

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations at AVG, Anaikatti on 21/11/2020

The celebrations started with Gurupaduka puja done by Swami Sadatmanandaji offering flowers to Pujya Swamiji's paduka with the chanting of guru stotram and guru-ashtotranamavalli by the students led by Br Sharanji. Invocatory prayer on Lord Ganapati was sung by Smt Bala- 2 yr course student.

Br Sharanji who was the master of ceremonies delivered the welcome address.

Annual Gurukulam report was read by Sri Vallabhesanji, GM AVG , Anaikatti.

Swami Jagadatmananda, Trustee, Sruti Seva Trust honoured Swami Sadatmanandaji and delivered Anugraha- bhashanam in Tamil. Annual report on SDJ Ayurvedalaya was read by Dr R. Parthasarati, Chief medical officer.

Chief guest Swami Veditatmanandaji delivered his talk through live streaming from Ahmedabad.

Swami Sadatmananda, chief acharya AVG, Anaikatti blessed the occasion with his Anugraha-bhashanam and the ceremony was concluded with the Vote of thanks by Sri Kathiravanji, Manager AVG, Anaikatti.

### **Pujya Swami Veditatmanandaji's Anugrahabhāṣaṇam:**

Pujya Swami Veditatmanandaji expressed his reverence for the unbroken tradition of the teaching initiated by Pujya Swamiji, which has been continued in this institute. Swamiji shared how Pujya Swamiji had devoted his time and energy to found and built the institute until he departed, with the sole purpose of passing the traditional knowledge of Arsha-Vidya, Vedanta: the *Prasthānatrayī* including the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, *Upaniṣads* and *Prakaraṇagranthas*. Why Vedanta? Swamiji pointed out how grief is the fundamental problem of all human beings, and the grief is a result of *moha* or delusion or ignorance, which further gives rise to grief. And because this grief in every human's life is a result of ignorance about one's own self, so the knowledge of the self is the only way to remove this grief, which is what Vedanta teaches, and which is what Arsha Vidya Gurukulam is employed in: in teaching and creating teachers for realization of the true self.

Swamiji mentioned that PujyaSwamiji not only emphasized the teachings of the Upaniṣad which are amplified in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, *Brahmasutra* and

*Prakaraṇagranthas*, but also, believed Vedic chanting as very important as it makes the seeker strong. He pointed how this institute has been imparting not only the teaching, but also facilitates the students with all the means which supplements this teaching, including yoga, meditation and chanting. The whole and sole purpose of the teachings in this institute is to create teachers: a teacher creating another teacher! Swamiji shared how at the end of the course, Pujya Swamiji would tell the students, 'go and teach!' How Pujya Swamiji thought teaching to be the most important *sādhana* for a seeker of Vedanta to gain clarity and abide in it, and so emphasized on studying the scriptures and sharing what we know, and this is how Pujya Swamiji spent whole of his life making the most significant contribution to this country by providing an authentic teaching and creating authentic teachers.

Lastly addressing the students, Swamiji prayed for the Lord's blessings to inspire them and guide them in their pursuit of spiritual knowledge and liberation. Swamiji advised the students to make the best use of their time in the Gurukulam, by not only learning the *Upaniṣads* and *Gītā*, but also learning Sanskrit as well as possible, and pay attention to the Vedic chanting with memorizing as much as possible. That the important parts of the text such as some shlokas of *Bhagavad Gītā*, mantras of *Upaniṣad* be memorized, since that is what stays with the seeker. The talk was concluded with the final prayers for all students spiritual well-being, that they imbibe the knowledge, assimilate it and bless others.

