

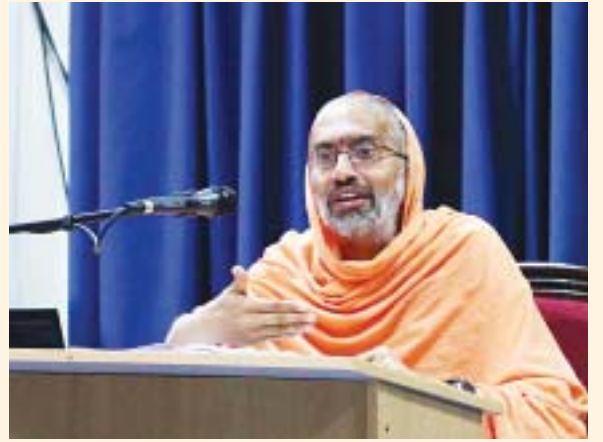
## Long Term Course At Avg: May - June, 2014

The fifth long term course in Vedanta at AVG, Anaikatti, which commenced on May 1, 2014, boasts of a truly global environment, with around 75 students participating from all over India as well as from all over the world. Some of them will attend the first three months of the course. Under the guidance of Pūjya Śrī Svāmi Dayānanda Sarasvati, the 39-month long course is being conducted by Svāmi Sadātmānandā, Svāmi Śaṅkarānandā and Svāmini Āgamānandā.

The events of each day for the next 39 months are designed to instill a Vedic way of life and living. A typical day for a student begins with prayers at the temple between 5.15 a.m. and 6.30 a.m., followed by yoga between 6.45 a.m. and 7.15 a.m. Meditation class is held between 7.15 a.m. and 7.45 a.m.

After breakfast, between 8 a.m. to 8.30 a.m., the first Vedanta class is held between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. From 10.15 a.m. to 11 a.m., the chanting class is held. There is a tea break at 11 a.m. which is followed by Sanskrit class from 11.25 a.m. to 12.40 p.m. Lunch break will be from 12.45 p.m. to 1.15 p.m.

Between 1.15 p.m. and 3.30 p.m, the students perform Gurukulam seva. After a tea break, the second Vedanta class is held between 4.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. Evening prayers are offered at the temple between 6.15 p.m. to 7.15 p.m. After dinner, scheduled between 7.15 p.m. and 8 p.m, the



students assemble at 8 p.m. for an hour long *Satsang* with Pūjya śrī Svāmiji.

Pūjya śrī Svāmiji teaches the essence of Bhagavat Gītā in the morning. Svāmiji also conducts the *Satsang*. Svāmi Sadātmānandā guides the students in meditation and teaches **Tattva Bodhah** in the evening. For **Sanskrit** classes, the students have been divided into three categories based on their previous knowledge of Sanskrit. Svāmi Śaṅkarānanda, Svāmini Āgamānandā and Brahmacharini Medha Michika are the Sanskrit teachers. Svāmini Vedārthānandā and Svāmini Śāradānanda teach how to chant with proper accent and pronunciation. – (IMG.5907, 5925), 5987, 5985,

A summary of the Vedanta classes held during May – June, 2014, is presented below:

**Bhagavat Gītā:** Bhagavat Gītā means the Lord's song. The Gita is divided into three sections; the first section (Chapters 1 to 6) explains about the *Jiva*; the second section (Chapters 7 to 12) explains about *Īśvarā* and the third section (Chapters 13 to 18) explains about the oneness between *Jiva* and *Īśvarā*. The Gita expounds the theme of the source book, the Upanishads. Vedanta is the only *pramana* (means of knowledge) to gain *ātmā jnana*. Gita says that knowing oneself is the same as gaining oneness with *Īśvarā*.

**CHAPTER I: THE TOPIC OF ARJUNA'S SORROW:** *Duryodhanā* usurped the kingdom which rightfully belonged to the *Pāṇḍavās*. Lord Kṛṣṇā went as a messenger of the *Pāṇḍavās* to the *Kauravas* to negotiate a settlement in order to avoid war. However, *Duryodhanā* did not yield and a war became inevitable to establish dharma. Thus, a war between the *Kauravas* and the *Pāṇḍavās* started at Kurukṣetra.



Lord Kṛṣṇā agreed to be Arjuna's charioteer during the war. As the war was about to begin, Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇā to place his chariot at a vantage point. Kṛṣṇā placed it in front of their army, facing *Bhisma* and *Drona*. Seeing the people he had to fight with, **Arjuna** became afflicted with great sorrow: **he was unable to fight against his own kith and kin and his teachers**. So, he declared that he did not desire such a victory nor could he enjoy ruling a kingdom won after killing one's own kith and kin. He sat down on his chariot, overcome with grief.

