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Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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Puja Swamiji and AVG Acharyas with the students of the three-year course that ended on October 26, 2013.

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*Arsha Vidya
Newsletter*

In fearless voice may
we proclaim

The Rishi's message
from all house-tops

And bring the men
of different claim

To a fold of Love
where oneness lasts!



मुण्डकोपनिषद् Muṇḍakopaniṣad Mantra 1.2.8



(continued from the last issue)

India is a country of sampradāya. People always say, “This is our sampradāya”. Sampradāya means that the guru should be reasonable. He cannot be illogical. What he says can be a matter of belief, either verifiable or non-verifiable, but it cannot be a belief that is against reason. If it is illogical, one cannot call it a belief. When I say, “I have a flower in my hand, ‘therefore’ there is a horse behind the stage”, it is illogical. The presence of a horse behind due to my having a flower in my hand is not a matter of belief. If I simply say, “there is a horse behind the stage”, that is OK. You may think that Swamiji has extra-sensory perception. That is fine, that is a belief. One can verify it. One can go and see if a horse is there or not. ‘There is a flower in my hand’ is not a belief. It is a direct perception. In the sentence, ‘Therefore, there is a horse behind the stage,’ the word ‘therefore’, points to the logic. This is illogical and is not a belief.

One must make sure that a non-verifiable belief is not illogical. That there is heaven is a non-verifiable belief. But if you say, “It is eternal heaven,” it is illogical. ‘If one goes there, one will remain there for ever’—that is not possible. One goes to heaven because of the result of one’s good karmas. If one has done good deeds all through one’s life, then that puṇya may keep the person in heaven for another life-time or a little more, not forever. There is no such thing as ‘eternal heaven’. Heaven is the result of actions. Śāstra tells,¹ “Just as in this world, experiences gathered through karma come to an end, so too, the lokas like heaven gained as a result of good actions are also limited in time”. If you buy a house, all your diamond sets are gone. Similarly, if one goes to heaven and experiences pleasures there, then one’s puṇya is exhausted. One comes back again. The karma-phala, like heaven, is desirable all right, but it is finite.

These self-appointed leaders are not leaders. Someone said that the one who leads is the leader, but that is not totally true. If there is no following at all, the person is not a leader. Such persons should lead some people or some people should follow them; only then can they be considered as leaders. If people follow the person then he or she is a good leader, like Gandhiji. His leadership was something very beautiful. He believed in something, he began living it, and then people found themselves following him, and therefore he became a leader. He

¹ यथा इह कर्म-जितो लोकः क्षीयते तथा अमुत्र पुण्य-चितो लोकः क्षीयते । छान्दोग्योपनिषद् (8.1.6)

was ready to reshuffle his ideas and had no cast-iron ideologies. That is what made Gandhiji a leader. There are some others who are convinced about some philosophy, and then they lead. Hitler believed in the blue blood theory of the Aryans. He believed that only Germans are Aryans and they are born to rule, others are all nobodies. He propagated that idea and he made people follow him. He was an idealist—a dangerous kind of person. Then there is an opportunist, a union leader. He creates issues and appoints himself as the one who will solve them. Whenever there is a chance, like bonus time, he becomes the leader. He also leads people. So, there is an opportunist leader, there is an idealist leader, and there is the real leader. Here, these people are all idealist leaders because they think they know. They commit themselves to a belief and then lead.

Andhenaiva nīyamāna yathāndhāḥ : like the blind people being led by a leader, who is blind himself. The blind people do not know whether the person who offers himself to lead has eyesight or not. They cannot see the blind. Therefore, they follow this person. Holding on to this person, they will never reach the destination. When a blind person follows another blind person, his chances of falling are double. He will fall whenever the other also falls. So, all these blind people enter into the ditch of saṁsāra. Already they are in a ditch anyway. They get out of one ditch, and they again get into another. They move in circles. So, they do not reach the destination called mokṣa. Blindness is here is with respect to the limitation of karma. The buddhi is very bright and brilliant with respect to other things in life, but when it comes to ātma-tattva, it is anaesthetised.

If there is a blind person who knows himself to be blind and still offers himself as a guide to another blind person, definitely he is a cheat. But here the ‘cheat’ is not the example. Here one has wrong convictions and he thinks that he is right. People do not know whether this person knows or not. Naturally they are gullible.

Here one has to understand what is being said, irrespective of who said it. One should be able to see through whether it is proper or not. One can give the benefit of doubt to anybody, but one cannot simply swallow anything. When one is embarking upon the inquiry of what is true, then one cannot have a ‘charismatic approach’. The blind people, therefore, follow the person who says, “I will lead you”.

अविध्यायां बहुधा वर्तमानाः वयं कृतार्था इत्यभिमन्यन्ति बालाः ।

यत् कर्मिणो न प्रवेदयन्ति रागात् तेनातुराः क्षीणलोकाश्च्यवन्ते ॥ १।२।९

avidhyāyām bahudhā vartamānāḥ vayaṁ kṛtārthā ityabhimanyanti bālā ।

yat karminṇo na pravedayanti rāgāt tenāturrāḥ kṣīṇalokāścyavante ॥ 1.2.9

Steeped in ignorance and error with many notions, these immature people think, ‘we are well informed’. Because they do not know the self due to their longing

for worldly ends, they are constantly afflicted and fall from heaven when their puṇya is exhausted.

Avidhyāyām bahudhā vartamānāḥ existing variously in ignorance. These people exist in ignorance with different notions about themselves, the world, the God, the ultimate end and the means to achieve it. All are ignorant but each one has some special notions. There are no varieties in the basic delusion. 'I am the self, the self is a kartṛ, doer, and it is limited'—this notion is common to all. Within this there are varieties. The ramifications of the sense of limitation are varied. The conclusions that people arrive at, are varied. One will say, "What I say is true. What he says is not true. I am the latest, and the last". Another will say, "Your mokṣa lies in heaven. Unless you follow me, you will not go to heaven". Here are different belief systems, and people hold on to different types of theologies.

Vayam kṛtārthā ityabhimanyanti bālāḥ : these immature people think, 'all that is to be gained, has been gained by us'. They consider themselves as accomplished people. Abhimāna is false identification. They falsely identify themselves as fulfilled people. But they are bālāḥ, immature people, because they do not see anything beyond means and ends. Within the avidyā alone they live their life in various ways, following various means and ends. Again they advocate various means and ends to others also. They are people who are still ignorant and childish in their thinking.

Rāgāt na pravedayanti : due to rāga they do not know. Rāga is the longing for a desirable end, like security and pleasure in this world and heaven after death. They have discovered some value for the results of action, and the very longing for the results blinds them. This is like holding a bubble floating in the air. They do not see the perishable nature of lokas. All the religions are committed to going to heaven. It is a trip. They do certain special rituals to achieve desirable ends. They do not know what is to be known. They do not know Brahman. But they think they know everything.

Tena āturāḥ : remaining ignorant, they are afflicted by sorrow and pain. They constantly have a sense of dissatisfaction. Whatever loka is gained as a result of karma, it is going to be lost in time. Therefore, kṣīṇa-lokāścyavante : having lost the lokas that are gained through karma, however desirable they are, they slip from there. They fall down into wombs where they can fulfil the rest of the karma. These karmas are infinite. Therefore, when one sphere of enjoyment is over, they get another sphere.

