

SWAMI OMKARANANDA'S VISIT TO AVG

Swami Omkarananda is the Chief Acarya at Swami Chidbhavananda Ashramam, Theni. He is disciple of Swami Paramarthananda Saraswati and is in the lineage of Arsha parampara. Having undergone yajur veda adhyayanam he is also well versed in vedhic and agama rituals. Swamiji is the source and guide for all important rituals in Arsha community, including temple kumbhaabhishekam.

Swamiji visited AVG, Anaikatti on June 10, 2016. He was received with purna kumbha honours.



Swamiji is being received with Purnakumbham

In the evening Satsangh, Swamiji answered the questions of students.

Q: Why is shastiabdhapoorthi (60th birthday) celebrated?

A: Sastra prescribes that. We follow that implicitly. According to Advaita, all samskara relate to mind only. One should learn about four goals of life during first 25 years. From 25 years to 60 years one can earn money and enjoy pleasures as permitted by dharma Sastra. From 60 years to 75 years one can take retirement and be in vanaprastha. After 75 years one can live like a sannyasi.



Acarya introducing Swamiji

Q: Should shastiabdhapoorthi of a woman be celebrated?

A: Shastiabdhapoorthi of husband is good enough for the wife, being his better half. According to a book on dharma Sastra titled "Dharma Sindhu", in case of a widow, if children desire, the children can do the ritual when she attains 60 years. But elaborate santi karma is not done. Only simple puja is done.

Q: Should shastiabdhapoorthi of a single man be celebrated?

A: Sastra prescribes shastiabdhapoorthi primarily for a married man. But bachelors and widowers can do simple puja. In Mutts, shastiabdhapoorthi of Sannyasis are celebrated as prayer to the Lord. According to Sastra, Brahmacharis and Sannyasis are not required to celebrate shastiabdhapoorthi.

Q: How is maha Samadhi anniversary of a sannyasi observed?

A: The procedure followed differs from place to place. 16 Mahatmas are honoured with offerings of 16 danams and dakshina along with bandara (bhiksha). It is done on the thithi of maha Samadhi every year similar to what is done during shodasi on the 16th day of maha Samadhi.

In Tamil nadu, according to purvaasramavarna of sannyasi, some rituals are done additionally

Q: My father is 87 years old. He is not able to do nithya karma. What should he do?

A: The rituals are there for one to enter, grow and later come out. There should not be any sentimental attachment to the rituals. Sastra understands that when a person is old, he will not have the capacity to do rituals. He can do the rituals mentally. Alternatively one may resort to mental sanyasa and later he need not do any more rituals.

Q: When can one renounce karma?

A: When one has adikaritam, one can take sannyasa and formally renounce karma. Sri Adi Sankara, while commenting on Gita verse "brahmarpanam brahmahavih...", says for a Brahma jnani (whether sannyasi or grahastha) Brahman itself is everything karma, karanam etc

Q: How to take vanaprastha?

A: Sastra prescribes the ritual to be done for agnihotri to become a vanaprastha. Even priests are not aware of that. Now we do not do agni hotram and hence this is not relevant. Sankalpa in the mind can be made that from this time one is a vanaprastha. After that one can spend his time in Sastra study, puja and upasana.

Q: After coming to Vedanta study, if one understands that he is not having required qualification, what should be done?

A: In Panchadasi it is mentioned that such a person should continue study of Vedanta. That study itself will give him the requisite qualification later. The Sastra study also gives punyam.

Q: What should the students do during the long term course?

A: Your study will not come to an end in three years. Till one goes to sleep and till one dies, one should think only about Vedanta. Do not give place for binding desires and anger.

Q: What should the students do after the long term course?

A: You can teach. Or you can do Seva through AIM for Seva, Dharma Rakshana Samiti or if permitted by the authorities serve in this Gurukulam itself.

Q: Is animal sacrifice in rituals not violence?



A: Dharma is subtle and relative. The general rule is ahimsa. But, there are exceptions like animal sacrifice in a yagna. Animal sacrifice in yagna is not considered himsa. The soul of a goat offered in animal sacrifice attains a better body in its next birth.

Q: Can women perform rituals alone?

A: According to Sastra, both men and women are not permitted to perform rituals alone. They have to do it together. Our likes and dislikes cannot decide how a ritual should be performed. Rituals are a team effort. Everyone has a different role. But the result will be shared by all the participants equally.

Q: Can women become priests?

A: In Maharashtra, women priests are there.



Satsang session

-Report by N. Avinashilingam