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Eight Significant Verses of the Bhagavad Gītā

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the first part of the serial article.

Chapter 3, Verse 3

श्रीभगवानुवाच |

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ |

ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् || 3-3||

śrībhagavān uvāca

loke 'smin dvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha

jñānayogena sāṅkhyam karmayogena yoginām Verse 3-3

श्रीभगवान् *śrībhagavān* - the Lord; उवाच *uvāca*- said; अनघ *anagha* - Oh! Sinless One; अस्मिन् *asmin* - in this; लोके *loke* - world, द्विविधा *dvividhā* - two-fold; निष्ठा *niṣṭhā* - committed life-styles; पुरा *purā* - in the beginning; मया *mayā* - by me; प्रोक्ता *proktā* - was told; ज्ञान-योगेन *jñāna-yogena* - in the form of the pursuit of knowledge; साङ्ख्यानाम् *sāṅkhyam* - for the renunciates, कर्म-योगेन *karmayogena* - in the form of the pursuit of action; योगिनाम् *yoginām* - for those who pursue activity

Oh! Sinless One, the two fold committed lifestyle in this world, was told by Me in the beginning - the pursuit of knowledge for the renunciates and the pursuit of action for those who pursue activity.

Kṛṣṇa was not talking here as Mr. *Kṛṣṇa*, who was born on a given day at a given time, but as *Īśvara*, the Lord. Throughout the *Gītā*, *Kṛṣṇa* talked as the Lord, except in one or two places where he said to *Arjuna*, 'You are my friend.' In fact, anyone who understands the nature of *Īśvara* can talk as an *avatāra*, as *Īśvara* incarnate, just as *Vyāsa* had *Kṛṣṇa* do in the *Mahābhārata*. In the fourth chapter of the *Gītā*, *Kṛṣṇa* himself talked about what an *avatāra* is, as we shall see later.

Here, in this verse, *Kṛṣṇa* says that in the Veda, a two fold *niṣṭhā* was expounded by him. *Niṣṭhā* means a committed lifestyle. For example, a person who is committed to the practice of *japa*, chanting the Lord's name, is called *japa-niṣṭhā*, and when performing austerities, *tapas*, is the emphasis in one's life, the person is called *taponiṣṭhā*. One for whom the pursuit of *Brahman* is the *niṣṭhā* is called *brahma-niṣṭhā* and *jñāna-niṣṭhā* - one whose commitment is to knowledge.

In this verse, *Kṛṣṇa* says that one of the *niṣṭhās* or lifestyles he revealed to the world in the beginning is for the *sāṅkhya*, the *sannyāsīs*, and is in the form of *jñāna-yoga*, meaning that knowledge is the means to accomplish his end. Knowledge is the means for the *jñāna-yogi* who is a *sannyāsī* because he has no *karma* to do, other than the pursuit of knowledge, in order to gain *mokṣa*. The other *niṣṭhā*, *karma-yoga*, he revealed to the world in the beginning is for everyone else- *karma yogis*.

Kṛṣṇa then revealed the two-fold *niṣṭhā* to *Arjuna*. The word *sāṅkhya* means knowledge and is also used in the *Gītā* by Lord *Kṛṣṇa* to mean *sannyāsa*, the life of renunciation. Those who are committed to knowledge are called *sāṅkhyas* and the knowledge that is unfolded so clearly by all the *Upaniṣads*, the subject matter referred to as *Vedānta*, is called *sāṅkhya*. The only topic that *Vedānta* deals with is - ‘*ātmā* is *Brahman*.’ Therefore, *sāṅkhya* means *Brahman* and what is unfolded by the *Vedas*, by *Vedānta*, is called *sāṅkhyam Brahma*. Because the knowledge of *Brahman* is called *sāṅkhya*, and those who pursue that knowledge are also called *sāṅkhyas*, we find in the *Gītā* that the world is also used as a synonym for *sannyāsa*, the lifestyle of renunciation in which knowledge alone is pursued.

Because *Arjuna* wanted *śreyas*, *mokṣa*, *Kṛṣṇa* told him about this two-fold *niṣṭhā*. *Mokṣa* is clearly the end in view and the *niṣṭhā* is a means to this end. The *niṣṭhā* is two-fold because there are two different groups of people. One group is the *karma-yogis* or just *yogis* and includes everyone who does not live a life of renunciation. For these people there is *karma-yoga*, whereas for the *sannyāsī* there’s *jñāna-yoga*. These two styles are in accordance with the four stages of life found in the Vedic culture.

The first stage is called *brahmacarya-āśrama*, wherein the person lives a studious life with learning as the main focus. The *brahmacarya-āśrama* prepares one for the next ashram, the *gṛhastha-āśrama*, or married life. In *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, we read that, *Śvetaketu* spent twelve years in the *gurukula*, which he joined when was was twelve years old. So the first twenty four years of one’s life comprise the first stage of the *brahmacarya-āśrama*.

The second stage of life, *gṛhastha-āśrama*, where being a householder and raising a family is the primary focus, prepares one for the third stage, called *vānanprastha-āśrama*. In this stage, a person remains married, but husband and wife live as friends, rather than as a married couple. The person continues to perform the various rituals enjoined by the *Veda* for householders, but withdraws from worldly activities and lives a contented life. The *vānanprastha-āśrama*, prepares one for the fourth and final stage of life, *sannyāsa*, a life of renunciation. *Sannyāsa* is the best retirement plan there is because you do not require money for it. You simply renounce whatever you have.

Renunciation is possible at any stage. *Arjuna*, who was in the *gṛhastha-āśrama*,

wanted to renounce. He did not want to go through the intermediary stage as a *vānanprastha*. To remain as he was, meant that he would have to remain a *grhastha* for a length of time and then take permission from his wife to move on to the *vānanprastha-āśrama*, none of which would be easy. Nor was it necessary to do so for the day a person wants to get out of any of the first three *āśramas*, it can be done. When one discovers the readiness, the dispassion, in oneself, on that very day, one can take *sannyāsa*. There is a Vedic sanction for it.

The *sanyasa-āśrama* is a stage of life where one is absolved from performing all *karma*. One is freed from all duties in order to pursue knowledge. This pursuit is all that is to be done. Therefore, the person must already be a *jñānī* or want nothing but knowledge.