#### **Sw Sadatmanandaji's Anugrahabhāṣaṇam:**

यस्य कृपाप्रयत्नाभ्यां स्थानम् एतत् सुनिर्मितम् ।

तमेव स्वामिनं पूज्यम् वन्देऽहं सादरम् मुधा ॥

*yasya kṛpāprayatnābhyām sthānam etat sunirmitam |*

*tameva svāminam pūjyam vande:'ham sādaram mudhā | |*

I am happy to be a part of this 30 th anniversary celebration of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam which was founded by Pujya Swamiji in October 1990. In one place, Pujya Swamiji describes the spirit of gurukulam. It cannot be said in a better manner than the way swamiji has done. He says that the study of vedanta is a serious study of oneself and it entails the personal care and attention of the teacher for the student and Arsha Vidya Gurukulam is an honest attempt of providing the students with such an environment where there is personal care and attention. Further he says that this gurukulam is a home away from home where you are taken care of,

so that you can be with the teaching. This is the spirit of Pujya Swamiji when he founded the gurukulam. We are trying here to maintain that spirit of this gurukulam. Various courses are conducted and now we are having a long-term course of two years. When there was conducive situation earlier, we had short term courses as well.

For this gurukulam to run well, the four pillars of gurukulam need to be very strong. Like they say, for democracy, there are 4 pillars - representation , equity, freedom and justice. For government they say, there are four pillars - legislative, executive, judiciary and press.

Similarly, for our gurukulam also there are 4 pillars in a figurative sense – first of all ,the teachers, then the students, third the management and staff which runs the gurukulam and the fourth is the donors and supporters. The gurukulam will run well if these four pillars are strong and supportive. Each one of them needs to have a proper attitude towards the gurukulam.

Today we will try to see what can be the attitude of each one of them. Gurukulam is there because there are students to study and the teachers to teach. So the teachers who are the first pillar have the attitude towards the gurukulam that it is an avenue to express our gratitude to the sampradaya (tradition) by which we have immensely benefitted. The gurukulam provides me an opportunity to give back, to express my gratitude to the parampara of acharyas. Also, an attitude that the gurukulam becomes a medium for me to be in touch with sastra. When teaching is there, study will be there. So teaching in the gurukuam provides me an opportunity to be in touch with sastra. That is the attitude. There is no other motive or agenda. Also the teachers are aware of the fact that not only the teaching will have impact on the students, but that their conduct, their behaviour and their expressions will also have an impact on the student. This is the approach of the teachers who form the first pillar of the gurukulam.

The second pillar is the students. Their attitude is one of gratitude to the gurukulam that because of the gurukulam we have this opportunity to study the sastra in depth. They feel blessed to be there.

Their gratitude is so much that there is always eagerness, readiness to express it in the form of seva or any form of contribution to the gurukulam. Also there is sincer-

ity to make use of the opportunity for learning given by the Lord in the form of this gurukulam. That is the attitude of the students.

The attitude of management and staff is that elsewhere they can do the job and earn money. But here they have the opportunity to earn their livelihood and also serve to a noble cause. That also makes them feel blessed to be a part of the gurukulam. That is the attitude of management and staff working at the Gurukulam.

The attitude of the supporters/donors is that as grhasthas, they are supposed to do 5 maha-yagnas – deva yajna, pitr yajna, brahma yajna, manushya yajna and bhUta yajna. Of these 5, this brahma yajna is - studying the sastra, teaching the sastra and by extension supporting the teaching activity of scriptures. Bhagavan has given us this opportunity to contribute to this gurukulam who is doing this jnana yajna . So the donor has this attitude -“ I have an opportunity to contribute to this cause, so that I am fulfilling my duty of doing brahma yajna”. Also, they can visit this place where teaching is generally going on. There are so many courses/retreats offered and definitely they can benefit from the gurukulam. They have this feeling of being blessed to be a part of this gurukulam by way of contribution.

If this is the attitude of all the 4 pillars, then Gurukulam can run very smoothly. Fortunately, the four pillars of our Gurukulam are strong and supportive by the grace of Lord Dakshinamurti and by the grace of our Pujya Swamiji. Pujya Swamiji has worked so much and people in general are so grateful to him, that they are ready to support this gurukulam, even when his physical presence is not there in this gurukulam.

So we express our gratitude to Pujya Swamiji, Lord Dakshinamurti and pray that let all these 4 pillars continue to support this Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, so that the spirit with which pujya Swamiji has founded this place will be maintained in the years to come.

*Om tat sat*