

Residential Spiritual camp

With the blessing of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Paramarthananda, Swami Sakshatkritananda and Swami Sadatmananda, Arsha Avinash Foundation conducted a residential spiritual camp. The camp was held for two days on May 14, 2022 and May 15, 2022. Around 35 students from Coimbatore, Tirupur, Chennai and Shimoga participated in the camp.

INAUGURATION: Swami Sadatmananda, Chief Acharya inaugurated the camp. He explained that Bhagavad Gita is not only for worshipping, chanting on special occasions, general chanting, but for learning its meaning. As the worshipper of the Lord is benefited, the chanter is benefited, the listener is benefited, the teacher is benefited and the student is benefited.

We can divide Bhagavad Gita into three sections of six chapters each. We can say it talks about karma yoga, upasana yoga, and jnana yoga. We can say it talks of jiva, Isvara (including jagat) and oneness between jiva and Isvara. We can say it talks about self efforts, Isvara's grace and values.

Bhagavad Gita is for inner growth called spiritual growth. We should be committed to truth. If we are street smart, we may not be committed to truth. If we practice the values mentioned in Gita our life will be meaningful and rewarding.

Like banks observing customer service week, students can observe ahimsa month. In one month one value can be practised with more emphasis. Like that if we practice 12 value in 12 months, we will be endowed with 12 values in one year. Moreover they are interconnected. If we pull one leg of a wooden cot, the other three legs will also come. Similarly if we practise one value, all other values will also come to us. Swamiji blessed the students for success in their spiritual pursuit.

IMPORTANCE OF VEDANTA STUDY: Swami Jagadatmananda, Acharya addressed the students regarding the importance of Vedanta study. He said that we generally think that the problem is due to brother, son or neighbour. Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati has written a book titled 'You are the problem. You are the solution'. Swamiji has explained that the fundamental problem is non acceptance of the self. Sastra says that the world is not real as its existence depends upon Brahman. When we rearrange our understanding through self knowledge, all our problems are solved. Swamiji also explained about the proposed 3 months Vedanta course in Tamil at Anaikatti Gurukulam.

BHAGAVAD GITA SESSION: Sri N. Avinashilingam and Smt. Ponmani Avinashilingam taught 20 values from Bhagavad Gita Chapter 13. They explained the values in detail

and also referred to the relevant portions from Kathopanisad, Niti Satakam and Thirukural. If these values are there atma jnanam is very easy to gain. These virtues give the required qualification for atma jnanam. Hence these values themselves are called jnanam. There was excellent interaction and floor participation during the classes.

OTHER SESSIONS: In the meditation session, Sri N. Avinashilingam conducted Guided Meditation on the topic of Value Meditation. Smt. Visalakshi Ananthanarayanan taught Gita Chanting. In the evening Satsangh, Smt. Kalyani Natarajan and Smt. Uma Ramachandran sang devotions songs including Bho Shambho, which is the most popular composition of Pujya Swamiji. Smt. Prema Rammohan beautifully summarised the Vedantic teaching.

VALEDICTORY OF PRASTANA TRAYA CLASSES: Arsha Avinash Foundation, Tatabad, Coimbatore started prastana traya classes on September 30, 2017. Sri N. Avinashilingam and Smt. Ponmani Avinashilingam were the Teachers. They have successfully completed the teaching of following texts without bhashyam, Bhagavad Gita, Mundaka Upanisad, Kenopanisad, Kathopanisad, Kaivalyopanisad, Taittiriya Upanisad, Isavasya Upanisad, Mandukya Upanisad (without karika), Prasna Upanisad and Aitareya Upanisad. They have also taught the summary of Chandogya Upanisad, Brihadaranyaka Upanisad and Brahma Sutra (555 sutras).

Swami Sadatmananda, Chief Acharya on May 15, 2022 gave the valedictory address for the prasana traya classes. He said that I am limitless atma. I am free. But I do not know how I am free. Ignorance is the cause for bondage and knowledge is the solution. The means of knowledge is Vedanta (Upanisads). Prasata trayam means a group of three main texts. Three main texts are Sruti –Upanisads, smriti -Bhagavad Gita and for resolving doubts Brahma Sutra. They have to be studied under a Teacher.

The teaching can be summarised as under:

Samsara varnanam: The problem is diagnosed as self ignorance.

Sadhana varnanam: The jnana sadhanas are sravanam, mananam and nididhyasanam.

The student should have four fold qualifications.

Jiva svarupa nirupanam: Jiva has avidya and therefore appear limited

Isvara svarupa nirupanam: With upadhi, Isvara is jagat karanam. Without upadhi, Isvara is Satyam, Jnanam, Anantham Brahman.

Aikyam: Oneness of jiva and Isvara

Jnana phalam: Attains moksa or limitlessness.

Students may ask what next? I have completed study of prastana trayam. If the question what next is there, repeat studying again and again. Some say 'I am Brahman'. But my

wife is not accepting. Brahman has no wife, so the student has not yet understood that I am Brahman. Once knowledge is gained, every moment is fullness. There is no fear of God, no fear of rebirth. Fullness is expressed in the form of universal love and compassion. Until there is conviction that I am Brahman, keep studying prastana trayam.

FEEDBACK FROM THE CAMPERS:

The atmosphere in the Gurukulam, spiritual teaching, temple and food were all excellent. The values taught in the class are highly useful in our day to day life.

- **Smt. T.T.Varuna Devi**

The camp was beautifully arranged, held in sylvan surroundings, gave a brief outline of essential values for becoming a Vedantic student. – **Sri K. Anathanaryanan**

The values presented are very much useful to improve the quality of our life. The temple puja was divine. – **Kumari M. Bhavani**

The ambience and intellectual participation of the campers were excellent.

– **Dr. S. Dorairaj**

The punctuality of the classes were perfect, the explanation by the Teachers were wonderful. – **Sri V. Natarajan**

I found this camp very purposeful to begin my spiritual journey.

– **Sri M.R. Krishnamohan**

I loved it thoroughly. – **Smt. Prema Rammohan**

I liked the accommodation, punctuality, Swamiji's introduction, Gita classes and vibration in the temple.- **Smt. C. Kalyani**

The camp was a stepping stone in my spiritual journey.- **Sri G. Unnikrishnan**

I was so happy to hear the speech of Swami Sadatmananda and Swami Jagadatmananda. I had a very peaceful and happy stay in the Gurukulam. Sri Avinashilingam and Smt Ponmani explained the Gita verses patiently. – **Smt. Archana Krishna Mohan**

Report by N. Avinashilingam

Photo in the wrapper page #31