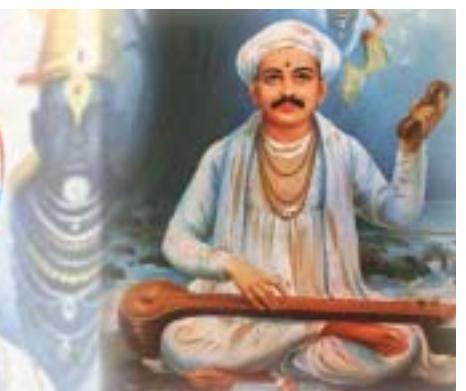


Nachiketanjali ***...an offering***

A Journey Into The Spiritual Realm!





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EDITORIAL

Life, especially human birth is very valuable. To say it in the spiritual language, it is Durlabha- that which is not easily obtained. If we keep aside people who desire only worldly life, it is very precious for those who are aware that God is the ultimate and this human birth is given to realize Him and who travel in that direction with a firm resolution.

If someone gives us a precious object, we hold it close to our heart knowing its value. We try to use it to its maximum utility knowing well the item is short lived and we might lose it any moment. When a common object is given such importance, what about the 'Human Birth' which is durlabha? Should we not give more importance to it and consider it very precious?

As most people think, life is not about only hardships and tears. It is filled with happiness. It is a valuable gem. Instead of playing with it, our life can be utilized for the service of God. In reality, the value of any object is realized only when it is properly utilized. The ultimate reality or paramartha is to search for Truth (sathyanveshana). The happiness and bliss derived when we realize the True self is countless times more than worldly happiness. It cannot be explained. One has to taste it.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa also tried to explain that Bliss several times to His disciples. He had to stop when He was almost there for words failed Him. He used to go into a blissful mood and when He came out of that state said "Mother is overwhelming me" and laughed like an innocent child. There is no boundary to that Bliss and it cannot be measured.

We have to seek people who have enjoyed the Bliss, walk with them and try to remain in their company. This path will lead us to God and make our lives successful.

-Subhadra K.

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Inner Chamber



We all of us have our own inner chamber. And this chamber is not built on this life or intelligence but it is built on many lives with the support of feelings, thoughts and emotions blended with acceptance, love, dedication and devotion. Many times when we are in crisis or in utter confusion or in a kind of blissful state through different activities, we find ourselves dripping slowly into our inner chamber, but without knowing. Is it not strange that whether good or bad, we first enter into our inner chamber?

They say that the one who knows inner chamber is the true Guru and such 'Souls' will never misguide anybody or cheat others. The real Guru makes sure that everyone is given personal attention on higher level without discriminating them. Guru works on everybody's chamber and lives for all. Even though Guru tries to strengthen our inner chamber, we the devotees approach the Guru with lots of expectations. But in this kind of situation also, the one who maintains silence, guides devotees spiritually and does work without getting

perturbed is the real Guru. Therefore let us bow down to all those who are constantly guiding and strengthening our inner chamber.

Without Guru this spiritual journey might not be possible, but the moment we encounter our inner chamber, we can see the real Guru within. Then we do not need any external Guru, we can find the very essence constantly flowing within and making us always take the right path. They say that, no matter how big we become, mother remains mother, similarly, Guru remains Guru for every devotee. This is a wonderful journey and we all need to understand the importance of having the right Guru in our life. Therefore let there be a very special and permanent place for Guru in our inner chamber. Please join both the hands to respect our revered Gurus. Please open the inner chamber and invoke the Guru within to experience the divinity. We all are blessed because we have got this human birth. Please make sure that this very life is dedicated to the noble cause which eventually will open our inner chamber and will give the insight of Guru.

Attributes!

We are divine beings in human form with limitations of body and mind. What is perishable is perishable. Awakening, kundalini, realization and procreation are different elements related to the body and mind. They say that Devaraha Baba from Himalayas carried this body more than 250 years, but eventually he had to drop it. Sage Vyasa was a married person and had a child. Janaka was a king who exhibited divine qualities and made everybody happy. Yet what they have demonstrated and produced had a unique flavor. Therefore the age, marriage or any other type of attribute is neither a criteria nor a hurdle while treading the spiritual path.

It is all in the heart. Therefore let us find out the best method to know our inner chamber and with the help of Guru march towards divinity. We, the universal family of Tapovan wish you all a very special spiritual life on the occasion of GURU POURNIMA.

- *Swami Nachiketananda*

Guru and Salvation

Ananta Samsara Samudra Tara

Naukayitabhyam Guru Bhaktidabhyam

Vairagya Samrajyada Poojanabhyam

Namo Namah Shri Guru Padukabhyam

Meaning: I again and again prostrate to those holy **Padukas** of my reverential **Guru**, which serve as the boat to help cross this endless ocean of Samsara, which endow us with devotion unto our Gurudev and with whose worship we are blessed with the dominion of renunciation.

This Sloka from Guru Paduka Stotram glorifies **Padukas** of **Guru**. This Stotram conveys divine qualities of a Guru and beyond all the qualities it speaks of the power that his Padukas have. Here 'Padukas' means not the mere wooden chappals, but they signify the path of the Guru on which he walks and attains salvation.

Guru is considered as a realized soul, who has the experience of profound truth, or the ultimate reality. In our shastras Guru is considered to be an authority higher than the God. It is understood through Sant Kabira's Doha. He says that if God and Guru stand together, first he would offer salutations to his Guru, because Guru led Sant Kabira to experience that ultimate reality of life and the universe. Guru is the one who spends his precious time and shows us the real abode of the self.

In our Vedas and shastras also Guru is considered as a living form of God. We have some true and live examples from our society.

Namadev was a great bhakta of Lord Vittala. At the age of 5 years, he had a Darshan of Lord Vittala. From a very young age he started talking and playing with Lord Vittala. After few years, Lord Vittala orders Namadev to go to a Sannyasin(Guru) to learn higher spiritual disciplines.

You might get a doubt that after having Lord Vittala in Namadev's life is it necessary to go to any other person to learn higher spiritual disciplines. Yes it is necessary. It is not difficult to

have Darshan of your beloved God in your life. But just by having Darshan of Lord the purpose of human birth is not fulfilled. When you discover your true nature or divinity, when you find your true abode, then your purpose of Human birth is fulfilled. It is only possible when the ignorance of self is dispelled. Your mother gives you birth but Guru gives you life. The birth without a meaningful life doesn't have any value and will not fulfill the purpose of human birth. So Guru is the one who dispels avidya or ignorance and takes you on the path of Jnana. That is the reason Panduranga asked Namadev to go to the Sannyasin, who was a realized sage and who helped him attain the highest Spiritual state of Liberation. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa also used to talk with Ma Kali; and was initiated into many spiritual disciplines. Totapuri by giving Him sadhana asks Him to go beyond Ma kali and makes Him realize the ultimate spiritual reality.

Being a Jagath Guru even Lord Krishna had sage Sandeepani as a Guru in His life. It is the same with Lord Rama also who had Vasishta as His Guru. So Guru plays a great role in a Shishya's life. He tries to remove the layers of ignorance created by the disciples from many Janmas. He is the luckiest and purest soul on the earth who has a True Guru in his life. In today's society, it is easy to find many Gurus but it is very rare to find a True Guru in one's life. It is the same with the disciple also. In today's society it is hard to find a Shishya like Nachiketa who has thirst for supreme knowledge. In this Kali Yuga you may feel that it is difficult to find a True Guru. I say it is not difficult. In this world nobody wants to renounce the true happiness. But how many will work hard to achieve that happiness? Many people have desire to experience that ultimate reality. Just having desire will not help you to experience the truth. You need to have a burning desire, your every part of the body should have a greater and higher intensity to realize the truth. It is up to a Shishya or disciple to have a burning desire to know the true abode of the self. Then whatever the Yuga might be, certainly a Guru will come to you to remove the layers of ignorance and to show the path of light. So try to become a true Shishya. Guru will definitely make you cross the ocean of Samsara. So let us pay our homage to that Guru who is ever pure, with full of divinity and knowledge.

- *Swami Shivanandamayi*

*Your
mother
gives
you
birth
but
Guru
gives
you
life!*

- Swami Shivanandamayi

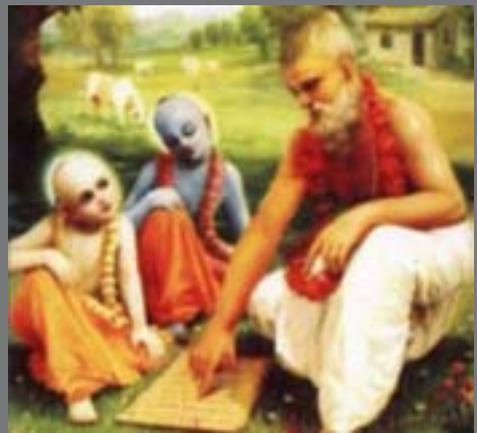
The Origin of 'GURU BRAHMA...'

The commonly recited sloka that has eternally become associated with paying respects to Guru, '*Guru Brahma Gurur Vishnu...*' is an excerpt from the '*Guru Gita*' as given in the Uttarakhand section of '*Skanda Purana*'. The *Guru Gita* is a Hindu scripture of 216 verses, authored by the sage, Vyasa. It is a part of the larger *Skanda Purana* the largest Mahapurana devoted mainly to the life and deeds of Kartikeya (also called Skanda or Murugan). It describes a conversation between the Hindu God, Lord Shiva and his wife, the Hindu Goddess Parvati, in which she asks him to teach her about the Guru. Shiva answers her by describing the Guru principle, the proper ways of worshiping the Guru and the methods and benefits of repeating the *Guru Gita*.

Jagadguru Adi Shankara begins his Gurustotram with this Sanskrit Sloka, that has now become a widely sung Bhajan:

Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu,
Guru Deva Maheshwara
Guru Sakshath Parambrahma,
Tasmai Shri Gurave Namaha!

(Guru is the creator Brahma, Guru is the preserver Vishnu, Guru is the destroyer Shiva. Guru is directly the supreme spirit — I offer my salutations to this Guru.)



Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara



Sri Ramakrishna says that the knowledge of a worldly person, the knowledge of a devotee and the Knowledge of an Incarnation are by no means of the same degree. The knowledge of a worldly person is like a lamp, the knowledge of a devotee is like the moon and the Knowledge of an Incarnation is like the sun. Sri Ramakrishna gives a very interesting example to elucidate this point.

A rich man said to his servant; "take this diamond to the market and let me know how different people price it. Take it, first of all, to the egg plant seller." The servant took the diamond to the eggplant seller. He examined, turning it over in the palm of his hand and said, "Brother, I can give you nine seers of egg-plants for it." "Friend," said the servant, "a little more. Say, 10 seers." The egg plant seller replied "no, I have already quoted above the market price. You may give it to me if the price suits you. The servant laughed. He went back to the master and said "Sir, he could give me only nine seers of egg-plants and not one more. He said he has offered more than the market price." The master smiled and said, "Now take it to the cloth dealer. The other man deals only in egg-plants. What does he know about a diamond? Cloth dealer has a little more capital. Let us see how much he offers for it." The servant went to the cloth dealer and said "will you buy this, how much will you pay for it?" The merchant said "yes this is a good thing; I can make a nice ornament out of it. I will give you Rs.900 for it." "Brother," said the servant, "offer a little more, I will sell it to you. Give me at least 1000 rupees." The cloth dealer said, "Friend, don't press me for more. I offered more than the market price." Laughing the servant returned to the master and said, "He wouldn't give me a rupee more than Rs.900. He too said he had

quoted above the market price." The master said with a laugh, "Now take it to a jeweller. Let us see what he has to say." The jeweller glanced at the diamond and said at once, "I will give you one hundred thousand rupees for it." One offers a price for an article according to one's capital.

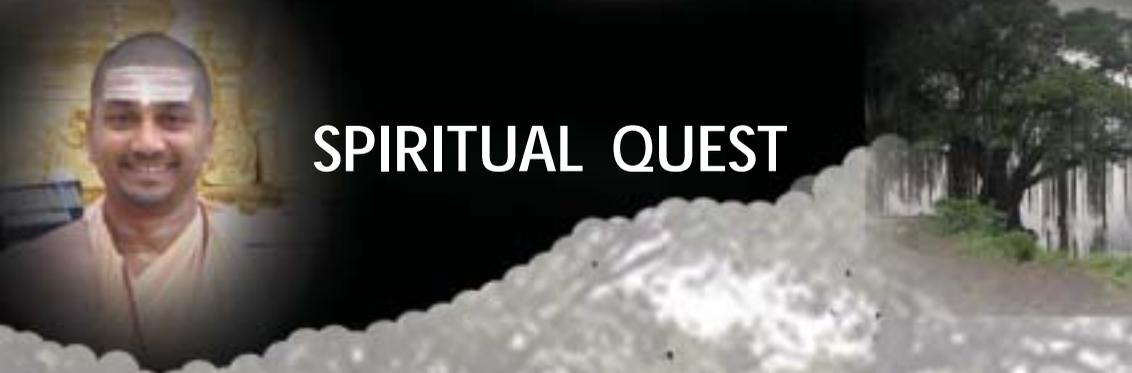
Worldly people talk about God only from hearsay. They are like a frog living in a well, who has never seen the outside world. He knows only his well; so he will not believe that there is such a thing as the world. Likewise, people talk so much about the world because they have not known the joy of God. They live within the four walls of their house and the roof is sealed with Lust and Gold. But Incarnations of God belong to class of Iswarakotis. They roam about in the open spaces. They are never imprisoned in the world, never entangled by it. Their ego is not the "thick ego" of worldly people which is being imprisoned within four walls. The man inside them cannot see anything outside. The ego of the incarnations and other Iswarakotis is the 'thin ego' through it they have an uninterrupted vision of God. That is to say, though they have a human body, they are always united with God.

How can we attain such knowledge? He tells us - First, the company of holy men. That awakens sraddha, faith in God. Then comes nishta, single-minded devotion to the Ideal. In that stage the devotee does not like to hear anything but talk about God. He performs only those acts that please God. After Nishta comes bhakti, devotion to God, then comes bhava. Next mahabhava, then prema and last of all the attainment of God Himself.

Let us take a vow this Guru Purnima to break open the walls of ignorance and other senses that imprison us and experience God in this life itself. Go forward!

-Compiled by Geetha K.

If you must be mad, be it not for the things of the world. Be mad with the love of God. - Ramakrishna



SPIRITUAL QUEST

How should one select a Guru? What are the qualifications of a Guru?

Ans: Dear Jignyasu, there is no such thing as selection or rejection in spiritual field. Guru cannot be selected or rejected. Guru is already there within and without. If we have the strong desire to lead a spiritual life, then we do not need to find a Guru. By seeing our longing, external Guru will come or Internal Guru will spring forth and shape our lives.

'Guru' is made up of two letters i.e. 'Gu' and 'Ru'. 'Gu' means darkness and 'Ru' means the one who removes. Therefore Guru means the one who removes darkness or one who directs us from within. Before trying to understand who Guru is or what his qualifications are, we need to know what ignorance is. Ignorance is, not knowing the 'Self' or in simple words 'forgotten identity.' Now what does this Guru do? He knows "We are what we are" and by using different methods he just tries to remind us that, "We are that, what we are." That's it!

There are two different Gurus. One is external Guru and it could be anything from living to non-living beings and the other one is internal Guru i.e. 'Self' or you 'yourself'. When it comes to external Guru we really need to be cautious before getting associated with living beings, whereas we do not need to take any care when we want to get associated with non-living beings, but need extreme dedication and unflinching faith in whatever we are doing. In fact external world brings us closer to self.

It is like a mirror in which we can see ourselves. Though it is a mere reflection of our own 'Self', we can get at least a glimpse of it. And who knows sometimes we may experience that hidden energy which is the real cause of everything. Dattatreya had 24 Gurus from external world and He achieved in His life what many people could not achieve even though they lived with God.

If we are trying to seek a human being as a Guru then we must look out for a few things. We must know that miracles or healings or siddhis or supernatural powers are nothing but temporary powers. And one who is trying to use them for one's personal gain or misusing and trying to exhibit are not real Gurus. Paramhansa Ramakrishna had a natural tendency to enter into Samadhi but He never tried to exhibit it. Whatever He wanted to do to the world He did silently. True love and compassion for all, without discrimination is the true qualification of any Guru.

Life is life wherever we are. But what matters is how we are leading that life. Gurus are for others, others are not for Gurus. Real Guru leads a simple life and vanishes from the world without getting noticed. Please understand that every action is designed at the spiritual level and echoed only at gross or physical level. We do not need extra efforts to search without but need sincere efforts to search within.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

- Swami Nachiketananda

They say that the one who knows inner chamber is true Guru and such Souls will never misguide anybody or cheat others.



The Movie Called Life!

Once Lord Yama asked Yudishthir, "What is the most amazing thing in the world?" to which he replied, "Everyday, we see hundreds of people dying and suffering. Yet, we refuse to believe that it could happen to us. And we continue to live our lives foolishly and recklessly, believing that we are going to live forever. That is the most amazing thing in the world." Indeed, Yudishthir was the wisest person of his time.

Life is beautiful. But where does the beauty of this life lie? In material happiness? In money? Fame? Or Power? I think, in none of the above. The most beautiful part of life is that it never comes back. It is short, it is unexpected and it is unpredictable.

Just imagine if you had your whole life in front of you like a book or a very long movie. You could know about every minute, every hour, every single day of your life before it happened. Then, would you really enjoy it? I don't think so. You would go through it like a boring routine, feeling none of the joy as you do now, in living with a holy curiosity.

Don't you enjoy it when halfway through summer, there is a sudden downpour of rain and the smell of wet mud seeps in through your window? Don't you love it when an old friend of yours suddenly calls you up one boring afternoon and you chat for hours about 'those good old days'? Don't you feel like bursting with happiness when your family gives you a surprise on your birthday and you open that wrapping paper on the gift not knowing what to expect?

Come to think of it, would you really like to know all of this before it happened?

On the other hand, there are those who wish they were immortal. Some wish they had a



very, very long life. Really? Are you sure? Would you really like to live for 800 hundred years until you become a walking-talking vegetable, with creaking bones and aching muscles?

Life moves on in different phases- infancy, childhood, youth, adulthood and old age. But the two most important phases that no one really thinks of are Birth and Death. They are the most vital for maintaining the balance of nature. And they are deeply interlinked.

While being born, the first thing a baby does is cry out loud. Naturally! It is being pushed out of the comfortable home it has been living on for the past nine months into the unknown world. Wouldn't you cry too? In a way, it is Death. And when you die, you transcend life and go into another realm. It is a new birth. And it is much grander than life itself. Our souls know it.

Birth and Death signify change. They remove the old and bring in the new. If you were to live forever, none of this would have happened.

So stop wishing you could live forever. Stop wishing you could turn back time and live 'that day' once more. Stop losing yourself in the past that is history, and in the future that is still a mystery. The present is a Gift. Enjoy it. It lasts only for a moment. And it's never coming back.

Take risks, push yourself harder, make every moment bigger, have the courage to dream about the impossible, knowing that if you can *think* it could happen, you can also *make* it happen.

Don't forget that one day, just before you close your eyes for the last time, your whole life is going to play in front of you, moment by moment. Make sure its worth watching!

- Avinash Agarwal



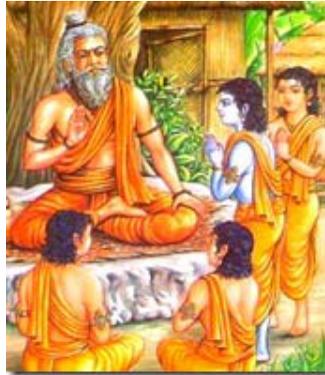
Rama - Vasishtha



According to the Vedas, the universe is constantly being created and destroyed and each creation is divided into four Yugas or time periods; Satya yuga, Treta yuga, Dwapara Yuga and the Kali Yuga, which we are currently in. God comes to earth in many different forms according to time, place and circumstance. The reasons for the Lord's advent were many and they differ slightly for each creation.

In the Treta Yuga, the Lord came in the form of a brave and pious prince named Rama, born as the eldest son of Maharaja Dasaratha of Ayodhya. Though the Lord appeared as his son, the father failed to recognize His greatness, though in the same palace, sages Vishwamitra and Vasishtha knew the divine aspect of Sri Rama. This is spelt out in sage Vishwamitra's address to Dasaratha when he was reluctant to part with Rama despite his earlier promise.

Vasishtha is one of the Saptarshis (seven sages) and is said to be the manasaputra of Lord Brahma, the creator. He was the chief priest of the line of kings claiming their descent from the Sun God (Surya-vamsha), the most famous in that line being King Sri Rama- an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Once when Rama was still a prince, He returns from touring the country and becomes disillusioned after experiencing the apparent reality of the world. This worries His father, king Dasaratha. The king expresses his concern to his Guru, Sage Vasishtha, upon his arrival. The Guru consoles the king by telling him that Rama's vairagya is a sign that the prince is now ready for spiritual enlightenment. He says that Rama has begun understanding profound spiritual truths, which is the cause of His confusion and He just needs confirmation.



The sage asks the king to summon Rama. Then in the court of king Dasaratha, the sage begins the discourse to Rama which lasts for several days and as his voice echoed, kings, ministers and citizens sat motionless and began to ponder over his words. These wonderful discourses of sage Vasishtha showered nectar in the hearts of all listeners. The answer to Rama's questions forms the entire scripture that is YOGA VASISHTA- a unique and an extremely profound discourse that provides innumerable insights and secrets to the inner world of consciousness and covers all the topics that relate to the spiritual study of the seeker.

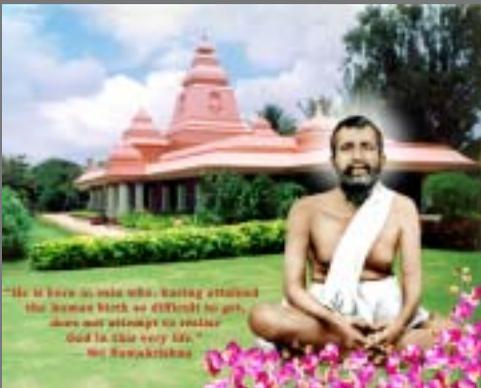
Lord Rama, who is worshipped as God, fulfilled the required discipline Himself; He surrendered before Guru Vasishtha so that the world may also understand how to fulfill the required discipline. He knocked at the door of Guru Vasishtha to get an answer to His query. "What is my true identity?" In other words, He surrendered at the feet of His Guru and made the attainment which illumined His life. On the other hand a worldly man feels much sure and proud of his own intellect and accomplishments.

Similarly there are many other aspects of Lord Rama's life that inspire us. He gave the same love and respect to Kaikeyi and Mandhara as He gave to His mother Kausalya though they caused much hardship and problems in His life! We should also imbibe the same tendencies and similar large heartedness and forgiveness. Let us also surrender and bow down to our Gurus to attain Truth. Let us work towards finishing the game- the journey of the soul back to its source, the reunion of God and devotee, the merger of the ocean and the rivers.



All religions leads to same divinity!

God is our inner guide!



"He is born in one who, having attained
the human birth so difficult to get,
does not attempt to realize
God in this very life."
— Sri Narayana

Yuvanjali



The disciple must have faith in the Guru (teacher). The relationship with the teacher is greatest in life. My dearest and nearest relative in my life is my guru, my mother; then my father. My first reverence is to the guru. If my father says, "Do this," and my guru says, "Do not do this", I do not do it. The guru frees my soul. The father and mother give me this body; but the guru gives me rebirth in the soul. (8:112)

The only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through the student's eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. (4:183)

The guru must teach me and lead me into light, make me a link in that chain of which he himself is a link. The man in the street cannot claim to be a guru. The guru must be a man who has known, has actually realized the divine truth, has perceived himself as the spirit. A mere talker cannot be the guru.

How are we to know a teacher then? In the first place, the sun requires no torch to make it visible. We do not light a candle to see the sun. When the sun rises, we instinctively become aware of its rising; and when a teacher of men comes to help us, the soul will instinctively know it has found the truth. Truth stands on its own evidences; it does not require any other testimony to attest it; it is self-effulgent. It penetrates into the inmost recesses of our nature, and the whole universe stands up and says, "This is truth." (4:23-24)

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

Life – An endless journey



Life takes unexpected turns every moment and we often make the mistake of assuming every little turn to be an obstacle or the end of life. In fact, every turn leads to a new walk and every bend makes the journey even more beautiful. One should have utmost faith in oneself and the eternal master who is always within oneself. We give up in times of difficulties and join our hands to praise thee, when we are happy, we don't remember the one who helped us overcome the obstacles.

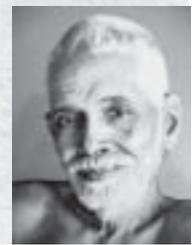
Once a blacksmith found a bog of raw iron at the garbage bin, he brought it home, cleaned it and thought of making fine sword of the metal. He hit it hard, heated it on big flame and then worked on it for several days to get the perfect shape he desired to. All this while, the piece of iron that was being subjected to all this misery thought, "I wish I was left to my misery at the garbage bin myself, why did he have to pick me from there to hit me hard and make it all the more miserable for me? Wish all this never happened."

Meanwhile, came there a prince to see the new sword which was being made for his highness. He took the sword in his hand and with great pride, as he stood in front of the mirror, the iron which was made a sword, couldn't believe its eyes. It was amazed to see the fineness brought in to it by the blacksmith. It forgot all the pain and hardship it went through to take this form. It thanked the blacksmith hearts of heart for making it look so beautiful and so fine. Being held by the prince was an honor, such a great feeling that it wished to take back all the curses it had once given to the blacksmith for having subjected to so many difficulties.

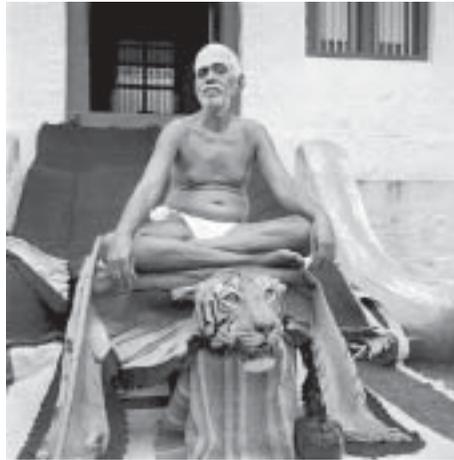
Similarly, God subjects each of us to difficulties to make us even better and so wonderful that we take pride to see ourselves grow and inspire the community. God always gives us surprises to make it interesting. Imagine a life without surprises! It would be as bland as porridge would be without sugar. Enjoy every walk of the journey which has several bends but no end.

- Ramya Manasa

THE SAINT OF SILENCE



'Who am I?' is the question that resonates in our ears as we enter Ramanashram, situated at the foothill of Arunachala, to the west of the pilgrimage town of Tiruvannamalai. No wonder, as the abode of Ramana Bhagavan reflects His silent teachings. The dancing peacocks and the monkeys seem to greet us with the same question. We find people who have never seen Bhagavan physically, never heard His voice or listened to His upadesa, sit in the Old Hall or the Samadhi Hall, oblivious of themselves, often shedding tears and going round the hall as if impelled by some unseen force. What gives these people their experiences? As Bhagavan always said, "Is this body Bhagavan?" When somebody expressed sadness at having to go back home from the



Ashram, Bhagavan said, "What am I to do? You say that this body is Bhagavan, I say that it is not. Now, if you insist, what am I to do?" To others, He would say, "Look! He says he is going to a place where I am not." The new devotees of Bhagavan are proof of all He said. Even today just one glance at His picture makes us speechless for a moment. Even while reading His books our eyes close involuntarily drawing us within.

Bhagavan conveyed everything in silence. Once a sannyasi came and stayed in the Ashram for three weeks. On the last day he came near Bhagavan and said, "Swami, I am satisfied in every way with my stay in the Ashram. Now I pray, fill my heart." Bhagavan got up and held the sannyasi's hands. They stood thus for a long time. Then the sannyasi prostrated before Bhagavan and said: "Now I am blessed." With that he departed. Thus would Bhagavan give

enlightenment with a word, a look, a touch or in deep silence.

On a Shivaratri day after the evening worship at the Mother's shrine was over, the devotees had their dinner with Sri Bhagavan and later sat at His feet. At 8 pm, one of the sadhus stood up, did pranam and with folded hands prayed:

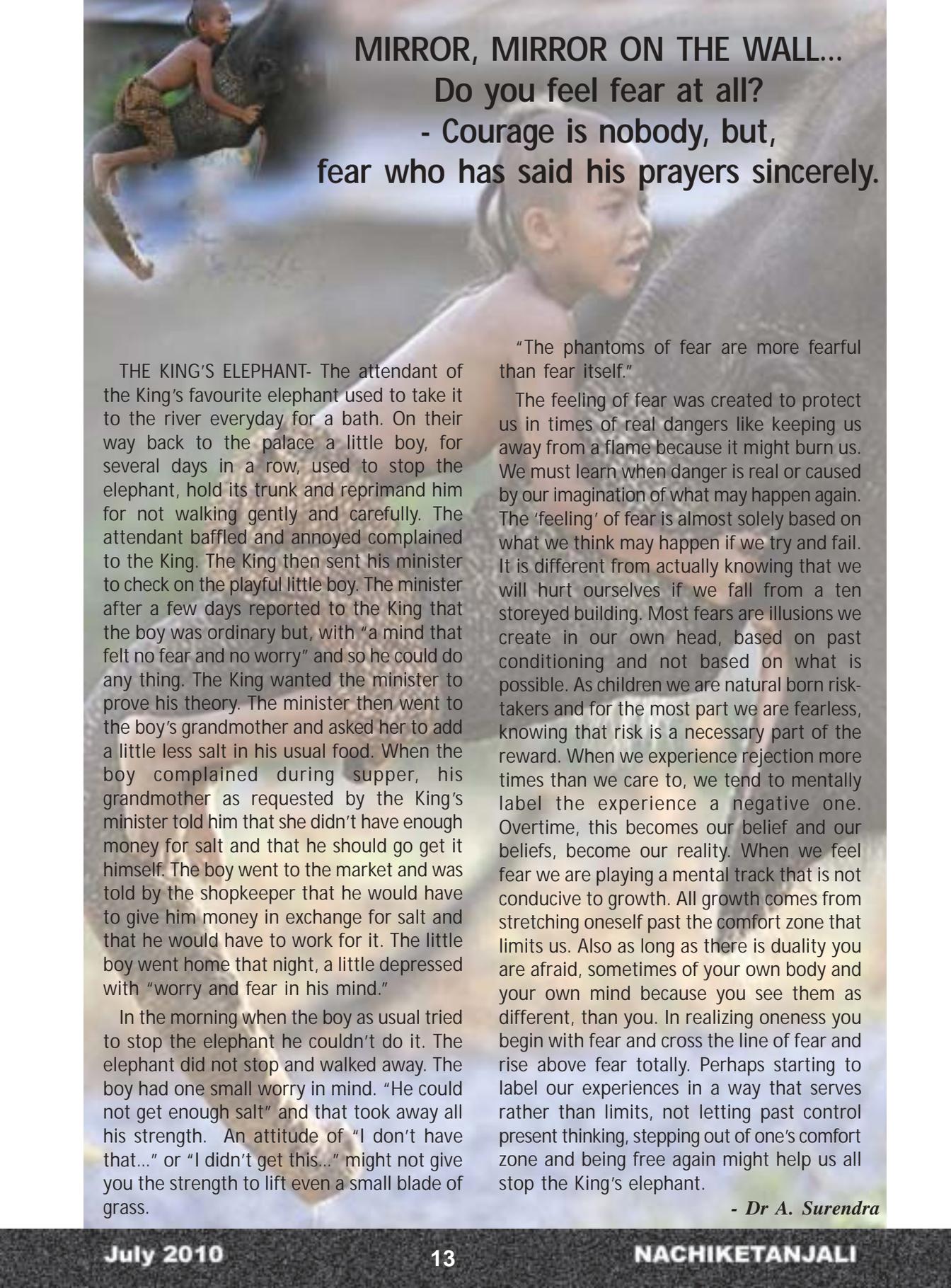
"Today is Shivaratri. We should be highly blessed by Sri Bhagavan expounding to us the meaning of the Hymn of Dakshinamurthy. Says Bhagavan, "Yes, sit down." The sadhu sat and all eagerly looked at Sri Bhagavan and Bhagavan looked at them. No words, no movement and all was stillness. He sat still and all sat still, waiting. The clock went on striking, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, one, two and three. Sri Bhagavan sat and they sat. Stillness,

calmness, motionless- not conscious of the body, of space or time. Thus eight hours passed in Peace, in Silence, in Being, as it is. Thus was the Divine Reality taught through the Speech of Silence by Bhagavan Sri Ramana-Dakshinamurthy.

