

LAKE GENEVA SPIRITUAL CAMP

KrishnaRamanujaDasa
RaghuMudumbaiRamanujaDasa

July 6 through July 12, 2003, changed the lives of about ninety families who took time off from their busy schedules and travelled from all over the USA to discover the secrets of this Universe and purpose of life. The seven-day spiritual retreat organized by JET at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, just outside Chicago was a rare opportunity to spend one full week under the guidance of Sri Sri Sri Tridandi Chinna Sriman Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swamiji, and to learn from him directly about the history, philosophical insight, and practical wisdom of our Vedic heritage.



A nature friendly class by HH

The camp was conducted in a beautiful and serene atmosphere, in a forested, hilly area on the bank of a picturesque lake. While many classes were conducted in a comfortable classroom environment, some were conducted in the open air, giving one the feeling of being in an *A:sram*. Although the weather was

cool and occasionally rainy, we all felt comforted under the spiritual umbrella of HH Sri Jeeyar Swamiji and his profound wisdom and compassion.



Mass Sahasranama chanting

While this was welcome time away from the regular routines, it was far from the usual vacation. Each day began at 4.30 AM with HH Sri Sri Sri Jeeyar Swami personally teaching *Yo:ga*, *Pra:naya:ma*, *Su:rya Namaska:ram*, meditation and the chanting of *Pra:thas Smarani:yam*. After morning prayers (*Se:va:ka:lam* and *Thi:rttha Go:shtthi*) and a light *Prasa:dam* - breakfast, Sri Jeeyar Swamiji led the group through profound discussions on the hidden truths contained within *Ma:ndu:kyo:panishad*, using wonderful interactive animated presentations to make the concepts clear and easy to understand. After lunch, HH Sri Swamiji introduced us to the Vedic Literature in the afternoons. There were also separate breakout sessions for learning



classical bhajans and Vedic chanting. HH Sri Jeeyar Swamiji spent the later part of the afternoon teaching *Gi:tha:rttha Sangraha* (The Essence of *Gi:tha* which was authored by *Sri: Ra:ma:nuja's* spiritual master, *Sri: Ya:muna:cha:rya*). The evening session started with *Sri: Vishnusahasrana:ma Stho:thra* chanting, followed by interactive sessions on various topics with special presentations. Each and every moment was spent hearing the sweet, nectar like voice of Sri Jeeyar Swamiji, which brought joy even to the elderly who were limited in their understanding of English.

In all, a number of wonderful discussions on the Realities of this Nature, Soul, God, their relationships, their nature, authenticity of various scriptures, various practices and festivals etc., were presented in a clear and lucid manner by HH Sri Jeeyar Swamiji, whose vast wisdom allowed him to bring in present-day examples that made the complex subjects simple and practical.

Everyone came to the camp to quench their thirst of spiritual knowledge; instead they were drowned in the enlightening Divine Ecstasy, the joy of knowing the truth, the wonder of knowing our true roots, and the wisdom that lies in our Vedic Tradition, which

leads the world in the path of goodness and service to the Divine.



Enjoying the class of H.H

Despite the rigorous schedule and sometimes late hours of discussion and learning, young and old alike seemed to never tire of being in the presence of HH Sri Jeeyar Swamiji and in the company of fellow devotees. In fact, at the end of the camp, many expressed that the camp would have run for a few more days. Others felt that such camps should take place more frequently. To the organizers and volunteers who put the camp together and ensured that food and other amenities were available to everyone, it was a dream that Sri Jeeyar Swamiji envisioned come true.

Every one left the camp spiritually recharged with the wisdom of our Vedic tradition. The *Sri: Vai:shnava* tradition which *Bhagavad Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya* brought to light to all of us, brings the entirety of living beings under the umbrella of one family, “*vasudhai:va kutumbakam*”.



With the Grace of God and the blessings of HH Sri Jeeyar Swamiji, this camp has served as the model for many such camps in the near future, under the Divine guidance of Acharya HH Sri Sri Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji.



A Class open to the nature

UPANISHAD QUIZ

1. How many definitions exist for *the word ve:da:ntha* ?
2. From how many *upanishads* have our *A:cha:rya:s* quoted while explaining *ve:da:ntha*?
3. How many main *upanishads* does the *Yajurve:da* have ?

4. Which *upanishads* tell us how to chant *O:mka:ram (O:m)*?
5. How many types of *Prama:nas* (methods of acceptable evidence) are there and what are they?
6. Which *upanishads* talk about the *srushti* or the creation process?
7. What is described mainly in *Yajurve:da* ?
8. How many branches of *Ve:da* existed in ancient times and how many are available now?
9. What are the five *Upabrumhanas* or *Vya:khyas* which elaborate the meaning of *Ve:da* ?
10. What is the difference between *Ve:da:ngas* and *Upabrumhanas* ?

(Answers in next Edition)

Jai Sriman Narayana!

