



Nachiketanjali

...an offering

A Journey Into The Spiritual Realm!



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Sant Kabir



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Founder & Managing Trustee

Vasundhara P.

Adi Praneta

Swami Nachiketananda

Adhyatmik Praneta

Swami Shivanandamayi

Editor-in-Chief: Subhadra K.

Executive Editor: Annapura R.

Design & Layout

Swami Nachiketananda

Editorial & Publication Office

Nachiketa Tapovan

Plot No. 70, Phase I, Kavuri Hills,

Madhapur, Guttlabegumpet,

Serilingampally, R.R.District. A.P. 500 081

Tel No: 040-23113887, 9849168937

email:nachiketanjali1@gmail.com

website:www.nachiketatapovan.org

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COVER STORY

The Hamsa (Swan) is an important motif in Advaita Vedanta. Its symbolic meanings are: firstly, upon verbally repeating hamsa, it becomes SOHAM (I am That). Secondly, even as a hamsa lives in water its feathers are not sullied by it; a liberated Advaitin lives in the world full of Maya but is untouched by its illusion. Thirdly, a monk of the Dashanami order is called PARAMAHAMSA. In Vedantic Hinduism the swan is frequently employed as a metaphor for the Atman or Soul.



local daily carried news and pictures of a school girl celebrating her birthday in a novel way. She offered orange juice to all the passersby on the tank bund. Her kind act was well appreciated by the public. The picture of the little girl standing in the hot sun with a tray of orange juice glasses was really touching. What has inspired her to do such an act, when she could have celebrated her birthday with friends amidst fun and frolic? Did the parents have a role to play? Certainly this needs to be given a thought. The parents would have been role models to the little girl.

When parents are asked what they want most for their children in life, the majority answer "to be happy." Makes sense! But what does it mean to be happy? Being rich? Famous? We often put a lot of energy into making sure our children behave and study well in school. But what about cultivating our children's character? We certainly play a huge role in shaping their character.

One character we highly value in our homes is kindness. We should encourage children to be giving. We as parents should set an example for our children by doing several kind acts. The acts need not be anything huge or time consuming. They can be as simple as offering a glass of water to quench someone's thirst. As parents we are like a mirror for our children. When children observe our examples of kindness, they will learn how to do them as they are very empathetic at an early age. If parents consistently role model kindness, empathy, compassion and love, children will emulate it and there is every possibility of these qualities being woven into their everyday lives. The world would be a better place if every one of us learned to think of others and find ways to show that we care.

-Subhadra K.

Accumulate power in silence
and become a dynamo of spirituality.

- Swami Vivekananda

Profile!

There are people living with high profile, low profile or no profile. We come across spiritual people in every field. But many get entangled into different profiles, carrying their worldly designations, eventually forgetting values and pushing their own personal agendas in lives. These make us more selfish and once we become selfish our very purpose of life is lost.

Have we ever thought that to express ourselves we do not need any profile? People have completely misunderstood this spiritual journey thinking seriously that only if there is profile they can express divinity otherwise it is not possible. There are good souls who have contributed their lives without any profile and there are people who have high profile yet their contribution is nil. If we look at people and the society we find a kind of imbalance due to selfishness. We are becoming more lethargic and can find lot of inertia in us. This needs to be taken care of, if we think that there should be an enlightened society. And this is possible when we understand that profile is not important to create a stage and present it to the world. If we find there is nobody who can listen to us then we should develop the language of silence and communicate with them. This was done by people like Sant Kabir, Dadu, Nanak, Rahim, Rohidas, Ekanath and many more. The list is endless and so is their contribution.

Everyone is going through a change, a kind of transformation but unconsciously. We are not able to notice it. If we understand the mechanism given by God and how to utilize it, then probably our journey into spiritual realm will become possible. People have achieved highest state only after giving up profile. Therefore even though our journey starts from 'Profile' it should always end in 'No profile'.

I have come across many such souls who have dedicated their lives, living in seclusion, speaking the language of silence, having burning desire to serve the society, not seen in the picture but felt in the picture. For me they are like paintings without signature or Vedas without purusha.

My humble pranams to such souls for showing the path of no profile...Om Namah Shivaya!

- *Swami Nachiketananda*





Discover the power of Mind

Today most of us are more interested to know about the other person or the external world.

Example: A software engineer is interested to know the mechanism of a computer, he tries to understand computer inside out. But dear Sadhakas, the computer is a man's creation! When man's creation is so fascinating then what about God's creation? God created man and the universe and many more things which cannot be explained. This external world keeps changing, but there is some thing which is unchanging and eternal that needs to be experienced by man. So how many of you are interested to know about that which is unchanging or the True Self? How many of us are interested to know the mechanism of the Self? It is a must for a human being to know his true nature without which human life is a waste.

How to understand our own mechanism? Is it possible to understand the mechanism of the Self? If you can understand the nature of the mind, it is very easy to experience the true nature of one self.

Let us understand what mind is? Can you see mind? No. You can only experience it. What does mind do? It directs you.

What is the biggest pollution in the world? Is it the air, water, sound pollution etc...? No, you will be amazed to know the truth because in the world, the biggest pollution is that of mind. Look at the dust bin, keep all the dust of the house hold for two to three days and see what happens. It begins to stink. In your mind you have good and bad thoughts. Are you aware of the fact that your thoughts travel in the universe and attract the same kind of thoughts? That is the reason our sages suggested positive thinking. Then what about your mind? All the negative

thoughts will be expressed in the form of diseases; they say that mind is faster than the wind or air. Mind is like a monkey. A monkey is not stable, it keeps moving from one tree to another, one place to another. Our mind also is similar to that.

Mind is a package given by God Himself. It comes with birth and carries the impressions of your habits, thoughts and Samskaras.

In fact you should direct your mind, but instead the mind directs you! *You might be a king of the world, but you are not the king of your own self. He is the true king who directs his mind.*

Why do we need to direct our mind? What is the necessity?

For material or spiritual gains you should be the boss or owner of your own mind. Only then you can achieve success in every aspect of life.

Sant Tulasidas says, ***"I bow down to that sage who has conquered his mind."***

So, mind is a powerful instrument to experience the purpose of life. It is the greatest medium to realize the Self. Only thing is you need to understand the mechanism of the mind with the help of right practice or Sadhana described by our sages.

For me thoughts are like scattered flowers, mind is like a thread and sadhana or practice is a skill which helps in making a garland.

Lord Krishna says, ***"Bondage and liberation are the mind alone."***

Make a beautiful garland with the help of right Sadhana, so that you can offer that garland to the Lord.

Mastery of the mind helps in achieving the destiny and makes life meaningful and purposeful.

- Swami Shivanandamayi



Vajrasana

Vajrasana is one of the meditative postures and is recommended for meditation and Pranayama practices. This Asana is adopted by Muslims and Buddhists during prayer.

Meaning: Vajra means diamond which is very strong and shiny. Another meaning of Vajra is thunderbolt and is the weapon of Lord Indra, the king of Devas. In the body there is a Vajra nadi which starts from the big toe and ends in the navel region. When you sit in Vajrasana this nadi gets activated which helps in curing all gastro-intestinal and digestive ailments. This nadi sublimates and controls the sexual energy. Therefore Vajrasana is beneficial in curing ailments related to reproductive system.

How to do?

Sit on the mat/ bed sheet/ foam cushion/ asana.

Stretch both the legs and keep both the hands next to buttocks.

Now fold right leg at the knee and keep under the right buttock.

Now fold left leg at the knee and keep under the left buttock. Keep back bone straight.

Keep palms on the knees by keeping index and thumb fingers together.

See that there is no gap between the knees.

Who must not perform?

The patients of arthritis and women in advanced stages of pregnancy should not perform vajrasana.

Who should do? When it should be done?

Vajrasana can be performed by any one at anytime. This is the only asana that doesn't have any restrictions regarding food and time. In the house while doing your house hold, official work or watching TV etc...instead of sitting in the chairs and sofas try to make a habit of sitting in Vajrasana. This asana makes body stronger and healthy. Adopt this asana to stay healthy and to bring stability to mind.

NOTE: When you start doing this asana you might not be able to sit even for a few minutes, but do not stop practice. Start from minimum 5 minutes to 15 minutes/ 30 minutes/ 1 hour or as per your convenience.



Sitali Pranayama

Sit in any comfortable meditative posture Vajrasana/ Padmasana/ Siddhasana.

Adopt chinmudra or chinmaya mudra.

Gently close your eyes.

Observe all the body parts and relax them part by part.

Now stretch the tongue out and make like a tube.

Inhale through tube and exhale through nose.

One inhalation and exhalation is one round.

5 rounds to 10 rounds can be done.

In summer you can do 30 to 40 rounds.

Who should not do?

This sitali pranayama should not be practiced in winter and cold climates.

People suffering from Low BP, Cold, Sore throat, Asthma, Bronchitis, excess mucous and Constipation are not supposed to do this pranayama.

Benefits

Sitali Pranayama reduces excess heat from the body.

It cools down the body. This pranayama provides relaxation to the body and calmness to the mind.

It activates brain cells in the body.

It helps in controlling hunger and thirst.

- Swami Shivanandamayi

Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara



Sri Ramakrishna's room in Dakshineswar would be filled with devotees everyday. There would be singing and dancing with a religious fervour at all times and at other times He would talk about God and His Leelas. He would answer the questions posed by ardent devotees in a simple and lucid manner. Below is a sample of such questions which we as spiritual seekers would find relevant even though a century has passed since they were answered.

Devotee: Sir, why has God put us in the world?

Master: "The world is the field of action. Through action one acquires knowledge. The guru instructs the disciple to perform certain works and refrain from others. Again, he advises the pupil to perform action without desiring the result. It is like getting rid of a disease by means of medicine, under the instruction of a competent physician."

"Why doesn't God free us from the world? Ah, He will free us when the disease is cured. He will liberate us from the world when we are through with the enjoyment of lust and gold. Once a man registers his name in the hospital, he cannot run away. The doctor will not let him go away unless his illness is completely cured."

Devotee: Sir, may I make an effort to earn more money?

Master: "It is permissible to do so to maintain a religious family. You must try to increase your income, but in an honest way. The goal of life is not earning money, but the service of God. Money is not harmful if it is devoted to the service of God."

Devotee: How long must one do one's duty?

Master: "The blossom drops off when the fruit appears. One doesn't have to do one's duty after the attainment of God, nor does one feel like doing it then."

"If a drunkard takes too much liquor, he cannot retain consciousness. If he takes only two or three glasses, he can go on with his work. As you advance nearer and nearer to God, He will reduce your activities little by little. Have no fear."

