

“God Consciousness Ultimate Goal of Human Life”

“Love God; not fear him” says Swami Bhakti Swarup Tirtha Maharaj, Founder of Gaudiya Vaishnava Association (GVA). Swamiji is currently in Atlanta to deliver Bhagavad Gita discourses between July 5th and 23rd in Alpharetta between 6:30 to 8:30 PM.

GVA is a spiritual congregation that aims to promote peace and harmony by spreading spiritual knowledge and remove the misery they believe is caused by hankering for material gains. GVA conducts various seminars/workshops at various Universities, Indian community centers and temples around the globe aimed for the youth.

“Vedic wisdom and theories are open to exploration and discussion for the aspirants to determine and decide a particular process that will ultimately lead one to God consciousness.”

“Vaishnavism promotes faith in a personal God, dwelling in a spiritual abode. It is the essential point of all Vedic teachings. Vedic wisdom and theories are open to exploration and discussion for the aspirants to determine and decide a particular process that will ultimately lead one to God consciousness” Swamiji says about the Vaishnava philosophy.

Swami Thirtha Maharaj firmly believes that the ultimate goal of human life is to be God-conscious and that the only way to happiness is to be a true devotee. His philosophy seems to be based

JYOTHSNA HEGDE in conversation with SWAMI BHAKTI SWARUP TIRTHA MAHARAJ, the founder of Gaudiya Vaishnava Association.



on the principle that a Krishna-conscious person is above and beyond the fear of failure or elation of success and that such a person will be able to face all possible situations in life with the knowledge that he has surrendered himself to God.

In terms of relationships, Swamiji opines that mother ideally provides a sense of security for a child and plays an important role in the child's development and the father must be the provider and guide the children. He believes that parents must imbibe Krishna consciousness in children at an early age which, he says, will prepare them to

face the world and revive family values throughout their lives. “Spouses must serve each other” he says about the ideal relation between spouses. He believes that a husband and wife that are ready and willing to serve and support each other will find themselves in a blissful marriage. In a teacher and student relationship he says it is important that the teacher accepts the student as his own child and the student serve his teacher with devotion and that the student must train in obedience. Speaking of Doctor patient relations, he reminds the importance of a person being Krishna con-

scious person saying that if the doctor was indeed god conscious then he would treat the patient as if he were treating a portion of Krishna himself and hence would do his best to treat all his patients. Similarly he says, quoting his own example when he was admitted in a hospital, a patient who is a Krishna devotee will not worry about the treatment because he knows that the God will take care of him and what ever the outcome of the treatment will be, cure or death, will be god willing.

In the International edition of the Bhagavat Vani, a magazine published by the GVA, Swamiji explains the five fundamental truths of the Bhagavad Gita namely “Ishwara”, he says is the supreme controller of the entire cosmos, “Jivas”, the individual living beings who are atomic portions of Krishna, “Prakriti”, the material nature he explains is God Krishna's material energy by which the entire cosmos has been created, maintained and destroyed periodically, “Kala”, the eternal element of time which sets the creative process in motion, and “Karma”, deeds or action performed by a combinations of three modes of material nature under the control and purview of eternal time.

Swami B.S.Tirtha Maharaj, the founder Acharya of GVA hails from Tamil Nadu. Shrilal Maharaj was invited to share his knowledge at The World Parliament of Religions held in Cape Town, South Africa, 1999.

For further information about the Gita discourses in Atlanta between July 5th and 23rd, you may visit <http://www.gva.in> or stop by 4795 Morton Bridge Lane, Alpharetta GA 30022 between 6:30 to 8:30 PM each day.

Aparna Dance Academy Celebrates Seasons At Annual Event



Atlanta: Aparna's Dance Academy performed one of its latest productions, Rituraj at its annual Kathak Utsav recently. This rendition in Kathak was remarkable. Performers told *katha* (story) of *ritu* (seasons) in the Kathak style.

“In India we have six seasons”, explained Aparna Sharma, the director of the academy, “One of them is *Basant ritu*, which is also known as king of seasons or Rituraj.” A two hours long production was formatted into a 30-minute performance for the event.

In its fourth annual Kathak Utsav, addition of great visual affects, lights, and high quality sound effects showed attention to details. The narration started with a story about beginning of earth, and origin of its name, *Ritambara*. “*Ritambara*”—a Sanskrit name for Earth—comes from the various seasons that add splendor to the planet. The blossoming flowers and singing birds of *Basant ritu*, sizzling heat in *Greeshm ritu*, dark clouds and loud thunders of *Varsha ritu* and pleasant nature of *Hemant ritu* are very well narrated with great sound affects.

However, Kathak performance is the one, which brought the feel-in-your-bones experience. It is amazing to see how skillfully, Kathak performers used “*bhav*” or the expression of emotion to show sizzling heat. Lyrics such as “*Koyal ki kuk, Bhaware ki gunjan,....*” and accompaniment of “*savan aayo re...*” with peculiar peacock walk, were rendered amazingly with *bhav* and *layakari*.

Aparna Sharma, demonstrating the mastery in Kathak, performed with her students in Rituraj. She held audience spellbound with her dynamic and thrilling performances. “I have never seen such a performance” said one parent after the event, “I am very happy to know that my daughter has a good future with you as her teacher. She is learning a lot from you. You motivate her and bring out the best in her.”

“Your started the show on time, this year and all past 3 years”, observed another, “All 15 of my family members enjoyed it very much”.

The event, Kathak Utsav, began in its tradition of Ganesh puja and *guru vandana*. Kamal Mohanty, a long time friend of Aparna Sharma,

hosted the show. With alternating performance on Kathak music and selected Hindi film music, performances were very entertaining. Little Radhas' performed Kathak on Lata Mangeshkar's “*Mohe Chedo Na*”. Each dance performance was Kathak dance, whether the music was Kathak “*bol*” or Hindi film song. Small children to young adults performed beautifully with signature Jaipur *gharana's* high speed footwork, and *chakkars* (pirouettes).

Aparna Sharma recognized the accomplishment of two of her students, who recently finished their Bhushan certification. Rajnish Singh and Nikki Sagar received tight hugs from their guru, Aparna. Both students expressed, each in their own words, their deep love for Kathak and strong bond for their guru. A visibly touched Sharma, explained such accomplishments are result of students' hard-work, discipline and love for this art and their guru. These are the key soft skills taught by her guru and she is teaching her students in return.

In the finale, Aparna and her

students treated audience with *Jugalbandi*, a rhythmic interplay between Aparna Sharma and her students. With their lighting fast footwork and pirouettes, and graceful hand movements had audience on their feet and clapping.

The year 2011 will be 10th anniversary of academy and 5th anniversary of Kathak Utsav. Aparna Sharma promised a special show in Kathak Utsav 2011.

