



Nachiketanjali
...an offering

Vol: 1

Issue: 1

September: 2010

Price: Rs. 10/-



O Lord! Thy presence is always felt in Nature!



Volume: 1

Issue: 1

September 2010

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Single Copy - Rs. 10/-

Subscription

1 year - Rs. 100/-

3 years - Rs. 280/-

5 years - Rs. 450/-

Subscriptions can be sent by
MO/DD/Cheque/Cash in favour
of "Nachiketa Tapovan".

(Plus Rs. 30/- for outstation cheques)

Printed & Published by Subhadra K., owned by Nachiketa Tapovan Trust and printed at Kala Jyothi Process Pvt. Limited, Suburban Press, S. No. 185, Kondapur, R.R. District. 500 081 A.P. and published at Nachiketa Tapovan, Kavuri Hills, Madhapur, Serilingampally, Ranga Reddy District. A.P.

EDITORIAL

Man throughout his childhood is blissfully detached from the tribulations in life. He is full of pure unadulterated joy. He leads his adolescent life happily, dreaming about the future. But the problems start from his youth. Burdened with heavy responsibilities he lives in fear of the future. And in the old age, when one has to sit back and enjoy the fruits of his labor, he lives in fear of death. This generally applies to the common man. But it is not the same in the case of a Jnani. Having understood these four stages, he leads a blissful life with total awareness.

Man forgets he is part of the universe and separates himself from the world, with the anticipation that he would achieve something great and in the process loses his own identity. All of us need air, water and food to live. To this we have added many more comforts and believe they are the basic necessities. This is the root cause of all problems. He tries to escape from all his duties and always expects to float on the pleasure boat of life. Once he tastes the joys of life he would never tolerate even the slightest difficulty. And when his desire is not fulfilled there is chaos in his life.

Sorrow becomes unbearable only when it is experienced with the mind. Jnanis accept it as a part of their lives. We are all born the same way. But some consider all the events in their lives as problems while some understand them as beautiful experiences and make their lives happy. Time flies. Age is not something we can control but what we do with passing age is entirely in our hands. So go ahead and rediscover yourself. Life has a lot in store. You just need to explore its full potential. The greatest irony of life is that it would take more than a lifetime to know everything about life! 'Every grey cloud has a silver lining.' Let us remember this saying and never allow the road to happiness to come under repair.

"God gave me nothing I wanted, He gave me everything I needed!" These words of Swami Vivekananda help man to cross the ocean of life. Let us understand the Mahatma's saying in-depth and lead a happy life.

-Subhadra K.

Strange but True!

Strange but true...Sometimes we simply feel like walking into the kitchen and start cooking. Sometimes we feel like brooming the entire house and remove the cobwebs. Sometimes we want to sit at one place without doing anything. Sometimes we feel like walking on the beach, in the forest and in the fields. Sometimes we feel like crying for no reason. Sometimes we want to hug a small kid. Sometimes we feel like giving alms to the beggars. Sometimes we feel like watching a movie. Sometimes we feel like gazing at a flower, a tree or a cloud. Sometimes we want to look at the space, stars and moon. Sometimes we feel like driving. And all such feelings are without reason. They simply come and go without any notice, but we experience them. That is inner call. When that call comes from silence it becomes 'Divine call' and when the same call arises from emptiness then it becomes devil's call. But how many of us are listening to our own inner call? Are we afraid of it? What if we listen to our inner call and march towards Divinity?

Is it possible for all of us to know the Divine call?

Strange but true...Yes! It is possible! Sorrow comes from emptiness whereas happiness springs from silence. So there is a wonderful connection between happiness and silence. Happiness is that which is temporary and will again push us into emptiness. Simple detachment from all actions will truly open the gate to silence. Ego, selfishness, attachment, boredom and expectations will bring emptiness in us. They are all identified with the body and mind. Hence we need to go even beyond this body and mind to feel the ocean of silence, where we reside as 'Self'. Sometimes when we stand near a seashore and gaze, what do we see? Huge gigantic ocean, but unfortunately most of the times, we see only and only waves. That's how we live in this world. "Looking at the waves not at the ocean...looking at the body and mind not the 'Self'!"

If we start looking at the ocean the waves disappear, similarly when we look at the self the body and mind disappear and our hearts get filled with silence. Then the Divine call springs from within to take us to the depth of the ocean of Divinity.

Strange but true...Rama goes on exile to forest following the command of His parents. Sri Krishna leaves Gokula for the welfare of the society. Adi Sankaracharya leaves His mother behind and takes up the wandering phase and establishes monasteries in all four corners of India to protect the motherland. Swami Vivekananda leaves His small family in dire conditions to hug bigger family called the world to transform the lives of millions and millions of people. Why! Because of the inner call. This is strange but true that those who have received higher commands in their lives to establish Dharma, they have all taken wonderful steps in their lives.

Strange but true...that, life is experienced but not seen like wind or heat...strange but true that life is hidden everywhere but hardly felt in others...strange but true that even though self is hidden within, we are hardly aware of it...strange but true that we are connected with one thread called Divinity but feel strongly separated...strange but true that 'we' stand for 'one' and 'one' stands for 'we' but we are not aware of it...strange but true that there are no directions but we live in directions...strange but true that infinity remains infinity but due to limitations we make it finite...strange but true that we are not confined to any boundary but we live within boundaries...

Strange but true that all such inner calls are gateways to the self...to the Divinity. If we start listening to those inner calls then the day is not far when we will be able to experience His creation...His expressions and His true nature...the Self.

- *Swami Nachiketananda*

Janmashtami

*Mukam Karoti Vachalam
Pangum langhayate girim
Yatkrupa tamaham vande
paramananda Madhavam*

Meaning: The dumb can start speaking and the lame can climb mountains, if they have the grace of that Madhava.

The name of Sri Krishna is sweeter than anything else in this world. Janmashtami is the day when Krishna incarnated on this earth.

Some people opine that Krishna was only a skillful king and not an incarnation. If you look at the annals of history, we had many kings but we don't celebrate their birthdays. Though Krishna lived 5000 years ago, his birthday is celebrated with great pomp and splendor. Sri Krishna is a Poornavata. Putanavadha, Sarvaloka sandarshanam, Kaliyamardhanam, Govardhana Puja, and Kamsavada are but some of his many leelas. Amongst all the nine incarnations, Krishnavata shines like a Kaustubha Mani.

His Bhagavad Gita is not a mere shastra. It is a way of life. It is the perfect guideline to aspirants, showing them the various paths to reach the ultimate. That ultimate knowledge was given to the humanity by Sri

Krishna for which He is universally acclaimed as Jagatguru. His nama is a sadhana for sadhakas and an ocean of happiness to the bhaktas.

Many bhaktas like Rukmini, Meera, Sakkubai, Tukaram, Jayadeva and Vittala have experienced Krishna by singing his name and glory alone.

Surdas was blind, but when he started chanting Krishna Nama he got that real, true vision and he rejected the physical vision. Just by having physical eye we can not have that true vision. For that we need to have the grace of Sri Krishna.

That grace dawns on us when we have that Shraddha and Bhakti. Krishna's existence is not limited to the Dwapara yuga, or the temples. He is Sarvantharyami. Janmashtami reminds us to awaken that Krishna consciousness within with the help of Shraddha and Bhakti. Then that day will be a real Janmashtami by singing his Nama;

Jai Sri Krishna, Jai Sri Krishna...

- *Swami Shivanandamayi*



Ardha Siddhasana



Today many people are suffering from various ailments due to bad life style. We even forgot the right way of sitting and sleeping. If we sit in the right posture we will be free from many problems.

In Patanjali Yogasutras, Maharshi Patanjali says " Sthira Sukham Asanam" meaning " the posture which is steady, relaxed and maintained for a long time. Meditation or Raja yoga demands a meditative posture which should be maintained for a long time.

So let us learn one of the meditative postures which is used for meditation and Sadhana: **SIDDHASANA**

Those who are unable to practice Purna Siddhasana, can practice Ardha Siddhasana.



ARDHA SIDDHASANA: This asana is practiced by Siddhas. By practicing this asana you become a Siddha.

Procedure: Sit on the mat with legs stretched out. Bend your right knee and place it with the foot flat near the left thigh with heel pressing the perineum. Bend your left knee and place it near the right foot. See that left leg is not placed on the right thigh.

PURNA SIDDHASANA: In this asana follow the above mentioned instructions and push left leg toes between right thigh and calf muscles. And pull out right big toe from the left thigh and calf muscles. Keep your head straight and spinal cord erect.

Benefits: Balances the reproductive system and blood pressure. All the abdominal organs get strengthened, cures gynaecological and abdominal problems. It activates Muladhara and Swadistana chakra. This simple asana regulates and increases the Pranic flow in the lower region, and strengthens the nervous system. It activates the brain and particularly activates certain brain cells which help in maintaining Brahmacharya.

- Swami Shivanandamayi

*J.Robert
Oppenheimer,
American nuclear
physicist
(1904-1967)*

*"If the radiance of
a thousand suns
were to burst into
the sky, that would
be like the splendor
of the Mighty
one..... Now I am
become death, the
destroyer of worlds."*

*Oppenheimer "the
father of the atomic
bomb" quoting
from the Hindu
s c r i p t u r e
Bhagavad-Gita
upon witnessing the
mushroom cloud
resulting from the
detonation of the
world's first atomic
bomb in New
Mexico, U.S.A., on
July 16, 1945.*

*"Access to the Vedas
is the greatest
privilege this
century may claim
over all previous
centuries."*



Advice to Householders

Sri Ramakrishna has shown the path of spirituality for householder devotees in the Gospel. He says, "It is difficult to lead the life of a householder in a spirit of detachment. Once Pratap said to me, 'Sir, we follow the example of King Janaka. He led the life of a householder in a detached spirit. We shall follow him.' I said to him: Can one be like King Janaka by merely wishing it? How many austerities he practised in order to acquire divine knowledge! He practised the most intense form of asceticism for many years and only then returned to the life of the world."

"Is there, then, no hope for householders? Certainly there is. They must practise spiritual discipline in solitude for some days. Thus they will acquire knowledge and devotion. Then it will not hurt them to lead the life of the world. But when you practise discipline in solitude, keep yourself entirely away from your family. You must not allow your wife, son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother, friends or relatives near you. While thus practising discipline in solitude you should think: 'I have no one else in the world. God is my all.' You must pray to Him, with tears in your eyes, for knowledge and devotion."

"If you ask me how long you should live in solitude away from your family. I should say that it would be good for you if you could spend even one day in such a manner. Three days at a time are still better. One may live in solitude for twelve days, a month, three months or a year, according to one's convenience and ability. One hasn't much to fear if one leads the life of a householder after attaining knowledge and devotion."

"If you break a jack-fruit after rubbing your hands with oil, then its sticky milk will not smear your hands. While playing the game of hide and seek, you are safe if you but once touch the 'granny'. Be turned into gold by touching the philosopher's stone. After that you may remain buried underground a thousand years; when you are taken out you will still be gold."

"The mind is like milk. If you keep the mind in the world, which is like water, then the milk and water will get mixed. That is why people keep milk in a quiet place and let it set into curd, and then churn butter from it. Likewise, through spiritual discipline practised in solitude, churn the butter of knowledge and devotion from the milk of the mind. Then that butter can easily be kept in the water of the world. It will not get mixed with the world. The mind will float detached on the water of the world."

Hence it is imperative for us householders to follow his advice and stay away from the world in solitude at least for a day and pray sincerely to God. We stray constantly from the path of devotion as we feel we have duties towards family and that we cannot take time away from our duties. Just as oxygen is necessary for breathing so is solitude necessary for us to realise ourselves. Sri Ramakrishna has given us explicitly as to what we need to do. What more do we need? If we pray to Him sincerely He will grant us the time to be alone when we take the first step towards this goal.

-Compiled by Geetha K.

Spiritual Quest

Why is money so important in life?

Why are riches the measure of success?

Even Tapovan is dependent on money to carry its activity, why?

Ans: In life everything is important and has got value, but due to our selfishness we forget value and get entangled into this samsara. Life without money and money without life have different meanings. They say "Life can be without money but money cannot be without life." What is the use, if we are in dense forest with lot of money but no food. What is the use of covering a body with money after death. What is the use if we have a huge palace but nobody to stay in it. Therefore our wealth is useful as long as we have life and once life has gone, everything has gone. Life is greater than anything else and it cannot be measured by money.

It is unfair to say that we do not need money or monetary help. Money is important without selfish motive and trade. As long as we are going to live in this world, we are bound to get involved in trade. And all of us are quite aware of this so called trading. But there is a difference between selfish and selfless trading. The world we see and the trade we experience is totally different in both the contexts. The moment we see selfless desire in us to serve, trade disappears and the beauty of life twinkles all over and the moment we see selfish desire in us, trade comes in between and the world becomes gloomy.

There is a beautiful dialogue between Sri Rama and boatman Guha. Sri Rama wanted to cross the river by boat and He approaches Guha. After seeing Sri Rama, Guha says, "please do one favour, I will help You to cross this river and in return, please help me to cross the ocean of this samsara." Sri Krishna negotiates with Kauravas for the welfare of Pandavas and eventually for Dharma. We can see that everywhere some kind of trade is going on but with total difference.

It is wrong to measure success by riches or money. This is not the real criteria. Success brings a kind of happiness, a kind of satisfaction and that is possible even without money. Eventually with or without, if the result is the same then we do not need to measure success by riches or money. Actually success is not the real output or the final product of our activity. The real output is happiness. If this is true then money or riches in life becomes secondary.

Dear one, inspite of conquering half the world, Sikandar had to bid goodbye to this world with empty hands. Understand what happened to Hitler and Napoleon. These are not success or failure stories. But the motive behind every action is more important than anything else. When we transform money into Ma Laxmi, money will follow us but when we convert Ma Laxmi into money then we will follow money. Then we will become slaves to money and forget its true value. Therefore the real value of money is, seeing its importance in life.

When everything revolves around money, money becomes more important in life. Similarly when everything revolves around values, values become more important in life. It all depends on, what revolves around what. Dear one, see that, money revolves around life, not life revolving around money. Then everything is possible. Then the journey of life becomes more pleasant and simple. Then we can measure success without money or riches. Then to sustain for any organization, money will not play major role.

Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah!

- Swami Nachiketananda

The Morning After..



There are good days, and there are bad days. Last night was one of the worst. It was one of those days when you feel sick of life, when you want to get away. I did. I came alone and sat at the beach, at the edge of the sea.

It was a starless night, a little cloudy. A small sliver of the moon played hide and seek behind the silver clouds. The night perfectly reflected the color of my melancholy.

There was a sudden crack of thunder. Great, I thought. This was all I needed. In moments, the clouds became darker and steadily began to envelope me. Then it started to rain. Not a sprinkle or a droplet. But cold, merciless torrents slashing and slapping against me. I began to realize how small I was. And I felt even more helpless, powerless.

'This would be a good time to go back inside', said the smart voice in my head.

'NO. Stay put', said a deeper voice. So I stayed.

By now, I was drenched to the bone. I was shivering. It was getting really cold now, almost unbearable. But not yet. And I sat there at the edge of the sea, perhaps trying to kill myself out there.

Lightning flashed in front of my eyes again and again. At first, they were just flashes. Then I began to see them as if they were incidents of my life, sharp and painful, against the dark picture of my life.

It was one of those times when you feel a little bad about something. Then, as if from nowhere, dark thoughts burst in, flood you and begin to take you down to drown.

Each flash was followed by a painfully loud clap of thunder. And I began to see things. I began to see moments of my life that I had forgotten about, that I had locked away deep inside. I didn't want to think about them, let alone speak. But here they were, playing across in front of me. And I sat watching.

It was the darkest, blackest, coldest moment of the night. And this was the darkest, blackest, coldest moment of my life. I could feel myself sinking deeper. If there had been a time when I was more depressed in my life, I do not remember when that was. But this one was right down there.

My face was numb with the ice cold drops of water precipitating there, and I felt two small tears form in my eyes. They oozed out gently, and began getting heavier as more painful thoughts seemed to weigh them down. And then they spilled, flowing down my cheeks, mixing with the rainwater somewhere along the way.

'This would really be a good time to go back inside', said the smart voice in my head.

'NO. Not yet', said the deeper voice.

'Do you want to die in the cold?' scolded my smarter half.

'Yes, that would be nice. But not yet.' insisted the deeper half.

So I sat still. By now the cold began to chill my very blood. I could feel it.

It was beginning to pain now. Even my breath came in short wheezes. But I obeyed.

I closed my eyes and gave a quiet sob. I quickly opened my eyes and looked around. There was no one. So I gave another sob, a little louder this time. Two more tears dropped down.

At that moment, it was as if my whole life was coming crashing down on me. It brought in all the moments when I had felt the weakest, the most vulnerable and all hope was lost. I let go. I closed my eyes and howled into the night. I cried my heart out.

Not for me, for I wasn't a bad man. But for the world around me.

All I could see was a dark, dark night that refused to end.

All I could see was a thick curtain of rain that refused to yield.

All I could see was loss, pain, tragedy and suffering around me, inside me.

Not mine, for I wasn't a bad man. But for this world around me.

I do not know how long I was there, but when I came to my senses I was lying down. I had probably fallen asleep. The rain had stopped and it was a little warmer now.

A trickle of water at my feet from a small wave woke me up.

I was lying at the edge of the sea. With a start I got up to look around me. It was still pitch dark, and had stopped raining. But that was not what captivated me.

It was the smell in the air, probably of everything the rain had brought in.

A sudden movement caught my eye.

In the pitch darkness, a slight tinge of yellow moved somewhere.

Almost as if it were shy. Almost as if I had made a mistake and not really seen it.

I blinked. Yes, there it was again.

The rain was gone, and a sudden gush of wind came in.

It swept my hair backwards and smelt strangely sweet.

I breathed in deeply and even dared to smile a little.

It seemed as if cracks were beginning to appear in the dark blue canvas of the night sky, and yellow rays began piercing through it. So this was it. The night had ended.

I tried to remember what I had been crying about, but just couldn't recollect.

Maybe the rain and cold and darkness had washed it all away.

A lightness seemed to spiral up my chest. What was it?

As if in answer to my question, the dark blue of the sky began to disappear altogether. Bold yellow rays seemed to stretch across the sky as if it were a painting board. An invisible hand continued to paint yellow strokes until I could see a neat outline of the horizon.

The dark blue turned to violet, and then, after a second in transition, became bright blue.

Like last night, this was another big moment. It felt as if everything that had ever made me feel alive was coming together in this grand finale- the love, laughter, and joy seemed to fill me with such strength that I felt I would burst.

After the darkest, blackest, coldest moment of the night, sunshine was upon me.

But it was a second later that the real miracle happened.

Far, far away, at the very edge of the horizon, an orange dot began to appear out of nowhere. It was very faded and seemed to blend with the purple that was around it.

The wind stopped blowing. The water stopped moving. My heart stopped beating.

We were all holding our breath to see what was going to happen.

It was as if none of us knew that the sun rose every morning.

It was as if, forgetting about this one simple fact, we had come forth to behold this one astounding miracle- the birth of a new day.

The orange dot steadily became larger and brighter. Then it became yellow. And then it turned gold. It was getting bright, blindingly bright. It reached a crescendo, and just when I thought I could bear to hold still no more, it happened. The sun broke through. And the night was killed.

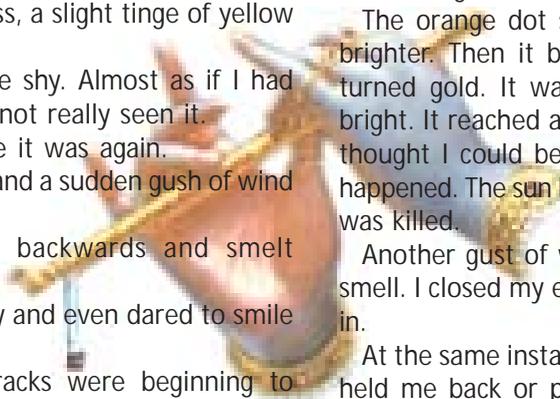
Another gust of wind came with that sweet smell. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath in.

At the same instant, everything that had ever held me back or pulled me down seemed to break away. Just like one ray of sunshine had pierced through a hopeless, eternal darkness, something reciprocated inside me. The chains of fear and sorrow that were strangling me snapped into pieces as I flew away, high into the sky.

'Open your eyes. See around you!' urged the smart voice in my head.

'NO.' smiled the deeper voice. 'Keep your eyes shut. For you have never been able to see better in all your life..'

I smiled. I knew the deeper voice was right.



-Avinash Agarwal



**Swami Vivekananda's Address
The Parliament of Religions
on September 11, 1893:**

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"Sisters and Brothers of America... [At this moment came the three minute standing ovation from the audience of 7,000] It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions; and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects."

"My thanks also to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honor of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration."

"I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation."

"I will quote to you brethren a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest childhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: 'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'

"The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: 'Whosoever comes to me, though whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me.'

"Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful Earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization, and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now.

"But their time has come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal."

Views on Swamiji and His Address

He is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation.

-The New York Herald.

A striking figure, clad in yellow and orange shining like the sun of India in the midst of the heavy atmosphere of Chicago, a lion head, piercing eyes, mobile lips, movements swift and abrupt-such was my first impression of Swami Vivekananda, as I met him in one of the rooms set apart for the use of the delegates to the Parliament of Religion.

Enraptured, the huge multitude hung upon his words; not a syllable must be lost not a cadence missed! "That man a heathen!" said one as he came out of the great hall, "and we send missionaries to his people! It would be more fitting that they should send missionaries to us."

-Dr. Annie Besant

Quoted in *The Life of Swami Vivekananda Vol. I (1979), page 429.*



Life - A Priceless Possession

Every time I have reason to quit, I find a reason to stand up and fight back. Every time I have a reason to be sad, I find reasons innumerable to feel happy. Every time I have a reason to cry, I cherish memories that could make me smile. Life has a reason to be yours. You rule your life and nobody else. Think of a week with all surprises, all smiles and all happiness in your life...Don't you think the joy of living is all lost? Do you still enjoy surprises when they no more surprise you, when they are just part of your routine life?

Once, there lived a rich man, with all luxuries a man could afford and wanted to but all he lacked was the feeling of happiness. He went to a sage and asked him if he could suggest ways of happy living. The sage then ordered him to part with all his property, also to hand over all of his property to him and leave the place immediately. The aghast man did all that was asked to be done and left the place with a frown on his face and a heavy heart. A week later, the sage called for the man who no longer was rich, enjoyed luxuries, was happy and enquired him what he would do if all his property was given back to him. The man's heart was lit with a ray of hope and face glee with joy. The sage then gave him back all his property and valuables and asked him if he

was happy. The man shrieked out of excitement and was overwhelmed with joy. He neither spoke a word nor asked for any explanation. He just thanked the sage for making him realize the preciousness of life and left the hermitage for home. On the way home, did he realize what all this meant? He realized that none other than himself could actually influence his emotions and life.

Similarly, each of us rule our lives and we are the authors of our destiny. We write the book called LIFE, ourselves. When an individual talks about life, it is always "MY LIFE" that one refers to it as. The word "MY" makes it particular to which extent one realizes the preciousness of the possession. We should know how to alter ourselves and accord our lives when people try to influence us. Remember! Life never turns against you. It is the people you trust and people you let influence your life and the situations that turn against you. That is when you have to act wise and turn life in your favor. Realize! The joy of living always lies within oneself. Life is a priceless possession. Never can one either buy it or sell it. It is meant to be lived and is meant to be cherished. Life once gone, like time, can never come back. So, be proud and pleased to have such an invaluable possession.

- *Ramya Manasa*



The Cosmic Wedding... Ganesh Chaturthi



We are all familiar with the story of how a little boy was created by Mother Parvati, to guard Her home when She was bathing and the events that followed which led to the child receiving the head of an elephant calf and becoming Ganesha. It is worthwhile to understand what is behind this seemingly impractical story. Swami Chinmayananda says "...Don't blindly believe. Question every statement. Your independent thinking and understanding are of utmost importance. Then alone our knowledge can unfold our self."

Sanatana Dharma, which is a Universal law, in the course of time came to be called as "**Hinduism**" followed by the creation of a religion. To explain the phenomena of Cosmic Law with the help of words, the sages (in other words the knowers of this Law) have taken the help of numerous symbols and images. With the passing time, people not having the same knowledge have retained only the images devoid of their meaning. Again, the sages have created rituals and symbolism, in order to help the people connect to that very knowledge. But again in course of time people have applied the rituals without living up to them, without knowing their meaning. Thus is born what can rightly be called a religion, the Hinduism, profoundly symbolic which for many people has changed into a blind faith. In Ganesha's story we have on one side Shiva, the Purusha or the Consciousness, and Parvati, the Prakriti or the Nature, on the other side and Lord Ganesha, being His son, is symbolic of a person who has attained that state of Divinity.

It's Parvati, by Maya, the illusion that is Herself, creates a child from the scurf of her own body who is no other than the mind, her own creation. This child, the mind, prevents Shiva from meeting

Parvati; he prevents the cosmic wedding, the reunification of the two, Prakriti and Purusha. According to Shiva Purana when Shiva wants to put this child away, it is not possible for Him, He has to seek the help of "ganas" but the little boy overcomes these ganas. The ganas are the symbols of the virtues, the good tendencies in us which means that in order to fulfill his desires; the mind will even kill the good tendencies in us. When Shiva wants to meet Parvati and He cannot, even with the help of the Ganas, the only means to succeed is to chop off the head of the boy with His trishul. This represents that the Consciousness kills the mind. That being done, He replaces the head of the child by the head of an elephant.

The elephant head is constituted of senses all increased to the maximum: large ears, piercing eyes, very big nose and symbolizes the immense wisdom of a person of Perfection. Wisdom is something that comes out of *manana*, independent thinking and reflection. This *manana* can happen only when one has taken in spiritual knowledge i.e. the process of *shravana* has taken place. This process of *shravana* or intake of spiritual knowledge is portrayed as Lord Ganesha's large ears where one listens to a teacher. It also symbolizes that even the wisest people are always open to hearing fresh ideas and opinions. In other words, the wise are those who always keep an open mind.

He replaces the head of the boy, the mind by the intelligence, the "**buddhi**": the faculty to discriminate, to distinguish the true from the false, the only means for Shiva to be able to be united with Parvati. The boy was a creation of Parvati; Ganesha is the creation of Shiva. The sense of ego has been cut and replaced by the buddhi, the discrimination. From then, instead of killing the ganas, He becomes Ganesha, the Lord of Ganas. Hence in temples we first honour Ganesha before reaching Shiva. We must first give up your mind, our ego; without doing which we will never reach the Consciousness, Our Self. And this is what we celebrate and remind ourselves every Ganesh Chaturthi.

- Adapted from Sources by Gaura Krishna

Differentiation: The cause of rift



There is so much of unrest and violence in our world in the name of religion. So many terrorist acts are committed in the name of God and innocent people die painful deaths. So many mothers lose their children, so many children become orphans, so many people become disabled. What have they done to deserve this? Can God want His children to suffer? God does not want terrorism. Message of God is only Love and nothing else. But these terrorists will never stop for a moment to think what they are doing. They believe that the world is only theirs which they cannot share with others. But who is this "others"? Their own flesh and blood, people who have been created by the same God with same flesh and blood as them. Then why can't they realize it? What is stopping them?

When Swami Vivekananda was asked whether he is tolerant of other religions he was shocked. He said "Why should I tolerate?" We should accept all. The concept of tolerance is so demeaning. Is the person lesser than us in any way that we should somehow tolerate that person? It is not so. Religion cannot be so narrow that it can accommodate only few; it is actually for all. The brotherhood which binds us together is our religion- the religion of universal brotherhood. We are for all and everyone else is for us. Why can't such simple things be comprehended? There is so much of complexity and viciousness around and the strangest part is that all these things are for nothing. God does not discriminate whom to love and whom not to. How is one human being different from the other?

Even if we forget the world at large, inside our own little community we will find that there is so much differentiation between people in the name of caste, creed, colour and economic status and that it is hurting. We consider the people who work at homes as mere servants who are at our beck and call. We forget that they are humans just like us with likes and dislikes. They should be treated with love and understanding. Any relation which is based on love and compassion will last. The concept of equality should not be merely an ideal but an achievement. There should be no place for ego in our hearts. After all, life is very short.

- *Sukanya Ghosh*



Living With A Divine Soul

- Joy In Work

Those who work without choice always grumble and work under pressure. For those who work with choice, their happiness depends upon the result. But a real Karma yogi does the work as it comes without having any attachment towards it. He alone can find joy in work.

Swami Nachiketanaanda always says, 'Never work under pressure. That will not do you or others any good.' He sets an example by putting His heart and soul in any work that He undertakes. He never worked disinterestedly and He never felt any work was a burden. He never classified work as high and low. He always experienced Divinity in the work He did. Where ever He was, the whole atmosphere was electrified with His presence.

Swamiji demonstrated how to cook tasty and satvik food. He took up cooking work for two months at Nachiketa Tapovan. By 7.30 am He used to keep ready, Rice, Dal, Roti and one vegetable curry for college goers residing in Tapovan and twice or thrice every week, when there was Annadhanam, He used to prepare food for about 150 students, teachers and volunteers. I was worried that He was taking too much strain and one day asked Him, "Swamiji! Why are you making so many dishes? Can't you make one single dish? It will lessen the burden for you. Why are you straining yourself?" To that He replied: "I am enjoying cooking for everyone. When you take care of someone, always give your hundred percent. Never work half-heartedly." This was a great lesson for me. The way He said this really touched my heart. I saw a true mother in Him.

It was a pleasure watching Him at work. While cooking or cleaning, Swamiji was always in a joyful mood. Those who have seen Him working in the kitchen would have learnt enough lessons for their lifetime. He never exhibited His Divinity nor did He expect anyone to respect Him. He made everyone feel He was one with them. He was a friend to the children, a Guide to the youth and a child to all the mothers. I am really blessed to be His mother.



"Those who work, work with zest and with joy and in work, learn calmness and the serenity of the human mind and heart. What a wonderful joy it is to work in such a way! It is like gliding. When we glide we don't find any pressure of friction."

- Swami Ranganathananda



- P. Vasundhara

Beyond Human Bonds



A Guru meets his disciples after a long time and the delighted disciples swarm around him like bees around a flower. The Guru asks the disciples to share their experiences and here is the conversation that followed.

A Disciple: Guruji, more than anything, I am happy to be in your physical presence. But even when you are physically away, I still enjoy your presence in the subtle way. The very thought of you gives me a lot of energy to function in my daily life.

Guru: (Looks at the disciple and smiles in appreciation).

Another Disciple: When I see you after such a long time, my emotions are exploding like volcanoes. Your physical presence is very important to me. I feel my life is meaningless when you are away. I am neither able to meditate nor do service. I feel wonderful when you are around and I am sure you can understand my feelings. Can't we always be together? I would like to sit at your feet and enjoy the bliss. I have always shared my joys and sorrows with you. Whom else can I trust or count on more than you?

Guru: Are you here to realize this five foot body? Is it not to realize the Consciousness that pervades the universe?

Disciple: I can never understand this spirituality Guruji. I just came here to be with you. I will live and die for you.

Guru: If you are so attached to my physical form it will only bring sorrow to you. You live in a world of illusion. Everything you treasure can't be yours forever. All the Jivas in this world are my children. I have to take care of them. Then how is it possible for me to be in your presence all the time? I have come into this world to fulfill a task and once that is fulfilled I have to leave. Physical separation is inevitable. You too have to leave this body when the call comes. So, is it not sensible to lead a purposeful life instead of lamenting over my physical presence? Clean the windows of your soul and look within, you will see me there. If you depend on me

only externally, it will lead to sorrow and the sorrow will turn into anger, which is dangerous. Then you will become more distant from me and eventually your true self. You will go away from your goal.

If you understand the true essence of the Guru then the pain of separation from the Guru actually takes you to your goal. And when you march forward with that understanding there is no possibility of failure. Take the pearl for example. It is said that a grain of sand enters into the oyster and makes it irritated. Out of that irritation the body of the oyster reacts. It undergoes a lot of pain, but it is later transformed into a pearl. Separation is a pain, but that pain is converted into a pearl if it is with understanding the Guru's essence. But for many, the pain becomes anger and then they find fault with the Guru. They even feel the Guru is partial. I have come to give the key to all your problems. In fact, you may never have to call me anymore, although I'll always answer if you do.

Disciple: What kind of key are you talking about? And what if I don't use it?

Guru: Unhappiness happens. Love is the key I am giving you.

Disciple: I don't follow you?

Guru: Don't try to understand with your head. Try to understand with your heart. I am the love that is in your heart. I am the key. Spread that love everywhere. Everyone is your Teacher. Use each person as a mirror and turn the searchlight onto yourself. You are sure to see me there. I hope you understand and move forward. Do not waste your precious time.

