



ARSHA VIDYA
MONTHLY JOURNAL



November 2024

Retreats at Jnana Pravaha, Manjakudi



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Silence in spite of Thoughts

By Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Preparing the mind

To create a condition of mind that enables you to see the Truth of yourself, you must remove all of your false notions. With love, you have to criticize various opinions and prejudices. There is no other way to obtain clarity, which is the sweetest thing. Whatever denies you a clear vision of the Truth has to be eliminated, along with limiting notions and prejudices about yourself. You condemn yourself, "I am useless, I am worthless", and it is this self-condemnation that stands in the way of knowing what you are.

When a *guru* comes and tells you that you are *sat*, *cit* and *ānandā*, that you are full and you are the center of creation, that there is nothing beyond you, it is a beautiful thing that you see. Not just beautiful, more than that. "Such a profound Truth am I, I lack nothing. I am all that I seek." That is a stunning discovery. Who would think that he/she could be all that? "How could I ever imagine that the thing I am seeking in life is myself?

By the very fact that I am seeking it, I can't imagine that it is myself." The Truth is heard, but not assimilated. For those who seem to follow what the *guru* says, as long as the *guru* is talking, everything seems to be clear. You think, "That is true. That is true." Then the *guru* goes, and that *ānandā* you felt and all that he said, all that also goes. When he comes, *ānandā* comes; when he goes, *ānandā* goes. Therefore, you begin to doubt what you understood. "Did the Swami hypnotize me? I think he made me believe that I am wonderful. If I saw that I am wonderful why don't I feel that I'm wonderful now?" It is that old confusion of knowledge and experience.

If hypnotism could do it, I need not teach like this. I need only tell you from the first day onwards, "You are all happiness, you are all joy, you are all joy, you are all joy..." That is called hypnotism. It doesn't work.

The whole teaching is an unfolding. Just as the artist makes you see beauty in something you generally take as commonplace, so the teacher makes you see yourself. He doesn't bring his own experience and tell you. He uses your experience as the basis for teaching and makes you see the truth of that experience. This brings about assimilation in terms of knowing the experience of yourself. So it is not hypnotism.

Then if it is knowledge, why does it seem to not stay and serve me? It doesn't serve me because the mind is still the old mind with all its likes and dislikes which it picked up over

many years and which do not just drop away overnight. Previously we were agitated. After listening to the teaching, we again suffer through spells of sadness, of frustration, of sorrow, of anger ---- what we don't want to happen keeps happening. So the mind keeps saying, "I want to see myself as a full being all the time!" Well, of course, I am always a full being, but I forget. On a day to day basis this knowledge doesn't seem to serve me, and therefore it seems isolated from my life. What can I do about that?

The silent self

I must come to know that I am the Truth of every thought. Whether it be an agitating thought or a blissful thought, I am the Truth of the thought. A thought has no existence without me. It exists only as a reflection of my own self-effulgent being. It is something that shines after me, as the moon shines after the sun, and therefore a thought cannot disturb me. It depends upon me. If, on the other hand, I am the thought, then whatever is the condition of the mind is my own condition. If the mind is restless, I am restless.

The mind undergoes change. The mind is meant to undergo change. I should see myself in spite of changing thoughts as a person who is all silence, even as gold, in spite of being a chain, is all gold. It need not become a ring in order to take itself as gold. Whether it be a chain or a ring or a bangle, it is pure gold all the time. Once I see that the thought (or the chain) is *mithya*, apparent, then the apparent cannot cause a problem. Therefore, I can and must see myself, not in the *absence* of thoughts, but in spite of thoughts. This is called meditation.

What is that unchanging 'I' that is to be seen in spite of thoughts? That 'I' is silence. That 'I' is happiness. That 'I' is fullness. That 'I' is freedom. It lacks nothing. It is always free, the free, silent self.

Now, the silence that is the self is not something that is different from myself. Can I ever gain silence? No. Can I ever regain silence? No, because I *am* silence, I need not do anything to gain silence. Nor can I regain silence because it is not something that comes and goes.

Agitation comes and goes. All those thoughts which seem to destroy silence – they come and go. But silence is something that always remains, before agitation, under agitation, and after agitation. When agitation goes I am silent. Because I am generally agitation, it seems as if silence comes and goes. In England, where it is cloudy all the time, it seems as if the sun comes and goes. In truth, the sun does not come and go. It is the clouds that come and go. The sun always remains. Similarly, here the clouds in my mind fall away and

I see myself as silence. They come again and I seem to lose myself. That is all that happens. Silence is never away from me.

In order to learn anything I must be silent, otherwise learning can't take place. Because I am silent now and then, I have gained some knowledge. But if I try to pick up something when I have a lot of thoughts in my mind, nothing will happen. Even a newspaper column won't make sense because my mind is occupied. When the mind is preoccupied, I can learn nothing new.

Changing thoughts

I know that silence isn't something unknown to me. It only appears to come and go because thoughts appear to create agitation. I take thoughts as myself and become agitated due to mechanical thinking. The deep accumulation of likes and dislikes, of undigested and unassimilated ideas, cause so many conflicts and frustrations that the mind becomes mechanical. It reacts rather than acts. Once a thought comes, and *that* thought takes me to another thought, and that thought again takes me to another thought, I experience a spell of agitation.

In such mindlessly mechanical thinking I take the very thought as myself. I forget myself. Then when the thought goes away I suddenly come back to myself and pick up a moment of silence. Thus silence appears to appear to come and go. But if I analyze it, the problem is not one of discovering silence but one of destroying mechanical thinking.

A thought comes and goes. Before it came there was silence, and after it goes there is silence. Again, after another thought, there is silence. Between thoughts there is silence. Silence is not something I have to strive for. Thoughts come and go. Silence always is. And still I miss it. What does this mean? I miss it because I walk upon the thoughts. I am carried away with the thoughts.

I miss the silence when there is a buildup of thoughts, thereby creating a spell. I walk upon the thoughts. I don't get to the ground. My mind, by some association, jumps from one thought to another. The association can be a simple sound, even a rhyme. The meaning of a word can also bring any number of other words to mind. Just as the monkey leaps and catches the next branch, I also catch the first thought and leave the last one. This is why the mind is called a monkey. I must learn to break the spell of this mechanical travel upon thoughts and discover the silence between two thoughts. This should become a practice for me.

I should provide myself with a situation wherein I can develop the knack of being with

myself in spite of thinking. This special situation is called meditation.

What is meditation? Am I meditating when I remove all thoughts? Suppose I try to remove all thoughts. Then what happens when a thought comes? Silence is gone. I am going to be in for trouble, because the arrival of a thought becomes a problem. Can I have a mind that will never think? Would I ever ask God, "Oh, God, give me a mind which will never think!" Why should He give me a mind at all, then? The mind is meant to think. Thinking doesn't create problems. It is a blessing to be given a mind. To make thought into a nightmare is the silliest thing a person can do.

If you think the absence of thought is meditation or seeing funny visions is meditation, I would say that is *mad*itation. Seeing funny visions is not meditation, removing thoughts is not meditation. If I seek to remove all thoughts I only become frustrated and condemn myself as worthless because I can't do it. In trying to be "spiritual", I become so frustrated with myself that I become an impossible person to be with. I can't stand anything going on, because it all creates thoughts in me.

