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Swami Suddhananda Saraswati, Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati and Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati on the auspicious occasion of Shankara Jayanti in Hyderabad



Family Retreat at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh



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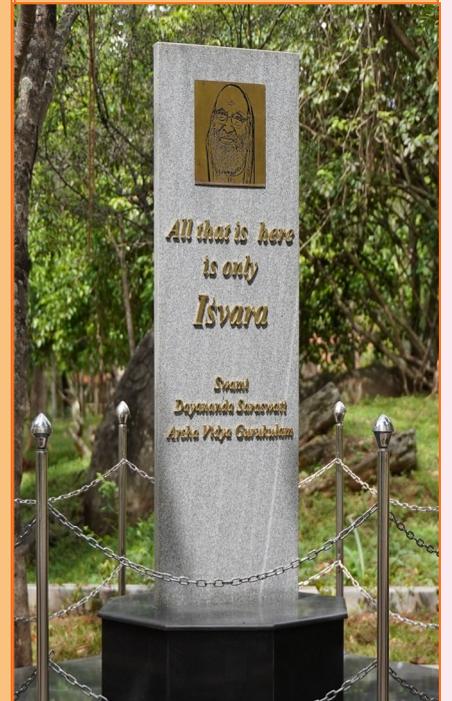
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This is the thirty sixth part of the serial article, continuation from May 2024 newsletter.

अणोरणीयानहमेव तद्व-
न्महानहं विश्वमहं विचित्रम् ।
पुरातनोऽहं पुरुषोऽहमीशो
हिरण्मयोऽहं शिवरूपमस्मि ॥ २० ॥

*aṇoraṇīyānahameva tadvanmahānaham
viśvamaham vicitram
purātano'ham puruṣo'hamīśo
hiraṇmayo'ham śivarūpamasmi*

अणोः - than the subtle अणीयान् - subtler अहम् एव - I alone तद्वत् - similarly महान् - (greater than the) great अहम् - I am विश्वम् अहम् - I am the universe विचित्रम् - the manifold पुरातनः - ancient अहम् - I am पुरुषः अहम् - the whole I am ईशः - the ruler हिरण्मयः अहम् - effulgent I am शिवरूपम् अस्मि - I am of the nature of auspiciousness

I am subtler than the subtle, and similarly greater than the greatest. I am the manifold universe. I am ancient, the whole, the ruler, the effulgent, and of the nature of auspiciousness. (20)

Aṇu means an atom. Here it stands for the subtle, very small, and very subtle. *Aṇoḥ aṇīyān*, subtler than the subtle I am. *Tadvat mahān aham*, in a similar manner, I am big. I am simultaneously smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. How can a given thing be simultaneously small as well as large? This can be only when the qualities of smallness and largeness are superimposed. Therefore, I am the one that shines as smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest. Whatever is small, whatever is large, and whatever is in between, all of it exists because I am. I impart existence and intelligence to everything; I am everywhere. I am *aṇu*, smaller than an atom. I have not become an atom; I have not become big or small. Whatever is, big or small, it is and it shines because of me. To put it another way, the self shines or appears both as the small and the big, as well as everything inbetween, without having become any of that.

Viśvam idaṁ vicitram, this manifold, variegated universe I am. I shine as this variegated universe of names and forms. In the same way as the rope shines as the snake, I shine as the manifold universe. The universe is recent and constantly changing. Are you also changing? No. *Purātanaḥ aham*. I am the most ancient one. I am not subject to birth and growth. I am ancient, ever the same, eternal, and changeless. I am all pervasive. I am *puruṣa*, which means *pūrṇa*, complete. *Puruṣa* also means consciousness. The one who dwells in the 'city' of the body is called *puruṣa*, and the one in whom the whole universe dwells is also *puruṣa*. I am the self of all. I am the one that fills up everything. That all pervasive consciousness I am.

Aham īśaḥ, I am the ruler. In my presence alone is everything ruled. The word ruler is used for *īśvara*, but it is not meant in the literal sense, because some kind of exertion or strain is always involved in such an action. Nobody wants to be ruled; everybody wants freedom. Even a child does not want to be ruled. We might ask the child to hold our finger and walk, but it wants to walk independently. Even a little dog does not want to be ruled. When you take the dog for a walk, in the beginning, you walk the dog, then the dog walks you! So if *īśvara* wanted to rule this universe, he would really be in trouble, because that would involve a lot of stress on his part, and some day all that stress would cause him to come to an end. However, as we have already seen, this is not the case, because it is in the mere presence of *īśa* that the ruling takes place; there is no real ruling involved.

Things can be caused to happen by one's mere presence only when the presence is of the nature of love; then alone is everything happy. We see that everything in the universe is happy doing what it is required to do. We do not see any kind of pressure. The sun rises every morning at an appointed time; it never revolts for a break in that routine. The sun, the moon, and the stars function exactly according to the laws, as appointed. There is no transgression of the law. That is because they do not see any need to transgress it. They are happy being what they are. If you are happy doing what you are required to do, then no ruling is required. The self-motivation is sufficient, isn't it? Only if one is not quite happy doing what one

has to do that there is a need to be ruled; one then needs to be forced or needs to be disciplined. Otherwise, if one enjoys what he or she is doing, there is no need for any rule.

It is clear that the whole universe seems to function out of *ānanda*, joy. Says the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, “All the beings of the universe are born of *ānanda* (wholeness, fullness), in *ānanda* alone are they sustained, and back into *ānanda* do they go.” As this *ānanda* alone is *īśvara* manifest. Call it *ānanda*, happiness, or call it love. In that state, everything seems to be quite content being what it is. There is no need for any external motivation or pressure; everything functions out of total contentment and harmony. By the presence of *ānanda* or love, everything automatically is ruled. That kind of *īśa* or ruler I am. *Hiraṇmayo’ham*, I am golden, the effulgent. *Hiraṇya* means gold, which implies shining or effulgence. ‘I am golden’ means ‘I am self-effulgent, self-shining, self-revealing.’ *Śivarūpaḥ asmi*. I am *śiva*, I am the very auspiciousness. Ever pure and sacred I am.

We hear that *īśvara* is omniscient and omnipotent, meaning all-knowing and all-powerful. In what sense is that so? In what sense is *īśvara* the ruler? That becomes clear when we analyze the meaning of the word *īśvara*. The word is derived from the root *īś*, in the sense of ruling. To that root, the suffix *varac* is applied. That lends it the sense of an agent having such a habit. Hence, one whose nature it is to rule is called *īśvara*, and such a one as he is also omniscient and omnipotent, all knowing and all powerful. God alone knows how many galaxies there are and what happens in each one. But how many eyes does he require to know everything? How many ears should he have to be all-knowing? How many hands should he have to be all-powerful? How many weapons should he wield? Indeed, our gods are shown with many hands and many weapons. But how many weapons should God have? How many hands would he need to control the universe, which extends everywhere?

The next *mantra* explains this.

To be continued...

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the thirty fourth part of the serial article, continuation from May 2024 newsletter.

