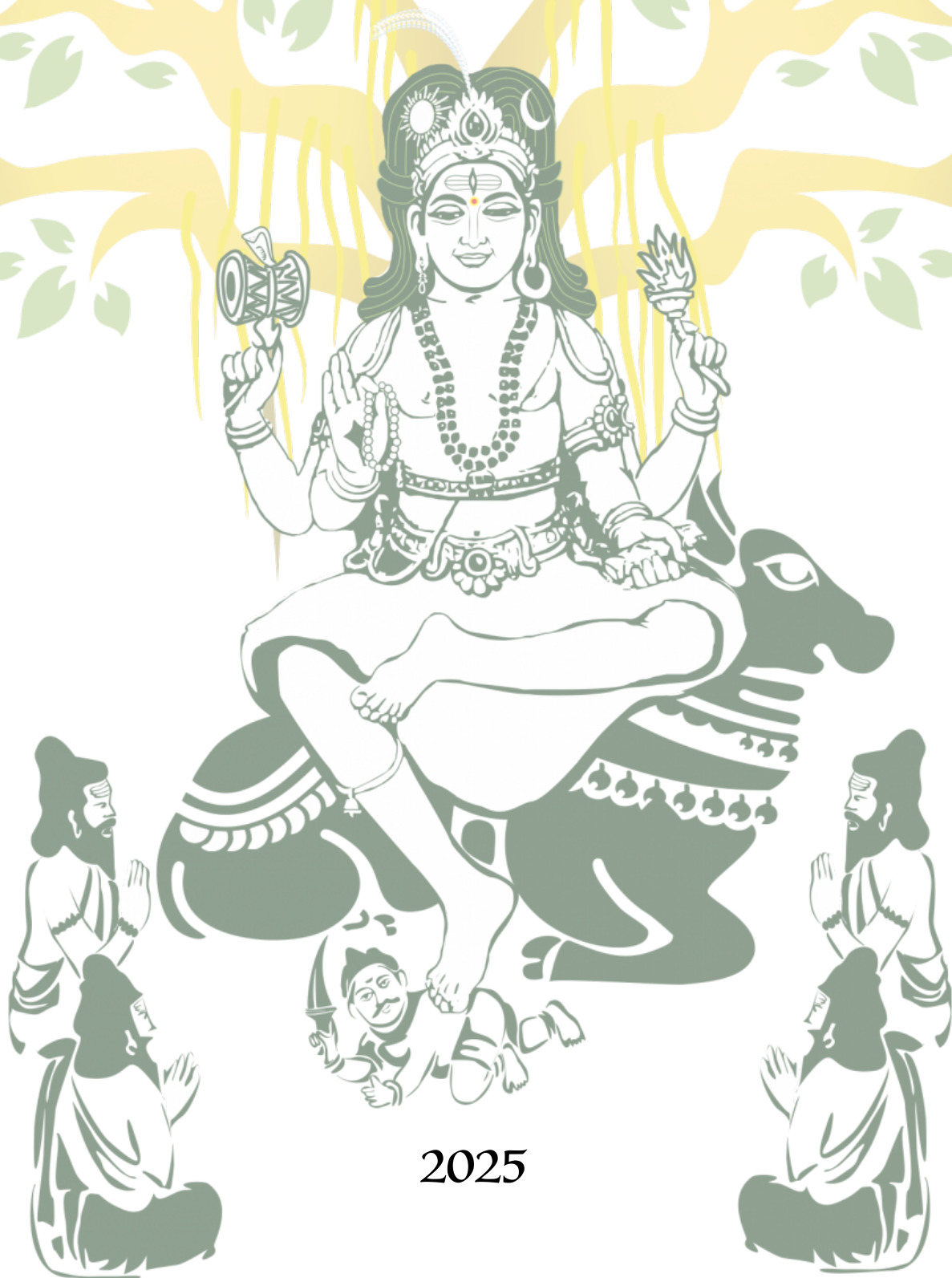


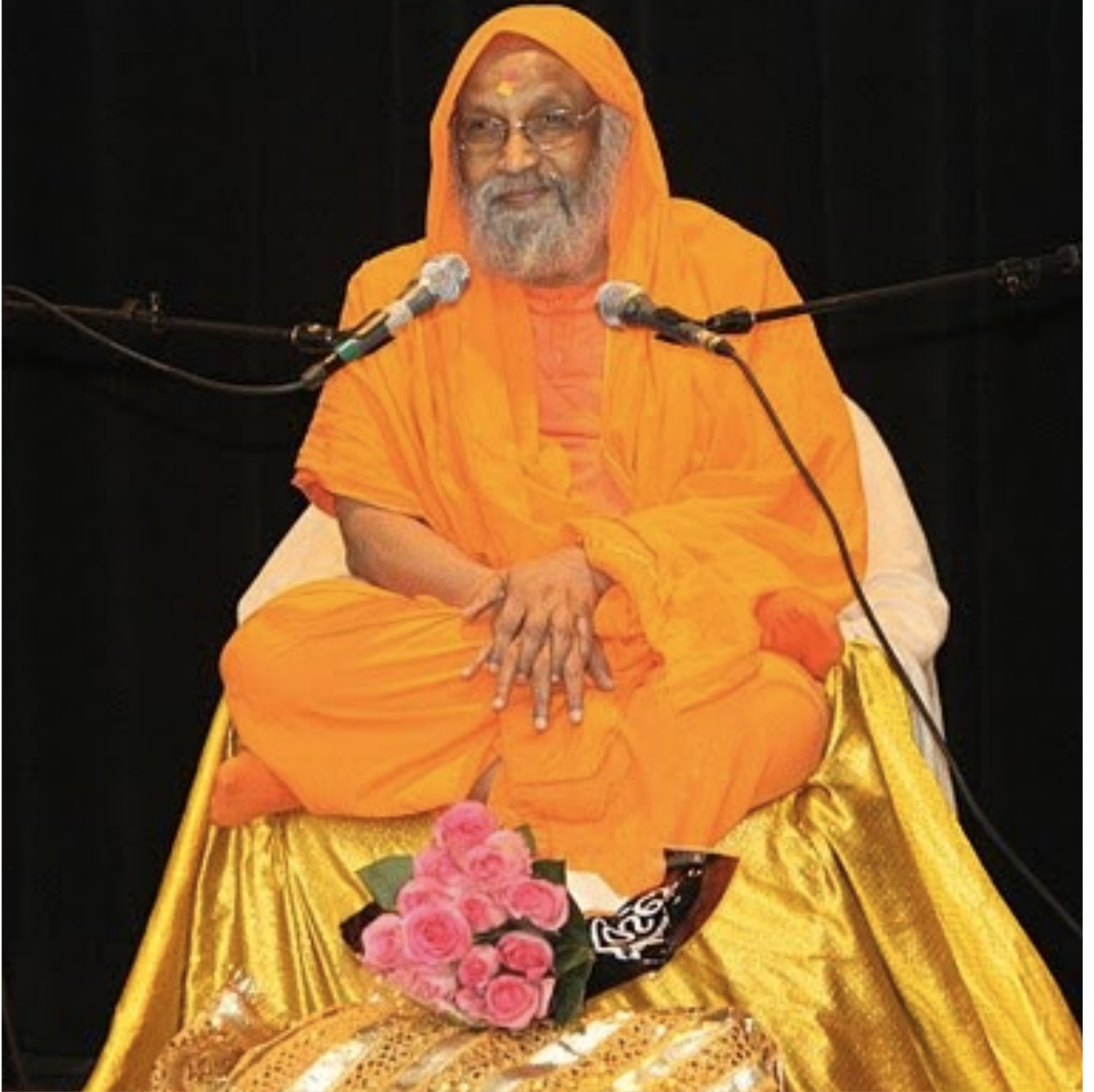
Longterm Course Student Handbook

Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh



2025

Type to enter text There is nothing more attractive than clarity.
–Pujya Sri Swami Dayanandaji





Blessed Self,

Welcome to Arsha Vidya Pitham, Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh. In this guidebook, you will find useful information that will help you easily navigate the ashram and make the most out of the course. Kindly bring a printout of this booklet with you for easy reference during the course of your stay.

We pray for your stay at the ashram to be fruitful and filled with the joy of learning about and reveling in the *ātman*.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sakshatkrtananda', is written over a faint, repeating pattern of the word 'ARSHA' in a light green color.