Developing the knack

Any process of thinking is a chain of many and varied thoughts. In this chain there is always a probability of being carried away on the thoughts, a superficial, reacting, mechanical form of thinking. But now I am going to do something with my mind whereby I shall have many thoughts and, at the same time, I am going to discover the silence between the thoughts.

How do I do this? Instead of having many varied thoughts, I create thoughts that are many in number but are all identical. If the second thought is just like the first thought and the third is just like the second, no captivating thought chain is created. There is no association, no connection. Only thought-period. Thought – period. Thought-period. After the first thought, what is there? Silence. After the second thought? Silence. Third thought? Silence. Fourth thought? Silence. What am I doing now? Learning. Learning what? The knack. Of what? Of being silent. Between what? Thoughts. It's a knack, just like learning to ride a bicycle or swim.

That single thought may be repeated as one word. What should that word be? Should it be meaningful or meaningless? If I take a meaningless word and start repeating it the mind tells me that I am doing a meaningless thing.

So I should choose a meaningful word, something representing the Whole, the core of creation. Something that is not one of the things in the creation. And because it is a word

that is very meaningful to me, the entire teaching can be seen in that one simple word. Any word which you recognize as the name of the Lord, a word which, as you repeat it, makes you appreciate yourself is fine. It should be a very meaningful word in which you are included.

The word can be one like Om, a word which includes everything, both in its meaning and in its sound. It has the sounds 'a', 'u', 'm'; 'a' stands for the waking, physical world; 'u' stands for the thought world; 'm' stands for the unmanifest. Therefore, the whole creation and the basis thereof are all brought into this one syllable, Om.

The word you chose could be another word. It could be Jesus. Or you can say, "Om namaḥ śivāya." Namaḥ means "I salute." Śiva means "all-auspicious," that which is all ānandā. Thus, "Unto the Lord I offer my salutations." Such words form a prayer. If I require that, these words are very useful. So long as the word is meaningful, it can be anything.

Om. Om. Om. Is there any connection between them? No, because each is complete. The thought is the same even though it is repeated a number of times. And the repetition must be there. Why? Why not have only a single Om? Because in order to discover silence between thoughts I must necessarily have many thoughts, but not various thoughts. To have various thoughts means that the thoughts form a chain, and I will not discover silence in a thought-chain. Therefore, I feed myself a single thought many times. I don't create a chain, but at the same time I see a number of thoughts. The first is not different from the second, and the second is not different from the third. Thus I provide myself with a situation wherein I discover the silence between thoughts. I can't miss it.

When I chant Om, what is next? Silence. Om. Silence. Om. Silence. And I do this all in order to see that I am silence in spite of having two successive thoughts. This new occupation, called meditation, helps me discover with ease that I am always the same. In spite of all actions performed, perceptions gathered, and thoughts entertained, I remain the same free being that is silent and does no action whatsoever.

Om Tat Sat

Transcribed and edited by Lynn Del Cotto and Dorothy Brooks from a lecture series on meditation given in San Francisco in November 1978

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the thirty ninth part of the serial article, continuation from Oct 2024 newsletter.

यं यान्तमनुयाति स्म चतुरङ्गबलं महत् । तमेकं सीतया सार्धमनुयाति स्म लक्ष्मणः ॥ २-३३-६
ऐश्वर्यस्य रसज्ञः सन् कामानां चाकरो महान् । नेच्छत्येवानृतं कर्तुं वचनं धर्मगौरवात् ॥ २-३३-७
या न शक्या पुरा द्रष्टुं भूतैराकाशगैरपि । तामद्य सीतां पश्यन्ति राजमार्गगता जनाः ॥ २-३३-८
अङ्गरागोचितां सीतां रक्तचन्दनसेविनीम् । वर्षमुष्णं च शीतं च नेष्यत्याशु विवर्णताम् ॥ २-३३-९
अद्य नूनं दशरथः सत्त्वमाविश्य भाषते । नहि राजा प्रियं पुत्रं विवासयितुमर्हति ॥ २-३३-१०
निर्गुणस्यापि पुत्रस्य कथं स्याद् विनिवासनम् । किं पुनर्यस्य लोकोऽयं जितो वृत्तेन केवलम् ॥ २-३३-११
आनृशंस्यमनुक्रोशः श्रुतं शीलं दमः शमः । राघवं शोभयन्त्येते षड् गुणाः पुरुषर्षभम् ॥ २-३३-१२

yaṁ yāntamanuyāti sma caturaṅgabalam mahat |
tamekaṁ sītayā sārddhamanuyāti sma lakṣmaṇaḥ || 2-33-6
aiśvaryaśya rasajñāḥ san kāmānām cākaro mahān |
necchatyevānṛtaṁ kartuṁ vacanaṁ dharmagauravāt || 2-33-7
yā na śakyā purā draṣṭuṁ bhūtairākāśagairapi |
tāmadya sītām paśyanti rājamārgagatā janāḥ || 2-33-8
aṅgarāgocitām sītām raktacandanasevinīm |
varṣamuṣṇam ca sītām ca neṣyatyāśu vivarṇatām || 2-33-9
adya nūnam daśarathaḥ sattvamāviśya bhāṣate |
nahi rājā priyaṁ putraṁ vivāsayitumarhati || 2-33-10
nirguṇasyāpi putrasya katham syād vinivāsanam |
kiṁ punaryasya loko'yaṁ jito vṛttena kevalam || 2-33-11
ānṛśaṁsyamanukrośaḥ śrutaṁ śīlam damaḥ śamaḥ |
rāghavaṁ śobhayantyete ṣaḍ guṇāḥ puruṣarṣabham || 2-33-12

Turning to Sumantra, the king's man, Rama said, "We must go. Please tell Dasharatha that we will come to him and take his blessings now as we go." To reach Dasharatha's palace, Rama and Sita walked through the streets of Ayodhya, streets crowded with the populace straining to get a glimpse of their hero. Sita had stayed in Rama's palace for most of the time since her arrival. Even the birds above has not seen her. This was the first time the citizens could see the prince and princess alone together. They loved seeing the beautiful Sita walking the streets next to their beloved Rama.

अस्मत्त्यक्तं प्रपद्यन्तु सेव्यमानं त्यजन्तु च । तृणमांसफलादानां देशं व्यालमृगद्विजम् ॥ २-३३-२४

asmattyaktam prapadyantu sevyamānam tyajantu ca ।

tṛṇamāṁsaphalādānām deśam vyālamṛgadvijam ॥ 2-33-24

Rama was always accompanied wherever he went by representatives of the four-fold armed forces. The procession of royalty, military, sages and attendants led by the blessed couple stirred the hearts of the populace as they passed. Waves of questions surged through the crowds that lined the streets, “How could Dasha-ratha send Rama away? Even a bad son would not be banished to the forest. What reason could there be for this? It seems rash.” “Rama has endeared himself to all of us and shown his capacity and willingness to be our next king, what could have happened? Possessed of the six-fold *guṇas* - harmless, compassion, learning, righteous conduct, self-control, mindfulness – all that qualifies a king, how can our Rama be sent away? What stroke of destiny is this?” “Rama is going, Lakshmana is going, Sita is going, we should go. We cannot be ourselves without our Rama. Kaikeyi and Bharata can stay here, and it will all be desolate. No one will cultivate the fields. Those who stay can eat roots and meat and whatever is here. They will have to be satisfied with snakes and deer as their servants. We will go to the forest and make that a worthy home. We have no reason to stay here.” Rama heard all this but did not react.

