

AWGP NORTH AMERICA YOUTH NEWSLETTER

GREAT MOMENTS OF CHANGE

Q4 2021 (October to December)

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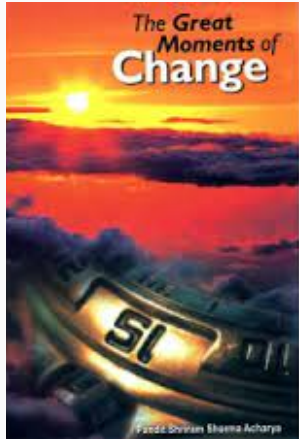
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Introduction

Our generation is living at the cutting edge of technological progress, scientific advancement, and global connectivity. Simultaneously, we are experiencing social, political, economic, environmental, and individual levels of unrest. These changes comprise a critical juncture in history. This edition is based on the book, "The Great Moments of Change", which illuminates the paradox of rapid material growth with increased human suffering, while providing comprehensive solutions for sustainable progress.



Below are quotes from the book "Great Moments of Change" by Vedmurti Taponistha Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya ("Gurudev"). The book elucidates the significance of the current times that humanity is navigating. He acutely explains present day challenges and describes their causes and remedies, while also providing assurance of an extremely bright future for all.

The Root Cause of Modern Problems

"Materialism and tendency of resource accumulation has led some people to ignore the age old values of **prudence, religion, responsibility, justice, compassion, humility, brotherhood, and benevolence**, which being the very foundation stones of theism and spirituality, were earlier considered essential ingredients of life." (Page 17)

"Ironically, the prevalent traditions and **modern versions of spirituality** have been polluted to such a great extent that to an intelligent mind they do not appear worthy of any consideration whatsoever." (Page 28)

"Instead of finding comprehensive solutions, prevalent modern approach has merely **provided local treatments to suppress the problems**, which then keep on recurring and even multiplying in various shapes, forms and intensity elsewhere." (Page 62)

Solutions for Sustainable Progress

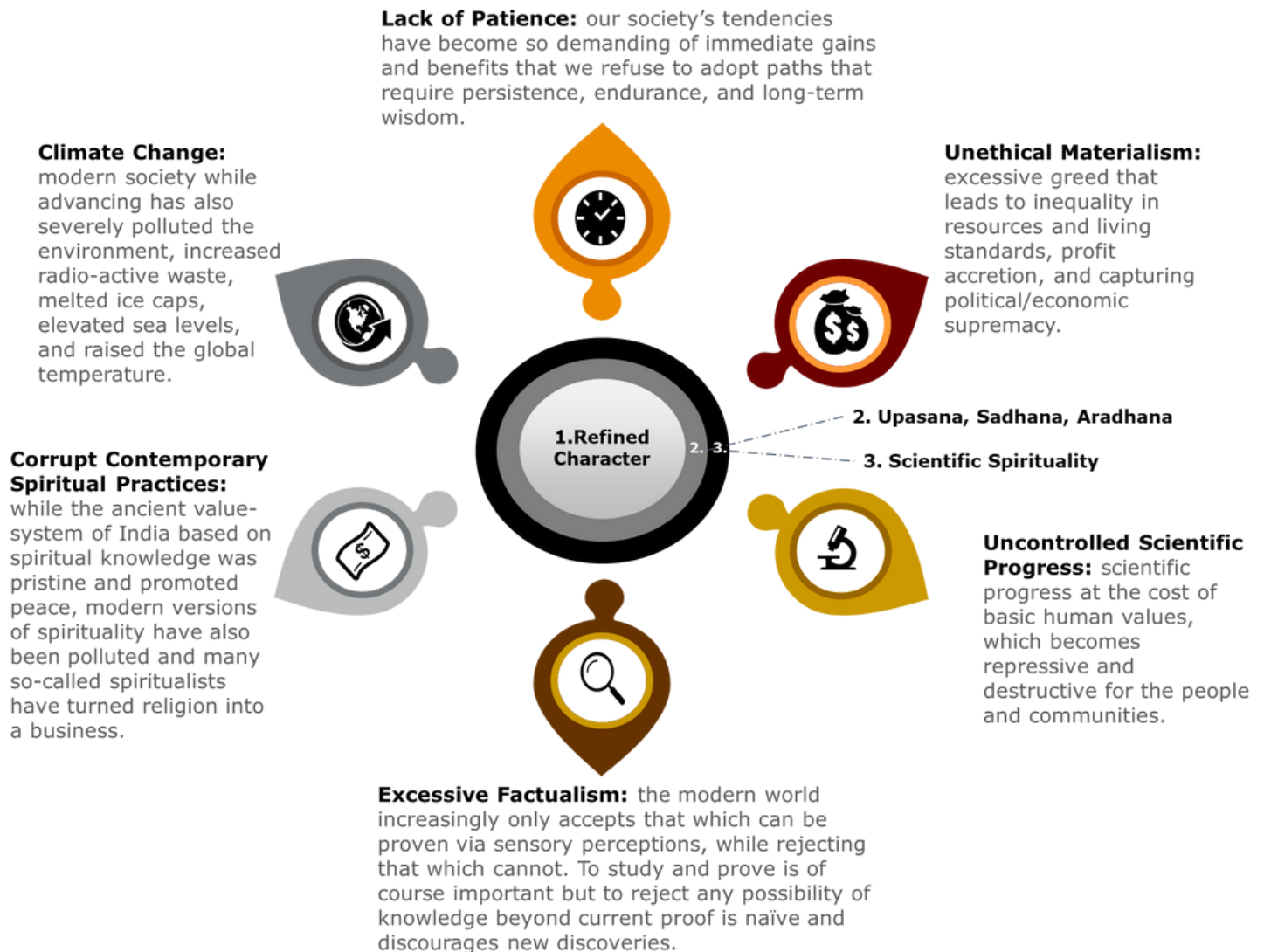
"Amidst this confusion, a solution emerges. **Materialism should join hands with spiritual wisdom** and on the other hand spirituality should assume a form which can be convincingly tested by the standards of scientific factualism." (Page 30)

"Cultivation of **inner-strength and awakening of intrinsic desire for spiritual ascent** will bring about an **extraordinary transformation in the aspirations, thoughts and behavior of humankind** and will turn the course of the misguided human endeavor upside down from cravings and evils, towards sensitivity and social benevolence and elevate it towards wisdom. Thus, gradually, an environment of life will be created that would resemble resurrection of Satyug." (Page 70)



Thematic Overview of the Book

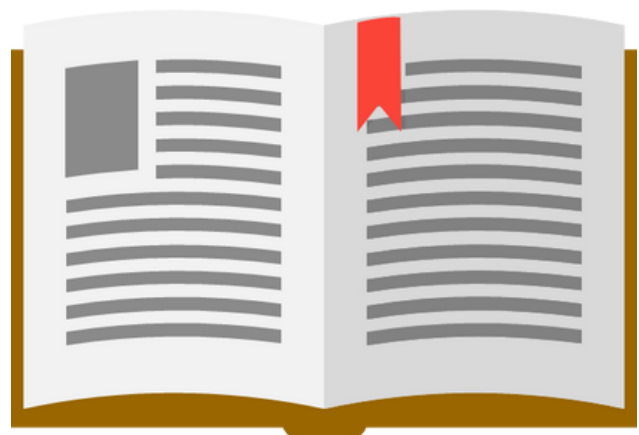
Visual Summary of Great Moments of Change: The key challenges in our society are shown on the outside and the solutions presented in the book are shown in the central core of the infographic.



Book Reflection by Krishna Solanki (Toronto, Canada):

"We live in a world of constant chaos and turmoil. From the pandemic to climate change to geopolitical clashes, the world seems to be increasingly heading towards a destructive path. The book *Great Moments of Change* provides a revealing exposition of how we have even ended up here. The author explores how the hope that progress and science would be a way to improve life for everyone on this planet, has instead become a curse. Instead of providing a better life for all, this progress and science has been ruthlessly exploited by few who continue to take without care or worry of the impact on others.

This continued exploitation will only lead to the destruction of this beautiful planet and continue to bring the vast majority unhappiness. Fortunately, the author provided a comprehensive approach on how we can move forward as a society. Through thorough experimentation and dissection of the root problem, the book provided a robust treatment via a new field of scientific spirituality. By combining the best of the past and today's world we have an opportunity to bring a new era where we can all live together peacefully. An era of heaven on earth, where we all belong and act with wisdom and compassion. This book is a must read as we approach this great moment of change."