There are people who live a good life, a life of dharma, performing good karmas. The result of such karmas is talked about here in order to point out that even the good results are not good enough to achieve what we are looking for.

To be continued.....

श्री रुद्रम् Śrī Rudram Anuvāka 08

Ṛṣi (for the mantras of eighth anuvāka and those of the ninth anuvāka upto nama akhkhidate ca prakhkhidate ca) – Bhagavān ; Chandas – Anuṣṭubh; Devatā - Bhagavān

Dhyāna śloka (for the mantras of the eighth anuvāka and those of the ninth anuvāka upto nama akhkhidate ca prakhkhidate ca anuvāka) is the same as that of the mantras of third anuvāka.

Result for the chanting of mantras of eighth anuvāka and those of the ninth anuvāka upto nama akhkhidate ca prakhkhidate ca: One gains sovereignty, all wealth and the world of Lord Śiva. The result is always relative to one's position.

This anuvāka is very popular among the people who daily recite the Rudram. The famous five syllabled mantra 'namaḥ śivāya', the king among mantras, is in this section. So, the whole anuvāka is considered important.

The seventh anuvāka glorified the Lord as sarvātmaka and sarvāntaryāmi; this section presents the Lord as sarvaloka-upāsya, as one to be worshipped to fulfil all puruṣārthas—dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. For this the Lord is praised appropriately with special attributes.

नमस्सोमाय च रुद्राय च

Namassomāya ca ruḍrāya ca:

Salutations to Rudrā, the Lord seated with Umā is the one who liquefies and evaporates the sorrows of saṁsāra. You invoke the Lord in the manner because you want his blessings to remove your sorrow by destroying the causes, pāpās. When you call, 'O Rudra', you are calling the Lord as saṁsāra duḥkha apahartā, the remover of the sorrow of saṁsāra. Thus ruḍrāya namaḥ is a complete sentence as it is. It does not need to be complete, mentioning what do you seek. Unto that Rudra, my salutation.

Now the jijñāsu salutes the Lord in the form of Soma, for gaining mokṣa puruṣārtha. somāya ca. Soma means a particular plant or the moon. Here soma is a compound word meaning the one who is with Umā, śakti¹ The word Umā has the same three letters of a, u and m as in Om. The letters *a* and *u* are construed as manifest forms while *m* is the unmanifest form. And the Lord's svarūpa is the truth of the manifest and unmanifest, which is śuddha caitanya. Though śakti is of different types, the mumukṣu is invoking jñāna śakti of Umā to get rid of saṁsāra-duḥkha. Unto that Lord who is with Umā, my salutation.

¹ umāya saha vartate iti somaḥ tasmai—unto the Lord who is with Goddess Umā, namaḥ, salutation.

नमस्ताम्राय चारुणाय च

namastāmraṃ cārūṇāya ca

Namastāmraṃ cārūṇāya ca – Salutation to the Lord as the rising sun and the midday sun. The Lord's blessing is a potential; one needs to tap. The Lord as sun is upāśya, worshipful. The sun is one of the eight fold forms of Lord Śiva. The Lord is visualised as the five elements, the sun, the moon and the self. The self is included in the eight-fold form; otherwise there is fear from a second thing. "Even if one sees a slight division in this (non-dual Brahman), there is fear for him.² Arjuna saw the cosmic form of the Lord, but did not include himself in it and therefore he had fear. He saw the Lord as bhaya-hetu even though he is the remover of fear. Here, the eight-fold form is Bhagavān and one is not separate from Him. This is Īśvara darśana; it is the same as svātma darśana. The self-revealing ātmā is everything and therefore one does not require seeing the Lord as separate.

The sun as one of the eight-fold forms is a manifest blessing of the Lord and hence is upāśya. How do you meditate upon the Lord in the sun? Look for the crimson sun as he rises. Be ready to welcome him. He is dinakara, day-maker and the one who appears day after day. He is called aruṇa, whose form is just after sunrise, orange in colour. One begins the day by invoking the Lord in the form of sun to gain artha, money and other securities that one seeks for the day. Again, one has to offer oblation at sunrise. Unto this special manifestation of the Lord my namaskāra.

नमः शङ्गाय च पशुपतये च

namaḥ śaṅgāya³ ca paśupataye ca

The Lord takes you to happiness, provides you with situations that give you happiness. Here kāma is the puruṣārtha. Why do we say saṅga? He is paśupati, the Lord of all beings and therefore, he is the protector of all. The Lord as kālāhara and kālāgni keeps away the factors that rob your happiness and thereby protects your happiness including the limited saṃsārika-sukha such as vidhyā- sukha, vaiśayika- sukha and yogic sukha. Salutation to the one who gives happiness and who is the Lord of all beings.

Namaḥ ugrāya ca bhīmāya ca – Ugra means śreṣṭha, the one who is the most worshipful, because the glories of all the exalted beings are from him. The Lord is bhīma, because Indra, Varuṇa and other devatās do their jobs due to fear of him. They follow the mandate of the Lord. Vāyu does his job without any murmur. He does not say, 'I have been blowing all the time and now I want to stay put!' The Lord is bhīma and therefore śreṣṭha. Salutation to the one who excels in glory and who is the cause of fear.

To be continued...

² udaram antaram kurute atha tasya bhayam bhavati - Taittirīyopaniṣad (2|7)

³ śaṃ sukhaṃ gamayati iti saṅgaḥ – the onewho takes you to sukha.

Honouring Ācāryas at AVG



Pāda pūjā was done to the parama ācārya, Pūjya Śrī Svāmi Dayānandā Sarasvati during the valedictory function of the long term three and half years course held on Oct 26, 2013. (This was reported in AVNL dated November 2013.)

PĀDA PŪJA TO ĀCĀRYA ŚRĪ SĀKṢIJI

The penultimate day of the long term course at AVG, Anaikatti was on Oct 25, 2013. The function started with prayer. Śrī Svāmi Śaṅkarānandā performed pāda pūjā to Ācārya Svāmi Sākṣātkṛtānandā on behalf

of the Students. The students garlanded and honoured other Ācāryas who had taught them during the course.

MESSAGE FROM ĀCĀRYAS:

Svāmi Sākṣātkṛtānandā thanked the Chief Ācārya Pūjya Śrī Svāmi Dayānanda Sarasvati for his blessings. He thanked all the teachers and students for their co-operation and for the opportunity to share knowledge. He said that technology has helped us to be in touch with the people and at the same time be physically away



from the people. He gave his contact e-mail address. He assured that he can be always contacted. He blessed the students for a successful teaching career and for gaining the ultimate.

