



Arsha Vidya Newsletter

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Varshabhisheka Puja Guru Vandanam



Varshabhisheka Puja (First Anniversary of AVG Temple Kumbhabhishekam)

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*Arsha Vidya
Newsletter*

In fearless voice may
we proclaim

The Rishi's message
from all house-tops

And bring the men
of different claim

To a fold of Love
where oneness lasts!

śraddhā-bhakti-dhyāna-yogād avaihi

Fifth part of the serial article continued from June 2019 issue.

Need for sraddha on the part of sastra and guru discussion continues....

Now you understand what *śraddhā* implies—determining¹ that the sentences of the *śāstra* are valid, whether you understand them. If you do not understand, you look into the *śāstra* again and reconcile all the differences. Therefore, you use *anukūla-tarka*, conducive reasoning, to help you understand the *śāstra*. You do not use reason to dismiss the *śāstra*. This is *śraddhā*. If *śraddhā* is there, then your knowledge of grammar, language, and knowledge of other disciplines will all help you understand the *śāstra*. If *śraddhā* is not there, then all these will only distract you and keep you away from the *śāstra*.

Whenever an occasion arises, Śaṅkara says in his commentaries, “*śāstra-ācārya-upadeśam anu*, following a teacher’s teaching of the *śāstra*.” Śaṅkara always refers to both *śāstra* and *ācārya* together. So *śāstra* is taught by an *ācārya*. At one place Śaṅkara says,² “Even if a person is a great scholar in the *śāstra*, he should not inquire into Brahman without the help of a guru.” Therefore, Brahmaji said to Āśvalāyana, “*śraddhayā avaihi*, know through *śraddhā*.”

BHAKTI

Now we have the *śāstra* and the *guru*. Then what more is needed? Nothing more is needed. If a person has the *guru*, he will definitely know. If the *guru* is there, it means the *śāstra* is there; if the *śāstra* is there, it means *jñāna* will be there. Therefore, the *śāstra* says, “*ācāryavān puruṣo veda*, one who has a teacher knows.”³

It is a very bold statement. But one person says,

“Swamiji, I have a *guru* but nothing happens.”

“Did you do what the *guru* asked you to do?”

“He only says, ‘Do this, do that, do *japa*’.”

¹ *Śāstrasya guruvākyasya satya-buddhyavadhāraṇā sā śraddhā...*

(*Viveka Cudāmaṇi* 26) - The determination that the *śāstra* and the words of the *guru* are true (is said to be *śraddhā*).

² *Śāstrajñopi svātantryeṇa brahmānveṣaṇam na kuryāt* (*Muṇḍaka Bhāṣya* 1.2.12).

³ *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 6.14.2

It points out one more thing that one needs—and that is *bhakti*. *Bhakti* *avaihi*, know through *bhakti*. The *anugraha*, grace, of *śāstra* and *ācārya* are not enough. You need *īśvara-anugraha*. The word '*bhakti*' is there to show the need for *īśvara-anugraha*. *Bhakti* conveys the meaning of doing *sevā*. There are lot of *duritas* in the form of various obstacles in everyone's life which come in the way of our accomplishing things. In our daily prayers like *sandhyāvandana* or in performing rituals on special days there is a *saṅkalpa*⁴ that we do. While doing the *saṅkalpa* we say, "I do this *karma* to please *Īśvara* through the neutralisation of all *duritas* I have accumulated so far."⁵ Some modify this *saṅkalpa* to "I do this *karma* to please *Śrī Mahāviṣṇu*..."⁶ *Parameśvara* and *Mahāviṣṇu* are one *Īśvara* only. The word '*prītyartha*' means to earn the *anugraha* of *Īśvara*. You achieve this by removing all your *duritas*.

Durita means *pāpa*, the cause that gives rise to sorrow and pain. Centred on one's body there can be obstacles in the form of diseases. Centred on the world there can be obstacles like a quarrelling neighbour and so on. Then, there are obstacles from unseen forces. These three types of *tāpas*, sufferings, are caused by *durita*. One has to pile up enough grace of *Īśvara*, through prayerful *karmas*, to neutralise the *duritas* so that one can be at the right time at the right place. The following narration will enlighten us on the need for *Īśvara*'s grace.

One blind person was returning from the fort after seeing the king. He had to come out of the fort. Nobody was available except the inner gatekeeper and he would not leave the gate. The blind man wanted some help. The gatekeeper said, "You take the help of this wall by passing your hands on it all the way until the main door comes, and then you can go out. There someone will help you."

So the blind man went along the wall, but again he came back to where the inner gatekeeper was. The gatekeeper asked,

"Why did you come back here?"

"Oh! I thought this was the gate."

"How did you miss the gate?"

"I went along the wall, but there was no gate."

"How can you say there is no gate? There is a gate."

⁴ *Saṅkalpa* is a step in a ritual wherein the intention of doing the ritual is stated.

⁵ *Mama-upātta-samasta-durita-kṣaya-dvārā śrī- parameśvaraprītyartham aham idaṁ kariṣye.*

⁶ *Mama-upātta-samasta-durita-kṣaya-dvārā śrī-mahāviṣṇuprītyartham aham idaṁ kariṣye.*

But how did he miss the gate? This man kept walking, touching the wall. Then he had some itch, and in order to scratch, he removed his hand but went on moving. After scratching, again touching the wall he went on walking. Thus, he went round and round because he had the itch exactly when the gate came for him to go out. The itch came only at that time. Think of it. This is some *durita* only.

Similarly, when one has to understand the *śāstra*, while listening, one falls asleep. The *guru* is teaching well, he also listens, but at the time of an important revelation he falls asleep. Then he wakes up and sees only the grammar. This is *durita*. When I was attending a Vedanta class on *Brahmasūtra* in Rishikesh, one Swami used to sleep in the class. He did want to listen, but he used to fall asleep. The teacher would not talk about it. He would continue teaching. One day, he himself could not take it anymore. He said in Hindi “*ye sunne ka baat hai, ye sone ka baatnahi hai*, this is a matter for listening and not for sleeping.” Sleep is a *durita*, an obstacle to one’s effort. One must do a lot of *pūjā*, *japa* etc., only then things fall in place. There is no other way. To earn the grace of Īśvara, *bhakti* is necessary.

Bhakti is a *lakṣaṇa* for *karma*. *Bhakti* should be taken as *bhakti-pūrvaka-karma*, action done with *bhakti*. In the *Gītā* Arjuna asks a question,⁷ “What happens to a person who, even though endowed with *śraddhā*, puts forth inadequate effort and hence, does not make it in this life?” *Śraddhā* is there but something else is not there. What is that missing ‘something?’ *Īśvara-anugraha* is not there.

For the word ‘grace’ the equivalent in Sanskrit is ‘*anugraha*’. There is a difference between the two. God determines grace but you earn. God decides to whom he should give grace. Every day he should make a lucky dip. Otherwise, on what basis will God extend his grace? If you say that there is some good *karma*, then the result of that good *karma* alone is *anugraha*. Why should we use the word ‘grace’ then? The graceful expression of *karma-phala* is *anugraha*. So we can use the word ‘grace’. We do not know which *karma* was responsible for this blessing, for this favourable situation. If we cannot make the connection, then we say it is grace.

