**Bhagavad Gita Mahayagna**

A group of blessed children got ready to embark on a spiritual journey during the auspicious Karya Siddhi Hanuman Temple (KSHT) Kumbhabhishekam celebrations in Frisco, TX during the July of 2015. The directive came from none other than their beloved Sri Swamiji/Appaji/Tataji.

**The Vision**

Pujya Sri Swamiji wished to see at least 18 kids memorize ALL 18 Chapters of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita by the time HE visited Dallas next year. HE also instructed them to learn the meanings of the shlokas. Srikanth Datta and Aishwarya Lanka were chosen by HIS Holiness for this divine mission.

**About the Teachers**

Following the instructions of Parama Pujya Sri Swamiji, Srikanth Datta underwent a disciplined training through a 2 Year Brahmachari Vedanta Course and studied Sanskrit and Advaita Vedanta through Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and other Vedantic texts in a traditional way from a gurukula atmosphere. With the divine blessings and Instructions of Parama Pujya Sri Swamiji, Srikanth Ji conducts Jnana Yagnas(Discourses), Vedanta Study Groups and Bhagavad Gita Study groups for adults. He is a Dattapeetham certified Kriya Yoga Teacher and conducts Kriya Yoga workshops and practice sessions. He also coordinates Bala Datta Program in Washington DC and conducts Yuva Datta (Youth Group) classes in NJ.

Aishwarya Lanka is a third year undergrad student at Texas Woman’s University majoring in chemistry. In July of 2015, Appaji blessed her with the privilege of being able to work with Srikanth Ji to assist as the local Dallas teacher. Aishwarya is among the first batch of Gita kids taught by Srikanth Ji.

**The First Steps**

Who can ignore one’s Sadguru’s instructions especially when it is for their children? Amazingly but not entirely surprisingly, the number of children who signed up were WAY more than 18. These children were not just from Dallas area, but from different parts of the US as well.

A few, who had learnt a chapter or two earlier had a faint idea what they were in for. Some thought let’s just sign up and take it one step at a time and others, were completely clueless. But no one was prepared for the changes and transformations that the children would go through during the learning process.

Although children have good memory retention (compared to parents anyway!), we still see them struggling with memorizing things at school. For example, the Spelling Bee, a Pentathlon/Decathlon type Competition or memorizing complex formulas in Chemistry to name a few. If things like that are an issue, how can one expect them to memorize 700 Samskritam Shlokas, WITH the perfect pronunciation AND learn the meanings as well? Well, we don’t have to look far to answer this question:

“Mookam Karoti Vachalam Pangum Langayate girim..Yatkrupa tamaham vande paramananda madhavam” - 8th Dhyana Shloka for The Gita.

In simple words this verse translates to “I pray to the supreme Lord, whose compassion makes a mute person to speak fluently and makes a lame person to climb the mountain.”

Perhaps this is the driving force or strong belief that Parama Pujya Sri Swamiji subconsciously instilled in the teachers, future students and their families that motivated them to undertake this challenge.

**The Process**

The first class started on August 10, 2015 at the KSHT’s Yaaga Shaala, learning the Gita Dhyana Shlokas. The children met twice a week to learn new shlokas (and some meanings), once a week for assessments and once a month for the Competitions. Parents were also provided with audio files to assist in memorization.

Elementary School kids as young as 7 years old to High School Kids as old as 16 years equally and completely immersed themselves in memorizing the verses. This became their number one priority for the next 10 months, with all their extracurricular activities taking a backseat. The Assessments, Competitions, Gita Games brought out the Competitive spirit in these children and pushed them to perform better....so much so that the teachers saw great improvement in all the children with every passing month.

On May 26, 2016, very aptly on Pujya Sri Swamiji’s 74th Birthday, the last shlokas of the 18th Chapter were taught.

Post May 2016, Children have learnt Gita Mahatyam, Gita Saaram and Gita Aarti as well.

**All Work and No Play?**

Gita kids had a fun filled camp during the winter break of 2015. It was a roaring success! Kids from out of town joined the local kids for about 2 weeks on a daily basis for practice sessions. Besides learning new Shlokas, they played fun-filled customized Gita games like Jeopardy, Dumb Charades, Parallel Chanting, Gita by Numbers, Antyakshari etc. An evening of Bowling, white elephant gift exchange and a fun night/sleepover at the Jaya Lakshmi Mata Hall were icing on the cake!