Advice by Dr. Chinmay Pandya

Great Moments of Change mentioned how it can be very difficult to walk the righteous path when the wrong path is widely accepted. How can you distinguish between the two and what do you do when you cannot decide if the path you are walking is right or wrong?

Firstly, how do you define what is right/wrong because right/wrong are arbitrary definitions. What is right for India might be wrong for Pakistan and what is right for the US might be wrong for Canada. If we go through the definitions of what is socially acceptable, they would change from place to place, even within the same geography, linguistics and cultural divisions. But the spiritual definition is a very easy one to follow and is based on your intentions. If my intention is to help the other person and create a right path for my soul and others, then it's the right path. And if I'm thinking about hurting other people, my intentions are wrong and will eventually bring the wrong outcome. Everyone knows in their own heart what their intentions are. It may look all correct on the outside but inside people may have darker intentions and sinister sentiments. The idea is very similar in both morality and spirituality; based on intention rather than outcome. This is what Gurudev is also saying in the book "Great Moments of Change"; even if everyone is doing something, it doesn't mean that it's correct. Your conscience and intentions should agree with it.

How can you distinguish between doubt and the inner/divine voice and what if you find it difficult to follow the inner/divine voice?

By definition, the divine voice is doubtless and beyond any speculation. Whenever it appears, you will have no doubt; even if the whole world is saying that there is no God, Prahlad believed there is and his belief made God appear. That kind of doubtless knowledge, which isn't based on intellectual capacity or logic, but coming straight from the heart with absolute and utmost belief, that is the divine voice of intuition. Everyone has divine intuition, the problem is that our mind is filled with distractions and contradictory paths given by others (friends, peers, parents, society, etc.) making it hard to listen this inner voice. The idea is to be still. When we're calm and in tune with our real self then the voice emerges because it's never gone, it's always there. The divine voice is not a flame that can be extinguished, it's always lit. We must learn the process of unlearning because the mistake that humanity has made is actually accumulation of excessive information at the cost of wisdom, hence the inner voice becomes feeble. But it's not an easy task, it takes a while for a person to master that and takes lots of courage to stop listening to external influences. One that has absolute belief in themselves would have undoubtable belief in divinity and vice versa. In order to achieve this you must do a couple of things. 1) Devote time for listening to your inner self, 2) honest self introspection, 3) live life like you only have one day to live so the mind is not being thrown into the fantasies of the future or the worries of the past. Stick to your path with persistence and perseverance.

We are living in a time of great external adversities. How can we individually make an impact on society if there are so many external uncertainties against us?

Firstly, external uncertainties have always existed, we are not special. Everyone has had to face them, perhaps even harder ones than we can endure. Second, individual difference is always what matters, not what is being collectively done. When one person takes a stance, then only can they inspire others. Without one taking a stance against what is wrong, no collective effort can be generated. Even if it's just a small step; it starts with the smallest things to the biggest things in life. Like Gurudev wrote in 1986 in Akhand Jyoti, when negative forces come, they come like a storm and some people will fly away like dry leaves. Others stand tall like trees; we should be standing like trees. Adversities give us possibility and opportunity. Only in adversity one can define and refine their character. If there is no war then soldiers would have no possibility to show what they're capable of, where else would a teacher show their ability to teach other than in a school. If we are doctors then we are supposed to show it in the hospital and if we are "Srijan Sainiks" of Gurudev then this is a good time for us to do what we are capable of doing.



Great Moments of Change in the Words of Enlightened Souls

Many enlightened souls have inspired humanity to rethink their current ways of living. According to them (and Pujya Gurudev), we're at the cusp of a divine transition. Below are two examples from two such extremely enlightened souls who have envisioned the same future truths as those referred to in Great Moments of Change.



"A new world is born. It is not the old world that is changing. It is a NEW world which is born. And we are right in the middle of the transition period when the two overlap, when the old is still all powerful and entirely controlling the ordinary consciousness. But the new slips in, still very modest and unnoticed - so unnoticed that externally it disturbs hardly anything... for the moment, and is even absolutely imperceptible in the consciousness of most people. But it is working, it is growing."