Light seemed to dawn on the disciple. He watches the form of the Guru disappearing into oblivion, with a look of contentment in his face.

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Exactly a month ago, in the month of June, we were on a Safari in Kenya's Masai Mara National Park in Africa. As our jeep made its way through the golden grass on a bright sunny day, we spotted herds of Thompson Gazelles (deer family), wild buffaloes and zebras serenely grazing. While I was enjoying the serenity and the tranquility, my eye caught an unfamiliar movement. It was not the movement of a gazelle or a wild buffalo. It was a cheetah walking elegantly amidst the crowded herd.

Oh God! One of these animals ending up as a meal set my pulse racing. First, some of the zebras popped their striped heads out of the grass, lifted one of the legs, wagged tails and casted a dubious glance; but did not move. It was astonishing that the predator caused no fear in them. As the cheetah moved towards the wild buffaloes, they too gave a blank stare and continued to graze. My knowledge told me that a prey runs for its life when a predator is around. But none of this was happening. My instinct then suggested that the cheetah probably wanted to eat a gazelle. But the not so hungry cheetah, continued to walk through the herd of gazelle, still disinterested. The Gazelles too repeated a similar act. It was like one big family living in peaceful co-existence.

Looking at my restlessness over the peaceful co-existence, the tour guide commented that the wild animals do not hunt when they are not hungry. The Law of Wild Animals propounds, "Eat only when

you are Hungry". The wild animals hunt only when hungry.

Now, the question arises.....Why do humans not understand the 'Law of the Wild'? If we 'Humans' too eat only when we are hungry, then maybe we would not deplete the Earth's natural resources. On a broader perspective, I do not mean the physical act of 'eating'. What I mean is if man took only what he needed for survival from nature and not all that he saw around him, the Earth would have been a happier place and we humans too would have had a peaceful co-existence.

The so called 'Wild animals' are not any wilder than we humans. It is 'We' the Humans who are much wilder than these animals trying to grab everything from everywhere. If an animal with no intelligence can overcome avarice, man with an intellect can definitely overcome greed.

Hence, "Take only what you need for Survival from Mother Nature and nothing More!"... This law of the Wild if followed by each one of us in our own small ways will help us all live in peaceful co-existence and avert many catastrophes. It is indeed a lesson to be learnt from the 'The Wild Animals'.

(Pictures Source: Internet Photographer Michel Denis-Huot, who captured these amazing pictures on safari in Kenya's Masai Mara in October last year.)

- Anuradha Raju

A Bouquet of Flowers

It was one of the mid-summer afternoons when the temperatures were touching mid 40s. The power cuts were making the heat all the more unbearable. While complaining about the sweltering heat and the lack of power back-up in the place I walked into the balcony hoping to catch a breeze or two from the Albizia tree. It was too ambitious of me to expect the slightest waft at that time of the day when the tree herself was parched and the air was completely still like a perfectly disciplined class of pupils. While my disappointed self was looking around in despair and distress, my eyes snapped a Kodak moment! Children of the construction staff of neighborhood were playing right under the flaming Sun, squealing and laughing. The rays of Sun that were piercing me like daggers through the brick walls of a secure house didn't even seem to touch their unsheltered happy skins. The heat that was able to vaporize and terrorize me could in the least affect their joy. At that moment those little kids looked like yogis doing penance in the Himalayas. That instance reinforced in me the might of mind in training our senses. That instance revealed the secret to human behavior. It is our mind that plays a greater role than the situation itself in determining whether it evokes pain, pleasure or equipoise. In turn the mind is influenced by

the previous memories that the situation brings along with it. To me high temperatures carry the memory of discomfort caused by sweating which I detest. So in my case if I overcome the abhorrence for sweating or get desensitized to the discomfort caused by it then I wouldn't be as over-reactant to high temperatures any more.



Trying to walk through and analyze situations that pose hurdles in conducting ourselves smoothly is a stepping stone in the spiritual journey. Close observation will bring to our knowledge that we possess a set of stubborn tendencies that demand enormous patience, commitment and hope from us. On the brighter side the teacher called the life gives us an abundance of opportunities until we overcome our strong tendencies. Opportunities come in the form of Guru, children, parents, spouse, pleasure, pain, health, illness, wealth, poverty, awards, tests, work, leisure, achievements, failures and the list can go on. If we don't identify or miss one lesson there is always going to be another chance. And the track is designed so cleverly that if we try to bypass a hurdle, we will be led back to square one. Life does present us with a bouquet of flowers called opportunities but unless we accept and cherish each of them the journey will not be worthwhile.

- An aspirant

*Greater is He that is in you
than he that is in the world.*





*Krishnam
Vande
Jagat
Gurum!*





Enigma of Right Action



A verse in the Bhagavad Gita goes:

*SWADHARME NIDHANAM SHREYAH.
PARADHARMO BHAYAABAHAAH* (chapter 2: Verse 35)

Simply translated, it is better to do one's dharma than adopt another person's dharma.

It is the basic ethical foundation. It implies righteous living, thinking and action - a constructive interaction with humanity.

Along the years, through interactions with the world around, while questioning my own thoughts and actions, I have always pondered on Krishna's counsel to Arjuna, about "swadharma".

At first look it is sort of confusing as to what the message really is. While casually discussing with a family member, two points were raised. Firstly, does this mean that even if we are inspired and like what someone else is doing (inspiring or noble or worthwhile), we should not emulate the person and make his/her dharma our own?

OR, secondly, does it imply that one should just stick to his/her own 'dharma' no matter what the consequences to people around?

Spiritually speaking neither seems to make sense completely. The great saint, freedom fighter and social thinker, Vinoba Bhave says, the purpose of the Gita is "to remove the illusion that stands between us and our swadharma." So then, what is this keyword "swadharma" that pops up so often in the eternal dialogue between the SELF (Krishna) and the self (Arjuna)? What is meant by 'right action'?

When Arjuna saw most of his family out there on the other side of the battle field, he was overwhelmed. He was blinded by emotion and lost clarity on what his duty was. We face these situations on a daily basis, both within and without. Within, our good samskaras wage a constant war against our lower samskaras and our 'self' is not ready for this tussle. Especially because of the habituated attachment to

everything we identify ourselves with (both good and bad). While dealing with the outer world too we are overwhelmed sometimes when we find ourselves in moral, spiritual or emotional dilemmas.

The Lord advises the grief-stricken Arjuna that as a kshatriya his duty is to protect righteousness in his land. No matter whom the fight is against. If at that moment, Arjuna decided to put down arms and take up the dharma of a sannyasin, would it be the right call for the moment?

