

FEED BACK ABOUT THE LONG TERM COURSE

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati told the students of the earlier course, for those who may wonder whether they did well or not after 3 years, “Don’t worry, this teaching goes and sits inside.”

We present the feedback received from Students of the long term course 2014-17 held at AVG, Anaikatti:

It is by special grace that I had the opportunity to study Vedanta and Sanskrit for the past 39 months at AVG, Anaikatti. The Gurukulam provides all that a student requires to be able to comfortably study and stay with the teaching. The first year was most memorable where we were privileged to learn all that we could from Pujya Swamiji. The jnana-ganga continues to flow through his trusted disciples. Every day has been a blessing - to be able to learn from such committed and caring Acaryas who spare no efforts to help us understand the vision of the Sastra. Perhaps nowhere else Shankara Bhashyam is taught with such clarity, precision, commitment and reverence like our Acarya did. We are indeed blessed to have received the treasure of knowledge from the parampara in its pristine form. - **N. Arthi, Chennai.**

I had the good fortune of getting purna ashirvada of Pujya Swamiji and other Acharyas of our Guru Parmpara. Due to the grace of the Acharyas, I have received the vision of the Sastra. It had been grace all the way. I had Sastra kripa, Isvara kripa, Guru kripa and Atma kripa. I was an instrument for launch of a website for sharing free e-books on Vedanta and Sanskrit grammar and also for the widely read Pujya Swamiji’s brief biography. I have a sense of satisfaction that the purpose of this birth has been achieved. Now I can happily accept whatever happens as Isvara’s order. – **N.Avinashilingam, Coimbatore.**

41 months – a long period of time seems to have passed in a jiffy. This is the beauty of the long-term course and also the routine of Gurukulam life with its modest but apt boarding and lodging facilities. Having developed an interest in *Advaita Vedanta*, which almost coincided with my retirement from active corporate life, I have oft-times felt that I should have pursued this course much earlier in my life when I had more physical energy and *medha shakti*. It did not happen because, perhaps, I did not have sufficient *adhikaritam* and maturity born out of experience of samsara. I am reminded of Mundaka Upanishad mantra “*Pareekshya lokaan karmachitaan brahmanah....*”, which makes a lot of sense in my case.

And that is why perhaps, during *shravanam*, I did not have many doubts about what was being taught. Shruti, Bhagawan Bhashyakara and the painstaking and exemplary teaching of Acharyas, put to rest a few doubts, which arose in my mind, as if they could read my mind. This was the easy part, which was aided by the knowledge of Sanskrit language and grammar, gained during the course. However, *viparyaya*, the past orientation is a big obstacle, which is not easy to overcome. Therefore, what is left now is, for me to engage wholeheartedly in *nidhidhyasanam* through “*tat chintanam, tat kathanam, anyonyam tat prabodhanam*” to gain *viparyaya rahita atma jnanam*, which is *aparoksha jnanam*, the goal of this entire pursuit. -**R.Ganapathy,Mumbai**

I will always be grateful to this Gurukulam and to our teachers. For the last couple of years all that is required for this pursuit of knowledge was given to me here without reserve, without any demand other than my commitment and sincerity in this pursuit. Not only the most important knowledge of Brahman was given, but also in many ways – by opportunity of doing seva, by being part of the temple activities, by namaskarah, by living in connection to the Vedic culture, by the proximity with the Acharyas and others - the means to gain the adhikaritam necessary to receive and assimilate this knowledge was also given. Sanskrit was taught thoroughly with joy and patience, giving us the entrance key to study the Sastra in depth. With this background our great teacher Swami Sadatmanandaji was able to communicate to us the message of the Upanishads, and also to make us understand the style of writing and the ways of thinking of Bhagavan Bhashyakarah. He did it by covering every sentence and idea of Bhashyam without any gap whatsoever. It was amazing. Having received here the greatest wealth in the form of this teaching I can move on after the course is over, without real worry about the future, remembering with gratitude the Gurukulam and our teachers. Because now I can never forget the invariable smile of Dakshinamurti. So I take this opportunity to offer namaskarah and thanks to all our teachers, to Pujya Swamiji, to my co-students and all members of the Gurukulam. - **Henrique (Harihara), Brazil.**

