

One Week Vedanta Retreat 2013 at Saylorsburg Gurukulam



The One Week Vedanta Retreat was held at Saylorsburg PA from September 14 to September 21. Approximately 120 students participated in this camp. Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati taught Mandukya Upanisad Chapter I verses 1 and 2. Swami Tattvavidananda taught selected verses from Panchadasi Chapter IV. Suddhatmaji taught chanting. Pandit Mukesh Desaiji conducted classes in Hundustani Classical Music. Yoga classes were conducted by Lance Daniels during the camp.

Registration was complete during the day on September 15. Suddhatmaji held the orientation in the evening. Suddhatmaji explained the camp schedule and provided information about the facilities available at the Gurukulam.

Pujya Swamiji taught in detail the two verses from the Upanisad. Mandukya Upanisad belongs to Atharva Veda. There are in all twelve verses in the Upanisad.

Pujya Swamiji expounded the meaning and significance of OM. The pratika (symbol) 'OM' stands for what was before, what is now and what will be in future. It consists of letters A, U and M. The letter 'A' is formed in the back of the mouth, 'U' in the center and 'M' by closing the lips in the front. It contains all the speech and sounds. It also identifies with the triplicity (group of three) in Vedanta. Pujya Swamiji then explained the four padas(quarters) as states



of waking, dream, dreamless sleep and Turiya(the state of pure consciousness). The three states are means for understanding as though the fourth state, Turiya.

Pujya Swamiji held satsang everyday and answered questions from the students.

Swami Tattva Vidananda Saraswati taught selected verses from Vidyarananya's Panchadasi. Swamiji explained the relationship between Jiva and Iswara. It is the relationship between the mind and the Soul. Iswara has a Shakti (power) of Maya. Maya creates Moha (delusion) which is the cause of desire, fear and bondage. Jagat and the objects are creation of Iswara. Jiva derives enjoyment from the objects. Jiva creates the happiness or unhappiness while the objects remain the same as created. Mind creates its own world and identifies with it. This identification is the cause of unhappiness, pain and sorrow. The Jiva creates duality of two kinds, one conforms and the other does not conform to the scriptural injunctions. The one which conforms should be kept in mind until Brahman is understood. Kama and Krodha have to be given up. The tendency of unnecessary thinking on objects can be removed by meditation. One has to understand that he is not the mind and that he can control it. Mental poise and



concentration is required to study the scripture which ultimately removes the notion of duality.

On September 17, Pradosha Puja was performed at the temple with Abhiseka for Dashinamurti.



On September 18, a ceremony for Ganapati Visarjan was performed by the students. It is traditionally a procession undertaken on the last day of Ganesha Ustav. In Mumbai and throughout the state of Maharashtra as well as all over India this is a very big festival. In Saylorburg Gurukulam Savithri Maniji started this ceremony last year. This is the second year it was performed in this Gurukulam. After the Puja, The Ganapati idols were taken in a procession on Gurukulam Campus. There was music and Dandia dances. The students chanted

“Ganapati Bappa Morya, Pudhachya Varshi Lavakar Ya” which translated from Marathi means, “Lord Ganapati we love you. Please come back quickly next year.” Procession stopped at the Ganga Building (Pujya Swamiji’s residence). Swamiji blessed the gathering from the balcony. Sawami Tattvavidananadaji and Swamiji Pratyagbodhanadaji joined the ceremony. The idols of Ganesha were taken to the water for Immersion. The Ganapati Visarjan was performed in the Ganga Pond behind the Temple.

On September 20, the students were pleasantly surprised when Jayendra Swami



of Rajarajeswari Temple in Bangalore visited Swami Tattvavidnanada's class in progress. Swami Jayendraji addressed the class for few minutes. He said that Raga (anger) is not just a passion but it is also an indication of attachment. So, convert the Raga into Prema (love).

Suddhatmaji taught the Vedic Chanting classes. The Chanting included Ganapati Atharvashirsha and Purusottamayoga.

Pandit Mukesh Desaiji taught the Indian Classical Music. On September 21, Panditji's students presented Puja Swamiji's composition of 'Ram Bhaje Shyam Manasa'

in Raga Durga, Adi Talam/Keharava. Swamiji was very pleased.

The kitchen staff worked hard to serve delicious meals on time.

Priests Sri Ravichandran and Sri Ganesa performed the pujas regularly.

Suddhatmaji and the staff, the teachers, and volunteers worked hard during the camp to make it an enjoyable event.

The camp ended on September 21, 2013

Reported by Arvind Bagal