TYPES OF SANNYASA

There are two main types of *sannyāsa*. For a person who is already a *jñānī*, there is *vidvat-sannyāsa*, a *sannyāsa* taken because of knowledge. The person has knowledge and, therefore, there is nothing more for him or her to do in the world - no obligation whatsoever. If the knowledge has been gained in any of the other three *āśramas*- *brahmacarya-āśrama*, *grhasthya-āśrama*, or *vānanprastha-āśrama* - the person can take to the *sannyāsa-āśrama* directly, taking *vidvat-sannyāsa*, so that he or she is no longer obligated. Otherwise, for the person with knowledge, there will still be obligations because each of the first three *āśramas* implies certain duties on one's part, which cannot be left undone as long as one is in that *āśrama*. Thus, the person takes *sannyāsa* to be free of these obligations- to make it perfect, in other words.

The other main type of *sannyāsa* is called *vivdiśā-sannyāsa* and is meant for knowing. This *sannyāsa* is for those who desire to know the self, *ātmā*, as *Brahman*. The person knows exactly what is to be done. He or she has heard that this *ātmā* is *Brahman* and wants to know it. Such a person is not interested in anything else and has a certain *viveka*, discrimination, with reference to the real and the unreal. He or she also has *vairāgya*, dispassion, *mumukṣutvam*, the desire for liberation, and other qualifications in various degrees. And with these qualifications, the person takes to the life of *sannyāsa*, called *vivdiśā-sannyāsa*.

There is a third type of *sannyāsa*, called *āpat sannyāsa*. When a person thinks he or she is going to die and does not want to die a *grhastha* or a *vānanprastha*, but rather as a *sannyāsī*, he takes *āpat-sannyāsa*. *Āpat* means danger. Because the *sannyāsa-āśrama* is always praised in the *śāstra*, it is natural for a person to want the results of this *āśrama*. It is as though the person has had a blank cheque all along and now wants to encash it. For one who has already lived a *grhastha* life and has been told that death is near, there seems

to be no use in continuing in the *grhastha-āśrama*.

A man who is not about to die will usually want to remain a *grhastha* because he is fond of his wife and children. But if he knows he is going to die fairly soon, he may go for *āpat-sannyāsa*. At such a time, one does not require a *guru* but can simply declare oneself to be a *sannyāsī*. With the sun, the elements, and all the gods as witness, one can make vows, for which there is a particular *mantra*. And if one happens to survive, the vows taken can always be ratified later. This is how *Śaṅkara* became a *sannyāsī*.

HOW SANKARA BECAME A SANNYASI

Śaṅkara wanted to become a *sādhu* at a very young age, but his mother was not at all agreeable. As the story of his life goes, he had the help of a crocodile that had caught hold of his leg while he was bathing in the river. *Śaṅkara*'s mother was waiting for him on the bank and he called out to tell her what was happening. It may have been a ploy or perhaps the crocodile was symbolic of *saṃsāra*. We do not know. In any case, when his mother began crying, *Śaṅkara* told her that if he took the vows of *sannyāsa*, the crocodile would let go of him. Because there was danger to his life involved, this was *āpat-sannyāsa*. *Śaṅkara* then took the vows and, lo and behold, the crocodile released him!

When he walked out of the river, his mother said, 'Come on. Lets go home.' 'What!' *Śaṅkara* replied, 'I am a *sannyāsī* now.' When his mother told him the vows were only for the crocodile's sake, he said, 'Not at all! I have made the vows and I am going.' In this way, *Śaṅkara* became a *sannyāsī*. Later, he went to the *guru*, *Govinda-bhagavat-pāda*, who lived on the banks of *Narmadā* in the middle of India, and became his disciple. It was *Govindapāda* who ratified *Śaṅkara*'s vows of *sannyāsa*. Ratification is always possible whenever one has taken *āpat-sannyāsa* and survives.

Expecting some good end from *sannyāsa-āśrama*, people have a value for it. This expectation is based on the belief that a *sannyāsī* does not take another birth. And if there is a birth, the hope is that one will at least get a better chance in the next life. This is a belief and one has faith, *śraddhā*, in it. A person may be born into a family where he or she can start life as a *sādhu*, so that directly from the *brahmacharya* stage he or she will become a *sannyāsī* and not a *grhastha*. Thus, those who have become *sannyāsīs* this way may have been *āpat-sannyāsīs* in their previous life.

THE LAST RITUAL OF A SANNYASI

Arjuna's heart was not in *āpat-sannyāsa*. He was not dying, but he did want to know. Therefore, he wanted to take *vivdiśā sannyāsa*. In *sannyāsa* one gives up all *kar-mas*, for which there is a special ritual, the last fire ritual that a *sannyāsī* performs. You may see a *sannyāsī* doing a puja. But you will never see a *sannyāsī* sitting around a fire performing Vedic ritual. Such a person has been freed from all obligatory fire rituals, of all

karmas, in fact. A *sannyāsī*'s last fire ritual is one in which all *karmas* are given up.

In this ritual, the *sannyāsī* bids goodbye to all the ancestors, to whom there has been an obligation - father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, great grandfather, great grandmother, then *ṛṣis* and *devas*. The person taking *sannyāsa* says that self knowledge will be pursued to the exclusion of all else, asks for the blessings of the paternal and maternal ancestors and takes a vow of *abhaya*, a vow not to harm any living being, including trees and plants. The *sannyāsī* also vows to be a non-competitor in this world and all others, thereby becoming a person who does not compete for the same of the status politically, economically, or socially. Knowledge is the only interest for the *sannyāsī*.

Having taken these vows, the *sannyāsī* takes a few symbolic steps towards the north, the direction that stands for *mokṣa*. South stands for death. Thus, Lord Death, Lord *Yama*, is a southerner. This symbolism may be based on the polar attraction in the north. Death never attracts you, whereas freedom from death does. Moving towards the north in search of *mokṣa*, having discarded all clothing, the *sannyāsī* is called back by the *guru*, given a set of simple clothing, and asked to serve and continue studying with the *guru*. This, then, is the ritual of *sannyāsa*, be it either *vidvat-sannyāsa* or *vivdiśā-sannyāsa*. Both are mentioned by *Śaṅkara* in his commentary.