**CHAPTER II: THE TOPIC OF KNOWLEDGE:** Lord Kṛṣṇā asked Arjuna for the reason behind his sudden shying away and indifference to war. Arjuna replied that he did not want to fight with *Bhisma* and *Drona* who were worthy of his worship. He felt that it was better to live a life of a *bhikshu* (one living on alms) instead. Getting a full grasp of his own helplessness, Arjuna saluted Lord Kṛṣṇā and surrendered to him. **He** asked the Lord to teach him **what *sreyas*** (ultimate goal of life) was. The Lord agreed and thus the teaching of the *Bhagavad gīta* began from Verse 11.

Lord Kṛṣṇā told Arjuna that his grief had no reason. **Ātmā** is not subject to birth or death; *ātmā* is *nitya*. Whenever one thinks that he is a subject, guilt is inevitable; whenever one thinks that he is an object, hurt is inevitable. *Ātmā* is neither the subject nor the object. *Ātmā* is "being" in the form of consciousness and is free from any doership.

One is endowed with choice only over action. Proficiency in action is choosing action in accordance with *dharma*. One can choose to do an action, not to do or to do it differently. **Īśvarā** as *karma-phala-dātā* **gives the results taking into various**

**accounts, mainly his previous and present *karma***. Results can be equal to, or more, or less, or opposite of what one expects. A mature person accepts the results as *prasada* since it comes from *Īśvarā* alone. This attitude is called *samatvam*, born out of understanding. **Performing one's action with an attitude of offering to *Īśvarā* and accepting the result as *Īśvarā prasada* is *karma-yoga***.

**CHAPTER III: THE TOPIC OF KARMA:** Arjuna's heart was not set on doing his *karma* .i.e.. Fighting the war. He was interested in taking to *Sannyāsa* and thereby seek exclusively *sreyas*, or knowledge for *mokṣa*. He asked Lord Kṛṣṇā why he was being pushed to perform *karma* when gaining knowledge was praised as the only thing that was capable of giving *mokṣa*. It was seemingly conflicting.

Lord Kṛṣṇā replied that a *sannyasi* exclusively pursues knowledge. **A *Karma yogi*, being a *samsari***, pursues knowledge while doing his *karma*, as prescribed by the *sastra*. The Lord explained that *sannyāsa* is of two types: *Vividisa sannyāsa* and *Sarva-karma sannyāsa*. In *vividisa sannyāsa*, the lifestyle of *Sannyāsa* (renunciation) is chosen and one exclusively pursues *ātmā jnana*. *Sarva-karma sannyāsa* is the end that both a *karma yogi* and a *sannyasi* achieves. It is achieved by knowing that *ātmā* is free from *karma*, that *ātmā* does not perform any *karma*. **It is renunciation of all *karma* by understanding**.

A *karma yogi* understands that living life conforming to *dharma* is living a life in tune with *Īśvarā*. His likes and dislikes are neutralized and do not rob the mind of the stability and focus needed to pursue *ātmā jnana*. His **mind becomes contemplative and qualified to receive *ātmā jnana***.

**CHAPTER IV: TOPIC OF RENUNCIATION OF ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE:** Lord Kṛṣṇā said that he had taught ātma jñān to Vivasvan, the head of the Solar dynasty. Arjuna raised a question here: he asked, when Lord Kṛṣṇā's birth is a recent event, how can it be that he taught Vivasvan? Lord Kṛṣṇā replied that both Arjuna and the Lord had had many earlier births. While the Lord knew them all, Arjuna did not know them. He was not born of *karma-phala*. Whenever *dharma* weakens and *adharmā* gains force, *Īśvarā* appears to re-establish *dharma*.

According to one's own disposition (sātvik rājasik and tāmasik), **one can be classified as belonging to one of the four varṇās**. Although he may be engaged in an occupation different from his disposition, if he follows *dharma*, does his duty and has the attitude of *prasada buddhi*, he is known as a sātvik person. **The real growth of a person is when he consumes less and contributes more.**

One who understands that he is *sat-chit-ananda ātmā* has no doership. When doership is not there and action is performed at the body level, no action is actually done as *ātmā* does not do any action. This is how one can see actionlessness in action. He is no more a samsāri and he will accumulate neither *pāpa* nor *puṇya* by doing any karma.

**CHAPTER V: TOPIC OF RENUNCIATION:** A *karma yogi*, by his attitude, neutralizes his likes and dislikes. By prayer he neutralizes *durita* and earns grace in order to become contemplative. He understands "I am Brahman". Both *vividhiṣā sannyāsa* and *karma yoga* are the means to reach the end of *sarva-karma sannyāsa*.

Bhagavan then taught how one can prepare for meditation. One is objective while seeing the sky, mountains and green valley. In a similar manner, one should do practice to become objective in regard to people whom he loves. Once the inhibitions of expectations go, love becomes purified.

