



Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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Swami Veditatmanandaji's Stabhishekam Photos

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Ātmānam ced vijānīyāt

PujyaSwamiji's transcribed talk

This the second issue of the serial article

The self does not become evident to you by operating a means of knowledge. I am sitting here and talking to you and you see me and hear me. Therefore, I am evident to you. I do not become evident to you unless you oblige with your eyes and ears. If the eyes close and you go to sleep, then I am not there for you. I will be talking, but then, you are gone. You need not even go to sleep. If your mind slips away, that is enough. If the mind slips into another pattern of thinking, then I, the Swami, is gone for the time being. The Swami does not become self-evident to you. Swami is evident because there is an operation of a *pramāṇa*. Therefore, the Swami is *pramāṇasiddha*, established by a means of knowledge. The Swami exists in this form because you see with your eyes.

Similarly, anything that happens pertaining to your physical body becomes evident to you. You look at your body and say, "This is how my body is." What occurs in your mind also becomes evident to you. You look at your mind and say, "This is what my mind is thinking." Therefore, your body is evident to you, your mind is evident to you, but the self does not require any means of knowledge to become evident. If the self requires a means of knowledge to become evident, then to whom is it evident? There should be another self because any evidence is to the self. If the self has to become evident to another self, I am talking of that self only. It is the self to whom everything becomes evident. That self is self-evident.

The self alone is self-evident and is referred to by the word 'I'. The moment you say, 'I am' in the 'I am' the self is self-evident. That is the reason why when you knock at the door of your house, and somebody from inside asks, 'Who is that?' you immediately respond, 'It is me.' What comes first is only the self. Thereafter, come other responses like husband, brother and so on.

Ātmā svataḥ siddhaḥ, the self is evident by itself. Therefore, you can commit a mistake about that *ātman*. To commit a mistake, all you require is, the locus of mistake must be evident and there must be ignorance. Without the operation of any means of knowledge *ātman* is available for you to commit a mistake. To correct the mistake, you have to look into the self.

To look into the self you have to have a means of knowledge. How are you to look into yourself? You can look into your mind by looking into your psychology. You can look into your past, dig up something from the past, pull out a lot of skeletons that are there in the cupboard within, and find out what exactly is the reason for your getting scared. All these are possible because they are within the area of your objectification. You can always have access to that. Here, however, we are talking of the one who is looking into the mind. How do you look into that self?

One person said, “If all thoughts go away, the buoyant self will emerge.” The self is already evident. It does not need to come out. When you say, “I am sad, I am a *samsārin*,” the self is already evident as a *samsārin*, which is a mistake. In the vision of the *śruti*, the self is Brahman. To know about the truth of the self you require a means of knowledge.

A human being is capable of inference and perception. A cow is also capable of inference and perception. A cow perceives and makes an inference. If you beckon a cow with a bunch of grass in your hand, it makes an inference that you are a desirable person. You beckon the cow and it thinks for a minute, and then majestically it turns towards you. During that time there is a lot of reasoning going on there. Then, it is caught between the horns of dilemma: ‘Should I go or not?’ Then it just decides to go. If you drop the bunch of grass, instead, pick up a stick and raise your hand with an angry look, the cow stops and then again estimates the situation, judges and makes an inference—‘This person is not desirable because he has a stick in his hand and I had been beaten before with the stick; it was not pleasant’. So it runs away from you.

Every animal has perception and inference which it uses for survival. Even bugs have them. A human being has better perception because of improved sense organs through the addition of various instruments. He has better inference. But still, he is equivalent to a cow in the area of perception and inference. A cow does not know itself. That the cow does not have self-knowledge is very well known. It does not even know its own color and form. It does not have that kind of self-judgment, though it has a certain kind of identity. It does not have a self-identity leading to a self-judgment, however. Where, then, is the question of self-knowledge? Therefore, with reference to *ātman* it is ignorant. A scientist also can be ignorant of the self. He may be an expert in handling perception and inference, in handling various means of knowledge at his disposal. He can be a great intellectual, yet he may not know the *ātman*.

To know the *ātman* you require another means of knowledge different from perception and inference. They are the Vedas—a body of knowledge. At the end of each of the four Vedas, the self is unfolded. Therefore, the end section of the Veda is called Vedanta. Vedanta is just a positional name; it is not the end of knowledge. This is clear from the fact that we use the plural also for the word ‘Vedanta’ because there are four Vedas.

Vedanta is a means of knowledge. The self is the subject matter for Vedanta. Vedanta is not a theory; it is a means of knowledge, like the eyes. The *śabda*, words, of Vedanta are a means of knowledge. That is how we look upon them. You cannot dispute it either; there is a reason for that. Vedanta itself says that it is a means of knowledge. If it is a means of knowledge, then, how can you prove that it is not a means of knowledge unless you operate it? You can disprove it only by using it. When you use it, it proves itself to be a means of knowledge.

If Vedanta is a means of knowledge for the self, then we have to know what it says. Does it say that *ātman* is *śūnya*, emptiness; does it say it is *kṣaṇika-vijñāna*, flickers of consciousness, does it say that body is the *ātman*, does it say that the *buddhi* is the *ātman* or does it say ignorance is the *ātman*? Each one of these views is claimed as being said by Vedanta. We have to prove that it does not say any one of these. Now, it is a question of *mīmāṃsā*, analysis, to find out what Vedanta does say. We look into the *vivakṣā*, what it wants to say.

In this analysis, we look into the whole thing—what is said in the beginning, what is said at the end, what is often repeated, what is glorified and so on to know exactly what it wants to say. It has nothing to do with any opinion. It implies analysis of words that are the basis for clear knowledge.

1 Vedāntāḥ. (Brhadāranyakopaniṣad Bhāṣyam 1.4.10)

2 There are *ṣaḍliṅgas* - six pointers, to find out the *tātparya* - purport of a text: *upakrama-upasaṁhārau*, what is said at the introduction and conclusion; *abhyāsa*, what is repeatedly stated; *apūrvatā*, what is not covered by other means of knowledge; *phala*, that for which result is mentioned; *arthavāda*, that which is glorified; and *upapatti*, reasoning.

Bonding With God

Swami Dayananda Saraswati¹

All that is here is Īśvara, the Lord.

The fact is we have to relate to the world. It is unavoidable, and it need not be avoided. While relating, we are called upon to respond to different situations, and our responses can be objective and dispassionate. However unpleasant the situation is, we can respond without being stressed. But to be objective is easier said than done. To be objective takes a lot of understanding.

There is a psychological order in the behavior of a person. Like there is a physical order, a physiological order, a biological order, and an epistemological order, there is also a psychological order. Whether we know or we don't know why a person behaves the way he or she does, we can still understand that there is no other way possible for that person to behave at this time.