Swami Sakshatkrtananda
Chairman and Managing Trustee
Cum Chief Acharya,
Swami Dayananda Ashram
Purani Jhadi, Rishikesh

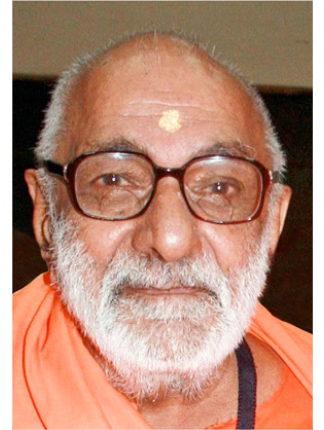


The Visionary

Swami Dayananda Ashram is the legacy of Parama Pujya Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati. This is his *tapobhūmi*, the land of *tapas*. A great *mahātman* and a *jnānin*, Pujya Swamiji was known for his clarity and effortless exposition of the tersest of concepts in Vedanta. He inspired thousands of people to study Vedanta and commit to a life of emotional maturity and spiritual growth. He has also created a record number of monastic and lay teachers, who continue his legacy of excellence in teaching and service. You can read more about Pujya Swamiji by clicking [HERE](#)

The Architect

Sri Swami Shuddhanandaji is the Chairman Emeritus of the Ashram. His is an exemplary life of service rendered to his Guru and to the ashram. He has been involved in the planning and execution of many important projects of the ashram right from its inception. Even at the age of 95, Swamiji continues to guide the administration. You might see him in the office on some days.



The Torchbearer

Sri Swami Sakshatkrtanandaji is Chairman and Managing Trustee Cum Chief Acharya of the ashram. He is a walking encyclopedia of the *śāstra*— the Upanishads, Bhagavad-Gita and the Brahmasutras flow from him effortlessly like the Ganga. An outstanding teacher, Swamiji has been deeply immersed in *brahmavidyā* for the past three decades.. He is known for his precision and clarity. He leads by example; his simplicity, humility and commitment to service are an inspiration to all.



ASHRAM LIFE

Based on ancient Vedic knowledge, the ashram lifestyle is designed solely for the cultivation of emotional maturity, an essential prerequisite for gaining self-knowledge. Generally, one's life is crowded by numerous distractions, dead-end pursuits, and mindless consumption. By contrast, the ashram lifestyle is uncomplicated and devoid of the need to keep making choices. Not needing to make decisions about what to wear or eat gives the spiritual aspirant a much-needed respite from constantly being at the mercy of well-entrenched preferences and prejudices, and instead allows one to focus on assimilating the truth of oneself as limitlessly whole and free. When one is committed to self-knowledge, needless preoccupations and distractions effortlessly drop away, allowing one the opportunity to reset one's priorities in life.

We encourage you to participate in all aspects of the course wholeheartedly. This knowledge, and lifestyle that accompanies it, is transformative and brings the gifts of equanimity and contentment.



ARRIVAL, ROOMS, & MEALS

Please report to the office/reception soon upon your arrival to receive keys and directions to your room. All rooms are fully furnished and equipped with cot, mattress, bedsheet and pillowcase, chair, table, lights, fan, geyser for bath, water jug, and cleaning materials. Therefore, there is no need to bring these items. Bring only items that you need for your comfort, bearing in mind the weather during the course, which will include, summer, monsoon, and a light winter. Please conserve electricity by switching off appliances when not in use. The ashram serves a simple sattvic diet (devoid of onion and garlic), which includes, rice, roti, dal, khichadi, kadi, and seasonal vegetables. There will be three meals a day, plus tea served in the early morning, mid-morning, and afternoon. Everyone is expected to do gurukula-seva for roughly an hour a day during the course of their stay at the ashram.



ASHRAM DRESS CODE

The dress code for the six month course students will be white dhoti-shirt or pyjama-kurta for men and white saree or salwar kameez for women. The dress code will set the course students apart from other campers and casual visitors to the ashram, thereby underscoring the seriousness of one's commitment, and contributing to emotional growth and maturity. In a way, it is nice not to be preoccupied with what to wear each day, thereby allowing one to cultivate a tranquil and focussed mindset. Additionally, kindly ensure that you are fully clothed at all times while in the public areas. Please abstain from wearing shorts and sleeveless and/or revealing attire.



TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

7-7:30 AM Meditation

8:15-9:15 AM Upanishad Class

9:30-10:30 AM Sanskrit Class

11-12 Noon Chanting Class

4-5:15 PM Bhagavad-Gita Class

5:30-6:15 PM Yoga Class

8:15-9:15 PM Satsang Q & A

MEALTIMES

5:00 AM: Morning Tea

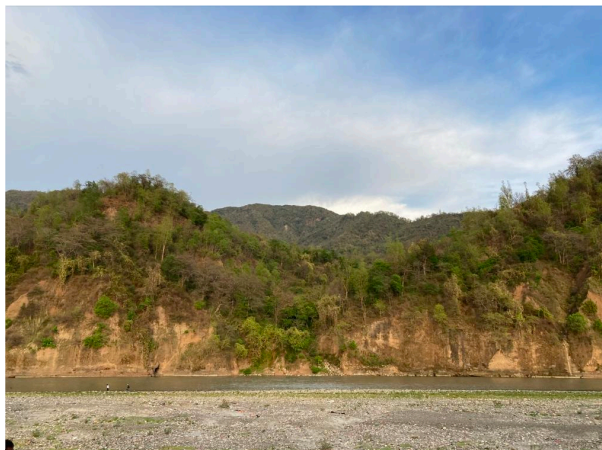
10:30 AM: Tea Break

3:30 PM: Afternoon Tea

7:30 AM: Breakfast

12:30 PM: Lunch

7:30 PM: Dinner



HOLIDAYS DURING THE COURSE

Students will enjoy Wednesdays off every week for relaxation and for taking care of personal errands.



CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE & DECORUM

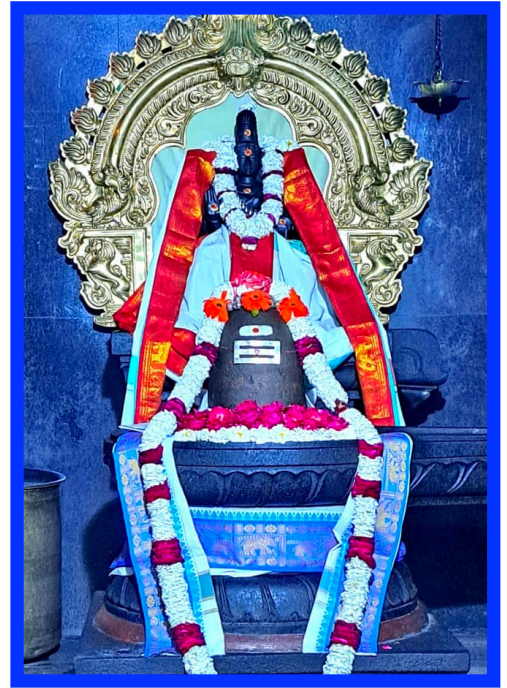
Classes and satsangs will be conducted in the Yoga Hall next to the temple. There will be floor seating with personal desks. You can bring your own asanas or seat-cushions as needed. For people who are unable to sit on the floor, a few chairs are available.

All classes will begin promptly at the times indicated. In the Vedic tradition, it is considered respectful on the students' part to assemble in the classroom before the arrival of the acharyas. This habit cultivates an eagerness to learn, and allows one the space to compose the mind to receive the sacred transmission of self-knowledge. Further, this practice avoids needless distractions that can be created by late-comers scrambling to occupy their spots in the room at the last minute or after the class has begun. For these reasons, please plan to arrive early, and be seated at least five minutes before the beginning of each class. Eating, drinking, or chewing gum is never allowed in the classroom. Please finish your snacks/tea before entering the hall.

The classroom will be cleaned twice a week. Please cooperate by removing your personal effects from the room and by stacking your desks to one corner on cleaning days (Tuesdays and Fridays).

SRI GANGADHARESWARA TEMPLE

Beautiful and serene, Gangadhareshwara temple is an abode of joy and peace. If one is serious about seeking freedom from *samsāra*— a life assailed by constant wants—cultivating devotion is a must. The primary way to protect the desire for self-knowledge from being hijacked by other desires or overpowered by obstacles is through prayer. A consecrated temple, where daily pujas are held becomes a powerful center for neutralising even the most difficult of karmas, thereby allowing one to be steadfast in one's pursuit.



THE SAMADHI MANDIR

The *adhiṣṭhāna* of Parama Pujya Sri Swami Dayanandaji is the embodiment of *guru-anugraha*, the grace, of the Guru. The *śāstra* mentions several kinds of *anugraha* needed to assimilate the teachings of the self as non-separate from *Īśvara*, the Lord. Of these, the Guru's grace is of paramount importance. We worship the Guru's abode to seek the blessings of emotional maturity and the gift of growing clarity in the assimilation of the *vidyā*. We also pray for all obstacles in the pursuit of self-knowledge to be burnt to ashes. Ever the embodiment of compassion, Pujya Swamiji never denies granting anyone's sincere and heartfelt desires. We pray to the Guru for the wellbeing of all students and for the success of the course.



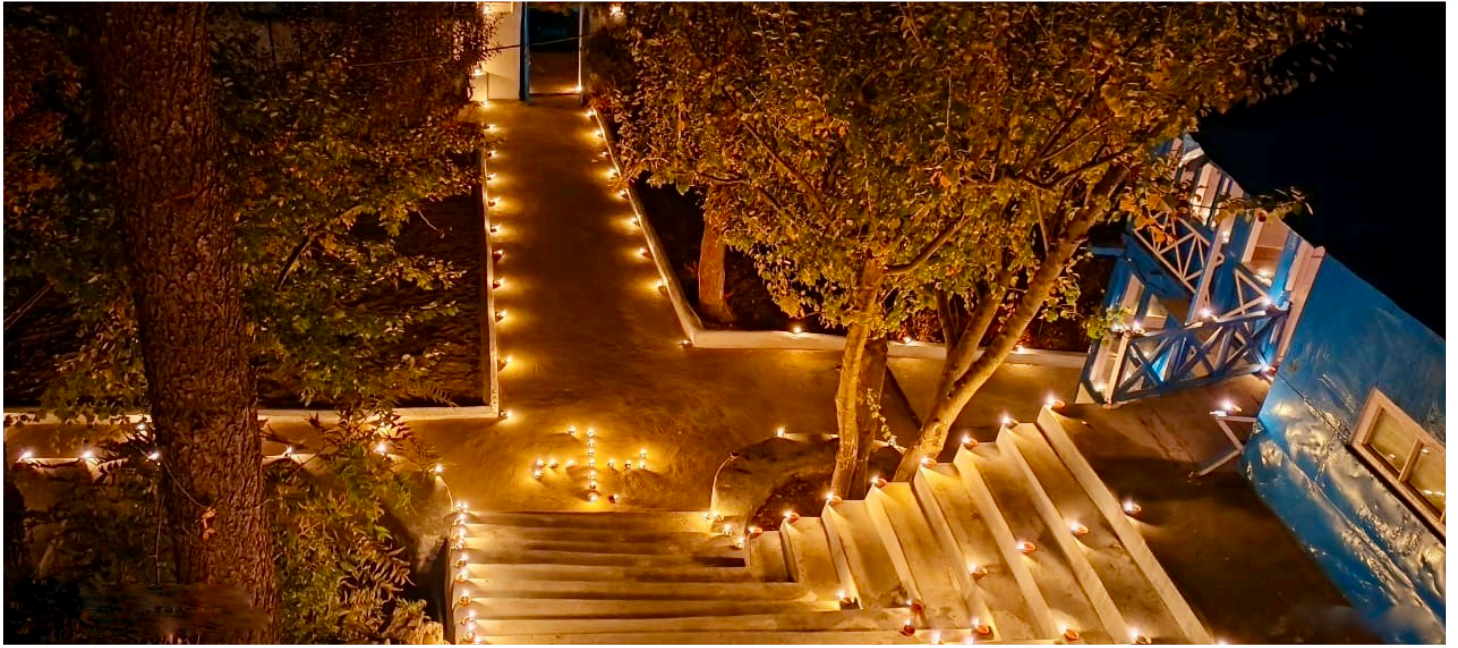


GURUKULA-SEVA

"Sevā" is a Sanskrit word that can be loosely translated as service. Reaching out to help others allows the heart to bloom and grow in compassion. The seva offered to the ashram and the guru assists in one's self growth and emotional maturity. Students will be assigned to a seva roster that rotates fortnightly. Since the whole idea of seva is to gladly accept and perform the task assigned, there will not be much room for choosing the seva, except under extenuating circumstances, such as illness, physical infirmity, .

