

Mauritius Retreat 2024

Sri Swamiji Sakshatkrtananda conducted a retreat at the Mauritius Arsha Vidya Ashram. The ashram is a beach-front property surrounded by lush trees and vegetation in the back. It is a serene and beautiful place, perfectly suited for contemplation and in-depth study of Vedanta. The retreat, August 6th to 14th, was attended by eighteen students.

The topic of the retreat was:

तदनन्यत्वमारम्भणशब्दादिभ्यः

tadananyatvamārambhāṇaśabdādibhyaḥ, which is Brahmaṣutra 2.1.14. This sutra along with all the objections and rebuttals were beautifully unfolded by Swamiji, who is a walking encyclopaedia of śāstra.

Sri Swaminiji Svratmavidyananda unfolded, with depth and clarity, selected shlokas of the profound Saddarshanam of Sri Ramana Maharishi. The text highlights the need for inquiry into and the conscious dis-identification with the fragile ahaṁkāra as an important sadhana for ātma-jñānam. Additionally Sri Swamini Chidekarasananda ji, in her mellifluous voice, held a few chanting classes on Bhagavad Gita chapter ten.

A salient highlight of the Ashram is the beautiful Prajna Dakshinamurti temple complex established by Pujya Sri Swamiji in 2009. In addition to Lord Dakshinamurti, it also houses the Varaprada Jnana Ganapati and Kalyana-Subramanya, Valli and Devasena shrines. It was a delight to chant Rudram and other Vedic mantras at the temple. On the first day, we performed a Mahaganapati Homa and prayed for the wellbeing of the ashram and success of the retreat. On that day Swamiji himself did the milk abhishekam followed by puja of all the deities including Pujya Swamiji.

Everyone felt the ashram is indeed blessed by the living presence of Pujya Swamiji, whose grace permeates the whole place. Sri Swamini Prajnananadaji is a veritable store house of energy. She single handedly manages the whole ashram and temple premises with enthusiasm. During our stay we got to enjoy tasty organically home-grown papayas and bananas from the ashram trees. Swami Prajnananandaji's has been a life of dedicated and committed service to Pujya Swamiji's vision. She keeps the place in pristine condition, and makes the ashram available for various camps and retreats.

We had a wonderful opportunity to visit Sri Swamini Karunanandaji's new ashram. It is located in a central, yet serene place, with a wooded area and a creek flowing nearby. Known as the Arsha Institute of Vedanta, the ashram is still under construction, but the main hall is almost ready and, therefore, we could have a gathering there. We were welcomed by Swaminis Karunandaji and Lakshyanandaji, along with the trustees of the ash-

ram. We toured around the property and then were invited to partake a delicious bhiksha at the home of Sri and Srimati Soobhagraha, who are prominent devotees.

We went sight-seeing on one of the days to the southern part of the island and visited Ganga talao, a temple complex surrounding various temples; Trou aux Cerfs crater, a dormant volcano; the national park where we saw the multi-coloured sands of Seven Coloured Earth and Venkateshwara temple.

On one of the evenings, Revathi Ramachandran gave a robust and graceful bharatanatyam performance. She shines in her abhinaya and footwork.

In all, the retreat was a delightful experience for all participants, who enjoyed every bit of it. Om tat sat.

—Report by Brahmachari Yoga