King Dasharatha gathered the royal family. He wanted all to hear what he had to say to his son, mighty Rama. Dasharatha knew that not even the gods could stop what had now started. Rama had given his word and it was over. That value is highlighted here and highlighted by Rama’s attitude. Holding forth with the spirit of *dharma*, and without concern for the immediate consequences, is the way this value is brought to focus. In much the same way, negative values are highlighted to reveal the costs of *adharma*. Here, listening to someone who has been swayed by selfish interests has brought tumult to the kingdom. Kaikeyi, a good person, had been convinced by the words of selfish Manthara, and there were severe results. Everyone has both virtue and weakness, and those can be played upon by others with cunning and wile. Kaikeyi had been turned into a vicious serpent who preyed upon the king’s weakness.

To be continued...

Mahābhārata
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the fifteenth part of the serial article, continuation from Oct 2024 newsletter.

In the meantime Dhrtarashtra's mind worked to find what else they could do to get rid of the Pandavas. He called for Shakuni. Shakuni was Duryodhana's uncle. Shakuni, also known as Kanika, was another small fellow, a past master in scheming. Dhrtarashtra told Shakuni that Duryodhana wanted to rule, and he asked Shakuni what should be done. Shakuni had one word of advice, "You cannot have them alive. You must destroy them. Whatever you do to them, nobody should know. Keep telling the people that you are fond of the Pandavas, while inside you search for the means to be permanently rid of them. For the public you weep and cry, but make sure the Pandavas are killed in some effective way."

Duryodhana naturally went forward with the plan he was working on with Dhrtarashtra. One of the court ministers was Purocana, a trusted fellow schemer, one who would not leak information. Duryodhana enlisted his support and promised him restitution for his contribution and his diligence. Duryodhana told Purocana, "The Pandavas will be sent to Varanavata, but you go there first. Go there and build a palatial house made of lac, of wax. The house should not look or smell like wax, but it should be all wax. Perfume it properly so no one can get the smell of wax. Furnish it properly and make it comfortable and suitable for guests. This is where the Pandavas will be told to stay for one year. Kunti will be with them, and in time the people in our city will accept the Pandava absence. Do not begin the torture too soon. Let the Pandavas get to feel safe and secure and then torch the place. Make sure that in every room of the wax house there is a large pot of oil and ghee. Quietly hide combustible materials throughout the house. Do not fail to do this." Purocana readied his best horse, gathered some trusted aides, rode to Varnavrata and began building.

Yudhisthira soon learned that the Pandavas would be asked to leave the Hastinapura palace for some time. Certainly he questioned why they were being sent away at the same time the king seemed to be trying so hard to be kind and considerate. Yudhisthira knew this was not a vacation, not for fun. There was

somehow more to it. When Bhishma asked Yudhisthira what was up, Yudhisthira said, "Oh, this is my uncle's desire to give us some kind of a break." Bhishma noted the sarcasm in Yudhisthira's voice, but he did not suspect how much jealousy and enmity there was behind Dhrtarashtra's move. Bhishma only saw Dhrtarashtra's attention to the welfare of the children, he did not think this man would lose his head like that.

The people, the citizens, advised the Pandavas not to leave. They suspected that some harm might come to them, that there was some plot. Yudhisthira told them, "This is the command of my uncle, who is now my father and who is the king." The preparations were completed and the Pandavas left their homes and went to Varnavata. The people of Varanavata received them with due pomp and were excited to have the royals live amongst them. The Pandavas moved into a house that was theirs for ten days while Purocana, a little away from town, finished the construction of the special wax house. Soon Purocana came to the Pandavas and told them that their new home was ready and invited them to take up residence there as the king had ordered.

Yudhisthira knew something was up. When he had taken leave of Bhishma and Vidura, Vidura, who was fluent in a dialect that Yudhisthira also understood, had said cryptically, "People must live alertly. When you go to strange places, there can be weapons more powerful than swords and maces and arrows. In the way that a rat has to run from fire, one has to be ready to escape from perils. One should enjoy the freedom of clear skies and bright stars and be ready to go out and see them. One has to keep all the senses alert." Vidura spoke in a way that he knew that Yudhisthira would have a very good idea what was being said. Vidura was a minister in Dhrtarashtra's court, and he had spies who informed him exactly what was going on in the palace. Kunti asked Yudhisthira about Vidura's conversation in that uncommon language. She wanted to know what it was that was said that had to be concealed. Yudhisthira said, "I think Vidura wanted to warn me about the possibility of someone plotting against us. Mostly it seemed to be about fire and the need to be able to escape the heat like rats do. We must wait and see."

To be continued...

Three month Vedanta Course in Tamil

A three-month Vedanta Course in Tamil was conducted at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti, Coimbatore from 27th July to 27th October 2024 by Swami Jagadatmananda Saraswati. The course commenced with the Aunugraha-bhashanam of Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati, Chief Acharya, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti.

18 students participated in this course including one from Malaysia. The focus was on bringing the vision of Srimad Bhagavad Gita with word by word meaning as explained by Pujya Swamiji in his Home Study Course.

The contents of the course covered all the chapters of Bhagavad Gita, Atmabodha, Selected verses from Sivavakyar Padalgal, a Tamil text and Chanting. The fundamentals of Sanskrit at the beginner's level were also taught. The first session was meditation, and the day concluded with Satsang. Chanting of Sri Lalita Sahasranama and the 15th Chapter of Gita were practiced and memorized during the chanting class. Br.Kumar ji guided the students with special classes for Sanskrit.

The participants of the course enjoyed the two tour programs in which they visited the Sri Masani Amman Temple, Anaimalai and Sri Lalitambika temple, Periya Thadagam. Swami Tadevananda Saraswati ji of Arsha Vidya Pitham, Anaimalai visited the camp and blessed the students. The course got concluded on 27th October 2024 with the blessing message from Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati ji.

FEED BACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS:

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam's serene divine sanctuary hosted a life-changing Vedanta course, integrating Bhagavad Gita, Lalitha Sahasranama, Sanskrit, Atma Boddham, devotional songs and guided meditations nurtured my soul. The guidance of Swamij Jagadatmananda ji transformed my perspective. Grateful for this spiritual journey. – **Shanmukha Priya**

3-months Vedanta Tamil course conducted by Arshavidya Gurukulam brought out the thoughts and vision of Pujya Swamiji. The Gurukulam gave us the experience of Bhakti yoga, understanding of Karma Yoga, practice of Dhyana Yoga and the true meaning of Jnana yoga and to sustain the knowledge of the self-evident

Self by removing the delusion. – V.N. Srinivasan and Sowmya

We were blessed to study entire Bhagavad Gita in Tamil in 92 days. Thanks to Acharya ji and Swamiji. - V. Tilakarajan and Syamala

Sanskrit which was bitter like Neem oil to me is now like honey after this course. I have clarity now because of the simple and clear teaching. - Vijayavalli.