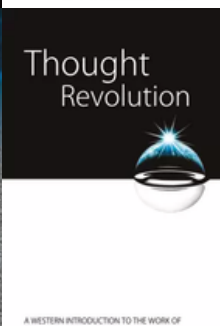
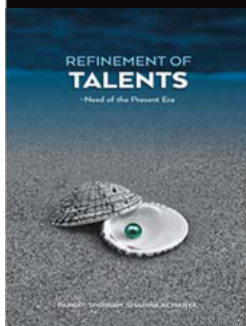
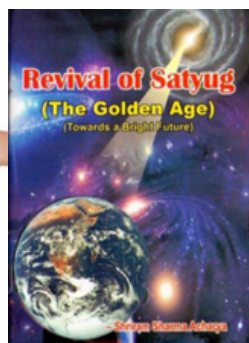
- The Mother (Sri Aurobindo Ashram), Book: The Mind of the Cells



"India, when independent, will adopt the materialism of the West and attain prosperity to such an extent that it will surpass past records in that field and Western countries like America would become increasingly spiritual in nature because they will have realized from the height of material prosperity the simple truth that gross materialism cannot give eternal peace."

- Swami Vivekananda (1897)

Suggested Books Aligned with Great Moments of Change



The following are six prominent books by Gurudev that expound on the critical themes that are mentioned in Great Moments of Change. Reading them would clearly explain the divine transition that the world is living through, describe his overall vision for a bright future, and highlight our roles to support this evolutionary process.

- 1) Problems of Today Solutions of Tomorrow
- 2) Folly of the Wise
- 3) Thought Revolution
- 4) Revival of Satyug
- 5) Refinement of Talents I and II
- 6) A Glimpse of the Golden Future

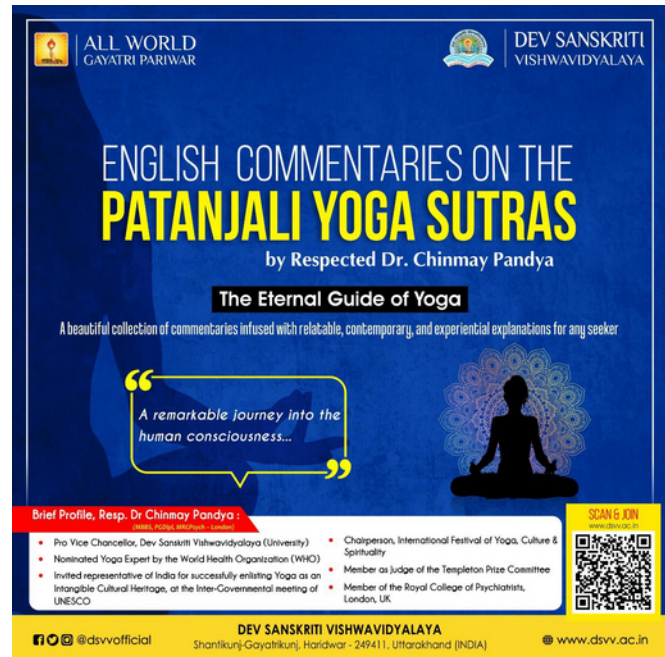


Special Updates

Patanjali Yoga Sutras - Chapter 2 English Commentaries by Dr. Chinmay Pandya

Many of the readers would recall from the Q1 2021 edition that Resp. Dr. Chinmay Pandya had commenced a remarkable deep dive into Chapter 1 of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. After much anticipation, English commentaries of Chapter 2 (of total of 4) of the Yoga Sutras have been released, and like before, they provide profound insights and knowledge for any seeker. This chapter reveals the famous and largely quoted knowledge of the "Kriya Yog", disseminating knowledge on an action-oriented approach to spirituality. We encourage everyone to listen to them, since they're infused with relatable spiritual knowledge, and are replete with helpful stories and explanations that help us tackle our everyday challenges.