"Finish the few duties you have in hand and then you will have peace. When the mistress of the house goes to bathe after finishing her cooking and other household duties, she won't come back, however you may shout after her."

Devotee: How long should a man feel obliged to do his duty toward his wife and children?

Master: "As long as they feel pinched for food and clothing. But one need not take the responsibility of a son when he is able to support himself. When the young fledgling learns to pick on its own food, its mother pecks it if it comes to her for food."

Seeker: Is it necessary to practise spiritual discipline all through life?

Master: "No. But one must be up and doing in the beginning. After that one need not work hard. The helmsman stands up and clutches the rudder firmly as long as the boat is passing through waves, storms, high wind, or around the curves of a river; but he relaxes after steering through them. As soon as the boat passes the curves and helmsman feels a favourable wind, he sits comfortably and just touches the rudder. Next he prepares to unfurl the sail and gets ready for a smoke. Likewise, the aspirant enjoys peace and calm after passing the waves and storms of 'lust and gold'."

Let us stand up and clutch the rudder firmly and make a commitment to ourselves to cross the storms of Samsara. Go forward now and relax in his Bliss later!

- *Compiled by Geetha K.*

SPIRITUAL QUEST

What is grace? Is it needed for our spiritual growth?

Ans: Grace has got many meanings in English dictionary but the real meaning of grace is "that which transforms the mind into heart". There are two types of grace. One is external grace that comes from different sources such as Guru, Nature, Parents, Friends, etc whereas second is internal grace, that comes from God.

'External world' is a medium to convey the grace whereas 'Internal world' is the source of grace. Yet when it was time for Sant Kabir to bow down to God, He says –

"Guru Gobind Dono Khade Kake Lagu Paya, Balihari Guru apne Govind Diyo Dikhaya!"

Probably this is the greatest homage paid to any Guru. Guru only conveys yet Sant Kabir says, I bow down to my Guru because He has shown me Govinda. This very expression shows Kabir's internal integrity and spiritual bond with external world.

Many people think that after realization, the realized person drops every activity and does nothing, but if we look at history, we

will come to know that, they were the souls who have shaped the society and created a wonderful world, for all of us to live in. Sant Kabir is one such soul whose presence is still felt.

Spiritual journey is possible when there is a longing for God and grace. Sant Kabir travels many years in search of God, but finds no God. The reason is simple; He was in search of GOD without direction, but not in search of GURU who is the direction. Finally when He finds a right Guru, His search for the God ends. I personally feel when that grace dawns, our total life gets transformed, our true nature is expressed and simplicity takes the front seat in life.

For me grace in other word is Shraddha and when that Shraddha springs forth from within, we can see Ma Ganga and Her purity spreading all over. What the Guru has done in Sant Kabir's case is to show Him the right path and give Him proper guidance. Guru's grace and direction worked on Kabir and rest is history. So it is necessary to have grace while treading the spiritual path.

- Swami Nachiketananda

One must experience the effect of past action...None can escape it. But japa minimizes its intensity.

- Ma Sarada Devi



Let's play Football of your choice...



Request you not to make any conclusions until end of this article.

Venue – Your choice Date – Your choice Duration – Your choice
Opponent – Your choice Coach – Your choice Referee – optional

Rules of the game – Your choice again

The rules can be varied depending on your opponent's strength. There is no goal post (if you want, you can have it as well) as the main aim of the game is to keep the ball with you all the time.

You can choose your own team members and so can your opponent. There are boundaries and there are a few penalties as well if you cross the boundaries. You can have breathe time as long as you want.

Looks simple and interesting. Isn't it? Now let us see if it is easy just on paper or practically as well. I have played this game and found it tough initially but later understood the nuances of the game. Icing on the cake is – you can decide yourself, if you want publicity as well.

Let me share my experience so that it would make you understand the game in a better way. Here it goes – My first opponent of my choice was "fear", I had a few team members initially like family, friends, however decided to face my opponent myself. I tried to keep the ball called "LIFE" with me almost all the time until my opponent gave up.

Well, for this to happen, I had to play many league matches with the same opponent until we decided on a final and I was victorious. Later on there were a few more opponents against whom I just had to play either knock-out phase or finals and I do not wish to play them again.

During these games, I chose my referee to be "Society" which warned me, punished me if I went wrong against the unsaid rules. In some games I realized I would be my own referee, of course, in all these games there is a TV referee called "GOD". So you cannot

walk away with whatever you do on the field. If I accept my guilt, I can sit out for some time and come back to play. If I try to fight the decision I might lose my time and opportunities – again it was my choice.

I hope, now you understand what the game all about is. You can solve your own (self-created) problems – that is why you choose your opponent.

Depending on your opponent, you decide your own coach – your parents, nature, friends, your own child, a spiritual guru etc. who can guide directly or indirectly but with love.

The aim of the game, as said earlier, is to defeat your opponent (which should never be an individual), however remember that, you are supposed to keep everybody happy (at least try your best).

The best part of the game at the end is – you are satisfied at what you achieve and worst part is you cannot blame anybody/anything if you lose as everything was of your choice. No complaints please.

"Writing this article" was my opponent this time and hoping I have been victorious. Now, reading and understanding is your choice.

In these 3 decades of my life, first 2 decades went on in training; next half-decade went in preparations as an individual and rest 5 years have been games for me. Hence, all these thoughts are with personal experience. If any of these thoughts have been quoted elsewhere, then it is purely coincidental.

So are you ready to play a game of your choice – Again your choice to play or not to play.

-Nirmal Kumar D.





Exploring Karma

There are numerous stories from the Puranas which bring out the significance of various theories and the tale of 'Garuda and the tiny bird' is one such story, which reveals the role karma plays in one's life and how it is impossible to escape from its clutches.

Once Lord Vishnu went to meet Lord Shiva and when He reached Shiva's abode in Kailash, He went in leaving behind His vehicle – the Garuda at the entrance. Garuda sat alone and looked around, marveling at the natural beauty of the surroundings. His eyes fell on a beautiful little bird perched on the arch of the gateway to Kailash. Garuda wondered how God could create the lofty mountains and also the tiny bird and make them seem equally wonderful. "What a marvelous creation!" he said to himself.



As he was thus ruminating, Yama – the God of death came along and before entering Shiva's abode, he spotted the little bird and gave a bewildered look. Garuda who was observing Yama's action thought it meant the bird's time is up and when Yama comes out after meeting Shiva, he would probably carry away the bird's soul. Garuda's heart filled with compassion for the little bird and he resolved to save it. He swooped up the tiny bird and carried it to a forest thousands of miles away from Kailash and placed it safely on a rock beside a brook. He then came back to the gateway of Kailash and resumed his position feeling happy and content that he could save the life of the little bird.

When Yama came out, Garuda out of curiosity asked him why he was dismayed to see the little bird. Yama smiled and said, "The little bird was supposed to die in a few minutes, swallowed by

a python near a brook in a far away forest. I wondered how this tiny bird could traverse thousands of miles in such a short time to meet its destiny. But I am sure it should have happened somehow." Saying this, Yama left leaving a perplexed Garuda who mulled over the surprising turn of events. Whether Yama realized the role Garuda had to play in the fate of the little bird is a different question.

This subtle tale leaves us in a dilemma about the veracity of right and wrong actions. Should the action be deemed positive or negative solely on the basis of the result it generates? Or is there some other criterion? Philosophers say what determines the nature of karma is the intention behind an act. In the above tale, Garuda's intention was to save the bird from the clutches of death. His action was positive though the result turned out to be negative.

In our lives too, we come across many such situations. A simple act of rescuing a person from an accident might end up in his death in the hospital. Is our action to be blamed? A doctor can't be charged with murder for the death of his patient during a surgery. We cannot hold certain people responsible for their actions, such as children or the mentally handicapped because they have no conception of the ideas of right and wrong. A child might be playing with a loaded pistol left behind carelessly by his parents. His fingers might press the trigger killing his sibling playing with him. An important question arises here. Should he carry the heavy price for his action done in ignorance? Can it be tagged on the same line as a terrorist killing hundreds of people intentionally? Karma indeed needs to be explored!

- A Devotee



Faith

How many times have we thought that no matter what, I am going to do this! But then something unexpected happens that is out of your control and derails the whole plan. Then one is forced to think "do we really have everything in our hands? Are we really the makers of our own destiny?". It creates tremors in the confidence you have in yourself. You may think it is true what they say about God that nothing happens without His will. Then what about the power you thought you had? It strikes, you have no control over it! Your own life. Scary thought, isn't it? To think that your whole life is planned and all you are doing or the decisions you make are already decided by someone else...GOD.

And even if it is not, then you console yourself thinking that whatever happens is for the good. That it is prelude to something better. But when you don't get the result that you worked really hard for, it is not difficult to question that faith.

But there is one thing you do know and that is to do what best you can do and leave the rest to the infamous destiny as God is neither a story writer nor a player of your life, but a power, a faith that shows us light and gives us strength in the bleakest of hours. God is nothing but the goodness in every person and destiny nothing but your past actions catching up...good or bad.

- Satya Siri Atluri

Yuvanjali



Cheerful Disposition

I have been asked many times, "Why do you laugh so much and make so many jokes?" I become serious sometimes- when I have stomachache! The Lord is all blissfulness. He is the reality behind all that exists; He is the goodness, the truth in everything. You are His incarnations. That is what is glorious. The nearer you are to Him, the less you will have occasions to cry or weep. The further we are from Him, the more will long faces come. The more we know of Him, the more misery vanishes. If one who lives in the Lord becomes miserable, what is the use of living in Him? What is the use of such a God? Throw Him overboard into the Pacific Ocean! We do not want Him!

We must be bright and cheerful; long faces do not make religion. Religion should be most joyful thing in the world, because it is the best... It is the cheerful mind that is persevering. It is the strong mind that hews its way through a thousand difficulties.

...Let the mind be cheerful, but calm. Never let it run into excesses, because every excess will be followed by a reaction.

Combine seriousness with childlike naiveté. Live in harmony with all.

From "Living At the Source" - Yoga Teachings of Swami Vivekananda

Dear God

How are you? Is everything good in your house? Say hi to everybody.

I am fine. I am enjoying school very much. But the teacher doesn't like to answer my questions. Even Mummy, Papa and Bhaiya are tired of answering my questions. They say the questions are 'never ending'! But I want answers. Even I have to answer all their questions in the exam and in my homework notebook. It's not fair. Even I want some answers. I will also give full marks and a red star to who ever answers best.