I am thankful to the teachers who guided me to understand Karma yoga in the right attitude and very much inspired by the highlight on “ Nimita Matram Bhava” . – Savitri.

The three-month Vedanta course about Bhagavad Gita encouraged me understanding oneself. Bhagavad Gita teaches that living a Dharmik life, which involves morality, purity, discipline, honesty, righteousness and commitment to duty.

– Sivagamy, Malaysia.



Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti - 34th Anniversary Function

The thirty fourth anniversary of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam was celebrated on the 3rd November, 2024 at the Anaikatti Campus. It was well-attended. For the last few years it has been a custom to formally receive Anujna(consent) and Anugraha(blessing) of Pujya Swamiji before any function starts at the Gurukulam. This was done by offering a small puja performed by the Chief Acharya.

The function started with a prayer song by Smt. Shanti Subramaniam, followed by chanting of Veda by our Veda Pathashala students.

Sri Ravi Venkataraman ji, Secretary, Sruti Seva Trust welcomed all. This was followed by a delightful Bharatanatyam dance performance “Nrityanjali” dedicated to Pujya Swamiji, by the mother-daughter duo Smt Rajeswari Aravind and Kumari Amaya Aravind.

Sri Ravi Venkataraman ji, Secretary, Sruti Seva Trust presented the Gurukulam report for the year, which highlighted all the activities and the courses conducted in the Gurukulam. He mentioned the starting of Swami Dayananda Saraswati Veda Pathashala and getting an award from the Vidyatheertha Foundation, Sringeri, for the best Vedanta Institution, as significant milestones during the year.

Sri Vallabesan ji introduced the Chief Guest, Sri B.K.Krishnaraj Vanavarayar, Chairman of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Coimbatore.

Key note address by Sri B.K.Krishnaraj Vanavarayar:

Sri Vanavarayar, began with his familiarity with Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, comparing the similarities in the contribution of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Arsha Vidya Gurukulam. He suggested that Arsha Vidya Gurukulam should be called a Vidya Peetham now. He acknowledged that his presence in this function was a blessing by Pujya Swamiji and recalled his personal experience with Pujya Swamiji for a long time. He started with the physical transformation of the campus from the day the Gurukulam was started 34 years back – from a desert-like look to a beautiful campus today. Pujya Swamiji, in spite of his charismatic personality and knowledge, versatility with people across all strata and a phenomenal ability to communicate the most complicated subject in a very simple manner to people from rural area, urban area, educated and uneducated alike. He was against marketing himself, rather he never believed in marketing. He described Pujya Swamiji as an ideal monk – no likes, no dislikes; no comforts, no discomforts; can adjust to any situation; he was the same to everyone. He could connect with big scholars as well as rural

mass. He was concerned with the materialism and western onslaught on our culture. He explained that a unique achievement of Pujya Swamiji was the formation of Acharya Sabha, where he brought all the acharyas in India under one umbrella.

He continued with his statement that such Gurukulams are not just meant for old people and that they should encourage participation by youngsters, especially children. He listed the challenges facing the humanity:

Racial discrimination, Religious intolerance and conflicts; Social upheavals; Political tensions; Cultural degradation; Ecological imbalance ; Cut throat competitions; Loss of inner peace in man; Lack of creativity; animalistic tendency overpowering human beings, terrorism and many more.

These maladies every country has, but only India has a remedy for these. Since we have created these problems / maladies, only we have to find the solution. This is where places like our Gurukulam can help – not only teaching Vedanta, but living Vedanta. The greatness of India and the reason the world respects India, is the fact that we not only believed in potential divinity in every human being, but carry this belief even today, in this space age. He went on to explain the greatness of Advaita Vedanta, which is being researched in many western universities. Advaita Vedanta is the most logical, progressive, eternally relevant, extremely practical and capable of standing the test of times. He quoted Swami Vivekananda that Vedanta should reach masses in the slums. Vedanta is not for intellectual extravagance. It is meant for the ordinary man. Pujya Swamiji wanted Vedanta to help in facing national challenges and in nation building. The Chief Guest found the thoughts of Pujya Swamiji and Swami Vivekananda were similar in many respects when it came to facing challenges and nation building. Pujya Swamiji worked for the whole of humanity and not for just a religion or society. Our Gurukulam has done a lot of service to humanity silently – with this appreciation he concluded his speech.

After the key note address, Chief Acharya honored our auditor, Shri Prabhu.

Dr. R. Parthasarathy presented the SDJ Ayurvedalaya Report. He highlighted the participation of 1600 people from more than 40 countries in the last 10 years. This year the celebration of the 10th Anniversary and the initiative of Swarnaprasna were the significant achievements. For the first time, Ayurvedalaya trained a team of doctors from Latin America last year.

Anugraha-bhashanam by Swami Jagadatmananda Saraswati:

With humble pranams to Pujya Swamiji and a quote from Thirumandiram, Swami

Jagadatmanandaji began his Anugrahabhashanam. He thanked Acharya Swami Sadatmanandaji for taking the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam to greater heights, in achieving the vision and mission of Pujya Swamiji. Everyone is searching for something or the other in this world – some wealth, some knowledge, some truth, some liberation etc. He quoted Google as an analogy and people using the search engines to continue searching. The true knowledge seeking is when one stops searching. And the searching ends when one enters the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, thus the Gurukulam helps people coming in with the search for truth and wisdom. Therefore he welcomed everyone to come to the Gurukulam to seek wisdom and end their search. Swamiji asked everyone to visit Gurukulam and be with us in the success of all our endeavors. Swamiji concluded his Anugrahabhashanam by blessing everyone, with a special reference to the one year Vedanta students.

Anugraha-bhashanam by Chief Acharya Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati :

Swamiji began by saying - “It was a mesmerizing talk by the chief guest.. Everybody is blessed with different capacity and everybody is a vibhuti of Bhagavan . I am very happy to see these glories manifesting through different people” He then talked about the Gurukulam, its role and about the scriptural teaching.

This place called Arsha Vidya Gurukulam was founded on 31st October 1990. Today, we are celebrating the 34th anniversary of this place. This place is called Arsha Vidya Gurukulam which our chief guest wants to name as a Pitham. I appreciate and thank him for his love and respect for this institute. Gurukulam literally means guroh kulam= residence of guru. The residence of guru is a place of learning . Learning what? Arsha Vidya.. The knowledge imparted by the rishis which is contained in the vedas and veda-based scriptures. Traditionally we talk about 14 bodies of knowledge - 4 vedas (Rig,yajur, sama, Atharva veda), then 6 vedangas. These are auxiliary disciplines of knowledge to understand the content of vedas. The first two (shiksha & kalpa) are discipline of knowledge related to chanting and performance of rituals, then Grammar (vyakaranam) and etymology of words (niruktam) , prosody (chandasa) and astronomy/astrology (jyotisham) . We have 4 more branches called upanga - Nyaya sastra which deals with the method of how to think in a logical manner. Mimamsa is the analysis of the Vedas..The analysis of the first part of the Veda-purva-bhaga or Karma khanda is called purva mimamsa sastra and analysis of Vedanta called Brahma sutra. These two together is called Mimamsa. Then we have got puranas which is a vast literature to convey the vision of vedas through stories, anecdotes, metaphors. Then we have got dharma sastra like manusmriti, yagnavalkya

smriti. These are the 14 vidya sthanani . Sometimes 4 more are added to it- Ayurveda which is popular discipline of knowledge dealing with health. Dhanurveda dealing with archery and Gandharva veda, the discipline of knowledge dealing with art, music, dance and Arthasastra - dealing with economics. These 4 are called Upavedas. So 4 vedas +6 vedangas +4 upangas and 4 upavedas = total 18. All of them can be called Arsha Vidya.