During this camp, kids had an opportunity to interact with New Jersey youth Sthitadeesh Nelapatla and Pawan Saidatta Prabhala. They belong to the first batch of Gita Chanting Class. Both Sthita and Pawan have memorized all 18 chapters and have won several prizes at Chinmaya Mission, Sringeri Vidya Barati Foundation etc. Sthita also won the scholarship prize of $10,000 per college year for reciting all 18 chapters of Gita from memory. Pawan was a prize winner at Chinmaya National Gita Chanting Competition. They both were a huge source of motivation to these kids and also helped Srikanth Ji in conducting games and reviewing the kids.

**The Surprise Impetus**

KSHT was honored by Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji’s visit in the month of February, 2016. The children impressed HIM with Chapter 8 rendition. Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji’s Darshan and HIS words of motivation and encouragement rejuvenated the kids, making their focus clearer than ever before and gave them the push for the final leap to reach their goal.

**The Metamorphosis**

With Sri Swamiji’s blessings, the dedication, focus and discipline with which Srikanth Ji and Aishwarya have been performing their duties is indescribable. Parents unanimously agree that they have helped instill Humility, Discipline, Punctuality and Respect in their children. They have been there every step of the way for the kids as well as for the parents. Be it for encouraging kids not to give up, to push themselves harder and for parents to NOT give up.

As the popular quote goes “It’s about the journey, not the Destination”, This Bhagavad Gita kids batch has come a long way since August of 2015. They have become spiritually richer by understanding the meanings. They have learnt to prioritize their tasks. They have learnt that even the hardest of tasks can be easily achieved, by grace of the Sadguru, if one puts one’s heart and mind to it. They don’t worry about the results because they have done their duty by giving it their 200%. They know the importance of performing selfless service as displayed during their Gardening Project at the KSHT. They are consciously aware of the 3 Gunas and know which one to follow. They know the importance of good posture, importance of what to eat and how much to eat, why a teacher should never be doubted. Above all, they know to completely surrender to their Sadguru and follow HIS guidance.

By prioritizing this call of Pujya Sri Swamiji, parents vouch for the positive impact this journey has brought about in their lives and families. This is not only the best treasure they can pass on to their young ones but also the Best Gift they can ever offer to Pujya Sri Swamiji.

**Great Grand Total**

43 children memorizing the entire Srimad Bhagavad Gita (18 Chapters – 700 Shlokas) under less than 10 months!! This is no small feat and only a Sadguru can make the impossible possible. Sri Swamiji’s immense love, grace and guidance was felt throughout this journey. These hardworking and dedicated children are forever grateful to their Sadguru (or Tataji as they lovingly address HIM) for this life-changing experience.

**Preparation for Sampoorna Paarayana on July 17, 2016 at KSHT, Dallas**

A lot of planning went into the preparation for the D-Day. Parents were very enthusiastic, energetic and readily volunteered to render their services every step of the way, from getting items for Gurudakshina, ordering matching costumes for children, tiered stage setup, stage decoration, making the Gita Journey book, contacting various spiritual organizations, audio-video setup to name a few. Under the guidance of Srikanth ji and Aishwarya, multiple sampoorna paarayana dry runs took place in Jayalakshmi Mata Hall (JMH) as well as in main temple.

**Sampoorna Paarayana Event, July 17, 2016**

The moment for which all the Gita Mahayagna families, relatives and friends were eagerly waiting had finally arrived. Children looked forward to offer the fruit of their Maha Yagna to their beloved Tataji. They would have been very happy even if Tataji had sat and listened to just one chapter. God surely showers blessings on those who expect nothing in return for their service. This became true for them that day and still continues to do so even to this day. Parama Pujya Swamiji blessed everyone by HIS divine physical presence from beginning of invocation prayers till the program concluded with the rendition of Gita Aarti. Before the chanting started, HIS Holiness offered Aarti to Lord Sri Krishna, to the 43 performing children and showered them with flowers. After invocation prayers, Gita Dhyana Shlokas were chanted, followed by the 18 Chapters. To everyone’s surprise and delight, a Conch was blown at the beginning of each chapter’s invocation. Kids got a short break after Chapter 6. Pujya Sri Swamiji patiently granted interviews for various TV Channels during the breaks. Chanting resumed from Chapter 7 with renewed energy and vigor. It was only because of their beloved Tataji’s blessings, that even young kids (some as young as 7 yrs old) were able to sit cross legged for such a long time, without fidgeting or needing a break and were able to recite without any mistakes! All through out, it was Tataji who was guiding these children.