These are the seva opportunities at the ashram:

- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner service (Daily)
- Mala-making for temple deities (Daily)
- Assisting with puja at the adhishtanam (Daily)
- Classroom cleaning (Tuesdays and Fridays)
- Temple and Samadhi-Mandir Cleaning (Tues-Thurs-Sat)
- Photo Gallery cleaning (Mondays and Thursdays)
- Flower and Mala purchase coordinating (Daily)
- Yoga Hall Deep Cleaning (Once a Month)



FESTIVALS

The Vedic tradition is one where vision of non-duality pervades all aspects of the everyday life. The festivals that we celebrate are no exception. We will participate in many important festivals together throughout the course, such as Mahasivaratri, International Yoga Day, Guru Purnima, Krishna-janmashtami, Ganesha Chaturthi, Onam, Navaratri, and Dipavali to name a few. The festivals are an effortless way of relating to *Īśvara*, the Lord. Immersing oneself in the richness of the Vedic culture affords a wonderful opportunity for understanding their significance in one's life in general, and for one's spiritual growth in particular.

Additionally, there will be Ganga-Arati and Sadhu-Bhandaras being offered throughout. The Ganga-Arati teaches us about the respect accorded to ecology in the tradition, while the Sadhu-Bhandara offers practical instruction about the richness of the monastic tradition in the *vaidika-dharma*. Even for those raised in the Hindu culture, the festivals celebrated at the ashram afford a renewed opportunity to examine all that one may have taken for granted and to reconnect with the profundity of one's customs and culture.



MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

COURSE TEXTBOOKS AND CLOTHES

Books can be bought at the Gita Press near Ram Jhula, which is a short walk from the ashram. In the same area, you can also find white clothes for purchase. Sanskrit books will be available at the bookstore located across the office.

YOGA CLASSES

Yoga classes will take place between 5:15 and 6:00 pm daily (except during the days off and as advised) in the Yoga Hall, located upstairs next to the main temple.

DRINKING WATER

You can fill up your jugs and bottles at the Drinking Water Station right next to the office.

BED LINENS

You can exchange your bed linens once every two weeks on your days off from Housekeeping and Stores, located near the side entrance of the Dining Hall. Please contact Sri Mukesh, who is in charge of Housekeeping.

SUNDRY ITEMS

Personal items, such as snacks, soap, toiletries, etc., are available in small shops outside the main ashram gate.

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Sri Gunanand Rayal, General Manager: 9412381866

Dr. Kiran Bhatia for health issues or medical emergencies: 9528864614

DAILY SCHEDULE

5:00 am Morning Tea	12:30 pm Lunch
5:30 am Temple Puja	1:30-3:30 pm Rest/Seva
7-7:30 am Meditation	3:30 pm Tea Break
7:30-8:10 am Breakfast	3:45-4:45 pm Sanskrit Classes
8:15-9:45 am Upanishad Class	5-6 pm Yoga Class
10-10:45 am Chanting	6:30 pm Temple Puja
10.45 am Tea Break	7:30 pm Dinner
11am-12:15 pm Gita Class	8:00 pm Satsang Q & A

COURSE SYLLABUS

Ísopaniṣad and Kenopaniṣad	Prakaraṇa Granthas
with Adi Sankara's Bhashya	Sanskrit (Various Levels)
Bhagavad-Gita with Bhashya	Vedic and Shloka Chanting
	Yoga

GENERAL ASHRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS

Swami Dayananda Ashram welcomes you to a comfortable and peaceful stay. This ashram is meant only for the stay of those who are connected and committed to Arsha Vidya teachings. Please make sure that you register yourself by submitting a copy of your Aadhar/Passport/Visa on your arrival. We request you to kindly pay attention to the following rules during your stay and strictly follow them:

- The daily routine of the ashram is displayed on the notice board. Please follow the general timings of temple prayers, dining and closure of ashram gates and so on.
- Please attend all the programs in the ashram during your stay.
- Please switch off the light, fan, geyser, etc. when you are not in the room.
- Please take food in the dining hall only, and do not bring the food to the rooms.
- Please do not collect kitchen utensils in the room.
- Cooking in the room is prohibited. Onion and garlic are strictly not permitted in the ashram.
- Please note that one begins to eat only after the prayer chanting (Gita Chapter 15) is completed.
- Smoking, liquor consumption, and doing any kind of drugs are strictly prohibited. Violations of this policy will entail in immediate eviction.
- Guests are requested to maintain decent attire while staying in the ashram and avoid using shorts, sleeveless etc. that will expose the body. The permitted dress code is pyjama/kurta, full pant/shirt or dhoti/ angavastra or shirt for males and sari/blouse or salwar/kameez for females.