Last week in Social studies class, I was learning about a man called Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. You know him? People also call him Mahatma. They also call him Bapu. They worship him sometimes like they worship you when they are in trouble.



Teacher also showed us some big 100 rupee notes which had Gandhiji's smiling photo on the cover. She says that all the notes have his photo. But why is Gandhiji smiling? Everybody is fighting for money and killing for money. Still, Gandhiji is smiling on the cover of money. He should not smile. Gandhiji was a good man. Gandhiji said we should always think of good things and say the truth and be peaceful. It is wrong. Moral Science teacher taught us that money is evil. People become greedy and start fighting for money. Then why do they have Gandhiji's photo on money? I want to talk to Sardar ji Uncle in Delhi to change it.

Why did Gandhiji use a stick? Teacher said he scared the British people with only a dhoti and a stick. Dhoti I can understand. If he didn't wear it, he would be shame-shame. But why did he use a stick? If a stick is so scary, why don't police uncle and army uncle and Kasab uncle use a stick? They also want to scare people and make them sit quietly in their houses. Then why use big guns and big bombs and make everything red-red? I will ask Teacher to use a stick from tomorrow in class. If I don't give her the idea, she might get a big gun and shoot if we make noise.

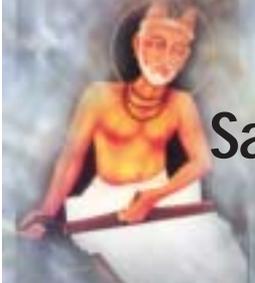
Should I tell teacher to use a stick? Or should she also use a gun and make everybody's white uniform red-red? Should I write to the Sardar ji uncle in Delhi to change Gandhiji's photo? Mummy and Papa say I should not. He will not reply. Then why is he Prime Minister? My Principal should be Prime Minister. She always replies to all the letters.

Maybe I will also grow up and be like everybody else only. I will also fight for Gandhiji's photo and then make everybody red-red. But it might be a bad thing. I don't know. Is it?

Okay, now I'm going. I have to do my homework. I will call you in the morning tomorrow. You also finish your studies and sleep on time. And reply fast. Bye!

XXXX

(That is my first signature. I am 8 years old. So it's okay) - *Avinash Agarwal*



Sant Kabirdas

Once a man walking by a house, saw a young woman grinding jowar grain. The sight of the seeds being crushed between the grinding stones brought tears to his eyes. Their fate reminded him of the impending death of man and saddened him. A sadhu who was passing by that way enquired about the reason for his sorrow. The man explained it and inquired whether there was no escape from death.

*Chalti Chakki Dekh Kar, Diya Kabira Roye
Dui Paatan Ke Beech Mein, Sabit Bacha Na Koye*

Looking at the grinding stones, Kabir laments; in the duel of wheels, nothing stays intact.

The Sadhu was touched by his sensitivity and insight. He agreed that nature of man indeed is transient like those jowar seeds. But just like some seeds stuck to the axle rod stay intact through the grinding, the men who latch on to the rod called God will not be affected by death. The man who was strongly convinced by the Sadhu's teaching and devoted rest of His life to God was none other than Kabir.

Conflicting opinions are held by scholars regarding his birth, death and religion. According to one story a weaver couple Neeru and Nima found a baby whom they took into their loving care. They gave him the name 'Kabir' which meant Mahatma. True to his name Kabir, a poet, singer, Jnani, Bhakta and a social reformer came to be the 'Sant' claimed by Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs as belonging to their religions. Since Kabir was not confined to one religion, He was accepted neither by Hindu nor by Muslim Guru as his student. Just when He gave up all hope of meeting a Guru, He met Ramananda Swami on the banks of Ganges as per Divine providence. Ramananda was the leader of Bhakti movement (14th-17th centuries) which

taught that people should ignore the rituals and caste system in India and experience God through overwhelming devotion. And He accepted Kabir happily as His student.

*Gur Dhobi Sikh Kapda, Saboo Sirjan Har
Surti Sila Pur Dhoiye, Nikse Jyoti Apaar*

Guru is the washer man, disciple is the cloth and the name of God is like the soap. Wash the mind on foundation firm, to realize the glow of Truth.

Kabir was a born Bhakta with unquenchable quest for knowledge. He called Himself, at once the child of Allah and Rama. God for Him was Truth, Love and Nirguna - a formless spiritual presence. He was His guru, His beloved and present in everyone regardless of religion. He listened to Hindu Sastras, Muslim Koran, Sufi masters' lectures etc. He is known for His spiritual couplets and songs - Dohas written in common man's language deriving inspiration from the nature around. His songs found their way into Guru Granth Sahab, the Holy Text of Sikhs.

*Mali avath dekhike kaliya kari pukar
Pooli pooli chunlayi khal hamari baar.*

The buds grieved over their fate as they saw the gardener. They felt, just as he plucked the blossoms that day, he would pluck them also the next day. Death is inevitable.

Kabir's progressive style of Bhakti involved virtues of humility, devotion to a formless God, compassion for fellow human beings, a spirit of forgiveness and a gentleness. He lit the lamp of love and devotion through His poetic works. Kabirdas was opposed to idol worship and caste feelings and believed in attaining liberation through discharge of Karma with detachment and renunciation. According to Kabir the true way to liberation was,

*Pothee pad pad jagam aa pandita hu aana koye
Dhayee akshar prem ka pade so panditahoye*

Many people wasted their lives in research over God through, classics. Only those who pronounced the two and a half letters (Sri Ram), they were liberated proclaimed Kabir.

Kabir Jayanti is celebrated on 7th June.

- Compiled by Annapurna R.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL

*Can you tell me a bed time story at all?
-Stay awake...Here it goes*

Once upon a time there was a grasshopper, who through diligent practice became one of the best hoppers on land. She loved hopping so much that she began teaching other grasshoppers to hop. With discipline she told her students when to eat, what to eat and how to eat. During practice she barked out orders telling them to faithfully follow her commands. The teacher felt very fulfilled when baby grasshoppers that had never hopped before began to hop and good hoppers could now hop much higher.

Then one day a creature showed up that she had never seen before – an eagle. She was determined to teach the eagle how to hop, as she was certain that hopping was the path to fulfillment and enlightenment. At a gathering of grasshoppers the eagle looked at the grasshoppers and said, “You are content with hopping but I can fly.” “Stop this foolish talk of flying,” screamed the teacher and turned to the grasshoppers. “Any time such thoughts arise, immediately focus your energy back on your hopping – this is how you will become enlightened.” The eagle realized that to communicate with the grasshoppers he would have to speak the grasshopper’s language – the language of hopping. The next day the eagle began to hop with the grasshoppers. To their surprise he could not only hop but could hop as well as any of them. Later that day a brave solitary grasshopper approached the eagle and asked “Can you take me flying?” The eagle nodded and gently took the grasshopper in his powerful talon. With a few beats of his wings they were aloft. Circling overhead the grasshopper could see the mountains, rivers and ocean that the



eagle had described, far beyond the familiar grass-fields. Careful not to go too high, the eagle soon returned the grasshopper to the ground. Hearing the commotion the other grasshoppers rushed over to find out what happened and one of them asked the eagle, “But our teacher told us that flying is imagination.” “Bless your teacher and be grateful to her, for she has taught you to hop,” said the eagle. “But now you know the truth.” The eagle looked deep within the eyes of the brave grasshopper. Though she was still a bit dizzy, he saw a spark within her being. He looked at the other grasshoppers and saw that the spark was already spreading to them. “My work here is done,” announced the eagle abruptly. “Someday you will learn to fly.” “But if you leave, who will teach us?” “Rest assured, as it has always been, when the student is ready, the teacher will appear.”

With that the eagle unveiled his powerful wings and soared off into the sky.

- Dr A. Surendra

A QUEST

Recently there has been a lot of talk about the volcanoes in Iceland. Volcanic eruptions are among the Earth's most powerful and destructive forces and can be very dangerous and deadly. This has been clearly evident in Northern Europe when it faced with erupting Icelandic volcanoes and melting glaciers. Silence prevailed in the sky after the eruption as the flights had to be grounded. European airspace was shut down due to ash clouds spewing from Iceland's volcanoes and itineraries of businessmen, tourists and students were thrown out of gear.

There is much more to this event than mere volcanic ash and smoke. Volcanoes can erupt in our inner lives which can make our lives traumatic in the blink of an eye. A family is shattered with the loss of a dear one. Silence prevails in their homes even after the mourning period is over for they are in a deep state of shock and need to come to terms with the realities in life. They dare not talk to each other for fear of grief pouring out of their words. So they remain silent trying to get over the loss, searching for sources of optimism that life could still continue.

Most of us are not aware that we live in the shadow of a volcano- in the shadow of a disaster that can happen in our lives. These volcanoes give us an opportunity of exploring ourselves for our illusions are shattered leaving behind a crystal clear mirror where we can see our true self and that once seen can lead to improved lives. We encounter volcanoes when we try to suppress our emotions, while they work toward release. Mounting pressures in our work life always come into conflict with the pressures of family life and relationships or vice-versa. We need to identify the source of pressure and find a way to release it before an explosion occurs.

If we could spare some time to listen to our inner voice, the volcanoes in our lives could be averted. Quite often we do get a warning before the volcano erupts in our life. When we are



angry or frustrated we try to stifle it and stuff it deep down as a way to avoid expressing our emotions. Suppressed emotional energies send out signals in the form of heartburn, stiffened joints, tumours or high blood pressure, but we ignore them until one day the forces beneath the surface erupt in a violent emotional outburst, or worse, in a physical catastrophe such as a stroke or heart attack. Let us not ignore these warnings. On the other hand let us attempt to get in touch with those feelings and find a healthier way to deal with them.

Volcanoes can influence our spiritual lives too as they are often associated with the power of divinity. In fact, the very word 'Volcano' is derived from the Roman God VULCAN. We suddenly encounter the Divine in our meditation and a volcano can erupt in our subconscious mind leading to powerful and positive life changes. However, it is essential to exercise caution and have a spiritual guide to monitor our progress for there is every chance of getting washed away in the lava emerging out of the volcano. The ultimate quest is to understand these volcanoes and avoid their steam and rumble in our lives.