But under what circumstances do we consider it our dharma to exchange blows when we confront injustice and cruelty? In every layer of human life, this predicament exists. As two little ones entered my life, I began to feel that life was revolving only around feeding, changing diapers, entertaining and putting them to bed. Reading inspiring lives of Mother Teresa, Gandhi etc made me crumble inside that I wasn't serving outside my home and that my life needs to have more purpose and be less self-centered.

During brief periods of a relatively good meditation, I would reflect that at THAT point in time, my primary duty was to be a care-taker at home. Neglecting which, even if I did glorifying service outside, I would not be fulfilling my 'real duty'. Does this mean it's only right to take care of family and not contribute outside? No. For another person, seemingly in the same situation, in a different state of affairs and a different 'baggage' within, the right action may be different. Another aspect to think over is that one's own 'swadharma' may change at different stages in one's lifetime.



Spiritually seekers experience this at a different plane. Sadhana is usually prescribed based on the person's individual temperament, vasanas and lifestyle. Embracing another person's sadhana may not be completely beneficial. It is said, that the same guru, would advise different disciples in a different way with respect to their sadhana based on the individual's specific needs. Some need more bhakti, some more Gyana and some others more karma yoga. The right mixture of this can only be something unique to the seeker.

In the yogic way of thinking, there is no good or bad in the world, just "less ignorant" and "more ignorant". So how can we be sure we make the right choice in our action or the "less ignorant" one? The most difficult question for which there is no black and white answer. How we wish we had an all knowing Guru who was always there to point it out for us. But just as children like to draw their own pictures instead of us holding the hand for them, the Cosmic Spirit has left it to us to decide the steps. We might keep failing, but we need to try to get back on the horse and the next time we might have more clarity. That would rightly be our own "experiments with Truth".

The experienced sadhakas indicate that we should contemplate on the difficulty deeply, preferably right after our sadhana, be it japa, meditation, prayer etc. That's when, the Enlightened Ones say, we will have the most clarity. The inner voice will slowly guide us as we start seeking help and be 'receptive' to it. It may not be an obvious message or answer but as we put one foot forward after another, we might hear the inner voice a little louder. Even if, in worldly sense, it turns out to be a "failure", it is still our "experiment with the Truth" and our learning from it. One day, when we have developed unfettering faith in the Divine guidance, we will surely get help through one of His many instruments.

Finally, knowing the intricacy and contextual nature in choosing the right thought and action in my problems, I should also be aware of not being judgmental about my fellow human beings' life's decisions in life, however absurd or insane or unacceptable it may seem to me.

- Harini Nandakuru

*Everyone
is
gifted,
but
some
people
never
open
the
package!*

Management Philosophy in Bhagavad Gita



Bhagavad Gita is considered to be the essence of Indian Philosophy, which was revealed to Arjuna by Lord Krishna on the battle field, when the former went into depression and declared to withdraw himself from waging the war.

Great western thinkers, writers and scientists are fascinated by the essence of the Gita. Millions of Indians chant the Gita verses every day. Many scholars have written commentaries on the Gita. Many Gurus give Gita discourses as thousands listen and comprehend it.

Modern management gurus are using the Gita to explain the management concepts. Here a few verses of Gita are discussed from the point of efficiency in management.

Efficient Manager/Worker- Satvika Karta (chapter18-sloka 26)

A person who is

- Free from ego and attachment while performing the work
- And is having clarity and resolve about his goals
- Ever enthusiastic and energetic
- Even minded in success or failure; is called a satvika worker/ manager.

Emotional Manager/Worker- Rajasika Karta (chapter18-Sloka24)

A person who

- Gives importance to the (end) result
- Neglects the means of achieving the ends
- Does the work with over exertion
- Is always carried away by emotions like anger, attachment and passions, is called a Rajasika worker/manager.

Idiotic Manager/Worker- Tamasika Karta (chapter18-Sloka25)

A person who

- Over estimates his capabilities and performs the work with ignorance
 - And whose acts always end in violence or cause disturbance to the people around him
 - Who procrastinates the work without honoring the commitments is called a Tamasik worker/Manager
- Krishna reveals about the ways to obtain communication skills (chapter17-sloka15):

The words that are not provocative, that are truthful, spoken with good intention, words that produce soothing effect in others are considered to be the effort for communicative ability (Vak tapas). This skill can be obtained by consistent study of great literary works and continuous practice with awareness.

From: *Eternally Talented India 108 facts*

RISHI PANCHAMI

Rishi Panchami is a vrata observed by women on the consecutive day of Ganesh Chaturthi. The significance of this vrata is paying respect to our great Rishis of Yore. It is believed that any sins committed could be washed away by performing this vrata. Great Rishis like Kashyap, Atri, Bharadwaj, Vishwamitra, Gautam, Jamadagni and Vasishta are remembered on this day. Our Hindu culture has a rich tradition of Vedas, which were written by Rishis. Near the North Pole there are seven 'Nakshatras', which are popularly known as 'Saptarshis'. They are called so purposely to remember the names of the Rishis permanently.



During the observance of this vrata, women visit the river, take cow dung with them, clean their teeth with a medicinal herbal stick and take a cold water bath. They arrange the idols of Saptarshis on a small wooden platform in the form of seven betel nuts and perform pooja. They partake only those fruits, which grow below the earth and strictly avoid eating any eatables which are prepared from the grains grown from the toiling of bullocks.

Brushing of the teeth with herbal sticks has a scientific aspect. 'Aghada', a herbal plant is grown in the months of Ashad and Sravan. In Bhadrapad it becomes full-fledged and its medicinal instincts are prominently noticed in the same month. There is a reason behind brushing with Aghada sticks. The teeth become stronger, gum infections are cured and the juice when swallowed takes care of cough and stomach infections. With all these advantages in one plant, it was but obvious that its use is strongly advocated. In the month of Shravan, pooja is performed by women wherein they garland the Goddess with Aghada and Durva leaves. The Jains too regard this as a very important day.

*Peace
is
not
the
absence
of
conflict.
It's
the
absence
of
inner
conflict!*



Sanskrit - Lesson Seven

Let us imagine dinner time at a Samskrit Home (xÉxMwiÉaEWiqÉ). A Samskrit Home is one wherein at least 2 family members are able to converse in Samskritam with each other. Samskrit Home or otherwise, in my childhood, they used to say that during meals time, one should use only Samskrit language, because meals is like a Yajna for an Indian.

