

# FAMILY CAMP AT AVG

2018 May 20 to 26th

A family camp was held at AVG, Anaikatti between May 20 and May 26, 2018. Around 40 persons participated. They participated in the Balalayam temple puja in the mornings and evenings.

**PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN:** The children had yoga, story time, chanting, Spoken Sanskrit class and happy assembly. The children had fun and at the same time they learnt about Indian culture. Sri Pulluri Srinivas and Sri Srinivasulu were the teachers for Children's programme. The children were all happy participating in the camp and wanted to return next year.

**PROGRAMME FOR ADULTS:** There were concurrent sessions for adults. In the mornings they had guided Meditation session. Swami Sadatmananda taught selected verses from Patanjali Yoga Sutras. Swami Shankarananda taught selected verses from Bhagavad Gita. Brahmachari Kumar Chaitanya taught chanting of Slokas. There was a question and answer session and satsangh late in the evenings.



**SELECTED VERSES FROM YOGA SUTRAS:** Swami Sadatmananda explained that Patanjali Yoga Sutras means aphorisms on Yoga composed by Sage Patanjali. It has four padas (sections) totally containing 195 sutras. Yoga means focus/ concentration/ absorption of the mind. The prayer verse says that I salute with folded hands Sage Patanjali who removes impurity of the mind through yoga, impurity of the words through grammar and impurity of the body through ayurveda.

**YOGA DARSANAM:** Yoga darsanam accepts Vedas and Isvara. It says that the cause for sorrow is confusion between Purusha (conscious principle - atma- self) and Prakriti (matter principle – non-self). Moksa is attained by yoga which means Samadhi. Yoga, Samadhi is attained by resolution of the thoughts of the mind.

**SIMILARITIES WITH VEDANTA:** Yoga darsanam also accepts Vedas and Isvara. Atma is of the nature of consciousness, timeless and unattached to matter. Confusion between self and non-self is the cause for bondage. Moksa is attained by resolving the confusion between self and non-self.

**DIFFERENCES WITH VEDANTA:** Yoga darsanam considers that Prakriti (matter principle) has independent existence. Vedanta says that Prakriti ( or maya) has no independent existence other than Brahman. Yoga darsanam considers that there are many atmas. Vedanta says that there is only one atma. Yoga darsanam is practice oriented. Vedanta is knowledge oriented.

**SAMADHI PADA:** This gives the traditional teaching of Yoga. Yoga is mastery of thought modifications of the mind. When there is resolution of thoughts, there is abidance in one's true nature. At other times there is identification with the thoughts. Thoughts can be mastered by practice and dispassion. Practice is repeated efforts for abidance of the mind. Practice becomes firmly grounded when it is done for a long time without interruption and with earnest devotion. Dispassion is a state of mind, which is free from craving.

Concentration may be gained also by devotion to Isvara. Isvara is a special being, not associated with ignorance, karma, fruits of karma and inclinations. The name of Isvara is Om. Om should be chanted, meditating on its meaning. Due to this, one can become aware of inner consciousness and obstacles will be removed. The obstacles are disease, inactivity, doubt, carelessness, laziness, craving for sense pleasures, wrong ideas, despair due to failure to concentrate and instability.

One should meditate upon the truth. Calmness of the mind is attained when one has friendliness towards happy ones, compassion towards unhappy ones, joy towards those following dharma and indifference towards those following adharma. One can meditate upon any divine form. Concentration can be achieved even if seeds of attachment and desire remain. When one enters the seedless Samadhi all past impressions, attachment and desire are removed.

**SADHANA PADA:** Austerity, study and dedication of one's work to the Lord are known as kriya yoga. These activities prepare one for concentration and reduce obstacles in the path. The obstacles are ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and desire to live long. Ignorance is regarding the temporary as permanent, the impure as pure, the painful as pleasant and the non-self as the self. Egoism is considering the non-self as self. Attachment is the like for pleasure. Aversion is the dislike for pain. The desire to live long is there in ignorant people and also learned people. When the obstacles have been diluted, they can be destroyed by resolution of the mind. The active form of obstacles can be neutralised through meditation. The pain which has not yet come, can be avoided. The pain is caused due to false identification with the objects of experience. This identification is due to ignorance. When ignorance is gone, the identification will also be gone. Ignorance is destroyed by self-knowledge.

All impurities are reduced by the practice of eight limbs of yoga. The eight limbs of yoga are yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana and Samadhi. Yama is abstaining from harming others, from telling lie, from stealing, from incontinence and from greed. Niyama is observing purity, contentment, wilful self-denial, study and devotion to the Lord.

When one is established in ahimsa, all living beings will have no enmity in his presence. When one is established in satyam, all his words will come true. When one is established in non-stealing, all wealth will come to him. When one is established in abstinence, he will attain spiritual energy. When one is established in non accumulation, he will attain awareness of his previous and next birth.