धर्मज्ञो गुणवान् दान्तः कृतज्ञः सत्यवाञ्छुचिः । रामो राजसुतो ज्येष्ठो यौवराज्यमतोऽर्हति ॥ २-८-१४
भ्रातृन् भृत्यांश्च दीर्घायुः पितृवत् पालयिष्यति । संतप्यसे कथं कुब्जे श्रुत्वा रामाभिषेचनम् ॥ २-८-१५
भरतश्चापि रामस्य ध्रुवं वर्षशतात् परम् । पितृपैतामहं राज्यमवाप्स्यति नरर्षभः ॥ २-८-१६
सा त्वमभ्युदये प्राप्ते दह्यमानेव मन्थरे । भविष्यति च कल्याणे किमिदं परितप्यसे ॥ २-८-१७

dharmajño guṇavān dāntaḥ kṛtajñaḥ satyavāñchuciḥ |
rāmo rājñasuto jyeṣṭho yauvarājyamato'rhati || 2-8-14
bhrātṛn bhrtyāṁśca dīrghāyuh pitṛvat pālayiṣyati |
santapyase katham kubje śrutvā rāmābhiṣecanam || 2-8-15
bharataścāpi rāmasya dhruvaṁ varṣaśatāt param |
pitṛpaitāmahaṁ rājyamavāpsyati nararṣabhaḥ || 2-8-16
sā tvamabhyudaye prāpte dahyamāneva manthare |
bhaviṣyati ca kalyāṇe kimidaṁ paritapyase || 2-8-17

With these words of incitement and insult, Manthara pressed home her point. Still Kaikeyi said, “Rama is *dharmavān*; he will never do a wrong thing. He is a clean person, first-born son of the king, fit to be Prince Regent. Let this anger and spite go. Bharata in his turn will become king by his own right. This is how it should be. Tomorrow is a very special day, do not let all this bitterness spoil it for you. Enjoy the installation of Rama and the celebration.”

ध्रुवं तु भरतं रामः प्राप्य राज्यमकण्टकम् । देशान्तरं नाययिता लोकान्तरमथापि वा ॥ २-८-२७
तस्माद् राजगृहादेव वनं गच्छतु राघवः । एतद्धि रोचते मह्यं भृशं चापि हितं तव ॥ २-८-३३
dhruvaṁ tu bhārataṁ rāmaḥ prāpya rājyamakaṅṭakam |
deśāntaraṁ nāyayitā lokāntaramathāpi vā || 2-8-27
tasmād rājagrāhādeva vanaṁ gacchatu rāghavaḥ |
etaddhi rocate mahyaṁ bhṛśaṁ cāpi hitaṁ tava || 2-8-33

But Manthara was not convinced, “You do not see at all. I do not know if I should laugh at you or weep for you. Kausalya, the other woman, is going to rejoice and for that you want to give me a gift. I do not see the reasoning there. How can you fail to see what is in store for you? What will happen when Bharata wants

to return and Rama will not accept him? He won't, you know. Rama is against Bharata. You are going to lose your son. Somehow you must get Rama sent to the forest before Rama sends Bharata to the forest. That is what I think best."

एवमुक्ता तु कैकेयी क्रोधेन ज्वलितानना । दीर्घमुष्णं विनिःश्वस्य मन्थरामिदमब्रवीत् ॥ २-९-१

अद्य राममितः क्षिप्रं वनं प्रस्थापयाम्यहम् । यौवराज्ये च भरतं विश्रमेवाभिषेचये ॥ २-९-२

evamuktā tu kaikeyī krodhena jvalitānanā ।

dīrghamuṣṇaṁ viniḥśvasya mantharāmidamabravīt ॥ 2-9-1

adya rāmamitaḥ kṣipraṁ vanaṁ prasthāpayāmyaham ।

yauvarājye ca bharataṁ kśipramevābhiṣecaye ॥ 2-9-2

At the thought of Bharata being sent to the forest, at the thought of losing her son, Kaikeyi changed her mind. Once something like this is started it cannot be stopped. Manthara made Kaikeyi understand that if she was going to act she had to do it now. Kaikeyi's mind became fearful and spun around, "Today itself I will see that it is Rama who is sent to the forest. Before the installation of Rama I will see that it is done. Bharata will be the Prince Regent as soon as he comes back. Manthara, help me figure out how to do this."

नह्यतिक्रमितुं शक्तस्तव वाक्यं महीपतिः । मन्दस्वभावे बुध्यस्व सौभाग्यबलमात्मनः ॥ २-९-२६

nahyatikramitum śaktastava vākyaṁ mahīpatiḥ ।

mandasvabhāve budhyasva saubhāgyabalamātmanaḥ ॥ 2-9-26

Manthara had a plan, "Kaikeyi, remember when Dasharatha went to the Dandaka forest to fight with the demon Shambara, Timidhvaja, who caused such a ruckus and was destroying people? Dasharatha took his army with him. It was a major struggle, Lord Indra was there, and many people were lost. There was great magic involved. The cruel *rākṣasas* would steal away the injured warriors at night and do away with them. Even Dasharatha was attacked and injured, almost knocked unconscious, helpless, and it was you who lifted him away and put him in a safe place and healed him. Remember well. It was then that he gave you those two boons. For what you did he granted you two boons. He promised two boons to be encashed whenever you want. The time has come now. Encash these two boons. With Vasishtha and the others there, there is no way Dasharatha will be

able to swallow the word he has given. Oh, you sluggish thinking woman, take account of your welfare and the strength you do have. Your king cannot transgress those words, and you will make things right.”

पृथिव्यामसि कुब्जानामुत्तमा बुद्धिनिश्चये ॥ त्वमेव तु ममार्थेषु नित्ययुक्ता हितैषिणी ॥ २-९-३९
नाहं समवबुध्येयं कुब्जे राज्ञश्चिकीर्षितम् । सन्ति दुःसंस्थिताः कुब्जे वक्राः परमपापिकाः ॥ २-९-४०

*prthivyāmasi kubjānāmuttamā buddhiniścaye ॥
tvameva tu mamārtheṣu nityayuktā hitaiṣiṇī ॥ 2-9-39
nāhaṁ samavabudhyeyaṁ kubje rājñaścikīrṣitam ।
santi duḥsaṁsthitāḥ kubje vakrāḥ paramapāpikāḥ ॥ 2-9-40*

“Ahh,” said Kaikeyi, “this is a good plan. I will do it. I will do it all.” She set her mind. “There may be other sharp hunchbacks in the world, Manthara, but you are the sharpest among them. You are the only one who is always interested in my welfare. There is no one else like this. Usually the thinking of a hunchback is as crooked as its body, but you are the exception. You are exactly right in this. In your silken sari with your long gnarly flat feet and gangly legs you are really wonderful. Under your delightful massive hunch there must be nothing but tricks and schemes for our well-being.” Kaikeyi gave her a pat on her hunchback.

Manthara spoke up, “Hey, do not just sit there. Dasharatha will come tonight to tell you what is going to happen and that is your chance. You must take off this fine dress and put on something disheveled, muss up your hair a bit and throw aside all your jewelry. Look as though some great calamity has occurred. Wait in a different room in your wing; make him find you; you should be elsewhere. Lie on the ground, and when you hear him coming start weeping and wailing. Let him hear you before he sees you. Remember, when you ask him to encash your boons, he will offer kingdoms and riches instead. He will proffer everything else. But never budge an inch. Remember my words: You will be Kausalya’s servant and be made to toe her line. Bharata will be in the forest where you will never see him again.”