In this *janma*, birth, we have brought along with us some *karmas*. They are collectively called *prārabdha-karma*. It is *ārabdha-karma*, a *karma* that has begun to fructify and is getting exhausted now. This *prārabdha-karma* has some good *karma*. We cannot say when it was gathered. We cannot say it was gathered in the immediate previous birth or this birth. The previous birth may not have been human. Therefore, we are constrained to use the word grace. From the *sañcita*, accumulated *karmas*, certain *karmas* precipitate looking for a body, clamouring for a body. Those *karmas* that clamour for a body are many. One set of *karmas* may be ready to give you a *janma* of a cat and another, a *janma* of a rat. So, there are different types of *karmas*—all are clamouring, ‘I want, I want, I want.’

⁷ Ayatiḥ śraddhayopetaḥ yogāccalita-mānasaḥ ... kām gatiṁ kṛṣṇa gacchati (Bhagavad Gītā 6.37).

Among them, the powerful ones cause this particular body. If you come to Vedanta, then the next *janma* is assured to be a good *janma* for you, because you have to pick up the thread. Already due to good *karma* done now or before, you have come to Vedanta, you desire *mokṣa*. You are on an onward track because of cumulative *karmas* and you never trace back. Why? Because this journey is one you have set for yourself and you are given an assurance in the *Gītā* by the Lord ⁸: “Anyone who performs good actions never reaches a bad end. Having gained the worlds belonging to those who do good actions, and having lived there for countless years, the one who did not succeed in *yoga*, a spiritual pursuit, is born in the home of wealthy and cultured people who are committed to *dharma*. Or he is indeed born into the family of wise *yogins*.” Even as a child he would be listening to Vedanta.

I once went to Ahmedabad from Mumbai. In the Mumbai airport there was a big queue for security check. Boarding was announced for the Ahmedabad flight and I was standing in the security line; the line was very long. Then an airline staff member came and called ‘ Ahmedabad.., Ahmedabad.., Ahmedabad.., Ahmedabad...’ Now, all those bound for Ahmedabad were taken out of the security line and allowed to board the plane. So, even if you are in a queue, you cross all the others and board the flight. This is how Bhagavān also calls: ‘*mokṣa.., mokṣa.., mokṣa.., mokṣa...*’ If you are ready to board the *mokṣa* flight, you are taken out of the big queue of other *karmas* waiting to give you a body and taken forward by Īśvara. This is how Īśvara in the form of the law of *karma* works

...to be continued

⁸...*nahi kalyāṇakṛt kaścid durgatim tāta gacchati* (6.40). *Prāpya puṇya-kṛtām lokān uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ śucīnām śrīmatām gehe yogabhraṣṭo’bhijāyate* (6.41). *Atha vā yogināmeva kule bhavati dhīmatām...* (6.42).

Book of Enlightening Laughters

Collection of Stories & Anecdotes From the Talks of
(Sri Swami Dayanandaji's lectures)

One Cannot Accept Eye-brows! (002)

You cannot be happy thinking that you are a mortal, thinking that you do not have money, thinking that you are losing the hair on your head, thinking the hair is turning grey, thinking about your height and weight, about your colour, the shape of your nose and eyebrows. People worry about even their eyebrows. There is no self-acceptance on our part.

One Indian woman built a house on eyebrows in Canada. She went to Canada just three years before. She learned some skills there and picked up a job and built her own dream house in three years. She invited me for a bhikṣā in her house and I went there. I asked her :

“What do you do?”

“Swamiji, I am a beautician.”

“What do you do? Do you cut hair or what?” I asked her. I did not know much about it. I had not seen a barber for decades. Here beautician means hair-cutter.

“You do not want to know,” she said.

“I want to know, what do you do?” I said. Once she said you do not want to know, naturally I wanted to know. That is how I get all these ideas.

She was very hesitant. Slowly I made her speak. She came up with this reply. Do you know what she told me? She pulls the eyebrows of people. She did not say it in words. But she indicated by the action of her fingers. I said, “My God! You built a house by pulling the eye-brows!”

You can understand how many eyebrows she must have pulled out to build a house paying taxes, etc. She further said that there are many on the waiting list. That means you can understand how many people suffer. Suffer, what for? Due to eyebrows.

You can understand how many eyebrows she must have pulled out to build a house paying taxes, etc. She further said that there are many on the waiting list. That means you can understand how many people suffer. Suffer, what for? Due to eyebrows. They do not like the shape of their eye-brows. Everybody, male or female, does not accept something or other about him/herself. Leave alone one's complex about one's knowledge and emotions. At the level of physical appearance itself there are varieties of complexes starting from eye-brows. Nobody likes his or her weight, height, colour and so on.

With all these complexes, one cannot accept oneself as one is. If there is one person who says, 'I love you,' then I become acceptable to myself. The whole person is accepted. At least in the eye of one person you are acceptable as you are and he has no judgement about you and he positively loves you. You need only one such person. What a great acceptance it is. Then you do not care anymore about your eyebrows and so on. Our self acceptance is so low that many times we cannot even believe that the other person loves us.

The struggle to seek acceptance from others is due to our love of being a pleased person. We can be that pleased person when someone loves us. If that person displeases you he is no more an object of love.

...to be continued

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This will enable us to act fast.

Editor.

Swami Paramarthanandaji's Talk

At Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Coimbatore 2019

Swamiji took Advaita-makaranatam during morning session. Introduction to the text was given on the first day of the talk, bringing in to essence the spiritual journey of a seeker. Transcribed talk of the same is reproduced here:

The entire spiritual journey of a spiritual seeker has been designed by the *vedās*, our original scriptures. It consists of several stages. The first stage being a life consisting of *karmayogā* and *upāsanayogā*. *Karmayogā* is a life in which we dedicate ourselves to the service of the world to the extent we can afford. Not only mere service, but with a reverential attitude towards the universe. The service is called *karma* and the reverential attitude is called *yogah*. *Karmayogā* should involve the service part and the attitude of reverence looking upon the universe as the many very expression of *īśvaraḥ*.

Simultaneously, the scriptures talk about *upāsanayogā* also, which is meditation upon *īśvaraḥ*. *Īśvara-dhyānam* is called *upāsanayogah*. Initially we meditate upon *īśvara* in the form of *iṣṭa-devatā*, any particular form that appeals to us, which is called *iṣṭa-devatā-dhyānam*. Later, we have to learn to look upon the entire universe as the manifestation of the lord, which is called *viśvarūpa-īśvaraḥ*. So the second form of *upāsanā* is *viśvarūpa-dhyānam*.

When we say *śantākāram bhujagaśayanam padmanābham sureśam*, etc., it is *Viśnu* as an *iṣṭa-devatā*. When you say *bhūfpādau yasya nabhir-viyadhusur-nilas-chandra-sūryauca netre*, the earth is the feet of the lord, heaven is the head of the lord and entire space is the body of the lord. When I visualize in this manner, it becomes *viśvarūpa-dhyānam*. Thus *upāsana-yogā* consists of *iṣṭa-devatā* and *viśvarūpa-dhyānam*.

