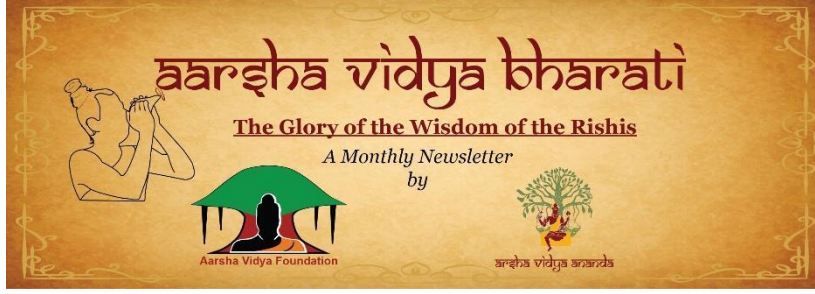

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A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [apr 2024 issue](#) or read any of [the articles](#).

How being a SHINE teacher has helped me in my Vedanta pursuit

By Priya Gopie, Trinidad and Tobago

**SHINE is a learning program for children about the Spiritual Heritage of India for Next Generation Empowerment.*

In this life, I play many varied roles in response to different relationships- a mother to my kids, a wife to my husband, a doctor to my patients, an administrator to my staff, a student to my Sanskrit teacher, and so on. So why take on this novel role of being a SHINE teacher?

Through the teaching of Vedanta, the vision of 'I' should expand with *mahāvākya*-s like *tat tvam asi*, but then I look at my limited self, and wonder how can this be true? By taking on bigger social roles in our communities that are not dictated by our mandatory existing relationships and external motivators, I get to experience how big I am. I see how connected I am to others, how I can impact others, and even create small changes in a place bigger than me and mine. Being a SHINE teacher has given me a platform to impact a small group of children, their parents and maybe some onlookers. With this, I experience an expansion of the understanding of I, which is helpful as one studies Vedanta.



Also, being a SHINE teacher has helped me to acknowledge myself as a Hindu. In a society where 20% of the population is Hindu, and many educated Hindus do not externally identify themselves as being Hindu, one may not want to appear religious due to the imaginary fear of being judged.

As a SHINE teacher, I publicly post on social media what I teach kids about our *Sanātana* Dharma. SHINE has helped me to be more straightforward and accepting of me. I grow out of notions and boundaries. *Antaḥkaraṇaśuddhi* is an important part of the Vedanta pursuit.

I have been a Hindu from birth. As I grew older, some of the practices of Hinduism fell to the wayside, perceived as unnecessary, maybe ritualistic, or I didn't feel connected to the practice. Through SHINE, I see the strength of my culture and heritage, and how it makes me secure and resilient by connecting to *Bhagavān*. Because of SHINE, I am competent and regular in performing the 5-step *pūjā*. Why is it important to connect with *Bhagavān*? Well, *Bhagavān* is that *tat of tat tvam asi*. So, to fully understand I, I make an effort to understand *tat*.

As one takes on varying roles, and develops competence in each, the recognition of one's capacity brings a confidence that I can achieve anything I set my mind to. As Swaminiji says~ I realize that if I can do one thing, then I can do ten things. Of course with the teaching of *karma yoga*, I recognize that I am a contributor and not the controller of any outcome, but still the inherent untapped shakti that is there in each of us is amazing. Indeed you can be a SHINE teacher in addition to whatever role you play. One is not defined by any role. You can take up and identify with any role. Taking up an unaccustomed role, with different relationships, like being a SHINE teacher does help with this. I am the simple being that fills up each role.



On this journey of life, one realizes how blessed one is. As a SHINE teacher, I get to give back in a small way to my community. One can use oneself as a positive influence. The kids have a SHINE teacher who is a Hindu work-professional in their society. Naturally, one becomes a leader for *Sanātana* Dharma.

In today's inclusive society, one is inundated by various influences. By having a strong foundation

in *Sanātana* Dharma, the person is able to stand firm amidst all. Through the application of dharma, by practicing *karma yoga*, and connecting with *Bhagavān*, one leads a happy and fulfilled life. This is the gift of *Sanātana* Dharma. The understanding of Vedanta is supported by the teachings of *Sanātana* Dharma. In and through the rituals and traditions, one sees that it points to the Truth of I. Why not make sure that this is available to future generations by helping to pass it on?

Each *śiṣya* wants to do *sevā* for their Guru. One may do so based on one's fanciful imagination and *rāga-dveṣa*. However, what does the Guru really need from me? Well nothing really, but if one can somehow help in a project of the Guru, then one can certainly try to. Is being a SHINE teacher contributing to my Guru's work? If so, then maybe I can devote some of my time and effort to this endeavor.

These are some of the deciding reasons for a Vedanta student to choose to be a SHINE teacher. The beauty of being a SHINE teacher is that there is never any pressure to do anything. From the curriculum and teaching material, one can design classes based on the children in front of you. It is a blank canvas on which one can create. So much freedom to do, as was always the case.



SHINE *Shine*
Spiritual Heritage of India for Next-gen Empowerment

Arsha Vidya Ananda
@discoveratma.com

invites everyone to contribute to
Sanaatana Dharma in a meaningful
way by teaching children the spiritual
& cultural heritage of India

ENROL NOW
BE A SHINE TEACHER

Qualifications required:

- Can find / have access to an interested group children (4-12 yrs)
- Can spare 2-4 hours a week to conduct a SHINE Class (offline/online)
- Highly motivated and committed to teach about Sanaatana Dharma & the rich heritage of India

SHINE Tejasvi Teacher's Training
April 18th-19th, 22nd-25th 2024
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Fill form at:
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