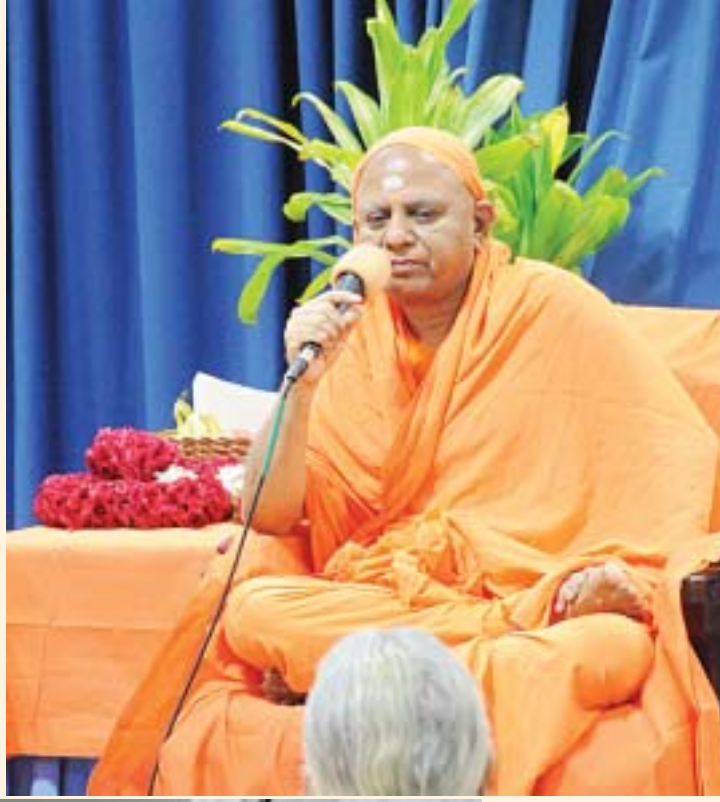
Svāmini Śāradānandā thanked everybody. She wished the students to blossom like a flower by caring and teaching.

Svāmini Vedārtānandā told that she enjoyed teaching every day. She prayed for success of the students in their entire endeavor.



Svāmi Śaṅkarānandā said that Pujya Swamiji asked him to do whatever the Acharya Swami Sakshatkrtananda wanted him to do. He had tried to do that to the best of his ability. He wished the students all the best.

Śivātma Caitanyā said that he had the privilege of being with Pūjya



Svāmiji for so many years. He enjoyed teaching saṁskṛtam.

STUDENTS GRATITUDE:

A few students spoke. They thanked pūjya svāmiji for teaching prasathāna traya with bhāṣyam to them. They thanked Svāmi Sakṣātkṛtānandā for his patience, accommodative nature and smiling disposition which enabled all the 75 students to successfully complete the course. They thanked all their Teachers during the long term course. They thanked the āśram staff for their co-operation and dedicated service.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

Seven Week Vedanta Retreat 2013 with Swami Tattvavidanandaji at Saylorsburg Gurukulam



The Fall Vedanta Retreat was held at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Saylorsburg PA from October 8 to November 25. This was essentially an adult camp. Approximately 70

students attended the camp. Swami Tattvavidananda Sarswati taught Chhandogya Upanishad Chapter VI and and Gīta Chapter 10 with Sankara Bhashyam. Swamiji also taught part of Gīta Chapter 11 (This chapter will be completed next year) and conducted guided meditations. Additionally Swamiji held satsangs every day. Suddhatmaji conducted the chanting classes. Lance Daniels teaches Yoga at the Gurukulam regularly. He conducted the Yoga classes during the camp. Divya Devi also conducted Yoga classes. Kalpesh Jasapara and Terry taught Sanskrit classes. Savithri Maniji taught Bhajans.

Week 1

Chhandogya Upanisad Chapter VI

This is the beginning of Swamiji's class. The Upanishad belongs to Sama Veda as part of Chhandogya Brahmana. Svetaketu, the son of Sage Uddalaka was sent to Gurukulam to study the real knowledge that a Brahmin has to acquire so that he can be called a Brahmin. Svetaketu studied at the Gurukulam for twelve years. When he





returned he was a proud young man who thought he knew everything. His father noticed it. He asked his son if he had studied everything. Svetaketu said he has. His father then asked him "Do you know That by knowing which everything is known?" Svetaketu did not know it. His father gave him an example of the clay and the pot. They are perceived as being apart but they contain the same element namely the clay. Similarly the gold and a chain. So also there is one reality and no varieties. At the request of his son, Uddalaka continued the teaching and this is the content of Chapter VI of this Upanishad.

Swamiji's teaching begins here. The theme is: 'the Samsara is Nama and Rupa. It is an idea of mind. There is no Jagat. Nothing exists outside your consciousness'.

Gita Chapter 10

Swamiji read experts from what some famous people have said in praise of Gita.

Bhagawan Sri Krishna says to Arjuna that this knowledge will illuminate the supreme reality. Devatas and Rishis do not know this. It is: "Atma is that by which you know who you are". You see God in ocean, in mountains and all the big objects. Eventually you will see God in a drop of water. God is in Lord Rama but understand this that God is in all of us also.

Week 2

Upanisad

There are discussions on the objections raised by various Purvapakshis (opponents). Swamiji expounded on the various objections raised. Sat is pure Real. Jiva is Abhas (reflection). It is a shadow. The human beings may appear different due to Svagata Bheda (difference within itself), the sajatiya Bheda (difference in the same species) and Vijatiya Bheda (difference in different species) but the Reality is free from the differences.

Gita

Vibhutis are powers of God. Arjuna insists on knowing all the Vibhutis. Bhagawan Sri Krishna tells him that the Vibhutis are infinite but He will tell Arjuna about some of them briefly. Those who know this and my attributes will appreciate me. I grant the wisdom by which they reach me. I am the source of everything. Of me are born the seven Rishis and the four Manus. To them who know this I give lamp of knowledge (Dnyana Deepa). It is the knowledge gained by meditation on the Self.



The Dnyana Deepa illuminates the darkness created by ignorance.

Week 3

Upanisad

Swamiji illustrated the place of Jiva as the center of everything by a diagram of circles that open in infinite tangential straight line.

Cause and the effect are the same. The Vedanta acknowledges that the Supreme Being is the cause of creation. Fire Water and Earth are the subtle elements. Everything is a product of these elements. Food gets converted in three forms, namely the gross, the middling and the subtle. So does the liquid. So also the Energy. The fire, water and the earth enter the system and they become mind, prana and speech. The mind is formed of food, prana of water and the speech of the fire.

Svetaketu requires more clarification. His father says there are sixteen digits of mind. As an experiment he asked Svetaketu to fast for fifteen days. Svetaketu fasted and came back. He had lost his capacity to chant the Vedas. He was asked to eat food. His mind became alert again. This proved the fact that mind is dependent on food. Another illustration was given that of a blade of grass which when burnt creates a spark. When fuel is added to the flame it burns in a full flame. In fact mind is the essence of food, prana of water and the speech of fire.

Gita

In continuing the teaching of Gita Swamiji explained in details the Dyana Deepa. Karya drusti Binds, Karan drusti liberates. So Bahirmukha drusti binds, Antarmukha drusti liberates. The Dynana Deepa removes the ignorance that binds. Looking for happiness outside is cognitive mistake. It is a delusion. Wisdom is the oil of Dynana Deepa. Desires and fears are winds of Raga and Dwesha. Protect the Dyana Deepa from the winds by meditation and contemplation of Iswara. Practice silence to protect the Dynana Deepa.

Week 4

Upanisad

Svetaketu wanted to know more. Uddalaka tells him about Svapti meaning 'one sleeps'. A person is drawn out from all external connections. He is his Being. A bird tied to a post by thread flies all over but returns to where it is tied. It may or may not know what and where it is tied to. It has searched freedom all over. It is tired and returns to where it belongs. So does the mind. It cannot find the freedom outside. It gets exhausted and it returns to where it belongs. That is deep sleep, his Being.