Swelling with indignation, Kaikeyi said, “Today you will see what Kaikeyi is capable of. Dasharatha, this old man, will be held to his words. He cannot get

away with this. If I fail, I will not dress up or eat, I will not wear make-up or jewelry, I will not touch flowers or food. I will just die.” You know how a delightful deep blue-black night sky that glitters with bright stars becomes dark and shadowed and lifeless when covered by a large cloud? This beautiful woman, the wife of the king, with this clouding of her mind, became dark and dense and threatening.

प्रियार्हा प्रियमाख्यातुं विवेशान्तःपुरं वशी । स कैकेय्या गृहं श्रेष्ठं प्रविवेश महायशाः ॥ २-१०-११

न तेऽहमभिजानामि क्रोधमात्मनि संश्रितम् । देवि केनाभियुक्तसि केन वासि विमानिता ॥ २-१०-२८

यदिदं मम दुःखाय शेषे कल्याणि पांसुषु । भूमौ शेषे किमर्थं त्वं मयि कल्याणचेतसि ॥ २-१०-२९

priyārḥāṁ priyamākhyātum viveśāntaḥpuram vaśī ।

sa kaikeyyā gr̥haṁ śreṣṭhaṁ praviveśa mahāyaśāḥ ॥ 2-10-11

na te'hamabhijānāmi krodhamātmani saṁśritam ।

devi kenābhīyuktāsi kena vāsi vimānitā ॥ 2-10-28

yadidaṁ mama duḥkhāya śeṣe klyāṇi pāṁsuṣu ।

bhūmau śeṣe kimarthaṁ tvaṁ mayi kalyāṇacetasi ॥ 2-10-29

Dasharatha had Sumantra, his minister and aide, confirm that all the arrangements for the next day's ceremony and celebration had been made. Then, later, he came to Kaikeyi's well-appointed apartments. He could not find her at first, and he searched around until he was told where she was in the complex. He came upon her in a room where he had never before seen her. He had never seen her in such a condition. “What has upset you? What happened to you? Did someone do or say something to you? Are you angry with me? Did I do something wrong? To see you like this is very hard on me. Tell me what I can do to help. You know that I would do anything for you. I can make a rich man poor and I can make a poor man rich. I can pardon any wrong-doer and I can punish anyone. Tell me what to do for you. I would give you the kingdoms of Tamil Nad, the Panjab, the Deccan, the Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, Kashi, Kosala, all the realm. Oh, sweetheart, what's wrong? Tell me what you want, just stop crying, please.”

To be continued...

Mahābhārata
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the tenth part of the serial article, continuation from May 2024 newsletter.

Drona went to his old friend Drupada, who was now a king, thinking that now that he had learned archery everything would be all right between them. He thought he could be an archery teacher in the palace in Panchaladesha. He went to Drupada and reminded the king of their days together and the offer the king had made as a prince. King Drupada laughed at him, “Hey, poor Brahmana, how can you seek friendship with me? Do you think you can talk to a *rājā* as an equal? Only other kings can be my friends. You have to find another *brāhmaṇa*, one who is equal to you to be your friend.” Drupada had changed, and his thinking was different.

Drona walked out of Drupada’s palace furious. He said to himself, “Revenge. I will teach Drupada a lesson.” He went straightaway to Hastinapura. He knew what he had to do and what he had to offer. That is how he came to be standing there when the boys were playing ball. By reclaiming the ball from the well Drona made his introduction to the Pandavas. The boys all ran to Bhishma and told him of the Brahmana who was an amazing archer. Bhishma smiled, for his boys had found a teacher, the teacher he had been waiting for, a teacher who had been taught by Parashurama, his own teacher. He had heard about this Drona, and he would ask him to teach archery to the Kaurava princes and the Pandavas.

Drona told Bhishma exactly what had happened at Drupada’s court, about how obnoxious Drupada had been. Bhishma assured Drona that eventually he would fulfill his desires and avenge his anger. Drona thought the best way to take his revenge was to train a *kṣatriya*, and through him to finish with the insulting *rājā*. The princes of Hastinapura thought they had learned archery from Krpa. But with Drona there, they found they did not know much of anything. Drona started a school of the arts of warfare – javelin, mace, hand-to-hand combat, all that – for

all the princes and for other boys from Dvaraka and from other places. Among all Drona's students, Arjuna was the most devoted and dedicated and well-behaved. Drona's son Ashvatthama attended the school also, and he was equally a good archer. But still Drona had a special corner for Arjuna due to the boy's remarkable capacity.

One day Drona went to the forest with the princes. He wanted to test what kind of person Arjuna was. Drona saw a bird and he asked Arjuna, "What do you see there? Do you see a tree? Do you see a branch?"

Arjuna said, "Yes, I see a bird."

After a few minutes Drona asked, "What kind of bird is it?"

Arjuna said, "I see only the neck. I do not know the bird's type. I know only the neck."

Drona knew then what kind of archer Arjuna was.

Once Drona fell into a pond and was held down by a crocodile. Drona had enough weapons that he could escape the creature, but he wanted to test his students. He shouted for them to come and free him from the crocodile. The princes all heard their teacher's voice and hurried to help. But before any other help came, five arrows came from Arjuna's bow and finished the crocodile. Drona was further impressed with Arjuna, and he gave him a special *astra* at this time. Each *astra* was a special missile, and there was a *mantra* for it. A *brahmāstra* was given to Arjuna. Arjuna was told not to use this *astra* on an ordinary person. The missile was to be saved for a *rākṣasa*, a demon, or a perverted *deva*. Arjuna was told that if the weapon were used against a dharmic person or against a weakling, it would destroy the world. The target for this *brahmāstra* had to be carefully chosen. Every *astra* had some conditions to fulfill. Some *astras* would come back at the shooter if they were used by an *adhārmika* person. The awarding of the *brahmāstra* was Drona's statement that Arjuna was the best archer of the time. Bhishma was the greatest fighter, and he had many *astras*. Drona had *astras*. Many warriors held

astras, but Arjuna had answers for all of them. Therefore he was the best. He continued to collect *astras* throughout his life.

Now remember Karna, who asked his mother why he did not want to be a chariot driver even though his father was. Even the new chariot his father brought did not interest him. He told his mother of a dream he continued to have, "I see a woman coming, appearing with all sadness. She always covers her face. I want to know who she is and I ask her and she goes away. Her face haunts me and I want to see her face, but it always goes away. She dresses like a princess, but I have never seen a person like that." Karna was already sixteen.

Karna's mother told him, "Listen to me carefully, Radheya. One fine morning when he went to Ganga, your father Adhiratha saw a box floating by, a shining box that attracted his attention. He picked up the box and inside was a child who wore the brightest armor and earrings. The child was shining like the sun and was in fact the blessing of the sun. Adhiratha picked up this child and he gave this child to me. I brought you up, and I think you are a *kṣatriya* not a *sūta*. As a baby you had the marks of a *kṣatriya* and that is what you should be. You are not a *sūta*, as some think you are." A *sūta* is one born of a union of a Brahmana and a Kshatriya. His mother went on, "Now it is time for you to go. You can go and do whatever you want to do. You should go and find your real mother, then you will be happy. That woman you have seen in your dream is your mother." With tears in her eyes she told him this. She gave him the freedom to do what he wanted to do.

