

GURU PURNIMA RETREAT AT ANAIKATTI, COIMBATORE

Guru Purnima Retreat was held at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti from July 10, 2022 to July 13, 2022. Swami Sadatmananda taught Manisha Panchakam and Swami Jagadatmananda taught selected verses from Guru Gita. 80 persons mostly from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana attended the retreat. One family of five from Coimbatore, consisting of three generations attended. The campers also took part in the Guru Purnima puja at the Gurukulam on July 13, 2022. A summary of the classes is presented.

MANISHA PANCHAKAM: Manisha Panchakam means a vision with conviction presented in a group of five verses. This text is written by Sankaracharya. Manisha Panchakam is an expository text which presents the vision of prasatna trayam.

There is an incident in the life of Sankaracharya. When Sankaracharya was going to Kasi, on the way a Chandala came before him. Sankaracharya told, 'Go away'. Lord Shiva had come in the disguise of a Chandala. The Chandala asked, "What do you want to move, the body which is annamaya or the atma? As both bodies are annamaya, it need not move. As atma is one all pervasive consciousness it cannot move." Sankaracharya understood that the Chandala was none other than Lord Shiva and worshipped him.

The first verse is an explanation of 'Prajnanam Brahma' maha vakya. I am the consciousness which is invariably present in all the three states of experience. It is present as a witness in all bodies from Brahmaji to an ant. There is no difference in consciousness.. If anyone has this knowledge, whether he is Brahmana or chandala, he deserves to be my Guru.

The second verse is an explanation of 'Aham Brahmasmi' maha vakya. I am the adistanam Brahman on which the whole world is superimposed. The world being an effect, does not exist apart from the cause Brahman. The whole world is an expansion on consciousness alone. The whole world is projected by me with the help of maya. I am the sakshi of the body and mind. I am ever pure.

The third verse is an explanation of 'Tat Tvam Asi' maha vakya. Live a life of karma yoga doing right action with right attitude. Meditate on Isvara with the aid of astanga yoga. Composure of mind gives the desire to know about the self. Through sravanam, mananam and nididhyasanam get firm knowledge of Brahman. You will have jivan mukti and videha mukti.

The fourth verse is an explanation of 'Ayam atma Brahma'. Consciousness is very well recognised in the mind as 'I am' by animals, human beings and celestials. Only due to

sun, clouds are seen. But clouds seem to cover the sun. Only due to consciousness or Brahman, the body, mind and senses are illumined. But they seem to cover Brahman for an ignorant person. But for the wise person Brahman is evident and his mind is fulfilled.

The fifth verse explains the nature of ananda and gives the benefit of self knowledge. I am free from limitations of time, space and object. My nature is ananda. All experiential happiness is a small manifestation of my ananda svarupa, even for Indra. A wise person is fulfilled having owned up this ananda in a quiet mind. His mind is absorbed in nitya svarupa sukam. He is not a knower of Brahman. But he is Brahman. He is worshipped by Indra and other devatas. Such a person is a Guru.

O Shiva! As body, I am your servant. As jiva, I am your amsa. As atma, I am you. This is my well ascertained knowledge from scriptures.

GURU GITA: Guru Gita means song of the Guru. This appears in Skanda Purana written by Vyasacharya. There are 272 verses in this. This is a dialogue between Lord Shiva and Parvati. This dialogue was narrated by Suta Maharishi to his disciples. In the camp selected 31 verses were taught.

The disciples requested Suta Maharishi to teach them the secret of secrets. Maharishi told that Parvati asked the same question to Lord Shiva. The Lord replied that Parvati was para Brahman and she asked for benefit of the humanity. The student should serve the Guru and remove papam. Then he would be eligible for this knowledge.

Atma jnanam can be obtained with guru bakthi. Worship the Guru with your thought, word and deeds. Do sastanga namaskara to the Guru. Guru is the formless self who has crossed the three gunas. Contemplation on Guru is contemplation on Lord Shiva. Worship of Guru is worship of Lord Shiva. We should meditate on Guru's form. We should worship Guru's feet. We should revere the Guru's words as mantra. We will gain moksa due to Guru's grace.

Guru can bless me with material prosperity. Guru is an embodiment of knowledge. He always dwells on Tat Tvam Asi maha vakyam. He teaches maha vakyam to disciples. The disciples gain moksa. Atma jnanam is Guru's prasada.

The curse from Muni, Snake or Devatas can be removed by the Guru. Guru protects the disciples from the fear of death. For the one who worships the Guru, all papams are removed and all wants are removed. Devotion makes the disciples ripe. Lord Shiva concluded the teaching and told Parvati was always dear to him.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

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