At the stroke of 4 am Sri Bhagavan quietly said: "And now, have you known the essence of the Dakshinamurthy hymn?" All the devotees stood and made pranam to the holy form of the Guru in the ecstasy of their Being. This method of teaching has a long tradition in India, its most famous exponent being Dakshinamurthy, a manifestation of Shiva who brought four learned sages to an experience of the Self through the power of His silence.

Let us receive this flow of power from the silent Guru by focusing our attention on the Self.

Resourced from devotees experiences

A young boy is riding an elephant in a natural setting. The boy is sitting on the elephant's back, holding onto its trunk. The elephant is walking towards the right. The background is a blurred natural landscape.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL...

Do you feel fear at all?
- Courage is nobody, but,
fear who has said his prayers sincerely.

THE KING'S ELEPHANT- The attendant of the King's favourite elephant used to take it to the river everyday for a bath. On their way back to the palace a little boy, for several days in a row, used to stop the elephant, hold its trunk and reprimand him for not walking gently and carefully. The attendant baffled and annoyed complained to the King. The King then sent his minister to check on the playful little boy. The minister after a few days reported to the King that the boy was ordinary but, with "a mind that felt no fear and no worry" and so he could do any thing. The King wanted the minister to prove his theory. The minister then went to the boy's grandmother and asked her to add a little less salt in his usual food. When the boy complained during supper, his grandmother as requested by the King's minister told him that she didn't have enough money for salt and that he should go get it himself. The boy went to the market and was told by the shopkeeper that he would have to give him money in exchange for salt and that he would have to work for it. The little boy went home that night, a little depressed with "worry and fear in his mind."

In the morning when the boy as usual tried to stop the elephant he couldn't do it. The elephant did not stop and walked away. The boy had one small worry in mind. "He could not get enough salt" and that took away all his strength. An attitude of "I don't have that..." or "I didn't get this..." might not give you the strength to lift even a small blade of grass.

"The phantoms of fear are more fearful than fear itself."

The feeling of fear was created to protect us in times of real dangers like keeping us away from a flame because it might burn us. We must learn when danger is real or caused by our imagination of what may happen again. The 'feeling' of fear is almost solely based on what we think may happen if we try and fail. It is different from actually knowing that we will hurt ourselves if we fall from a ten storeyed building. Most fears are illusions we create in our own head, based on past conditioning and not based on what is possible. As children we are natural born risk-takers and for the most part we are fearless, knowing that risk is a necessary part of the reward. When we experience rejection more times than we care to, we tend to mentally label the experience a negative one. Overtime, this becomes our belief and our beliefs, become our reality. When we feel fear we are playing a mental track that is not conducive to growth. All growth comes from stretching oneself past the comfort zone that limits us. Also as long as there is duality you are afraid, sometimes of your own body and your own mind because you see them as different, than you. In realizing oneness you begin with fear and cross the line of fear and rise above fear totally. Perhaps starting to label our experiences in a way that serves rather than limits, not letting past control present thinking, stepping out of one's comfort zone and being free again might help us all stop the King's elephant.

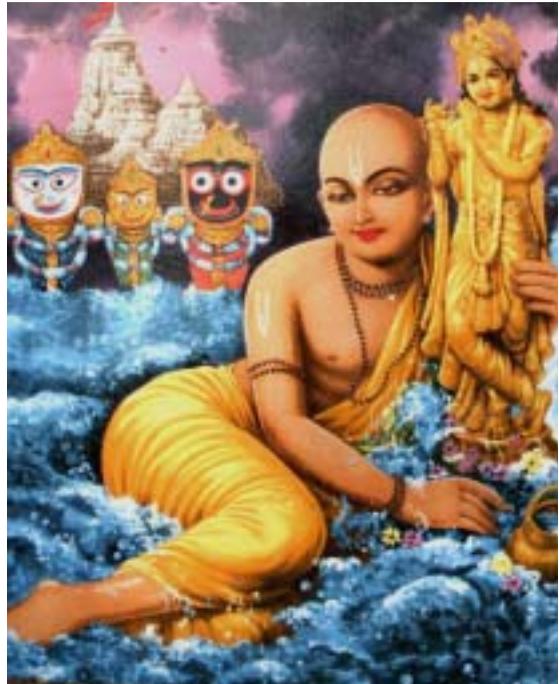
- Dr A. Surendra

GURU-DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP

Man, the moment he is born is entangled in material possessions. As the child grows he becomes a youth, is enamored by the women around him and tries to accrue wealth. As time passes he accrues wealth and spends day and night in search of material possessions. Suddenly, he finds one day that old age has dawned on him. When he looks back he has walked much distance already. The earthly adventure that began as an infant soul, leads to many experiences until a time comes when he begins the search for truth. When his consciousness evolves to this point, the real inquiry begins and he begins to ask himself: What is life? What am I and whence have I come? Once an earnest sense of inquiry begins in the individual, the lord responds and the anguished soul is drawn to an enlightened teacher- a true guru and as the yearning becomes intense his understanding unfolds and spiritual growth is quickened.

There is no true comparison to the true guru. The Guru is transcendental and his compassion knows no bounds. He takes the chela by his hand, perfects him and introduces him to God. The Guru-Disciple relationship encompasses all disciplines and principles of the right action which the disciple must follow to prepare himself to know God.

Loyalty is the highest spiritual law. In the modern world we find no loyalty between a father and a child, employer and his employee or among friends. Therefore this is often misunderstood. The chela must be one pointedly loyal to the Guru and his teachings. He shall not absorb different ideas and dilute his consciousness. He must pay all his attention, affection and effort in attaining the spiritual goal. In brief, the chela must follow the Guru like a lamb.



*Build up your character and
manifest your Real Nature!* - Swami Vivekananda

The chela must be obedient and surrender himself to the Guru. In this way, he will overcome ego and the delusion. He has to tune himself to the divine will of Guru which breaks his limiting ego consciousness. This is possible only by following the Guru's instructions sincerely. By following the Sadhana prescribed by the Guru, the disciple attains freedom from the world of dualities.

The chela must respect the Guru. By showing reverence to the Guru, one becomes receptive to God's blessings. Through receptivity one develops discrimination. He understands the good and bad. Then the ego is shattered and the chela becomes humble. When there is humility the Divine grace flows.

One should develop right attitude towards Guru. There was a saint who was throwing stones at his disciples in anger. Those disciples who picked up the stones found them to be gold nuggets and for others they remained stones. This story illustrates the point that whatever duty is assigned by Guru to the chela, whether the duty is painful or disagreeable, if it is done with right attitude, then it becomes a blessing.

All moments with the Guru whether meditating or listening to his teachings, playing, eating are for only one purpose: Liberation. Therefore the chela has to tune his mind to the Guru with greatest devotion of the heart so that the mind clogged with ignorance is cleared and the pure love, devotion of the soul flows towards God, unobstructed.

Thus Guru holds an indispensable position in our lives. Without a Guru a person treads towards nowhere. That is why Paramahansa Yogananda in his "Autobiography of a Yogi" began the book with these lines- "the characteristic features of Indian Culture have long been a search for ultimate verities and the concomitant disciple-Guru relationship." Kabir praised the Guru in his lines - "The Guru is beyond words and great is the fortune of the disciple." In the words of the poet even the lord says, bow to the Guru first and then to him afterwards.

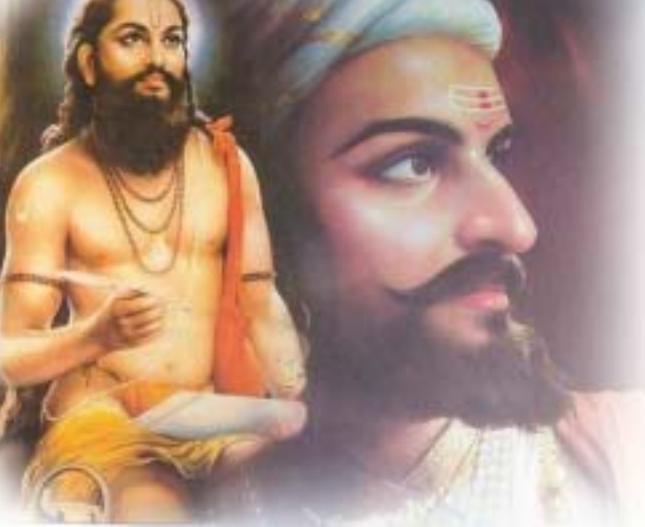
"Guru Govind dono khade kake lagoo pai
Balhari Guru aapane Gobind deao batai."

-By Sridhar



*Man is
made
by the
company
he
keeps!*

The All-powerful



One fine morning Chatrapati Shivaji, looking out from his terrace caught the sight of his Gurudev Ramdas begging for alms in the streets of his kingdom. Shivaji found it hard to comprehend why his Guru should beg when the entire kingdom has been placed at His disposal. To convey his ideas and concerns to his Guru, Shivaji presented a written statement to his Gurudev making the whole kingdom a gift to Him at the same time soliciting His blessings. Gurudev Samarth Ramdas accepted the gift with a smile and asked Shivaji what he was planning to do with himself now that he let go his kingdom. Shivaji prostrated himself before Guru Ramdas and sought His permission to serve Him rest of his life. Then Ramdas said, "Take this bowl and let us go on our round." Thus the royal disciple surrendered his kingdom and self with sheer shraddha to his Gurudev and the historical pair went round Satara begging. After collecting alms they would return to the river, Guru would prepare a simple meal and Shivaji would partake of what was left after Gurudev's meal. No wonder, Samarth Ramdas rightfully acknowledged Shivaji Maharaj as "Shriman Yogi," or a person achieving desires with detachment. After this continued for a few days, Guru Ramdas knew it was the right time to impart the highest ideal He was waiting to. Ramdas asked Shivaji to rule the kingdom but under His (Guru's) name and to take the Gerua chaddar (ochre cloth) for his banner and defend its honor with his life. He asked him to think that the kingdom did not belong to himself but treat it as a trust to be ruled justly and well



before God. Accordingly, Shivaji placed the sandals of his Guru on the throne and acted as regent of the kingdom under the orders and guidance of his Guru and adopted as ensign the flag of orange colour. His kingdom was known as "Hindavi Swarajya" (Sovereign Hindu State) rather than a kingdom under his own name.