During the entire event, one could evidently see Pujya Sri Swamiji totally immersing in the chanting and at times tears rolling down HIS cheeks. At the end of chapter 18 recitation, the entire audience stood up instantaneously and gave a standing ovation. A lot of them were also seen shedding tears of happiness, relief, ecstasy. It was not only the packed audience that showed appreciation but congratulatory messages and messages of gratitude were posted non-stop on Livestream and Facebook as well.

Mahayagna children were thrilled to offer Gurudakshina with their own hands to their beloved Tataji. HE was presented with Godanam, a crown adorned with peacock feathers and a flute. The Gita Journey book, a pictorial book showcasing details of the Mahayagna children, teachers, and their Gita journey was also released by Pujya Sri Swamiji on this occasion. Inspite of a very lengthy program, Pujya Sri Swamiji patiently handed out awards to the Annual Gita Competition winners and also blessed them and the rest of Gita Chanting children with a one-on-one close up picture.

**Post Sampoorna Paarayana**

Tataji, out of his infinite love took all the Gita Chanting children for a boat ride on Lake Ray Hubbard. All those present in the boat were blessed when Pujya Sri Swamiji sprinkled holy waters collected from Mandakini, Gangotri, Yamunotri, Haridwar, Kashi and Manas Sarovar, on everyone. Children got an opportunity to speak a few words about their Gita journey experience and express their gratitude to the Visionary; their beloved Tataji. All children lovingly presented a shawl to their dear Tataji with their signatures, teachers’ and volunteers’ as well. It was indeed a very memorable boat ride which is aptly described in “Naav Chal Padi” Bhajan, which everyone sang on the boat.

Within a year of starting to learn Bhagavad Gita, these children have become so proficient in it, that many of them can recite a shloka within a few seconds when given a chapter/shloka number or vice-versa, ie they can tell the chapter and shloka number, given a shloka. Most of the children can also chant the shloka before or after a given verse. These amazing skills were on full display when a few kids exhibited their Shloka Number prowess to the audience in the presence of Pujya Sri Swamiji in KSHT main temple. Tataji’s was overjoyed and HE made it very evident when HE showered HIS affection by hugging, kissing and patting these blessed participants!

It was another memorable night indeed. What made it beyond memorable, beyond unimaginable was the announcement there after! Prasad ji recalled Pujya Sri Swamiji earlier trip to Kurukshetra, when he spent a whole day in the sacred land. In its reminiscence, Pujya Sri Swamiji wished to take these Gita Chanting kids along with their families to Kurukshetra during the December Holidays of 2016. He wished to have them chant Gita at the very place where Lord Krishna gave Gitopadesha to Arjuna. All the children wanted was for Tataji to listen to them chant atleast a few chapters during their maiden Sampoorna Paarayana performance!! Never in their wildest dreams did they think about travelling to Kurukshetra, that too with their Lord HIMSELF. All families were ecstatic and couldn’t wait to embark on their pilgrimage to Kurukshetra. Even if everyone could not make it for whatever reason, Pujya Sri Swamiji wished atleast 18 kids should travel. Prasad Ji also mentioned that Pujya Sri Swamiji would be travelling with these kids and their families from New Delhi’s SGS Dwaraka Ashrama to Kurukshetra.

**Chalo Kurukshetra….and Mysore too!!**

Following the announcement regarding Kurukshetra Pilgrimage, meetings were underway to plan for the travel logistics. More good news came along the way when it was informed that there would be a Sampoorna Parayana in Nada Mantapa Auditorium in SGS Ashrama, Mysore too. That was indeed a great bonus and made everyone involved doubly excited.