Karna replied, "You say that I had a first mother who just dropped me. I know you as my mother, and I do not want to lose you too. All that I have is just you. It may be true that my mother is in this dream, but I do not want that mother anymore. She abandoned me, and I do not want to go back to her. You are my mother and you will always be. I am your Radheya, son of Radha.

To be continued...

Veda Pathasala Inauguration

With the blessings of Lord Medha Dakshinamurti and Pujya Swamiji, Swami Dayananda Saraswati Veda Pathasala, Anaikatti was inaugurated on the 21st June 2024.

Acharya Sadatmananda, Swami Jagadatmananda, Swamini Saradananda, Swamini Vedar-tananda and others graced the occasion with their august presence.

The function started with lighting of lamp by the Acharya and other Swamiji and Swa-minis. Swami Jagadatmanandaji welcomed the gathering. He briefed the efforts behind the revival of the Vedapathasala and in the reconstruction.

Swaminis chanted prayers followed by the inaugural address by Acharya Sadatmananda. While explaining the dream of Pujya Swamiji about the institution of the Veda Pathasala, Acharyaji also gave five important requirements for the students to be successful in their pursuit:

- Interest (ruchi),
- Self-confidence (atma-viswas),
- Sufficient effort,
- Grace of the Lord earned through prayer and
- Guru-kripa.

Pathasala Acharya Sri Nivas Pathakji chanted Atharva veda. The function concluded with vote of thanks by the AVG Manager.

Those who want to support this Veda Pathasala project, are most welcome. Please con-tact AVG Manager (manager@arshavidya.in) for more information.



Advaita Bharati Retreat Report

Advaita Bharati conducted a retreat at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh from May 11th, 2024 to May 18th, 2024. Founder and Acharya of Advaita Bharati, Smt. Suryapriyaji taught Mandukya Upanishad – Agama Prakaranam to 82 vidyarthees who had come to Rishikesh from all around the world, many from Chennai.

The retreat was blessed and inaugurated by Swami Satsvarupananda ji, Swami Brahmayogananda ji, Swamini Satyavratana ji, Swami Shivasvarupananda ji, Acharya Shri. Rangaji and many Swamijis of the Ashram. The event started with lighting the lamp by our Swamijis. Swami Satsvarupananda ji, Swami Brahmayogananda ji, Swamini ji and Swami Shivasvarupananda ji blessed us with their Anugraha bhashanam. This was followed by an Invocation class by Swami Brahmayogananda ji as an introduction to the Upanishad.

The second day of the camp was the auspicious day of Shri Sankara Jayanthi. The day started with yoga session by Swami Brahmayogananda ji and special puja at the temple for Shri Sankaracharya. Advaita Bharati Acharya ji and her students were blessed to arrange for Sadhu Bandara for about 200 sadhus on this auspicious day. In the evening the students had a special satsang by Acharya Shri Ranga ji about our Guru parampara and how Shri Shankaracharyas Bashyam, Stotrams, Prakaranams are the most important texts for a vedanta student. The day ended with a special satsang by Swami Brahmayogananda ji which took them through the entire life of Shri Sankara. It was the most blessed way to celebrate Shri Sankara jayanti in the abode of Pujya Swamiji.

As told by Acharya ji on the first day of camp, the Mandukya upanishad felt like a puzzle waiting to be put into a frame and the last day put it all together. The class on Omkara vichara, with a glimpse into the bashyam made us understand why Sri Ramar said "Mandukyam, Ekam eva alam". With the blessings of The Guru parampara, our Acharya ji and Ganga Mata, we completed Mandukya Upanishad - Agama Prakaranam and it was followed by the Samarop function. At the start of the Samarop function the students had the Anugraha Bhashanam of Swamiji Sakshatkrtananda ji on Shri Sankara's Upodhgatha Bashyam of Bhagawad Gita. Its profundity cannot be expressed in words and Swamiji took us through it with so much ease that we were blessed to get a small drop of the big ocean that day. Acharya ji and her students performed puja to Arsha Guru parampara and went on with the samarop function as a gesture to thank the sampradaya for giving them this greatest knowledge. The Upanishad was summarised by the students with parts being assigned to each group. The students performed puja to their Guru and received her blessings for continued sastra patanam.

The next day the Advaita Bharati team went for Badrinath yatra where with blessings of Ishwara and Guru Anugraham we had a good darshan. After the yatra there was a special class by Acharya ji for her students on Kamalajadaitashtakam. The last day of camp was celebrated with a grand Ganga Puja and the retreat ended well with blessings of Ganga Mata.

- Report by Radhika Karthik, Advaita Bharati

Nurturing Young Minds: Arshavidyalaya's Holistic Approach to Sanatana Dharma Education

Arshavidyalaya, Coimbatore, a bastion of traditional wisdom and spiritual learning, is actively engaged in spreading the vision of Vedanta and the values of Sanatana Dharma through a series of classes and a variety of other activities.

With Poojya Swamiji's blessings and directive, significant focus has been on children. A flagship program of Arshavidyalaya is the *Samskrtena Samskrita* (SSAS) initiative, a visionary program tailored specifically for children. Drawing from the rich tapestry of Sanatana Dharma, SSAS aims to instil a deep understanding of and reverence for ancient teachings, while nurturing excellence in each child's chosen field. Spanning a structured, comprehensive five-year curriculum, the program commences with the sacred practice of learning to chant the Bhagavad Gita with devotion and correct pronunciation.

Despite the digital landscape dominating modern education, Arshavidyalaya remains steadfast in its commitment to providing students with immersive learning experiences. While online classes serve as the primary mode of instruction, the institution recognizes the importance of personal interaction in holistic development. To this end, a series of contact programs has been devised to foster meaningful connections between students, teachers, and practitioners of ancient wisdom.

These contact programs encompass a diverse range of activities, including,

- ◆ daily Ganesha *puja* sessions,
- ◆ face-to-face classes during school holidays,
- ◆ weekend *gurukulams*, (an innovative concept developed at Arshavidyalaya)
- ◆ visits to spiritual interest, including temples, *ashrams* and other places,
- ◆ spiritual retreats and,
- ◆ day-camps during school vacations,
- ◆ Annual residential camps in the elevating ambience of other ashrams.

Each activity is carefully designed to provide students with firsthand exposure to the rich cultural heritage of Sanatana Dharma and its values & practices, fostering a sense of pride and belonging.

Children had the unique opportunity of engaging in daily puja rituals, chanting of various slokas and mantra (including *Rudram*) at the temple, chanting of Bhagavad Gita at Pujya

Swamij's *Adhistānam* as well as in the temple at Gita Bhavan. The crowning moment of the camp was the collective chanting of the Gita in the presence of Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati and other *mahans* present there.