In this Gurukulam, we are mainly focusing on Vedanta which is a part of vedas , vyakaranam and some part of shiksha on how to chant vedas. The main focus here is on Vedanta. The vision of Pujya Swamiji to establish this Gurukulam is : the study of Vedanta is a serious affair. It requires conducive atmosphere for the students. Gurukulam is an attempt to provide that conducive atmosphere to students to study without any worries about anything else. Pujya Swamiji would nicely say that this is the only Gurukulam which does not have any agenda for the students. Come study and you can spread the vision the way you want . If you want some help. We can provide that. But we do not have any agenda that you have to serve the organization in any way. There is no such obligation. The spirit of freedom is complete.

This Vedanta which is the main focus of this Gurukulam is relevant to our life. Many people have this question : how vedanta is relevant to my life ? For that we understand that everybody is seeking satisfaction , self-acceptance . I want to be acceptable to myself and when I am acceptable to myself, the whole world will be acceptable. Whenever I reject anything in this world or whenever I am complaining about this world, its root is in some non-acceptance of oneself. So the more you learn how acceptable you are, the world will be more and more acceptable to you. The vision of Vedanta is: all that is here is Isvara and that Isvara you are. Isvara and you are not different - sarvam brahma. Tat brahma tvam asi = everything is Brahman and that brahman you are. When a person has this vision , then there is a sense of fulfillment , fullness and that fullness will be expressed in the form of love and compassion. When there is love and compassion, then contribution, serving becomes very natural. One need not be even told. There is a life of harmony. A person himself feels fulfilled and his or her presence is a blessing to humanity and he spreads the message of love and compassion . Thus, the teaching and study of Vedanta is time-tested knowledge, relevant for all times. Some people say that I studied Vedanta and it did not work for me. Pujya Swamiji in some context said that to be fully benefitted by Vedanta, one requirement is relative self-love which means I have relative self-acceptance. This will be there when some inhibiting unconscious factors are taken care of . For that appreciating the order of Isvara and seeing oneself in order helps very much.

I will have less complaints about myself. I am kind to myself and I can be kind to others. Then I can see that the teaching of Vedanta is relevant all the time.

For that we talk about the 4 types of grace we require. First grace is the grace of Ishvara (Ishvara-kṛpa) by which alone you can have the desire and the opportunity for getting knowledge. How do you earn this grace? As Pujya Swamiji says by two methods – by reaching out action of being a greater and greater contributor for the well-being of all. The second is prayers, through body in the form of worshipping, thro' speech, chanting, and through the mind, meditation. All of them can help you earn the grace of Ishvara. Third grace we require is the grace of the scriptures (sastra kṛpa). By showing respect and love for the scriptures, protecting it and trying to contribute to spreading its teachings, we earn the grace of the scriptures. Fourth we require the grace of guru (guru kṛpa). This we earn by having reverential approach and love for the guru and serving him. Finally we require the grace of oneself (atma-kṛpa). It means my body is fit, my mind is relatively free from emotional disturbance and I have got relative self-acceptance. I have a relatively healthy self-esteem. If all these factors are there, then Vedanta will definitely work. It has worked for so many and there is no reason it should not work for you. For sharing this vision of Vedanta, this Arsha Vidya Gurukulam was founded by Pujya Swamiji. So we are very, very grateful to Pujya Swamiji that he has founded this place. I look upon the entire Gurukulam as the embodiment of Pujya Swamiji's grace which is manifesting through this place.

I am thankful to all the trustees, all the donors and sponsors, devotees, all the teachers, all the management staff and all other staff and mainly the students. The students are the flowers of the garden of Gurukulam. Without students, there is no Gurukulam. Swamiji thanked everybody for coming for this occasion and expressed a prayer that the grace of Pujya Swamiji continues, so that we can continue the activities of the Gurukulam with the spirit with which the place was founded. Om tat sat.

The function ended with a vote of thanks by Sri Vallabesanji.

After the conclusion of the function, all the guests were served a tasty maha-prasadam lunch.

- Report by Mr. Venkat Subramanian and Ms. Padma Ramaswamy

Photos in cover page# 32

Fall Vedānta Retreat by Swami Tattvavidānanda at AVG Saylorsburg

The 2024 Fall Vedānta retreats, guided by the venerable Swami Tattvavidānanda, began with a two-week course primarily on Aparokṣānubhūti, a Prakaraṇa Grantha text. Following this course, there was a five-week program that covered the much-anticipated course on the Aitareya Upaniṣad with Śrī Śaṅkara Bhāṣyam. These retreats, like past ones, covered an enormous number of topics that can help listeners assert wisdom in a variety of life-situations. A brief summary of teachings by Swamiji are described here.

We are ever grateful and offer our Namaskāraḥ to Puja Swamiji, Puja Swami Viditmanandaji, Puja Swami Tattvavidānandaji and other Mahātmas for their vision, blessings and love that enabled such an enlightening program to be made possible.

The five-week program was particularly remarkable because the Aitareya Upaniṣad is rarely taught using Śaṅkara Bhāṣyam. This is partly due to difficulties involved in making sense of the commentaries to arrive at a unified vision. The available palm-leaf manuscripts are known to be damaged, leading to later day people filling in whatever they could. This has resulted in multiple versions of Śaṅkara's commentaries on this Upaniṣad, posing a unique problem of arriving at consistency.

Later day Advaita scholars have provided reconciled versions, but their works are mostly in Sanskrit. More recently, scholars such as Swami Gambhīrānanda have provided useful English translations. Erudite Vedanta scholars like Swami Saccidānandendra Sarasvatī have provided cogent visions in Sanskrit. Swami Tattvavidānanda researched all the available scholarly works and wrote a book in Telugu, providing Śaṅkara's commentary with Telugu translations. Swamiji used this book to delineate the beginnings and endings of Pūrvapakṣa and Siddhānta sections with clarity.

As always, Swamiji presented the entire Śaṅkara Bhāṣyam in his distinctive style, going over every word and phrase, unlocking insights and making them relatable. In addition, he used metaphors from stories, insights from literary works, philosophical wisdom, and examples from fundamental sciences to reinforce the sense of oneness in how the material is presented. The interest in this course was so high that onsite accommodations were fully booked, prompting seekers worldwide to tune in via the ashram's online streaming services.