Coming and living at the Gurukulam has broadened my outlook and enabled me to look at people with compassion and respect. What touches my heart is the commitment and discipline with which the foreign students have imbibed Hindu culture. We are lucky to have Acharyas who are steeped in Vedantic knowledge and imparts it so well to the students. Pujya Swamiji had appointed committed Teachers to teach Vedanta, Sanskrit and Chanting. – **Ponmani Avinashilingam, Coimbatore**

I have earned a lot of punya in my purva janmas, to be picked up from the whirl pool of samsara, by the Guru himself, who helped me realise that there is more to life than mere existence!

When I joined the course I had no idea I would enjoy it this much. That in itself speaks for the quality of teaching. The Acharyas spare no effort in making the tatparyam understood, be it Tattva Bodha, or Brahma Sutra. By giving contemporary examples, they include the foreign students, with diverse backgrounds and bring the classes alive.

The two temple Swaminis, I have always felt are like two song birds singing in unison. Their dedication and devotion, not only to the temple but also to their chanting classes is amazing! Sanskrit is being taught meticulously by a team of dedicated teachers, headed by Acharya Swami Shankaranandaji. Panini school of Grammar is followed.

Added to all this is the divine presence of Dakshinamurthy, the presiding deity, with Jnana Ganapathy, Narmadeshwara and Devi Jnaneswari, with Kalyana Subramanya Swami with his consorts blessing the entire Gurukhulam from atop the hill!

I am sad to say good bye and know that I will keep returning like a daughter to her Parents' house, for it is indeed a home away from home . - **Prema Sharma, Bangalore**

This course clarified that I lack nothing. The lack arose from ignorance that made me conclude that my inadequacies are endless and the search for fulfillment in life a mere pipe dream. The conviction that there is order amidst apparent chaos, comes from an inward approach rather than an outward search for peace and well being in the form of wealth, prosperity, name, fame, and approval from others. The search ends when we realize that there is nowhere to go or come, nothing to do or undo, but to return introspectively to one's own self to find all answers. This is "REAL HOME COMING" symbolized by (1) the biblical story of the Prodigal Son, (2) "RETURN TO THE PROMISED LAND" attributed to Moses, (3) "KNOW THYSELF", an admonition from Socrates and (4) "YOU ARE THE WHOLE" the precise expression of *our Parama Guru Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati*. The point is, we are always at home when we return to the self which is one and the same in all, and one with the Creator too. In a nutshell, this study has been the best blessing bestowed upon me by our present *Acharyas Swami Sadatmananda* and *Swami Shankarananda* and the entire *Guru Shishya Parampara*. - **M.S.Rajagopalan, UK.**

Grace, grace, grace. By Isvara's grace, I was given an opportunity to study in the three-year course in Anaikatti. It is during this time, I was able to study Vedanta and serve Pujya Swamiji, Swami Sadatmanandaji, and Swami Shankaranandaji in an intimate manner. It is through their grace, I was given the opportunity to study the Prasthan Trayam with Bhasyam and various prakaranas. I am ever grateful for their boundless compassion and commitment.

Similarly, it is only grace which allowed me to learn Sanskrit under the inspiring Medha Michikaji, and chanting under the love of Swamini Sharadanandaji and Swamini Vedarthanandaji.

I am also ever grateful to the AVG management, staff, and workers for their continuous commitment and care. "यस्य प्रसादात् अहम् एव विष्णुः - By whose grace, I am Visnu alone," (Vakya Vritti, Sloka 2). - **Shivam Gosai, USA.**

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam is a unique setup for anyone who wishes to pursue Vedanta in depth while having sense of commitment. Because it provides a very conducive atmosphere, as well as a very well maintained residential facilities.

During the 3 years course we have greatly benefited by the highly qualified Vedanta Acharyas, vedic chanting and high level of Sanskrit teaching - all blessed by the 'magic touch' of Pujya Swamiji and his inspiring vision.

The magnificent full fledged Dakshinamurti temple is one more gem in the Gurukulam where the intimate connection to the Lord can easily be cultivated or strengthened.

The 3 years Vedanta course was a unique opportunity for self growth providing a wide exposure to the traditional teaching of Vedanta Sastra.