From July to December, thanks to coordination of number of individuals in US as well in India, things began falling in place. December 25 was the date set for Mysore Paarayana. December 28 was the date set for Kurukshetra Paarayana.

Pujya Sri Swamiji wanted atleast 18 children to make it to the pilgrimage, but how would anyone miss this once in a lifetime opportunity? With the exception of one child, who could not travel due to health issues, the rest of the 42 kids confirmed their travel arrangements. Not only that - 10 more kids joined the team along with their families. For them, it was the prospect of taking the pilgrimage to India with their Sadguru, that motivated them to memorize Gita in an unbelievable short duration of 3- 6 months. Thus the final count of kids who were ready to perform in India swelled to 52.

Mahayagna families began arriving in India, some as early as beginning of December. A lot of families travelled together right from US. These kids have almost never been on such long flights with friends. For them it was like a 2-week picnic starting from day 1. For parents, it was probably the ‘smoothest’ long haul flight they ever experienced.

**Mysore SGS Ashrama**

On reaching Mysore Ashrama, families were greeted with banners announcing the Sampoorna Paraayana in Mysore by Tataji Sena, USA. It was the first time these kids were referred to as Tataji Sena, USA. The term Tataji Sena has since become an official term to describe all the children devoted to their Tataji.

Visiting families were housed in the Arka Ganapathi Kuteera for their stay in Mysore. It’s a beautiful complex just outside the main Ashrama with nice rooms, convenient meeting/practice rooms and plenty of room to run around and play. Kids overcame the seeming discomforts (Jet lag, wet bathrooms, absence of showers, pollution as per them!) and happily embraced the Ashram atmosphere and new surroundings. They attended practices sessions during the day and attended the Ashram programs in the evening. Teachers took up the challenge to achieve productive practice sessions with the addition of 10 new kids, new seating arrangement and above all without having the kids falling asleep due to jet lag!

Ashrama Canteen Sevaks took wonderful care of the visitors, particularly for children with allergies. Prasadam was delicious and it was hard not to overeat. Dining in the Annapoorna Mandir, kids developed the habit of putting their plates and glasses away after cleaning them. During major festival days, Annapoorna Mandir feeds tens of thousands.

On December 23rd, Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji graced one of the practice sessions and blessed the kids by HIS Holy and Cheerful presence and valuable feedback and tips to the teachers. HE spent quite some time listening to them and wished them luck for their upcoming program in Nada Mantapa. What made the children feel like it was party was the ‘goody-bag gift’ they received from HIM. Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji presented each child with a unique idol/murthy from HIS personal collection which HE had gathered travelling to different places. The children are forever grateful for all the love showered by Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji.

On Dec 24th, Pujya Sri Swamiji blessed the Gita families to a tour of the amazing Shuka Vana located inside the Ashrama. Shuka Vana is a one of its kind Parrot Park and rehabilitation center for about 2000 birds. One can see about 380 different species of rare and colorful parrots from all over the world in here. Through HIS love and undivided attention to these birds, Pujya Sri Swamiji teaches us that we need to treat all beings equal, with love and compassion. Shuka Vana is a very popular destination and sees hundreds of visitors every day from all walks of life. Mahayagna children got an opportunity to feed a few birds, gently guided by their beloved Tataji. A special picture capturing this moment was the cherry on the top for the tour. Kids also thoroughly enjoyed A 30 min film on Talking Birds in the in-built Ashrama theatre.

Later that evening, Children finally got the opportunity to visit Nada Mantapa. Everyone was captivated by its beauty and splendor. This Auditorium was inaugurated in May 1998 after a 40 day Mandalotsava puja. It houses the sacred Swara Saligrama. Among the other unique features, one can also see the Sapta Swara murthys here. Pujya Sri Swamiji has blessed devotees with many Meditation and Healing Music Concerts and Bhajans in the Nada Mantapa. Nada Mantapa has hosted many music stalwarts from India and across the globe.

For the paarayana event, the immediate attraction was the split 3 tier stage setup and the beautiful Bhagavad Gita themed backdrops. Srikanth ji and Aishwarya, along with the backstage and sound system volunteers did a dry run for the following day’s event. Taking into account of any audio synching issues that might arise due to the split stage, audio testing was thoroughly done and it marked the completion of that evening’s dry run. Thanks to Prasad ji and Pramod ji for an awesome job and for spending their valuable time in coordinating the stage and backdrop design to match the kids’ dresses and also for guiding the run.

