

## Valedictory function

Valedictory function of the two years and three months Vedanta Course was conducted at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti, Coimbatore on 18th March 2022 at 10 AM. Swami Sakshatkritanandaji, Chief Acharya, Arsha Vidya Pitham, Rishikesh was the Chief Guest of the occasion. The Students and participants of the course gathered earlier at Guru Tirtha with all happiness to celebrate the function and show their gratitude to the gurukulam and the Chief Acharyaji who had conducted the course with complete dedication. The function started with the Guru Paduka puja and all walked towards the lecture hall along with the teachers and Swamijis. Shreeparna a participant of the course commenced the program with prayer and the welcome address.

The Chairman of Shruti Seva Trust, Shantaramji honoured Swami Sadatmanandaji and Swami Jagadatmanandaji honoured the Chairman. As an opening remark in his talk Shantaramji thanked and greeted all supporters, well-wishers and volunteers who made this course as a great success. He remembered the words of Pujya Swamiji before he left to United States. "We are glad that everything is moving as per the words of Pujya Swamiji. Two long term courses in Vedanta have been completed successfully. We thank Acharyaji on behalf of the Board of Trustees."

Swami Sadatmanandaji honoured Swami Sakshatkritanandaji and students honoured the teachers with garlands and shawls followed by the narration of the three levels Sanskrit syllabus, Shiv Tiwari and Emi in English and Sai Krishna in Sanskrit. Keiko described the Vedanta syllabus.

Students presented their feed backs. Malini remembered her teacher's advise that this opportunity to join the course is a single opportunity in life and after the completion of the course she had realized the truth behind that statement. Vinay shared his beautiful memories which he had during his stay at gurukulam and confirmed that the take away message from the course is all about Values and he acknowledged the book Value of Values by Pujya Swamiji. Chitra said that before coming to gurukulam Sanskrit was a challenge to her and after the course and with hard work Sanskrit has become easy and possible and she thanked her Sanskrit teachers. She also confirmed that this course was a life changing experience. Karan while sharing his views thanked all the 67 subscribers of the online classes. He also thanked Swami Veditatmanandaji and Swami Sakshatji for their special classed during the course on Mandukya Upanishad and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. He also expressed his gratitude to Acharyaji. Later Swami Veditatmanandaji joined

the function through online. Swamiji appreciated Acharyaji for his clarity in imparting the knowledge. He advised the students that our commitment should be only for the process and we need not judge about the accomplishment. Swamiji blessed the students for Ishwara-Kripa, guru-Kripa, Shastra-Kripa and Atma-Kripa and all success.

Later Swamini Saradanandaji and Swamini Vedarthanandaji chanted Vedic chanting from Taitriyopanishad. Sri S. N Ramachandranji said that the students have been fed with all contents of knowledge and later they have to recall everything and contemplate for the assimilation of the truth that they have learned like the cow eats the grass and later it chews again. Swami Jagadaatmananda thanked Acharyaji for his relentless and dedicated teaching and also thanked Swami Sakshatji for being a guide as a beacon light during all the occasions.

**Swami Sadatmanandaji greeted all the students and blessed with words of grace and the talk is as follows:**

My pranams to Pujya Swamiji, my Pranams to Swami Sakshaaktji who granted my request very easily and came to bless all of us, my namaskarams to all my co-teachers, all swamijis and swaminijis, all devotees, well-wishers , and my dear students.