Swamiji continued the teaching of Upanishad. What is the being? Is everything being or all is ultimately united in the being? The answer was everything resolves in being. Being is identified with Atman.

Being is the background of all that exists. Svetaketu asks another question. "How is it that everything becomes Being and how all merge into one?" Uddalaka gives an example of honey bees that merge in an essence of the flower in which all distinctions are lost and one essence emerges. Similarly I am this and I am that is all lost. When this occurs there is liberation. It is like the rivers flowing into the ocean. The rivers lose their identity when they merge with the ocean. The rivers are not destroyed, they are absorbed. So do the individuals lose their identity when they merge with the Supreme Being.

Gita

Bhagawan Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that he can meditate on any of the Vibhutis. Bhagawan then begins to tell Arjuna what God is. He has selected some vibhutis. Swamiji described in details all these Vibhutis and why Sri Krishna has identified with them.

WEEK 5

Upanisad

Swamiji provided a detailed explanation of what is life. Life is what one is living. There is no specific definition. A form dies when the Reality is withdrawn. A person in deep sleep or a person who died and has entered another body does not remember anything. Reality or the being is manifested in different proportion in different objects but it is the same Reality. From a tiny seed a huge tree is formed, from the essence of the being everything has emerged and that essence is you.

Gita

Swamiji continued describing the various Vibhutis and the reason Sri Krishna identified with them. Sri Krishna says to Arjuna that there are infinite Vibhutis. You do not have to know all of them. You need

to remember that I am present in everything that is there. I am the seed of the Universe. With one part of mine I support the whole of this Universe. Nothing can exist without me

The Chapter 10 ends here.

Week 6

Upanisad

Swamiji continued the teaching of Upanishad. Svetaketu asked for more explanation about the being. His Father gave him an example of salt dissolved in water. It is invisible but is still present in water in the form of taste. Similarly Being has entered into everything of the creation. It is not easy to perceive it. One is like a blindfolded person who has been taken to wilderness and left there. How can he find his way back? The answer is by the help of one who has sight to find the way back. We are spiritually blindfolded, we are in darkness, we have lost our way and we are trying to find the way back.

Gita

As there was still some time left for the course to complete, Swamiji decided to continue his teaching of Gita. Chapter 11 is scheduled to be taught next year. However, Swamiji started teaching this chapter now. This week Swamiji started teaching Chapter 11, the Vishvarupadarshan (The Cosmic Form Devine) from Srimad Bhagawad Gita.

Week 7

Upanisad

Swamiji continued the teaching further this week. For the person lost in wilderness a wise man who has the sight can indicate the guideposts that he has to follow to get back home. Similarly a Guru who has experienced the life can show the path to Reality. It is a long way. The way is

Acharya, the Guru. Swamiji explained what is meant by Kramas. The Prarabdha Karma has to be completely removed, so also the Sanchita and Agami Karmas will have to be resolved in knowledge. Then there is no bondage. The truth is attained. What is the difference between the knowledge of one who is in deep sleep or died and the one who has no bondage? For all the senses, the mind, the prana and the breathe are withdrawn. Soul is withdrawn but the desire to come back lingers in those that are in sleep or died. In the case of a liberated person, he has transcended all desires, there is no coming back. Jivanmukti is liberation while living. It is Self-discovery. The Jivanmukta knows what he is; the others do not know it.

Gita

Swamiji continued teaching Chapter 11 this week. Arjuna urges Bhagwan Sri Krishna to show his Cosmic Devine Form. Bhagawan grants him this wish. Bhagawan shows Arjuna how He has already destroyed all enemies of Arjuna. All Arjuna has to do is to fight the war. He has to be a Nimittamatra.

This is consistent with Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna throughout the Gita, to stand up and fight. It was also the purpose of Sri Krishna's Avatara to destroy the evil on this earth. It brings out one of the most profound messages of Gita that a person is not the doer; it is Iswara who does everything.

There are 55 verses in this chapter. Swamiji completed 33 verses. The remaining of Chapter 11 is scheduled for the next year's course.

This is the end of Swamiji's teaching of the Seven Week Vedanta course for the year 2013.

Deepawali was celebrated at the Gurukulam. Approximately 300 adults and children of all ages took part in the function. Swami Tattvavidanandji addressed the gathering. Priests Sri Ravichandran and Sri Ganesan performed the Lakshmi and Kubera Puja. Delicious Deepavali dinner was served at the Gurukulam dining hall. Fireworks followed. The children especially enjoyed the occasion.

Summary of Swamiji's Deepavali address:

The Universe is a display of Energy and the Energy is a symbol of God. Fire is the most visible symbol of God. The Rishis visualized this. We chant the five verses from Devi Mahapurana. Ambika is the mother. Seek her blessing. The all auspicious will happen in your life. All Devatas and Rishis worship Ambika. She is the power of Parmatma. Devata is the Natural force. The prayer is to the mother to protect the Universe from fear. Mother is wealth. Mother appears on one side as wealth of rich people and on the other side as poverty. She is the wisdom and scholarship of wise and shradha of Bhaktas. Laxmi and Gauri are praised in these verses.

The verses help to open up things. People are in need, fear, and are insecure. These mantras dispose of fear. You are the one who removes fear and poverty. So help us.

Swamini Srividyanandaji comments on the play presented by the students:

Swamini Srividyanandaji directed the play based on Swami Vidittatvanandaji's teaching in the class. Following are her comments:

"We have heard that once upon a time, long time ago, when the study of the Vedas was the watch word, great discussions would

have taken place among the learned from different schools of thoughts and each one would try to establish his or her theory as the truth. On those lines, a group of students, of the 7-Week Vedanta Course conducted by Sri Swami Tattvavidananadaji at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam Saylorsburg, enacted rishi Uddhalaka's elucidation of the mahavakya tattvamasi to Svetaketu. Class room Material from Chhandogyaopanisad (6:2:1, 12) consisting of the purvapaksasiddhanta vada was scripted in a dialog form and the students, dressed in costumes of yester years as Rishi Uddhalaka, Svetaketu and the three schools of thought, presented the discussion. The Vaisesikas thesis that name and form alone are real, Sunyavadis hypothesis that everything is sunyam and Mimamsakas sabda sakti and vakya pramana issues were taken up for deliberation. With the help of various illustrations and metaphors the Adaivatis negated each one of the conjectures of the purvapaksis as untenable. The acharyas and the audience appreciated the lively one hour debate."

Swami Aksharananda from Guyana once visited Swami Tattvavidananada's class in progress. He told the students about his work in Guyana and expressed a hope to start some classes in collaboration with Arsh Vidya Gurukulam.

Events during the course:

October 12,
Saraswati Puja

October 13,
Vijayadasami

October 15
Mandala Puja

October 16, November 1 and 14
Pradosa Pujas

October 18 and November 15
Revati Star Ritual

November 2

Deepavali. Mahalaksmi and Kubera Puja.

Suddhatmaji conducted the chanting classes during the camp. Mantras were taken from Sri Rudraprasnah, Ayushyasuktam, Shanti Mantras and the Purusottamayoga. Priests Sri Ravichandran and Sri Ganesan performed several Pujas during the camp as well as the regular Pujas at the temple. Lance Daniels provided rides to airports and other destinations for the incoming and outgoing students during the seven weeks.

