

Valedictory function of 108 days Vedanta course at AVG, Anaikatti

On Dec 18th 2019, a valedictory function was organized to formally mark the conclusion of the 108 day Vedanta course. The lecture hall was decorated with garlands of flowers, and the path to the lecture hall was laden with exquisite *koLams*. A small but emotionally charged *pooja* was performed to Pujya Swamiji's *moorti*, with an *archana*, to start the final proceedings. Suguna ji, as the Master of Ceremonies then took over, to smoothly conduct the program which involved thanksgiving by various students, followed by *anugraha bhaashaNam* by both Acharya Sadatmananda ji, and Swami Veditatmananda ji.



Both Swamis urged the graduating students to concentrate on the values in daily life which is the *saadhana* necessary for transformation and acquiring *adhikaaritam* for *moksha*. Acharya ji started by quoting *manushyatvam, mumukshutvam, mahaapurusha samshrayaha....* He emphasized the value of values, our commitment to them, introspection, prayer to *ishwara*, as well as the importance of *satsangha*. Acharya ji also reiterated that we ought not to make judgments on ourselves based on physical, emotional, financial, and social conditions. *shaastra* is *pramaaNam* to know what/who I am, not our feelings, as Pujya Swamiji used to say. He later focussed on the instructions of *Shikshavalli* from *Taittiriya Upanishad*, let there not be carelessness about our *shaastra* study, let it be a part of our routine. We students had chanted this section of the *Upanishad* at the beginning of the program, as part of our showcase of what we had learnt from Swamini Ammas in the chanting class (*'satyam vada, dharmam chara'* etc), finally, he emphasized the quality of gratitude towards our *Arsha sampradaaya*, our *gurus*, and their teachings.

Swami Veditatmananda ji said that he was happy to note that the students seemed to have developed a great bond with the Acharya, and had also learnt a lot in spite of the discipline which could usually cause rebelliousness in most people. He congratulated Acharya ji, especially for making the students recognize that this was for their benefit. To fill up Pujya Swamiji's shoes is not at all an easy task, yet Acharyaji has managed to perform the role demanded of him well, said Swami ji admiringly. Swami ji also dwelt on how students are moulded by their teachers, and hence it is essential that we studied from one teacher for a length of time to ensure proper tuning, understanding of the teaching style, for developing a good relationship, and to make our learning more fruitful. Swami ji stressed on the aspect of *svaadhyaya*, and repeating what we study to firm up our learning.

In the end, all the students of the 108 day course as well as the 3 day camp lined up respectfully to receive the blessings from Acharya ji, Swami Veditatmananda ji, all the teachers of Sanskrit and Chanting, and also to receive *prasaada* in the form of books by Pujya Swami ji on Karma Yoga and Vishnu Sahasranamam. To get an idea of all that we covered in these 3 ½ months Karan Bhatt, one of the speakers at the valedictory, listed out the data: 149 classes of Bhagavad Geeta, 68 classes of Tattvabodha, 73 Meditation classes, All the temple prayers/ *mantras*, the entire Bhagavad Geeta chanting, along with 13 different *stotrams*, 82 Satsang classes where we learnt 8 different texts, and 90 classes of Sanskrit in 3 different levels, where students of the first level for example, learnt the samskrutam alphabet from scratch, and reached the 10th chapter of the Infant Reader, in such a short span!

All in all it was a very overwhelming experience, which left many a student teary eyed, and emotionally choked, yet with a determination to imbibe the teachings.



-Report by Kavita