- **Subhadra K.**

Homeward Bound



Along the beautifully tree lined paths of a picturesque town was a pair of a young mother and her five year old, walking holding hands. The curious child was asking questions and the doting mother replying patiently and blissfully. Evidently the twosome was cherishing those precious moments of their lives. Suddenly, the sight of an object on the emerald grass alongside the path brought a sparkle to the innocent eyes of the child who leaped to pick it up. It was a currency note! The little one began to feel excited at the thought of owning something she is otherwise not allowed to possess at that age by her parents. But the bubble was burst by her mother very soon who started to teach the child that other's money is not to be kept as our own. The child tried to argue saying 'Finders are the keepers' but the mother didn't yield. She convinced and led the child into a nearby store and made her deposit the money in a receptacle of collection for the homeless.



The works described as in Vedas are of two kinds- those that relate to Pravritti and those that lead to Nivritti. In the above mentioned anecdote what the child was exhibiting is termed in Samskrit as 'Pravritti' and the mother is modifying the same into more evolved 'Nivritti'. Pravritti means revolving towards while Nivritti means revolving away from the centre point the world and "I and mine". This includes all actions performed for attaining 'Artha' and 'Kama' - to enrich "oneself" with money, power, name, fame and anything of grasping nature, irrespective of the kind of action. Even Sacrifices

like Agnihotra, Yagas, Offerings, charitable works, when done with desire for their fruits fall within Pravritti or acts leading to rebirths. Same actions if done without desire, as offering to the Supreme Being fall under the caliber of Nivritti or liberation. Pravritti involves experiencing through sense organs. Nivritti transcends the sense organs. While Pravritti confuses the mind, Nivritti purifies the heart. Pravritti makes one seek from outside oneself whereas Nivritti leads one into the self.

Pravritti and Nivritti are the two essential elements which in right proportions lead to a healthy and stable society. Pravritti is the natural tendency of man and is predominant in his early life. But, only Pravritti results in a materialistic society and limits man to the "human" level. At some point he thinks "enough is enough of sense enjoyment" and looks for a spiritual dimension in life. And he is ready for renunciation of selfish actions and worldly desires. Thus only when he tries to break the human tendency, moves away from his sweet self and embraces Nivritti does he enter the realms of Morality, Spirituality, Divinity and Godhood. The readiness of a man to sacrifice his body, mind and everything for other beings is nothing but the perfection of Karma yoga which leads him to the same point as the greatest bhakta or the highest jnani would arrive at after years of penance. May it be Sri Rama, Buddha, Mahavir, Jesus Christ, Sri Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda, Sacrifice of oneself is what elevated them to Godhood.

- R. Annapurna

- References: 1. *Srimad Bhagavata Vol.2 Translated by Swami Tapasyananda*
2. *Karma Yoga a book by Swami Vivekananda*





THE ART OF COMMUNICATION

As I sat down to begin writing a topic, it was not as easy as I initially thought it would be. I would start writing and get stuck somewhere and stop writing, cursing myself. The days were rolling fast without much progress. I could not communicate properly with myself, about what I wanted to express in writing this time. Then an idea flashed in my mind and the result... is right in front of you. No prizes for guessing, it is about Communication.

Famous author Robert Frost rightly said "Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it." If the art of speaking is nurtured properly, communication gap can be averted. It was also said, **"Words are bridges that reduce the communication gap and unless that distance is reduced nothing is worth achieving" because success cannot be achieved or enjoyed alone. The happiness gets doubled when shared.** According to a survey 7% communication is verbal, 38% through voice and remaining 55% is through body language. The best examples are most celebrated artists like Charlie Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy.

One can communicate through walk, standing, eyes and hands better known as body language. According to psychologists we talk to ourselves 90% of the time, in what is called self talk. What we suggest to ourselves, our subconscious mind receives and releases the same like Aladdin's magic lamp. So be careful in what we talk to ourselves. The best communication is between the mother and the child in her womb. We come across such instances in our Upanishads where Madalasa communicates with her son when he was in her womb and how wise he was at birth! According to Dale Carnegie, **those who speak freely, express their views freely and fearlessly alone can lead; speaking is a leadership quality.** He was the author of "How to win friends and influence people" still preferred by most of the people across the globe. He could connect with the readers through his work. The power of

communication has been in vogue since time immemorial. Even in Mahabharata, Dharma Raja used this to good effect by uttering words, "Ashwatthama hatah... [kunjara]!" With a pause and low voice, he could win over his guru Dronacharya who took an oath that he will renounce weapons when he hears the news of his son Ashwatthama's death. We all know what actually happened- an elephant (kunjara) by name Ashwatthama was killed in the battle. Dharma Raja known for his morality did not lie, but could reap rich benefits of communication.

Communication is the action of communicating and communicating is sharing or exchange of information. A set of words when uttered becomes communication when

- * It carries good sense that brings cheer to the listener
- * Information is exchanged between two individuals and both the speaker and listener are benefited
- * Knowledge is imparted to learners by the learned

Precisely, the exchange of words turns into communication when it is perceived and taken in the right sense. That which creates a mental tuning between the speaker and the listener, instigates the listener to do an act and brings him new knowledge and benefit is the true communication. Good word has tremendous power. It results in a good rapport among people. When anyone talks, don't just hear but listen. If we listen we can communicate better. Regular practice of listening can bring change gradually and we can reciprocate. As it is said **one cannot become a good speaker unless he is a good listener.**

Sharing information is a symbol of knowledge, but it differs from person to person. What we learnt may trouble us if we try to share it with everyone we come across. To speak is knowledge whether to speak or not is wisdom. Usage of Right word in the Right context will work wonders. For instance a master to his servant who was working with a nail, "hit on the head"

and the latter hits on the former. Be careful while using words, because once uttered they never come back. "Connecting with oneself and connecting with others is also a form of communication. Most of the negative thoughts like 'I can't', 'I may not', and 'I don't want to' may prove disastrous. Replace them with positive thoughts like 'I will', 'I can', 'I am great', 'I am strong', 'I am intelligent' and results will be seen in time. Words spell magic and words spell success. Words have bombarding power. Take for instance the speech of Swami Vivekananda delivered at The Parliament of Religions held in Chicago, U.S.A.



He could create euphoria among the audience by just saying 'brothers and sisters of America'. This is the power of words. This has every character required for good communication-right usage of words; Swamiji could connect with people (listeners) instantly. Properness and brevity of words will create everlasting impression in the minds of the people. Even without disclosing who had said, one can recognize who said it. The statements of those great personalities speak volumes of their achievements and have become inspirational quotes for people like us. Strength is life and weakness is death-Swami Vivekananda, My Life is my message- M.K. Gandhi, Give Me blood and I will give you Freedom- Subhash Chandra Bose, I have a Dream-Martin Luther King and My Life is My work- Swami Ranganathananda

are just few examples. Even Lord Buddha had emphasized on Samyak Vachanam (right speech).

Height of communication skills is Public speaking. Every one of us may not get an opportunity to speak in public. But let us try to become a better personal speaker at least. By interacting with our selves, our family members, friends, colleagues and even with our superiors we can become better speakers. The importance of speaking is also discussed in Upanishads: **Satyam bruyaat priyam bruyaat nabruyaat satyamapriyam- which means speak truth, speak pleasantly but do not speak unpleasant truth.** If it is unpleasant for everyone try to avoid it (depending on the situation). While speaking, try to do the following and realize the change in you:

1. do not use harsh language
2. speak pleasantly
3. speak fearlessly
4. try to be brief
5. most importantly, ensure it makes some sense
6. use simple words
7. avoid controversial statements
8. don't just hear, try to listen
9. never argue but discuss
10. encourage others to talk
11. do not interrupt the speaker in the middle

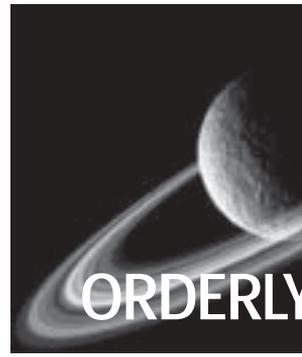
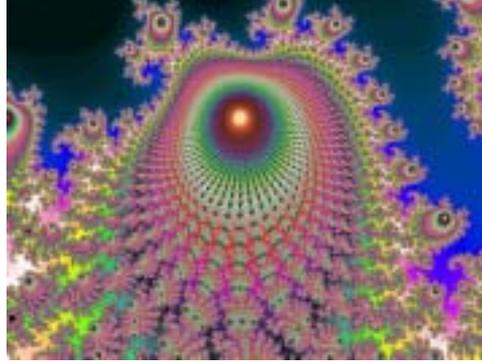
For a successful career it is important to develop communication skills. There is a growing demand for communication skills due to globalization. Communication skills are the need of the hour as they have become a yardstick to assess one's credentials. Moreover, good communication skills are confidence boosters. A good communication between oneself and people around would work wonders and brings cheer forever.

-By M. Koti Rajasekhar

E-Mail ID- koti.rajasekhar@gmail.com

Who serves Jiva, serves God indeed!

-Swami Vivekananda



A bird's eye view of a metro city at a rush hour provides a viewer a picture of confusion and randomness. But when you zoom into one unit of that seeming chaos you will learn how coordinated and timed it is. Apparently "the basic nature of the universe is extreme complexity, inexplicable disorder; that mysterious, tangled magnificence popularly known as Chaos." New discoveries in the science and mathematics of Chaos research reveal a hidden *fractal* order underlying all seemingly chaotic events. *Fractal* as described by B.B. Mandelbrot is "a rough or fragmented geometric shape that can be split into parts, each of which is (at least approximately) a reduced-size copy of the whole". The world-view emerging from this scientific research is new, but the spiritual implications and significance of Chaos and Fractals date back to Vedas and Upanishads.



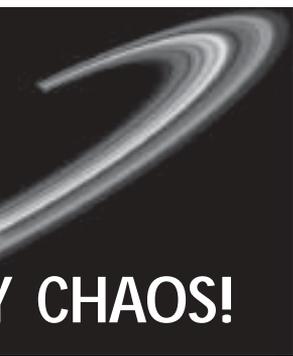
There are many things in nature that exhibit the property of self-similarity such as snowflakes, crystals, rivers, and some plant structures. Indian temples and monuments exhibit a fractal structure: a tower surrounded by smaller towers, surrounded by still smaller towers and so on. Quoting William Jackson, "The ideal form gracefully artficed



At any given moment, life is complex. In a short period, it seems to reveal itself as an order, a purpose, trending in a direction.

-Aldous Huxley





CHAOS!