First of all I express my gratitude to Shri Jnana Ganapathi, shree Dakshinamurthy, shri Narmadeshwara, shree Jnaneswari, and Shree Subramanya swami. All the devataas blessed us to complete this course. And we had the blessings of Pujya Swamiji in all our efforts. We had the blessings of swami Veditatmanandaji in the form of teaching us Maanudukya upanishad with bhashyam, and whenever I requested him for something , he granted my request. Even for the message of blessings we heard today, when I requested, he agreed without any fuss. So I am grateful to him. Swami Shaakshaatji of course, has been a source of inspiration and help, and Swami Jagadaatmanandaji has been a great asset to this Gurukulam, a great help: he is playing the role of a teacher, trustee and advisor, a triple role, and he is playing it very well. Swami Jagadaatmanadji really, really helped in so many ways. And of course I thank swami Vishvaatmanadji, a scholar and saintly person, a highly dispassionate one with very simple life. He agreed to teach Sanskrit here, and did it well. Sharanji with his dynamism, took care of many course related activities, as a course coordinator and he taught Sanskrit and also chanting, when swamini amma had some difficulties coming over here. I thank Swamini ammas who helped us in teaching chanting and temple activities, and Ramchandranji, also, gave his service as a Sanskrit teacher and in any other manner that he could help us, he did. So I thank him. All trustees were very co-operative. Management staff also helped

me. The present and past manager, our GM, supervisor, our Ramchandranji and all kitchen staff and other employees have contributed for the successful completion of the course. So I thank them all. And also to all the donors and the well-wishers I thank for their contribution.

I congratulate all the students for completing this course. As Swamiji said I am well known as a task master. So it must have been a difficult job to complete this 2 year course and you did it. It shows your commitment to study, your love for shastra, your mumukshutva. Without that you could not have completed this course, but you did it and so I congratulate all of you.

Even though I have been teaching for two years , or more, and still there is always something to share in the last moments. So I will share a few thoughts.

First of all how does one look upon the completion of the course as a student? You have enough reasons to feel blessed that you could complete the course. As a student our attitude can be of feeling blessed and gratitude to the parampara. There is no basis for having any arrogance, but definitely there is basis for feeling blessed.

As it is advised in shastra, *svaadhyayaprapanacaabhyamnapramaditavyam*. Study and teaching, one should not be careless about . First, every day some study of shastra should be done. We may read some Upanishad , a chapter of Kathopanishad, or small ones like Kaivalya upanishad or a chapter of Bhagavad Gita. Let there be some study of shastra, by way of reading a book or listening to the recording, in whatever manner possible but important thing is to remain in touch with shastra. Secondly, let there be some routine of prayers. Some japa, and if possible some meditation, even for 15 or 20 minutes. If possible let this meditation be done in the morning and evening both. Sandhya vandana also can become one form of prayer. Japa, or chanting stotras like Dakshina-murthystotra etc, or some prayerful activity is very useful. And Pujya Swamiji suggested while giving a valedictory talk, that we can separately write down the shlokas related to satvaguna, or values, and read them repeatedly. Aamanitvamadambitvam, or advaishtA-sarvabhutanaam , which are laskhanas of a wise person, and sAdhana for sAdhakas. We can remember them and imbibe them.

One more thing is that based on financial conditions, social conditions, physical conditions or even emotional conditions, we do not make judgments about ourselves. I do not decide who I am based on my feelings that the mind has. Feelings are not pramaanam to decide who I am. Shastra is pramaanam. Even if there is a tendency to judge immedi-

ately , we tell ourselves that feelings are not pramanam to decide who I am. Vedanto naama Upanishad pramaanam. Otherwise tendency to judge is a very natural and unless we pay attention it continues . So without any judgment, we appreciate ourselves as we are. Paaramartika drshtya, aham saccidaananda. And even vyaavahaarika drshtya you have reasons to feel “I am blessed”. You are really blessed. You have the blessings of Acaryas of this Gurukulam, you have the blessings of all the Acarayas of the parampara , you have been in this place, and have the blessings of Pujya Swamiji. You have earned a lot of grace by going to the temple. Therefore you have all reasons to feel “I am blessed’. There cannot be a perfect setup for anyone anytime. Perfection is not the aim, as perfection at anatma level is not possible nor required. We can bring in the drshti from the paramarthasatya that “I am poornah, or empirically speaking “ blessed I am , dhanyah aham, anugriheetah aham”. That drishti we can bring again and again. As Swamini amma, swami Veditatmanandaji and all other Acaryas said, you are blessed and invoke this fact in your mind that you are blessed.