Every individual has his or her own background, and at any given time, they are doing their very best. We always worry and question, "Why did he do that? Why did he not do this?" But given the background, that person can behave only in the manner he does at this time and place. There is no other answer.

When we understand very intimately that all the significant people who bother us are behaving exactly as they can (there is no other way the person can behave), then there is no problem. And the fact is that anyone who bothers us is significant. Insignificant people do not bother us as much. Anything that exists in time (what is time-bound) both known and unknown, including our physical body, mind, and senses, constitutes the *jagat*. While the *jagat* is not independent of Īśvara, Īśvara is independent of the *jagat* because he can exist without the *jagat*.

The rule is that an effect is not independent of its material cause. The material cause, however, can exist without being a cause. The clay can exist without being a cup, but the cup cannot exist without being the material of which it is made. This is the same truth with reference to the Lord. He is both the maker and the material cause. Like in the dream, we are both the maker and the material cause.

The truth about the material cause is that it sustains the effect. In fact, there is no effect; it is just the material cause. We have this example of a simple pot and clay. The pot is not independent of its material.

1 Published in the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam 17th Anniversary Souvenir, 2003

This is a very interesting thing: You are looking at the world, and in the world you want to have a vision of Īśvara. In fact, whatever you see right now is Īśvara. The seeing eyes are Īśvara, the seen object is Īśvara, and the seer is not separate from Īśvara. All that is here is Īśvara. If this is so, isn't it a foolish thing to locate the Lord in a particular place? God is called all-pervasive, almighty, and the cause of everything, and still he is located at a particular place.

All that is here is Īśvara, and Īśvara exists in a two-fold way: one way is in a manifest form that is available for our perception and interaction; the second way is as the unmanifest potentials that are Īśvara. Prayer is a special action that taps those potentials.

Prayer is the only act where our free will enjoys total freedom.

In all religious cultures, prayer is common. Prayer can be in any language and in any form. The Lord does not have a linguistic problem. He can be invoked in Hindi, Latin, Greek, French, Hebrew, English, or an Arabic language. This is not the same as saying all religions lead to the same goal. They do not! When I say all that is here is Īśvara, what is here you have to claim, and you claim that through prayer. If you do not claim it, then you are the loser.

All prayers are valid. Prayer is an action (*karma*) because it stems from you as a doer (*kartā*). Anything that stems from you, a doer, is called action. It comes from your free will. The human free will is difficult to define because we do not know which is free will and which is pressure. In all actions, some free will is involved. But more often than not we find we are in a corner where we are constrained to do an action. Therefore, we do not know how much freedom that free will enjoys. It is disputable.

There is always pressure, inner pressure and outer pressure. Outer pressure finally becomes inner pressure when somebody pressures you and you internalize that situation. If you refuse to get pressurized, there is no inner pressure; there is only outer pressure. The pressure is for the other person; it remains his agendum, not yours. When you internalize the other person's demands, it becomes your duty or your pressure; you feel you have to do it.

Due to pressure, one is constrained to do certain things. Even a reaching-out action like charity is sometimes done because of our own empathy. When we see somebody in pain, we pick up that pain. That is human nature. First, we empathize; then, in order to eliminate that empathy, we do something that sometimes becomes a reaching-out action. There again there is pressure that is empathy born.

Social service is empathy born. However, some people do social service with an agendum for converting people. For all the eyes that see the work, it looks like service; but the person has a certain plan, a program to convert the people to a different religion.

Therefore, that is not considered service. That is only a means for accomplishing an end. The means happens to be good, but the end is not good because a culture is being destroyed. It is not necessary.

Perhaps a person is really reaching out to help someone. Without receiving any monetary reward whatsoever, one does an action. However, nobody does anything without expecting some kind of a reward, and there is always some reward for anything that one does. Perhaps the person is getting rid of his or her empathy-born pain, or maybe the reward is discovering the joy in sharing. So even a reaching-out action is a pressurized action. One's own empathy pressures one into doing something.

Prayer is the only action where our free will enjoys total freedom. We need not pray. "But, Swamiji, it is a prayer in distress; I am in a difficult situation." But in distress you need not pray. In distress, you can hit your head on the wall. In pain and in distress, you can do a hundred different things. You can take alcohol; you can take drugs; you can go on a buying or killing spree. You need not pray. Why? Because you do not see an immediate result.

Prayer has two results. An immediate result and an unseen result. The unseen result of prayer is called *adr̥ṣṭa phala*. It will manifest in time and is what we call grace. It is produced by an action and accrues to the doer of the action, the one who prays. This is a potential, and the potential you tap. Like there is underground water that has to be brought out by a series of actions. So also prayer is an action tapping the potential grace. The immediate result of prayer is called *dr̥ṣṭa phala*. That you can pray is itself an immediate result. It is not easy to sit and pray.

A prayer can be said in simple words, or it can be an elaborate ritual, or it can be purely oral or purely mental. Prayer can be described as three different forms of action—physical (*kāyika*), oral (*vācika*), and mental (*mānasa*). A ritual is a physical form of prayer; singing in praise of the Lord is an oral form of prayer; and chanting a mantra silently is a mental form of prayer.

When we act, our intention becomes complete. When we want to wish somebody a happy birthday, we can just mentally think about that person and wish the person well and that is all. But when we take the time to choose a card, buy it, write something on it, and then post it, our wishes become totally manifest. When we act it out, our intention is fulfilled.

That is why we have a daily ritual as a form of worship. The ritual is performed at an altar where flowers, incense, and light are offered. This is purely cultural. Nobody worships an idol. People worship only the Lord, and the Lord being everything (there is nothing outside him) every form is the Lord's form. In any form that you recognize as Īśvara, you can invoke the Lord. It is purely invocation. When we invoke the Lord at an altar and offer worship, it is called *kāyikam karma*, which involves the physical limbs, the mind, and the organ of speech.

Oral prayer, *vācika karma*, is common in all religious traditions and is also there in the Vedic tradition. It involves the mind and the organ of speech. The same prayer can be mental, which is called *mānasa karma*, involving the mind alone. It is called meditation, a mental activity for which the object is *saguṇa Brahman*, *Īśvara*, the Lord.

We bond with *Īśvara* by doing actions that invoke the devotee in us.

While doing these prayers, we are producing an unseen result called *adṛṣṭa phalam*, which makes the difference between success and failure. It is called grace. But more than that, the devotee is invoked in us. We need to establish a bonding with *Īśvara*, a bonding that got snapped between our parents and us.