The busy daily schedule is not always easy to follow, but once there is determination to keep it up, the reward is immense in so many levels, serving as a highly significant milestone in our spiritual pursuit.

Moreover, the serene atmosphere, away from the busy 'worldly life', enables to spend time with oneself, allowing many unresolved issues to surface, giving us a very good opportunity for self improvement, correction, development and growth. We learned to appreciate the values of contribution and seva, accommodation and acceptance of ourselves and others for what we are, due to which a very close team spirit was formed.

I feel highly blessed and full of gratitude for being given this rare opportunity of participating in this course.

I wish to thank so much to all the Gurukulam people who made my 3 years stay truly meaningful and unforgettable. - **Shreya , Israel**

Hands down the best course in the world! How can I say this, because I did search for few years and also attended some courses, as in Trinidad and in States.

When I came to Anaikatti, I foolishly asked Pujya Swamiji to compare the course. He laughed and said “ he is asking ME “ one thing I can tell you, nowhere they teach Panini Sanskrit” (he meant our parampara). “And We have best teachers”.

The course was slow but thorough. We are so blessed to have a teacher who worked harder than the students. Perfection and eagerness to pass the knowledge thoroughly to the students made our teacher repeat the facts again and again, which came as a blessing to many students who were not exposed the basic culture of Hinduism. His admiration for Adi Sankaracharya is infectious. Equally proficient teachers took all varieties of sutras and texts making our knowledge wider and clearer. Students are so blessed to have many levels of Sanskrit classes to suit their need. Not just one but Two Swaminis to teach the Chanting to perfection.

Friends who visited me were amazed to see the variety and quality of the food. The scenery is breathtaking as Peacocks and Deer families roam around us. It is so beautiful. The students in this course are so blessed to study the highest of Knowledge to this detail and in such a serene environment provided by Pujya Swamiji. I can say I spend my happiest 3 years here and will miss all these when I leave. - **Dr. M.R.K Suresh, Canada**

I consider myself as very fortunate to have been able to attend the course. The Vision of Vedas, the two life styles namely Karma yoga and Jana yoga have been unfolded clearly. The course has made me capable of accepting most of the situations, people, things and ‘myself’ by exposing to the concepts of ‘Orders of Isvara’ and ‘Apasmara’. I feel blessed for having attended the course. - **K. Thinnappan, Coimbatore**

I can say I am blessed to Join this course. But for the grace of Lord Dakhsinamuthy and Pujya Swamiji I would have not joined. This long term course conceived by Pujya Swamiji is unique in its own way. The teaching flew down from traditional teachers. Our course is conducted by Pujya Swamiji and Acaryaji Swami Sadatmanandaji and Swami Shankaranandaji and Swamini Vedartanandaji and Swamini Saradanandaji and Medha Michika. We are taught prasthanatrayam- Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and Brahmasutras. To facilitate understanding of the subject matter we had been taught the language of Sanskrit. We had meditation classes which really help us to contemplate upon what we have learnt. Daily satsang classes were conducted where

our doubts are resolved and we had been taught other important prakarana granthas too such as Tattva Bodha, Viveka Cudamani, Drk-drshya-viveka, Upadesha Sahasri, etc.

The chanting of Rudram, Camakam, various Suktas, Stotras, Upanishads are learnt by us.

I should be grateful and thankful to all the teachers for their excellent teaching. Staying in gurukulam and studying for 3 years definitely makes the person committed to jnana nishta. – **C.Vallidevi, Hyderabad.**

For long , I have harbored a desire to do a long term Vedanta course and have been pursuing options. The culmination of that finally fructified in 2014 with the blessing of Pujya Swamiji and the Acharyas. What a great experience it turned out to be. The serenity of the place , the great experience of attending and listening to Pujya Swamiji's lectures, the excellent Vedanta lectures by Acharyaji and Shankarandaji , all of these made the course very special. The systematic teaching of Sanskrit with the high quality course study material, made learning Sanskrit easier. The comfortable accommodation and the excellent satvik food were great additions for a great course. Above all it is Lord Dakshinamurthy's grace all the way.