**CHAPTER VI: THE TOPIC OF MEDITATION:** The first type of Meditation is thinking about *Īśvarā* with a form. *Puja* can be done mentally by visualization of an altar. Otherwise a mantra, whose meaning is *Īśvarā* with a form, can be chanted mentally.

The second type of meditation is called *nididhyāsanam*. It is contemplation on *ātmā* after the study of Vedānta. *Sravanam* is listening to and studying the *sastra* – the *pramana* for *ātmā jananam*. *Mananam* involves removing the doubts coming from outside the *pramana*. **nididhyāsanam** is performed to neutralise unconscious habitual wrong thinking – to remove any *viparita bhavana* that I am not *ātmā*.

One who is able to lift himself by his own efforts is a friend to himself. When he understands that wherever the mind goes, there is *Īśvarā*, his contemplation becomes pleasant. When he sits for *japa*, he gives an auto suggestion: "Whenever my mind moves away, I shall bring it back". By repeated practice and objectivity, he learns to keep the mind focused. His mind will become calm like a lamp protected from the wind.

Arjuna asked what will happen after death to the one who has *śraddha* in the *sastra* but whose effort is inadequate and therefore has not gained *mokṣa* in the present *janma*. Lord Kṛṣṇā replied that in the next *janma*, he will be born in a home where there is wealth, values and Vedic tradition and continue

the pursuit. Or, he will be born in a home of a *karma yogi* who has Sastra jnana. In other words, the progress made in this life is not wasted; in the next life, he starts his spiritual evolution from where he left off.

**CHAPTER VII: TOPIC OF INDIRECT & IMMEDIATE KNOWLEDGE:** When we analyse what is creation, we understand that it is only word and meaning or name and form. This jagat is a creation put together intelligently to serve a purpose. We have three words to describe reality; *satyam* (exists in three periods of time), *anrtam* (false) and *tuccham* (non-existent). There is one more reality “anirvacanīyam”, or *mithyā*, which is not available for categorical presentation and inexplicable. This jagat is *mithyā*. *Mithyā* is one which has no independent being but depends on others for its being.

*Maya* means magic. Previously created objects in the previous creation came to an unmanifest condition. From the unmanifest, this *jagat* becomes manifest. And the one who wields this magic is *Īśvarā* (the *māyāvi*). In the creation, the Creator is in the form of created objects with a name, form and function. All that is here is *īśvarā*.

Bhagavan talks about four types of *bhaktas* (devotees) in all. *ārthaḥ* is the one who prays only when he is in distress. *Arthārthī* is the one who prays for the fulfillment of his desires relating to security and pleasure. *Jijñāsu* is the one who seeks the knowledge of *Īśvarā*. A *jñāni* is the one who recognizes that he is one with *Īśvarā*.

All the four types of devotees are devoted for various reasons: but they all pray to

*Īśvarā* and earn His grace. The *ārthaḥ* grows to become an *arthārthī*. An *Arthārthī* grows to become a *jijñāsu*. And a *jijñāsu*, in turn, grows to become a *Jñāni*. A **Jñāni is the most desired as he recognizes his oneness with *Īśvarā*.**

After many births one may understand that ‘Vāsudevaḥ sarvamiti – that is, “ All that is here is *Īśvarā*” – that *Īśvarā* is all knowledge and is the efficient cause of this universe. The entire universe exists in *Īśvarā*, and He is also the material cause of this universe. But such a wise person is very rare.

**Tatva Bodhaḥ:** It is a prakaraṇa grantha, or introductory text, giving the entire vision of Vedanta. All the technical terms of Vedanta are explained in this book. This book is attributed to Ādi Śaṅkarā and it is in prose form. This book starts with a prayer to the Guru.

#### ANUBANDHA CATHUṢṬAYAM

1. Viṣaya (Subject Matter) - Tattva-Bodhah (knowledge of the truth)
2. Prayojana ( Purpose) - mokṣa
3. Adhikāri (Qualified student) - The one who is desirous of *mokṣa* only-*Mumukshu*
4. sambandha - pratipādaka - pratipādyā Sambandha (Revealer - Revealed connection)

This book guides one about how to do discriminative analysis leading to discriminative knowledge, which serves as the means for gaining freedom to students endowed with four-fold qualifications: *vivekah*, *vairagya*, *samaadi shatga sampattih* and *mumukshutvam*.

## FOUR-FOLD QUALIFICATIONS (SĀDHANA - CATHUṢṬAYAM)

**Vivekḥ** : Discriminative understanding to help differentiate between what is permanent and what is not.

**Vairāgya**: Dispassion for enjoyment of objects, here and in the hereafter.

**Samādhi ṣaḍka sampattiḥ** : Six-fold qualities of *sama*, *dama*, etc

**Mumukṣutvam**: Desire for *mokṣa* alone.

**Vivekaḥ**: The discriminative knowledge that only Brahman ( *Īśvarā*) is permanent and that other than Brahman, everything else is impermanent. Leading a life of *dharma* with an attitude of *karma yoga* renders the mind subtle and pure. And, discernment through life's experiences gives one maturity. The mere company of men with discriminative knowledge can help one set right one's priorities in life.