In *Vidvat-sannyāsa*, one may or may not take *sannyāsa* formally. The main aim is that, by knowledge, one gives up all *karmas*. The knowledge is that 'I am a non-doer. I perform no action.' This is what is called *naiṣkarmya*, the state of actionlessness. I perform no action at any time because *ātmā*, which is 'I', does not perform any action. Nor do *ātmā* cause anyone to perform action. I am not a doer in spite of all the actions I do. This knowledge is real *sannyāsa*, described as *jñāna-karma-sannyāsa*.

For the sake of this *jñāna-karma-sannyāsa*, one takes to the life style of *sannyāsa*, pursuing self-knowledge. The other *niṣṭhā*, *karma yoga*, is for all those seekers in the other *āśramas*.

THE PURPOSE OF KARMA YOGA

There is no doubt that *karma* binds, with its limited results. But, if you do *karma* for *antaḥ-karaṇa-śuddhi*, for neutralizing your *rāga-dveṣa*, for gaining the grace of *Īśvara* - if you perform your prayers, rituals, and duties for the sake of these alone, the *karma* you perform becomes a means, *yoga* for *mokṣa*.

Sannyāsa is only possible if you have lived a life of *karma yoga*. Otherwise, you become a *sannyāsī* who has *rāga-dveṣas* and you will be miserable. A *karma-yogi* has the means, world, a field, where his or her *rāga-dveṣas* can be neutralized. Such a field is not there for a *sannyāsī*. *Sannyāsa* means a life of study from morning to night. No other activity is available. A *sannyāsī* cannot even sing much because the pursuit of music, along

with everything else, has already been given up.

A *sannyāsī* is one who has to pursue knowledge for which a certain capacity to contemplate is required. If the pressure from *rāgadveṣas* is there, you cannot sit in contemplation. You will find, instead, all kinds of agitation or you will fall asleep. After a few days, the life style of a *sannyāsī*, traditionally indicated by the wearing of orange robes, will become a source of irritation. Naturally, then, *sannyāsa* is meant only for those who, to an extent at least, have taken care of their *rāgas* and *dveṣas*.

The two-fold *niṣṭhā* is meant only for *śreyas*. *Arjuna* wanted *Kṛṣṇa*, to tell him which one was better and *Kṛṣṇa* replied that one can be a *sannyāsī* or a *karma-yogi*. Both are meant for the same end- *mokṣa*, *śreyas*. One can live a life of a *karma-yoga* and gain *mokṣa* and one can live a life of *sannyāsī* and gain *mokṣa*. The only difference is the for a *sannyāsī* there is only knowledge, whereas for a *karma-yogi* there is knowledge and *karma*. This difference must be understood well because this is where there is a lot of confusion.

Arjuna was a *karma-yogi*, not a *sannyāsī*. By listening to *Kṛṣṇa*, he was pursuing knowledge. Although *grhasthas* pursue other activities, they can be qualified for knowledge. This pursuit of knowledge plus the performance of *karma*, with a certain understanding, made *Arjuna* a *karma-yogi*. If the pursuit of knowledge had not been there, if he had had no discrimination, if *mokṣa* had not been the end for him, he would not have been a *karma-yogi*. He would have been a simple doer, a *karmī*, a *karmaṭha*. When *mokṣa* is the end in view, then *karma* becomes *yoga* because it is done with a particular attitude in order to gain *antaḥ-karaṇa-śuddhi*, purification of the mind.

In this way, *karma yoga* is important in gaining knowledge. You can take *sannyāsa* and gain *sarva-karma-sannyāsa* or you can live a life of *karma yoga* and gain the same thing. *Sarva-karma-sannyāsa* is an end in itself for which the means is knowledge, gained in either of the two lifestyles - *sannyāsa* or *karma yoga* revealed by the Lord in the beginning itself, in the *Upaniṣads*.

Among the ten *Upaniṣads*, commonly studied, the first one is *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad*. The first *mantra* of this *Upaniṣad*, is meant for the *sannyāsī*, the *jñāna-yogi*. It says, 'In this moving world, everything should be looked upon by you as *Parameśvara*, the Lord - *īśāvāsyamidam sarvaṃ*. The Lord being everything, what is there that is yours? Or, not yours? Live a life of renunciation and pursue self-knowledge alone,' this *mantra* enjoins. Pursuit of this knowledge, giving up every other pursuit, is the life of *sannyāsa* or *jñāna-yoga*, says *Śaṅkara*, in his commentary.

The second *mantra* of the same *Upaniṣad* says, 'Even if you want to live one hundred years, live doing *karma* with the proper attitude. This is the best way for you. If *karma* is done in the proper way, it will not affect you at all.' This is *karma yoga*. This, we

see here the two fold *niṣṭhā* being unfolded, *sannyāsa*, wherein the pursuit of knowledge alone is allowed, and *karma yoga*, the pursuit of knowledge along with whatever *karma* is to be done. Throughout the *sāstra*, these two *niṣṭhās* are always discussed in the same way.

CHOICE OF LIFE-STYLE

In the Vedic vision, *śreyas* is *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is the end, the human destiny to be gained in this life. Here, itself *saṃsāra* is crossed. To have taken a human birth means that you have already made it. Because you have an intellect, *buddhi*, *viveka* is possible. It is true that experience teaches, but you do not need to get knocked around for seventy five years to get discrimination. Twenty five years are good enough! Once you develop *viveka*, *śreyas* alone looms large before you; it becomes the only real end for you.

Then you become either a *karma-yogi* or a *sannyāsī*. The *niṣṭhā* was given in a two-fold way because there are two kinds of people. But there is only one means for *mokṣa*, knowledge. Depending on the kind of person you are, you can either be a *sannyāsī* and pursue knowledge to the exclusion of all else, or a *karma-yogi* and pursue knowledge along with *karma*. In both life styles, the pursuit of knowledge is common. Knowledge is *mokṣa*. Therefore, the choice is not between *jñāna* and *karma*. It is between *sannyāsa* and *karma yoga*.

When the choice is between *karma yoga* and *sannyāsa*, it is natural to look to *sannyāsa*. Given a choice, why do *karma* at all? *Sannyāsa* seems to be the better choice since performing *karma* implies so much effort, problems, and even bloodshed, in *Arjuna*'s case. *Karma* can be such a nuisance. When two life-styles are available, why should I put up with a life of *karma*?

