

Pujya Swami's Aradhana divas programme

Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh(19th to 23rd September 2018)

Just as all the rivers find their way to the ocean, Vedanta Acharyas, devotees and students from all over India and the world find our way to our beloved Pujya Swamiji, on the banks of Gangaji around the Aradhana divas, being 23rd September 2015 .



It is a time to honor, revere and celebrate Pujya Swamiji's life transforming presence in our lives, The key highlights of the programme were :

19th September - 24 Arsha Vidya Acharya-s recited the entire Shankara bhashya (parayanam) of the Bhagavad Gita and 6 Upanishads from 9 am – 6 pm. This continued every day at an individual level culminating with parayanam of Bhrguvalli of Taittiriya Upanishad at Pujya Swamiji's adhishtana sthalam.

20th September - After nitya morning puja in the temple, a reverential and elaborate ekadasha rudra abhishekham was done to Bhagavan Dayanandeswara and prasad was had by all.



20th and 21st September - A Vidvat Sadas was organised where different Arsha Vidya teachers presented on topics of their choice.

Jaishankar Narayan ji spoke about Savikalpaka and Nirvikalpaka Jnaanam based on what is discussed in the text Vedanta Paribhasha.

Swamini Atmaprajnananda ji spoke on Buddhism, life of the Buddha, his tapas, his teachings, his lifestyle, the Sangha rules, subsequent schisms in Buddhism, different denominations of Buddhism - Hinayana (Theravada and Sarvastivada) and Mahayana (Madhyamaka and Yogachara), their tenets, Rise and decline of Buddhism, and how Buddhism continues to remain an integrated part of Hinduism.

Swami Brahmavidananda talked on the topic of 'Handling the Purvapaksha of Science'. Western Science being a basically materialistic paradigm, the latest accepted theory of creation is the Big Bang in which Awareness evolved from matter. Western Science does not accept consciousness/ awareness or mind as separate from matter. This being the purvapaksha, Swami Brahmavidananda ji answered this challenge from the paradigm of science itself. A cardinal principle in Science is that every event has to have an observer. If the Big Bang was an event where was the observer? No observer, no event. Therefore if Big Bang was an event conscious observer has to be present. Here is where Vedanta walks in with Ishvara or Satyam jnaanam anantam as the source of it all.

Swamini Sadvidyananda ji gave a talk on the three different contextual usages of the word 'jnaanam' in the fifth chapter of Bhagavad Gita. She clearly explained how Bhagavan uses jnaanam to mean Viveka Buddhi, then vrtti jnaanam and then svarupa jnaanam.

Swami Sachidananda ji presented the topic Pre- Shankara Vedantins. He highlighted that different schools of Vedanta emerged post Shankara and this is easily understood by just studying Shankara Bhashya. He showed how Gaudapadacharya in Mandukya karika uses the logic developed by Buddhism to present the Advaita Vedanta . He also pointed out that Mandukya karika had been inspired by Mula Madhyamika Karikas of Nagarjuna.

All the speakers of the vidvat sadas were honored with shawls by revered Sadhus of the parampara.

In the evening there was a discussion on how to handle the antima kriya after an Arsha Vidya Sadhu attains mahasamadhi. The traditional view is that the body of a paramahansa sanyasi should only be buried (Bhu samadhi) or disposed off in a river or ocean (Jala samadhi). In modern times both these options are increasingly becoming difficult. So it was decided that a general guideline outlining different options to be articulated by a working committee. This would form the basis of a document to be prepared by each Arsha Vidya Sadhu at their individual level stating their preference clearly so that there is no confusion post their passing away. Further it was decided that where Bhusamadhi or Jalasamadhi is not possible, then a sadhu can opt for cremation but with laukika agni, without any vaidika rituals. Most Sannyasis present in the meeting preferred the electric crematorium option after due consideration of all the factors and inputs from senior Vedanta Acharyas. It was also recognised that newer technologies are emerging which can dehydrate and reduce matter into a powder. This procedure will not involve agni and the powder can be duly immersed in the river.

22nd September - After morning puja-s, the Arsha Vidya meet commenced. Swami Santatmananda ji welcomed all the Arsha Vidya Sadhus and teachers.

1. Launch of the website - The website <https://www.arshasampradaya.org> was formally launched by Swami Tattvavidananda ji. Swamiji blessed the website project by elaborating on the word, 'sampradaya', sacred giving that is the tradition. He highlighted the purpose being the direct vision of the truth to be discovered in the student's heart through the sampradaya and prayed that it may reach out to all. The purpose of the planned website is to be a space which features Arsha Vidya teachers, their contact details and their activities all over the world. In the last Arsha Vidya meet it was decided that such a website will be created and a committee was formed for the implementation of the same. Although a budget was allocated, Jaishankar Narayan ji was gratefully thanked for offering his free services in the creation and maintenance of the website. For any requests related to the website, they may be contacted at admin@arshasampradaya.org / Swi Brahmaprajnananda (brahmaprajna@arshasampradaya.org).

Some valuable suggestions were given about presentation of the entire list of Arsha Vidya teachers, improving the 'search' categories, linking to all Arsha Vidya websites.

2. Arsha Vidya newsletter – Swami Santatmananda ji suggested improving the newsletter with a view to reaching out to more people. Many suggestions were given and a few doubts were clarified about how the Arsha Vidya newsletter is managed under the aegis of Sruti Seva trust with the current editor, Sri Ramachandran based in Coimbatore.

It was agreed that contributing to the newsletter and sharing it was the responsibility of the entire Arsha Vidya family. The focus this year would be on the same. Swami Sadatmananda ji also welcomed the idea of an editorial board with representatives from the four gurukulams and would discuss it with the trustees and the Editor.

3. Progress of Senior Sadhus home – Swami Santatmananda ji announced that a home for senior sadhus with fifteen rooms was being built in Haridwar funded by Dayananda Anugraha fund and Sri Gangadhareshwara trust, Rishikesh. The plan was to inaugurate it in September 2019 during the next Aradhana diwas programme. Brahmacharini Maheshwari had donated 2.4 acres of land to Sruti Seva trust in 2014. She offered to request that the land be used for constructing a senior sadhus home in the South which could also serve as a place for bhu samadhi as the case may be. This will be followed up by the concerned people.

4. 50 th Anniversary of Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh: The Golden Jubilee celebrations of the ashram was scheduled for 20 – 24 September 2019. Swami Santatmananda ji reiterated that there was no need for invitation as we were one Arsha Vidya family. Help was required to organise the programme. Bhashya parayanam would be organised by Swamini Svatombodhananda ji, Swamini Brahmaleenananda ji and Swami Brahmabhutananda ji.

In the evening the Virtual reality show was inaugurated where Pujya Swami Dayananda ji made an appearance again along with the kutiya and Gangaji. Later many Arsha Vidya teachers shared their heartfelt memories and teachings of Pujya Swamiji.

On 23rd Sep 2018 there was ekadasha rudra abhishekham for Dayanandeswara. Sadhu bhandara was offered on all days.

Pujya Swamiji's biography written by N. Avinashilingam and translated into Telugu by Sri B A R Somayajulu. This book released on September 23 2018 at Dayananda Ashram Rishikesh by Swami Suddhananda. Swami Tattvavidananda received the first copy.

Bharatanjali from Bangalore, under the guidance of Guru B Bhanumati, performed various choreographies which were in praise of Ishwara in his different forms.

By Swamini Brahma Prajnananda Saraswati.

More photos of this function can be seen in Wrapper 2 and 3

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This will enable us to act fast.

Editor.