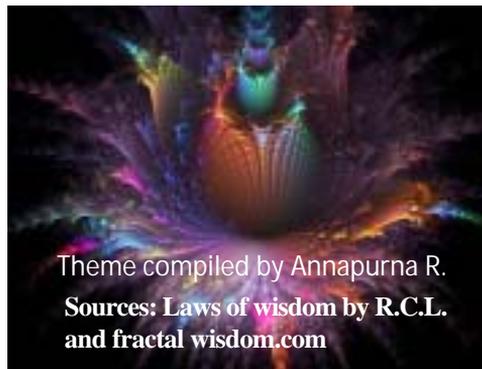
suggests the infinite rising levels of existence and consciousness, expanding sizes rising toward transcendence above, and at the same time housing the sacred deep within."

All of reality, from the smallest microcosmic sub-atomic particle, to the largest galactic cluster, seems to follow the same basic fractal structures. There seems to be a basic drive which compels all conscious entities on an upward spiral of ever expanding consciousness and coherent intelligence. Conscious beings are like fractals evolving to ever greater scales of magnitude. Along the way we follow the same basic patterns, but at each stage there are some unique variations. This variety adds spice to life, spice which can easily lead to confusing chaos. If you know what to look for, the key fractal structures, you can look beyond the millions of trees and start to see the forest, the unity behind the great diversity of nature. These insights can be used to create a bridge between Science and Spirituality in your life. This new knowledge can be applied to a better understanding of your life, to live autonomously, based on freedom and your own contact with the Source of the Universe, the Infinite.



etely senseless. But viewed over a organism existing in time, having a a certain direction.

(1894-1963)



Theme compiled by Annapurna R.
Sources: Laws of wisdom by R.C.L.
and fractal wisdom.com



AKKA MAHADEVI

Despite the feminists' hues and cries, assaults on women are sky rocketing in India. In this context; it is relevant to bring back Akka Mahadevi the seer-poet and social reformer of Karnataka, to the present turbulent arena. Probably, she may be the first feminist in India as she has been in a constant battle against the established institutions and rituals prevalent in India, in the 12th century.

Women who stifle under the established powers but unable to get out of the tangles should definitely turn back to 900 years, to find a teenager who fought for her self assertion. Some consider Akka Mahadevi as an incarnation of Goddess Parvathi. From her childhood itself, she accepted Shiva as her mystical spouse. She abandoned her husband King Koushika when he tried to molest her and leaving behind all the palatial comforts she stepped into the streets unclothed. On the streets she lived like a wandering sannyasin. She not only wrote many vachanas about the foolishness of lust, but challenged it directly by living the rest of her life without wearing any clothing and covered her body with her long flowing tresses.

Akka Mahadevi wished to join a community of Virasaivas and many of her poems are from the report of her successful attempt to prove to the male Virasaiva leaders gathered in the city of Kalyana that she was worthy to be a part of their community. There is an interesting dialogue between her and Allama Prabhu, the holiest man of Virasaiva leaders:

Prabhu: Why have you come here in the prime of your youth? Our saints resent the sight of a young woman. If you can disclose the



identity of your husband, you can join the fellowship of saints, or else you can depart.

Mahadevi: I have engrossed in penance for many years so that Shiva might become my wedded lord! My own people wedded me to Shiva by smearing my body with ashes and tying the marital bracelet to my wrist... All the world knows that the innumerable saints are my parents. Therefore, O Prabhu, God is my lord; for me, there are no other husbands in this world.

Prabhu questions whether Akka Mahadevi can be "One with God" when she still has human form and worse, a female body.

Mahadevi: Would the sandalwood cease its fragrance when it is cut into pieces? Would a piece of gold, even when cut and heated, lose its luster? Would the sugarcane lose its sweetness when it is squeezed within a press and

then heated? When you search for my bygone sins and hurl them at my face, the deprivation is yours. O Lord, though you may slay me, I will never cease to love Lord Shiva.

Allama Prabhu and other leaders realize that though she is female in appearance, her mind is merged with God. Akka Mahadevi eventually leaves Kalyana and wanders alone through a forest and then up a mountain, where she will be "united with God like hailstone melting in water, salt dissolving in water and milk mixing with water!" She attained enlightenment at an age of 20 years. Her eternal journey ended up in Kadali Vana, near the Srisailam temple, inside a cave. She is said to be merged into the Great void.

Ref: Akka Mahadevi - An epic of times by Gayathri Sundaram. "Love of the Divine: Sister Mahadevi" by Sri Danesh A. Chekki.



Three Disciples!

There was a great soul. He had three disciples. They were amazing by nature. The first two had a kind of desire in them but the third one was desireless. One always claimed recognition whereas the second one wanted recognition but silently and the third one never wanted it. So one day the Guru told all three of them that he is going to give them a task before giving sannyas diksha. Then the guru sends them to three different Islands. First disciple who always wanted recognition was sent to an island where there was a small hamlet, few animals and a dense forest, whereas the second one was sent to an island which had no hamlet, but only animals and a dense forest and third, the one who never wanted recognition was sent to an island which had no hamlet, no animals but only a dry forest. After 5 years when Guru with his other disciples visits all three islands they come across a strange situation. In the first place they find no hamlet, no animals but a dry forest and the disciple in a dire condition. In the second island they find no animals but a dry forest and the disciple in an unhealthy condition. But in the third island they find a hamlet, healthy people, animals and dense forest with beautiful lakes and of course a spiritually awakened soul. Guru immediately declares the third one as his successor. He brings back all three of them and asks how they have spent the 5 years.

First one says that initially after seeing the hamlet and all facilities he started working with them. He did what he could do for all. But sometimes when people were not getting his lunch or dinner on time he used to get offended and used bad language. He always used to remind them inspite of the favours he is doing for the sake of their development, they are not able to feed him. That added more fuel and he became more arrogant. He even asked them to cut the trees for his shelter and for firewood.

Second one says he felt lonely after seeing only animals. He tried his level best to do sadhana but nothing worked. Then with great difficulty he cut the trees and made a shelter and he started collecting firewood for cooking and spent a lot of time in search of food in the forest.

What he could do was only this. Later he saw few people coming from a different island to settle down there. Initially he was happy but soon he realized that they are expecting more from him and in return he was getting nothing. Few months he tried his level best to teach them but unfortunately did not succeed in anything. They also got fed up and left the place.

When Guru asks the third disciple, he says after seeing the forest he was more excited and felt, this is the right situation and right place for him to work hard. The first thing he did was to find out the right place to stay. He collected dry wood fallen on the ground and built a small hut. Then he did a geographical survey and took contours. He knew that, if he was able to divert water properly and make small water bodies then in rainy season the forest will have blossoms. His only sadhana was to work all day to create water bodies, make small pits around plants and trees and find some 'Kandas' for eating. At night before going to bed he used to sing the glory of the Lord and invoke that spirit within. After two years he was able to see a few water bodies, green trees laden with fruits and birds chirping. This change invited wild animals. After seeing this change he got more inspired and took plantation work at different places without disturbing the animals. In the third year he saw a few people coming to this island. He invited them and gave them food. They said that they were in search of a place to live in. When they arrived he found that they needed proper guidance and love. Gradually he taught them Ayurveda, Yoga and the language of birds and animals. He explained to them that if we take care of the forest, animals and birds, they would take care of us in return. Now, the same people are growing their paddy. They have a kitchen garden and they are more religious. They have given up eating non-vegetarian food. They have understood that harming wild animals and cutting trees will create imbalance in the ecology.

The third disciple has proved that hard work when combined with shraddha pays and in his case it led to winning over the Guru's grace.

- *Swami Nachiketananda*

VATA SAVITRI POURNIMA

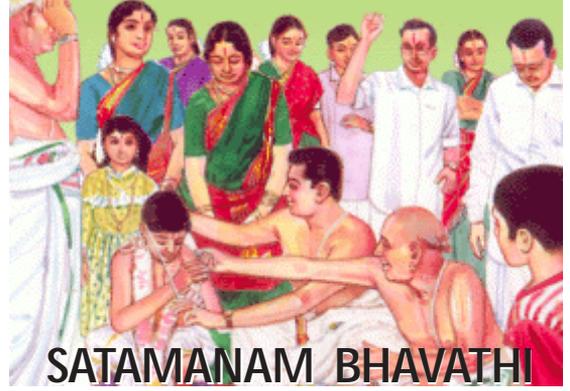
(25th June 2010, Friday)



We owe our existence on this earth to Her entire flora and fauna living in perfect harmony. The integral element of Hinduism has been recognizing the roles of biotic and abiotic elements of the nature.

Vata Savitri - a vowed religious observance, popular in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa performed by married women on the full moon day of the Jyeshtha month (May-June) for a long and prosperous married life. Vata, the Banyan tree, or Kalpavrksha or the Asvattha Vrksha, in Hindu religion represents eternal life because of its ability to expand, regenerate and live for an incredible length of time. It has ever been associated with the worship of the Divine. In Bhagavad Gita the Holy fig tree is recognized as His *vibhuti* - "Asvattha sarvavrkshanam ..." meaning "of all trees I am Asvattha" (Ch.10:26).

Legend goes that, Aswapati, the noble king of Madra desa after severe austerities including Savitri-yajna performed under an Asvattha tree begets a child whom he named Savitri. When her father permits her, Savitri chooses Satyavan as life partner. But the prophecy was that he would live for only one more year. But the determined Savitri follows her heart and marries Satyavan. Three days before the destined day of his demise, she observes a fast and on the third day she follows Lord Yama who takes away Satyavan's life, implores Him with long, intellectual and clever debates under an Asvattha tree. And with her sheer determination and devotion she wins back her husband's life from the lord of death exemplifying that nothing is impossible to humans. In the foot prints of Sati Savitri, the foremost of Hindu Pativratas, women observe a fast and tie threads around a banyan tree and pray for the same husband in every birth and his long life.



SATAMANAM BHAVATHI

*Satamanam bhavati Satayuh purusha
Satendriya Ayush yevendriye' pratishitati*

'One hundred' has always been a magical number and is used to depict wholeness of quality and quantity. It is every man's ambition to live to be a hundred. This ultimate form of benediction wishes the seeker with the Vedic life of 100 years. During those Veda Aayus to have fully functioning Indriyas and all the faculties established intact to observe the Nitya karmas ordained by the Vedas and Shastras and to pursue the noble Vedic way of life doing Pancha yajnam, Sanshya Vandhanams, Service to Acharya, Bhagavan and His Bhagavathas.

In Indian families, when a boy is initiated into "Upanayana," all his elders bless him saying "Satamanam Bhavati Satayur..." meaning "May you live to be a 100 years old!" Similarly, we can see elders and friends blessing a newly married couple wishing them a 100 years of life together. The reason for such a blessing can be traced back to the Isavasyopanishad which says

*Kurvanneveha karmani jijivisechchatam samah
evam tvayi nanyatheto'sti na karma lipyate nare II2II*

One must desire to live even a hundred years by doing prescribed karma only. Thus is it right for you, not otherwise; [if this is done, then] karma will not bind the human.