The Teachers, Suddhatmaji, the Gurukulam staff and the volunteers worked hard during the camp.

This course was attended by the students who attend these courses year after year after year. They are serious students of Vedanta. Their expectations are high. In Swami Tattvavidananadaji we have a scholar and a teacher whose knowledge of Vedanta and love for teaching is a blessing for the students. He is compassionate and understanding teacher. "Are you with me?", "Do you get it?" are his frequent questions to us the students. Occasional appropriate stories and some jokes make his teaching more interesting. The students have great respect and love for him. Many have expressed this by saying "One like him comes rarely in a lifetime." It is so. Indeed this Swamiji lives what he teaches.

Reported by Arvind Bagal

Thanksgiving Vedanta Retreat 2013 at Saylorsburg Gurukulam



"People roam all around in search of a shrine or river that could purify them. But they do not realize that the greatest shrine of all is Kasi shining in the heart as Atman."

Swami Tattvavidanananda Sarawati

This camp traditionally is for families to get together at the Ashram over the Thanksgiving week end. 175 adults and 90 children from ages 6 to 13 and above attended the camp. On November 28th, registration was completed during the day. Orientation was done in the evening by Suddhatmaji. He explained the course schedule and gave information regarding the facilities at the Gurukulam. It is especially a nice time of the year for the children. Accordingly, the children had many activities planned for them during their stay at the Gurukulam. The children were grouped according to their ages as the Juniors group 6 to 9, the Seniors group 10 to 13 and the Teens group 13 and above. Each group had its own activities such as Vedic chanting, yoga, Sanskrit study, drama practice, arts and crafts, Vedic Heritage, aarati and camp fires administered by the staff and the volunteers. Lance Daniels, Malathi Aunty, Usha Aunty, Savithri Aunty



and Divya participated in the children's programs.

For the adults, Swamiji Tattvavidananandaji conducted classes in meditation. Suddhatmaji taught chanting and Mrs. Chaya Rajaram conducted Yoga classes.

Swamiji had selected verses on OM from the Kathopanisad, the Bhagavad Gita, the Mandukyopanisad and the Mandukya Karika. Swamiji explained the importance of OM in Vedanta and its meaning. OM is the Cosmic sound. The three aspects of the mind namely the physical, the psychological and the spiritual are fragmented. They





should be united. A calm and quite mind is necessary for healthy living. OM is silence and sound. Mind resolves in the silence, Om is the link between a devotee and God. In chanting OM the Ahankara (ego) is surrendered and it is sacrificed in Atmadyana. There are several mantras which start with OM. Om connects the individual to prana (breathe). It is Soham. 'So' is in inhale and 'ham' is in exhale.

At the end of every lecture Swamiji conducted a small meditation on OM. It was very useful.

On November 30th under the direction of Savthriji the children presented a cultural program. The Junior students sang a song of Lord Ganesa and enacted a play 'Gopal Bhaiya'. The senior students performed a beautiful Lezim Folk Dance in colorful costumes. This is a very popular dance in the State of Maharashtra. They also presented a play 'Caring and Sharing'. The Teen students presented a Fashion Show and a play 'Yaksha Prashna'. The program concluded with a song 'Thank you Amma' performed by all the students.

The kitchen staff worked hard to accommodate the needs of this big gathering. The priests Sri Ganesan and Sri Ravichandran performed the pujas regularly and on time. Suddhatmaji, the staff and the volunteers worked hard during the camp to make it a success.

Thanks giving camps are fun and entertainment for all. The children enjoyed it. The adults learned the meditating with OM. They also learned some good Yoga practices and chanting. It was a very nice camp. The camp ended on December 1, 2013

Reported by Arvind Bagal

Gṛhe Gītā Adhyayan



Anugraha bhaashanam by Pujya Swamiji at the release function on 19/12/2013 at Ahmedabad appreciating Dr. Anil Patwardhan for his good work on bringing out Bhagavad Gita Home Study course in Marathi – translation from the Bhagavad Gita home study in English authored by Pujya Swamiji and published by Arsha Vidya Research and Publication Trust, Chennai.



It is a great dedicated work for many years – 9 volumes, Gita Home Study. Gita home study in English is in nine volumes and to translate all of them, it takes lot of insight, one has to understand what is going on, people say I speak simple language, I do not, I speak clear language, I do not speak simple language. Therefore it takes some understanding of language also. Ubhaya bhaasha praveenah. One has to be very good in English, one has to be very good

in Marathi, not enough. One has to understand what is going on. Bhagavan's grace is necessary. All marathi saints' grace is necessary. I congratulate him for his contribution, it is a great contribution, for generations to come. Somebody will read the book, lying in some library and get enlightened, possible. I am very proud of his contribution to the world of seekers.

Swami Sudeerananda's Camp at AVG



Swami Sudeerananda conducted Spiritual Camp at AVG, Anaikatti from Nov 24, 2013 to Nov 30, 2013. Swami Sudeerananda taught Vedanta texts Sadhana Panchakam and selected verses from Viveka Chudamani. He also conducted guided meditation and sat sangh. Smt Ponmani Avinashilingam and Sri Balakrishnan conducted yoga classes during the camp. Brahmacharini Mahalakshmi conducted chanting classes.

INAUGURATION BY PUJYA SWAMIJI AND HIS ANUGRAHA BHASANAM:

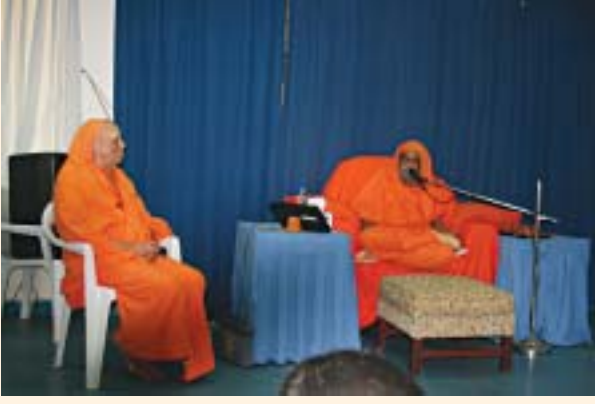
Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswathi inaugurated the camp. He told that Sadhana Panchakam written by Sri Adi Sankara in 5 slokas, explains the steps to be taken to get Atma jnana. Ishwara is the maker of the jagat and is also manifest as the material cause of the jagat. All that is here is Ishwara. Veda should be chanted daily.

Vaidika life style should be followed. Human life is a mixture of punya and papa. To earn punya one should do ishta and purta karmas. Ishta karma is doing daily puja and chanting the holy name of Ishwara. Purta karma is doing social service required by the society. AIM for Seva is doing purta karma. When one does enough punya, he will develop interest in atma jnana.

The following is the summary of the classes by Swami Sudeerananda.