- Students should refrain from making loud noises such as playing music loudly, singing and dancing in the rooms or in the premises that will disturb the other sadhakas in the ashram. Kindly maintain silence during your stay in the ashram, particularly near the temple, Samadhi Mandir and Dining Hall.
- Please do not take bath in Ganga away from the bank. The water is deep in some areas near the bank. Please do not take valuables when you go to take bath as they can be swept away.
- Please do not directly hire any staff for services in your room or for yourself or pay any money without the consent of the administration.
- The Ashram is run on voluntary donations. Students are requested to make Rs 5000 monthly donations to the ashram every month. Donations up to Rs 10000 can be made in cash but IT exemption is not available and one should take printed receipt compulsorily for all donations. PAN Number has to be given for all donations. Donors are discouraged from making cash donations. For different schemes of donations please contact the office or visit our website www.dayananda.org. Office timings are 8.00 to 12.30 noon and 3.00 to 7.00 p.m.
- Please drop off the room keys at the security if you are leaving at odd hours. Otherwise please hand over the keys at the office at the time of departure.
- People who do not follow the rules will be disbarred from staying at the ashram in the future. Hence please make sure that you follow all the rules mentioned above. Thank you and have a pleasant stay.
- It is strictly prohibited to eat in the dining facilities of adjacent ashrams without the written permission of the Acharya. Violation of this rule can result in disbarment.
- It is forbidden to visit the rooms of the opposite sex or socialize with other students or guests.

STUDENT TESTIMONIALS FROM PREVIOUS COURSES

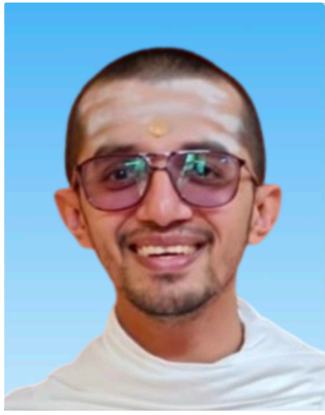


Starting with Adi Sankara, all the way to our Pujya Swamiji, earnest sadhakas faced a lot of hardships for gaining this knowledge. By God's grace and Pujya Swamiji's blessings, we didn't face any difficulties in our quest, and instead we were warmly welcomed into this lineage. Realizing the importance of this *vidyā* and contemplating on it is the Guru-Dakshina we can offer with our humble pranams.

–J. Sharada and J. Sesha Shekhar

Having just a basic introduction to Vedanta during my Yoga course, I found myself pulled towards understanding the Advaita philosophy in depth. Upon completion of the 6 months course at Arsha Vidya Peetham, I know that Vedanta is not just a philosophy but the very truth of myself. I have overall grown as a person under the guidance of the Acharyas. I have a much stronger understanding of my pursuit now and courage to face the world. –Kavya Varma





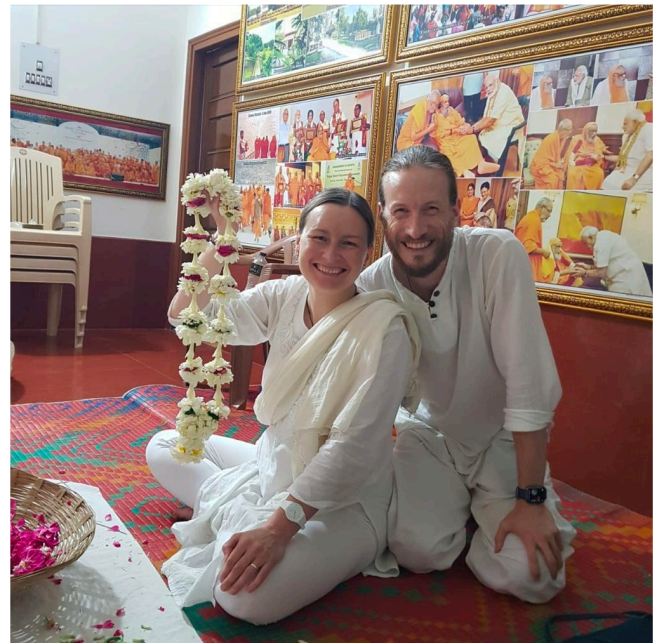
I will always be grateful to be a part of the six month course at this ashram. The immersive teaching of Vedanta has been absolutely transformative. The love, care, and wisdom of the Acharyas has shown me the right path. I thank God repeatedly for this good fortune. The environment of the ashram is clean, the staff is friendly and, graced by Gangaji, the ashram is conducive for an profound spiritual journey.

