

TAMIL VEDANTA RETREAT ON KAIVALYOPANISHAD

Due to a request for classes in Tamil, the Gurukulam had arranged a six day retreat in Tamil by Swamini Brahmaleenananda. The camp was attended by 22 students comprising of some already exposed to Vedanta and some for whom Vedanta was totally new.



The day was well packed with activities starting with suprabhatham by the peacocks, followed by the Puja in Dakshinamurti Temple, Namaskaram to Pujya Swamiji at Guru Tirtha and the rushing to the Meditation class.

Swamini taught the preliminary steps of correct posture, sankalpa for meditation, prayer to Isvara seeking blessings for the dhyana, body visualisation and relaxation, followed by breath watching, then observing the quiet mind, then doing the manasa japa. She also made the students see the fact that one cannot be the body, breath or mind which are objectified. Appreciating the body, breath and mind as Ishvara given gifts, seeing the prana as pratyaksham brahma, seeing the Atma as Siva, manasa puja were also introduced. The fact that we can never get away from Isvara was emphasised again and again.

There were 3 classes daily on Kaivalyopanisad. Swamini introduced the purusharthas, what are vedas, veda as pramana. The text was taken elaborately introducing moksha as the real pursuit, the importance of Self knowledge as the sadhana for moksha, place of sravana, manana, nididhyasana in self knowledge. What is sraddha, bhakti, Isvara were explained. Finally the mahavakya was explained. Wherever possible various activities and concepts in our culture were explained making our life meaningful.

Many concepts were explained with examples. Day to day events and experiences were quoted as examples. Pujya Swamiji's examples and stories were given making Pujya Swamiji alive for us, even for those of us who have not seen him.

Br. Kumara Chaitanyaji taught us the Guru Paduka Stotra taking pains to see that we got the tune and pronunciation correct. The 2 Acharyas addressed us for half an hour on 2 afternoons. Swami Sadatmanandaji explained what is Spiritual pursuit, why it is important and how one should have intellectual and emotional commitment for the pursuit. Swami Sankaranandaji while answering our questions explained what is Maya with the help of the Indrajala example of Adi Sankara and also how to make children interested in our culture and religion. Swami Prasantanandaji while blessing us emphasised the importance of chanting Isvara Nama with involvement whenever one is free.

On August 3rd which happened to be Pujya Swamiji's Janma Nakshatra day, we had the unique opportunity to do an archana to Him at Gurutirtha with all the steps and also chanting his 108 names. On the 4th we felt blessed to do Mulamantra japa in front of Sri Medha Dakshinamurti seeking prajna, medha and ability to do dhyana.

We felt that this was a home away from home, not an ordinary home but a dream home as though, transformed to a spiritual world from waking to sleep with no worldly care whatsoever. The system was well oiled and running so well. We sincerely appreciate the dedication and involvement of all the people who have taken the pains to make our camp comfortable and fruitful and know that what we offer is nothing compared to what we have received. We thank one and all for their help. We pray to Sri Medha Dakshinamurti to bless us with more opportunities for such retreats.

Report by Students who attended the camp

Quotes from Pujya Swamiji's Diary – 1968

July 1968 –

- * Man is bound if giving or loss of things leaves him in sorrow.
- * Allow things to leave you: you become an orphan. Leave things as they go: you are ever the master.
- * The measure of success in life is in the intake of happiness one had. Rich, one can be unhappy. Poor, happy.
- * In life there is no "back" at all, for as you turn back, the back becomes the front.
- * What is in front is real. Beyond, is there anything? If there is a thing beyond, it should be known, and when it is known, is it beyond?