SADHANA PANCHAKAM:

One should do one's daily duties diligently. One should dedicate actions as offering to Ishwara. One should cultivate good qualities and endure opposites like heat and cold. One should take only minimum food for sustenance of the body; relinquish worldly enjoyments as they bring pain



ultimately and live life with sat sangha. One should worship a Sat Guru and learn the truth of the Upanishads from him. One should contemplate in solitude on the teachings of the Upanishads to assimilate the truth that atma is Ishwara and Ishwara manifests as the jagat.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI:

This prakarna grantha written by Adi Sankara tells that there are three rare things: getting birth as a human, getting desire for moksha and getting a Sat Guru to teach. One should get the required four-fold qualification for gaining moksha. Atma jnana is the only means for moksha. When one approaches a Guru with

reverence, the Guru teaches the maha vakya "Tat Tvam Asi". Again when all the doubts are dispelled by the Guru, one understands the meaning of tat pada and tvam pada and also the equation that tvam is tat.

CONCLUDING SESSION:

On the last day of the camp, participants spoke their experiences. They said that they experienced a calm mind in the wonderful ambience and received the spiritual teaching. They thanked Pujya Swamiji and Swami Sudeerananda for arranging the camp and for their spiritual teachings and blessings.

Report by N. Avinashilingam



Spiritual Message for Chartered Accountants



The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Coimbatore Branch, arranged a special talk by Sri S.N. Ramachandran, who had recently completed the long term Vedanta course at AVG, Anaikatti on 'Spiritual Message for Chartered Accountants' on November 21, 2013. The talk was well attended.

AM I THIS BODY?

Sri Ramachandran in his talk told that being spiritual means relating to one's own self which is otherwise known as atma. There is a universal quest to ascertain "Am I this gross physical body or something different from it?"

Vedanta says that intrinsic nature of human being is Brahman. Chandogya Upanishad declare the well-known equation 'Tat Tvam Asi'. All other Upanishads not only declare the same message that svaroop of jivatma is Paramatma are one, but also systematically reveal how this knowledge of oneness of jivaatma and paramatma can be cognized.

TWO DIFFERENT LIFE STYLES:

Vedas prescribe two different life styles to gain atma jnana. One life style is in form of renunciation, that is, opting life style of being a Sannyasi and the other life style is in form of karma yoga for grahasta. Sannyasa life style means giving up all karma

and pursuing atma jnana exclusively. Karma yoga is doing one's own svakarma (duty) with proper attitude.

KARMA YOGA:

One needs to perform action to the best of one's own ability, but when the result comes; it is to be accepted as prasada from Ishwara. This is called Prasada Budhi. It is because whatever may be the result, it is within the order of Ishwara. This prasada attitude neutralizes possibility of reaction, when result is not pleasant. This is a great, fundamental stress reliever. No other stress relieving methods – be it meditation, yoga or pranayama—can match with this fundamental stress reliever.

ISHWARA IS THE MAKER AND THE MATERIAL CAUSE:

When we see the macrocosm or the microcosm, we understand that everything in the world is intelligently put together. We can logically understand that these are intelligently put together by an intelligent principle and that the raw material cannot come from outside. The same intelligent principle or Ishvara is the maker as well as the material cause. All that is here is Ishwara.

DHARMA:

Samanya dharma is what I do not want others to do to me, I do not do the same to others. Vishesha dharma is praying, doing one's duty, taking care of the elders, family members, society, environment, etc. Bringing in Ishwara in every aspect of one's life is karma yoga. Attitude of Karma yoga helps to acquire the required preparedness to live a spiritual life based on dharma and uphold ethics in all dealings.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

Essence of the Upanishads

Pujya Swamiji's Talks
From 25th to 28th of November 2013
At Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra
Saraswathi Auditorium, 7 Mumbai -830 pm



In what words can we praise a person who gives all of himself to everyone who comes into contact with him. A love is so rare and unconditional that every person he meets feels at home.

He gives all without any personal reward or claim. This is Holiness Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati! He accommodates us all with equanimity, which is truly

remarkable. Being with him we forget our troubles and are secure in joy knowing his blessings are with us!

His energy levels remain astonishing for all that he endures and his clarity of thought and knowledge is crystal itself.

The program organised by Shribanta and Nilofer Giri along with the help of donors, volunteers and Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha, was not just a public talk by Pujya Swamiji, but was indeed a Vedanta class for all.

Spanning over four days leaving his audiences spell bound and reflective we sat on edge as Pujya Swamiji revealed the essence of the Upanishads. With succinctness and simplicity of expression, we were left in awe at the enormity of the revelation.

The word or title Upanishad reflects the subject matter. If a book is titled Mathematics you don't expect to read literature but Math. Similarly the Upanishads reflect the subject matter of self-knowledge for they destroy the false notions we have about ourselves.

The Upanishads are mainly ten in number and listed them. They are further divided into two groups: the Mantropanishads and the Brahmanopanishads. The Mantropanishads contain mantras or hymns and mahavakyas that explain the entirety of the Vedic vision in one word or one verse!

‘What is Brahman? Brahman is the cause of this entire world you are the very content of everything. You are the whole. This is the meaning of the word Upanishad and the book is also called Upanishad.’

The Upanishads are the only means of knowledge or pramana available to us to know the Self. Why should we know the Self? As a self-conscious being we are dissatisfied, and by knowing the Self we shed all sadness and dissatisfaction.

The Veda says the one who knows the self gains the ultimate! The Upanishad does not establish that you exist but unfolds what you are in reality.

Upa is your self really. Ni -Nischaya-arthakaha, Upa-ni means self-knowledge, very well ascertained self-knowledge (Upa-ni).

What does it do- Shitili karoti, it puts an end to this life of becoming,

struggling, seeking, being cheated and dissatisfied. Knowing the Self, you are the very meaning of satisfaction. Satisfaction is centred on you. You are the meaning of satisfaction. Upanishad, this life of becoming it puts an end to, in other



words, it makes you discover you are Brahman.’

The word is (actually) Upanishat becomes Upanishad. Sad dhatu visharati, shitili karoti, causes disintegration to all that is found wanting centred on you. That we are complete is contrary to our experience and our opinions, therefore it is some thing to be known, that the contrary is true.

The problem of being a samsari is a pendular swing from happiness to sadness and vice versa.

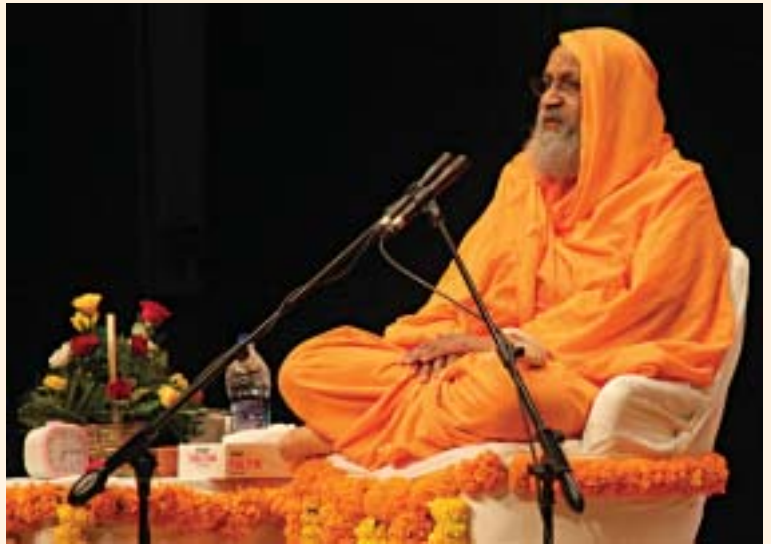
Lack of self-knowledge is the basic problem of the human being and this is a spiritual problem. ‘Self-acceptance is what we are seeking. Everybody is seeking and wants to be different. If anybody wants the set up

to be different what you really want is yourself to be different not the set up.'