YouTube: [click here](#) **Spotify:** [click here](#)



International Spotlight: New Zealand

In order to foster increased collaborations with other youth groups, we wanted to showcase the youth activities that the New Zealand pariwar has been engaged in, which are:

- 1) **Reading Call:** a twice a week Akhand Joyti (Hindi) reading call to read through the monthly edition and discuss.
- 2) **Bal Sanskar Shala:** the youth of NZ started the first BSS in Christchurch in December 2021, which leveraged curriculum from Shantikunj. This BSS will continue to run in Christchurch and a new one is planned to be initiated in Hamilton, NZ in early 2022.
- 3) **Sanskars:** youth of NZ also actively participate to perform yagyas and various sanskars at various households to spread the knowledge of Indian Culture.

Weekly Youth Meditation Call

Youth from across Canada and the United States started the new year off with a simple idea to dedicate one day during the week to perform short meditations. We wanted to: (1) start off simple to and have no/minimum commitment, thereby allowing more people to join; hence the once a week frequency on Wednesdays on a "drop-in" basis, (2) ensure the meditations are easy to perform, and inclusive to "non-AWGP" and non-Indian audiences; hence why we started with "Naadyog". See below for details:

Day / Time: Wednesdays at 7:30am EST

How to join?: Please reach out to awgpnay@dsbv.ac.in



Self Care Corner

SOOTHE YOUR SOUL

Great moments of change start with you! Caring for yourself can be the first step in making a change in the world around you. Below are suggested ways to practice self care and truly be in tune with your divine spirit.



Music Therapy

The melodies of music can have a therapeutic effect on the physical and spiritual body.

Music therapy is now widely used in hospital centers, nursing homes and other places of healing. Music therapy can settle emotional turbulences. It helps to decrease stress by working to reduce cortisol levels, lowering heart rate and decreasing arterial blood pressure. The melodies of music can also modulate neuronal activity in the brain especially in the reward center and help release endorphins and oxytocin. Group music can also elicit positive feelings of bonding and togetherness. Read more about the benefits of music therapy in this [article](#).

Join the North American Youth call on Wednesday mornings to practice music therapy via "NaadYog" (see pg 6).



Swadhyay (Study of Self)

Swadhyay, or self introspection, is an important tenet of connecting with divinity and your deeper self. Swadhyay consists of careful observation of your thoughts, feelings and emotions. This can be accomplished through many different modalities, including reading sacred texts such as Gurudev's literature, practicing yoga or engaging in pranayama and meditation.

The power of righteous knowledge gained via swadhyay can be immense and even serve as a companion to help us through our most difficult struggles. Pujya Gurudev often used to mention that it may not always be possible to be in the company of illumined thinkers but you can always establish a deep connection with their thoughts through the practice of swadhyay. The goal should be to not merely read but to also imbibe in our lives. See page 5 for a list of six significant books to read.



Regional Pariwar Updates

Toronto Pariwar

Swadhyay: Youth from Toronto continued to participate in the weekly Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna calls as well as the weekly call wherein youth from multiple regions were reading "Who Am I?".

Community: One of our youth also continued to work on the development of a North America wide youth website. **Education:** Our BSS continued to hold regular classes.



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Austin Pariwar

Education: We commenced our 2021/2022 BSS year during this period with our theme of "Gayatri - Philosophy and Applications". The objective is to familiarize the students with concepts and science behind the Gayatri mantra, in a way that is relevant in a North American context. Topics covered during this period include: the science of sound (infra and ultra sonic sounds), definition of Gayatri Mantra and its deeper meaning/health benefits, "shikha" and "yagyopaveet" and the nine illumined qualities they represent, and how to eat your food and drink water (application of Gayatri on the physical body).

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Western Ontario Pariwar

Community: Older youth from the Western Ontario region successfully continued their monthly youth meet-ups (virtually). These monthly meetings serve as a way for youth to reconnect and also continue to read and discuss critical works and books of Pujya Gurudev. The older youth also brainstormed ideas for intriguing presentations that could be delivered during the upcoming Vasant Panchami event. **Education:** We also continued to facilitate regular BSS classes for younger children. One special update was that our Milton BSS classes started to cater to the intermediate youth age group (i.e. teenagers) by discussing key verses from Shrimad Bhagwat Geeta and how they can be applied to our lives for continued prosperity.