We started our life with complete trust in our parents. As we grew, we naturally took our mother and father to be infallible. That bonding that was there was with the almighty infallible, and our father and mother constituted that almighty infallible God. As a child, we did not have any other God except these two people.

Afterwards, when we discovered that our parents were not almighty but they were fallible, that trust faded. The infallible parents became fallible in the eyes of the child, and the bonding was snapped. Then all our lifetime we have been searching for the infallible. There is a longing to bond with a being we can trust. That bonding has to again be established.

This is an enlightened bonding. In the baby, it was an innocent bonding. Understand the difference. Here we have grown up in our life, and we understand what *Īśvara* is. The bonding that is established now is deliberate bonding by knowing, first, this is *Īśvara*, and then by doing such actions that establish that bonding, actions that will invoke the right person in us. A person who has that bonding will never have stress.

Suppose you are jealous of somebody with whom you have to live, and you want to remove this jealousy. Jealousy is the pain born in the wake of knowledge that somebody is happy when you are not. Once jealousy comes into the mind, it grows and the only cure for it (if at all there is one) is to do something. You have to act it out in the opposite way. Give the person a rose every day for forty days. Tell him, “I want to get rid of my jealousy, so please accept this rose.” When you are honest, people are different.

Your commitment to change is manifest in that action of giving a rose to that person to whom you would rather not give a rose. It takes a lot of commitment to change. Definitely, it is a deliberate action. Only by acting it out, as though you already have the quality you are seeking, do you change. You fake it till you make it. We do this all the time. How did you learn swimming? By faking it and making it. You have to enter into the water and swim. The swimming teacher tells you, “Come on, swim! Do the same thing as I do.” In the process, you learn swimming. You learn driving by driving. You learn cooking by cooking. You learn everything by doing it. There is no other way.

We have to establish bonding with Īśvara. Once that bonding with Īśvara is there, we can relax. As we saw before, when a child feels insecure and afraid because something like a cockroach is seen, it runs to its mother. Once it is standing near its mother, it feels safe because it trusts that the almighty, infallible mother can take care of it. The child feels powerful now.

Then that trust is eroded when the mother calls dad. The child thinks that dad is almighty and infallible, but then dad cannot handle the situation either. So from this the child quietly understands that they are fallible. First, a vague understanding is there. Then the clarity grows as the child grows. Afterwards, the bonding is gone. One has to become complete again.

As a child, we were together with our mother before birth, and that connection was snapped after delivery. Then we seek that bonding in life that can take place only with the infallible. That is why people love a religion that has a saviour. That is why those religions that have a saviour to offer have followers, and that is also why there is saviour psychology. Thus, all the cults come into the picture because people want somebody to save them.

Human beings are fallible in the sense that they are limited in knowledge, strength, and power. Only the total conscious being is infallible. The order itself is the conscious being, the order being not separate from the conscious being. Īśvara is the infallible; the order is infallible.

If I find the order is fallible, it is not the order that is fallible, but my understanding of the order that is wrong. The order can never disappoint me. It is my expectation that disappoints me. And that is to be expected because my knowledge is limited.

The devotee in us is the basic person who plays different roles.

The basic person is always relaxed. Between the basic person and the role that the basic person is called upon to play, there is always a distance, and the distance is the awareness of the basic person.

To one person, we are related as a son or a daughter. To another person, we are related as a husband or a wife. To another person, we are related as a father or a mother. To another person, we are related as a brother or a sister. To another person, we are related as a neighbour, as a friend, and so on. The person being the same, the roles vary.

I, the subject, am the same. Therefore, I am father, I am son, I am husband, I am brother, I am wife, I am mother, I am daughter, I am sister. *I am* is constant in all this, but whom I relate to is variable. *I am* always there in all the relationships. Therefore, I am constant. But am I totally constant? No! There is a certain variable component there also. To my father, I am son. But to my son, I am father; and to my brother, I am brother. That means what? Not only are the people different, I am also different. I am son, I am father, I am brother. It is clear that I am also changing. However, there is also an invariable element in this. *I am* is invariable.

I am is the basic conscious person (*puruṣa*), not male or female. This is what we are, and this conscious person is playing different roles like father, son, and husband. Some roles are a little difficult to play, but still they are roles. I am father with reference to my son or daughter; I am son with reference to my parents.

Each role is a status that I assume depending upon the relationship. This is how we are all cast in life. The world is a stage, and we are all players playing different roles, and every role has a script that becomes evident according to the situation. Nobody has to write the script. We all know exactly what we have to do, and if we do not know, we can ask somebody. We can follow this script meticulously and happily if we know, “I am the basic person playing the role.”

Imagine an actor playing the role of a beggar. The actor is on the stage now; and, according to the script, he has to undergo a lot of pain. People abuse this beggar, and he has to suppress his feelings and still go about begging. Now and then he has to cry. He is happy because he is shedding real tears. The tears just roll down his cheeks. The people in the audience are also crying.

He is congratulating himself: “I am doing very well.” Not only he thinks he is doing well, but a friend, who is sitting in the audience, also thinks he is doing well and comes backstage to congratulate him: “Hey, you did wonderfully. How did you manage to cry like that?”

However, while crying even more the next day because he lost a loved one, if the same friend were to say, “Hey, you are crying even better today, congratulations!” that would be inappropriate. That was a role; this is real.

Let us look at that role. The actor was congratulated for his crying. He was also self-congratulating. How come? Because he is not the role. There is a cushion of understanding “I am not the role.” The actor is not the beggar even though the beggar is the actor. The role’s body is his body; the role’s mouth is his mouth; and all the words in the script are from his tongue. Therefore, the beggar is totally the actor, not just partially the actor (there is no distance by time between the actor and the beggar), but the actor is not the beggar. (B is A; A is not B.)

The beggar is suffering; the actor is not suffering. The beggar’s suffering is confined to the beggar, not because the actor is different but because the actor is not the beggar. So understanding that the beggar is the actor but the actor is not the beggar is the cushion. That knowledge gives us the space to play the role according to the script and enjoy playing it also.

We find ourselves in a given setup in a vast universe where there are a few significant people whom we would like to change. Those significant people bother us, and related to those people we are playing various roles. But in real life, we don’t look at it as playing roles. We assume that on the stage it is a role, but offstage it is not a role. However, “offstage” is also a stage.

The drama of life has to be understood. Shakespeare had a great mind and somehow felt all this without Vedānta because the truth is the same. He understood the emotions of the human mind very well, and he had a way with words. As someone said, Shakespeare's mind is the platform of the world. He said, "The world is a stage; all men and women are but players," which is true.

My relationship with Īśvara is basic, fundamental, and invariable.

