

Rishikesh camp by Sri Uday Acharya ji

Vedanta Teacher Shri. Uday Acharya Ji conducted spiritual camp at Rishikesh in June 2024 (17th to 21st). All the participants met in the evening at the Swami Dayananda Adhishtanam for puja, followed by the puja at Swami Gangadhareshwar temple and the Ganga Arati. Our respected Teacher Shri. Uday Acharya Ji briefed us about the ashram timings and a schedule of the camp for next five days.

With the blessings of Swamiji and after the puja in the Swami Dayananda Adhishtana Sthal, we received the printed text material for our camp. He blessed us all for success of the camp.

The guided meditation by Shri. Uday Acharya ji helped us to make the mind calm and receptive to knowledge imparted in subsequent sessions. The main text taken up was BhriguValli from Taittiriya Upanishad (Chapter – III) which made us aware that “anando brahmeti vyajanat” – you are that brahman which is nothing but ananda. The teaching on Nirvana shatkam also made us aware that you are ananda, the limitless, you are shiva, the pure (untainted).

During the chanting session, we chanted Prayers, Shanti Mantras, Dayananda Panchakam, shlokas of Chapter-III - Bhrigu Valli and Nirvana Shatkam. Chanting effectively reduced stress, increased calmness and invoked the divinity and sense of oneness with the divine. Interactive Workshops gave insights and made us think where we are; what we are; and made us aware about our spiritual, emotional, and financial goals; our weaknesses and strengths in these aspects and what and how we should plan and try to meet our goals. We shall certainly do our best to achieve them and live up to our own expectations.

On the last day of our camp, the Swami Sakshatkritananda ji, who is in-charge of the Swami Dayananda Ashram at Rishikesh, gave a small talk on Vedanta and explained us about ‘I’ and ‘This’ and the error of superimposition of ‘This’ on ‘I’ which needs to be corrected with the knowledge of the self from a teacher who knows shastra. He also gave his blessings to all of us for our learning Vedanta and gave lovely chocolates in the form of prasada.

Apart from above camp schedule, I would like to mention that during our stay at Rishikesh, we utilized afternoon free time for visiting few prominent places. It was nice experience to watch and attend all pujas performed by Shri. Matrubutham ji and Smt. Uma Madhu ji on 19th June 2024, including the mandir puja / Arati, Ganga Arati.

The main takeaway from the camp is the realization that “You are the only one whole, undivided, timeless, limitless, conscious reality. What IS is Brahman, here and now. Brahman is Kaaranam and kaarya both. Brahman is a cause of all. Brahman alone is. There is nothing other than brahman which is Ananda. Everything else is negatable.”

Our gratitude and thanks to our respected teacher Shri. Uday Acharya Ji, who has organized and conducted this camp so well. Thank also to Smt. Kalpana madam for meticulous planning and coordinating the activities of the camp. I must also thank all my co-participants.

- Report by Satish Kharche, Mumbai

Anugraha bhashanam of Swami Sakshatkritananda ji:

Swamiji blessed us with a short talk at the first opportunity he could manage after returning to the ashram from his trip. Within a short time, he covered many aspects of Vedanta in a very interesting way. After explaining about Shruti Prasthana (e.g. all Upanishads), Smriti Prastana (e.g. Bhagavat Geeta) and Gyana Prastana (e.g. Brahma Sutra) he moved on to Vishaye Vishaya vichara to clarify the error in the mix up between them. 'I' is Vishaye while 'This' covering the word of things, people including my body is 'Vishaya.'

What I have is this body, mind, and intellect complex. Unfortunately, an error is committed by superimposing the 'I' Vishaye on 'What I have' the body-mind complex and the limitation of Vishaya is mapped on to 'I' Vishaye due lack of clarity. The error that 'I am this' and 'this is mine' is age old, Anadi. I am born ignorant of self and the world. Any amount of knowing about the world is insufficient as 'to be known' is ever increasing exponentially and our life time is very limited. So, it is better to know the essence of all knowledge 'I.' This knowledge is gained by using the means of knowledge by exposing us to it.

Shruti Prastana (e.g. all Upanishads); for understanding this one should be prepared like Nachiketas, Satyakama, Swetaketu et al. Upanishads are for eligible students. Hence one may start with Smriti Prastana (e.g. Bhagavat Geeta). Arjuna's problem is very much like ours (shoka) sorrow, (moha) delusion and (bhrama) confusion. Krishna had brilliantly addressed this

in Bhagavat Geeta. In chapters 1 to 6, Krishna explains about I and Me, in chapters 7 to 12 he describes the aspects of Ishwara and in chapters 13 to 18 Krishna explains the merger of 'I, world and Ishwara'. Gyana Prastana (e.g. Brahma Sutra) clarifies why Vedanta is required.

EPILOGUE:

The grandeur of Gangadhareshwar temple, majestic and lively Pujya Swamiji's Adhishtanam, gushing and gurgling Ganga, towering Himalayas and the peaceful ambience of the Ashram were all super delicious. Acharya ji's camp prasadam to us of three wonderful books of Pujya Swamiji 'Danam,' 'Japa' and 'Hinduism...its uniqueness' are valuable take home blessings.

Report by Uma Mathrubutham, Navi Mumbai