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A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



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Vedanta Camp Report

By Gunjan Sachdeva, Delhi

After a long Pandemic initiated break, we finally had an opportunity to soak ourselves in Vedanta over a 4-day Camp with our Pujya Gurus Swami Brahmavidananda ji and Swamini Brahma Prajnananda ji. The camp began on the auspicious occasion of Janamashtami on Thursday, August 18th thus infusing Bhakti with Śravaṇam through the classes, Mananam through Satsanga and group discussions, and Nidhidhāysanam through the morning meditations.



Janamashtami became even more special with the presence of our Gurus, starting with the chanting of *Bhagavad Gītā* chapters 12 and 15 followed by Puja & Prasad in the evening and performances by various students which included melodious religious bhajans and an impromptu hilarious skit.

The texts covered in the camp included:

1. A section from *Upadeśa sāhasrī* by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya which focused on the Witness or the awarer, the conscious being 'I' as being *Svata-siddhaḥ*, self existent.
2. A part of the *Uddhava Gītā* from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11th Section of 11th Skandha) which elaborated on the difference between one who is bound or liberated in terms of the 3 *guṇa*-s (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*).

The primary insights gleaned were as below:

I am self-evident but because of ignorance, avidya, am in denial of who I am and pick up identities that are *mithyā*. Once the ignorance is removed through knowledge which is the only solution, all identities just become standpoints. Karma and *Karma-Phala* are always finite and hence cannot give fulfilment. Consciousness is *Nirvikāraḥ* and doesn't undergo any change. *Brahman* is the underlying reality behind all names and forms.

Once *ajñānam* is removed, then all problems created by ignorance are gone and all identities become standpoints. Waking up from the state of ignorance through *Neti Neti*, I understand

that I am neither the body nor the mind and that all the roles are conceptualized and hence all superimposition is negated.

The major difference between a *Muktaḥ* or a *Bandaḥ* depends on how much a person is influenced by the 3 *guṇa*-s, all rooted in *Māyā* because a person who is free is free from the influence of the 3 *guṇa*-s.



All our experiences and sense of bondage comes from *Kartā-Bhoktā* (doer-experiencer) identity.

I, *Sākṣi*, Consciousness, *Caitanyam* am aware of the different experiences that I go through and as I experience, I am untouched. I was never the *Kartā*, nor the *Bhoktā*. I am that *ātmā* in which everything exists.

A *Muktaḥ*, remaining free from *rāga-dveṣa*-s, continues to be involved in various activities, has *Vairāgya* which is a result of clear *Vivekaḥ*.

The sense of *Nanatvam*, or many-ness comes only from avidya or ignorance. A *Muktaḥ* is free from *saṅkalpa*, not affected by humiliation or worship, neither praises nor criticizes, continues to be in contemplation, doesn't have *rāga-dveṣa* towards any *nāma-rūpa*, name-form.

Dāsa Bhāva was understood and Bhakti was seen as love for *Bhagavān*. *Bhagavān* further mentions 30 qualities of a *Satpuruṣaḥ*.

One gives up *Kartrtvam* and *Bhoktrtvam* born of avidya, ignorance. This was followed by *Bhagavān* expanding on how to become a *Satpuruṣaḥ*.

The corollary of a dream was repeatedly used to understand that just like we wake up from a dream to see that I am free from the dream, likewise, one who wakes up to the reality of oneself sees that he is not touched by all that happened in the human state.

The teaching was further understood through discussions in small groups ranging from our *Kartā-Bhoktā* accounts to our experiences during the pandemic to bringing in the *Sākṣi*. We had a great discussion in response to the question – How do we continue to perpetuate our sense of bondage and what we were doing to free ourselves from it?.

Morning meditations helped internalize the teachings thus resulting in an extremely fruitful and learning time for everyone.

The camp finally concluded with Guru Puja offering our reverence to our Gurus and we embarked on our journey back homes taking with us fond memories, moving some steps ahead in our *Mokṣa Sādhana*, waiting already for the next camp!

Some words shared by other attendees:

The camp offers immersive Vedant experience in short dosages. The valuable sessions and productive group discussions have caused a jumpstart in my understanding.

Thank you Swamiji, Swaminiji and the whole group.



- Neha Kamat, Mumbai

Extremely Grateful to Swami Brahavidanandaji and Swamini Brahmaprajnanandaji . This camp was one of the Best Camps attended by us as it was : Well Organised, More Participative and free to ask doubts / dilemmas, Lot of Warmth & Love amongst the Participants and there was Focus on Implementation / Practice of the Teachings of Vedas. The venue, stay, food and service of RMP Team was Excellent. Hari OM.

- Gobind & Lata Lulla, Mumbai

I have been attending online 'Gita Amrtam' classes by Swaminiji but in-person retreat conversations are a way different and productive at a very large depth and width to learn and evolve as a transformed person all together we are made to introspect our own inner corners to get aware & awake to think where am I? Where I want to go & What am I doing to achieve that self defined goal?

Thank you for everything and my complete Gratitude...!

- Dipti T, Pune