When I relate to my grandfather, I am grandson. When I relate to my father, I am son, not grandson. In order to be a son, I replace my grandfather with my father. My relationship with the Lord is not the same. As an individual, I am fundamentally related to the Lord whether I recognize the relationship or not. This relationship is expressed by the word "devotee."

As a devotee, when I assume the role of father or son, the devotee is not replaced. This relationship between the Lord and me is the same as that between my father and the Lord or my friend and the Lord. The devotee remains due to the abiding nature of the relationship with the Lord. First and last, I am a devotee connected to the total, to Īśvara. I am a conscious being; Īśvara is a conscious being. That particular relationship is basic, fundamental, and invariable. Therefore, when I am a father or a mother, I am that basic person, the devotee. I am a devotee father, a devotee mother, a devotee husband, a devotee wife, a devotee son, a devotee neighbour.

Awareness of my being that basic person, the devotee, is a cushion, a space that gives me the freedom from being stressed by playing a role. We cannot avoid playing roles just so that we can avoid stress. We have to play our roles. If you list all the problems you have, you will find that all the problems belong to the roles.

As a father or mother, daughter or son, husband or wife, you have some problems. All these problems are the role's problems, not the person's problems. Where is stress I would like to know? Is there any drama without plots and without changes? There is no drama in life without plots. All that must be there. Real life is like that. There are very quick turns. Shakespeare was famous for those turns. Everything is going well; then suddenly everything changes. The drama of life has to be understood as such.

As an individual, I see myself as a devotee. A relationship that exists with Īśvara is recognized. As a devotee, I invoke the help and the grace of the Lord by an act of prayer. Prayer is an action. The result is what is called "grace." I create grace through the act of prayer; and, also, through the various forms of prayer, I establish my bonding with Īśvara.

The significant people that are in the cast of our life may make some omissions and commissions. Sometimes there are omissions and commissions on our part also. A good actor makes up for all the omissions and commissions and keeps the drama going and makes it enjoyable, too.

Advaitic kritis composed by Pujya Swami Dayānanda Saraswati

The song Bho Śambho Śiva Śambho Svayambho is sung by many a singer without even knowing the composer and the writer of these wonderful lyrics. It probably it reflects the greatness of Pujya Swami Dayānandaji as a teacher, where he wants the teaching to be remembered over the teacher, the song to be remembered over the composer.

Pujya Swamiji composed many such Sanskrit kritis, in praise of different devatas. Nineteen kritis to be precise to be sung upon Gaṇapati, Someśvara, Śāradādevi, Mīṇākṣi, Ṣaṇmukham, Rāma, Govinda, Dakshināmurty, ĀdiŚankara and even on our dearest Bhāratavarsha. The last of his compositions was on Devi Jnāneśwari, in praise of the Veda, our Śruti māta. Each is profound.

In the Bhagavad Gitā, Chapter 7, verse 16, Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa talks about the four bhaktas - ārta, arthārthi, jijnāsu and the jnāni. Each type of bhakta is seeking or connecting with Bhagavān through his own understanding of Bhagavān. ĀdiŚankara in his bhāṣya says चतुर्विधाः चतुःप्रकाराः भजन्ते सेवन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनः पुण्यकर्माणः हे अर्जुन। आर्तः आर्तिपरिगृहीतः तस्करव्याघ्ररोगादिना अभिभूतः आपन्नः, जिज्ञासुः भगवत्तत्त्वं ज्ञातुमिच्छति यः अर्थार्थी धनकामः, ज्ञानी विष्णोः तत्त्वविच्च हे भरतर्षभ ७।१३

Pujya Swamiji's compositions connect with each of these four types of bhaktas to his personal understanding of Bhagavān.

How do the kritis touch and have an impact on each bhakta?

The ārta, arthārthi, jijnāsu can sing or listen to these kritis, connect fully with the words and thus ask Bhagavān for all that they are seeking. The jnāni sees himself as the meaning of the words themselves.

Śabda, being a means of knowledge, is capable of connecting the singer/listener to Iśvarā/paramātmā and finally make him see the truth of himself. What are kritis anyways? Śabda, words woven in musical phrases and rāgas. Thus, the lyrics of the kriti forms the basis for the kriti. The music, the singing, the rāga the bhāva and the swarās further add and aid an absorption and laya of the seeking mind. Thus, along with the music and the words of connection and jñānam, each kriti becomes a prayer towards the presiding devata. Each bhakta can potentially become a nāda-upāsaka, i.e he can choose to do upāsana of the devata through śabda and nāda i.e music, relating to the lyrics and through their musical expression, finally leading him to understanding the meaning of the words and seeing himself as the very swarupa of the words, where in ultimately, the jñānam, the jneyam and the jñānagamyam are one and the same, thus making the singer, the song and the one to be sung upon as one and the same. On the other hand, the jnāni already sees himself as the basis of all the lyrics.

In such a beautiful manner, the kritis connect with every bhakta, every seeker in his entire journey of seeking the sought, ie seeking moksha. In the light of the above, we take a closer look at all the compositions and see their lyrics and their musical expressions to understand this better.

The journey of any seeker starts with the seeker recognising his helplessness in dealing with his life and seeking help from Bhagavan. From here starts his journey as a bhakta. A bhajan is a musical form of prayer. Praying is the most intelligent and objective karma that a bhakta can do. Through the musical prayer, the bhakta surrenders his efforts, his ahanmkara, his mind at the feet of Bhagavān. With this, without he realising, a change has happened. From the standpoint of karma, he has gained puṇya. And from the standpoint of his own mind, a huge shift has happened. He has dropped his notions of being self-made, of being independent and intelligent to now being a person who needs help and seeing himself helpless in his own eyes. He has now allowed Bhagavān into his life. Hence the bhajan i.e the musical prayer itself has helped the person start his journey of a seeker. From here now, what the seeker prays for, that becomes an important question.

An āṛta, आर्तः आर्तिपरिगृहीतः तस्करव्याघ्ररोगादिना अभिभूतः आपन्नः in his life and prayers, Bhagavān is just someone more powerful, whom he runs to when in trouble. Through Swamiji's nineteen kritis on different devatas, the āṛta bhakta can connect with the devata from whom he seeks help or with his iṣṭadevata, showering love and praises on him/her. The pallavis of each composition are praises upon the respective devatas. The āṛta can connect with the names of Lord Gaṇeśha in the kriti भजे विघ्नराजम् when he runs into obstacles. He can also easily relate to the words "दीनम् अतिदीनम् बलहीनम् उद्धर माम्" (I am weak and helpless, raise me) through the kriti "हे गोवि न्द हे गोपा ल". In fact the musical expression of the phrase dīnam ati dīnam so appropriately denotes the helpless āṛta bhakta himself.

