



**Arsha Vidya Center Presents  
Discourses on Bhagavad Gita – Chapter  
17**

**By Swami Veditatmananda**

**Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 to 9:00 PM**

**Jain Bhawan, 722 S Main Street, Milpitas**

**Shri Vijay Kapoor on Swami Veditatmananda**

Note: A mahatma is one who has gained the ultimate goal of all human beings, that of total joy and immortality through a clear vision of oneself. Such an extraordinary - termed in Kathopanisad and Bhagavad Gita as आश्चर्य - vision is gained with much effort and wisdom by rare individuals. I consider Swami Veditatmananda to be such a rare mahatma. It is said in our शास्त्र that this vision can be gained by all individuals, but requires personal contact with mahatmas. In the old days, mahatmas tended to be stationary and people had to travel long distances to learn from them. In our times, this has got reversed. But, instead of seeing this as a rare gift from Isvara, we sometimes ignore it – we may be too busy, or perhaps thinking there may be other occasions or teachers in the future.

In this newsletter, and the next, I would like to introduce Swami Veditatmanandaji's extraordinary journey from being an engineer in US, just like many of us, to where he is today, one of the most highly accomplished and respected spiritual teachers – indeed a rare mahatma. And in doing so, I urge you to avail of this opportunity of receiving this timeless wisdom from Swamiji, here for a short visit soon.

I remember first hearing about Swamiji in 1979 from Carol Whitfield (aka Radha), a senior student of Swami Dayanandaji. I was admiring her wisdom when she remarked to me “wait till you meet Swaroop Chaitanya (Swamiji's name as a then brahmachari)” Carol and Sri Swaroop were both students at the Vedanta course in 1976, under Swami Dayananda.

Like many of us, Swamiji came to the US for higher studies. He obtained MS in mechanical engineering from North Dakota, and was working in New York when he attended talks by Swami Chinmayanandaji. The young man was so taken by the vision of Vedanta that against the wishes of his loving family, he gave up his job and enrolled in the 2½ year course in Sandeepany in Mumbai. After the course, Swami Dayanandaji asked Sri Swaroop to move to Ahmedabad as a brahmachari and start

teaching the local people. In 1983, he obtained diksha to become Swami Veditamananda.

I first met Swamiji in 1990. By then I too had completed the 2 ½ year course of study under Swami Dayananda, and was asked to be the secretary of the newly formed Arsha Vidya Pitham. The gurukulam in Saylorburg was fully functional, and Pujya Swamiji wanted Swami Veditatmananda to be the first acarya to assist him in teaching the US students. I was given the honor of introducing Swamiji to his first audience in the ashram. We were all struck by his thorough grasp and clear explanation of the principles of Vedanta. There and then, I requested him to grace us by visiting the San Francisco Bay area. Although it took some time, this became a reality over time.

For the last 20 years, we have been fortunate to have him for one week every year. The bond between the students and teachers is mutual. Since the teacher has no agenda other than to find students who are worthy of learning, we are happy Swamiji finds students here fill that criteria. In addition to learning from Swamiji, my family has been most fortunate to have Swamiji stay in our home for the last dozen year or so (since last year, that honor goes to Kumud and Kishore Singhal in Milpitas, much closer to the talks). This has meant many heart-to-heart talks, with enhanced mananam and nididhyasanam for me.

As many of us discovered, one of Swamiji's special qualities is how he relates to individuals – totally non-judgmental and loving. I see him giving advice to students on day-to-day problems that are very helpful. When we started adding retreats to the schedule of talks, this quality became obvious. Early in the retreat he learns people's names, and their backgrounds, and gets to know them personally. Similarly, during satsangs and bhikshas, he tirelessly answers questions in a practical manner, keeping the questioner in mind. And yet, if you attend his bhashya classes at the ashram, you are struck by his erudition and insight into the subtle truth. He imbibes this quality to tailoring the teaching to the level of the students from our guru, Pujya Swami Dayanandaji.