In midst of all these wonderful and blessed activities, the implausible happened. Mahayagna children forgot that it was Christmas Eve! Normally when in US, they wouldn’t forget to remind their parents/relatives almost every day about it so that ‘Santa’ would not forget their gifts. But in Mysore, it was not until the evening programs in the Datta Temple started, that most of them realized it was Christmas Eve. Audience was treated to a beautiful program by the Angel Devotees. Datta Temple was beautifully decorated inside and out. Children especially loved the life sized Santa Claus and the snowing Christmas trees. The evening was capped by HH Santa Claus personally giving presents to the teachers, volunteers and all the participant children. Kids’ gifts were lovingly well thought out by Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji – White color outfits, custom stitched for every kid. Maybe white was a pointer to be like their Gita teacher, Srikanth Ji! Other children also received candy and treats. Despite so many activities, Tataji always remembers HIS kids’ wellbeing. HE kept enquiring about their health, whether they very practicing too much and whether they were taking enough rest.

**Nada Mantapa Sampoorna Parayana – Dec 25, 2016**

Tataji Sena, USA enthusiastically woke up early, got ready and after a good breakfast, led by the teachers, they took the blessings of the Lord Dattatreya, prayed to Pujya Sri Swamiji’s life size picture in the temple and took darshan of Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji performing Sri Chakra Puja. They proceeded to the Nada Mantapa soon after.

It was such a treat watching all the children seated on the beautiful stage with the 3 magnificent backdrops in the form of Lord Krishna with Arjuna on the chariot in Kurukshetra, Lord Krishna giving Gitopadesha, and Lord Krishna displaying HIS cosmic form. The costume, stage and backdrop color combination couldn’t have been more perfect. But it was only after Pujya Sri Swamiji and Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji graced the stage, the scene was divinely complete.

Pujya Sri Swamiji lighting the lamp marked the auspicious beginning of the event. Later HE showered the children with flowers. It was followed by a beautiful and touching speech by Prasadi ji. Pujya Bala Swamiji offered Aarthi to Lord Sri Krishna and to Pujya Sri Swamii.

By Pujya Sri Swamiji’s grace, the rendition went very well. Most of Audience recited with the children. A short break was given half way through the chanting. During the break, the detailed and memorable journey of the Gita Mahayagna was narrated. After the break, chanting began with renewed energy. The Auditorium, the sweeping cameras and above all the presence of Pujya Sri Swamiji on stage and Pujya Sri Bala Swamji in the audience..it was a dream come true. Chanting concluded with the rendition of Gita Saara – a composition of Pujya Sri Swamiji in different raagas. Children received a long standing ovation completely with whistles and cheers from the audience who attended in thousands. Pujya Sri Swamiji praised the teachers and children for their dedication and hard work in achieving the seemingly impossible task of memorizing 700 shlokas of entire Gita, coming from a foreign land. He reminded about his reason for telling Srikanth ji to stay back in US despite his desire to move to the Ashrama.

In HIS infinite grace, Pujya Sri Swamiji presented these blessed children and their teachers with custom made gold pendants with silver chain. Gold Pendants have Gita Saara, laser engraved on one side and Pujya Sri Swamiji picture on the other side. Children were also presented with Certificates bearing Tataji’s signature. Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji felicitated the children with beautiful mementoes.

To commemorate the Gita events in Mysore and Kurusketra, Pujya Sri Swamiji released Srimad Bhagavad Gita book containing easy to understand translations written by His Holiness HIMSELF. Also, MP3 Audio CD from the July’s Sampoorna Parayana conducted in KHST, Dallas was released by Pujya Sri Swamiji.

The event was widely publicized. It was telecast live for 30 mins on Public TV and covered in various newspapers as well.

**Ashrama Tour**

Later in the evening, all the families had a fun and educative tour of the famous Kishkinda Moolika Bonsai Garden and one of its kind Vishwam Museum. They also took blessings at Kala Bhairava Temple, Datta Venkataramana Temple and at the 70 ft monolithic Hanuman Temple.

