

Teaching Legacy of Swami Dayananda Saraswati in Argentina

During the decade of the 1990s Pujya Swamiji taught Vedanta camps in Argentina each year for nine consecutive years. He was keen on establishing a teaching center there that could serve the Spanish speaking students of the world. His efforts were rewarded when many of the Argentine students began to study three-year Vedanta and Sanskrit courses at the Arsha Vidya gurukulams in India. Due to his increasing work load in India and his declining health he could not keep coming to Argentina to teach Vedanta. So, in 2009 he passed the responsibility for building up his teaching legacy in Argentina to his one of his senior American disciples, who had settled in Argentina, Swamini Vilasananda Saraswati.

Along with a group of Pujya Swamiji's Argentine disciples, she established Fundación Arsha Vidya as a legal non-profit educational trust that would carry on his work by establishing teaching centers and a gurukulam, as well as publishing his books in Spanish. Pujya Swamiji dictated the by-laws for Fundación Arsha Vidya to his secretary, Swamini Srividyananda Saraswati, who sent them to Swamini Vilasananda. The most important article with respect to Pujya Swamiji's teaching legacy is the following:

"Article 1.- In the City of Buenos Aires, where its legal address is established, a foundation having the name Fundación "Arsha Vidya" (Knowledge of the Sages), was formed on the 21st of December of 2010 for a term of 99 years, which will be able to establish itself as

an educational and cultural institution in any part of the Republic of Argentina."

One of the line items under Article 1 is:

5. Organize and carry out the translation to Spanish, the publication and the sale of all books by the Master Swami Dayananda Saraswati and other books by some of his disciples.

In the year 2013, Fundación Arsha Vidya published two of Swami Dayananda Saraswati's books in Spanish: "Todo sobre Sādhana" and "El Valor de los Valores". And the translation of the Bhagavad Gītā Home Study Course (BGHSC) is being prepared for its publication in 9 volumes.

In 2014, with the permission of Pujya Swamiji, Swamini Vilasananda began to lay the groundwork for building the fifth Arsha Vidya Gurukulam. After consulting the manager of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Saylorsburg, Sri Suddhatma Chaitanya, and with the permission of Pujya Swamiji, she organized the first major fund raising event in Argentina in 2015 during the 25th Anniversary of Pujya Swamiji's first visit to Argentina. Pujya Swamiji delivered his message to the Argentine students by video.

There were enough donations to cover the costs of the event which included hall rental, music concerts, banquet lunch, souvenir and displays. Donations also covered lodging and other expenses for Swami Svatmananda Saraswati, who was invited to deliver public talks in the province and in Buenos Aires

City and the main talk at the anniversary. This first successful attempt at fundraising was a warm-up exercise.

Afterwards the foundation published another important book by Pujya Swamiji in Spanish, *Tattvabodhah*, 400 pages. Thirty books could be printed just in time for Swamini to bring them to Saylorburg USA for Arsha Vidya Gurukulam's 29th anniversary, where Pujya Swamiji would officially release the new book. The book was presented by Pujya Swamiji, but afterwards his health continued to decline and he attained his Mahā Samadhi later in Rishikesh on the 23rd of September.

It was very difficult to think about what to do after that. By Īśvara's grace Swamini Vilasananda began thinking about making a trip to the province of Cordoba to see if there could be a suitable property for building the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Argentina. These thoughts kept getting stronger, almost as if being called to go there. As it turned out, one of the Vedanta students was going to Cordoba in mid-December and she offered to find a place for both to stay for one week in the most beautiful part of the province. Every-thing began to fall into place, as if Pujya Swamiji's grace were propelling this to happen.

After seeing four or five properties, Swamini Vilasananda and Florencia were taken to see the most beautiful property imaginable on the last day. It already had the buildings that a gurukulam requires, situated on more than 12 acres (5 hectares) of land with a brook running through it. If Fundación Arsha Vidya can purchase this property, the gurukulam could be started almost immediately. There would be a possibility of negotiating to lower the asking price, which is one million US

dollars, because after seeing the property the Argentine peso was devaluated, which caused the dollar value to increase. If Fundación Arsha Vidya buys the property, we would also require funds to maintain it.

Like the other four Arsha Vidya Gurukulams, three in India and one in USA, this property has the spiritual atmosphere and the inspiring natural beauty of its surroundings to qualify as the fifth gurukulam established by Pujya Swamiji to serve students from all over the world. The capital of the province of Cordoba has an international airport which is 60 km from the town of Huerta Grande situated next to the property. That distance can be covered in one hour by car on highway 38. There are also buses.

For further details on how to donate and be part of the undertaking once a final decision is made, please contact Swamini Vilasananda at Fundación Arsha Vidya:

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More photos follow:





