Homework Review

- Practice a few minutes of *mauna* (silence) every day and observe your mind
- Practice meditation every day for a few minutes
  - Chant “*Om! Namaḥ Śivāya*…” with your eyes closed
- Reflect on the meaning of silence when you are in meditation
VALUES

REVIEW OF ANAHANKĀRA
Review: Value of Anahankāra

- Absence of ego (anahankāra) – in Sanskrit the prefix of “an” before “ahankara” negates the word “ahankara”
- The Sanskrit word “ahankāra” must be understood clearly and not mistaken for pride (simple meaning)
- Ahankāra can be translated into English as the “I-notion”
- It is a byproduct of ignorance of one’s true nature and ignorance of (how to relate to) the world around us
We mistakenly think “...I am the doer...” and ignore the source of all our capacities or powers (śaktis)

Needlessly we become prideful and cultivate the sense of ahankāra, which leads us down the path of delusion and suffering

It is a fact that the capacity to desire (iccha śakti), the ability to act (kriya śakti), and the capacity to know (jnana śakti) are essential principles to any accomplishment

The source of all these śaktis is the source of creation, which we identify as Īśvara
Think about your own body…

- Your heart, lungs, liver, pancreas, etc. function just fine without your consciously telling them do this or that.

- The food gets digested without any conscious thought (e.g. as explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa in Chapter 15 of the Bhagavad Gītā).

- Your blood circulates without any conscious command from you… the list goes on and on….

- Recognize that Īśvara is the source of all these powers or śaktis and makes all this happen!
Review: Value of Anahankāra

- When the fact (that the source of all śaktis is Īśvara) is recognized, one becomes truly humble and can let go of the pride – this is the mark of a wise person

- Such an individual does not take anything for granted and sees the miracles in every moment of existence…

- Think about it…. 
ĪŚVARA & RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE
PILGRIMAGE (YĀTRA)
Pilgrimage

- There are numerous places of worship in India that have gained sanctity over the millennia – we call the pilgrimage sites because

- One’s attitude (*bhāvana*) is what makes a place sacred!
  - If one has the attitude of devotion, that person will be blessed
  - If one visits the place as a tourist, they might not derive the same benefit
Pilgrimage

- Sage Ajāvana instructs Prahlāda (4th skanda of *Devi Bhagavatam*) that even though many have lived and bathed on the banks of the Ganga, only those who have an attitude of devotion to Ganga derive spiritual benefit from bathing in its holy waters.

- The *Padma Purana* says that one’s devotion and purity of mind are really what bless a person when he/she visits a sacred place.
Pilgrimage

- It is said that every person owes three debts in his/her life
  - Debts to the deities for what one is blessed with (i.e., what is “given”)
  - Debts to one’s forefathers who have left a legacy of culture and knowledge
  - Debt to oneself for one’s spiritual growth
- It is said that one fulfills these debts by pilgrimage to Prayāg, Kāśi and Gayā (tristhalī yātrā)
Tristhalī Yātra

- Traditional customs followed in making the *tristhalī yātrā*
- First one visits *Rāmeśvaram* to make three Śiva Lingās with sand to worship Lord Śiva
- One of the three Lingās is then carried to *Prayāg* and immersed in the *Triveṇi (Ganga)* after worship and holy bath in the river – *to fulfill debt to oneself*
Tristhalī Yātra

- From Prayāg one next goes to Kāśi to take a dip in the Ganga & worship Lord Śiva - *to fulfill duty to the deities*

- From Kāśi one goes to Gayā to make offerings of rice balls (piṇḍas) to one’s forefathers at three places - *to fulfill one’s duties to one’s ancestors*
  - On the banks of River Phalguna (tīrtha śrāddha)
  - At the Viṣṇu-pāda site in Gaya
  - At the Vaṭa-vṛkṣa site in Gaya (akṣaya vata śrāddha)
Tristhalī Yātra

- From Gayā one returns to Prayāg and takes a dip in the Ganga
- From Prayāg one returns to Rāmeśvaram with Ganga water to perform abhiseka to the sivalinga
Pilgrimage

- Sabarimalai Yātrā (Lord Ayyappa)
- Chārdham Yātrā (Four sacred pilgrimage sites in the Himalayas – Gangotri, Yamunotri, Badrinath and Kedarnath)
- Amarnath Yātrā (Eastern recesses of Kashmir)
- Lord Subrahmanya Temple Yātrā
Pilgrimage

- Have you gone on any Tīrtha Yātrā with your family?
- What made this a Tīrtha Yātrā and not just a tourist visit?
- What do you remember the most on this Tīrtha Yātra?
- What is your “checklist” for your next Tīrtha Yātrā?
  - Devotional attitude
  - Anything else?
Homework

- Practice FIVE minutes of *mauna* (silence) every day and observe your mind and practice meditation every day for a few minutes.

- Reflect on how to develop the attitude of *anahankāra*
  - Identify any one of your accomplishments
  - *What had to be “given” for you to be successful in that activity or accomplishment? Write these down and bring it to the next class*
Lord Dakṣinamurthi

From Swami Tadatamananda Saraswati’s Atma Bodha Ashram, New Jersey
Contains the most profound teachings of Advaita Vedanta
Set in a meter called “Shardula Vikridita”
Superb piece of poetry
The wisdom in the Dakṣinamurthy stotram is capable of destroying mula-avidya or “root-ignorance” (fundamental ignorance)
The Dakṣinamurthy stotram is mokṣa-sastra – knowledge that can lead one to liberation
श्री दक्षिणामूर्तिः स्तोत्रम्

ॐ

सदाशिव समारंभां शंकराचार्यं मध्यमां ।
अस्मदाचार्यं पर्यंतं वन्दे गुरुपरम्परां ॥
A young guru, imparting knowledge of Brahman through silence, surrounded by rishis who are firmly established in wisdom…

...teacher of teachers, whose gesture signifies wisdom, whose nature is fullness, smiling, reveling in himself, I worship that Lord Dakshinamurti
Seated on the ground under the banyan tree, bestowing knowledge to all the rishis who have assembled near him...

...teacher of the three worlds, destroyer of the miseries of birth and death, I bow to that Lord.
Amazing! Under the banyan tree aged disciples sat around a youthful guru. He taught them in silence, yet their doubts were dispelled…
Nidhaye sarvavidyānām bhiṣaje bhavarogīnām
Gurave sarva lokānām dakṣiṇāmūrtaye namaḥ

Salutations to Lord Dakshinamurti, the abode of all wisdom, teacher of the whole world, healing those who suffer from the disease of samsara ...
Om namaḥ praṇavārthāya suddhajñānaika mūrtaye
Nirmālaya praśāntāya dakṣiṇāmūrtaye namaḥ

Salutations to Lord Dakshinamurti, who is the meaning of "Om", whose form is pure knowledge, who is taintless and utterly silent ...
Salutations to Lord Dakshinamurti, who underlies all apparent forms of separation and pervades the universe...
Concluding Śānti Mantra

ॐ पूर्णमद: पूर्णमिदम् पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

- Om pūrṇamadah pūrṇamidam pūrṇātpūrṇamudacyate
  pūrṇasya pūrṇamadāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate ॥
  Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ॥

That is fullness, this is fullness. From that fullness this fullness came. From that fullness (when) this fullness (is) removed, what remains is fullness. Om peace, peace, peace