The spiritual Guru and guide of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Samartha Ramdas was born at Jamb in Marathawada in 1608. It is said that obeying divine orders of Sri Rama, Ramdas went in search of Shivaji to the banks of the Krishna to help in his cause. It was at the place called Singanvadi that Shivaji became the disciple of Ramdas. Samarth Ramdas, stood behind Shivaji in his quest as his philosophical guide. Samarth Ramdas was different from other saints that in addition to worship of Ram (Ideal) and Maruti (Strength), emphasized on the importance of the strength of the individual, society and self-governance by defeating the foreign enemy. The teachings and writings of Samarth Ramdas were based on pragmatism and consisted of guiding principles for living life with fulfillment, yet being responsible to family and society. Practicing His teachings helped Shivaji establish the "Hindu Kingdom" amidst reigning tyranny of Aurangazeb and change the psyche of the society of medieval India. The same teachings can help today's society from the clutches of individualism and dog-eat-dog ethics. His legacy to common man was his instruction to chant the 13 Devnagari-letter mantra "Shree Ram Jay Ram Jaya Jaya Ram" which He did until His last breath in 1682 at Sajjangad before merging with Lord Rama.

Compiled by Annapurna R.

SHIRDI SAI BABA



The saga of Sai baba of Shirdi started in the middle of the last century when, as a boy of about 16 years of age, He first appeared in a sleepy little village, Shirdi, in the interiors of Maharashtra. For the next 60 years, He devoted His life for the upliftment of the poor and suffering. His origin, religion and early life are shrouded in mystery and though He is believed to be an incarnation of Lord Shiva, His teachings transcended all religions and beliefs.

He lived as a pauper having distributed all that He received among the needy and the poor, yet remained calm, undisturbed, unaltered and therein is the Saint's spiritual glory. Soon people realized that this Baba was no ordinary person but a person with extraordinary powers. Baba preached His principle of love and faith in humanity to all His disciples. He always felt anguished over the fact that all those who came to Him were more for their own personal problems and not for attaining the ultimate goal of reaching God which He felt could be attained only by true servicing of humanity.

Sai baba was unique, in that, He lived His message through the Essence of His Being. His life and relationship with the common man was His teaching. The immense energy that was manifest in the body of Sai was moving and is still moving in a mysterious way, creating and recreating itself everywhere, beyond the comprehension of time and space. His most concise message for one and all alike was "WHY FEAR WHEN I AM HERE." To take refuge in Sai, is to enter into a journey to reach the Divine Oasis of Love and drink deep from the Fountain of Life, the source of all Spiritual Energy.

He set in motion a wave of spirituality, which is now spreading all over the globe. By first conferring temporal benefits, He drew unto Himself countless souls caught up in ignorance and opened their eyes to the true meaning of life. The miracles which manifested through Baba were just such as were needed to create

faith in the people and to make His devotees ethically and spiritually better evolved. He did not purposefully perform miracles to show His powers. The very strength of His perfect realization, in its interaction with nature, caused "the miracle" to take place. Thus He drew people from their deluded pursuits after earthly objects of a transitory nature and induced and inspired them to strive for Self-realisation. He

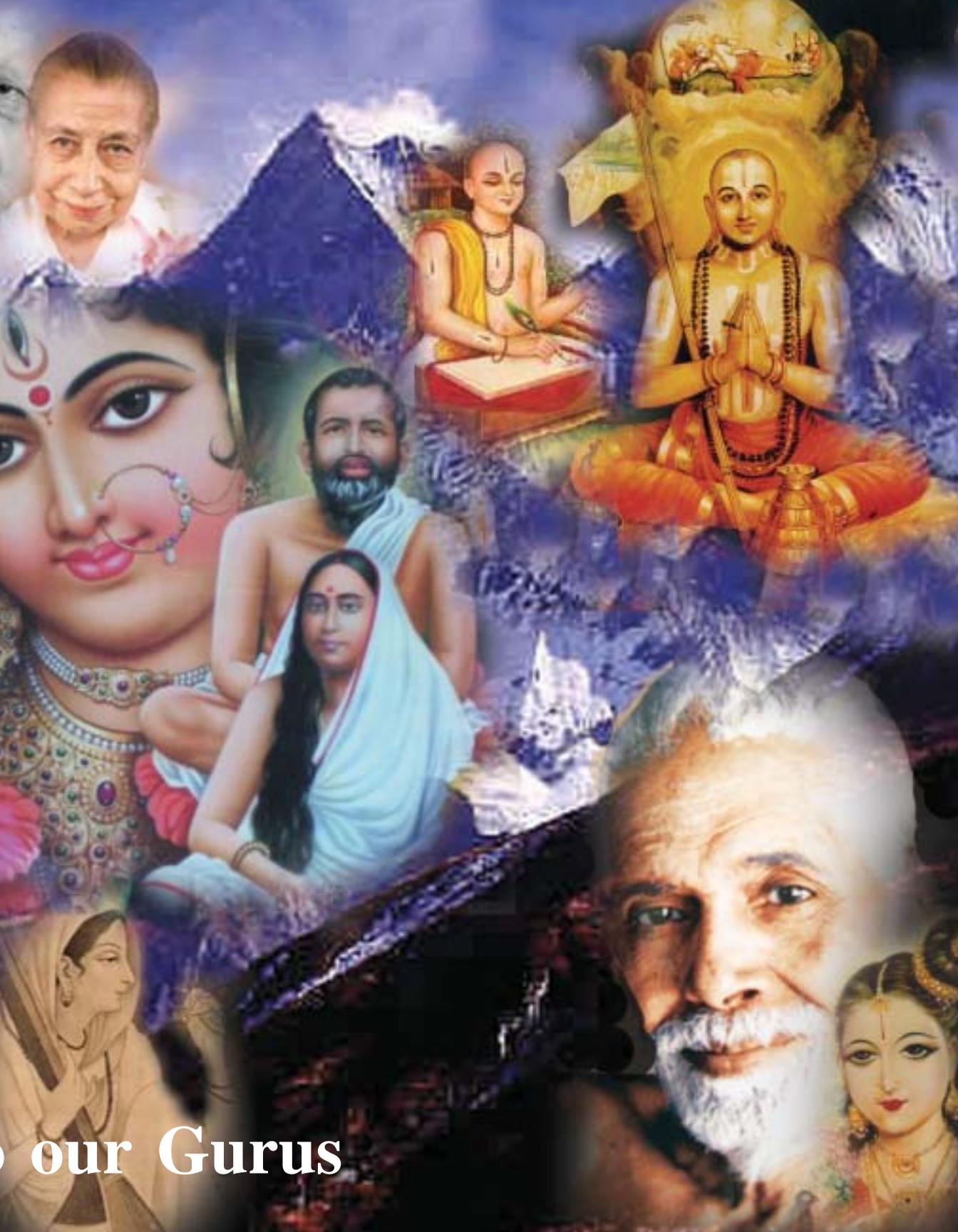
continued this glorious work until the last moment of His human embodiment in Shirdi.

This Omnipresent and Omniscient Sri Sai baba who left His mortal body in 1918, is the living Spiritual force that is drawing people from all walks of life, from all parts of the world, into His fold, today. Baba lived, acted and behaved as only a "God descended on Earth" can. His shrine at Shirdi has been incorporated as one of the holiest places in the world's map of pilgrimage.

Source - Sai Mandir



An Ode to



our Gurus

LIVING WITH GURU



“The Guru is like a companion who leads you by the hand.” - Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

You cannot measure the ocean's depth, like wise you cannot know the ways of Guru's teachings. Their energy works on us in subtle level. Though the clouds shower rain equally everywhere, the water accumulates only in craters while the erect mountains remain dry. Similarly Gurus and Saints do not discriminate. The bestowal of their grace on all is the same but the one with pure intention to learn and grow spiritually are like the craters, able to receive and retain the benefit of his grace. When I was ready with my heart's craters open, Grace started flowing in, in the form of Swami Ranganathananda and Swami Nachiketananda. I am fortunate indeed to have such Gurus in my life.

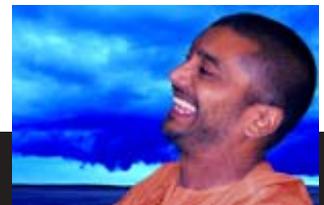
When I met Swami Ranganathananda in 1990, I was a novice in the spiritual field. I knew nothing about spirituality. I was deeply attracted to His talks, filled with messages that stressed on purity, values and service to Humanity. I was amazed to see that He practiced what He preached. He showered His love and blessings equally on intellectuals, the rich and the poor. His door was always open to everybody from the Prime minister to the postman. Even at the age of 95, in spite of His illness, He received people with the same loving smile. I never saw any artificiality in His smile. Everyone felt they were very close to Swamiji. Blessed are those who met Him!

Swami Nachiketananda came into my life in 1997. How can I describe in words the magnitude of the grace I received? He made me walk gracefully on the path laid by my Guru Sri Ranganathananda. He put me through different experiences, some pleasant, some pungent, some humiliating, some elevating till I began to trust and accept and assure I would delve into the

depths of spirituality. Sometimes a look was more than adequate, at other times a word or a smile or a rebuke was sufficient to shake me out of my slumber. I often got deluded by His seemingly human acts. Slowly I realized that His every joke and every smile, every gesture and every word, whether a pat or a rebuke was all intended for one sole purpose-the very mission for which He has assumed a human form-that is, to make us aware of our oneness with the divine.

His way of imparting knowledge is unique in the way it differed from person to person. It is similar to the way a mother cooks food according to her children's taste and power of digestion. Just by observing His total involvement and joy as He cooks, cleans, sings and plays with children, people get inspired and learn many values. He always said and proved that meditation could be done with open eyes too. I have never seen Him show any signs of attachment either towards the organization or people associated with Him. When He noticed or identified a person to be capable of doing some particular work, He immediately designated them the respective job and watched silently like a tortoise would watch its children from far. He always says, “Be ready with your bag to leave any moment.”

Sharing is an inborn quality in Him and once when someone came to Nachiketa Tapovan to donate some money, He spontaneously asked the donor to offer half of the amount to the other person sitting in the room. This person was running a school for the underprivileged in another remote village. Though we were in dire need of the donation, He didn't think twice before making the offer. He often says the purpose of life is to know our true nature. Whatever sadhana we do should express through our daily activities and we should never do business in the name of Spirituality.



I am greatly indebted to these Divine Souls, who have not only shown me but also made me experience the true meaning of Life.

- P Vasundhara Reddy

Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam

The Guru or God resides in our hearts and there is only one seat to offer. It is our choice whether we offer that seat to the Guru or dethrone him and offer it to the world.