When one blesses another with a "Satayur" or a "100 years of life," one is not referring merely to length of life but to the quality of life. There is no point in living for 100 years with poor or simply no quality of life. The Isavasyopanishad says in the above verse, a life that is lived both zestfully and purposefully is the only one that is really worth living for 100 years. A life of real quality must be full of good action, useful deeds and noble efforts, if it has to attain the state of Purnatva or Totality.



Champakulam Boat Race

Kerala's winding stretches of backwater are famous for their native boat races, which are held every year during the harvest season. The boat festival season begins with the centuries-old Champakulam boat race, which marks the beginning of a month long festivities. The boat races signify the excellent team spirit, integration and amity of the people of this backwater land. The boat races are occasions of great excitement to the Keralites.

In the boat races, a boat is manned by four helmsmen, 25 singers and 100-125 oarsmen who row in unison to the fast rhythm of the Vanchipattu- the song of the boatman. It is an amazing site as thousands of people gather at the water front to cheer the huge black crafts, as they cut their way through the waters to a spectacular finish. Many of these boat race festivals in Kerala have curious legends and myths attached to their origin.





Champakulam boat race is associated with a legend. Maharaja Devanarayana of Chempakasseri built a temple for Lord Krishna. But just prior to the installation of the deity, the king came to know that the idol was inauspicious. His ministers suggested to bring the idol of Sri Krishna, presented to Arjuna by Lord Krishna Himself, from the Karikulam temple of Kurichi. The ministers went to the place to bring the idol. While returning from the temple they spent a night at Champakulam to perform a puja. From there, boats of the entire area accompanied the idol in colourful, ceremonial procession through the lake to the temple. Celebrating that moment, the whole procession is enacted every year with the same enthusiasm. There is a huge turnover of people who come to witness this event. The age-old tradition is kept alive till date. This year the event falls on 26th June 2010.

-Ref: History of Kerala



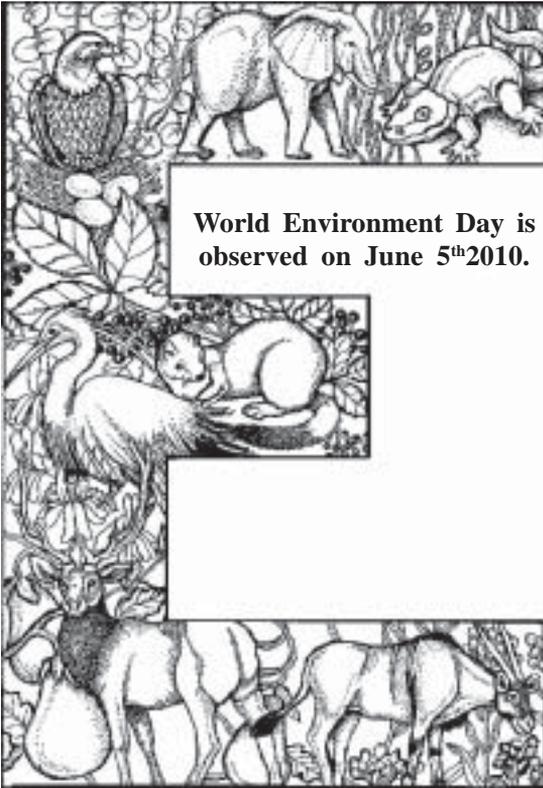
The Goddess Earth

"Mata bhumi putro aham prithivyaha"
(earth is our mother and we are her children).

Movements like "Go green", "Green peace", "Save the Earth" have picked up great momentum in the recent past in the modern world. But this is an age old concept to Hinduism. The most ancient and expressive environmental invocation is found in the Vedic Hymn- Prithvi Sukta of the Atharva Veda. This Vedic prayer invokes Divine intervention to bless and protect the environment. According to Prithvi Sukta, Mother Earth is adorned with mountains, hills, plains, heights, slopes, forests, plants, herbs and treasures. She takes care of every creature that breathes with, things strength-giving and nourishing. She gives shelter to all the seekers of truth, who are tolerant and have understanding. May she give us joy, health, wealth, prosperity and glory. The source of the creative spirit, we depend upon Mother Earth!

According to the Vedic conception Environment, God and Humans are integral parts of one Whole or the Brahman and they function with meticulous and marvelous coordination. The relationship or interdependence between the various elements of the environment is symbiotic in nature. The human lifestyle was thoughtfully moulded so as to conform to the principles of rest of the nature and not to trespass the subtle boundaries of their harmonious interdependence.

Reverence, compassion and non-violence towards all elements of environment have been central to the Sanatana Dharma. The Vedic seers were well aware that each organism small or big, simple or complex plays an indispensable role in the balance of environment. This was achieved through different approaches like Gods taking the form of animals like fish, turtle, boar etc., designating plants the status of worship like Tulasi, depicting animals as vehicles of Gods and so on. Due to this respect people refrained from activities that would disturb the Nature. If they had to do a constructive activity that could hurt the peace of one or more elements they would perform puja like Bhoomi puja and seek forgiveness. The performance of daily Agnihotra, yagas and the churning of ocean were some of the acts of periodic purification of environment.

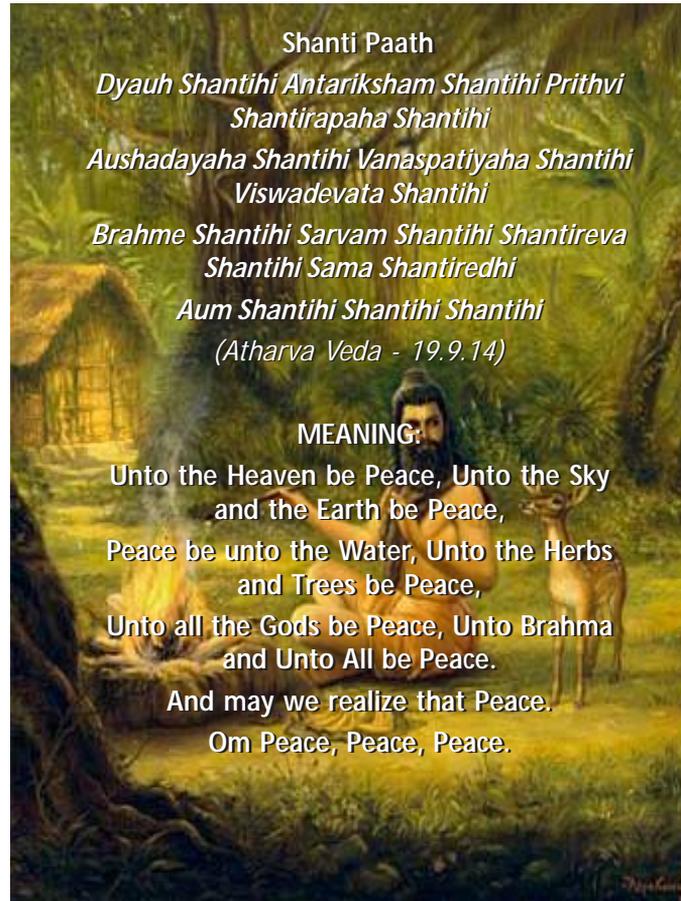


World Environment Day is observed on June 5th2010.

Trees that can neither think nor read give shade, flowers, fruits and wood silently and gracefully. Whereas the man who has been blessed with the most advanced brain and the highest level of consciousness, blinded by greed, selfishness and ignorance has crossed the limits of accepting and degraded the symbiotic relation into exploitation. Still, the all forgiving mother has been tolerating his misdeeds. But if man continues to play deaf ear to Nature's rebukes, he has to face the wrath of Her fierceness. The atmospheric deviations that we are experiencing are just the tips of the iceberg.

In the wake of globalization India is losing her nativity. Our culture was intrinsically pro-environmental but mimicking the consumerism of the West led to contributing to the woes of earthly beings. It is high time we pick our acts up before it is too late. We can do something as small as carrying our good old cloth bags to our next shopping trip, use one glass less water than yesterday, turn the lights off when we leave a room, use reused paper for jotting down an address and so on.

- Annapurna R.



Shanti Paath

*Dyauh Shantihi Antariksham Shantihi Prithvi
Shantirapaha Shantihi*

*Aushadayaha Shantihi Vanaspatiyaha Shantihi
Viswadevata Shantihi*

*Brahme Shantihi Sarvam Shantihi Shantireva
Shantihi Sama Shantiredhi*

Aum Shantihi Shantihi Shantihi

(Atharva Veda - 19.9.14)

MEANING:

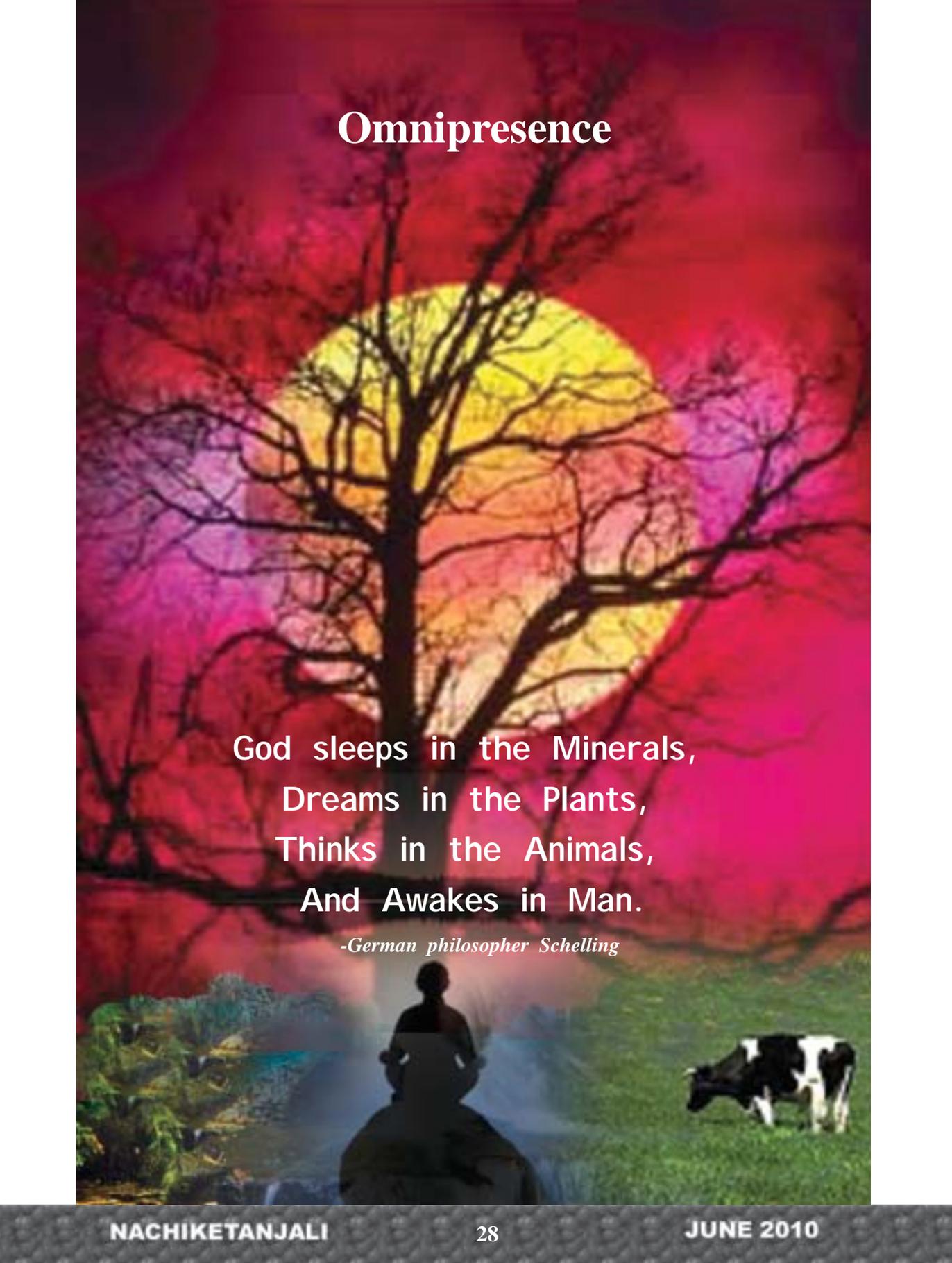
Unto the Heaven be Peace, Unto the Sky
and the Earth be Peace,
Peace be unto the Water, Unto the Herbs
and Trees be Peace,
Unto all the Gods be Peace, Unto Brahma
and Unto All be Peace.

And may we realize that Peace.

Om Peace, Peace, Peace.



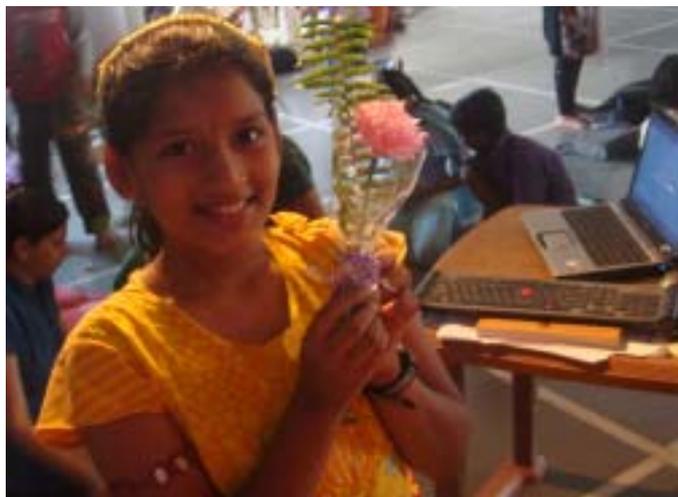
Omnipresence



God sleeps in the Minerals,
Dreams in the Plants,
Thinks in the Animals,
And Awakes in Man.

-German philosopher Schelling





A Report on Summer Camp-2010



A unique and inspiring Personality Development Camp took place at Nachiketa Tapovan from 2nd to 9th May 2010. We express our heart-felt thanks to all parents for supporting us in our endeavour to teach our Indian Values and culture to the children. The camp has touched the lives of nearly 45 children. This is a great achievement for all of us. It was an opportunity for children to escape normal routine and responsibilities back home, meet new people and learn lessons that will stick with them forever. Each day of the camp was a blessed day for the children as Swami Nachiketnanda and Swami Shivanandamayi have presented new ideas and activities filled with energy to promote spirituality and cultural values in the children.

The variety of events this camp had was incredible. For the participants, it was joyful and transformational. Visuals were shown taking the audience through the illustrious lives of our saints and sages of yore. Advice was given on how children could imbibe values in their lives. The Yoga with Mantras was so soothing and nourishing to the body and soul. Children enjoyed the Bhajan session and got immersed in the melody of



devotion. Arts and Crafts taught by Smt Mamata Agarwal and Smt Madhavi were very inspiring and reinforced the creativity of the children. A variety of fun-filled games were conducted to develop concentration skills in children. One programme blended into the next perfectly. The children enjoyed the whole experience together as a family.

This was not just a camp for the participants, but also for us, the organizers and teachers! The rewards of spending the time together were priceless. Children put in a lot of effort in making the camp successful and the parents need to be appreciated for sending their children on time. Special thanks to volunteers of Tapovan for taking care of all the arrangements. Valedictory function was held on the final day and Parents were thrilled to see their children perform. The power point presentations by campers from different groups were amazing. Many spoke about the positive changes the camp had brought in their lives. Parents agreed that this camp was beneficial to their children. The camp came to an end with children making promises to practice what they have learnt.



**Swami
Shivanandamayi**

SPONSOR OPTIONS

Anna daanam maha daanam; vidya daanam mahattaram.

Annena kshanika trupthihi yaavajjeevanthu vidyaya.

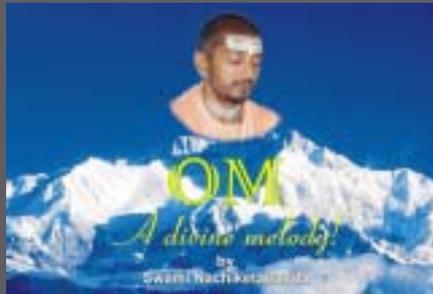
Vidya Mandir at Nachiketa Tapovan is currently able to accommodate a family of about 150 children who receive all-round nourishment from man-making education to milk-n-meals and basic health-aid in an atmosphere of genuine love. Kind-hearted Well wishers have been the unseen force behind this offering to God. We thank you for your continued support.

Vidya Daanam (Education)	Rs. 4500/year/child
Anna Daanam (Mid-day Meals)	Rs. 3500/day
Ksheera Daanam (Morning Milk)	Rs. 700/day
Vastra Daanam (Uniforms)	Rs. 600/2 pairs
Dinnerware (Steel Plates & Glasses)	Rs. 5000/ 50 sets
Stationery Supplies (Copier Paper)	Rs. 5000/term
Festivals Celebration	Rs. 1500/festival
Oushadhi (Medical Supplies)	Rs. 5000/month

Celebrate your Special Days with the Children at Nachiketa Tapovan!

PUBLICATION

*A set of 8 'Yogic CDs'
were released on
1st April 2007.*



*Cost of each
CD is Rs.35/-*

The CDs comprise instructions given on different yogic techniques based on an extensive research done by Swami Nachiketananda and assisted by other Swamis and volunteers. 'Om' - A divine melody is first of the series. All the CDs are available at the Nachiketa Tapovan premises at Kavuri Hills, and also in leading bookstores.

AN APPEAL

Dear Atman,

Nachiketa Tapovan has launched a massive Ashram project in Kodgal village, Jadcherla Mandal in Mahboobnagar district with a noble vision of providing Free Education, Medical aid, Vocational training and Spiritual upliftment for the underprivileged. Temples, Dhyana mandir, Residential Campus, Vidya Mandir and Dispensary are given priority in the 1st Phase of construction. With the grace of the Almighty we have been moving forward towards the completion of some of these projects.

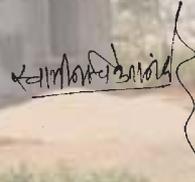
First we want to thank our supporters and well wishers for accomplishing our goals of constructing a Dhyana Mandir and Residential Campus at the Ashram. Your support was essential for meeting the substantial expenses of this Humanitarian work for which we are deeply grateful. At present our top priority is the major Temple Project and Vidya Mandir which are under construction. The total cost for these projects is estimated at **Rs 2.9 Crores**. Currently we have collected **Rs 1.19 Crores**. The rest of the funds have to be raised to inaugurate the Ashram. For the coming year, our goal

is to continue reaching out to more and more souls with our basic spiritual services, programs and publications and also to accomplish a number of smaller projects at Nachiketa Tapovan, Kavuri hills and Ashram at Jadcherla.

We hereby make a fervent appeal for generous donations. You can contribute to the project in any manner possible. Please participate in this noble task so that our cultural heritage and religious traditions will be safeguarded for the coming generations.

It may kindly be noted that donations to Nachiketa Tapovan are exempted from Income Tax U/S 80 G of IT Act, 1961 of Govt of India. Donations in the form of cheques/ Demand drafts may please be drawn in favour of Nachiketa Tapovan.

Yours in the service of Motherland



Swami Nachiketanda



Sri Sarada Devi Saswatha Jnananidhi Trust (Regd)
*(Appeal for donations to Vivekananda
Scholarships for poor students)*

Dear Atmabandhus,

Nachiketa Tapovan strongly supports the cause of Sri Sarada Devi Saswatha Jnananidhi trust and appeals on their behalf for donations to meet the cost of educating the poor but brilliant children who have secured best results in S.S.C and Intermediate exams. The Trust intends to give 'Vivekananda Scholarships' every year for their higher education in and around Rayadurg Town. For that they wish to establish 'Sri Sarada Devi Saswatha Jnananidhi Trust' by the Grace of the Holy Trio in Rayadurg with Rs.10 lakhs permanent fund as fixed deposit, using only the annual interest for the scholarships to the poor every year. Hence we earnestly request all the devotees of the Lord to donate liberally to this trust and support them in this noble cause.

Note: Please send your crossed DDs/Cheques in favour of "Sri Sarada Devi Saswatha Jnananidhi Trust, Rayadurg" payable at Andhra Bank, Rayadurg to the address given below.