An arthārthi, अर्थार्थि धनकामः who has a give and take relationship with Bhagavān seeks comforts, profits and pleasures from Bhagavān, looks towards Bhagavān as a beneficiary who can grant boons and pleasant situations in life. He connects with the words of the kriti on Devi

Mīnākṣī as "संताप हारिणी" (Remover of pain) and on Gaṇapati as "तापत्रययुत भवरोग भैषजम् (Remover of the ills of life fraught with three fold pain) and "शतको टी विघ्न-परि हारचरणम् (Remover of countless obstacles) and on Kṛṣṇā as "कल्पद्रुम , as a wish fulfilling tree granting countless desires". He prays to Subramāṇyam as a bestower of "पशुपुत्रकलत्र-स्वगांदीष्ट-कामतत्रो" i.e wealth, children marriage heaven. He recognises himself as "संचित-सर्व-कलुषकलापम् - a bundle of gathered impurities." He may also pray to Rāma as "नित्यधर्म-चारिणम् ,दण्डिनं कोदण्डिनं दुराचार-खण्डनम्" so that dharma is at the centre of his being.

The āṛta and the arthārthi are seeking dharmārthakāma whereas a jijnāsu जिज्ञासुः भगवत्तत्त्वं ज्ञातुमिच्छति यः is basically a mokshārthi, he is seeking a way out of the samsāra, as he has seen the limitations of "जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-व्याधि-दुःखदोषाः" (seen the limitations of birth, death, old age, disease, dukha) and he prays to Rama for their भवहरम् ie freedom from them. Generally, in the kriti, the jijnāsu, can connect with the words of the anupallavi or the first part of the charaṇam. In the kriti paripālaya karivarada, the jijnāsu has seen the limitations of actions, he seeks protection from the fire of samsāra in which he is afflicted with rāga and dveṣa अविद्यादि पञ्च-क्लेशादि तप्तम् He prays to Śambho as the भवसागर-तारक one who helps to cross over the ocean of becoming. The jijnāsu, who is seeking knowledge and hence adhikāritvam for the knowledge, asks for and prays to Lord Someśvara as "शमदमादि युक्तेन प्रतिपद्यमानम् (who is known for his mature mastered mind and senses) and prays to Śāradādevi for a "स्वच्छहृदय" (pure heart) and "शुद्धसत्त्व" (pure sattva) and to Ṣaṇmukham so as to take care of the shadripus as "कामादि-षड्रिपु निघनम् (destroyer of the six enemies) and to be centred on dharma prays to Lord Rāma. He prays to Kalyāṇa Subramaṇyam as the "पशुपाशमोह-विनाशक" (as the dispeller of attachment to wealth, cattle and more). A jijnāsu also prays for the teaching to Lord Rāma so that he can see truth of "वशीकृत-माया-कारित-वेशम्, (lord of maya, the cause of all beings) and to Lord Dakshināmurti as "जिज्ञासु-मनोगत-हृण्मूर्ते" who is residing in the jijnāsu's heart. Through doing seva to the people of Bhāratavarsha "कुरु सेवाम्" (reach out and join in seva), a jijnāsu is able to get a mature and fertile mind, for the knowledge to be seen clearly. In the kriti on Devi Jñāneśwari, the jijnāsu asks help from Śruti Mātā to cross over the ocean of samsāra, "तारयमाम्". The jijnāsu is reassured and ensured that no matter he the worst sinner, the jñānam will help him cross over the ocean of samsāra in the kriti त्यजरे भव-भयतापम् अपि चेदसि पापकृतमः सर्वम् वृजिनम् सन्तरिष्यसि त्वम् Swamiji also imparts the teaching to a jijnāsu in two of his kritis त्यजरे भव-भयतापम् and भावये परमात्मानम्. In त्यजरे भव-भयतापम्, Swāmiji brings in the mahāvākya of the Gita ch13 verse 2. इदम् शरीरं क्षेत्रं हि विद्धि। क्षेत्रं यो वेत्ति सर्वेषु क्षेत्रेषु स हि परमात्मा अहमिति पश्य समाहितो भूत्वा i.e understand and know the body to be the kshetram within which the knower of the kshetra abides, know him to be the Paramātmā, the limitless self, I aham, with a calm pure and composed mind.

Thus from preparation of the mind up to the understanding, through śravaṇam and mananam, the jijnāsu, if he understands these words from a brahmaniṣṭha śrotriya guru, will be able to see the truth of himself. In the Kriti bhāvaye paramātmānam, which is a very contemplative kriti, for niddhidhyāsana, the jijnāsu contemplates on the limitless self.

As we move from an āṛta to an arthārthi to a jijnāsu bhakta, each can easily connect with ekarūpa bhakti to anekarūpa bhakti and move towards arūpa bhakti.

For a jñāni ज्ञानी विष्णोः तत्त्वविच्च he clearly sees arupa Gaṇapati as "प्रशस्तम् तटस्तम् समस्तम् परमपदम् नितान्त-शुद्धान्त" (altar of praise, changeless, source of all beings, limitless, bestower of blessings, ultimate goal) and arupa Śambho as "स्वयंभो निर्गुण-परब्रह्म-स्वरूप निजगुह-नितान्त, आनन्त-अक्षय, नित्य-निरंजन" (self existent, free of all attributes, Brahman, residing in the heart, untouched, limitless, not declining, incomparable, eternal, pure). Nirguṇa Someśvara as "पूतम् पवित्रम् प्रणव-स्वरूपम् नित्य-निरीहम् निगमान्तगम् कालान्तकम् (pure, purifier, in the form of Om, known through Vedānta, lord of time)

Śāradādevi as "स्वप्रकाश-रूपिणिम् शुभदाम् परापरविद्या" (self illumining, confers ultimate freedom, para and apara knowledge) Devi Mīnākṣī as परमगुह्य परब्रह्म सहाये (hidden in our hearts, creative power of limitless Brahman). Ṣaṇmukham as प्राज्ञं प्रणवार्थ-देशिकम् (all knowledge, meaning of Om). Subramanya as विश्वाकार-ओंकार-तत्त्वार्थमूर्ते, स्फूर्ते, सुकीर्ते (in the form of the universe, meaning of Om, manifest consciousness, lord of all glories) Lord Kṛṣṇā as "भावाभावानिर्वचनीयमाया सच्चित्-घनरसमूर्तिम् पुण्यमनोरथपूर्तिम् हृत्स्फूर्तिम् " (in the form of maya, essence of existence consciousness, fruition of all punya, illumining all hearts) Dakṣiṇāmurti as "मूर्ते अमूर्ते आगमसार-परिपूर्ण-आत्म प्रसीदहृश अधीहि ब्रह्म " (formless and with form, vision of the Vedas, ātma, limitless, lord of my heart). In the kriti on Śaṅkarācharya, the jñāni can relate to the words of विज्ञात-परात्म-निजस्वरूपम् ज्ञेयं ध्येयं गेयम् ie he knows his ātma as the paramātmā, the one which is to be known, contemplated upon and attained. Thus a jñāni can completely see the truth of the words of the kritis as arupam, and ātma as paramātmā, himself.