Manasa bhajare Guru charanam-

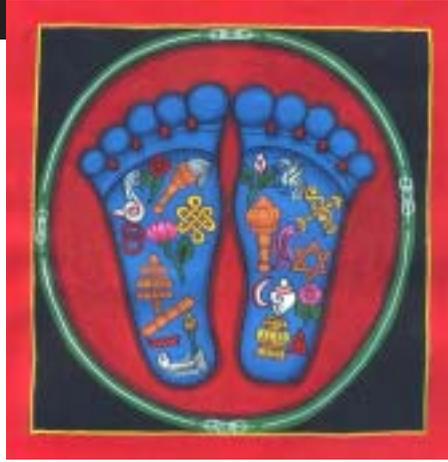
In the heart, turn within and worship the feet of the Guru. Why should we worship the feet alone? The feet of the Lord bear up the entire cosmos! They will take

us across this ocean of mundane existence. They will take us safely to liberation.

First we must be well aware of the fact that we are floundering in Bhavasagara, this agitated flux of birth and death. Then, we should resolve on Tharanam, the crossing of the sea, to safety on the shore. We must accept a guide in this effort; the guide could be the Guru or God Himself. We can choose the Name and Form which most appeal to us. Lastly, we should offer worship to the feet of the Divine guide with all our heart, all our mind and all our strength.

The Bhagavatha Purana speaks of Nava-vidha bhakti, which are in fact nine steps in the devotee's pilgrimage of God realization. It speaks first of SRAVANAM, listening to talks and stories that reveal the glory of the Lord. I can from my own experience assert that sravanam was the first step I had taken to enter the spiritual world. A sense of wonder was aroused by the sravanam. It started as a faint stir, a feeble echo of the call that softly gurgled from the depths within. A voice, a vision, a picture, a book, a dream, a song- all of these awakened me to a dormant hunger for God. Soon the echo grew, reverberating loud and long and the need to know more and more parched my throat.

I began to search for persons and places from whom and from where this insidious thirst could be quenched. I was delighted to find places where people sang the glory of God and eagerly



shared the elation that filled the air. I entered the stage of KIRTANAM- a microcosm of my spiritual journey. Kirtans reverberated in my being and I was privileged to live a life where the Lord always dwelt in my memory, granting me faith in His never-ending compassion. This is the stage of SMARANAM, remembrance.

A sudden outburst of singing

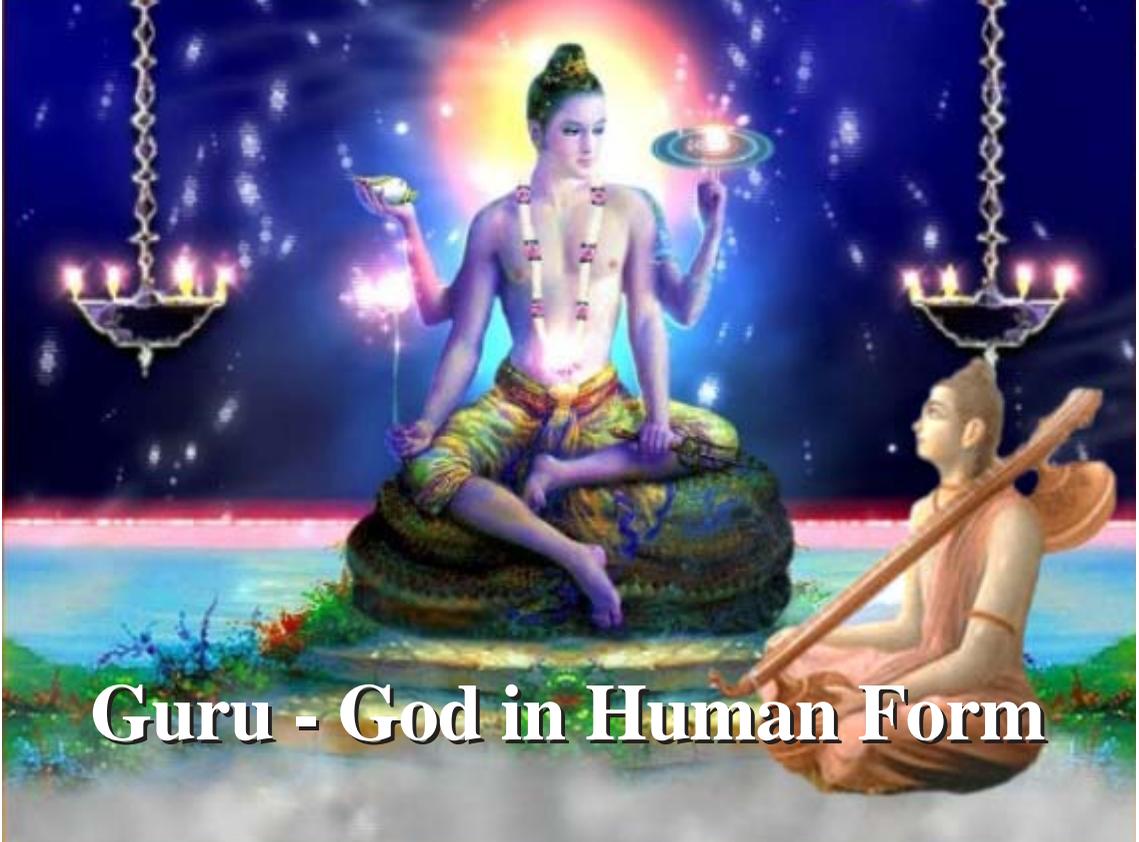
His name as I went through my daily chores and as I woke up from my sleep revealed, I was always tuned to Him and this devotion led me to my Guru's feet one fine morning.

I worshipped His feet by doing PADASEVANAM in my Manasa puja. This helped me overcome many hurdles of living. As I performed Padasevanam with all earnestness and devotion, my bhakti led me to ARCHANAM. Sincere involvement in His mission showed me the beauty in the Lord's creation. The Ocean of mercy- my Guru, accepted this worship and awarded me access to the next stage, VANDANAM, worship through purity of thought, work and deed. I got transformed into a servant who totally surrendered his will to that of the Master, which role established in the stage of Dasyam. The unreserved dasyam made me win His grace so plentiful that the relationship is divinized into SNEHAM, friendship. The ninth stage, ATMA NIVEDHANAM was attained through my selfless surrender at His feet.

So, as I sing "Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam," on this Guru Purnima, July 25th2010, I shall adore my Eternal Companion and demonstrate my love and respect to Him by trying to live up to His Message.

SADGURU CHARANAM PRANAMAMYAHAM!

Guru's feet will take us safely to liberation!



Guru - God in Human Form

Who is Guru? A simple human being or an incarnation, who had descended on this earth to liberate our souls from worldly bondages. Why he strives for us and helps us grow spiritually though he is in no way related to us? Does he expect anything in return from us? As Swami Vivekananda said European people had put their soul in art and culture and had given the best to the world in those fields, while we explored the world inside us. India's soul lies in religion. Thus, we have such a great significance towards Guru, the torch bearer for the souls that languish in the darkness called ignorance. We are related to our parents as we are born to them, but why is a Guru attributed such great place in our lives, particularly for those who are in the spiritual line? It is said Mother, Father, Guru and God. This denomination is coming since time immemorial. If observed carefully, the Guru lies in between Parents and God-the almighty. Parents look after our needs that make us survive and grow. But Guru looks after our needs that make us grow spiritually. Did anyone of us observe the beauty here? There lies a beautiful secret that unfolds the mystery of this universe. Guru is the bridge between

this world and God. Sri Ramakrishna would say I am an instrument and He (God) is the player. If the instrument (body) is good enough and under the control of the player (God) a melody can be created that transcends this world to higher planes of spirituality where one realizes that he is none other than the part of that Paramatman. There are occasions where God Himself came on to this earth in the form of Sri Ramakrishna, Jesus and Buddha, to preach mankind about their true nature.

A real Guru is he who practices before preaching to his disciples or devotees. A lady once came to Sri Ramakrishna complaining that her son was fond of sweets and Sri Ramakrishna must advise her son not to eat sweets. After asking her to come again and again, He finally says, "my little boy don't take sweets." Startled by this simple advice she asks, "You could have said this in my first visit." Sri Ramakrishna humbly says, "Mother, before giving such advice I must ensure I am not doing that anymore." Guru is he who silently practices and preaches through his living, not through any lengthy sermons or speeches.

Sri Ramakrishna, a Universal Guru Himself, had a disciple of Swami Vivekananda's caliber, who had taken the world like a storm and was called cyclonic monk. A Guru is discovered through his disciples. He can strike Gold out of dust. Laatu an unlettered man became Swami Adhutananda a great spiritual soul with the blessings of his Guru. Even Swami Vivekananda once said Laatu is above the rules that were imposed by him for monks in Ramakrishna order. Our Indian Culture had revered Guru the most, as we realized that he is none other than Lord himself who came to liberate oneself. There are many instances in history wherein Kings had unheard of parents, but not their Guru. Great Maratha warrior and King Shivaji attained greatness with the blessings of his Guru, Samarth Ramadas. It is surprising to learn even Asuras (demons) had Guru called Shukracharya. This is the uniqueness of the Guru. He asks us nothing but an unconditional total surrender towards our goal called Self-Realization. If it is achieved, there will be no difference between man and God. The sadhaka or a spiritual seeker understands that he is an atman of the paramatman. Can we reach that level? Who knows, some of us might have already ventured on to that path and made some progress. As Sri Ramakrishna lucidly said, all that a sadhaka (spiritual seeker) needs is, a yearning of a miser towards wealth, a chaste woman towards her husband, a mother towards her child which will make him reach the abode of God. A few of us progressed a little or nothing at all. We need not lose our heart. He had come on umpteen occasions for liberating souls from the clutches of maya, our history says it. If it is not true we would not have read lives of a Sri Ramakrishna, a Buddha, a Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a Jesus, a Mohammed or a Guru Nanak. His bounteous compassion will make him come again for us. After all we are his beloved children, for him everyone is equal. When God is so powerful, will He create His children powerless? We just require an unflinching perseverance, an unfathomable faith, a strong belief, an undiminishing strength, a yearning and a stable mind like an unflattered light in a room without air. One day Lord will come to us sooner or later. Just believe honestly. Stay afloat. See the revelation in you. That blessed day is just round the corner. On the sacred occasion of Guru Purnima, let the Spiritual Odyssey begin.

- M. Koti Rajasekhar

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*Do not be
afraid;
the Master
is behind
you
and
I am,
too, as your
Mother!*

- Ma Sarada



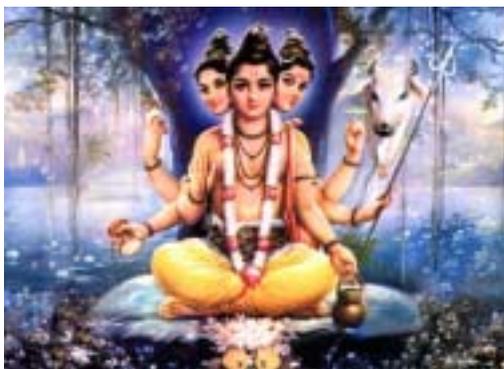
Guru Kripa

*'Dhyaana moolam gurur moorthim,
pooja moolam Gurur padam,
Mantra moolam Gurur vaakyam,
moksha moolam Gurur Kripa'*

This soul stirring sloka throws light on the power and significance of a Guru in a Sadhaka's life. Without the grace and guidance of a sadguru, it is impossible to tread on the path of spirituality. I have always felt the invisible hand of my Guru holding and supporting me at every step of my life, pulling me up whenever I lost my balance and putting me back on the track towards self-realization. I would like to share the most amazing and extra-ordinary experience I had with my Guru Shirdi Sai Baba.