The choice is like asking which is the better way to catch hold of my nose in order to do breathing exercises. Shall I take my hand directly to my nose or shall I reach around from behind my head? It can be done either way, but when the first way is obviously so easy where is the question of choosing? *Sannyāsa* seems to be easier - just give up all the *karmas* and pursue knowledge. Why do both? A *karma-yogi*, living in an agricultural society, for example, has to milk the cow, graze it, wash it, and take care of the children, among other things. One child is crying, the other is on his lap, and the third one is tugging at him from behind. The mosquitos are biting and his wife is shouting. In between, he has to perform the fire ritual, called *agnihotra-karma*, with all its problems. The firewood is wet, everything is smoking, and his eyes become filled with all kinds of tears - tears born out of the smoke, tears torn out of all the nagging children, tears born out of helplessness, and so on. When will such a person have time to pursue knowledge? Whenever he picks up the *Gītā* book, all that comes is sleep!

Is it therefore not better to go for *sannyāsa*? *Arjuna* definitely thought so. However,

sannyāsa is not as easy as it appears. It looks as though you need only sit and study. But try it and you will find that it does not always work that way. Instead, you may vegetate all day because you are not able to study so intensely. This, then, is not the way. Thus *Kṛṣṇa* continued to tell *Arjuna* exactly what *sannyāsa* and *karma yoga* are. Even though a choice is there, *karma yoga* will pave the way for *sannyāsa*. It will even pave the way for the desire for knowledge and, therefore, for *vividiśā-sannyāsa*. *Kṛṣṇa* told *Arjuna* that *sannyāsa* is not at all easy in spite of how pleasant and simple it appears to be. After all, *sannyāsa* is giving up everything.

Arjuna thought that giving up everything would not present any great problem, especially since he had lived in the forest for twelve years. But, during those twelve years, he had been thinking about *Duryodhana* and the kingdom, and the injustice of it all. Twelve years of meditation upon *Duryodhana* did not make *Arjuna* a *sannyāsī*. *Arjuna* had been nursing a big hurt for a long time. Therefore, *sannyāsa* was not going to come so easily to him. One does not become a *sannyāsī* by decision alone - all of which *Kṛṣṇa* would tell him later in the *Gītā*.

To be continued...

When the knowledge that your nature is wholeness is gained, what happens? Once you are the whole, you are the whole, whether you see the creation or do not see the creation, whether you do something in the world or do not do anything. The whole does not acquire a dent by your doing something, or by your not doing something. This knowledge is called liberation, freedom – the freedom everyone loves, wants and struggles for.

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the thirty seventh part of the serial article, continuation from August 2024 newsletter.

नाहमर्थपरो देवि लोकमावस्तुमुत्सहे । विद्धि मामृषिभिस्तुल्यं विमलं धर्ममास्थितम् ॥ २-१९-२०
यत् तत्रभवतः किञ्चिच्छक्यं कर्तुं प्रियं मया । प्राणानपि परित्यज्य सर्वथा कृतमेव तत् ॥ २-१९-२१
सर्वोऽप्यभिजनः श्रीमाञ् श्रीमतः सत्यवादिनः । नालक्षयत् रामस्य किञ्चिदाकारमानने ॥ २-१९-३६

nāhamarthaparo devi lokamāvastumutsahe |

viddhi māmṛṣibhistulyaṁ vimalaṁ dharmamāsthitam || 2-19-20

yat tatrabhavataḥ kiñcicchakyaṁ kartuṁ priyaṁ mayā |

prāṇānapi parityajya sarvathā kṛtameva tat || 2-19-21

sarvo'pyabhijanaḥ śrīmāñ śrīmataḥ satyavādinaḥ |

nālakṣayat rāmasya kiñcidākāramānane || 2-19-36

Rama said, “Never forget, I seek neither wealth nor comfort. Neither do I seek to conquer worlds. Understand me, I am the equal of the *ṛṣis* and the forest is the right place for me. I am pure and committed to *dharma*. Nothing else is important to me. All you have asked of me is not a problem. I have not heard anything I object to. I ask to be given time to seek the permission of my mother and of Sita.” Without rancor or sense of mistreatment or abuse, without anger, he took leave of Kaikeyi. With that he walked out. No one who saw him then could see any change in his face. Still they thought Rama would that day be installed.

This kind of news will not rest. It began to spread and the ladies of the court all talked and soon the city was aflame with the news of what had come to pass. Rama was leaving Ayodhya. The joyous mood of the waiting city became quickly melancholy. The whole place changed. In her palace, Kausalya was given to her ritual life, spending time on her own in *pūjā*. She might have felt somewhat neglected by Dasharatha; Kaikeyi was certainly young and attractive. Kausalya was very glad that Rama had come to visit her on this auspicious morning. When Rama told her what his father wanted, what Kaikeyi had done, she was more than surprised. Rama asked for her blessings. He was prepared to head immediately for the forest. Hearing this, Kausalya was shaken, all her fears came out in words.

She mentioned being neglected by her husband, and she said that bearing and raising Rama was her greatest joy. She did not think it was correct that Rama would leave her. She could hear the voices of those who would mock her and deride her. She insisted she could not stay in Ayodhya for even one day if Rama did as he said he was going to. She implored Rama to find some way to get around this evil deed. She said it was not right that he should leave his aging father at this time.

Rama said to his mother, "There is no choice in this. I'll be back. You just stay here and enjoy your life of prayers. The time will go quickly. I will be fine in the forest; I love it there. No harm will come to me. You must stay here and pray to the gods that they may support me and all of us."

Lakshmana had come in. He had heard the whole story. He was all fired up and he butted in, "What are you talking about? This old man is getting senile. He can hardly think at all. How can he send Rama away? I will kill Dasharatha first. I will kill Kaikeyi. Let Bharata come and I will teach him a lesson. Whoever stands to fulfill this unworthy promise I will take down. What for do I have these weapons? I am no ordinary archer in the street. I am a *kṣatriya* and I will live by our code. Rama has done no harm to anyone; he bears ill will to none. He looks upon Kaikeyi as his own mother. What reason is there to stop what should be done? Do you think Lakshmana will stand here and take this nonsense?"

Calmly, Rama replied to his dear brother, "Lakshmana, what are you saying? That is not the way; that is not the way. There may be more here than meets the eye. You do not know what you are saying. Dasharatha is your father; if he says wrong things, that is not your concern? Nothing will happen to me in the forest. If he has chosen this, it is to be done. You will stay here and care for him. It is our duty to do as he says. Please settle down." Lakshmana flared up a few more times before Rama could cool him.