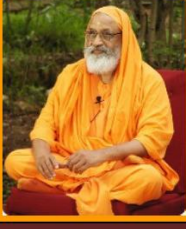
I had the privilege of editing the transcription of his retreat talks on Kaivalya Upanisad. During this time, I discovered his clarity of difficult concepts and his precision with words. In the process I learnt the art of converting talks into books (you may know that Swamiji performed the same function for our guru, Swami Dayanandaji in publishing the now famous book called 'The Teaching of Bhagavad Gita')

In the next newsletter, we will give some details about some of his accomplishments, including establishing a significant ashram near Ahmedabad, and publishing scores of books, CDs and videos.

We are looking forward to seeing you all at these talks. Visit <https://arshavidyacenter.org> for details of Swamiji's visit and any updates. Hari Om

Vijay Kapoor





संप्रदाय = सम्यक् प्रदानम्

A vision of absolute freedom that is well communicated  
from गुरु to शिष्य

## Swami Viditatmanandaji's journey from an engineer to a Mahatma

The previous newsletter, highlighted Swami Viditatmanandaji's extraordinary transformation from a normal worldly person, in this case a mechanical engineer working in New York, to evolve into a God-man, a Mahatma. All this in the space of a few years within a lifetime. That this unbelievable transformation (Gita Chap 2-29 आश्चर्यवत् पश्यति कश्चित् एनं ...) is indeed the promise of Advaita Vedanta, and the glory of the individual who seizes this opportunity to obtain the vision of oneness with ईश्वर. Also, the Advaitic sampradaya (a spiritual tradition), bestows upon such a ज्ञानी, i.e. a Mahatma, freedom to choose a life style - a life of solitude, or continue to be active in the world. We are happy that Swami Viditatmanandaji, following the footsteps of his gurus, Swami Chinmayanandaji and Swami Dayanandaji, chose the latter - the lifestyle of a teacher-sannyasi.

## Swamiji as a sannyasi and a teacher

Swamiji, having taken sannyasa, has steered his life's focus into two areas. One, his in-depth study of the shastras, and Sanskrit, enables him to teach the subtle truths of the self knowledge to advanced students, and as many as ten of whom have taken sannyasa.



The second is that Swami Viditatmanandaji is now revered as a spiritual leader among thousands of people in communities in Gujarat and elsewhere around the world. He relates well to the life of active people. I will never forget one advice he gave me: "I have found," he said, "that many people get introduced to the wisdom



of Vedanta as much from the personality of the teacher as from the teaching itself". People take clues from how he handles people's personal issues, how he remains naturally unruffled in resolving knotty administrative issues, and how naturally effervescent his personality is. It is not a surprise, therefore, that hundreds of families have grown with him - both adults and their children. He teaches several classes each week to the local community at his ashram in Ahmedabad, known as Adhyatma Vidya Mandir (Temple of Self Knowledge <http://www.tattvatirtha.org>) He holds week-long retreats in the surrounding cities, and takes groups of people for pilgrimages to the renowned temples. Every year he takes a train-full of devotees to our ashram in Rishikesh. He is constantly in demand for temple openings and renewals.



**Adhyatma Vidya Mandir**

### **Swami Viditatmanandaji, a prolific author**

These two roles - one as a scholar, and the the other as a community leader are reflected in the increasing authorship of his books and publications. To date, Swamiji has authored scores of books in Gujarati and English. Many of his books are translations of Upanisads, and also on specific topics he has chosen to give advice on - such as conflict resolution, freedom from sorrow, duty and success. One of his remarkable contributions has been a two-volume set of books called Satsang. This has been a collection of often common questions asked in live Q&A sessions in public gatherings numbering in thousands. The catalog of Swamiji's publication can be found at [http://arshavidya.us/avg\\_catalog.pdf](http://arshavidya.us/avg_catalog.pdf)

Such extraordinary achievements by Swamiji made him a natural choice by Pujya Swami Dayanandaji to be assigned the task to guide the Arsha Vidya Pitham in general, and the Gurukulam in Saylorburg in particular. We are very fortunate to see his steady, wise stewardship of this important institution. As a side benefit during the 3 months he spends in the US and Canada every year, he makes it a point to visit our area. My fervent hope is you to listen to the wisdom of our shastras from this Mahatma in 4 evening discourses. And if possible, spend a couple of days living with him at the Novato retreat.



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Vijay Kapoor