It dates back to 1986 – 87 when I was living in Guntur along with my family. I used to regularly read Sai Sathcharitha, a book on the life of Shirdi Sai Baba. While reading it, I would often wish and imagine myself to be living during His life time as His devotee and serving Him in many ways. The desire to do His seva was so intense that I decided to fulfill it by doing it to His idol in a small temple situated a few lanes away from my house. It is a small personal temple built by a Brahmin family in their compound which was open to the public. After taking their permission, every day early in the morning, I would go to the temple with freshly plucked flowers and Bilwa leaves, sweep and mop the temple floor, bathe Baba's idol, decorate it with flowers, light the lamp, do pooja and return home feeling elated and joyful. This continued for a week. On the eighth day, it was a Thursday, in the early hours, I had a dream. I saw a saint dressed in white clothes, glowing like thousand Suns put together, seated on a well decorated chair and smiling fondly at me. I fell flat at his feet with complete surrender and devotion. He blessed me and started

speaking to me. At this juncture I woke up feeling completely amazed at the same time happy. The face and the figure of this unknown saint was so vivid and clear that I had a strong feeling that he must be alive somewhere whom I will definitely meet at some point of time. After a few months, my neighbor and friend called me to say that her Guru was going to visit her home to bless her family. She was all thrilled and excited and requested me to help her in doing all the arrangements for a grand welcome.



I more than happily agreed and did all the necessary arrangements, single handedly for His Gracious Presence. To my surprise I realized that I was doing everything that I wanted to do for my Guru like decorating the path way, decorating the chair for Him to sit, arranging the pooja materials etc. Finally the great moment came

for which we were all eagerly waiting. He got down from the car and stood majestically at the entrance. Lo! I was shell shocked to see that this is the same person who blessed me in my dream. He is Sri Ganapati Satchitananda Swamy, whose ashram is in Mysore. He is said to be an avatar of Lord Dattatreya. I quickly recovered and followed Him, sprinkling flowers at His feet all through His walk into the house. He sat on the adorned chair and I fell flat at His feet. He smiled and blessed me. I told Him about my premonitory dream and asked why He blessed me though I am not his devotee. He said that all Gurus are one. Baba is also an avatar of Datta and He has come in this form to fulfill my wish and bless me. If the prayer is sincere and intense the Guru will come in any form to bless his devotee. I was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude and tears started rolling down my cheeks drowning me in Love.

- M. Uma



KUMARA SHASTI

*Hey Swaminatha Karunakara deena bandho
Sree Parvatheesa mukha pankaja padma bandho
Sreesadhi deva gana poojitha pada padma
Vallesa nadha mama dehi karavalambam*

Meaning: Extend a hand of support, Oh! Lord of Valli, Who is the chief of Gods, Who is merciful, Who is friend of the oppressed, Who is the son of the lotus faced Lord of Goddess Parvathi and whose lotus feet is worshipped by all Gods and also by Lord of Goddess Lakshmi.

Kumara Shasti is observed on the 6th day of the Shukla Paksha of Ashada (June-July) month. Legend has it that Lord Kumara or Muruga asked Brahma the meaning of 'OM' and when Brahma could not answer the question, Kumara held him prisoner. Creation came to an abrupt halt on Brahma's imprisonment. Realising his folly, Kumara, in repentance, took the form of a snake. When his mother Goddess Parvathi, came to know of it, she requested her husband, Lord Shiva, to restore their son to his original form.

Lord Shiva advised Parvathi to observe Shastivrat, which Parvathi, in all sincerity did, for 108 shastis and Kumara appeared in his snake form. Lord Vishnu and other Devas were also present and on receiving Vishnu's holy touch, Kumara regained his original form. Kumara shasti is celebrated to consecrate this re-transformation of Kumara from his earlier snake form. The festival is of great importance in Nepal and western parts of India. Numerous rituals are observed on the day in various temples dedicated to Lord Kumara. In 2010, July 16th is observed as Kumara Shasti in some regions.



QUIZ on GURU

1. A teacher is known as Guru- which of the following is the literal meaning of the Sanskrit term Guru?

- a) Imparts knowledge b) dispels darkness
c) purifies the heart

2. What is the name of the Guru at whose Ashram Krishna studied with his friend Sudama?

- a) Veda Vyasa b) Dronacharya
c) Sandeepani

3. Which of the following is considered to be the teacher of the Devas?

- a) Venus b) Jupiter c) Mars

4. What lie did Karna say in order for Parasurama to accept him as a disciple?

- a) That he was a Kshatriya b) That he was a friend of Krishna
c) That he was a brahmana

5. What have we lost that the Guru helps us find?

- a) Our real name b) Our relationship with God
c) Learning to control the mind

6. What is more important than getting a Name for repetition from a Guru?

- a) Serving him daily b) spreading his teachings far and wide
c) observing his commands

7. Who is the Guru of Gurus?

- a) Mantra Guru b) the wise preceptor
c) the God within

8. Who was the Guru of Ravana and Mahabali?

- a) Shukracharya b) Brihaspati c) Angirasa

9. Whom did Lord Hanuman take as His Guru when He wanted to educate Himself?

- a) Rama b) Jambhavan c) Surya

10. Which amongst the following is the mother and son pair, wherein the mother was taught the Sankhya Yoga for liberation, by her son?

- a) Agastya – Urvashi b) Kapila-Devahuti
c) Vyasa- Satyavathi

Answers:

- 1-B, 2-C, 3-B, 4-C, 5-A, 6-C,
7-C, 8-A, 9-C, 10- B

Puri Jagannath Ratha Yatra - Chariot Festival

Yatra literally means travel or journey and forms an essential part of the Hindu system of worship. Jagannatha refers to the ecstatic form of Lord Krishna with large eyes and rugged features who is carried on a gigantic chariot during this festival. Ratha Yatra also known as Gundicha Yatra, Ghosha Yatra, Navadina Yatra, Dasavatara Yatra or Festival of Chariots of Lord Jagannatha, is celebrated every year at Puri, the temple town in Orissa. Ratha Yatra, held on "ASHADHA SUKLA DWITIYA" i.e. the second day of the bright fortnight of Ashadha (June-July) every year is perhaps the grandest festival on earth.

Full of spectacle, drama and colour, the festival is a fair of huge proportions befitting the great Lord. Three different sizes of chariots are made for this Rathayatra which begins from the Lord Jagannath Temple. The Chariot of the Lord Jagannath is called NANDIGHOSH, the Chariot of Balabhadra is called TALADVAJA and the Chariot of Lady Subhadra is called PADMADHVAJA. Pre-yatra ceremonies include Snanayatra, Anavasara, Nibritha, Anga-raga or Navayavana and Netrotsava rituals after completing which the Deities are taken out from the temple and placed in their respective chariots on the Rathayatra day.

Against the norm of taking the Utsava murtis out for processions, here the presiding deities of the main temple, Sri Mandira, Lord Jagannatha, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra, with the celestial wheel Sudarshana are taken out from the temple precincts in an elaborate ritual procession to their respective chariots. The huge, colourfully decorated chariots are drawn by hundreds and thousands of devotees on the bada danda to the grand avenue to the Gundicha temple, some two miles away to the North which takes about seven days. After a stay for seven days, on the tenth day of the fortnight the procession of the deities returns to their abode in Srimandira and on the Ekadasi day Lord enters the temple again.

Ratha-yatra signifies the Lord's love for His devotees. He personally comes to visit His devotees and the public who welcome Him in the streets. For the devoted and believers, it is considered the most auspicious occasion. *Rathe tu vamanam drishtwa punarjanmam na vidyate* - A glimpse of the Vamana, the dwarf form, an incarnation of Lord Jagannatha, is sure to ensure emancipation, release from the cycle of birth and death.





As the story goes, Lord Krishna once overheard a conversation about how His dearest devotees, the cowherd maidens of Vrindavana, were lamenting in His absence. When He heard these accounts of overwhelming love in separation, the Lord's hair began to stand on end, His eyes opened wide and filled with tears and His arms and legs contracted as He went into a state of spiritual ecstasy. Seeing Lord Krishna in this condition, His elder brother, Balarama (Baladeva) and their sister, Subhadra, also began to feel ecstatic symptoms and displayed similar features. Thus the sublime deity forms of Jagannatha, Subhadra, and Baladeva represent this sweet pastime.

The festival of Ratha-yatra represents Lord Jagannatha's longing to reunite with His dear devotees in Vrindavana, foremost among them, Srimati Radharani. According to tradition, once

a year the Lord gets love sick just prior to the festival. To cheer him up, His servants arrange for Him to go on a lavish procession to meet up with His devotees. According to some stories Ratha-yatra symbolises that after a long time of separation Lord Shri Krishna is going to Kurukshetra from Dwaraka to meet the inhabitants of Brindavan.

The concept of the chariot has been explained in the **Kathopanishad** in the following words-

*Atmanam rathinam viddhi
sareeram rathamevatu
Buddhim tu saarathim viddhi
marah pragrahameva cha.*

The body is the Chariot and the soul is the deity installed in the chariot. The wisdom acts as the charioteer to control the mind and thoughts.

*In 2010, the date of Puri Rath Yatra is July 13.
- Annapurna R.*





Guru Gita

**Akhanda Mandalakaram
vyaptam yena characharam.
Tatpadam darshitam yena
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

My Salutations to that Guru who revealed to me that Truth, which is unfragmented, infinite, timeless divinity, and which pervades the entire universe – movable or unmovable.

**Agyan timirandhasya
Gyananjan Shalakaya.
Chakshur-oonmeelitam yena
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

My Salutations to that reverential teacher, who opened my eyes, by applying the divine collyrium of self-knowledge in my eyes, which had got blinded by the cataract of ignorance.

**Sthavaram jangamam vyaptam
yat kinchit sacharacharam.
Tatpadam darshitam yena
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

My Salutations to that reverential teacher, who revealed to me that which pervades everything in this world, whether animate-inanimate, or movable-immovable.

**Chinmayam Vyapi yatsarvam
trailokyam sacharacharam.
Tatpadam darshitam yena
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

My salutations to that glorious Guru, who revealed to me that self-effulgent divinity (the pure unconditioned consciousness) which pervades all the three worlds, with all its movable and immovable objects.