भर्तारं नानुवर्तेत सा च पापगतिर्भवेत् । भर्तुः शुश्रूषया नारी लभते स्वर्गमुत्तमम् ॥ २-२४-२६
यम् पालयसि धर्मं त्वं प्रीत्या च नियमेन च । स वै राघवशार्दूल धर्मस्त्वामभिरक्षतु ॥ २-२५-३

येभ्यः प्रणमसे पुत्र चैत्येष्वायतनेषु च । ते च त्वामभिरक्षन्तु वने सह महर्षिभिः ॥ २-२५-४
 यानि दत्तानि तेऽस्त्राणि विश्वामित्रेण धीमता । तानि त्वामभिरक्षन्तु गुणैः समुदितं सदा ॥ २-२५-५
 पितृशुश्रूषया पुत्र मातृशुश्रूषया तथा । सत्येन च महाबाहो चिरं जीवाभिरक्षितः ॥ २-२५-६
 समित्कुशपवित्राणि वेद्यश्चायतनानि च । स्थण्डिलानि च विप्राणां शैला वृक्षाः क्षुपा हृदाः
 पतङ्गाः पन्नगाः सिंहास्त्वां रक्षन्तु नरोत्तम ॥ २-२५-७
 स्वस्ति साध्याश्च विश्वे च मरुतश्च महर्षिभिः । स्वस्ति धाता विधाता च स्वस्ति पूषा भगोऽर्यमा २-२५-८
 लोकपालाश्च ते सर्वे वासवप्रमुखास्वास्तथा । ऋतवः षट् च ते सर्वे मासाः संवत्सराः क्षपाः ॥ २-२५-९
 दिनानि च मुहूर्ताश्च स्वस्ति कुर्वन्तु ते सदा । श्रुतिः स्मृतिश्च धर्मश्च पातु त्वां पुत्र सर्वतः ॥ २-२५-१०
 सर्वलोकप्रभुर्ब्रह्मा भूतकर्तृ तथार्षयः । ये च शेषाः सुरास्ते तु रक्षन्तु वनवासिनम् ॥ २-२५-२५
 अरोगं सर्वसिद्धार्थमयोध्यां पुनरागतम् । पश्यामि त्वाम् सुखं वत्स संधितं राजवत्सु ॥ २-२५-४१
 प्रणष्टदुःखसंकल्पा हर्षविद्योतितानना । द्रक्ष्यामि त्वां वनात् प्राप्तं पूर्णचन्द्रमिवोदितम् ॥ २-२५-४२

*bhartāraṁ nānuvarteta sā ca pāpagatirbhavet |
 bhartuḥ śuśrūṣayā nārī labhate svargamuttamam || 2-24-26
 yam pālayasi dharmāṁ tvāṁ prītyā ca niyameṇa ca |
 sa vai rāghavaśārdūla dharmastvāmabhirakṣatu || 2-25-3
 yebhyaḥ praṇamase putra caityeṣvāyataneṣu ca |
 te ca tvāmabhirakṣantu vane saha maharṣibhiḥ || 2-25-4
 yāni dattāni te'strāṇi viśvāmitreṇa dhīmatā |
 tāni tvāmabhirakṣantu guṇaiḥ samuditaṁ sadā || 2-25-5
 pitṛśuśrūṣayā putra mātṛśuśrūṣayā tathā |
 satyena ca mahābāho ciraṁ jīvābhirakṣitaḥ || 2-25-6
 samitkuśapavitrāṇi vedyāścāyatanāni ca |
 sthaṅḍilāni ca viprāṇāṁ śailā vṛkṣāḥ kṣupā hradāḥ
 pataṅgāḥ pannaḡāḥ siṁhāstvām rakṣantu narottama || 2-25-7
 svasti sādhyāśca viśve ca marutaśca maharṣibhiḥ |
 svasti dhātā vidhātā ca svasti pūṣā bhago'ryamā 2-25-8
 lokapālāśca te sarve vāsavapramukhāsvāstathā |
 ṛtavaḥ ṣaṭ ca te sarve māsāḥ saṁvatsarāḥ kṣapāḥ || 2-25-9
 dināni ca muhūrtāśca svasti kurvantu te sadā |
 śrutīḥ smṛtiśca dharmāśca pātu tvāṁ putra sarvataḥ || 2-25-10
 sarvalokaprabhurbrahmā bhūtakartṛ tathārṣayaḥ |
 ye ca śeṣāḥ surāste tu rakṣantu vanavāsinam || 2-25-25
 arogaṁ sarvasiddhārthamayodhyāṁ punarāgatam |
 paśyāmi tvāṁ sukhāṁ vatsa sandhitaṁ rājavartmasu || 2-25-41
 praṇaṣṭaduḥkhasaṅkalpā harṣavidyotitānanā |
 draṅkṣyāmi tvāṁ vanāt prāptaṁ pūrṇacandramivooditam || 2-25-42*

Kausalya too gradually resigned herself to Rama's reassuring words. She

knew Rama as only a mother could, and she knew she could not sway him in this. At last she somehow managed to tell him, “Go, now go, but come back safely. That will bring joy to my heart. Come back and be with me then.” She offered her blessings, “May that very *dharma* which firmly guides you now protect you. May the gods you have propitiated and venerated, the deities of your rituals, protect you. May the *ṛṣis* of the forest protect you. May the *āstras*, all the weapons that were given to you, protect and not fail to reach their mark. May your gentle and consistent service to your father and mother and your unyielding commitment to truth protect you. Let all your good will and good deeds not go unrewarded. May mountains and trees, ponds and streams, protect you. May lions and the other beasts of the jungle protect you. Dear son, just as the full moon returns to the night sky, I will see you again on the royal road.” She covered all that is in creation and all that is beyond. Offering *pūjā* and flowers to her *devatā*, she became silent. Rama encircled her with his steps and prostrated to her and took leave of her.

Now Rama had to convince Sita. He went to her and spoke to her, “Now, Sita, this is the thing.” She had no idea what was going on other than the installation of her husband as Prince Regent. Instead of taking her to the assembly hall as she expected, Rama told her she was to stay in Ayodhya while he lived in the forest for fourteen years, all due to Kaikeyi’s boon and his father’s word. He asked her to respect Bharata and his kingship and Kaikeyi. He asked her to serve his mother and father, and never to extol or praise him, never to talk in any way that demeaned Bharata or the family. He asked her to win their cooperation and love by her kindness.