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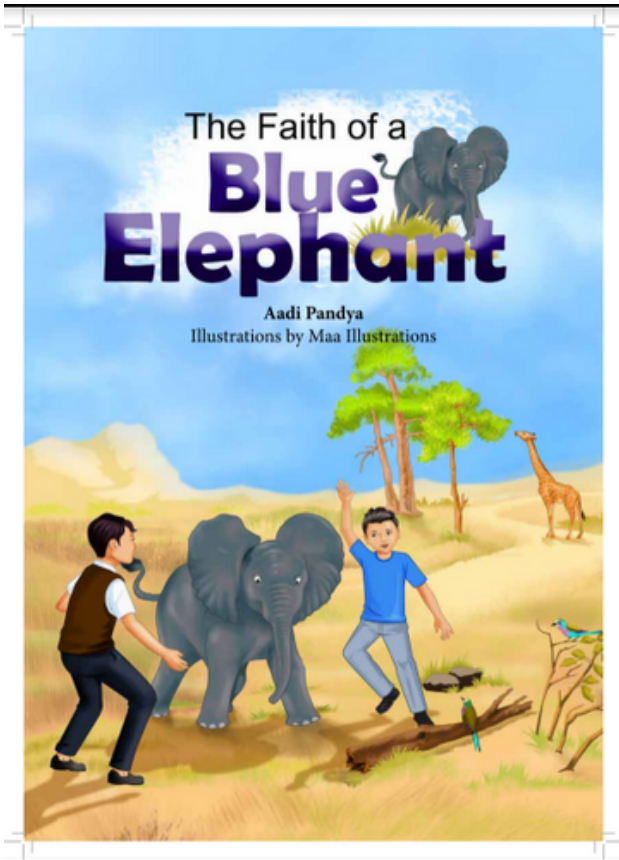
Regional Pariwar Updates

Long Island Pariwar

GGKLI partnered with Global Preservation Project through a representative of both organizations: Sonali Arora. "The NPO aims to promote education and awareness to the constant and oncoming environmental issues facing the world today. We bring people together through projects that combat climate change, pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity issues. We hosted a book writing event where the children of GGKLI attended a lecture about a multitude of problems our environment faces, and learned about what they could do to solve these problems. To provide a greater educational impact, the children and I worked together to brainstorm possible issues to write about, and plotlines to illustrate in a new children's book that will later be available (see cover image of the book to the left). GGKLI already provides their children with activities related to the Art of Living and wellbeing, and I wanted to expand their knowledge by showing them the real crises that we face, as well as how even small changes have a large impact in the long run."

– Sonali Arora

Contact: contact@ggkli.org



Chicago Pariwar

Education: The BSK Chicago kids continue their progress to further indulge and learn life lessons from Pujya Gurudev's teachings. The younger kids were introduced to the significance of the festive season of India, which includes Diwali. For the first time in the pandemic, the Gayatri Gyan Mandir of Chicago also celebrated Diwali/Dusherra with Chicago Gayatri parijjans with fireworks and crackers. The kids, parents, and everyone enjoyed meeting and having food together after a very long break. The older students are focusing on learning and taking a deep dive into the 18 Pledges ("Sat Sanklap"), whereas the younger kids are taught its significance via moral stories. Additional activities include: teaching of Sanskrit to younger students wherein they were also taught to sing "Happy Birthday" in Sanskrit, selecting one student as the news reporter of the week for improving their public speaking skills, and sharing of their favourite prayers and their meanings.

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Other Updates and Initiatives

- **Calling All Readers:** Please join us on Wednesdays from 9-10 PM EST as we embark on reading the book "Sleep, dreams and Spiritual Reflections". There is no compulsion to have read every week, and participants can join to listen in as well. Please email us for the call link if you are interested in joining.
- **Feedback and Q&A:** Please fill out this [Google form](#) in order to anonymously ask questions to Respected Dr. Chinmay Pandya for the next newsletter, give feedback on Newsletter improvement, or submit pictures/stories or other original work.

"Prudent integration of advanced-science and progressive spirituality could make the world more prosperous than the ancient Golden Age of Truth (*Satyug*). The author [Gurudev] also envisioned that the Supreme Creator has churned this grand evolutionary process in the subtle world. There is little doubt that it would trigger humankind to establish the new and brighter golden age (*Mahasatyug*)."

– *Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya*



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