Those who demonstrated mastery by memorizing individual chapters of the Gita and chanting them flawlessly were honoured with certificates by Swami Shashatkrtananda (Managing Trustee and Chief Acharya), a testament to their dedication and spiritual fervour. The children were also invited to chant chapter 15 of the Bhagavad Gita before lunch every day, a tradition that is followed in every Arshavidya institution. Camp participants also got to see and participate in *Sadhu Bhandara, biksha* (lunch) offered to a large number of sadhus and receive their blessings.

Arshavidyalaya's initiatives transcend mere education; they serve as a gateway to personal transformation and spiritual awakening. By actively participating in these programs, children not only acquire a holistic education but also develop a profound understanding of Sanatana Dharma and its timeless relevance in today's world.

A new batch (Learn to Chant 2024) will start on Monday, May 27, 2024. Arshavidyalaya extends a warm invitation to all those seeking to embark on this transformative journey. Together, let us nurture the seeds of wisdom and compassion in the hearts of our children, shaping a future guided by the timeless principles of Sanatana Dharma.

Contact Information: Anand – 8667829325, Aattreya – 8220712812



Family Retreat at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh

The Family Retreat held in Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh was a transformative experience for families, bringing together participants from around the world to delve into ancient teachings and practices. The camp, spanning from May 5th to May 12th, 2024, was guided by Chief Acharya Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati ji and executed by coordinator & Acharya Sri Pulluri Srinivas. This event aimed to create an awareness about the 'Treasure of Bharat' and the importance of family bonds and personal growth and finally for society development with Bharatiya Culture.

A diverse group of 58 individuals attended the camp:

- 28 children, 24 parent and 6 grandparents

The camp's curriculum was

For Children

- Breath awareness exercises, Surya-Namaskaras, Yogasanas & Pranayama.
- Bhagawad-Gita Chapter-15 Chanting
- Classes on Value of Values.
- Activity-Based Sessions: Hands-on activities that reinforced the day's teachings and promoted active learning. Also to create an awareness of surroundings; to improve the concentration & memory; and culturing the emotions.
- Yogic Games: Both indoor and outdoor games designed to be fun while fostering team spirit and physical fitness.

For Parents & Guardians

- Meditation; Bhagawad-Gita Chapter-12 Chanting & Explanation;
- Talks on Sanatana Dharma: Informative talks on the eternal principles of Hinduism, imparting ethical values and spiritual knowledge.
- Classes on 'Samskriti & Sampradayas' and 'Introduction to Vedanta'.

Combined Classes and activities for Children & Parents

- First two days Chief Acharya Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati ji given the special classes on the importance of 'Prayatna and Prarthana for the successful life'; in which Swamiji highlighted the topics of 'Who is Ishwara?' & 'How to get the blessings of Ishwara'; 'What are the ingredients for Success?'
- Seva (service) for the maintain the cleanliness of the Lecture-Hall, Yoga-Hall, Art Gallery and Adhistanam area in and out.
- Krida-yoga, Talent shows with a blend of Bharatiya Samskriti; that encouraged sharing, joy, and a sense of community.

Volunteers of the Camp

- Swamini Satyavratana Saraswati Ji from Chennai
- Swamini Chidekarasana Saraswati Ji from UK
- Pulluri Kumuda from Hyderabad
- Abhijeet Bisht from Almora, Himalayas.
- Sakshee Sharma from Dehradun

The camp concluded with a sense of fulfilment and spiritual enrichment. Participants left with cherished memories, a deeper bond with their expanded family members. The natural beauty and tranquillity of the Himalayas and the sacred River Ganga provided the perfect backdrop for this profound experience. - *Report by Pulluri Srinivas*



Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh requires a supervisor on voluntary basis for house keeping who is middle aged, well versed in Hindi and connected & devoted to Arsha Parampara. Accommodation, food and a nominal payment will be made. Interested persons may contact through email at sakshat1949@gmail.com sending detailed resume.

Śrī Medhā Dakṣiṇāmūrti Jīrnoddhāra Kumbhābhiṣekam

Śrī Medhā Dakṣiṇāmūrti Jīrnoddhāra Kumbhābhiṣekam

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, PA

May 17-19, 2024

While it is customary to perform a re-consecration of a temple every twelve years, sometimes the temple structure may suffer damage due to natural forces and thus would require maintenance. In such situations, an interim *kumbhābhiṣekam*, known as *jīrnoddhāra kumbhābhiṣekami*, is performed. Generally, two important purposes are served by a *kumbhābhiṣekam*, which are *pratiṣṭhā* and *prāṇapraṭiṣṭhā*, the installation of the *vigraha* on the *pīṭha* and invoking the power of the deity, respectively. The temple structure of Śrī Siddhi Vināyaka Swāmi sahita Śrī Medhā Dakṣiṇāmūrti Swāmi at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (AVG), Saylorsburg, PA needed some critical repairs. Upon completion of them a *jīrnoddhāra kumbhābhiṣekam* of the temple was performed during May 17-19, 2024, consisting only of *prāṇapraṭiṣṭhā*, as per the Vedic tradition in the august presence of Pūjya Swami Veditātmānanda Saraswati.

The religious proceedings were conducted for two and a half days in strict adherence to the tradition of the *kumbhābhiṣekam* rituals. They were expertly coordinated by Śrī. Ganesan, the temple priest, and executed by a team of 20 learned priests which included Śrī. Ravi Vādhyār, Śrī. Nataraja Sāstrigal, Śrī. Manikandan, and Śrī. Hariharan from Coimbatore. All of them are *yājurvedikas*. The other priests from the United States who performed the myriads of religious rituals were Śrī. Bhaskar (Yajur Veda), Śrī. Chandrasekhar Smt. Latha Deshmukh as the *yajamāna* and *patnī* for the religious events completed the team. (Sāma Veda), Śrī. Gnanaskandan (Yajur Veda), Śrī. Jayashankara Holla (Ṛg Veda), Śrī. Kailasam (Yajur Veda), Śrī. Krishna Bhat (Yajur Veda), Śrī. Nataraja śrauti (Sāma Veda), Śrī. Padmanabha Nadig (Ṛg Veda), Śrī. Raghavendra Bhat (Yajur Veda), Śrī. Ramesh (Yajur Veda), Śrī. Sabarirajan (Yajur Veda), Śrī. Sharavana Bhat (Ṛg Veda), Śrī. Shyam Bhat (Ṛg Veda), Śrī. Suresh (Yajur Veda), Śrī. Venkataraman (Ṛg Veda), and Śrī. Venugopal (Yajur Veda). Dr. Pramod Deshmukh and