To be continued...

Mahābhārata
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the thirteenth part of the serial article, continuation from August 2024 newsletter.

Kunti had crumpled into her seat, and she drew the attention of the spectators. The combat was delayed for a time. When she was able to get up it was already late. The sun had set, and the fight could not be started on that day. The tournament was over. Arjuna was in the heart of people, but the people were confused. Karna's presence had thrown the place into confusion. On this particular day all the problems in the Mahabharata started. The entry of Karna into the tournament stadium came like a storm, created a dissension and made Duryodhana strong. On that day itself Duryodhana resolved to destroy the Pandavas. With Karna, who knew everything Arjuna knew, who was a student of Bhargava, Duryodhana had solved the dilemma of Arjuna's prowess. Duryodhana was more bold and aggressive because of Karna's advent. This is the background for the war storms to come later.

Drona called together all his disciples, the princes, and told them it was, as was the custom, time to give *gurudakṣiṇa*. The princes were eager and delighted with the opportunity to give their teacher whatever he wanted. They need only hear what he desired. Drona said, "I am not interested in wealth. I just want you all to do one thing for me. I have an unsettled account with King Drupada the Panchalaraja. Drupada insulted me. At one time he was my friend, and I wanted that friendship to continue. But when he became a king he not only completely forgot me, he insulted me. I have taken a vow of revenge. Therefore I want all of you to confront Drupada and to bring him to me alive."

The Kaurava princes were only too happy, "We will do it for you. That is an easy job." Duryodhana and his people gathered a huge army and invaded Drupada's kingdom. When Drupada came to know that the Kauravas were invading, naturally he and his brothers mustered their armed forces and rose to fight. Still, he did not know the reason for war. Certainly, being Kurus, the Pandavas were

there too; they wanted to help their teacher Drona fulfill his desire. But they were not immediately ready to get into the fray. They waited for the Dhartarashtras to initiate the fight. The Pandavas knew their cousins, Duryodhana and his brothers, would soon be in trouble against the Panchala warriors.

As expected, the Kauravas, the Dhartarashtras, were defeated and ran for their lives. Drupada and his brothers fought valiantly and drove them off. Most of the Kauravas did not really have that much reason to fight, and they all ran away rather than be slaughtered. It was then that the Pandavas joined the battle. Arjuna got into his chariot and asked Bhima to go first. Nakula and Sahadeva were supposed to take care of the wheels, as they say. They covered the sides of the chariot. A chariot had to be kept intact, and opponents always aimed at the wheels and tried to disable the chariot and cause the enemy to lose his ride. Down from his chariot, a warrior became an easy target. Keeping the chariot moving was the goal of the charioteers. That was the advantage the charioteers held, though they were not mean fighters under any conditions.

Bhima cleared the way with his *gadā*, his mace, and Nakula and Sahadeva were alongside. As Bhima approached, Drupada became confused because he found that Bhima was not interested in killing anybody. Bhima just swept away those in front of him without killing them. Bhima's maneuver was something very beautiful, and it allowed Arjuna to move forward and to completely envelope Drupada in a shower of arrows. Like honeybees covering the honeycomb Arjuna's arrows swarmed over Drupada until he could not see. Drupada was not hurt, but he was blinded, surrounded by arrows. Arjuna jumped into Drupada's chariot and picked up Drupada. In a flash Arjuna leaped back into his own chariot and sped away before Drupada realized what was happening.

Arjuna dropped Drupada right in front of Drona. Drona received his *gurudakṣiṇa*. For Drona, the day he had been waiting for had come. Drona greatly appreciated Arjuna's performance. Drona turned to Drupada and asked, "Who are you now? Are you a king? You are not a king any more, you are at my mercy.

I can destroy you now. You said to me that only kings can have friendship with kings. You said friends had to be equals. Now you are equal to me. I have nothing and now you have nothing. Can we be friends now?" Drupada could not say anything. Drona continued, "Well, I do not want to kill you, Drupada. I sought only your friendship, and you were drunk with your power. Therefore you lost a good friend. Still, I want to be equal to you. I do not find in myself that I want to destroy you. From now on, the land on that side of Ganga belongs to you. This side, which was yours, now belongs to me. Now we are equal, by dividing your kingdom into halves. I suppose we can be friends." So saying, Drona released Drupada and sent him back to his palace.

Drona's anger was gone. Brahmana anger does not last. According to Mahabharata it goes away. But a Kshatriya did not forget such things. King Drupada was not going to forget this kind of shame. Drupada initiated great *tapas*, performed many rituals, and invoked Shankara, Lord Shiva. Drupada prayed for a son who would be able to defeat Drona. By the way, he asked for a girl child too. By virtue of his great *tapas*, why should he not ask for one more child? He wanted a son and he wanted a daughter. Drupada had marveled at the matchless Arjuna. Drupada's capture at the hands of Arjuna had been effortless and compassionate and had fully satisfied Arjuna's guru's request. Drupada did not blame Arjuna, and he was fascinated by Arjuna's extraordinary talents. Drupada's plan was to give the daughter he asked Lord Shiva for to Arjuna and to make Arjuna his son-in-law. He could not have Arjuna as a son, but he might have him as a son-in-law. The daughter was for Arjuna's sake. Drona was blessed with two children. The girl was Draupadi, and the son was Dhrstadyumna. We will frequently hear these names, the boy's later. Drupada was pleased with these blessed children.

One day Drona praised his student Arjuna as the greatest archer in the world, untouchable and unequalled by any other. Except one. Drona told Arjuna, "You will always be victorious over any enemy, except one." Drona did not often give such praise, and Arjuna knew and appreciated its value. When Drona said something, he meant it and it meant something. Arjuna wanted to know who was

that "except one." Drona advised him, "Do not let this get into your head. Enjoy the blessings of your talents and be content." Still Arjuna wanted to know that one. Drona told him, "That one is Krishna. He does not need even a bow and arrow. With a smile he can turn you to ashes. Do not ever fight with Krishna. If you can, make him your friend. If he is with you nobody on this earth, not even Indra, can defeat you. He is your cousin, after all. Your mother Kunti is Vasudeva's sister; Vasudeva is Krishna's father. Krishna is your auntie's son. Confirm the relationship that you already have. Keep Krishna with you. Arjuna and Krishna together - that's it." This was great advice from a great teacher.