The main attraction of the Bonsai Garden is the exquisite collection of more than 450 carefully shaped and miniaturized tress developed over the past 3 decades. Vishwam museum hosts articles that Pujya Sri Swamiji received as gifts on over 100 world tours, as well as from devotees across the globe.

The eventful and memorable day aptly concluded with Gita Saara Ballet Dance Performance in the Nada Mantapa. It was choreographed by Sri Lakshmi ji from Uma Maheshwara Natya Kalashaala. Lakshmi ji is a long time devotee of Pujya Sri Swamiji, who herself performed in Ashrama, growing up as child. The young artists mesmerized everyone with their colorful dance and wonderful expressions. It was Pujya Sri Swamiji’s divine vision to end the day in a symbolic way, have everyone take a pause so to say, go home, think and ponder about the true meaning behind BG shlokas, one chapter at a time. Prasad ji in his speech took the example of Lakshmi ji and told that all children should follow her example – spreading and teaching their knowledge to future generations, for the benefit of mankind.

As the Mysore program came to end, kids and parents alike could already feel the sadness of leaving the serene Ashrama. Even though they left Mysore with a heavy heart, hope was not lost. It was comforting for them to know that Pujya Sri Swamiji and Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji would continue to be with them on their journey to the holy land of Kuruksketra.

**Next Stop - New Delhi**

Buses were arranged for the Mahayagna families to reach Bengaluru’s Kempegowda Airport for their onward journey to New Delhi. A few of the families had the divine darshan of Parama Pujya Sri Swamiji at the airport.Some families even had the divine opportunity to be on the same fight as HIM.

On arriving at the New Delhi airport, pre-arranged buses took the devotees to Hotel Vivaanta Taj. Parama Pujya Sri Swamiji proceeded to the Delhi Ashrama at Dwaraka. Devotees were told to try to visit the Ashrama at their convenience later in the evening. A few families were able to do so. Ashrama was kind enough to arrange for to-go dinner boxes after the Darshan. All the families had a relaxing night after a long day of travel. Next day morning, after a sumptuous breakfast, families checked out and boarded the buses for KKS. There were a total of 6?? buses. After about 2 hours on the road, the group took a break at Haveli Restaurant It was a welcome break and devotees took advantage of the yummy fast food and hot beverages!

Once back on the buses, kids waited in anticipation as to when Tataji would board their bus. Tataji blessed and obliged everyone by boarding each bus and spending time with the children. Everyone present chanted Gita Dhyana Shlokas. Candy bars blessed by Pujya Sri Swamiji were given out t0 everyone on the bus.

**Dharmakshetre Kurukshetra..**

The birthplace of Bhagavad Gita welcomed the Mahayagna families with open arms. Everyone was pleasantly surprised to see 28th Sampoorna Paarayana banners all around the town. Buses finally unloaded at Jai Ram Vidya Peeth. An unbelievably large lunch buffet welcomed the visitors. Menu items included a variety of both south and north indian entrees. After the heavy lunch and a after small break, all Mahayagna families got onto the buses to proceed to Jyotisar.

This was it. The moment everyone had been waiting for, since the announcement in July, had finally arrived. Jyotisar is the place where Lord Sri Krishna preached the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna, to dispel his confusion and dilemma and thus motivated him to fight in the war. This Gitopadesha took place under a Banyan tree. That tree still exists and it is under this very sacred tree, Parama Pujya Sri Swamiji took his Aasana. And Tataji sena gathered all around. They wore the white dresses that Tataji had presented them in Mysore. Children chanted Gita Dhyana Shlokas and the Bhakti Yoga (Chapter 12). Everyone present also chanted Hanuman Chaalisa. Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji explained and reminded everyone the importance of Kurukshetra.