Let there be gratitude to this Guru parampara, represented by various institutes such as arsha vidya gurukulam. We have received a lot. So let us have and express our gratitude to any institute representing guru parampara. Let there be a thought “what can I do to serve this parampara from which I have received a lot”. I was very happy to read the feedback forms of 2 people, who have asked what they can do to serve the Gurukulam. We have of course asked what we can do , but I was happy to see that 2 students have asked. I don’t say it should be this gurukulam alone. In any manner let there be the attitude of being a contributor, by serving the parampara, any gurukulam. In whatever manner we can serve this parampara to continue and to spread , we do. Pujya Swamiji used to say gratitude is a sign of maturity. Deliberately entertaining the attitude of gratitude brings maturity and makes you a bigger person. When you contribute you become a bigger person. You may give you time, resources or knowledge, in whatever manner you can serve the guru parampara , it would be a growing experience for you. It is not to oblige the parampara but to oneself. The more one has this attitude of gratitude and being a devoted contributor, the more one grows in one’s life. As I said, you are blessed, and remember my blessings are there with you and also the blessings of all gurus of the parampara. blessings of Pujya Swamiji and the grace of the Lord dakshinamurthy is with you, so you will do well in your life. I love you , I care for you and my blessings are there all the time for you .

## Swami Sakshatkritanandaji delivered his valedictory address:

First of all congratulations to all of you for successfully surviving 27 months and completed the course. As you have been hearing, it is not easy. On this occasion, we have to remember one thing.

I have visited this Anaikatti ashram in 1986 along with Pujya Swamiji. This place was a corn field. The inhabitants of the place were porcupines. We saw a lot of thorns strewn all over the place. Pujya Swamiji chose this place. We see only corn field, but Pujya Swamiji saw a beautiful gurukulam here. I was there when the gurukulam started in 1990. The whole place was different. Now it is different, so beautiful with lot of greenery. It is all because of Sri Shantaram and Smt Sunitamma's family. Sunitamma's mother came everyday all the way from Coimbatore. All the plantations and coconut trees was done by them and she supervised that they were watered daily. Now we are enjoying all that. We are enjoying not only the place, but the purpose for which the place was built i.e, this continuation of this parampara. So many courses were started and completed by Pujya Swamiji and the same tradition continues and it will continue. Therefore we remember their dedication and also we remember Prema amma and others in building this place. I pray to Lord Dakshinamurti to bless them with a happy, healthy and long life. You are all blessed to have swamiji as your acharya guru. He is a srotriya and brahma-nishta. Brahmanishtatvam comes from sadhutvam. Swamiji is an embodiment of sadhutvam. You are all blessed.

This is a valediction. Sastra had a valediction i.e, at the end of gurukulavasa after 12 years of veda-adhyayana, when the students complete their brahmacharya ashrama. After that the students have to enter into the next ashrama- grhasthaashrama. There veda gives a command - *acharyaAyapriyamdhanamahartyaprajatantum ma vyavacetsih*. There are other advises - satyam vada, dharmam cara. These advises are valid even for this valediction. But *prajatantum ma vyavacetsi* is not valid anymore for you now because all of you who are brahmacaris and brahmacarinis have done enough purushartha. If we don't have to enter into grhasthaashrama at all. Then what do we do? One has to share this knowledge by communicating it to others.

There are several reasons why this knowledge has to be shared. I will say a few reasons and then say what is the main reason. Then these reasons become secondary or may not be there.

- When we finish the course and go, we want to propagate Vedanta because this is

the wisdom that is not available anywhere else. It is available only in Bharat-varsha and here also it is not known because it is held as a secret wisdom. Now that I come to know, I have to propagate this wisdom. I want to change the whole humanity because they are suffering for no reason. I want to change them. It is a good reason and one can do that.