Duryodhana and Bhima were further taught in handling the mace by Krishna's brother Balarama. Balarama was the best at mace. Strange but true, Balarama was very fond of Duryodhana. Balarama always backed the wrong one. If Krishna backed Arjuna, Balarama backed the other one. Always, always wrong, he always backed the wrong person. Arjuna had a difficult time dealing with Balarama. I think Balarama had some kind of rivalry with his own brother. The psychology of Mahabharata is amazing. There is a PH.D. thesis waiting there in the study of the characters. The Mahabharata may call silently, but I see the calling there - Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. All the time, everybody calls Krishna. All the *gopīs*, the girl cowherders, are after Krishna. Nobody seems to notice, but Balarama was equally strong. Balarama was always around, but in some ways he is always lost.

This is what they call a sibling problem. If Krishna was fond of the Pandavas, Balarama liked Duryodhana. It was always like this, purely a sibling rivalry, the problem between brothers and brothers, or brothers and sisters. Mahabharata is perfect in how it talks about it without talking about it. Balarama's problem was that he backed Duryodhana every time. When Bhima eventually killed Duryodhana, Balarama wanted to fight Bhima. Balarama wanted to destroy all the Pandavas, and Krishna had to pacify him. Every time this was a problem. Balarama, master of the mace, taught Duryodhana and Bhima their skills.

To be continued...

Pujya Swamiji's Birthday and Independence Day celebrations at AVG Anaikatti, Coimbatore

The day began with a Panchopara Puja performed by Acharya Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati at Guru Tirtha. This was accompanied by the chanting led by Swamini Saradananda Saraswati and Swamini Vedartananda Saraswati. After the puja and chanting, everyone did pradakshina of the Guru Tirtha.

Everyone moved to the ground for the next program of the day - hoisting of national flag.

Acharya Swami Sadatmanandaji hoisted the national flag and addressed the gathering of inmates, employees, students and acharya from the Swami Dayananda Saraswati Veda Pathashala, one year course and three months course students, and devotees - visitors.

During his Independence Day address, Swami Sadatmanandaji said:

Today we are celebrating the 78th Independence Day of this country. On this day we remember with gratitude, all those freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives, underwent many hardships, so that we can enjoy this independence of our country. We have received this freedom with a lot of struggle. Let us preserve it by our contribution, alertness and nationalism. Today, also happens to be the birthday of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati whom we fondly call Pujya Swamiji . He helped us to discover our inner freedom. On 15th August 1947, we got political freedom. So while we are celebrating political freedom, we pursue inner freedom by the method shown by Pujya Swamiji and other teachers. Thus we can enjoy both freedoms. We pray to Pujya Swamiji to bless us in our pursuit of inner freedom while enjoying external freedom.

After the Independence Day address by Acharyaji, National Anthem was sung followed by Sweets distribution to all by Acharyaji.

Following the Independence Day celebrations, all assembled in the Dakshinamurti temple and Satsang Mantapam for the Mula-mantra Japa. Lamps for Puja were organized in both Dakshinamurti temple and Satsang Mantapam.

Swamijis, Swaminis and devotees participated in the performance. All devotees chanted the Mula mantra along with Acharyaji, Swamijis and Swaminis.

A bhajan by Acharyaji was followed by his address:

Today we are celebrating the starting of the 95th birthday of Pujya Swamiji. Today also happens to be the Independence day of this country. We cannot say swamiji was born on Independence day. India got independence on Pujya Swamiji's birthday, since Pujya Swa-

miji 's birthday was first. So we can say the gift of independence was his birthday gift to us.

As the bhajan says- *apAra mahima guru mahima* - the glory of Pujya Swamiji is endless. But some of his glory we will remember today, to get inspiration.

In the well-known Dayananda Pancakam, in the 2nd stanza several words are used to describe Pujya Swamijs glory-

परब्रह्मनिष्ठम् , स्वतो धर्मनिष्ठम् - Pujya Swamiji was abiding in the limitless reality called Brahman. The abidance was expressed in the form of his fullness and love and compassion for all. But at the same time when it comes to transaction, he was abiding in dharma and he was spreading the message of our Vedic dharma. (Today the condition of our Hindu dharma in some places is not good. We can offer this mulamantra archana which we did to the removal or reduction of the plight of Hindu people suffering in Bangladesh and other places.) Pujya Swamiji spread dharma throughout his life and through his teaching.

अहिंसैकनिष्ठम् , स्वशिष्यैः सुजुष्टम् - *ahimsa paramo dharmah* - He was an embodiment of ahimsa. One Swamiji was telling that when he was staying in Rishikesh with Pujya Swamiji in sixties , that time his duty was to carefully take out all the insects where Swamiji was taking bath. Pujya Swamiji was very mindful that the insects should not be killed. Infact he never liked to kill mosquitoes. He used to say that he was a mosquito repellent for others because all mosquitoes come to him. All others are saved. Pujya Swamiji was loved by his students. He created a lot of students in his life who became teachers. He was always surrounded by his devoted students.

यतीनाम् वरिष्ठम् , गुरुणाङ्गरिष्ठम् - He was the greatest among all sanyasis. More important to us, he was the greatest among all teachers. As he used to say, that the teaching is to make the student see what you are seeing. That is the best teaching. Pujya Swamiji was great in this art of communication . What he was seeing, he could make others see. Another aspect of his greatness as a teacher was that he was a holistic teacher. He will help the student all the way. Whatever is bothering the student , he is ready to help. He did not have any boundaries. There are some teachers who have areas of teaching. You have a question, then you ask and it will be answered, but no more. Whereas Pujya Swamiji did not have any boundaries. He could keep the student relaxed.

Like when he took a long term course in Sandeepany he told the students, don't worry what will happen to you in future. "If you require a job I will get you a job, now focus on study". He will help the person to grow in various ways from wherever he/she is. When he teaches in front of an audience, his teaching was such that whether it is Brahma sutra or Upanishad, or a public talk, every person would get some prasada of his teaching, de-

pending on his or her level. There is always something for everybody. That is why he was the greatest teacher. We are very fortunate that we were benefitted by his teaching directly or indirectly. We pray to Pujya Swamiji who is one with Isvara, that he bless us in our pursuit of inner freedom on this occasion.

Om Tat Sat

After the address, Maha naivedyam and Mangala Arati were performed followed by chanting of Dayananda Panchakam by Swamini Saradanandaji and Swamini Vedartanandaji.