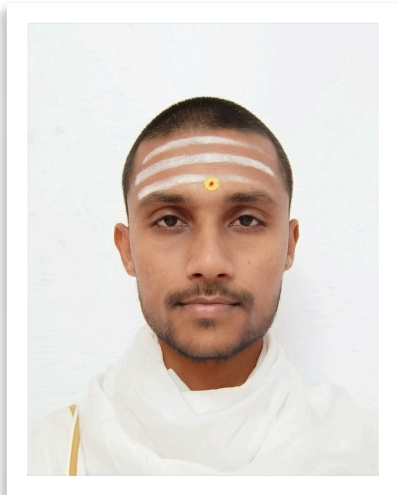
—Brahmachari Yoga

We are very grateful for the opportunity to be part of this 6-month immersive study of Vedanta, Bhagavad Gita, and Sanskrit. The teachers did an amazing job at carefully selecting people from across the world, with diverse backgrounds, and at various stages of life, all seeking answers to the same fundamental problem. Together, we cultivated a cohesive and supportive environment for emotional maturity and growth.

It was beautiful to come into contact with the vision of no division and to learn how to embrace it in our heart and life. We are now looking forward to continuing a life of karma yoga and to continuing the study in this lineage.

—Mariya and Marius, Canada



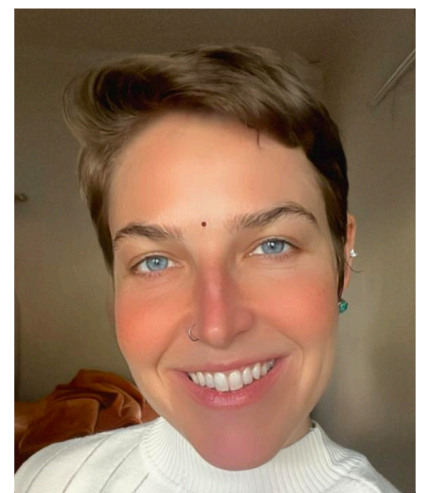


It has been a great time in Dayanand Ashram Rishikesh for these six months at the bank of holy Ganga. As a Brahmachari, I learnt many things I need to cultivate on this path. Apart from the syllabus, there is a lot more one can learn by being with the acharyas, and watching their way of living, teaching, and caring for all. I am very much blessed. Although I have been here for six months, it feels like a few days. Nothing more than study of the shastra in this holy environment is needed for liberation.

—Brahmachari Siddharudha

I have questioned myself all my life regarding who I was, why things happen in the way they do, how and why suffering happens. After many different studies and experiences I got different hints, but none of this “answers” brought me peace and the feeling of truth that I got with this knowledge. Now after this 6 months immersion I got more clarity and peace. This was no doubt the best choice I have done in my life, it changed my perspective regarding to the world and myself. I have no words to express my gratitude for this opportunity.

—Daniela, Brazil





Om sri gurubhyo namah

It is really a great pleasure to say that I am very blessed to be part of the six month course in 2023. Studying Vedanta is the result of punya especially studying it from Sri Sakshatkritananda Swamiji and Sri Svratmavidyananda Swaminiji. It is one of the best blessings I received from God. Again and again I salute Pujya Swamiji Dayananda for this great good fortune. ॐ 🙏

—Brahmachari Satish Chandra



I always had the curiosity to know why God created this world. I wondered why people suffered, and how can the humans be so similar yet so different from one another. This course answered all these questions & gave me a great opportunity to interact with lot of curious individuals who had similar questions. It was the best 6 months of my life! —B. Nagarjuna

It was a wonderful and precious time studying Vedanta with Swamiji and Swaminiji. The Upanishad classes were pure nectar. The study of the entire Bhagavad Gita helped me to "ishvarize" the whole universe, starting with my own body. These texts are absolutely essential for one to understand the truth of the self, namely, the fullness of This leads to the fullness of That.

—Ilia Ershov, Russia



*ŚUBHAMASTU
–OM TAT SAT–*