You are the one that cannot be bettered. You are the ultimate end of everything you are the content of everything. You are the cause of everything. You are limitless. You might doubt how can you be limitless. On the other hand, how can there be limitless without you!

The mahavakya stated in the Brahmananda Valli of the Taittiriya Upanishad that says 'the knower of Brahman is Brahman and this is the ultimate gain. What is Brahman?'

Satyam jnanam anantam Brahma'. As though an equation where two unequal sides mean the same thing such as $(4+4) = (20-12)$. One part of the equation has the same number repeated twice and has a plus



sign whereas the other side has two different numbers with a minus sign yet both equal the same value. To explain that in spite of the apparent differences that they are the same- is called teaching!

That is what the Veda reveals that though you feel different and limited when you are in fact the whole!

This knowledge is engrained in our culture. You only have to ask an elder were is Bhagavan and the reply invariably is all that you see is Bhagavan - All that is here is Bhagavan. This is why India is punya bhoomi.

There is only one source of knowledge and that is you. Quoting Sankara, "being a conscious being there are only two things one is 'I' and the other is 'This'." What you objectify is not you then what are you? The one who objectifies using the senses to presume, infer and illustrate.

Quoting the Keno Upanishad that, 'I objectify my sense organs I am the eye of the eye the ear of the ear and through these sense organs I perceive and learn.' To know is a conscious phenomenon and unlike all activities there is no will involved. You open your eyes you see. Knowing is a peculiar action, as all action requires will except knowing. All the senses involve consciousness, if there is seeing there is form consciousness, hearing there is sound consciousness, for everything there is consciousness. Even galaxies and black holes are within consciousness and objects of consciousness. Who is the one who is conscious it is 'I'. 'It is therefore very obvious that the meaning of the word 'I' is

nothing but jnanam consciousness, jnaptih. Any conclusion about you is a conclusion based upon what you objectify.'

The verse says the one who knows Brahman gains the most. The verse further defines Brahman as satyam jnanam anantam brahma. You are existence and everything that exists depends upon you to exist, you are all knowledge and all the laws of the universe come from you and you are limitless. Yet, you see yourself as a wanting being inadequate in shape form and content. It is an error born of ignorance a mistake for if you are consciousness what separates, a thought from thought consciousness, or an object from object consciousness?

There is no distance, no space separation no time separation in fact both space and time and everything contained in them is you, consciousness.

This is this and I is I and even though this is the truth the wonder is that there is a mix up! The body mind sense complex is construed to be the meaning of the word I and I is presented to be and is assumed to be the body mind sense complex. Therefore there is samsara that is why the Upanishad corrects this...'

'Do you exist or not?' Do you exist because of inference so do you exist because you are married? 'The argument is, 'If, I don't exist, nobody will marry me! That I am married therefore I must exist. I say before marriage you existed, after marriage (jokingly) I don't know. Before marriage you did exist it's not because you are married that you exist. You exist without a means of knowledge. I AM!'

You are evident to yourself you are self-evident and the Sastra tells us that Brahman is self-evident and is Atma!

‘It is an astounding reality that you are the only self-evident being’. ‘Vedanta is not necessary to prove your existence there is Vedanta because you are there as a self-evident being you can listen to that.

Vedanta is a means of knowledge not to prove that you are conscious being but to say that you are the cause of this entire world, Brahman and this is not possible for you to know because you are already the knower through the means of knowledge and these means of knowledge are only five in number and they are meant to objectify.’

Using a prakriya or paradigm to illustrate that Brahman is satyam jnanam anantam everything else you objectify is nothing but name and form and is therefore mithya for it is neither satyam being true (independent) nor anrutam being false nor tuccham being non-existent. Using these three words any object is dependent on its material as a clay pot is. The weight of the pot is the weight of the clay. The molecular structure of the pot is that of clay. Without clay the pot cannot exist. So too the universe the entire jagat cannot exist without Brahman. The ‘is’ in everything is Brahman and is satyam jnanam anantam for they are all objects of consciousness.

Even time, when you think of the past it is only in the present. There is only present, even when you think of the future you think of it in the present. Really speaking there is no past nor is there a future as everything unfolds in the present alone.

There is no measurement for the present for it is consciousness. Time disappears consciousness is, length of time consciousness is, that consciousness is satyam - the content of time and space.’

On the last day the relationship between us the world and Isvara is revealed! Every object is mithya dependent upon consciousness. The material of a physical object is based on its particle content and the particle content is ultimately conceptual based upon knowledge. The entire jagat being name and form is mithya dependant upon knowledge jnanam to exist satyam and that knowledge or jnanam is Brahman and it is limitless anantam.

‘Jagat mithya brahma satyam is all the way’. This means that Brahman is sarvajna or all knowing and that is what we say is Isvara.

That I am lonely sad wanting inadequate is a reality to me and for that reason every one is looking for a connection. We all want to be connected. To resolve this false sense of wanting we have to ‘bring’ Isvara into our lives by understanding that the entire universe or jagat is governed by knowledge or order (niyati).

When you sit you do not fly like a ball of fluffy cotton is order. Galaxies and anything physical is governed by a physical order. Water finds its own level for example is order. The world is connected to Isvara through a physical order. All living beings are connected through a biological order. All life or prana is governed by a physiological order. Where there is an order

there can be a disturbance within an order. Our emotions too are governed by a psychological order and our feelings including anger and loneliness dejection are a part of it.

So when are we disconnected from Isvara? The infallible is Isvara. 'If a, confusion takes place that is an order, that is psychological order. This is where your understanding of Isvara manifesting in the form of order, a psychological order, validates you.' All our pain and dissatisfaction has a background and we have to 'Isvarize' our emotions for there is always a connection we are never away from Isvara.

The fact that we have free will requires two critical orders to govern our actions. One is dharma and the other is karma. One value is enough to determine dharma ahimsa paramo dharma. Bhagavan is manifest as order in the form of dharma. Just, as I don't want to get hurt or be cheated others to don't want to be either. One value encompasses it all, ahimsa.

On the one side is the order of dharma and on the other side is the order of karma, punya and papa, when you go against dharma you rub the order therefore you get papa which translates itself into unpleasant

situations. If you go along with dharma and do things, which you want others to do to you, reaching out then you earn punya.

The order of karma based upon the order of dharma all of these are Isvara's order. And when you say Isvara is all-pervasive that is because of satyam jnanam anantam brahma. Without satyam jnanam anantam brahma there is no all-pervasiveness there is no total manifestation because brahma is satyam jnanam anantam (and) sarvajnabrahma is manifest in the form of jagat, the critical order of dharma and karma and the psychological order - this is Isvara. I am an individual not alienated from Isvara the total.

Don't say I want to connect and think of Isvara..... I want to always remember Isvara

Instead, try to be away from Isvara.... contemplate whether you can be away from Isvara, try to be away from Isvara (you cannot be because) at any level at every level you are connected.