Both these *yogās* are complimentary. *Karma yogā* supports *upāsana-yogā* and *upāsana-yogā* supports *karma-yogā*. Through these two *yogās*, a person gets certain important spiritual qualifications, namely *vivekaḥ*, *vyrāgyam*, *śamādiṣaṭkasampatti* and *mumukṣutvam*. Of these, *karma-yogā* gives the first, second and fourth. *Vivekaḥ*, *vyrāgyam* and *mumukṣutvam* are the result of *karma yogā*. *Upāsana yogā* is extremely important for acquiring the third qualification called *śamādiṣaṭkasampatti*. What do these qualifications mean?

First one is *vivekaḥ*, understanding that *mokṣa* alone is the worthiest goal of life. In fact, life will become fully meaningful only if we fix the goal as *mokṣaḥ*. Instead of *mokṣa*, you can call *īśvarā* also. So in religious language, we say *īśvara-prāptiḥ*. In spiritual language, we call it *mokṣa-prāptiḥ*. This alone has to be the ultimate goal of life. This understanding that, "all the other goals are secondary, *mokṣa* alone is primary" is called *nitya-anitya- vastu-vivekaḥ*. *Mokṣa* is primary and all the others are secondary.

The second qualification is called *vyrāgyam*. *Vyrāgyam* is changing my attitude towards the universe. And that is, nothing in the universe deserves to be my goal of life. Whether it is money, whether it is name, fame, position, possession or relation, none of them deserves to be the goal of life. At the same time, you cannot hate or reject the world. The world is extremely important to serve as a means. The world is not the end in itself. World is the means. The *sādhyam* status of the world should be replaced by *sāadhanā* status of the world. Money is *sāadhanā*, family is *sāadhanā*, not *sādhyam* because they all will go away. They cannot be an end. An ending thing cannot be a goal. And therefore *jagati sadhanatva buddhiḥ vyrāgyam. Mokṣe sādhyatva buddhiḥ vivekaḥ*.

And then the fourth one is *mumukṣutvam*. The desire for *mokṣa* will initially be a lukewarm desire only. This should not be included in the list of your desires, just because I am saying. So, this lukewarm thing will not be enough because the effort that I put forth is directly proportional to the intensity of the desire. And this mild lukewarm desire should get converted into an intense and desperate desire. They give the example of a person under the water. How he desperately looks for oxygen. He wants to somehow come out and breathe oxygen. Like that, a person should desperately seek *mokṣa*. So this intense desire is called *mumukṣutvam*.

When there are classes on *vedāntā*, there are several people, who will ask for the details of the class. Thereafter, they don't come at all. They ask. But between asking and coming, there is a gap. Asking is also because of desire. Coming is also because of desire. The degree of desire varies. And there is the next type coming one day and there after 3 days absent and then again on 4th day. There also now and then. These are all degrees of desire. When it becomes consistent, sincere and committed action, then alone it is called *mumukṣutvam, tīvira mumukṣutvam*. All these have to come through *karma-yoga*.

Then the 3rd qualification is *śamādi-ṣaṭka-sampattiḥ*, which is an internal discipline. What do you mean by internal discipline? When I come to the class, am I able to keep my mind unpreoccupied? Is the mind 100% available is the first question. And then the second question is it 100% available for 100% of the class time? Is my mind focused and unpreoccupied? So making the mind unpreoccupied and focused at will. That capacity is called *śamādi-ṣaṭka-sampattiḥ*. *Śamā* and the last one *samādhānam*. *Śamā* indicates an unpreoccupied mind and *samādhānam* indicates focused mind and in between few others are mentioned. Thus an unpreoccupied focused mind can be developed only by *upāsana-yogā*.

Karma yogā can give only 1, 2 and 4. *Upāsana yogā* alone can give the 3rd qualification. Therefore both *yogās* are equally important. In fact, in our *nitya-naimityaka-karma* itself, both have been included. Any ritual you take, it is *śoḍasa-upacāra-pūjā*. You will always start with *vignēśvaram dhyāyāmi. āvāhayāmi*. And thereafter, *ācanam samarpayāmi, arghyam samarpayāmi and dhyāyāmi*. They will have *dhyāna ślokā*. And *dhyāna ślokā* is not for just chanting. *Dhyāna ślokā* is meant for *dhyānam*. So, whether you take *sandhyāvandanam* or *nitya pūja* or *Viśṇu-Sahasranāma Pārāyaṇam*

“*atha dhyānam ...*”

“*Kṣīrodanvatpradeśe*”

“*sindhūraruṇa vighrahām*”

Any *karma* is mixed with *upāsana* also. But generally, we ignore the *upāsana* part of our *nitya-naimityaka-karma* and to assist that only *prāṇāyāma* also has been kept. Because *prāṇāyāma* is an ideal preceding discipline before *upāsana*. Thus *prāṇāyāma* and *dhyānam* combination will give 3rd qualification. Thus the initial part of spiritual journey is *karmayogā* plus *upāsanayogā* and once I have got a reasonable qualification, I try to spend more time in *jnānayogā*, which is the primary *sādhana*.

Jnānayogā, consists of *Śravanam*, *Mananam* and *Nidhidhyāsanam*. What is *Śravanam*? Consistent and systematic study of *vedāntic* scriptures for a length of time. So, length is important, consistency is important, systematic approach is important. Study of *vedāntic* scriptures, not independently, but under the guidance of a competent *ācāryā*. A person, who has been a *śiṣyā* alone, is a competent *ācāryā*. And what are the *vedāntic* scriptures? The main *vedāntic* scriptures are called *prastāna-trayam*.

The first one is *Bhagavad Gītā*. Any serious spiritual seeker should first go through the entire *Bhagavad Gītā*, sequentially. No choice and no excuses, if one is a serious seeker. And *Bhagavad Gītā* is the first one, which is called *Smṛiti Prastānam*.

And thereafter, we have to go to the next level. *Gītā* is like the under graduate course and the next one is the graduate course called *Upaniṣad*. One can study selected *Upaniṣads* (10 or 6 or 5), *Munḍaka*, *Kena*, *Kaṭa*, *Taitrīya* and *Māṇḍūkya*. At least these 5 we have to go through if we are serious seekers. This is called *Śruti Prastānam*, *Upaniṣad* study. There also, consistent and systematic condition is important.

Then comes the post graduate course, which is called *Nyāya Prastānam*, which gives logical support to defend the knowledge, called *nyāya prastānam*, *brahma sūtrās* of *vyāsa-ācāryā*. Even if we don't study the entire *brahma sūtrā*, one has to go through the first 4 *sūtrās* called *catussūtri* and it is called *nyāya prastānam*. Therefore *Gītā*, *Upaniṣad*, *brahma sūtrā* - *smṛiti*, *śruti*, *nyāya prastāna trayam*, and one should sincerely and systematically go through, these texts.

