

Swami Paramarthananda's Jnana Yajna



Arsha Vidya Gurukulam and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan organised Swami Paramarthananda's jnana yajna from April 28, 2013 to May 4, 2013 at Coimbatore. Swamiji taught Jiva Yatra in the mornings and Bhagavad Gita Chapter XVIII in the evenings.

JIVA YATRA is a beautiful text written by Swami Jnanananda Bharathi. Everyone wants to live happily and comfortably and this is taken as the destination of life. This text shows how to reach that destination.

Kathopanisad gives an analogy of travel in a chariot. Jivatma is compared to the Master of the chariot, buddhi is compared to the driver of the chariot, physical body is compared to the chariot, sense organs are compared to the horses, sense objects are compared to the road, mind is compared to the reins and Moksha is compared to the destination.

One should understand the limitations of material pursuits as bandhakatvam (leading to emotional dependence), atriptikaratvam (never satisfying), and dukha-misritatvam (mixed with pain). We can take Nachiketas as our role model for remaining detached.

Regular performance of pancha maha yajna leads to spiritual growth. They are:

Deva yajna (daily prayers for the welfare of all living beings), pitru yajna (respecting and serving parents and elders), brahma yajna (learning the Vedas and handing over to the next generation), manushya yajna (serving fellow human beings) and bhootha yajna (taking care of the environment).

The path to reach the destination can be summarised as follows: One should first have sraddha in the Vedas. After doing karma and upasana, one should study the vedantic scriptures from a Guru. Grasping the central message of "Brahma Satyam, Jagat Mitya and Jivah Brahmaiva na aparah" is sravanam. Getting intellectually convinced about this teaching is mananam. Removing the habitual ways of thinking that one is a helpless jiva is nididhyasanam. When one follows this path, the destination of moksha can be comfortably reached.

BHAGAVAD GITA teaches the essence of Upanishads. Sankaracharya's commentary is essentially the interpretation of Gita verses as per upanishadic teaching. Chapter XVIII is a summary of all the other chapters. Gita discusses four topics: karma yoga, upasana yoga, jnana yoga and daivi sampath.

Karma yoga is proper action with proper attitude. Proper action is doing nitya, naimittika karmas including pancha maha yajna. Actions are done with Iswara arpana bhavana. The results are accepted with prasada bhavana, understanding that the results are based on laws of karma. Karma yogi has reduced - anxiety about the future.

Upasana yoga is meditation on Iswara. The entire universe is meditated as manifestation of Iswara. This process dilutes one's ahankara and mamakara. The family, body and mind are offered to Iswara. As a Trustee one takes care of the family and body without any worry.

Jnana yoga is systematic study of vedantic scriptures for a length of time under the guidance of a competent Acharya.

The five capsules of Vedanta are:

1. I am of the nature of eternal and all - pervading consciousness
2. I am the only source of permanent peace, security and happiness
3. By my mere presence, I give life to the material body, and through the body, I experience the material universe
4. I am not affected by anything that takes place in the material world and in the material body.
5. By forgetting my nature, I convert life into a burden and, by remembering my nature, I convert life into a blessing.

Lord Krishna tells that sannyasa and thyaga are one and the same and it is of three types. Similarly jnanam, karta, karma, buddhi, drithi (resolve) and sukham are of three types, namely sattvic, rajasic and tamasic. By following the sattvic type one attains Moksha.

Report by N.Avinashilingam