Although, a jñāni can connect and understand the truth of the entire kriti, the lyrics that the jñānis see themselves as, are in the second part of the charaṇam or in the second charaṇams of the kritis. In the Bho Śambho kriti, the ultimate culmination of the jīva-jagat-iśvara-aikyam can be understood through its words which are put together in such a way that one cannot but look at the truth of Advaita revealing satyam and mithya and thus Oneness. Where there is the clay satyam, there need not be the pot mithya, but where there is the pot mithya, there definitely is the clay satyam". Swamiji has added a final tarāṇa in the kriti as the second charaṇam, dimita dimita dimi.. which depicts the tāṇḍava nritya of naṭeśa, naṭarāja śambho, indicating the dance of Isvara in the form of the entire jagat. Thus for a jñāni, who sees that where there is mithya, definitely there is satyam; where there is Prakṛiti, there is the Puruṣa sees the only One, the Himself in everyone and everything, thus depicting the Oneness.

Bhagavān Kṛṣṇā in the Gita ch10, says, I am the Sāma Veda amongst all the Vedas. वेदानाम् सामवेदोऽस्मि

All music has its origin in the Sāma. In fact, all the four Vedas are chanted, not read. With music as a form of expression, through the rāga, bhāva, swarās, tune and phrases; the śabda pramāṇa, the words come alive and establish an immediate and direct connection with the mind of the bhakta.

The āṛta, arthāṛti, jīṣāsu can sing or listen to these kritis, connect fully with the words and each kriti becomes a prayer towards the presiding devata and each bhakta has the potential to become a nāda- upāsaka. In this manner, the kritis connect with every bhakta, every seeker in his entire journey of seeking the sought, seeking moksha. The understanding of the jñāni resonates with all the words of the kriti as he sees himself as the swarupa of all forms and has understood that he was always muktaḥ.

Thus, no bhakta, no one, is denied Oneness. No one is rejected. No one left out. As Advaita, all are in Me and I am in all, I accept all as myself. मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि .And Pujya Swamiji, through his melodious Advaitic kritis continues being true to the name conferred upon him of being Dayānanda, the one who is all compassionate, all inclusive, denying no one, accepting each and every one, as all are in him, and he is in all.

Om Tat Sat.

By Sonali Ambasankar

(Sonali Ambasankar is a student of Swamini Brahmajnanananda. A singer with training in Hindustani classical music, Sonali has learnt the kritis of Pujya Swamiji from Darshanaji.

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References : Compositions of Swami Dayānanda Saraswati, published by Swami Dayānanda

Satabhishekam Celebration Committee, Coimbatore. Compositions of Swami Dayānanda Saraswati, from the Teachings of Swami Dayānanda app by Arsha Vidya Research and Publication Trust.

Swami Sadatmananda Ji released a book during the 60th Birth Day celebration of Perur Adheenam Sri Marudhachala Adigalar on 3rd February 2020. Swamiji also presented a three-face rudraksha mala to the pontiff.



Vedic Astrology Camp

January 4-11, 2020,AVG, Anaikatti, Coimbatore

A one-week residential camp on Introduction to Vedic astrology was conducted at AVG, Anaikatti from January 4 -11, 2020 by Swami Jagadatmananda Saraswati. There were 28 participants attended the camp. This was the 3rd of such camps organized by AVG. Inaugurating the camp Swami Sadatmananda Saraswati explained the meaning of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam as the place of learning of the knowledge which has come from the rishis. He then explained the role of the Vedangas and highlighted that jyotisham or Vedic astrology is one of the Vedangas, the study of which is important to understand the teaching of the Vedas. He also explained the role of astrology in our lives emphasizing that we should avoid the two extremes of dismissing astrology as superstition or getting obsessed. He professed that one should adopt a balanced approach and use our free will for deciding the course of events in our lives. He said that Jyotisha does not believe in determinism or fatalism.

In this camp Swami Jagadatmananda inculcated the fundamental rules of Vedic Astrology based on *Parashara Hora Sashtra* which were helpful to understand one's own strength and weaknesses. The principles of Panchanga and the practical methods of adoption on daily basis for a prosperous and harmonious life was the highlight of the camp. Swamiji also emphasised that astrology is not a faith but there are more things to understand. In all his teachings he emphasised the need of following dharma in our life. The course material provided was excellent and useful take home of the widely covered subject.

There was Satsanga at the end of each day with full of laughter and sharing of experiences kept the participants with undiminishing enthusiasm. There were some interesting insights into how predictive astrology can be accurate to a very high degree.

Overall, there was a very positive feedback for this course. The course ended with a brief valedictory function held on 11th January, 2020 where the participants received the blessings of both the acharyas Swami Sadatmanandaji and Swami Jagadatmanandaji.

Feedback from the participants of the camp:

Mr.Ganapati

..... I was able to understand the symbiotic relationship between astrology and advaita Vedanta of which I am a student, practitioner and a teacher.

More specifically, in my view, the study and understanding of astrology helps a mumukshu and a jigyasu in the following manner:

Firstly, it helps in bringing more and more ishwara in our lives

Secondly, when we start our day with the panchangam and conduct our daily lives with a good understanding of what is in store for us on a given day, we can use our free will to manage the daily affairs with least problems and maximum positive and happy outcomes

The third aspect is with a good understanding of the subject, we can guide people around us for them also to lead a dharmic and stress-free life.....

Mr.Vikram

The first thing that touched me was the simplicity and humility with which Swamiji conducts himself, in spite of the profound wisdom that he carries He taught astrology always from the viewpoint of Vedanta. He kept repeating that we suffer due our own deeds and we enjoy also due to our own deeds..

Every time I think of swerving from the path of Dharma after this course, I will be reminded of the karmic effects and the planetary combinations that I am producing for myself!

I am going back a changed person, Swamiji, an inspired person to lead a more Dharmic life. I remember a meaningful & famous quote, "One person can inspire many and those many can inspire many more..."

Mr.Ramkumar

..... My initial idea to understand and interpret in astrology was different but after being taught (initiated) by you Swamiji everything has changed. Astrology is an ocean and I would kindly request you to please accept me and guide me to the next level of astrology.