**Sarva-Shruti shiroratra
virajit padambujah.
Vedantambuja Suryo yah
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

My Salutations to that reverential teacher, who is like a sun for the blossoming up of the lotus like mantras of upanishads; and at whose lotus feet lie the beautiful flowers, symbolizing the best of jewels of vedas.

**Chaitanya Shashwatah shanto
vyomatito niranjanah.
Bindunaad kalatitah
tasmai shri Gurave Namah.**

My Salutations to that reverential teacher, who is verily the eternal consciousness, which is of the nature of peace. He transcends space and time, the concept of zero, the primordial sound and all parts.

**Gyanshakti samaroodhah
tattwamala vibhooshitah.
Bhuktimukti pradata cha
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

My Salutations to that glorious Gurudev, who is established in Knowledge and Power, who is adorned with the garland-of -Knowledge and who grants both worldly prosperity and spiritual liberation.

**Anekajanma sampraptah
karmabandha vidahine.
Atmagyana pradanena
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

My Salutations to that reverential teacher who by imparting the Self-Knowledge, has burnt away the very bondage of actions in a whiff, which had even though taken infinite lives to accumulate.

**Shoshanam bhavsindhoshcha
gyapanam saarsampadah.
Gurohpadodakam samyak
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

Even by the very sipping of the charanamruta (the water with which the feet of guru are washed), we get blessed by the eternal wealth (of liberating knowledge), and which dries up the endless ocean of seeking & the subsequent sorrows. My Salutations to the lotus-feet of that glorious Gurudev.

**Na Guroradhikam tattvam
na Guroradhikam tapah.
Tattvagyanatparam nasti
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

There is no higher truth than the Guru, no higher penance than (service to) the Guru, and there is nothing higher than Realisation of the Knowledge of the truth imparted by the Guru. My salutations to such a Gurudev, who is himself that very timeless truth (and who has taken up a form to bless his disciples like us with real knowledge).

**Mannaathah Shri Jagannathah
Matgurushri jagadguruhu.
Madatma sarvabhutatma
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

My Lord is the Lord of Universe; My teacher is the teacher of the entire universe; and my Self is the Self of all. My salutations at the lotus-feet of such a Guru, who has revealed such knowledge to me.

**Gururadiranadishcha
Guruhparamdaivatam.
Gurohparataram nasti
tasmai Shri Gurave Namah.**

The Guru is the beginning of the Universe, yet he himself is without a beginning, the Guru is the highest deity, and there is none higher than the Guru. My reverential salutations at the lotus-feet of such a Gurudev.

**Tvameva mata cha pita tvameva
tvameva bandhushcha sakha tvameva.
Tvameva vidya dravinam tvameva
tvameva sarvam mamadevadeva.**

O God! You alone are my mother, my father, my brother, and my friend. You alone are the knowledge, my real wealth. You are everything for me. You are verily my God alone.



*He alone is the true Teacher
who is illumined by the light
of true Knowledge.*

- Sri Ramakrishna



amskrit - Lesson Five

Now we will see words of feminine gender. Most of them are 'AkArAnta' or 'IkArAnta'.

UqÉE MuxrÉE mēiÉE? rAmAH kasyAH patiH?

UqÉE xēiīÉE mēiÉE| rAmAH sItAyAH patiH.

Whose husband is Rama? Rama is Sita's husband.

UqÉE MuxrÉE mēiÉE? rAmAH kasyAH putraH?

UqÉE MūxāsrtÉE mēiÉE| rAmAH kausalyAyAH putraH.

Rama is whose son? Rama is Kausalya's son.

UkÉE mēiÉE Mū? rAdhAyAH priyaH kah?

UkÉE mēiÉE MāvhÉE| rAdhAyAH priyaH kRuShNah.

Who is Radha's lover? Krishna is Radha's lover.

pēuīÉE mēPizēsÉE lēqē? bhavataH pATHaSAIAyAH nAmā kim?

qēqē mēPizēsÉE lēqē 'lū±EUhrē lū±fsÉE'. māmā pATHaSAIAyAH nAmā 'vidyArāNyā vidyAlayāH'.

What is your school's name? My school's name is 'Vidyaranya VidyAlaya'.

xēqMūiēpēwÉE uēzēwSē? saMskRutabhAShAyAH vaiSiShTyaM kim?

xēqMūiēpēwÉE oēwūiēiēpēwÉE| saMskRutabhAShA bahupurAtanabhAShA.

What is the speciality of Samskrit language? Samskrit language is a very old language.

All 'AkAra' ending feminine nouns have a 'yAH' at the end of the word expressing relationship as shown below:

xēiīÉE - xēiīÉE

sItA - sItAyAH

: Sita - Sita's

UkÉE - UkÉE

rAdhA - rAdhAyAH

: Radha - Radha's

pēwÉE - pēwÉE

bhAShA - bhAShAyAH

: Language - Language's

māOMūē - māOMūē

peTikA - peTikAyAH

: Box - Box's

Now look at 'IkArAnta' feminine words. In this case, we have 'yAH' in the place of the last 'I'.

MuxrÉE mēiÉE oē4SātÉE? kasyAH patiH brahmadevaH?

xEUxūiē mēiÉE oē4SātÉE| sarasvatyAH patiH brahmadevaH.

Whose husband is Brahmadeva? Saraswati's husband is Brahmadeva.

āhēzÉE MuxrÉE mēiÉE? gaNeSaH kasyAH putraH?

āiēzÉE mēuēiē mēiÉE| gaNeSaH pArvatyAH putraH.

Ganesa is whose (lady's) son? Ganesa is Parvati's son.

Invitation

We cordially invite you to
participate in the

Griha Pravesham

&

Guru Pournima celebrations.

Venue:

Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram

Gairan Tanda, Kodgal Village,

Jadcherla Mandal, Mahaboobnagar Dist.

Date:

25th July 2010.

Timings:

9.00 am to 11.30 am.

Spiritual Prasad will be served.

All are welcome!

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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.

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*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.

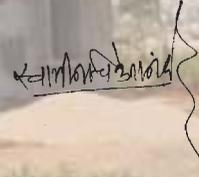
First we want to thank our supporters and well wishers for accomplishing our goals of constructing a Dhyana Mandir and Residential Campus at the Ashram. Your support was essential for meeting the substantial expenses of this Humanitarian work for which we are deeply grateful. At present our top priority 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 Nachiketananda

Deepshikha Mela

Nachiketa Tapovan is taking part in the Deepshikha mela.

Date:

6th to 8th of August, 2010

Venue:

Jewel Gardens,
Sikh Village.

Our stall will have beautiful Rakhis and handmade gifts made by volunteers and the children of Nachiketa Tapovan. All proceeds will be used for the needy children of Nachiketa Tapovan's Vidya Mandir.

We hope to see you there to support and encourage us.

*Purify
the
spectacles
of your
mind and
you will
see that
the world
is God!*

- Sri Ramakrishna

Seek God in Man!

With best wishes from

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- 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, Guttalabegumpet, 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.
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- j) Articles received will be published in one of the forthcoming issues.

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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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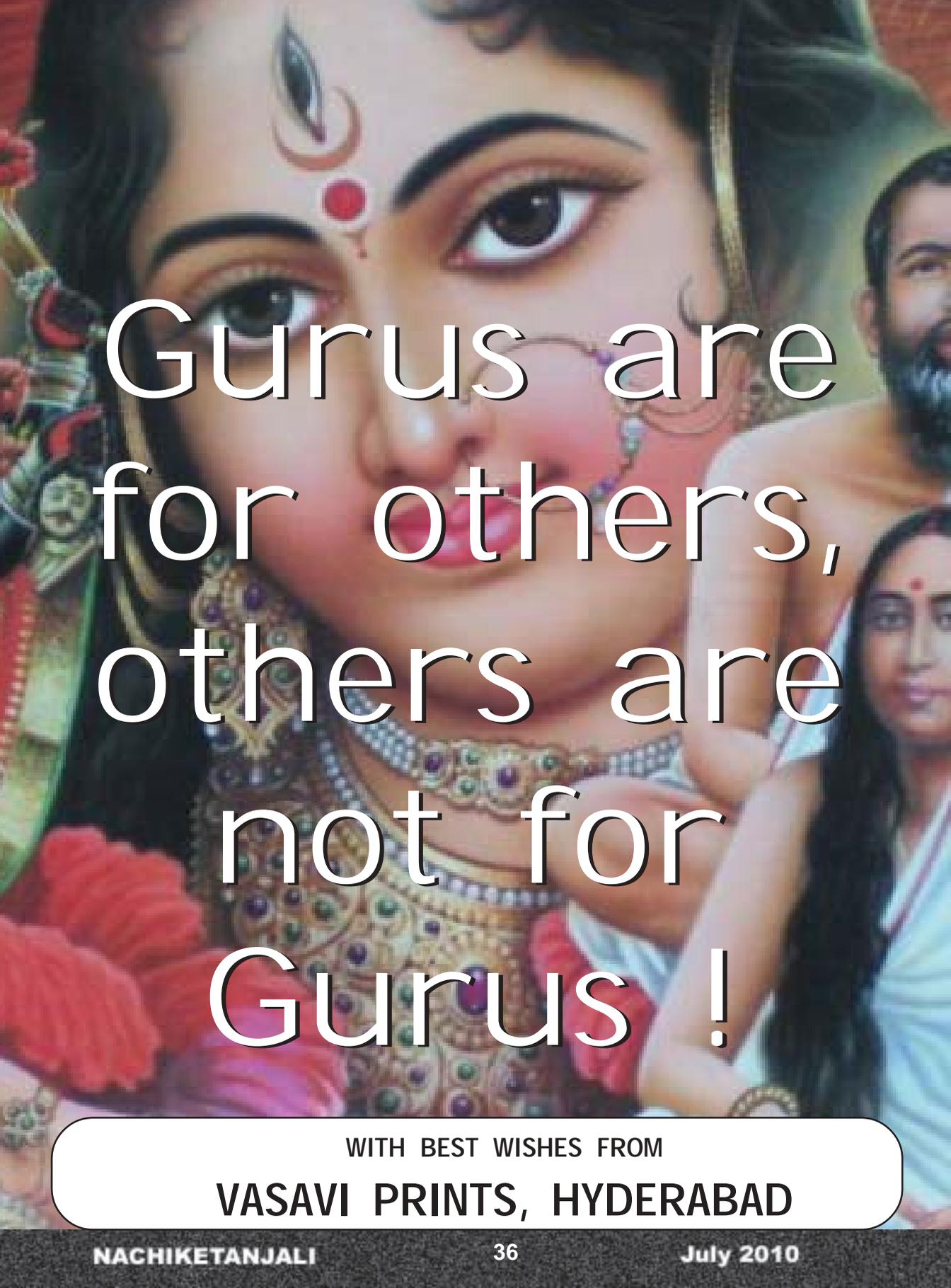
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Gurus are
for others,
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not for
Gurus !

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