

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti, Coimbatore
31st Anniversary Celebrations

Report on the 31st Anniversary celebrations at AVG, Anaikatti on 07-11-2021

The anniversary celebrations started at Guruteertha, the memorial place of Pujya Swamiji. There is a beautiful practice at the Gurukulam here, that before any celebrations, Pujya Swamiji's permission and blessings are taken. This is called **anujna puja**. Then puja swamijis padukas were taken in a procession chanting gurustotram and placed at the altar in the lecture hall.

The program started with an invocation prayer on Ganesha by Kum Bala, Chitra and Emy (all 2 year course students). Br Sharanji was the MC of the program who spoke of the tradition of the gurukulam which he said is well- depicted by our vata-vrksha emblem. Swami Jagadatmanandaji, our acharya Sw Sadatmanadaji and Swamini Brahmaleenanandaji graced the dias and gave anugraha bhashanams . The speakers went down memory lane and remembered their association with Pujya swamiji and their learning experience at the Gurukulam. For new students and guests, it was a glimpse into the Gurukulam history and for the old students, a journey down memory lane.

Swami Jagadatmanandaji spoke very eloquently about how Pujya Swamiji brought about a transformation in his life. His personal reminiscences touched many hearts. Some excerpts of his talk -

“ I always used to wonder is there a person who can love me selflessly and accommodate me by all means and in all times. Is there a person in this world who loves me even after many mistakes, failures, hopelessness and could there be one person who is ready to help me and lift me irrespective of my frequent faults? Is there a person to trigger my inner vision and show me a path which is the only way to moksha?

Even after all my family, friends gave up on me , only one hand held my hands strongly and took me towards the truth of truth-*satyasya satyam*. That person was Ishwara with a name and form called Parama Pujya Swamiji. Swamiji equated the Self, atman to me and made me understand I am Satyam. Knowledge of this Satyam as oneself is explained by Swamiji as parama purushartha as this is the only real means of knowledge. It leads to freedom from sorrow.

In my earlier life (before sanyasa), I was wandering for recognition. Even after achieving excellence in education, wealth and fame I was not recognized by any one. After a long search when I finally surrendered to Paramapujya Swamiji , he simply said that already I

am full and complete. With all my surprise, I started my study of Vedanta.

We are blessed with Paramapujya Swamiji who is ever living as a beacon light to the essential view of life which is Vedanta and as the way of life which is dharma. Before leaving his physical body Swamiji said, *"I will be with you forever at all times"*. It is true that Swamiji is Ananta: and we feel his presence in every walks of life as a guiding principle, motherly love and compassion. Usually Sanyasis will not be interested to commit themselves into starting any institutions as it becomes another samsara. But Parama Pujya Swamiji was an exception and because of him only today thousands of teachers of Arsha Vidya Sampradaya teach Vedanta and Sanskrit all around the world. Hence Swamiji is praised as teachers of teachers. Swamiji's main teaching is to understand the Value of Values. Today we celebrate our 31st Anniversary of our Gurukulam and the Sruti Seva Trust. On this auspicious occasion I thank our beloved Acharyaji for being a great support and taking up the vision and mission of Parama Pujay Swamiji to further levels. I see Acharyaji as Parampujya Swamiji as he is a learned scholar and full of contentment."

The next speaker was Swamini Brahmaleenanandaji who has been associated with Pujya Swamiji and the Gurukulam even before its inception and continues to be associated even now. She gave us a glimpse of how the Gurukulam infrastructure was built one by one over time. She shared several interesting anecdotes with Pujya Swamiji at the Gurukulam.

As Br Sharanji said, she took us back in time making the past times at the Gurukulam come alive to the audience . Swamini was in the first long term course conducted at the Gurukulam. There were Sunday classes for local people. Food was served to anybody who visited the Gurukulam. It was a place all felt welcome. She emphasized the important role played by volunteers who supervised all the activities and made the place and greenery as it is now. She also thanked the teachers and acharyaji for continuing the sampradaya.

After that, Mr Vallabhesanji, general manager presented the annual Gurukulam report for 2020-21 of the activities and projects done at the Gurukulam in the past one year. This was followed by the annual report presented by Dr Parthasarathy from SDJ Ayurvedyalaya which is a part of AVG activities 2020-21. He spoke of the impact of Covid on the operation due to which it was closed. But he spoke positively of how they used this period to improve and streamline their infrastructure and functionality . They are now ready to open by the end of December this year.

Acharyaji then honoured the three doctors - Our inhouse Dr Guru Maharaj, Dr Ramesh

who is available at a call when anyone is sick. Staff and students at the gurukulam are very grateful for their ready service. Acharya honoured all of them with a shawl and token gift and the audience expressed their gratitude with a loud applause. Acharyaji was then honoured by Sw Jagadatmanandaji .

This was followed by an anugraha bhashanam by our acharya, Sw Sadatmanandaji. A brief excerpt of the talk –

“ Today we are celebrating the 31st anniversary of AVG. It was founded on 31st Oct, 1990. The uniqueness of this and other gurukulams founded by Pujya Swamiji is that it is a place where traditional, authentic teaching of Vedanta is given without having any agenda for the students.

As we look back over the past 30 years, we can see what are the factors that are required and have contributed to successfully running an organization -

- **Clarity of purpose** . Pujya Swamiji was very clear about the purpose of this gurukulam. He used to say that the Gurukulam provides a place where people can learn Vedanta in a comfortable, safe and conducive atmosphere where everything is taken care of.
- **Effective leadership**. Pujya swamiji was a great visionary and he provided very good leadership to the gurukulam.
- **Public support**. Pujya swamiji mobilized that support very well. In fact whatever support we have now is because of Pujya Swamiji's efforts. We are just harvesting what he has sown. Local support of people around is very important which he mobilized.
- **Continuation of the activities for which Gurukulam is founded**. There is tendency that other activities creep in and the main activity gets stopped. That did not happen here. This gurukulam is meant for conducting Vedanta courses and this is done in many ways in the form of short term, long term courses, retreats.
- **Coordination between the management and the teaching faculty**. That also has happened here to a great extent. Therefore this Gurukulam is able to function effectively.
- **Grace of Isvara**. Dakshinamurtis grace, Pujya Swamiji's grace is there. Because of all these reasons, this organisation is running successfully.

Swamiji then thanked all the trustees, supporters, volunteers, management staff, all teachers for their support and prayed to lord Dakshinamurti and Pujya swamiji for their continued grace so that gurukulam can continue its activities.

The program ended with a vote of thanks by Br Sharanji to be followed by a special anniversary lunch!!