

Sashtiabdhapurti celebrations in Mumbai for Swami Brahmavidananda Saraswati

What better way to start Swami Brahmavidananda's Sastiabdhapurti celebrations than with the message and aashirwaad of his paramguru Pujya Sri Swami Dayanandaji,

VIDEO MESSAGE AND AASHIRWAD FROM SRI PUJYA SWAMIJI

"I am very happy that Sri Swami Brahmavidanandaji is going to be 60. I can't believe it. He came to me as a young boy going to college and since then I have been seeing him. And he is now 60 years. All these days from his college days till now he never had any other commitment. He had only one commitment - to understand the shastra, to live that life. It's an amazing accomplishment, an unflinching commitment. Although he had a short stint of work, it did not work for him!"

And his parents were very supportive. That has helped him a lot. And ofcourse I was supportive. He had come to Rishikesh and stayed here for quite a few years. He not only studied with me but also Swami Tarananandaji. He had gone through the difficulties that one goes through as a student, but happily. He and Uday Acharya, both of them. He had been teaching in Bombay very quietly. Only his students know him. He did not make a big news about himself. He did not make any attempt to do that. He enjoys being a quite teacher and that makes him a very, a very significant Mahatma. I am very proud to have him as my disciple. I wish him well."



Blessed by this message, the Sashtiabdhapurti programme for Swami Brahmavidananda commenced on 24th March 2013, being his Nakshatra birthday. On a quiet Sunday, in the busy Matunga suburb fragrant with the flower market and the aroma of South Indian coffee, Swamiji's students from his many different classes spread across Mumbai gathered in the Kanyaka Parmeswari temple. Ganapati Homa, Navagraha Homa, Ayushya Homa and Mrityunjaya homa were performed. A parallel session continued upstairs which had the screening of Pujya Swamiji's video message (above) and a 15 minute film of heartfelt tributes for Swamiji from students, friends, and purva ashram family members. The hall reverberated with dialogue, debate and discussions – purvapakshas and siddhanta by 8 students regarding different topics in Vedanta. The topics ranged from the summary of Adhyaasa bhashya, jnanam vis-m-vis karma for moksha, parallels between Vedanta and Sufism and Reflection of Vedanta in the Quran. A parallel between project management cycle and the management of life was also drawn – how one erroneous notion (Everything has to be done immediately/ I am a limited being/

) can influence the course of events. A couple of students shared their personal experiences and sang touching bhajans as well as an unusual qawwali in a South Indian accent (believe-it-or-not) paying tribute to the sadguru.

Abhishekam of Swamiji was done with sanctified water after the homas as well as water from the Ganga followed by Guru Archana. Swamiji said that, "In this journey from a student to a teacher, I owe all that I know to Pujya Swamiji." In his anugraha bhashanam, he spoke about 'What it takes to be a contemporary and traditional teacher'. Swam Brahmavidanandaiji said, "What is traditional and contemporary need not be opposed to each other – they can be in perfect harmony. Tradition is 'trans diction', in English – what is transferred by word of mouth. Therefore it is knowledge centric." Swamiji spoke about the highlights of the traditional methodology of teaching emphasizing that "only traditional teaching can transmit the vision of purnatvam. To be contemporary means to set the traditional teaching in the background of modern science, psychology and the contemporary socio-cultural economic milieu."

A souvenir commemorating Swamiji 's Sashtiabdhapurti was released on the occasion by Uday Acharyaji and Swamini Brahmaprakasandaji who came all the way from Nagpur. Swaminiji reminded everyone how blessed they were and reflected on the role Swamiji had played in her life, "He was not just a friend to me those days but he was also my friend philosopher and guide — all rolled in to



one. He was the one who initiated me into a deeper study of the vedanta-sastra, the allied subjects and the grammar of Panini. He gave me the vision of the possibilities and was the inspiration for me to take to this life of atmajana with complete surrender to our sadguru, Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati."

The celebration for the day concluded with students seeking Swamiji 's aashirwaad and a sumptuous lunch. Reflecting each other's happiness, one of the students aptly said," Really speaking it is our birthday celebration today as Swamiji was born to teach us brahmavidya." Some of the excerpts from warm, heartfelt and glowing messages from Gurubhais and Gurubehen – of Swami Brahmavidananda, his life and his presence:

Swami Sakshatkritananda, Acharya of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Coimbatore: *Swami Brahmavidanandaji is a great teacher who combines tradition and modernity. Traditional because he got the knowledge from Pujya Swamiji - sampradayavit. He is modern because the teaching that he gained comes through his mind that has got modern education. The modernity in his teaching is in using modern examples.*

Suddhatma Chaitanya: *Swami BV ji was instrumental in introducing 'Rishikesh Sadhu life' to me and we discussed Vedantic teachings during our stay in Rishikesh. I still have fond memories of those days, living with minimum and yet, gaining maximum in terms of 'Self Knowledge'. My wife Samata, also his 'Gurubehen' joins me in sending lots of love and prayerful wishes to Swami BV on his 60th birthday,*



Swamini Brahmaprakashananda, Resident Acharya of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Nagpur: *In our close knit group, he was a model and inspiration for all of us. He was also our teacher teaching us the Bhagavadgita to the Brahmasutra-bhashya. His skills as the teacher of Vedanta, the clarity of the knowledge have always impressed me. He was a very committed sadhu and he lived and studied in the Himalayas for many years.*

Uday Acharya, Vedanta teacher in Mumbai - Swami Brahmavidananda - Friend, Colleague, Mentor, Guide - He has been there in my life from my school days to Sandeepany to Rishikesh. If I have been a competent teacher, a good writer, successful motivator, able

counsellor, and great networker, I owe a great deal to this wonderful friend, philosopher and guide.

Swami Atmatriptananda, Kolkata - *It is not easy to find a teacher with the degree of clarity that he has on the subject which is the subject matter of life. Swami Brahmavidananda is a rare contemporary teacher who easily accommodates, leads and guides today's youngsters with flair and finesse. His understanding of all modern social issues and problems is amazing and thorough. In him, I see someone who neither assumes the airs of guru nor that of a sannyasi. I once had a chance to study a text called Vedantaparibhasha taught by him. There was not a trace of superiority I saw in his disposition. This is the kind of relationship I have ever enjoyed with him. I would have certainly missed something if I were to not know him.*

On this most auspicious occasion of his 60th birthday, we join our hands in prayerful gratitude and pray to Lord Dakshinamurti to bless Swami Brahmavidanandaji with sound health and a long life. May he continue to bless us with his teaching and share his wisdom with hundreds and thousands of students, in the years to come. Om Tat Sat.

By Mrinalini Rao

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