Dayananda Anugraha Fund for 2019

Report

The Dayananda Anugraha Fund was established in 2016 to provide financial support to direct and indirect disciples of Pujya Swami Dayananda. In 2019, 5 grants totalling Rs 4 lakh were awarded for living and medical expenses, and 2 grants totalling Rs 8 lakh were awarded for ashram repairs/construction. Also, funding and construction of the Dayananda Anugraha Bhavan in Haridwar was completed and the new residential facility is now ready for occupancy.

Many thanks to the Fund's committee members for overseeing this important work: Swami Viditatmananda, Swami Sakshatkritananda, Swamini Brahmaprakashananda, Swami Sadatmananda, Swami Shankarananda, Swami Tattvavidananda, Swami Santatmananda, and Suddhatma Chaitanya.

Any disciple in our parampara who is in need of support is invited to visit <http://www.dayanandafund.org>

or

contact

Dayananda Anugraha Fund, Arsha Bodha Center, 84 Cortelyous Lane, Somerset, New Jersey, USA 08873. Donations for the Dayananda Anugraha Fund may also be sent to the above address.

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

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A Mahātmā's Mahāyajñā draws to its finale



The sacred text of the Bhagavadgita, consisting of 700 verses spread over 18 chapters, is the direct teaching of Lord Krishna to Arjuna. The text is significant for the universality of its teachings without the trappings of any sectarian dogmas or secular ideology. That the Gītā was deliberated upon by great and varied thinkers like Śaṅkarācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer and others, and has been translated into almost all the languages in the world is testimony to its being a timeless guide and manual of life for all human beings. Like Bhagīratha who brought the celestial Ganga down to earth to gain release of his 60000 uncles from the curse of Kapila Ṛṣi, Ācāryas like Pūjya Swami Chinmayananda Sarasvatī, Pūjya Swami Dayānanda Sarasvatī and their disciples have made relentless efforts to take the message of the eternal ‘Song of the Lord’ to people of all walks of life. And today, we are the most blessed to receive the same teachings of the Upaniṣads and the Gītā through “a consistent and systematic study for a considerable length of time under the guidance of a competent living guru” like H.H. Swami Paramārthananda Sarasvatī.

This write-up is a humble tribute to Swami Paramārthananda who started a ‘systematic study’ on the *Bhagavadgītā-Śaṅkara-bhāṣyam* at Astika Samajam, Chennai, in 2006, continued regularly and persistently and concluded at the same venue on January 31, 2020. He imparted the teachings of Śaṅkarācārya’s *bhāṣyam* to a variety of students. Holding the attention and continued interest of a serious disciple or a sincere seeker through six hundred classes is indeed a marathon feat.

The mega-series of Swamiji’s lectures did go through a few unforeseen breaks. Yet, thanks to the grace of our guru who is none other than Brahman, it is our great fortune that the profundity of the text was unfolded in depth by a great spiritual master to us and future generations. All the lectures in the series are available as CDs from Sasraprakasika Trust, Chennai.

Through similar mahāyajñā-s, Swami Paramārthananda Sarasvatī continues his selfless service of sharing the ancient wisdom enshrined in our scriptural literature to hundreds of students directly and many more indirectly through social media.

Reported by Dr. Radha Raghunathan.

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Arsha Vidya Pitham

Swami Dayananda Ashram, Swami Dayananda Nagar, RISHIKESH: 249137

We are pleased to announce the commencement of a long term residential course in Vedanta, Sanskrit and allied subjects for a period of three years, likely to start on 26th October 2020. This will be preceded by a one month course from 5th August to 3rd September, 2020.

- Separate application forms for the one month and long term course are appended. Those who wish to join the long term course have to go through the one month course while those who wish to join the one month course need not necessarily join the long term course.
- The last date for submission of application is 30th April, 2020. Those selected for the one month course will be intimated by the end of May 2020.
- Accommodation will be on shared basis for the one month course.
- Those who join the one month course and wish to continue for the long term course will not have direct entry but will go through the selection process.
- The teaching is offered free of any cost. However, the ashram is run on voluntary donations. So voluntary donations are welcome.
- Foreigners applying for the one month course may come on a visitor's visa. Once selected for the long term course, process for student's visa will be initiated.

Qualifications for joining the one month/three year course

- Graduates who know to read/write /speak good English.
- Students below the age of 40 years (subject to exceptions) and bachelors will be preferred for three year course.
- The climate in Rishikesh is extremely hot summers and extremely cold winters. Students must have the capacity to endure the same.
- A daily routine for students to follow is enclosed along with application forms for one month and three year courses along with the syllabus.
- All classes will be compulsory.

other details are available in the website. The address is www.dayananda.org

Completed application forms with a PP size photograph may be sent to avp3year2020@gmail.com. For any further details you may write to us at the same address.

RISHIKESH

SWAMI SAKSHATKRTANANDA SARASWATI, CHIEF ACARYA

Sanyasa Diksha at Rishikesh during Mahasivaratri



Seven students were initiated into the order of sanyasa in Rishikesh by Swami Sakshatkritananda in Mahasivaratri Day this year, 2020.

They are

1. Radha from 2010-2013 Anaikatti Course - Ramaadhavaananda Saraswati
2. Girija from 2010-2013 Anaikatti Course - Girijaatmaananda Saraswati
3. Bhaskara Caitanya from 2009-2013 Nagpur Course - Saccinmayananda Saraswati
4. Sridhar from 2009-2013 Nagpur Course - Sadevananda Saraswati
5. Anita from Rishikesh Course - Anupamananda Saraswati
6. Vasudeva Rao from 2012-2016 Rishikesh Course - Vishnutattvananda Saraswati
7. Swaminatha Priya from 2014-2017 Anaikatti Course - Swaminathapriyananda Saraswati

Swami Veditatmanadaji's śatābhiṣeka celebration

January 26 through February 2, 2020



According to Bodhāyana smṛti, when an individual completes 80 years, 8 months and 8 days of life, he happens to see 1000 full moons and is therefore eligible for śatābhiṣeka ceremony. Swami Veditatmanandaji, the most enlightened, illustrious, venerated and senior disciple of Pujya Swami Dayānandaji completed 80 years, 8 months and 8 days on January 29, 2020. Very naturally, Adhyatma Vidya Mandir, Ahmedabad (The institute for teaching the knowledge of Vedanta founded by Swami Veditatmanandaji) decided to celebrate śatābhiṣeka of their 'Guru' on a grand scale. It was an opportunity to express their devotion, respect and gratitude towards their teacher who has been ceaselessly disseminating knowledge to them for the past 41 years. Swami Veditatmanandaji is wise man, a mahātmā who has fulfilled the purpose of this rare human birth. Not only has Swamiji fulfilled the purpose of human life for himself but has led many people on that path. Obviously it becomes a cause for celebration. Adhyatma Vidya Mandir in fact, declared the whole year beginning from January 2019 to February 2020 as śatābhiṣeka year. A host of enlightening programs were organised through out the year, such as talks on śrīmadbhāgavatam, Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Prasthānatrayī Pārāyaṇa etc. The culmination came in the form of a week long program beginning from January 26 to February 2, 2020.