Yours in the service of Motherland

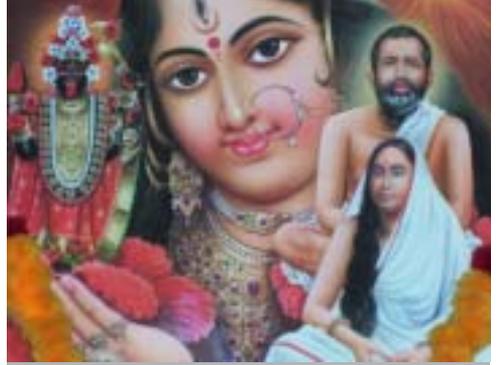
Swami Nachiketananda

ADDRESS: Swami Archanananda

Sri Venugopala Swamy Temple

Tahsildar Road, Rayadurg (post)-515865,
Anantapur Dt A.P

Cell No. 9490765381



**Our forthcoming Issue
No. 6, July 2010 will
be a Guru Pournima
special and we invite
readers and writers to
send articles on Gurus
from various fields.**

***Please send the articles
before June 10th.***

email: nachiketanjali1@gmail.com



**"This Atman is first to be heard,
then thought about and then
meditated upon."**

- Swami Vivekananda



A NOTE TO WRITERS:

- a) You can send articles by email to nachiketanjali1@gmail.com or by post to Nachiketanjali, Nachiketa Tapovan, Plot No.70, Phase I, Kavuri Hills, Madhapur, Guttlabegumpet, Serilingampally, Ranga Reddy District. A.P., with your full name, address and contact details.
- b) No article is returned.
- c) Your article should be reader friendly with a positive view point.
- d) No controversial or political issues are published.
- e) Word limit for an article varies from 250 (one column) to 1000 words (four columns). Writers can contact the editorial team for further details.
- f) The styles of references should be as per the 'Documentation of Sources' given at the end of the *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.
- g) Editor reserves the right to accept/ reject articles and edit the selected articles.
- h) Unsolicited articles are not acknowledged.
- i) The Editor does not accept responsibility for the author's views.
- j) Articles received will be published in one of the forthcoming issues.

BOOK REVIEW

We request Publishers to send two copies of their Spiritual, Philosophical and Religious books for publishing a Book Review in our "Nachiketanjali" - monthly Magazine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Nachiketa Tapovan is indebted to all the well-wishers, donors, patrons and advisors whose immense help and cooperation in multiple ways has helped us accomplish our goals.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS	INDIA	GIFT
Single copy	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 10/-
1 year	Rs. 100/-	Rs. 100/-
3 years	Rs. 280/-	Rs. 280/-
5 years	Rs. 450/-	Rs. 450/-

Subscriptions can be sent by MO/DD/ Cheque/Cash in favor of 'Nachiketa Tapovan'. (Plus Rs. 50/- for outstation cheques)

AN APPEAL TO PATRONS & SPONSORS

Ashraydatas are encouraged to become patrons of the magazine by joining Nachiketanjali's Patron's Scheme. You can become patrons by donating Rs. 5000/- which will be deposited in the magazine's corpus fund. We express our thanks by announcing their names in the following issue of the Magazine and the patron will also receive a 5 year subscription of the same.

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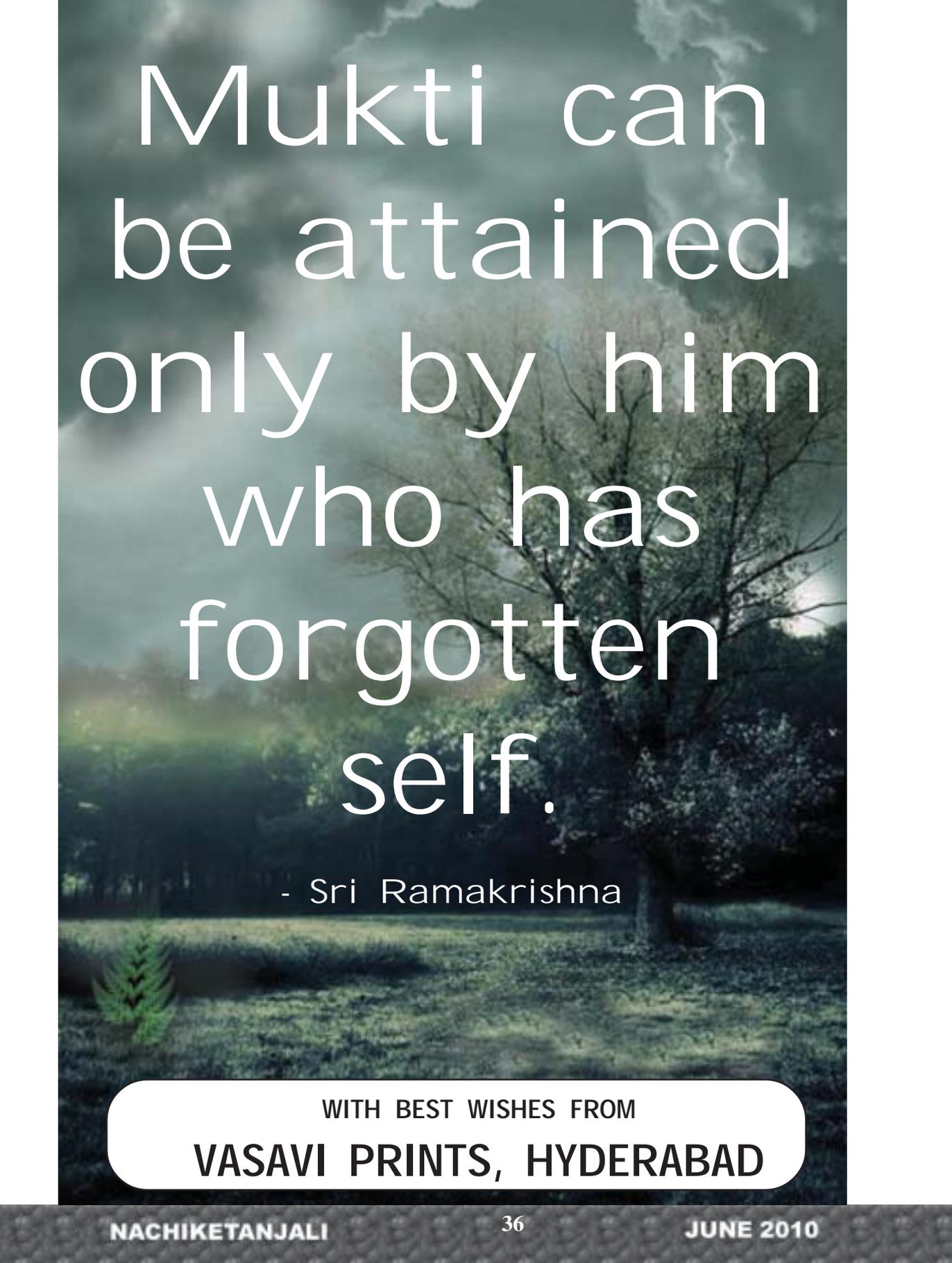
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"Be Good and Do Good"

- Swami Vivekananda

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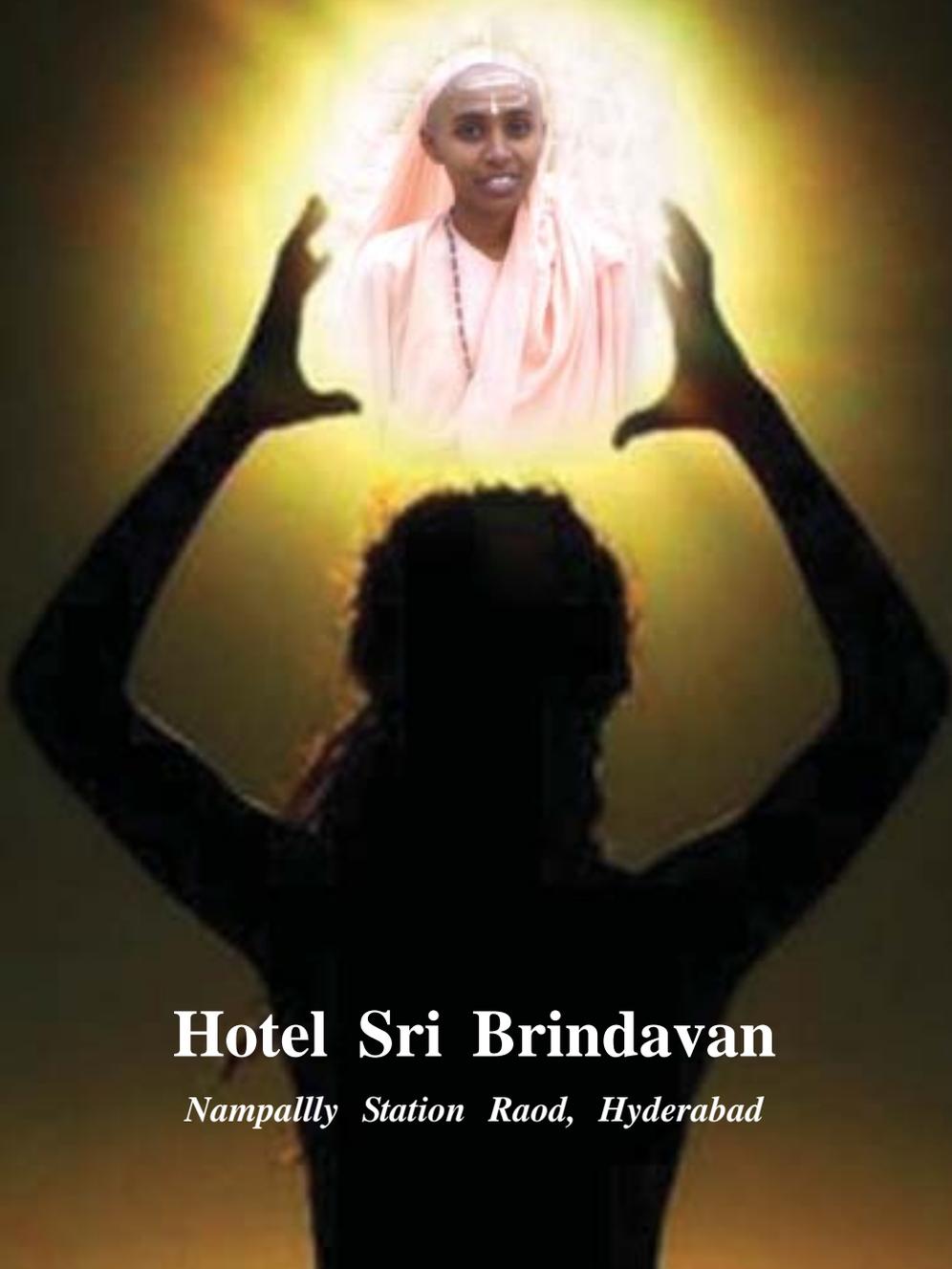


Mukti can
be attained
only by him
who has
forgotten
self.

- Sri Ramakrishna

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