Due to external purity, one will not be interested in physical contact with others. Due to internal purity, one will have a pure mind, a cheerful disposition, one pointed mind and will become fit for self-knowledge. Due to contentment, one will have intense happiness. Due to austerities, one will have miraculous power in the body and sense organs. Due to japa, one will have the vision of his favourite form of the Lord. Due to offering one's action to the Lord, one will attain Samadhi.

A posture which is steady and comfortable is asana. Asana is gained by slackening of the body and by meditating on the infinite space. Then one is no longer troubled by the dualities of opposite experience. After that, pranayama is to be practised by restraining inhalation and exhalation. Due to this, veiling of knowledge is removed. Mind gains the power of concentration. When the mind is withdrawn, sense organs also imitate the mind and are withdrawn. This is called pratyahara.

**VIBHUTI PADA:** Dharana (concentration) is focusing the mind in one place. Dhyana (meditation) is continuous flow of thoughts towards the object of meditation. During meditation when the true nature of the object is perceived without any thought of the perceiver, it is Samadhi (absorption). The first five limbs of yoga prepare one for the practice of the last three limbs of yoga together called samyama- concentration, meditation and absorption. Even samyama does not lead to seedless Samadhi. By doing samyama on the form of his body, a yogi can become invisible for others. By doing samyama on friendliness, compassion and cheerfulness, a yogi can vibrate these qualities. By doing samyama on strength of an elephant, he can obtain that strength. By doing samyama on the navel, he can gain the knowledge of constitution of the body. By doing samyama on the throat, he can conquer hunger and thirst. By doing samyama on the back of the head, he can see celestial beings. By doing samyama on Purusha, he can gain knowledge of Purusha. Due to this, he can gain intuitive knowledge and obtain super natural power of sense organs. These are powers in the worldly state, but they are obstacle to Samadhi. By doing samyama on the gross and subtle elements, one can gain mastery of the elements. Due to this he can have miraculous power of becoming small, big, light weight, heavy, contacting distant places, blessing power, power over five elements and Godliness. One having discrimination of Purusha and buddhi will have omniscience and omnipotence. Once dispassion is gained for these miraculous powers, there will be destruction of seed of all problems and moksa is gained. When mind becomes pure, moksa is gained.

**KAIVALYA PADA:** The miraculous powers can be gained by birth, medicine, mantras, penance or Samadhi. One who is not distracted by the miraculous powers will have the knowledge of Purusha and prakriti and will attain dharmamegha Samadhi. Then there is cessation of ignorance and freedom from the power of karma. The gunas resolve into Prakriti. This is liberation. Purusha abiding in himself is kaivalyam.

**SELECTED VERSES FROM BHAGAVAD GITA:** Swami Sankarananda explained that we start any undertaking with a prayer as we need to be objective, live intelligently by seeking help from Isvara to overcome hidden variables. Kurukshetra war was fought between Pandavas and Kauravas for the sake of protection of dharma. But when Arjuna saw that he had to fight with his own Grand-father, Gurus and other relatives he was overwhelmed by emotion.



He knew that in our culture Sannyasis are happy without anything in all situations. Arjuna understood that by winning the war, even if he becomes the emperor of the earth or ruler of the heaven he cannot be happy. Through the topical problem Arjuna discovered his fundamental problem.

Arjuna surrendered to Lord Krishna, expressed his helplessness and requested the Lord to instruct what was absolutely good for him. Lord Krishna began the teaching and told that Arjuna was grieving for those who are not to be grieved for. One who has self knowledge will not grieve over death. For one, whose satisfaction is centred on oneself alone, there is nothing more to be achieved. One needs nothing outside to be happy. When one does not want anything in the universe to be different, he is free. One should surrender to the Lord to know about the Lord without vagueness. All beings are woven in the Lord like beads in a string. One who wants to transcend birth and death should make an effort to understand that all factors of action are Brahman.

One worshipping the Lord by offering his own duty becomes accomplished. One has a choice regarding action but not to their result. One should do his actions with the spirit of karma yoga. With a purified mind one should study self-knowledge. There is nothing purifying like self-knowledge. One should approach a Guru with a proper attitude, ask appropriate questions and serve him. The Guru will teach him self-knowledge. Mahavakya upadesa removes the veil of ignorance. One who has commitment to this knowledge will gain the same. By performing action with the attitude of karma yoga, one is not bound. One who has shraddha in the Sastra and the words of the Guru, who is committed to knowledge and has mastery over his mind and senses, will gain self-knowledge. In order to grow and succeed in life let the words of Sastra (and not likes and dislikes) guide your choices and action.



**Report by N. Avinashilingam**

**Note: This is the 200<sup>th</sup> Report written by N. Avinashilingam in Arsha Vidya News Letter. He has been writing Reports in Arsha Vidya News Letter from May 2009.**