

## Two Week Course at ArshaVidyaGurukulam, Saylorsburg

with SwamijiTattvaidananda and SwamijiPratyagbodhananda; Sept. 21-Oct.4, 2014

The 2-Week camp began on September 21st with a welcome address and orientation with Suddhatma Chaitanya. SwamijiTattvaidanandaSaraswati then gave Satsang. There were about 85 - 90 attendees.

Classes started the next day with a 7am meditation. Swamiji Tattvaidananda always included chanting "OM" silently 3 times as a simple prayer at the beginning of all the meditations. He encouraged us to drop our pasts and our future plans with our breaths; to keep the spine stretched up and still; to keep the entire body still, ignoring its discomforts. He told us, "Watch the mind. Don't ask how. Just watch it.", etc. His constant refrain for us in and out of meditation has been to "be" - and that that "being" is love. He also had us do Loving Kindness meditations, telling us to wish ourselves, our family, all creatures and our foes, wellbeing, happiness and peace. During one meditation, in keeping with the 16th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita (BG), he said that there was nothing more beautiful than a mind maturing into its *daiva* qualities.

The first talk was at 9am, the second at 11:15am and the third at 5pm. To accomodate the schedules of the two Swamijis, the Swamijis talked at different times during the first week.

Swamiji Tattvaidananda started with the 16th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. He has

been talking about *daiva* qualities and *asuric* qualities, defining and giving many examples of each quality mentioned in the verses. He said that we were to not so much develop the *daiva* qualities but to notice and to turn away from the *asuric* qualities (before they turn to *rakshahs*) so that the *daiva* qualities, which are already within us, can manifest, so that the divine can begin to speak through us.

He touched on and clarified mistaken usage of words that might mislead to wrong understandings, such as the use of the word "suppression" in relation to our desires. We are to notice and to turn away from them, not to suppress them. He has been explaining about how self-forgetfulness leads us to pursue desires, to live in fear and how they both make us live in imaginations instead of what is. He said that satisfying our desires will not stop them from arising and encouraged us to ask ourselves, "Is it possible for the mind to not think in terms of more?" and "Is it possible for the mind to stop asking for more?" He has been making it clear to us over and over again how strong *mAyA*'s hold over us is. But he also told us that we must be confident that rising to higher consciousness is a doable feat.

The other text that Swamiji Tattvaidananda has been talking from is the *Saddarshanam* written by RamanaMaharshi. He said that

RamanaMaharshi was, perhaps, the lone voice in revitalizing self-inquiry. Swamiji made clear how self-knowledge differs from other types of knowledge and described the challenges *sadhakas* must overcome because of this difference. He said that abiding as the *Atman* is a *sadhana*, and, as per the text, elaborated on how the world is illusory and temporary and that the world and the mind are interdependent. He always urges us to listen with an open mind because the mind must

be open if we are to think creatively and if we are to discover, to have insight about *Atmavidya*.

Swamiji Pratyagbodhananda talked from the Mundakopanishad, Part 1. He talked about the differences between “*paraa*” and “*apara*” knowledge and that everything but Brahmanvidya is *apara* knowledge. Swamiji Pratyagbodhananda, to meet some obligations in India, left AVG on Sept. 29th.

On September 28th., a Sanskrit and Yoga scholar, Dr. H.V. Nagaraja Rao, gave a talk during the 11:15 class. Dr. Rao talked about the philosophical nature of the Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras and talked about the different disciplines of yoga (*asana*, *pranayama*, etc.) that can help the mind. He also said that it is “*chittavrittinirodhaha*”- that we are to knock off the *vrittis*, not the mind. He said that anything can be achieved by human beings but self-confidence and a life-long commitment are necessary. He also said that we should be grateful to the Rishis, to the Gurus, the *parampara* and our parents.

At the end of Dr. Rao’s talk, Suddhatma summarized the talk very concisely for the audience. Then Swamiji Tattvavidananda and Swamiji Pratyagbodhananda presented him with shawls.

Dr.Rao spoke with a flair and the general feedback was very positive. He left us with his contact information, MOHAN@AUDIOPEDICS.COM.

One day during the 2-week camp, SwamijiParamatmananda visited the ArshaVidyaGurukulam (Sept. 22). He talked about PujyaSwamiji’s and his visit with Prime Minister NarendraModi of India. He held a small Satsang in Swamiji Pratyagbodhananda’s room and talked about (quoting from the BG) how every one of our senses have their own *ragadveshas*. Some people asked him about how they could introduce Vedanta to their children. Swamiji Paramatmananda and Swamiji Pratyagbodhananda took turns answering their questions.

The music class has been conducted by PanditMukesh Desai and the chanting class was conducted by Suddhatma Chaitanya, who chanted, again, from the Taittiriya-Upanishad, chapters 7-9. From the second week, JasparaKalpesh began teaching Sanskrit in the morning. And again, Lance Daniels has been teaching some Yoga Asana classes.

Navaratri is being celebrated here currently. The worship of Saraswati Devi started yesterday and after meditation today (Oct.2nd.), the priests performed a Saraswati puja in front of a picture of Saraswati and the books we had laid down in front of Her. Tomorrow, they will do the SaraswatiPunar Puja after meditation.

*Report by Mami Kato*