The function ended with distribution of Maha prasadam to more than 350 people who participated in the celebrations and Mula-mantra japa on the occasion of Pujya Swamiji's 95th birthday.

- Report by Mr. Venkatasubramanian and Ms. Padma





Arsha Vidya Gurukulam
(Sruti Seva Trust), Anaikatti

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Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati
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Note: Familiarity with Sanskrit and some Vedanta study will help to get more benefit from the retreat.

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 Svātmavidyananda 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 Prajnānandaji 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 Prajnānandaji'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



Ganesha Chaturthi Celebrations at AVP, Rishikesh

On September 7th, the ashram celebrated Ganesha Chaturthi with great enthusiasm. The day began with a Vinayak Chaturthi Puja at the Mandir, where all attendees gathered to worship Lord Ganesha. This was followed by the Ganesha Sthapana, the installation of the deity in the lecture hall for next three days. The festivities included a Bhandara to over 700 sadhus. In the evening, Bhajanas and Kirtanas uplifted the atmosphere. After three days of devotional worship with Pujas and Arati, the festival concluded on September 9th with the Visarjan ceremony. A lively procession led to the immersion of Ganesha's idol in the holy waters of the Ganga, symbolizing the deity's Visarjanam. Om Tat Sat

- Report by Ms. Shambavi



Three months course in Vedanta and Sanskrit at AVP, Rishikesh

Arsha Vidya Pitham, Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh, is happy to announce the commencement of a three-month residential course in Vedanta & Samskrta on 14th January, 2025. The course will be conducted by Chief Acharya Sri Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati along with Sri Swamini Svatmavidyananda Saraswati.

The course syllabus includes meditation, classes on Vedanta, Samskrta, Bhagavad-Gita, Yoga, Chanting of Vedic mantras, stotras, and satsang.

The course is open to anyone who is interested in gaining insight into Vedanta and also a basic knowledge of Samskrta. This will be a full-time residential course, without any break in between. Married couples can also participate. The accommodation will be strictly on a double-sharing basis. Participants are expected to contribute a sum of Rs 5000 per head per month to partially meet the room and board expenses. In exceptional cases (of brahmacharis/brahmacharinis who have no source of income) the same will be waived at the Acharya's discretion. Participants will have to abide by the rules and regulations of the ashram. The Ashram reserves the right to ask any student to leave the course at any time without giving a reason, if in the perception of the ashram the continuation of the student is not conducive for smooth conduct of the course.

Those who are interested may apply from October 7th onwards by visiting the link: <https://dayananda.org/regular-6-month-courses/> and filling out the form at the end of the description on the website.

The last date for the submission of the application form is 7th November, 2024, after which applications will not be considered. The selected candidates will be informed by 1st December, 2024.

Important Note: Applicants are required to fill the form using a google account. If you do not have a gmail account, please create one and then fill out the form.

Family Retreat 2025 - Children camp along with Parents

Arsha Vidya Pitham is organising a 'Family Retreat' at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India. This is a Children retreat but compulsorily accompanied by parents / guardians, and sessions will be conducted separately for Children as well as for Parents / Guardians simultaneously.

Main Acharya: Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati

Camp Coordinator: Pulluri Srinivas and assisted by volunteers of Arsha Vidya Sampradaya

Focus of the Retreat:

- This retreat initiates the process of assimilation of certain important values and healthy attitudes.
- Explore towards Pujas, Meditation, Yogasanas, Chanting, Stories, Sanskrit and Yogic games, etc., And
- Imbibing the spirit of Nationalism.

Note:

- ◇ Children without Parent/s or Guardian are not allowed. And Adults without children too are not allowed to participate in the camp.
- ◇ Adults will have simultaneous sessions and participating in all the sessions are compulsory.

Date: Sunday 24th May – Sunday, 1st June, 2025

Note: The participants will **arrive on 24th May** and **leave on 1st June, 2024**

Contribution: Rs. 3000/- per child & Rs. 6000/- per Adult

Eligibility- Age of the child should be between 10 to 15 years only

(Junior group 10 – 12 years & Senior group 13 – 15 years)

For the glimpses of our Family Retreat – 2024 _ click below given links

Family Retreat – 2024 a short film

<https://youtu.be/DfuDsnw-pG4?si=IH7NmU0M3R5qQ9OW>

Participants Experiences

<https://youtu.be/keHULF7G4ro?si=6FXaeNcEvPW4cOv>

For registrations: click the link given below:

<https://forms.gle/Z8xzpzyYQVUhQv4p8>

Last date of Registration: 28th February, 2025

Camp Coordinator can be reached on WhatsApp - +91 9486819637

Krishna Janmashtami Celebrations at AVP, Rishikesh

श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः

The ashram was filled with high vibrations and profound devotion as Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated with immense joy, devotion and love. The event reflected the deep spiritual connection shared by all present. Students of the six-month course played a key role in the preparations, beautifully decorating the Sankirtan hall to reflect the joyous occasion. A bhandara was organized for 300 sadhus, who were nurtured and who spontaneously celebrated the Lord's sweetness. The day was rich with spiritual practices, where Krishna's divine presence was invoked through the repetition of his 108 names, followed by heartfelt chanting and joyful dancing. This celebration was not just an expression of devotion but also a deep act of gratitude towards the Lord, who has bestowed blessings upon us beyond imagination. All assembled were reminded of Krishna's timeless wisdom, and prayed for the protection of Sanatana Dharma.

Om Tat Sat

- Report by Ms. Shambavi



Dayananda Anugraha Fund



Dayananda Anugraha Fund

Supporting the disciples of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati

A permanently endowed fund established in 2017 to provide financial support to current and future generations of teachers and students in the Arsha Vidya Sampradaya.

Living & Medical Expenses Grant

- No application form required
- Up to Rs 2.5 lakh
- For any sannyasi(ni) or full-time Vedanta teacher/student

Special Grant

- Living & medical expenses exceeding Rs 2.5 lakh
- Travel, teaching, study, publication expenses
- End of life, mahasamadhi, shodashi expenses
- Repairs or improvements for ashram or residence

Advisory Committee: Swami Veditatmananda, Swami Sakshatkritananda, Swami Suddhananda, Swami Sadatmananda, Swamini Brahmaprakashananda, Swami Tattvavidananda, Suddhatma Chaitanya

For further information or to apply for grant, please see www.DayanandaFund.org

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