After those blessed and sacred moments, everyone went back to Jai Ram Vidya Peeth. From there, they proceeded to the Swaagata Sabha. This was no ordinary procession. It was just like a marriage procession replete with ‘Band’, ‘Baaja’ and dancing ‘Baaratis’. And the star of the ‘baarat’ was Pujya Sri Swamiji seated magnificently on a nicely illuminated horse driven chariot. The Swaagata Sabha at the Meditation Hall started off by Kamal Kappor ji and his family offering Sri Swamiji a Krishna-like welcome by offering him a beautiful crown, flute and pearl necklace and a shawl and garland. Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji was also presented with a shawl. Pujya Sri Bala Swamiji blessed the audience with a nice speech highlighting the importance of learning Bhagavad Gita. HE also wished the children good luck and implored them to offer their paarayana to their Jagadguru. Pujya Sri Swamiji also extolled the benefits of chanting and listening to BG. The evening concluded by a wonderful Gita Saara dance presentation.

Mahayagna kids and families retired early for the night to rest before the big day tomorrow.

**Kurukshetra Sampoorna Paarayana – Dec 28, 2016**

After getting up early and getting ready, children were treated to a delicious breakfast and led by their teachers, proceeded the Meditation Hall, the venue of the Paarayana.

The 4 tier stage setup looked splendid with all the children seated next to the their beloved Tataji. Chanting children were presented with beautiful pearl necklaces with a Radha-Krishna pendant personally blessed by Tataji. After HIS tips to the children as to how to present themselves in front of the video cameras, the sampoorna paarayana started with lot of energy and enthusiasm. However, as it progressed, tiredness and jetlag finally caught up with several of these little children as it was evident on the stage. With Pujya Sri Swamiji’s permission, the teachers decided to give them a short break after the completion of chapter 6. After the break, Children cruised from Chapter 7 till the end in the most devotional and blissful way. Several of the audience members thoroughly enjoyed chanting with them. Paarayana concluded after the chanting of Gita Maahaaatyam followed by Gita Saara. After the completion of chanting, Children were blessed with a beautiful metal plaque and also a souvenir mug.

All through the Paarayana, Tataji sat near HIS USA Sena, mentally guiding them through yet another successful Sampoorna Paarayana. Tataji took a promise from the Mahayagna children that they will study and practice the holy Gita till their last breath. It was a moment of joy and pride to see all children raise their hands immediately to take this divine oath on the divine soil of Kurukshetra. Pujya Sri Swamiji also mentioned that, that day HE was the arjuna and the chanting children were Krishnas.

Following the program, devotees followed Pujya Sri Swamiji to Brahma Sarovar. The Brahma Sarovar is believed to be the cradle of civilization. It is also believed to be the place where Duryodhana hid under water on the concluding day of the war. Taking a dip here removes internal and external impurities. Pujya Sri Swamiji prayed at the site and sprinkled the holy water on the fortunate devotees present.

Later in the afternoon, Children also got the wonderful opportunity of visiting the Sri Krishna Museum with Tataji. It has a huge collection of exhibits including ancient sculptures, carvings and paintings, dioramas, giant statues, surreal sounds and a walk-through maze.Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the tour of this unique museum.

With that, the trip to KKS was nearing its end. The wonderful arrangements were appreciated by one and all. Special kudos are due to all Datta volunteers who arrived in KKS from different places ahead of the Paarayana event. Their selfless seva in all areas made the visiting families feel pampered and feel right at home and beyond.

That evening and following day morning, families bid their farewells and left for their onward journey - some to nearby pilgrimages, some to their families in India and some back to USA.

Tataji Sena USA will forever cherish the wonderful and beautiful moments spent with their Tataji and Parama Pujya Sri Swamiji during their trip. Those moments are forever etched in their hearts and souls. Their families are forever indebted to Parama Pujya Swamiji and the Gita teachers for making this possible.

**The Onward Journey**

As Srikanth Ji puts forth the vision of Pujya Sri Swamiji, these children are the Brand Ambassadors of Bhagavad Gita in the US. They have already become an inspiration to their non Gita learning siblings, their parents, friends and the current batch of Gita learning students. They pray to their beloved Tataji to shower HIS blessings and continue guiding them in HIS divine mission. They also beg Tataji to help them keep their promise and never waiver from the oath they took in Kurukshetra.

All the kids, teachers and parents are extremely happy they could play a small role in Pujya Sri Swamiji’s divine dream becoming a reality at Kurukshetra. Along with the surrent batch of Gita Students, these children look forward to offer their Kritagnyata Samarpana during Tataji’s diamond jubilee birthday celebrations.