So this systematic study of *prastāna-trayam* is called *Śravanam*. This is a huge program. As Swami Chinmayananda says, “spirituality is not a revolution, but it is an evolution”. It takes time. Thus *Śravanam* involves *prastāna trayam* through which I learn the fundamental message of *Vedāntā*.

What is the fundamental message of *Vedāntā*?

Śankarācāryā presents that in one beautiful *ślokā*. That is

*brahma satyam jagan mityā jeevo brahmaiva nāparāḥ
anena vedyam sacāstram iti vedanta dindimaḥ*

brahma satya - There is only one ultimate substance or reality, which is called *brahman*. It is the content, the essence, the core of everything.

Jagat mityā means the entire universe is not the content, but it is only names and forms. The whole world exists only in the form of different names and for each name there is a relevant corresponding form. As in the example, desk is not a thing in itself, desk is the name of a particular form. The content of the desk is not the desk itself. The content of the desk is wood or metal. Then the wood becomes *satyam*. Desk becomes *mityā*. So, *mityā* you can understand as *nāma and rūpā*.

The whole world is names and forms only. How many things are there? There are not many things. Names are there, forms are there. Many things are not there. And if many things are not there, how many things are there? There is only one thing and what is that one thing? That one thing is *brahman*. *Brahma satyam jagan mityā*. First I have to assimilate that. And this knowledge is called *parokṣa-jñānam*.

Brahman is the content of the universe. And the question will come. Where is that *brahman*? How to identify that *brahman*? The word *brahman* only exists as a word and I know it is the core, but how to find it, how to identify it and how to locate it? Then the *śāstrā* says *jeevo brahmaiva nāparāḥ*. If *brahman* is the core of everything, *brahman* has to be the core of myself also. If wood is the essence of desk, wood is the essence of all the furnitures. If gold is the essence of bangle, gold is the essence of all the ornaments. If *brahman* is the essence of the entire world, it is the core of myself also. And that core is called *jīvātmā*. *Jeevo brahmaiva nāparāḥ*.

I am (is) my essential nature. Essential nature means what? Discarding the *nāma and rūpā*. I have a form, human form is there and human name is there. *Manuṣyaḥ puruṣaḥ and brāhmaṇa, pitā, mātā*. They are all names and forms. So I keep on removing all the superficial names and forms and arrive at the core and that core is called *caitanyam*, the consciousness principle. That I, the core, is the *caitanyam*, who is aware of everything. That I, is none other than *brahman*. This I is not only the core of me, but it is the core of everything.

kṣetragnyam cāpi mām viddhi sarva-kṣetreṣu

So this wisdom is called *aham brahma asmi* and this sentence occurring in the scriptures, is called *mahā-vākya*. Thus the essence of *Vedāntā* is *brahma satyam, jagan-mityā, aham brahmaiva nāparāḥ*.

This is the teaching in all the *prastāna trayam* and by listening to the *guru*, I have to grasp the message. This is called *jnānam*. So *jnāna yogā* consists of three things - *Śravanam, Mananam* and *Nidhidhyāsanam*.

Śravanam means study of *prastāna trayam*, that which gives me the *jnānam, brahma satyam, jagan-mityā, aham brahmaiva nāparāḥ*. But this *jnānam* is not enough, it should be my conviction.

Because, our intellect can generate several doubts as even I receive the teaching. Either there can be doubt regarding *brahma satyam* or there can be doubt regarding *jagan-mityā* or even that we will accept, but the final doubt is regarding *aham brahma asmi*.

How can I claim *Swāmiji*? I am an ordinary person born the other day, growing, graying and going. I am an aging and dying individual, how can I claim I am *brahman*? So, thus there can be doubts alone regarding any one of the three components. All the doubts regarding all the three components of the knowledge must be completely eradicated. This is called *śamśaya rahita jnānam, nissamśaya jnānam*. And this process of removing the doubt is called *mananam*.

I should be convinced. I need not convince others. If I am a *guru*, then I have to help others. But if I am a spiritual seeker, I need not convince others. But when I sit within myself and ask who am I? Am I a *samsāri* individual, a miserable individual or a wonderful *brahman*? So when I ask a question to myself, my intellect should answer, I am not at all a *samsāri* individual, but I am *brahman*, which is the content of all the bodies. I should say it without any hesitation, this requires *mananam*.

And then the last exercise is *nidhidhyāsanam*. Because even after conviction my attitude towards myself will continue to be based on my old habits, that I am a *samsāri jīvā*, it is my attitude towards myself, I require help from external world, I need a god outside who has to rescue me whenever I am in trouble. I have to hold onto someone called God. I require a supporting god or walker and whenever I have a problem, I have to rush towards the external help and *bhagavān* has to save me. My job is regularly getting into trouble, *bhagavān's* job is regularly lifting me up like a doctor. Like, visiting a doctor now and then, I have to regularly visit *bhagavān*. Without an external help, I cannot survive. This is my attitude towards myself. I need an external support during crisis. This is called *jīvā- bhāvaḥ*.

What is the definition of *jīvā-bhāvaḥ*? The attitude that I need an external support during crisis, this is called habitual thinking about oneself. This should go and I should look upon myself that I don't need any external support, because the entire world of *nāma rūpā* is supported by *brahman*, which is myself. Reiterating - I don't require any external support, because the entire world of *nāma rūpā* is supported by *brahman*, which happens to be myself. I am *sarva-ādhāraḥ*. Why do I need an *ādhāraḥ*?

In *kaivalya Upaniṣad*, there is the *nidhidhyāsanam* mantra

mayyeva sakalam jātam mayi sarvam pratiṣṭhitham

mayi sarvam layam yāti tat brahmātvayasmyaham

I support all. Why do I require a support? This, I should ask spontaneously. That I need support during crisis is *jīvā-bhāvaḥ*, I support everything and I don't need, is *brahma-bhāvaḥ*. The *jīvā-bhāvaḥ* should go away and *brahma-bhāvaḥ* should come. *Bhāvaḥ* means *bhāvanā*, the attitude. *Brahma-bhāvaḥ* should become spontaneous.

Initially it becomes spontaneous during normal time. Later it should become natural even when there are problems. Otherwise, during normal times I will tell I am *brahman* and during problem times I rush outwards. First, normal time, I should learn to say that. I don't need support during crisis. Later when crisis situations come, then also I should be able to abide in that. This is called *jnāna-niṣṭhā* where the habitual *jīvā-bhāvaḥ* is removed. And this process is called *nidhidhyāsanam*.

In *nidhidhyāsanam*, I don't gain knowledge, in *nidhidhyāsanam* I don't remove doubts. *Nidhidhyāsanam* is neither for gaining knowledge, nor is it meant for removing doubts. *Citānanda rūpam śivoham śivoham*. Who knows this, they say that. Just repeating *citānanda rūpam śivoham śivoham*, is not *nidhidhyāsanam*. So, gradually, *jīva-bhāva durbalikaranam brahma-bhāva prabalikaranam nidhidhyāsanam*.

So, thus *Śravanam*, *Mananam* and *Nidhidhyāsanam* will make the knowledge free from doubts and free from old habits. Habits are called *viparīta-bhāvanā* or *viparyayaḥ*. So, *Śravanam* gives *jnānam*, *Mananam* gives *śamśaya-rahita jnānam*, meaning doubtless, *nidhidhyāsanam* gives *viparyaya-rahitam jnānam*. When I go thru all these three, I have got *śamśaya-viparyaya-rahita jnānam*. This is called *druḍha-jnānam* or *sthita-prajñā*.

sthitaprajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhisthasya keśava

sthitadhīḥ kiṁ prabhāṣeta kimāśīta vrajeta kim BG 2-54

vītarāgabhayakrodhā manmayā māmupāśritāḥ

bahavo jñānatapasā pūtā madbhāvamāgatāḥ BG 4-10

We should keep referring to these Gita verses and regularly see where I stand in my understanding / abiding in it. Because, study is not for information. Study is for inner transformation. Am I changing internally? Otherwise what is the use of study? Study is not for study's sake.

Mere study may make you a scholar. You may be invited for different seminars and discourses and you may earn a lot of money also. *Śaṅkarācāryā* says. What is the use? Vedānta is not for giving discourses or claiming I have studied so much. It requires internal transformation. Therefore it is my job to constantly look at myself and see the transformation.

So thus, one knows *karma-yogā*, *upāsana-yogā*, *jñāna-yogā*. *Śravanam*, *Mananam*, *Nidhidhyāsanam*, are known. And *jñānam*, *śamsāya-rahita-jñānam*, *viparyaya-rahita-jñānam* are also known. And *prastāna-trayam* is known.

Now, in our tradition, several *ācāryās* have written several scriptural texts based on the *prastāna-trayam*. *Prastāna-trayam* is primary source. Based on the *prastāna-trayam*, we have got several small and big texts written by several *ācāryās*, who come in the tradition.

*nārāyaṇaṁ padmabhuvāṁ vaśiṣṭhaṁ śaktiṁ ca tatputraṁ parāśaraṁ ca vyāsaṁ
śukaṁ gauḍapādaṁ mahāntaṁ govindayogīndraṁ athāśya śiṣyaṁ I*

*śrī śaṅkarācāryaṁ athāśya padmapādaṁ ca hastāmalakaṁ ca śiṣyaṁ taṁ toṭakaṁ
vārttikakāramanyaṁ asmad gurūn santatamānato'smi II*

So many *ācāryās* have come. Many of them have taught and many of them have written books also. The purpose of these books is either assisting in *Śravanam* or it will assist in *Mananam* or it will assist in *Nidhidhyāsanam*.

Tattvabodhaḥ is a book for assisting *Śravanam* so that you know how to arrange the ideas. *Śārīra-trayam*, *Kośa-pancakam*, *Avastā-trayam*, just how you look at the scriptures in a structured manner in the form of a clean syllabus, syllabus presentation. We have got several books, presenting the syllabus beautifully. *Tattvabodhaḥ*, *Viveka Cūḍhāmaṇi*, *Vedānta Sārā*, *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*. They all present the syllabus. Knowing the syllabus will help in *Śravanam*. *Śravaṇa pradhāna* text and the general names of all these text books is called *prakaraṇa grantaḥ*. Thus *Śravaṇa pradhāna* or *Śravaṇa Upayogi Pradhāna Grantaḥ*.

There are certain other text books, which are meant for *Mananam*. Lot of logical analysis and discussions, visualizing all the possible doubts and answers for them. Any thinking intellect can raise certain questions. All the *ācāryās* visualize the possible questions. Sometimes, one may have questions but may not know how to ask it. Because to ask the question properly, one needs good communication skill. Otherwise they will ask a small question for half an hour in a roundabout way. Then the poor guru answers the question only to hear “this not my question”. Communication skill is required to ask questions also. Therefore the *ācāryās* know how to present the questions called *pūrvapakṣa* and they give answer *siddhāntā*. They are all called *manana upayogi grantaḥ*, it will be highly logical. There are many such books, you can lifelong.

And the third type of *prakaraṇa grantaḥ* is *nidhidhyāsanam upayogi prakaraṇa grantaḥ* like *Nirvāṇa Ṣaṭkam*, *Brahmajñānavaliṃālā*, *Prātasmaranam*.

Thus *Śravaṇa upayogi prakaraṇa grantaḥ*, *Manana upayogi prakaraṇa grantaḥ*, *Nidhidhyāsanam upayogi prakaraṇa grantaḥ*, we have so many text books.

The book that we are going to study is titled *Advaita Makarandaḥ* and it comes under *prakaraṇa grantaḥ* because it doesn't come under *prastāna trayam*. Anything other than *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Upaniṣad*, *Brahma sūtrā* will come under *prakaraṇa grantaḥ*.

Advaita Makarandam is a *prakaraṇa grantaḥ*, authored by the great *ācāryā Lakṣmīdhara Kavīḥ*, who became a *sanyāsi* later. It is small text book consisting of 28 verses. It comes under *Manana upayogi prakaraṇa grantaḥ*.

The teaching is not to be blindly believed. Because, a blind belief will never stay for long. I should be able to withstand any amount of questions coming from any other school of philosophy including modern science. Modern science has got an indirect philosophy. Any question, I should be able to answer. That is called *Mananam*.

In this *Manana upayogi prakaraṇa grantaḥ* also, different *grantaḥ* specialize on one or the other of the teaching. Teaching has got three components - *brahma satyam* part, *jagam mityā* part or *aham brahma asmi* part.

There is a very advanced book called *Advaita Siddhiḥ*, supposed to be the height of *vedānta*, very highly technical and logical. That *Advaita-Siddhiḥ* focuses on *jagan mityātvam*, because it is very difficult to think world is *mityā*, because we experience the world clearly. It is being experienced, being transacted and useful. When I am solidly experiencing the world, how can you say it is a bundle of *nāma rūpā*? How can I believe it? So, that (*jagan mityātvam*) is focus in that text. Whereas *Advaita-Makarandam*, focuses on *aham brahma asmi*, *jeevo brahmaiva nāparāḥ*.

How to accept this as a fact. There may be some reason to negate that. All those reasons / questions are raised and, the author answers all the questions and shows the truth, “I am *brahman*, nothing but *brahman*”, this is doubtless. Thus *aham brahma asmi* reinforcement is the purpose or aim of *Advaita Makarandam*.

It starts with a *dhyāna ślokā*. We will just see the *dhyāna ślokā*

Kaṭākṣa-kiraṇā-acānta namanmohābdaye namaḥ

anantānanda kṛṣṇāya jagan-mangala mūrtaye

So, here the author begins with a mangalācaranam, a prayer to Lord Krishna for the successful study of this text book without any obstacle. Obstacles can come in any form; obstacles can be pūrva-janma-karmā also. They are also invisible obstacles. *Adruṣṭha pratibandha parihārārtham mangalācaraṇam*.

For the author, it is required for completing the composition of the book. For us, it is required for completing the study of this book. Therefore his *iṣṭha devatā* is perhaps Krishna and therefore he offers *namaskārams* to Krishna. *Jagan-mangala-mūrtaye kṛṣṇāya namaḥ* is the *dhyāna ślokā*.