Jagadeesh Acharyaji taught Sanskrit, while beginners at various levels were guided by Brahmaçārīṇī Pūrṇaji, Swamini's Girijatmanandaji and Ramadhavanandaji. The spiritual pursuits of the retreat were augmented by daily yoga sessions led by Lance and Monica.

Nididhyāsanam sessions conducted every morning by Swamiji before breakfast were incredibly useful for all attendees. These sessions added depth to the daily discourse, providing assimilation opportunities.

For certain words of the Bhāṣya, Swamiji delved into etymology, Nirukta, and applicable Pāṇini sutras to establish the correct meanings and understanding, unfolding the right vision of the teachings. The entire seven weeks flew by and felt remarkably fresh, thanks to Swamiji's labor of love. Between the daily Satsaṅga and classroom sessions, the retreat also touched upon life's profound questions, making seemingly dry discussions relevant to all listeners, regardless of their background.

Swamiji always maintained that he is forever a learner and student, open to learning from anyone. He often remarked that attendees are unaware of how much he has learned from them. Swamiji's message was clear: No guru, no śiṣya, and the purpose of communication is mokṣa, here and now.

The students are ever grateful to the ashram staff and their managers for ensuring our stay was conducive to learning. We wish well to retiring staff members like Suddhātmāji, Vimalāji, and Sureshji. We are grateful to the new team taking over, including Karthikji, Vaniji, and Kishoreji. They have a big task ahead as they transition to their new roles for next year's programs.

Aparokṣānubhūti – Two-week retreat

The two-week-long 2024 Fall Vedanta Retreats focused on unfolding the profound wisdom contained in the first dozen verses of the Aparokṣānubhūti text. The teachings began with a prayer and delved into the topic of Sādhana for Self-realization, followed by an exposition on how one contemplates self-enquiry. While these were the primary topics, numerous others were addressed in detail.

For instance, there was an in-depth teaching on what constitutes Śravaṇam and how it differs from merely hearing what the speaker says. The critical question raised was: who is in the class? If a body-mind identified persona such as a husband, wife, grandparent, executive, or professor shows up, can such a persona gain the wisdom for radical inner transformation? The answer is a resounding NO. After all, these classes are not for realized individuals. So, who should attend an in-depth Vedanta class? What is the reason for coming to the class? Is listening done primarily to gain knowledge in the mind? What does it mean to go beyond verbal expressions since the word is not the thing the word points to?

These weighty questions demand absolute clarity, as understanding is sacred in Vedanta.

Rather than provide basic answers to satisfy curiosity, the questions are left open in this brief write-up. A burning question is more effective as a starting point for learning than a quick answer to satisfy the mind. Moreover, anyone can easily get audio and video recordings of the entire seven weeks of classes from the ashram bookstore.

Highlights

♦ **Abhedagarbha Namaskāraḥ**

The text opens with a prayer to Śrī Hari. This raises the question: how does a text teaching non-duality start with a prayer that seemingly conveys a message of duality? The purpose is to understand non-dual prostrations to one's innermost reality.

To achieve this, it's crucial to comprehend the etymological meanings of words like Hari and Śrī. One interpretation of Hari is "Harati iti Hariḥ," meaning "He who removes suffering is Hari." Hari's abode is in the cave of the heart, discovered by a sādḥaka. We live in a world created by thoughts of 'me and mine,' localized in brain cells. Prostration transcends head-level thinking to abidance in the heart, where one realizes Hari as the innermost reality. All sources of sorrow and suffering arise from an isolated ego living as 'me and mine,' and abidance in the heart removes this suffering once and for all.

Vidyāraṇya Swami wrote a commentary on this text and offered a unique etymological meaning for Śrī. It is not the name of the puranic goddess Lakṣmī married to Nārāyaṇa. The word derives from "Dhātuḥ Śrī Śraye," meaning taking refuge in the ground of all thoughts, which is Ātmā, the innermost reality. Hari, who is Śrī, is the ground of all existence, Ātmā abiding in the cave of the heart. The prayer seeks to move from brain cells holding thoughts of 'me and mine' to the heart, the abode of Ātmā, to realize bliss, the nature of existence. That Ātmā, which is Ānanda, is the cause of the appearance of the higher power Īśvara.

To contemplate this higher power in relatable terms, consider this: during a major rainfall in certain Texas cities, the power required for evaporation from the sea and uplifting to clouds was estimated to equal a power of million atomic bombs! If that's the power in an event limited in space-time, think of the power of the sun, billions of stars in each galaxy, and billions of galaxies in the known universe. While all these are vast, yet space-time limited, consider the power beyond physical constraints, one not limited by space-time. That is the higher power to which one surrenders to as Īśvara.

As a Sākṣi abiding in the heart, I know all that the mind knows and does not know. In that understanding, I am all-knowing. Biologists say the entire history of the evolution of the universe is within me because the genetic stack I carry results from millions of years of

evolution. Psychological history is within me as I carry the language and thoughts that evolved over millennia.

As a Sākṣi, I witness the mind spanning the universe with the aid of sense organs, the power of the mind, and instruments like electron microscopes or radio telescopes that allow the reach of the mind from the tiniest particles to the origins of the universe about 13.5 billion years ago. In this understanding, I am all-pervading, all-knowing, and the knowledge I carry includes the history of the entire evolution.

This contemplation brings Īśvara into the heart as Sākṣi, making the utterance of Śrī Hari very relatable.

♦ **What is Aparokṣānubhūti?**

Our conception of the world is defined entirely by our world experience. We sense the world using sense organs (Pratyakṣa) and conceptualize it through the mind using methods like syllogism and presumption. We may also derive understanding from scriptures, which provide testimony of realms like heaven or hell or an extra-cosmic God, representing another means of knowing the world. All these are remote (Parokṣa) because cognition through the mind is always indirect and mediated.

However, the experience of sorrow or pleasure is not known through the sense organs or the mind's processes. Instead, it is directly known by the Sākṣi, the witnessing awareness, and is termed Aparokṣā. How do we know the existence of this witnessing awareness? It is self-shining, timelessly present even during sleep, and is called Nitya Aparokṣā, which is Ātmā or Brahma.

Anubhūti means direct experience or realization. The title suggests that the verses of this text are about understanding and realizing one's innermost reality. Anubhūti is not the result of accumulation of knowledge but a deep feeling that is not relying on the memory of past-experience but feels ever fresh. It is a feeling behind the thinking that leads one to a fearless life of not being afraid of old age and disease as well no fear of death.

♦ **Sādhana**

Broadly speaking, there are three main classifications of means to Self-realization. These means are not necessarily constrained by space-time causality, as the very act of perceiving them as a process and contemplating the time required introduces false ideas of psychological time, which is a form of bondage. Moreover, a contradiction arises when a timeless reality already within oneself is approached through the prism of a space-time bounded process.

Sādhana consists of Bahiraṅga Sādhana, Antaraṅga Sādhana, and Sākṣāt Sādhana. The

latter refers to learning through Śravaṇam, Mananam, and Nidhidhyāsanam. The verses of this text describe the former two. Bahiraṅga Sādhana involves developing an attitude of karma yoga, which goes beyond the mere conception of execution of duties without desire for the results thereof. Even knowing what is one's duty is often not easy because of wrong ideas in the mind. For example, a person taking themselves as a 'grandpa' has really no duty towards 'grandchildren' assuming their parents are there to attend to the children's needs.