**Vairāgya**: Having dispassion for the enjoyments of this world as well as *svarga* is *viraagah bhavam*. Suppressing desires is not *vairāgya*. *Vairāgya* is growing out of desires. Objectivity with regard to every object, person and situation – meaning that the person has no binding desires or excessive craving or obsession for anything. When one steps in for a higher pursuit, all other pursuits get dropped.

**SAMĀDHI ṢAḌKA SAMPATTIḤ**: The six-fold wealth are:

- śama - Mastery of the mind
- Dama - Mastery of the sense organs
- Uparama- Doing one's duty
- Titikṣā - Forbearance

e. Śraddhā - Trust in the words of Guru and Sastra

f. Samādhāna - Single-pointed mind  
uparati titikṣā śraddhā samādhāna

**ŚAMA**: Mind is an instrument – a privilege. Only one who has mastery over his mind can pursue anything significant in life.

**DAMA**: It is mastery over the five organs of perception and the five organs of action. This virtue will help one to conserve time and energy wasted over unwanted activities. One can get this virtue by prayer, observing religious austerities and by being in the company of *sattvic* people.

**UPARAMA**: It is the renunciation of all unwanted activities for the single pursuit of gaining *ātmā jnana*. Following this virtue will improve one's self esteem. One who does his own duties with the attitude of *karma yoga* will get this virtue.

**TITIKṢĀ** It is endurance, forbearance, tolerance and putting up with opposite situations like cold and hot; pleasure and pain; and respect and disrespect. This will help one to focus on the pursuit of *mokṣa* without resisting external situations. One can look at every choice-less situation as an opportunity to raise the threshold limit of forbearance.

**SRADDHA**: This refers to the trust in *Īśvarā*. One should have trust in *Īśvarā*, oneself, the Sastra and the Guru. *Sastra* (*pramana* for *ātmā jnana*) is a jewel box whose key (the *sampradaya* of teaching) is with the Guru. Prayer helps in gaining *sraddha*.

**SAMADHANAM:** It is the concentration power or the ability of mind to focus, to dwell on a given subject over a period of time. This concentration power is required to get a deeper understanding of Vedanta. We can get this virtue by getting convinced of its use, practice of *asana*, *pranayama* and meditation, that is, by repeated practice of bringing the mind back to the subject on hand.

**MUMUKSUTVAM:** It is the intense desire for freedom from *samsara*. This desire keeps one motivated in pursuing Vedanta. When one introspects into his or her life experience, he understands that nothing else other than gaining *mokṣa* can liberate.

**TATTVA-VIVEKAH:** The essence of the subject is as follows: *Ātmā* is *satyam* (real). Other than that *ātmā*, everything else is *mithyā* (apparent). *Tattva-vivekah* is the analysis leading to the knowledge of the *Ātmā*, the reality. *Ātmā* (or I, or Self) is *satyam* and enjoys an independent existence. *Mithyā* is that which depends on something else for its existence and it is not available for categorization or definition.

**ĀTMĀ:** *Ātmā* is presented as distinct from gross, subtle and causal bodies. It is distinct from the five *kosas* – layers of personality. It is also seen to be distinct from the three states of experience – waking, dream and deep sleep. It is of the nature of existence, consciousness and fullness.

A cognitive separation or intellectual separation of *ātmā* and *anātmā* is done. A definition of an object should not have the *dosha* (fault(s)) of: *asambhava* (wrong description), *athivyapthi* (not being described exclusively) and *avyapthi* (not being described completely).

*Drg-drsya-viveka* is used in all the 3 methods of analysis – *sarira-thraya-viveka*, *panca-kosa-viveka* and *avastha-traya-viveka*. I am not any one of the *sarira* or *kosa* or *avastha* but *Ātmā*. I am Consciousness, not a part, product or property of the body.

**STHŪLA ŚARĪRAM:** The gross body is made of a particular type of combination of *five* original elements. The gross body is born due to *karma* or invisible result of previous actions. The gross body is the abode for experiencing pleasure, pain, etc. It has six modifications of ‘born’, ‘lives’, ‘grows’, ‘keeps changing’, ‘declines’ and ‘perishes’.

**SŪKṢMA ŚARĪRAM:** The subtle body is made of *five* basic five organs of perception, five organs of action, five *praanas*, mind and intellect.

**KĀRAṆA ŚARĪRAM:** The causal body is the undifferentiated, unmanifest form of categorically indefinable, beginning less ignorance – the cause for the gross and subtle bodies and ignorance of one’s true nature.

*Report by N. Avinashilingam*