No words will be good enough for the excellent teaching of Acharyaji and the crowning glory being the Brahma Sutra lectures. It speaks volumes for the continuous hard work he has put in to give us the best. Indeed we are fortunate to have such a Guru, which is clearly a mark of Iswara's grace on us. - **P R Venkataraman, Coimbatore.**

It is a great blessing and fortune to have gone through 3 Year Vedanta Course at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam under the auspicious guidance of Pujya Swamiji and his disciples Swami Sadatmanandaji and Swami Shankaranandaji. Studying Vedanta texts, Sanskrit, Vedic Chanting day after day for the last 3 years has transformed my life significantly in so many ways. I consider gaining this knowledge -"You are limitless; You are wholeness" as the greatest fulfillment of my life. When I joined the course, I didn't even know alphabets in Sanskrit language. Now I can say I am comfortable in the language, which has helped me to grasp the teachings of Vedanta - thanks to our Sanskrit teacher Brahmacharini Medha Michikaji. Swami Sadatmanandaji unfolded the teachings of Bhagavad Gita and Upanisads with Shankara Bhasyam meticulously and thoroughly that I was able to gain the vision and technical details of the scriptures effortlessly. Swami Shankaranandaji's meditation classes in the morning helped me to assimilate the teachings where I could just surrender myself to Swamiji's words and abide in the vision without any effort on my part. Once Pujya Swamiji had mentioned to us that studying Vedanta in Arsha Vidya Gurukulam is like doing Ph.D in Harvard University. After completing the course I was able to see the truth of his words. Apart from classes on Vedanta, I am grateful for being blessed with a conducive environment in the Gurukulam where food, water, electricity, accommodation etc were all taken care so I was able to focus my attention on the teachings of scriptures. I express my heartfelt gratitude to Pujya Swamiji and Swamiji's of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam parampara and the Gurukulam administrators for giving me once in a lifetime opportunity to study and gain teachings of Vedanta. - **Venkatesh Anandasayanam, USA**

ॐ श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः

भारत-देशे अस्माकं व्यवहारेषु अनेकाः वैदीकोपचारान् दृश्यन्ते। यथा मन्दिर-पूजा-यज्ञाः, जातकर्मादि-अन्त्येष्टिपर्यन्त-संस्काराः, पुत्रकामेष्ट्यादि-यागाः, पञ्चयज्ञाः, तीर्थयात्राः इत्यादयः। तेषु पुण्यकर्मसु जनाः प्रवर्तमानाः सन्ति। तेषाम् प्रयोजनम् स्वर्गप्राप्तिरिति केचन मन्यन्ते। विवेकिनः तु तानि कर्माणि चित्तशुद्धये इति मन्यन्ते। ते पुरुषार्थ-निश्चयिनः मोक्षमिच्छन्ति। तेषु कोटिषु केचन जिज्ञासवः ब्रह्मविद्यामालोक्य आर्षविद्यागुरुकुलं प्रति गच्छन्ति।

पूज्य-स्वामि-दयानन्द-सरस्वतिभिः दक्षिण-भारते गिरिसमूहेषु मध्ये विविक्त-देशे निर्मितमेतद् गुरुकुलं श्रेष्ठतमम्। अत्र श्रवण-मनन-निदिध्यासन-अनुकूल-क्षेत्रे, वर्षत्रयाधिकम् अन्तेवासिनः भूत्वा जिज्ञासवः श्रोत्रिय-ब्रह्मनिष्ठेभ्यः महवाक्योपदेशं प्राप्नुवन्ति।

उपदेशं प्राप्ते सति जीवनस्य लक्ष्यं स्पष्टं, सर्वं यथा-स्थाने अर्थवच्च भवति।

इदानीं तैः वेदान्तविद्भिः किं कर्तव्यम्? किमकर्तव्यम्?

by Jaykumar

-Compiled by N. Avinashilingam

NEW APPOINTMENT

GENERAL MANAGER, AVG, ANAIKATTI

We welcome Sri P.V.Kailasanathan, IOFS (Retd.), the newly appointed GM of AVG, Anaikatti. He has retired from service as Deputy Director, Ordnance Factory, Avadi, Chennai. He can be contacted at : office@arshavidya.in or + 91 9442624486.