You are connected you are satyam jnanam anantam brahma and therefore you are always connected'.

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A Well Wisher

“Let Us Be A Light Unto Ourselves...”

Note prepared by Swami Jyotirmayananda for the conclusion-day of the Seven-Week Residential Vedanta Course (October 8 - November 24, 2013), conducted by Swami Tattvavidananda, a learned disciple of Swami Dayananda Sarasvati and an Acharya at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, PA, U.S.A.

As an ardent student of ‘Vivekananda Literature’, having had the privilege of attending Swami Tattvavidanandaji’s Vedanta Course for a couple of years at the Gurukulam, I am glad to present some of my thoughts before you.

Swami Vivekananda, who made history in Chicago 120 years ago, once said that Science and Spirituality should shake hands. It is indeed heartening to note that his wish seems to be gradually getting fulfilled. As we all know, Swami TV (as he is popularly known amongst his Vedanta students), in the course of his Vedanta class, does not miss an opportunity to place before us the outcome of various modern researches and developments in the fields of science and psychology vis-à-vis the Indian spiritual lore, and the Vedic wisdom in particular. It is evident that the modern science, psychology, as also the biology are increasingly tending to confirm the exalted spiritual experience of the ancient saints and sages of India, so much so we are now in a position to understand how spirituality

(*adhyatma-vidya*) takes a quantum leap into the realm of the Unknown and the Unknowable, while the science seems to have been caught up in a vicious circle, faltering under the weight of the known.

Besides being a learned, traditional teacher of Vedantic lore, blessed by Pujya Swami Dayanandaji, Swami TV is also endowed with a clear understanding of the historical perspective of how Swami Vivekananda and his life and times have marked a significant turning point in the annals of the Indian history. As his students know, Swami TV’s Vedanta class is often interspersed with references to Swami Vivekananda and his significant utterances in the realms of science and spirituality. It clearly reflects on Swami TV’s admiration of and love for Swami Vivekananda, and many a time, his scintillating expositions during the Vedanta class, have invariably reminded me of the “Inspired Talks” of Swami Vivekananda at the ‘Thousand Island Park’ in the U.S. To my mind Swami TV is the only disciple of Pujya Swamiji

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who is an ardent votary of Swami Vivekananda and his teachings, having been fired with the Advaitic zeal and wisdom of Vivekananda, so much so at times I have even felt that if Vivekananda were to pay an unexpected visit to the Gurukulam and attend Swami TV's Vedanta class, he would feel immensely happy that what he envisioned more than a century ago is gradually getting unfolded. As Swami Vivekananda exhorted long ago, "Work out the salvation of this land and the whole world, each of you thinking that the entire burden is on your shoulders. Carry the life and light of the Vedanta to every door, and rouse up the divinity that is hidden within every soul. Then, whatever may be the measure of your success, you will have the satisfaction that you have lived and died for a great cause. In the success of this cause, however brought about, is centered the salvation of humanity here and hereafter."

Needless to say that Swami TV's scriptural expositions, incisive and didactic as they are, reflect on the depth of his understanding, erudition, command over the 2

Sanskrit language, and above all, his knack of presenting the intricate subject matter with all possible clarity and certainty, backed by his unassuming nature, childlike simplicity, his inimitable sense of humour and didactic anecdotes, is a great blessing to the students of Vedanta and the spiritual aspirants. Thus, in Swami TV himself do we find a happy blend of Science and Spirituality — both going together hand-in-hand. We see, quite often, in the course of

his expositions, he invariably supports and reinforces the *adhyatma-vidya* with the latest scientific evidences and research analyses. And, above all, his uncompromising insistence on the adherence to the basic disciplines of the Vedanta like *viveka* and *vairagya*, and the paramount need for freedom from all psychological dependence and total negation of all that is temporal (*mithya*) – the habitual human addiction to names and forms (*naama-rupa buddhi*), even as one endeavours to lead a normal and simple life of devotion and dedication, for the attainment of the summum bonum of human life (*atma-jnana*).

As Swami TV loves to put it, let us, the students of Vedanta, be a light unto ourselves and thereby to the world at large. In other words, may we all try our best, with all our sincerity, to live up to the lofty teachings of the Vedanta in our day-to-day life and be blessed thereby.

Finally, I should not fail to mention here as to how Swami Vivekananda brought me in contact with Pujya Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, in as much as we together participated in Washington, in a program (two decades ago) celebrating the centenary of Swami Vivekananda's appearance at the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893. While Pujya Swamiji spoke eloquently on the occasion, I had the rare privilege of paying my reverential Homage to Swami Vivekananda, the Great Hindu Monk of India. Later, in the year 2000, when Pujya Swamiji invited me to participate in the 'UN Millennium Peace Summit' at New York, I also had the unique privilege of visiting the AVG, (along with the other monastic

delegates to the Summit from India), where we were all formally honoured by Pujya Swamiji himself. Since then, by the Divine Grace, I have been able to visit abroad, ever year, to attend various programs and conferences in the US. I have also been able to attend annually, the AVG anniversary celebrations and other programs at the AVG, and every time Pujya Swamiji and the AVG have been very kind during my visit and stay here. Whatever little knowledge of Vedanta I have gained is solely due to my participation, from time to time, in the lecture programs and the Vedanta classes conducted by Pujya Swamiji and his senior disciples who are the Acharyas at the AVG. I feel thrilled when I visualize in my mind how overjoyed Swami Vivekananda would have been if he were to visit Pujya Swamiji's Gurukulam, to see the great work done here for more than a quarter of a century, in the noble cause of disseminating

the Vedic Knowledge in particular, and in the service of the Hindu Dharma and the Samaj, in general! Let the lines from Pujya Swamiji's 'Benediction' to my book on Vivekananda (released by Pujya Swamiji last year) speak for itself: "Swami Vivekananda is looked upon by an informed Indian as a person who enshrined in himself all that is true and noble of the spiritual heritage of Bharath. His vision to make everyone see the beauty of oneness, love and harmony, backed by his tireless efforts to actualize it, is getting unfolded all over the world not only through the Mission and Order he founded but also through various other individuals and institutions who owe to Swamiji's vision for their inspiration..." – significant lines indeed, revealing the source of inspiration behind the great work done by Pujya Swamiji himself as also the AVG founded by him.

Action can produce likes and dislikes only if the result is looked upon as a success or failure. When the result is looked upon as a function of the invariable laws of action or if it is looked upon as prasada from the Lord, the reaction of success and failure is avoided. The mind is calm and tranquil in spite of apparent successes and failures and no new likes and dislikes are created. The existing likes and dislikes are created. The existing likes and dislikes will no doubt create desires and produce actions but creation of new likes and dislikes are avoided. The vicious chain of action-success/failure-likes/dislikes-desire-action is broken. With the attitude of prasada buddhi, or karma yoga with respect to the result, an action which is born of likes and dislikes becomes the means of eliminating the very likes and dislikes. The mind free from the reactions of success and failure is free from the agitations of elation and depression. Such a mind is a contemplative mind. It can evaluate the results and learn.

Pujya Swamiji

**"Pujya Swamiji released the book
"Sadhana and Sadhya"
on December 16, 2013
at the Amrita Mahotsava function at Ahmedabad"**