Incidentally, the title of the book is *Advaita-Makarandaha*. Here the *advaita vastu brahman* or *advaita jñānam* is compared to *makaranda* honey or nectar. All the verses are compared to lotus flowers. From the flowers which are in the form of the verses, a person, a qualified student can probe or extract the honey or nectar. This the author himself mentions at the end, *lakṣmīdhara-kavehe sukṭi-śaradambodaja-sambhrjaha.....*

All the *ślokās* are like flowers and *advaitam* or *advaita jñānam* is the honey and this cannot be extracted easily by ordinary people. Just as only the bees have got the special power to extract, similarly only *sādhana-catuṣṭaya- sampann-ādhikāri*, has the capacity to extract the *advaita-jñānam*. And, therefore, this text book is called *advaita-makarandah*.

In this *mangalācaranam*, the first *ślokā*, the author is offering *namaskārā* to Lord Krishna to remove all the obstacles. So *anantānanda kṛṣṇāya namaḥ*. My prostrations to Lord Krishna whose nature is *anantaḥ* and *ānandaḥ*. His nature is *ānandaḥ* and his nature is *anantaḥ* or *pūrṇatvam*.

These two words can be taken as separate descriptions or we can take it as *ananta-ānandaḥ* is his *svarūpam*. Infinite *ānandaḥ* is his nature. To differentiate from the finite *ānanda* coming from the sense objects. Therefore *ananta-ānanda, pūrṇa- ānanda svarūpāya kṛṣṇāya namaḥ*.

Jagan-mangala mūrtaye, he is embodiment of *mangalam*, means the one which gives *ānanda* to others. *Amangalam* is *dukha kāraṇam*, *mangalam* is *ānanda kāraṇam*. Therefore, not only the Lord is *ānanda*, the lord gives *ānanda* to others also. So *mangalamūrtiḥ* means *ānandaprada mūrtiḥ*, a form that gives *ānanda* to not one, but *jagat*, for all the people.

In fact, the very word Krishna means the one who attracts everyone towards himself, *Karṣati*, *ākarṣati sarvān iti kṛṣṇāḥ*. A person can attract others, only when he is a giver of *ānanda*. Therefore, *jagan- mangalamūrtiḥ*, *ānandaprada mūrtiḥ* is not only his *svarūpam*; the word *mūrtiḥ* means his very body, his form. Not only his *svarūpā* is *ānandaḥ*, his very form is *ānandaḥ* as described in *madhurāṣṭakam*. *Adharam madhuram, vadanam madhuram*. Even his body is *ānanda pradaḥ*. Not only he gives *ānanda* to all, he removes the *samsārā* of all the devotees, who want *mokṣaḥ*. That is described in the first line, *Katākṣa-kiranā-acānta-naman-moohābdhaye namaha*

Acāntaḥ means one who sips or consumes or dries up. *Acamanam* means sipping. Its past passive participle is *acāntaḥ*. So *bhagavān* sips or sucks or consumes or removes. Final meaning is, removes the *mohā-abdhiḥ*. *Abdhiḥ* means ocean. *Mohaḥ* means ignorant and consequent *samsāraḥ*. So, *ajñānam, ajñāna janya samsāraḥ ca*, which is like an ocean, because, it is vast. So this vast *samsāra-sāgarā* of the devotee, *bhagavān* Krishna removes.

How does he remove? Not by taking too much of effort. For us, it may appear extremely difficult, but for *bhagavān*, it is a very simple job. He does it by a simple side glance. By the very look, *darśana mātrena*, just as the *sūrya bhagavān* through his rays dries up all the ponds down below, similarly *bhagavān*'s eyes are like *sūryaḥ*, the glance is like *raśmi*, the *kiraṇam* and it will dry up the *samsāra-sāgarā* of all the devotees.

Bhagavān will remove *samsārā* only when we seek it. When we do not seek it, and if *bhagavān* gives *mokṣaḥ*, we will say, you please keep it with you. I am not in a hurry; I have got so many other things to do. Afterwards, I myself will come and get it. Now I don't want, we will say all such things.

Therefore *bhagavān* will give only *mokṣaḥ* to those who value it, those who are *tīvira mumukṣu*. That is indicated by the word *naman*. So, *namatām, tīvira mumukṣūnām moharūpa abdhīhi-acānta-katākṣa-kiraṇaiḥ yasya or yena*. To that Lord, which means *mokṣaḥ* requires not only our effort, it requires *bhagavān*'s grace also. *Prayatna* and *prasādaḥ*. When both of them combine together, then alone *mokṣaḥ* is possible. If that grace is missing, we might put forth effort, but always *mokṣaḥ* appears a little bit away. So, grace is equally important. Therefore, to that Lord, who helps me in the removal of my *samsārā*, I offer my *namaskāraḥ*. This is the *mangala śloka*.

-Talk transcribed by Anuradha

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti, Coimbatore

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Arsha Vidya Gurukulam is happy to announce that it will be starting 108 day Vedanta course beginning 2nd September 2019 and ending on 18th December 2019. We have selected about 100 students for the course. The suggested donations towards lodging and boarding per student would be Rs. 10000/- per month. Generous donors are invited to sponsor the student who will not be able to make contribution towards the expenses.

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Swami Sakshatkritanandaji's Hyderabad Visit

And Swamiji's talk on 'Why should one study Vedanta?'

Devotees of twin cities were blessed with the much awaited satsang with Swami Sakshatkritanandaji on June 22, 2019. Students, guests, long time devotees like Meera Amma's family and a few staff of AIMS Telengana attended the evening satsang held at DAD Community Hall Complex in New Vasavi Nagar, Secunderabad.



Swamiji was welcomed with Purna Kumbham by vaidika priests. On behalf of Aarsha Vidya Sagar - Swamini Aaptaanandaji welcomed everyone and introduced Swamiji as one who truly fits the description of an Acharya. Ravi Sharma, who has recently completed the long term course in Anaikkati, garlanded Swamiji. Smt Aparna sang Pujya Swamiji's composition on Lord Ganesha in her melodious voice.

Swami Sakshatkritanandaji then proceeded to unfold the topic '**Why should one study Vedanta**'. The use of logic in a simple language along with colorful examples taken from daily life made it very easy for all present to grasp the need for Vedanta .

On behalf of everyone , Swamini Sumatmananda expressed heartfelt gratitude to Swamiji for the enlightening talk. The audience was encouraged to visit AVG Gurukulams and AIMS chatralayas and be part of the ever expanding Arsha Vidya family. Lastly everyone received the yagna prasaadam and a book of Pujya Swamiji as a token of Swamiji's blessings. May the shastras continue to guide us and may the Acharyas continue to visit us - was the prayer of one and all.



The extract of Swamiji's talk follows:

Why should one study Vedanta ?

I plan to approach the logical way. Basically we have three layers of personality .Through these layers of personality, body mind and intellect, we accomplish things in this world. What is the fundamental urge all of have in life? That urge is to live. Nobody can say I do not want to live. This urge to live is natural. You did not develop this urge. I want to live. How long do I want to live? I want to live/exist for ever happily. I want to exist happily. I want to be happy always at all times and all places. Thus at the level of the body I want to be 'Sat' (existence).