The religious rituals consisted of various *śānti* karmas and *puṣṭi* karmas. The former is performed to eliminate the inauspiciousness in the place, idol, and materials etc. and the latter is done to bring forth the sanctity in them. In this regard, special *homas* were performed invoking nava Durgās and 51 forms of Lord Gaṇapati. The *pañcakāla pūjās* performed over the 2 ½ days included Gaṇeśa pūjā, Dakṣiṇāmūrti mūla mantra *homa*, *viśeṣa dravya homas*, *jayādi homa*, *Śrī rudra trīsatī nāmāvalī arcana*, *Śrī rudra*

gaṇapāṭha, *pūrṇāhuti*, *vasordhāra*, *divyopacāra pūjā*, and *dīpārādhanam*. During the *divyopacāra* there was *caturveda pārāyaṇam* in every *kāla pūjā*. The *sāyaṅkāla pūjās* included *drāvidopacāra* (singing of Tamil hymns), *vādyopacāra* (nādasvaram), *nātyopacāra*, and *gaṇapati tālam*. The *ṛtviks* doing alternately *veda pārāyanam* and chanting the *nakṣatra sūkta*, and the singing of the *sāma gānam* by the *sāma veda* priests sanctified the ambience with the *veda ghoṣa*. In addition, there were specific rituals such as *ācārya/ṛtvik varaṇam*, *punyāhavācanam*, *agni-pratiṣṭhāpanam*, *yāgaśālā-vāstu-ārādhana*, *nava-graha-devatā and dvārapālaka ārādhana*, *devatā anujñā*, *kalaśa-ākaraṣaṇam*, *rakṣoghna-homa*, *mṛt-saṅgrahaṇam*, *ankurārpaṇam*, *yātrā dānam*, *sparsāhuti*, and *nāḍi-sandhānam*. A handout prepared by the author of this report describing briefly all the rituals was provided to the attendees to follow the sequence of the events and understand their significance.

On the evening of the second day, the *utsava mūrti* was carried around the gurukulam premises in a procession to the accompaniment of *nādasvaram* by vidwans Śrī. Murali and Śrī. Durgesh Murali, accompanied by vidwan Śrī. Raghu on the *thavil*, artists visiting from Bengaluru. At the end of the procession when the *utsava mūrti* was brought to the *yāga śālā*, *Chenda Melam* was performed by PA-NJ Vadhya Vedhi, a percussion ensemble, under the guidance of Śrī. Sanjith Nair. The sonorous sounds of the *Chenda Melam* engulfed the entire Gurukulam enriching the divine ambience.

On the *kumbhābhiṣekam* day (May 19th), devotees carried 300 plus *kalaśas* energized with the mantras to the temple for the *abhiṣekam*. At the prescribed *muhūrtam* of 10:27 AM, Swami Veditātmānanda Saraswati along with priests Śrī. Ganesan, Śrī. Ravi Vādhyār and Śrī. Nataraja Sāstrigal and the *yajamāna* went up on a crane to perform the *kumbhābhiṣekam* to the *ālaya vimānam*. A helicopter flying above the *vimānam* showered flower graffiti from the sky much to the delight of the crowd. This was immediately followed by *abhiṣekam* to Lord Medhā Dakṣiṇāmūrti and Lord Siddhi Vināyaka inside the temple. Subsequently, the *mahābhiṣekam* to Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti was performed with various *dravyas* and at the end with the waters from all the *kalaśas*. Pujya Swami Veditātmānanda Saraswati spoke on the significance of the *kumbhābhiṣekam* during the *viśeṣa alaṅkāram*. A benedictory message from Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati was read by Sri. Suddhatma. This was followed by *mahā dīpārādhanam*, *mantrapuṣṭam*, and *āśīrvādam*. All the assembled 700+ devotees received the *prasādam* from Swami Veditātmānandaji and Swami Muktatmananda Saraswati and partook in the *anna dānam*.

The *kumbhābhiṣekam* was celebrated in a grand manner, thanks to the many

sponsors who came forward in a short notice to support the event. The eminent presence of Pūjya Swami Vīditātmānanda Saraswati along with Swami Muktatmananda Saraswati, Swami Jnanananda Saraswati, Swamini Agamananda Saraswati, Swamini Svātma-vidyananda Saraswati, Swami Sachidananda Saraswati, Swamini Srividyananda Saraswati, Swamini Atmaprakshananda Saraswati, and Swami Svātmananda Saraswati embellished the event. The Board of Directors and Officers of AVG and the Kumbhabhishekam Committee wholeheartedly supported the event. A team of volunteers including Indira Akella, Vimala Sadasivam, Usha Arunachalam, and others reached out to devotees for *kalasam* sponsorships. The entire event was executed flawlessly by a team of volunteers who were ably coordinated by Śrī. Raj Kuppuswamy. The *rtvik bhojanam* arrangements were superbly executed by a host of volunteers under the guidance Smt. Suseela Swaminathan. Thanks to the efforts of Śrī. Sahadev, Śrī. Niranjana, Śrī. Karthik, Śrī. Sarva, Śrī. Suresh, and Ms. Chitra the audio arrangements during the religious events were remarkable. In addition, thanks to Śrī. Sahadev, Ms. Raji, Śrī. Pandu Kulkarni, and Ms. Richa, the three-day proceedings were broadcast live for the benefits of devotees who were not able to attend the function in person. During the entire 2 ½ days, Śrī. Ramachandran, Smt. Tara Patel, and kitchen staff prepared the sumptuous meals for all the devotees. The entire staff of the Gurukulam was facilitating the smooth operation of the event for the entire duration under the efficient oversight of Śrī. Suddhatma, the manager of AVG.

The memorable and cherishable *kumbhabhishekam* event evoked the fond and reverential memory of Pūjya Śrī Swami Dayananda Saraswati and his invisible presence and blessings. Brahmaleena Swami Pratyagbodhananda Saraswati radiated his welcoming smile from the heavens upon all the visitors to the gurukulam inspiring them to come again. - Report by Dr. V. Swaminathan of Bethlehem, PA.



Vedanta Retrat at Arsha Vidya Gurukualam, Anaikatti

A Vedanta retreat was held at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti from May 19, 2024 to May 26, 2024. Swami Sakshatkrtananda taught Ashtavakra Gita. Swami Sadatmananda taught Advaita Pancaratnam. 120 students participated. Swami Sadatmananda conducted Guided Meditation sessions. Both the Swamijis clarified the doubts of the students during Satsanga. One evening during satsanga, there was a Bharata-natyam performance by Smt. Revati Ramachandran.

ASHTAVAKRA GITA

This is a prakarana grantha. It contains 20 chapters and 298 verses. It is a nididhyasana text.

CHAPTER 1

Janaka asked: "How to gain vairagyam? How to gain jnanam? How to gain moksa?"

Astavakra replied: If you are desirous of moksa, give up the binding sense objects as poison. Look upon virtues like forbearance, straightforwardness, compassion, contentment, and truthfulness as nectar.

You are not the modification of the five elements. For gaining moksa, you have to understand that you are Saksi and you are cidrupam. To be ever free, understand that you are different from the body.

If you understand yourself as Saksi, you will be free from sorrow. You are free from varna and asrama. You are formless like space. You are pure existence, pure consciousness and pure Ananda.

You are independent of dharma, adharma, suka, duka, karta and bhokta. You are indeed free always. Saksi illumines the world through the mind. We are bitten by the dark cobra called doership. The antidote is knowing that I am not the doer. Jnanam fire burns down the forest of ajnanam.

The world is superimposed on Saksi, like the snake super imposed on the rope.

One who identifies with mukta atma becomes mukta. We have to reorient our thought pattern. Atma is saksi chaitanyam, all pervasive, that resolves everything into itself and is free from action.

Contemplate on atma as sasksi chaitanyam. From the stand point of atma, there is no external and internal. You are bound by the rope of identification with the body. It should be cut with the sword of knowledge.