To enumerate :

January 26, 2020 : 7 to 8:30 p.m. -

A program of bhajans and patriotic songs.

January 27, 2020 : 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. -

Learned priests from Karṇātaka began the ceremony with KalaśSthāpanam and SahasraModakaAtharvaśīrṣaHoma.

January 27, 2020 : 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.-

A hindi play, 'Navadhā Bhakti'.

It was a wonderful play dramatizing 9 different ways of invoking devotion for Lord. The play was written by Swamini Parprajnananda and directed by Dr. Vikram Panchal.

January 28, 2020 : 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. -

RudraEkādashiHoma with Mahānyāsa, RudratrīśatiArcanā and Abhiṣeka on lord śiva.

January 28, 2020 : 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. -

Bhajan Sandhyā: 'Vande Gurum Sadaram'

It was a program of bhajans with central theme of Guru, the teacher. All the bhajanas were penned by Swamini Vidyaprakashanandaji.

Souvenir: on the same day a souvenir sketching the life and contribution of Swami Veditatmanandaji was released.

Publication of C.D. and Pendrive:

On the same day a C.D. and Pendrive containing the bhajans and stotrās on Guru were published.

January 29, 2020 : 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. -

śatābhiṣeka ceremony was carried out on Swamiji by Acāryā Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara śhri Bhārati Bāpu and other senior sannyāsīs. It was the most pious and remarkable moment. Everybody present prayed for Swamiji's long and healthy life and sought his blessings.

January 29, 2020 : 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. -

A hindi play: 'Jagadguru ādi śankarācārya'.

This play was written by Swamini Vidyaprakashanandaji and directed by Dr. Vikram Panchal marvellously sketches the wondrous life and works of Bhagavatpād ādi śankarācāryaji.

January 30,31 and February 1, 2020

Talks on Īśāvāsyopaniṣad by Acāryā Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Swami śhri Puṇyanandagiriji.

Talks on Pañcadaśī, chapter 5 by Acāryā Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Swami śhri Viśvatmanandagiriji.

February 2, 2020 : 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. -

Talks by mahātmās and a bhaṇḍārā for sādhus.

The entire event was a thorough success and left an indelible mark on all who witnessed it. The week long program was attended by a number of ārṣa vidya Sannyāsis and other Mahātmās. The students of Swami Veditatmanandaji from India as well as U.S.A. and U.K. attended the program. It was undoubtedly a memorable and inspiring event and a befitting offering replete with gratitude to a great Mahātmā.

Thank you!

A Report on śatābhiṣeka celebration prepared by Swamini Paraprajnanada.

Retreats offered by AVG Anaikatti

The following are the retreats planned in 2020. More camps may be announced in as and when they are planned. Every retreat will include temple puja, meditation, classes on Vedanta, satsang (Question and answer sessions). Sessions on Chanting, yoga and sanskrit may also be included in some retreats. Participation in Gurukula seva during the camp as needed will be appreciated.

You may register for these retreats at <http://arshavidya.in/camps-retreats>

Retreat Id	Retreat Dates	Retreat Description
V20-01	Saturday, 11th April, 8pm to Saturday, 18th April, 12:30pm	<p>7 day retreat on <i>Meditation for self-growth and self-discovery</i> with Swami Shankarananda.</p> <p>The retreat will cover the vision of Vedanta in brief, understanding of dhyata, dhyeyam and dhyanam (the meditator, object of meditation and meditation), and the role of meditation in self-growth and self-discovery. The process of meditation along with some techniques and salient types of meditation will also be covered. There will be of course be guided meditation sessions.</p>

SUMEDHA-2019

(Life Skills Development Contest)

Aarsha Samskriti, Hyderabad successfully completed SUMEDHA-2019, with the major support of **Arsha Dharma Seva Trust, Bangalore & Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Ashram, Canada** and other wellwishers and contributors. Aarsha Samskriti encouraged few local organaisations / trusts to conduct this contest in their areas. Smt. Kumuda and Sri Prabhakar Reddy were taken majar responsibilities as a project directors form introdcing the contest to prizes distribution under the guidance of Sri Pulluri Srinivas (Managing Trustee, Aarsha Samskriti) and many other volunteers are supported to complete SUMEDHA-2019 successfully.

SUMEDHA-2019 was introduced into 206 schools and 49,723 students took part from class 6 standard to 10 standard. Further bifercation is given in the following table.

District	Cl-6	Cl-7	Cl-8	Cl-9	Cl-10	Total	Prizes	No. Of Schools
Hyderabad	7,303	7,215	7,382	7,069	6,906	35,867	2,216	148
Siddipet	1,755	1,859	2,002	1,946	1,899	9,461	756	34
Janagam	190	178	284	306	368	1,326	159	10
Warangal	501	574	660	695	639	3,069	250	14
	9,749	9,826	10,328	10,008	9,812	49,723	3,381	203



SUMEDHA-2019 (Life Skills Development Contest) was conducted based on a specially created question paper separatly for juinors (6 & 7 standard) and seniors (8, 9 & 10 standard) based on the values.

For Seniors based on the attitudes and aptitudes towards the selected values to improve the life-skills, for example:

Educate yourself to know / to be.

Academic excellence leads to get a job/ long term success and satisfaction.

The purpose of life is to find opportunity / to find happiness.



Also multiple choice thought provoking, value based questions, each question will have four answers and each answer will carry different marks/points. These questions are not meant to judge the students but to understand their priorities, based on the answers lectures / talks are given in the schools while distributing the certificates and prizes. For example:

Which aspect of friendship do you value the most?

- a. Friends have your best interests in mind
- b. We can rely on each other
- c. You can rely on her/him when needed
- d. Your friend accepts you the way you are

Selected value based stories for comprehension passages with questions; to inculcate values and life-skills.

For juniors, comprehension passages with questions to inculcate the ideas about the values.





RESIDENTIAL SPIRITUAL CAMP

at

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BHAJA GOVINDAM (in Tamil)
by N. Avinashilingam

SADANA PANCAKAM (in Tamil)
by Ponmani Avinashilingam



Dates: **March 14 & 15, 2020**
(Saturday & Sunday)

Those who are interested to participate please contact:



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Astrology Camp Photo

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Taipusam Puja At AVG February 2020