To fully comprehend a passing statement by Swamiji on this topic, the following background is provided:

The laws of nature and the second law of thermodynamics reveal that any system moves from order to disorder, with entropy, a precise measure of this process, increasing in any system. Where life forms are present, there is an assertion of negative entropy, though the total entropy of the organism and its environment continues to increase. A blade of grass, through photosynthesis, converts the disorder of dispersive carbon dioxide and water into orderly glucose molecules, a feat exceptionally difficult to replicate in a lab. Similarly, a vulture consuming a carcass gains negative entropy to sustain its life.

Thus, there is a continuous struggle at every level of an organism, from single cells to complex life forms, to seek negative entropy, even at the cost of predation. Organisms discriminate in their quest for negative entropy. In humans particularly, the gene pool seemingly provides a mechanism for deceiving the truth of oneness by instilling a sense of separateness from the whole. This intelligence at the genetic level appears necessary for the survival of any life form. The neurons in brain cells, deceived by the truth of oneness, can bind a human being to a false sense of 'me and mine,' governing all thinking and action.

Unlike other life forms, humans are uniquely endowed with the gift of Viveka, the discernment of what is real and what is unreal. Sādhana aims to counteract genetic deception, and in karma yoga, the teaching is to recognize the wisdom of not succumbing to desire for the results of any action. While the sense of doer-ship remains, the sense of enjoyer-ship is relinquished. In the language of bhakti, Hari is pleased with tapas of this kind. Tapas involves the mind's willingness to endure difficulties in the search for truth, fostering an attitude and calmness of mind to face situations with equanimity and endurance.

To do justice to this topic, in addition to listening to these lectures, readers should procure a set of eight lectures given in 2014 by Swamiji on the topic of karma yoga

(<https://avgbooks.org/shop/yoga-sound-14-mp3karma-yoga/>). Additionally, a book (<https://avgbooks.org/shop/vision-of-karma-yoga/>) based on these lectures, is available at the ashram bookstore and is highly recommended.

Aitareya Upaniṣad with Bhāshya – Five-week retreat

Samvāda – a play

Swāminī Śrīvidyānanda once again masterfully and creatively wrote a script, enrolled students, and directed this more-than-an-hour play. In a theatrical display of intellectual combat, students brought to life a debate known as the "Samvāda." This play is based on the Saṁbandha Bhāṣyam prior to the vākyas of the Upaniṣad.

For those interested in witnessing this engaging debate, a reference is provided below to watch the play on YouTube, where the clash of ideas comes to life in a captivating performance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJHgHXDU9FU>

Topics

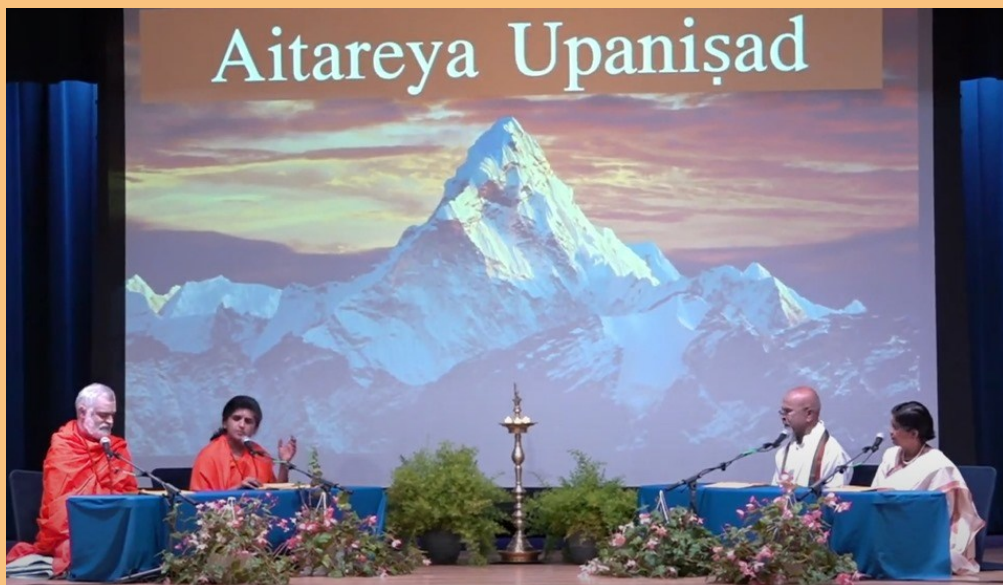
This retreat delved into a myriad of topics that hold direct relevance to our everyday lives. It was a profound exploration of the Bhāṣyam, where each word became a gateway to meaningful discussions on life experiences.

A summary of the five-week course highlights will be presented in the future edition of the Arsha Vidya Monthly Journal.

I Acknowledge people who voluntarily helped to review this article. Thanks specially to Terry, Rajitha and Jagadeesh for their help with correcting Sanskrit transliteration

- Report by T.K. Srinivas, USA

To be continued...



Tvam Pada Vichara Shibir at Jnana Pravaha, Manjakkudi

Pragnana Prakashika under the aegis of Acharya Shri Vasudevan ji conducted a three-day camp at Jnana Pravaha, Manjakkudi between 18-20th October 2024. More than 30 Sadhakas enrolled in Raja Vidya course, as part of their second year attended the camp. Acharyaji taught Kenopanishad during these three days.

The Camp started with all students attending the Nithya pooja at Pujya Swamiji's Shrine & Meditation centre. It was very kind of Swami Ramesvarananda Saraswatiji to have taken us on a guided tour of Jnana Pravaha, wherein he highlighted the vision and mission of Pujya Swamiji and how it is being implemented at Manjakkudi for vedantic studies. Swamiji in his blessing address during the inauguration stressed on the importance of pursuing a focused learning. Shri Rajagopalji, son of Trustee of SDET gave a brief overview of all the activities happening at Manjakkudi.

Dreams of Pujya Swamiji are realized in one form or other in Manjakkudi, one of them is Goshala that is maintained with around 80 cows. A grand Gopooja was done by all the students, presided by Swamiji and Acharyaji.

The students visited the temples, walked on the serene streets of the Agraharam and benefitted from the Thinnai Satsangs with Acharyaji where there were interactions and clarifications on sastram.

At the poorvaashrama residence of Pujya Swamiji, regular pooja is being done to Salingramam and Swamiji. All the students took part in the pooja and received Pujya Swamiji's blessings. They also visited the 108 Divya Desams exhibited in the university campus along with Acharyaji.

During the three days of the camp, Acharyaji taught Kenopanishad in Tamil in twelve classes and explained it in simple terms for all to understand it easily. During the valedictory session, the students presented their understanding of the Upanishad as their samarpanam to Veda mata and Guru Parampara.

