Self, or Ātman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rishis:</td>
<td>Sages to whom the Vedas were revealed in meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sadasya:</td>
<td>Student of a spiritual teacher, one who undertakes spiritual discipline to reach self-determined spiritual goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sādhanā:</td>
<td>Voluntary dedicated discipline to reach self-determined spiritual goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>sampradāya:</td>
<td>Spiritual lineage imparting knowledge of the Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>samsāra:</td>
<td>Bondage to the wheel of cyclical births and deaths; the subjective reality individual for each observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satsangha:</td>
<td>Gathering of students to hear spiritual discourses from a spiritual teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>sattva:</td>
<td>Quality of the mind manifesting inner clarity, harmony, inner intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satvic:</td>
<td>Adjective for anything that increases sattva in the mind of the observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satyam:</td>
<td>Eternal Truth underlying all reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seva:</td>
<td>Selfless service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>śāstra:</td>
<td>Sacred texts revealing Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>śīhāra:</td>
<td>Disciple who practices Vinay toward the guru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>śraddhā:</td>
<td>Faith, a functional openness in our minds, allowing us to receive new teachings from the śāstra and guru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smriti:</td>
<td>Memory, a mental faculty that can be invoked to remember our true Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svadhyāya:</td>
<td>Independent self-study and review of the guru’s teachings and śāstra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tapas, tapasya:</td>
<td>Spiritual discipline, austerities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ucchā koti:</td>
<td>Highest quality of student,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udārata:</td>
<td>Generosity, even when we have little to share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vāsanā:</td>
<td>Hidden desires, wants and traits borne from an imprint on the mind created by our actions, thoughts and perceptions in the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vidya:</td>
<td>Knowledge of the Self, Īśānam</td>
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Invitation to Contribute

This magazine is a sevā offering created by sadasya members for the benefit of the entire sadasya kula. There are many ways you too can gift your words and insights to the rest of your conscious community. If you are interested in writing an article on a topic covered in a Satsangha, submitting your artwork or photography, sharing your personal reflections on how this knowledge is changing your life, editing stories from our lineage, or transcribing selected teachings from recordings, please contact Ishani, magazine Editor in Chief, ishani@vedikaglobal.org.

Meet this Issue's Writers

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- Ishani Naidu
  Editor in Chief
- Aparna Amy Lewis
  Contributing Writer, Dean of Vedic Studies
- Shreyas
  Contributing Writer

About the Magazine Title, 'The Hamsa'

Just as the swan (Hamsa in Sanskrit) lives on water, but its feathers are never wet, similarly, an Advaita Vedāntin (follower of Advaita Vedānta) dwells in the Māyā-filled Samsāra, fulfilling all duties, but remains untouched and unpolluted by Māyā. Such a one is called a spiritual Hamsa. Vedic seekers must effort to emulate Hamsa-like ideals in their personal lives.