At the level of mind, I want to be Ananda.

At the level of intellect, buddhi, the natural urge is - I want to Know. I should be aware of everything under the sky. I want to be Chit/aware.

I want to be sat-chit-ananda.

At the level of body, can I live for ever? No. The body is subject to death. *jaatasya hi dhruvo mruthyuH* - Gita says. Whether it is Adi Shankara's body, or Lord Krishna's body or your Guru's body... at the level of body one cannot accomplish "sat".

At the level of mind, can you accomplish to be happy, all the time, at all the places and in all the situations? No. Impossible. Because, what is happiness? Happiness is the state of mind. That disposition of mind which is obtained, when one fulfils a desire. In keeping with the nature of the object of desire, I have to acquire the object of desire at the right time, right place, right situation. Then one becomes happy.

So we can never say, at the level of mind , I can be that Ananda, in all times, places and situations

There is dukha dukha dukha , only some sukha now and then.

Ananda comes and goes, dukha is more, ananda is less. There is no way I can be ananda always at the mind's level .There are only pieces of Ananda.

At the level of intellect, can I be the chit, all knowledge? No! Your total knowledge should increase when you obtain any new knowledge. But the fact about knowledge is, when you gain some knowledge, your ignorance increases. Like with the electronic chips. When you come to know about the electronic chips, along with the knowledge of the chips, you came to know what all you did not know about the chips. So far we knew only banana chips.

That is what specialisation is all about. The more one is specialised in medical field, the more he is ignorant about many things in that medical field

We had one physician before, we have 10 physicians now. One for the nose, one for stomach, one for ear etc etc. There is specialist - retinologist with regard to eye. Another is corneologist again with same eye. Earlier there was one doctor who was ophthalmologist. Now this retinologist will not be able to treat cornea related problems because of his specialisation. So knowledge wise it is impossible to know everything. Our buddhi is limited, our knowledge is limited. Therefore we can never be 'all knowledge'.

Therefore our analysis shows, while the permanent urge is 'I want to be sat-chit-ananda, the analysis shows I can never be sat-chit-ananda at the body, mind, intellect level.

Our intrinsic nature is Satchitananda, as per sastra. It is not possible to know this with the help of body, mind and intellect. There must be a solution. Sastra says everything is intelligently put together, including my body. For example, a clock, which is a product, is intelligently put together. It cannot spring-forth just like a spring of water. Neither one can pluck a clock from a Switzerland garden. So too in the creation, everything is naturally put together. There is so much intelligence in the creation.

Our body is also intelligently put together. The heart pumps blood to all parts of the body. The heart has to survive by the blood it pumps to the whole body. Our eyes, nose ears, every part is intelligently put together and placed.

Sastra says you are Satchitananda. But I don't see I am Satchitananda. What is the cause for this? Ajnanam. Ignorance. Like, light removes darkness, Jnanam removes ajnanam. What is opposed to darkness? Light. Similarly, what is opposed to avidya? Vidya. Because of ajnanam we are not aware that we are Satchitananda. For ajnanam to go, we require Vidya. So we have to bring Jnanam.

In order to accomplish and to fulfil the natural, permanent urge to become Satchitananda, you have to know. You have to have Jnanam. Means of knowledge come in two forms. One is by seeing with your eyes and knowing, which is pratyaksha knowledge. To know that I am Satchitananda, pratyaksha knowledge cannot help, because pratyaksha knowledge can only give the knowledge of objects that is outside.

The said ajnanam with regard to sat-chit-anandam is centered on the ego, ahamkara. That is the locus of error, which is not outside. The means of knowledge, to know that I am Satchitananda has to come from outside. That means of knowledge is Vedanta/Upanishad. To know the self, to know I am Satchitananda is a subjective knowledge. The ahamkara is sacrificed in the fire of knowledge. Without enquiry, the ego thinks I am 'this much' alone

The lot of body, mind, intellect becomes 'my lot'. Sastra says, the ahamkara is an imposter, posing as Satchitananda. When we begin enquiry, this imposter will vanish. When enquiry throws light on what is this ahankara, the imposter vanishes. It is a false entity, therefore it is not there. What is there is Satchitananda. Therefore, vedanta helps to see that you are Satchitananda.

Natural urge is to be satchitananda. Not at the level of body, mind , intellect. You have to discover at the level of ahankara, that satchitananda is myself. When you study Vedanta, you come to discover this. If we say we want to be satchitananda, let us study Vedanta. We are trying to accomplish satchitananda through various things, thinking that this and that will give us satchidananda. Only Vedanta will help you see your own intrinsic nature is satchitananda.

If you do not understand vedanta, even then vedanta shravanam will give you little punya. It will not give you what it should give , but definitely little punya. So one has to do consistent Shravanam. How long? One has to do shravanam like Svetaketu who studied vedas for twelve years. When Svetaketu, a qualified Vedic student needed nine times sravanam, what about us who have not even visited the patasala? Nine million times !! For a fit adhikari, sharp intellect, one match stick is enough!

*Talk transcribed by Meena , student of Swamini Sumatmananda
Report by Susheela and Swamini Sumatmananda*

Arsha Vidya Research and Publication Trust notification

AVR and PT is looking to publish memories of Pujya Swamiji by his disciples / students / devotees. It is requested that there should be enough content from each person to bring out a book of at least 100 pages. The contents can include relevant photos, facsimile of letters written by Swamiji to the person, if any; milestones and turning points in his/her life influenced by Swamiji's teachings and his/her experiences and journey of life with Swamiji can be part of the book.

Those who wish to share their memories - hard or soft copies - can send manuscripts and photographs to

Mr V Ramanathan, Arsha Vidya Research and Publications Trust

4, Srinidhi Apartments, Mylapore, Chennai 600004.

avrandpt@gmail.com Ph:9500777910

Prajnana Shibhir

Acharya : Rangaji
Organised by : Sri R Sathyanarayanan

Key Highlights of the Camp:

Inaugurated by 'Guruji' Shri Swami Brahmayogananda, Brahma Sutram student of Puja Swamiji

Inauguration included Upanishad-thraya Saaram – Mundaka, Kena and Isavasya, each by Guruji's student teachers – Smt Lavanya Ramgopal, Smt Suryapriya Rangarajan and Shri Vasudevan Kalyanaraman

Swami Sadatmananda conducted a Sathsang with campers – "Importance of Parampara for vedanta teaching and studying", followed by Q & A

Camp Acharya Shri Rangarajan Kalyanaraman (Rangaji) taught Aithreya Upanishad and Dakshinamurthy Sthothram

A sathsang with Arsha Avinashilingam ji – Puja Swamiji biography and online resources

Campers had a one day yatra to Perur Pateeswaran, Marudamalai and Isha Dhyana Lingam

One session on "Kaalam" - the greatness of Hindu calender and it origination from Surya Sidhanta the panchanga by Smt. Suryapriya Rangarajan

Inaugural Session

The camp was inaugurated by Guruji Shri Swami Brahmayoganada. Guruji had been 3 time student of Brahma Sutram with Puja Swamiji. Guruji had earlier conducted 3 camps at Anaikatti between 2008 to 2016 – 1. Value of Values, 2. Karma yogam and 3. Brahma Sutram.