A very serene and green atmosphere, organic Satvik food served at Koodam, state of the art classroom, cozy and immaculate Daya residency stay, all facilitated an uninterrupted study of Vedanta. Everybody unanimously conveyed their joy and gratitude to Swamiji, Mrs. Sheela Balaji and the staff of SDET for the wonderful hospitality.

They expressed their desire to attend more camps and reap the benefits from this teaching & learning.

Photo in cover page #2

Jnana Pravaha October Retreat

Namaste

We were immensely blessed when Swami Chitprakashanandaji announced a retreat at Manjakkudi between 23 & 25 of October 2024. It's memorable experience at the holy birth place of Pujya Swamiji. Swami Chitprakashanandaji had taken Updesha saaram of Sri Ramana Maharishi. It was completed in 6 classes. Brahmacharini Vijaya Baddiji explained the 12 th chapter of Bhagavad Gita.

Total 26 members of Belgaum and Hubli attended the retreat.

We attended regularly pujas at Jnanapravaha, we were very happy to meet Pujya Swamiji's brothers Sri MG Srinivansanji and Sri Dharmarajanji. Everyone was very happy to visit Pujya Swamiji ancestral home maintained neatly.

At college compass we could see Divyadeshm, Auditorium and library. We also could visit girls' and boys' Chatralayas. On our way back from Manjakkudi we visited Vedapaathashala at Kodavasal and listened to children chanting Vedas. We distributed fruits to them.

We had great time with Sri Swami Ramesvaranandaji who guided us throughout our stay at Manjakkudi, Rajgopalanji and Prasenjitji arranged transportation.

On arrival on 22nd at Tanjore we visited Sri Brihadeswara temple, and Saraswati Mahal library. On last day 26th on way back we visited 4 to 5 temples in and around Kumbhakonam. Some members showed interest visiting again in future.

Om Tat Sat

- Report By Student of Swamiji

Smt Bharati S C

Vidya Yawagal

Photo in cover page #2

Visit to AIM For Seva Hostel, Haridwar

Right before Deepavali celebrations, a group of the 6-Month course students had the great fortune of paying a visit to AIM for Seva Girls Hostel in Haridwar. The visit was beautiful with lots of lovely memories to take with us. Grateful to Divine that I could be part of it. Also, heartfelt thanks to Rekha Ji, the current coordinator (who has taken the previous 6-Month course), for inviting us all. Few Snippets below:

1. Started the gathering with a special Welcome song which the girls had prepared with Rekha Ji. Post which, each girl introduced herself. Each one had a unique, yet big dream about her future, which was very interesting.

2. After which, all the girls danced. The youngest Cutie pie gave the Solo performance. Rest everyone danced in groups on different songs. They invited us to join, and so I, along with few others joined them for dancing... 3. Following that, they sang beautiful songs - some Punjabi, some Gharwali. And yes, we all joined them again, learning from them.

4. They have shared about their daily routine, which besides school includes time for self study, time for puja, time to play/dance etc. We also replied some of the questions they had for us. We wrapped it all up with some gifts and sweets we have brought for them, and than enjoyed together Samosas, laddus and Chai, followed by some games such as Antakshari, Kho Kho and group dancing of course... It was all so sweet but too short a time and was really difficult to say GoodBye, was teary eyed. Aarti, Tamanna, Diya, Radha, Ekta (the youngest Cutie Pie), Asmi (Chess Champion) are few of the names I still remember, though do and shall always remember each one of their beautiful faces and souls. Rekha reported that the sweet memories of the visit lingered for days after. Girls kept asking if we will come again and she said "hope so". Glad we all captured some wonderful moments in pictures. Gratitude for Pujya Swamiji for starting this extraordinary organization, for helping so many girls, and for bringing hope to this world.

- Report by Geetika



Visit to Srimad Parasamaya Kolari Nathar Atheenam

Srimad Swami Sakshatkritananda Ji Maharaj visited on 09/11/2024, Saturday our (SRIMAD PARASAMAYA KOLARI NATHAR ATHEENAM) monastery, which was a great joy and blessing for all of us. Swami Sakshatkritananda Ji came that morning, Buddhatmananda Saraswati Swamikal and the devotees received Swamiji. Swamiji blessed all the devotees, and his discourse was meaningful and blessed. Swamikal was very happy to know more about the monastery and told all the devotees who came that the upliftment of this monastery would be good and everyone should help. Swamikal told all the devotees who came that the current Peethadhi of this monastery is Swami Buddhatmananda Saraswati. This is a very ancient monastery. This monastery was established in 647 AD. Till now, 38 Guru Mahasannidhanas have adorned the positions of the head of the monastery in this monastery. Now, the 39th Guru Mahasannidhanam is taking care of the monastery. We request that Swamiji come again, bless all the devotees, and deliver sermons to everyone. This Math was started in 647 AD and is ancient. Everyone is welcome to this Math. Swamiji's visit has been a blessing for everyone. We conveyed our gratitude and prayers to Swamiji. Swami Buddhatmananda Saraswati, the 39th Guru Mahasannidhanam, humbly informs that the visit of Venerable Swami Sakshakritananda Saraswati to Shrimad Parasamaya Kolari Nathar was very joyful and blessed.

- Report by SrilaSri Swami Buddhatmananda Saraswati



Deepavali Celebrations at AVP, Rishikesh

We are delighted to share the highlights of the magnificent Deepavali celebration at the Ashram:

The 6-month course students, under the leadership of Vanessa Sandrini, organized a special celebration for the neighbourhood children, complete with delicious food, cake, and an abundance of sweets. Each child received a sweatshirt and warm pants, ensuring they are well-prepared for the winter. The joy and gratitude expressed by the children, their parents, and the students was truly heartwarming. Inside the Ashram, lights illuminated every corner, filling the atmosphere with a bright glow of gratitude. The puja in the temple was more radiant than ever, and the presence of Pujya Swamiji's light and grace was deeply felt by all. Sweets were distributed to everyone, and after dinner, we came together to enjoy fireworks, sharing the light and joy of this auspicious festival.

It was a wonderful experience to celebrate Deepavali at Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh. May the grace of Pujya Swamiji shine upon us all.

Om Tat Sat.

CORRECTION

Bri. Amsavani Kuppusamy was initiated into order of Sannyasa on Shivaratri day in March 2024. Her diksha name was mentioned incorrectly.

The correct name is Swamini Hamsarupananda Saraswati .

Arsha Vidya Monthly Journal

(For Private Circulation Only)

Published by:

Ravi Venkataraman

Secretary, Sruti Seva Trust, Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641 108

Edited by:

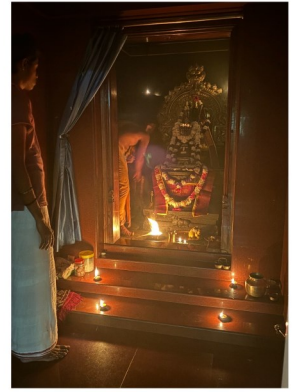
Ramachandran S.N (+91 94879 11949)

Printed by:

B. Rajkumar, Rasi Graphics private Limited

40, Peters Road, Chennai 600 014 ; Phone - (044) 28132970

Deepavali celebrations at AVP, Rishikesh



34th Anniversary function of AVG, Anaikatty, Coimbatore