- Or I can teach to payback rnam (debt). I got this wisdom and I am indebted to the tradition. I pay back my debt by continuing the tradition. When will the tradition get continued? When I handover the wisdom. This is one more reason to teach.
- Or *satkaramanapujartham*. You get name and fame of being a good teacher. This reason to teach is also not a problem. It can begin like that.
- Or one can teach for the love of teaching.
- One more reason to teach is that teaching is a method to survive because when you teach you have got a few students around you. When they discover the teacher in you, they will take care of you and you don't have to worry about the future. Survival is also a good reason to teach.
- But the main reason to teach is –“I teach for my own clarity”. When you teach even 1,2 or few students, it is enough. When you teach, pairs of eyes are looking at you. Your mind undergoes a change, when you are teaching. You cannot be causal. You have to be clear, logical, consistent and coherent. If those eyes are not there, I will not work for clarity, consistency, logic in the teaching. Therefore your mind undergoes a change when you are teaching. In that change of mind, you discover more and more. Therefore teaching becomes essential. That is what is expected also–

*Taccintanam tat-kathanamanyonyam tat-prabodhanam*

*etaekaparatrancabrahmAbhyaasamvidurbudhah ...*

Vidyaranya swami in ch 7 Pancadasi calls this as brahmAbhyaasa. Teaching is one method of fulfilling this- tat cintanam, tat kathanam. It gives clarity in one's thinking. Therefore it is nidhidyasanam. Teaching helps you dwell upon the vastu. It takes care of all obstacles in the gain of jeevan-mukti. Therefore that becomes very important. One may say, I am not interested in teaching. No. One must teach because this I am telling from experience how teaching is very useful. When you do listen, you don't get that opportunity. When you teach, you get that opportunity. Every teacher will vouch for this. If you feel, “I don't have that clarity how will I teach?” If I wait till I get clarity to teach, then it will not be in this janma. You get clarity only by teaching. I have this feeling, sense of isolation, non-

approval of people. When all these feelings are there, then I conclude that I don't know brahman. When I have this knowledge how can I have such feelings? Therefore I conclude I don't know. So these feelings are not pramana-janyam. Feelings are mithya. You have to recognize that in all feelings. I don't conclude I don't know, based on feeling. Feelings come and go. The truth is cognitive. So I don't fall for feelings, I don't conclude I don't know. I know all the sravanam I did are inside. I don't allow feelings to take over that. So, one has to be alert to this tendency to conclude. Therefore one has to own up the teaching. what I have learnt is with me. When I begin to share that, you will see all of them are surfacing. When you don't teach, you don't know what is there inside. They all come to the surface, when you invoke the teacher in you. Therefore teaching is very important.

Pujya swamiji has talked about the various things you look into when you teach. You can listen to them, they are very useful. All the things I take into account and teach. It will give whatever clarity it has to give. Knowledge is useless, unless it ends in jeevan-mukti. I have knowledge, but I see I am samsari. Jnanam has to give rise to jnana-phalam and that comes with teaching.

All of you are highly blessed. All the teachers talked about their blessing to you. So one blessing you all have got is gurukrpa. Gurukrpa is there, all the blessings will come.

Few notes on certain points-

- Swami Jagadatmanandaji said, one word you should know. Not ramahsabda, hari or gurusabda.

What word you should know is Brahman. Therefore when you know and understand all the implications of that brahman, not only will you get the sukha of svargaloka, but you will discover that you are the ananda that everybody gets there. You are that ananda-svarupa. Swamiji mentioned 26 stars, but I see 27 stars. He has to include himself also in it. Therefore all 27 stars are complete. Therefore this course is successful. I pray Lord and Pujya Swamiji for your successful pursuit of this knowledge.

Later all students were gifted with a shield in which Pujya Swamiji's photo and quote " All that here is Ishwara" was inscribed. The program was concluded with a vote of thanks.

*Om Tat Sat*

**Report by Swami Jagadatmanandaji.**

*Photos in the wrapper page (2)*