In his inaugural address Guruji provided an overview of Aithreya Upanishad and the importance of Vedanta studies for every individual. Coupled with the emphasis on value system, Guruji introduced Acharya Rangaji as the Prathama Acharya of Yoga Shanthi Gurukulam which he founded for traditional teaching of Vedanta in tamil and serve the nation to make Bharath Viswa Guru.



Guruji also introduced the other three acharyas of Yoga Shanthi Gurukulam, Shri Vasudevan Ji, Smt Lavanya Ramgopal and Smt Suryapriya Rangarajan. Each of them summarized Isavasya, Mundaka and Kena Upanishads respectively. Acharya Rangaji along with other acharyas performed Pada Puja to Guruji.



The inaugural session was blessed with the presence of Swamini Vedarthananda and Swamini Sharadananda and Brhni. Aarti Ji.

Satsang by Swamini Sadatamananda – Importance of Parampara

As a divine blessing to all campers, Shri Swami Sadatamanada, resident Parampara acharya, conducted a satsang. Swamiji spoke about the evolution of this Parampara and the significance of parampara teaching, which alone holds the key to show the vision of shastras by enabling a seeker to gain Pramaanya bhuddhi thereby help discover one's true self. Indeed a very interesting, thought-provoking hour helped the campers's to deepen their respect and reverence towards Shastras and the traditional teaching.



The satsang concluded with an interesting Q & A session.

Aithreya Upanishad and Dakshinamurthy Sthothram

Acharya Rangaji between 28th May and 2nd June conducted 21 classes.

Aithreya Upanishad – 11 classes

Dakshinamurthy Sthotram – 10 classes

The campers mainly constituted Acharyaji's regular class students from Chennai, Conducted and co-ordinated by Sri Sathyanarayanan Ji.

Aithreya Upanishad's uniqueness of shrsti prakaranam, its apavadam and Maha-Vakya ikya bodhakam, left the students both in a contemplative mode and recognition of the connection between teaching methodology and the Moksha purushartha.

Dakshinamurthy Sthotram classes helped the students to appreciate the profundity of this teaching and the greatness of Adi Sankaracharya having packed the essence of all Upanishads in an ashtakam. Aided by Manasollasa of Sureshwaracharya, the classes were deep in content and light in presentation, making it easy for all to gain the understanding.

Both Aithreya Up. and Dakshinamurthy Sthotram classes included summary classes and Q & A sessions.



Guru Thirth-Dakshinamurthy-Subramanya Swami Temple & Ashram Campus

A work of marvel is the Guru Thirth. The campers opined that it is a symbol of Shraddha and samarpana bhava towards Puja Swamiji and an apt tribute. Also equally conceptualization of the Puja Swamiji Gallery – capturing life of Puja Swamiji impactfully in just 10 mins.

Words inadequate to express the divinity and sanctity reverberating in the Dakshinamurthy Temple – Adi Guru and the serenity mounted on hill-top – Sri Kalyana Subramanya Swami.



The students expressed that for gnana vyavahara, these are serving as important sahakaaris.

Sathsang With Arsha N. Avinashilingam

Shri N Avinashilingam of Arsha Avinashi Foundation graced the occasion and addressed the students. With his dedicated service in the form of making study resources available online, many students across the world are reaping the benefit.

Shri. Avinashi Ji distributed Puja Swamiji's Biography to all the campers. A short yet contentful coverage of entire life sketch of Puja Swamiji, helped the campers know and rever Puja Swamiji more than ever.

Avinashi Ji gave brief outline of the contents available in www.arshaavinashi.org and requested all to make the best use of the resources.



The other significant activities during the camp included:

Nithya Parayanam : Pancha Shanthi, Bhagavad Gita and Dakshinamurthy Sthothram - conducted by Sri Suryanarayanan Sankaran and Smt. Indumathi Vasudevan

A power point presentation on Kaalam by Smt. Suryapriya Rangarajan. The presentation's main theme centered on how the reckoning of time calculations were astronomically carried out taking Ujjain Mahakaleshwar as the point in accordance with calculations available in Surya Siddhanta (dating back 20 Lacs+ years back in to Treta Yuga), which the modern science are catching up with.

Accu-pressure for easy Cure : Smt. Praveena Chandrasekar conducted a sessions to enlight the campers on simple methodologies centering on pressure points and colours that can help cure ailments without medications.

A day in the camp was reserved for yatra. The campers visited:

- o Perur Pateeswaran Temple
- o Dhyana Lingam at Isha Foundation
- o Marudamalai Murugan Temple

With concluding classes on 2nd June, the camp



With concluding classes on 2nd June, the camp ended with a valedictory session followed by Guru Pooja to Adi Shankara, Pujya Swamiji and Guruji. Om Thath Sath

A brief Note on Acharya Rangaji and regular classes in Chennai

Shri Rangarajan Kalyanaraman (Rangaji) is a student disciple of Guruji Shri Swami Brahmayogananda.

A Chartered Accountant by Qualification, Shri Rangaji's prime objective has been Shastra Patanam and Paatanam enabling over 150 regular students to be engaged in Vedanta through his regular classes in Chennai. A brief note of his regular classes, texts covered are provided below. Besides Gita and few Upanishads he has completed important prakarana-grandas also.

Classes by RangaJi

On-Going Texts		
Katho Upanishad (Moolam after study of Bashyam)	Mahaswami Padhuka Mandapam, Mylapore	Every Saturday 6-7AM
Bhagavad Gita – Moolam (Based on Sanakra Bhashyam & Home Study course contents)	Sri Venugopala Swami Temple, Gopalapuram	Every Sunday 6-7 PM
Bhagavad Gita Saram	Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam, T Nagar	Every Thursday 7-8 PM
Bhaja Govindam	Ayyappa Temple, Mahalingapuram	Every Saturday 7-8 PM
Sri Rudhra Bhashyam	Sai Samithi, T Nagar	Every Sunday 7-8 AM

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Upadesha-saram by Swami Veditatmanandaji

June 7 to 9th AVG Midwest Retreat, Illinois, USA



The second AVG Midwest Retreat was held in Plymouth, Indiana, USA on June 7th thru 9th. The first was held in Lisle, Illinois, last year. Swami Veditatmanandaji gave pravachans on verses from Upadesha Saram by Ramana Maharshi. The location was peaceful and serene in a quiet, rural setting and was well attended by over 125 devotees. Many were primarily from the midwestern states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. This was an opportunity for the local devotees to attend an event, away from their busy lives but within reasonable driving distance.

Another heartening feature was that the camp was primarily organized by the local "sevaks". There was also a spirited discussion on issues facing the Hindu community in the U.S. Areas of possible cooperation within the region were explored, including the promotion of scriptural studies, at various local temple locations, utilizing knowledgeable and dedicated persons, in the area itself.

Plans are already underway for next year's event. Swamiji covered about 8 verses in the sessions this year and will continue with the following verses next year also.

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