You are free from relations and actions; you are self-effulgent and you are always free.

Like thread in the fabric give existence to the fabric, you lend existence to the world as sat chit ananda atma. All small mindedness disappears on this knowledge.

You are free from dependence and change. You should have deep knowledge like the deep sea. You should remain unshaken due to your clear knowledge.

Once you understand that you are the formless atma, there is no more rebirth. In the reflection in the mirror, there is no inside and outside. Similarly, inside and outside the body, there is only one Paramesvara. One space is there inside and outside the container. Similarly, one consciousness alone is there inside and outside all beings.

CHAPTER 2

Janaka said: Atma is such a great wonder. All this time, I have wasted without knowing this, due to delusion. Totally giving up body identification, Paramatma is to be known.

Waves, foams and bubbles come from water and are not separate from water. Similarly, the world comes from atma and the world is not separate from atma. The world is nothing but atma with names and forms. Names and forms do not have independent existence apart from its adistanam i.e. atma.

Sweetness has dependent existence on the tongue. Similarly, the world has dependent existence on me, the atma chaitanyam.

People take the snake as real, due to ignorance of the rope. Similarly, people take the world as real, due to ignorance of me, the svayam jyoti atma.

Svaparakasam is my true nature. Due to upadi of ajnanam, the illumination is sometimes less.

Pot resolves into its material cause, the clay. Armlet resolves into its material cause, the gold. Similarly, the world resolves into me, Brahman its material cause.

As Brahman, I am the srusti, sthithi and laya karanam of this world.

What a wonder! When the whole jagat, from Brahma upto an insect, is resolved, I, atma remain. Even though embodied, I am one. I appear to go and come, but in reality, I do not go to or come from anywhere. In this whole world, there is no expert like me. I hold the world, without sarira. Although I do not have anything, all that is here is mine. I cannot be grasped by speech and mind.

Knower, known and knowledge are mithya. I am the adistana chaitanyam. Giving reality to the duality is the reason for sorrow. The only cure for this is the knowledge, that the entire dualistic world is mithya. I am satyam.

Upadhis are projected by me. I abide in nirvikalpa sthiti. I have no bondage or liberation. All glories appear to belong to me. But in reality, no glory belongs to me. From my angle

of pure consciousness, the world is not real and it is just a projection.

Svarga, naraka, bondage and liberation are imagination. Only I, the pure consciousness is there. I do not see duality as real, in the midst of people. So it is as good as a forest devoid of people.

I am not the body. I am not the jiva. I am chit svarupam. Earlier, I had longing, which was the bondage.

CHAPTER 3

Astavakra asked: If you are the knower of atma, how come you have fascination to accumulate wealth? Due to ignorance, mistaking for silver, people go after shell. When you are the source of happiness, why do you go after worldly objects?

When you are the ocean of consciousness, why you are running like a helpless person? You have heard that you are pure consciousness. After this why are you dirtying yourself by running after sense pleasures?

You see Self in all beings and all beings in the Self. Then why do you have the sense of ownership? You have commitment in moksa and abidance in Advaita. Then why are you still under the influence of sense pleasures? Why are you still attached to worldly objects?

When you have discrimination and detachment, why are you afraid of moksa? A jnani when fed well does not feel elated or when beaten does not become angry.

A jnani has no identification with his body. He is not elated by praise or depressed by abuse. He sees the world as maya. He has no fear. He has no desire to live or die. With whom can you compare a jnani, who has no desire even for moksa and who is content with self-knowledge? For a jnani, there is nothing to be acquired or nothing to be given up. Jnani is beyond the pairs of opposite, he is equal in praise and abuse, and accepts all situations as per prarabdha.

CHAPTER 4

Janaka said: We cannot compare a jnani with a deluded person. Activities are a play for a jnani. Although outside he plays roles, he is free inside. There is no elation for a jnani, who has gained self-knowledge, which even devatas desire. There is no connection with space and smoke. Similarly, for a jnani there is no connection with punya and papa.

Who can give injunction to a jnani who knows that the entire world is the self? Among all living beings, only jnani has no likes and dislikes. A jnani does, what he feels is good for the world without fear. Whatever is Jnani's sankalpa is Isvara's sankalpa.

CHAPTER 5

Astavakrta said: Janaka! You are free from sanga. There is nothing to renounce. Although you are a householder, you are still a jnani.

ADVAITA PANCARATNAM

It is a nididhyasana text. It has 5 gem like verses on Advaita. This text also has another name Advaita Pancakam.

I am not the body, sense organs, 5 pranas, mind, intellect or the inner most ahankara. I am very different from wife, children, land, wealth, etc as they are connected only to the body. I as Saksi, illumine the mind and through the mind, illumine everything. I am Saksi, timeless, inner self and pure happiness. I am sat chit ananda. I am Siva.

By statement of a reliable person, there is negation of super imposed snake and the snake is recognised as a rope. Similarly, by Guru upadesam, I negate jiva bhavam and I recognise that I am Siva.

I am not born, do not grow or die. They belong to the body. I am not the doer, experiencer or the knower. They belong to the ego. I am of the nature of pure consciousness. I am Siva.

Maya makes asatyam appear as satyam. This waking world is similar to the dream world. The waking world appears due to maya sakthi of Brahman. I am pure, purna, nitya and eka atma. I am Siva.

I am the adistanam of the world, which is mithya. The external world is projected by maya. It appears to be satyam. It is similar to the reflection of the city, which appears in the mirror. I alone appear as this world. I am Siva.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

My natural longing to be free from unhappiness is the further proof of the validity of the vision that I, the self, is free and happy. There is a natural longing to be free from being unhappy. I love what is natural and I want to get rid of what is unnatural. If unhappiness, littleness, were natural to me, if they were the essential characteristics of *ātmā*, the self, I could never give them up. But in deep sleep and in moments of happiness, I do give up all the notions that make me feel small, limited. I find myself happy when those notions are absent. - Swami Dayananda Saraswati

AIM for Seva Students Retreat at AVG, Anaikatti

With the blessings of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the chief Acharya Sadhatmananda Saraswati and Jagadhatmananda Saraswati, and with the guidance of Swamini Sudhavidhyananda Saraswati mathaji, the Aim for Seva conducted a residential retreat for Chatralaya students with the great support of Shrimathi. Sheela Balaji, the trustee of Aim for Seva. The retreat was conducted from 27th May 2024 to 30th May 2024. Students from Anakatti, Chinnasalem, Manjangudi, Pondicherry, Ambur, Cuddalore and Padaveedu chatralayas participated in the retreat with their wardens and teachers. The 4-day retreat was inaugurated by Swami Sadhatmananda Saraswati followed by the orientation program by Swami Jagadhatmananda Saraswati on 26th May 2024 at 8 pm. These four-day retreat consists of classes from 7 am to 9 pm as below. The classes started with the dharshan of Guru theertha and ended with Satsang daily. In this regard 3 yoga and meditation classes, and 4 value education classes were conducted by Swami Jagadhatmananda Saraswati to improve the memory power and discipline of students. Students learned daily pooja practice too in these classes.

Further 2 value education classes were conducted by Swami Tatwatmanananda Saraswati. Students went to Balamurugan temple and Medha Dakshinamoorthi temple and recite songs on the deities at 5 pm to 7 pm these days. 4 Sanskrit classes were conducted by Swamini Pranavapriyananda Saraswati and 4 chanting classes were conducted by Swamini Sathya Vritanandha Saraswati and students fondly attended these classes. 3 Satsangs were conducted by Swamiji Jagadhatmananda Saraswati. Students cleared their queries and they sang bajan songs with Swamiji then.

On 29th and 30th of May, Ramayana classes were conducted by Shri Venkata Ramesh Babu of Sai Ganga Trust, Tiruvannamalai, and his team Shri. P. Kuppan, Shri. Nalla Paneerselvam and Shri. Dinakaran and Certificates were given to the students for their participation. Arsha Vidhya Gurukulam staff, Shri. Thirumalai donated stationary materials to students which worth Rs.75. A special temple pooja was conducted for the welfare of chatralaya students on 30th May morning at Dakshinamoorthi temple. On behalf of Aim for Seva, Mathaji Sudhavidhyananda Saraswati gave vastra dhanam to all official and non-official staff of Arsha Vidhya Gurukulam.

The Aim for Seva staff and students are very much thankful to Shrimathi. Sheela Balaji, the trustee of Aim for Seva and the services offered to us by Arsha Vidhya Gurukulam.

Feedback received from students:

Mohana: The value education classes based on Dharma were thought provoking

Velmurugan: The Ramayana classes were too interesting and understandable

Bhuvaneshwari: The yoga classes were interesting

Raghavendran: Swamiji's bilingual teaching was understandable

Pushpa: The chanting classes were interesting .



Six month Vedanta course at Arsha Vidya Pitham, Rishikesh

Om Sri Gurubhyo Namah

The six-month Vedanta course in Arsha Vidya Pitham Rishikesh commenced on June 1, 2024 with a wonderful inauguration ceremony graced by the Chief Guest, HH Sri Sivakumara Swami of Sri Siddharudha Math, Bidar, Karnataka, alongside Sri Swami Brahmayoganandaji of Chennai, Sri Swami Chidrupananda Saraswati of Hubli and Sri Swami Satsvarupananda Saraswati of Swami Dayananda Ashram. They were joined by the esteemed teachers of the course, Sri Swami Sakshatkrtanandaji, Sri Swami Parabrahmanandaji, Sri Swami Shankaranandaji and Sri Swamini Svratmavidyanandaji.

This auspicious event marked the beginning of a profound journey, attracting around 80 students from diverse age-groups, nationalities, and backgrounds. The six-month course serves as a short, but deep, immersion into the timeless teachings of Vedanta. The schedule of classes includes the study of the Taittiriya, Kaivalya and the Ishavasya Upanishads, entire Bhagavad Gita, meditation, Sanskrit, Vedic chanting, and Yoga and participation in the ashram's daily activities such as puja and seva.

In the initial week, Sakshat Swamiji commenced teachings on the values, as taught by Lord Krishna in chapters 13 & 16 of the Bhagavad Gita. Swaminiji Svratmavidyananda captivately teaches the Tattvabodha, providing a comprehensive understanding of Vedanta. Swami Shankaranandaji imparts wisdom from the Bhagavad Gita and meditation practices, while Swami Parabhmanandaji teaches intermediate students (and an optional class on the Panini Sutras), and Muktiji introduces beginners to Sanskrit. Additionally, Br. Gopalji conducts vedic chanting classes.

Nestled by the holy Ganga Ma, which flows right backside the ashram, students find solace in her waters for daily baths and contemplative practices. Though most of us haven't had the opportunity to have Puja Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswatiji's Darshan, we are all here together thanks to his grace. His large, yet benevolent presence is felt in every aspect of ashram life, and we have the good fortune to get to know him through his devoted and erudite disciples who are now our brilliant teachers faithfully carrying forward his vision through their teachings. Puja Swamiji's great compassion, wisdom, humor, and divine life are a true inspiration for any spiritual seeker. We pray to be worthy of this auspicious opportunity, to grow from being consumers to being contributors, to grasp the teachings and embody them within us. May the Parampara of great teachers continue to bless all, may all beings in the jagat be happy and free.

- Report compiled by Shambhavi

photo in cover page #31

Shodashi Bhandara in the memory of Sri Swami Aparokshananda on 7th of June, 2024

Sri Swami Aparokshananda attained Mahasamadhi on May 3rd, 2024. Shodashi Bhandara was organized by the ashram for his memory, where 16 sadhus were invited and were given bhiksha, along with offering of 16 items, as Dakshina to them. The Purva Ashrama relatives of Sri Swamiji were present on the occasion. Before Shodashi Bhandara, a small puja was done for Sri Swamiji to seek his blessings. The Sadhu Bhandara with 300 people also took place on the same day.



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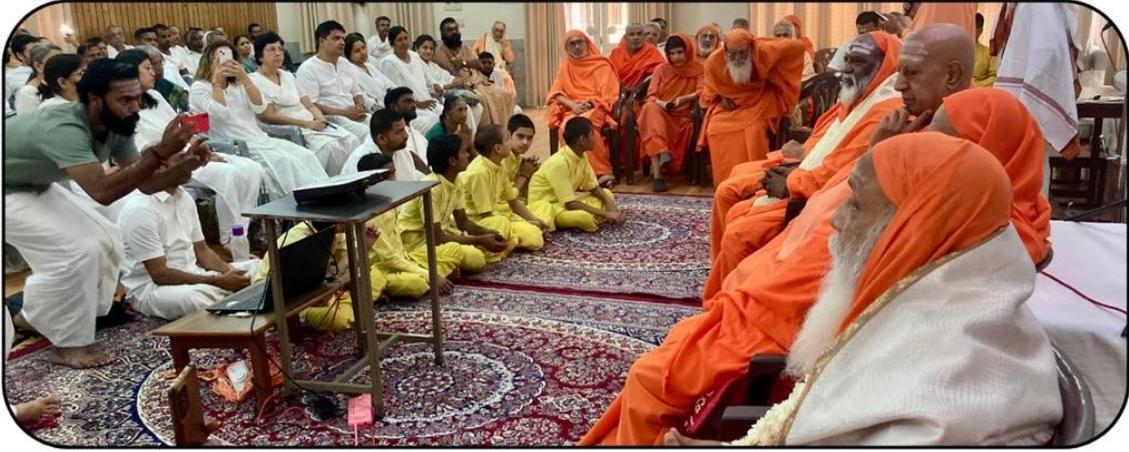
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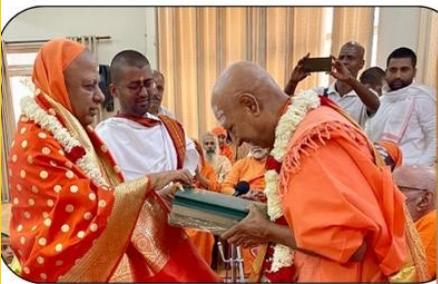
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*The students of the course are being blessed
and inspired by the Mahatmas*



*Chief Guest:
HH Sree Sivakumara, Swami Siddharudha Math, Bidar Karnataka*

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