Mother is serving while children are all eating. (Sometimes, you may find my English usage a little odd. I have chosen intentionally that style, so that you can relate words in English with the Samskrit counterparts.)

qÉÉiÉÉ - pÉuÉiÉÉ xjÉÉsÉMwÉ ÉUÉwÉ AÍxiÉ! IMuqÉc **AÉuzrÉMuqÉ?** Mother: Your plate is empty! What is **needed**?

mÉBÉÉ - A± zÉÉMuqÉc E''ÉqÉcÉc AÍxiÉ| zÉÉMQ SSÉiÉÉ| Son: Today curry is good. Give curry.

qÉÉiÉÉ zÉÉMQ mÉUuÉwÉrÉiÉÉ| IMuqÉcÉiÉc zÉÉMQ xjÉÉmÉrÉiÉÉ, mÉcNúiÉ| Mother serves curry. Places a little curry and asks.

qÉÉiÉÉ - **mÉrÉÉmiÉqÉ?** Enough?

mÉBÉÉ - iÉ, **CiÉÉámÉ** SSÉiÉÉ AqóÉ| No, Give **more**, mother.

qÉÉiÉÉ - CSÉiÉÉc mÉrÉÉmiÉqÉc uÉÉ? Now, it is sufficient?

mÉBÉÉ - AÉqÉc mÉrÉÉmiÉqÉc Yes, Enough

qÉÉiÉÉ (mÉBÉÉc uÉSiÉÉ) - mÉBÉÉ! IMuqÉc CcNúiÉ pÉuÉiÉÉ? Mother (tells daughter) – Daughter! What do you desire?

mÉBÉÉ - YuÉlJÉiÉc AÉuzrÉMuqÉc Daughter: Sambar is required.

qÉÉiÉÉ - **qÉÉxiÉÉ** oÉwá ZÉÉSiÉqÉc A±| mÉrÉÉmiÉqÉc CiÉÉámÉ qÉÉxiÉÉ| **No** (do not need). A lot is eaten (You ate a lot) today. Enough. No more.

mÉBÉÉ - iÉ, iÉ, CiÉÉámÉ IMuqÉcÉiÉc ZÉÉSÉlqÉ| No, no, I shall eat a little more.

qÉÉiÉÉ - **AxiÉ** Okay.

The telephone rings. I pick it up. Here goes the conversation. Look at the common greeting and other formalities.

AnÉUÉ (The Other)– Hello.

AWiqÉc (I)- **wáU AÉqÉ** (A nice Indian greeting in the praise of the Lord in the place of 'Hello'.)

xÉÉ (He) – Am I speaking to Krupalu?

AWiqÉc – Yes, I am Krupalu. Please go ahead.

xÉÉ – I heard about Samskrita Bharati. I am very keen to learn Sanskrit. Can you help?

AWiqÉc – Definitely.

xÉÉ – You speak in Sanskrit only. I learnt it in my childhood. I remember a bit of it now.

AWiqÉc - **AúzrÉqÉ** pÉuÉÉiÉc xÉÉxMwiÉÉaÉqÉ| **AW** xÉÉxMwiÉÉaÉ LuÉ **uÉSÉlqÉ** (**Definitely**, You are a Samskrit lover. **I speak** using Samskrit only.)

xÉÉ – It is so nice to hear you talk in Samskrit. Are there any classes near Madhapur?

AWiqÉc - AÉqÉc pÉuÉiÉÉ aÉwáÉqÉInÉa LMq xÉÉxMwiÉÉMúSÉqÉc AÍxiÉ| **pÉuÉÉiÉc** iÉcÉmMwiÉÉÉnÉÉaÉiÉc **ÉÉiÉÉiÉ** uÉÉ? iÉSÉ| (Yes, There is a Samskrit centre near your home. Do **you know** Nachiketa Tapovan? There.)

xÉÉ – Yes, I know. What are the timings? I want to come.

AWiqÉc - AÍaÉqÉ - aÉwáuÉÉxÉUa AÍaÉqÉ - zÉÉiÉuÉÉxÉUa uÉÉ, **pÉuÉÉiÉc AÍaÉcNúiÉ** aÉwáuÉÉxÉUa **ÉÁÉc** MuÉrÉÉ qÉkrÉÉ»á iSÉ - uÉÉSiÉÉ zÉÉiÉuÉÉxÉUa **ÉÁÉc** MuÉrÉÉ mÉÉiÉÉ SzÉ - uÉÉSiÉÉ (**You come** next Thursday or next Saturday. **If** Thursday, class is at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. **If** Saturday, class is at 10am.)

xÉÉ – Did you say 3pm on every Thursday and 10am on Saturday.

AWiqÉc - **xÉqrÉMq** iÉSé LuÉ AWiqÉc uÉSÉlqÉ| (**Good/Correct**. I say that **only**.)

xÉÉ – Excellent. Timing suits me well. I can come over next Saturday.

AWiqÉc - **kÉlrúuÉSÉ** AúzrÉc AÍaÉcNúiÉ| AWq pÉuÉiÉÉ qÉÉsÉiÉqÉc CcNúiÉqÉ| iÉÉuÉSé LuÉ ZÉÉSiÉqÉ (**Thanks**. Come definitely. I request your meeting. Is that all?)

xÉÉ - AÉqÉc kÉlrúuÉSÉÉ| (Yes, Thanks.)

AWiqÉc - AxiÉ Okay.

Incidentally, we do have regular classes taking place at Nachiketa Tapovan. You can call me on 98661 40406 and join in.

- *Krupalu Ogeti, Secretary, Samskrit Bharati, Hyderabad.*
email: okrupalu@sanskritam.net

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL...

*What does the word 'fortuitous' mean at all?
-it actually means:*

THREE BULLETS-There once was a man who had nothing for his family to eat.

He had an old rifle and three bullets. So, he decided that he would go out hunting and kill some wild game for dinner. As he went down the road, he saw a rabbit. He shot at the rabbit but missed it.

The rabbit ran away.

Then he saw a squirrel and fired a shot at the squirrel but missed it.

The squirrel disappeared into a hole in a cottonwood tree.

As he went further, he saw a large wild "Tom" turkey in the tree, but he had only one bullet remaining.

A voice spoke to him and said, "Pray first, Aim high and Stay Focused."

However, at the same time, he saw a deer which was a better kill.



He brought the gun down and aimed at the deer. But, then he saw a rattlesnake between his feet about to bite him, so he naturally brought the gun down further to shoot the rattlesnake.

Still, the voice said again to him, "I said, Pray, Aim high and Stay Focused."

So, the man decided to listen to the voice.

He prayed, then aimed the gun high up in the tree and shot the wild turkey.

The bullet bounced off the turkey and killed the deer.

The handle fell off the gun and hit the snake in the head and killed it.

And, when the gun had gone off, it knocked him down into a pond.

When he stood up to look around, he had fish in all his pockets, a dead deer and a turkey to eat for his family.

And all this happened because the man listened to the voice.

FORTUITOUS does not mean happening by chance or luck, it actually means:

Pray first before you do anything, Aim and shoot high in your goals,

and Stay focused on God.

-Dr. A Surendra Kumar.

Pray First, Aim High And Stay Focused!



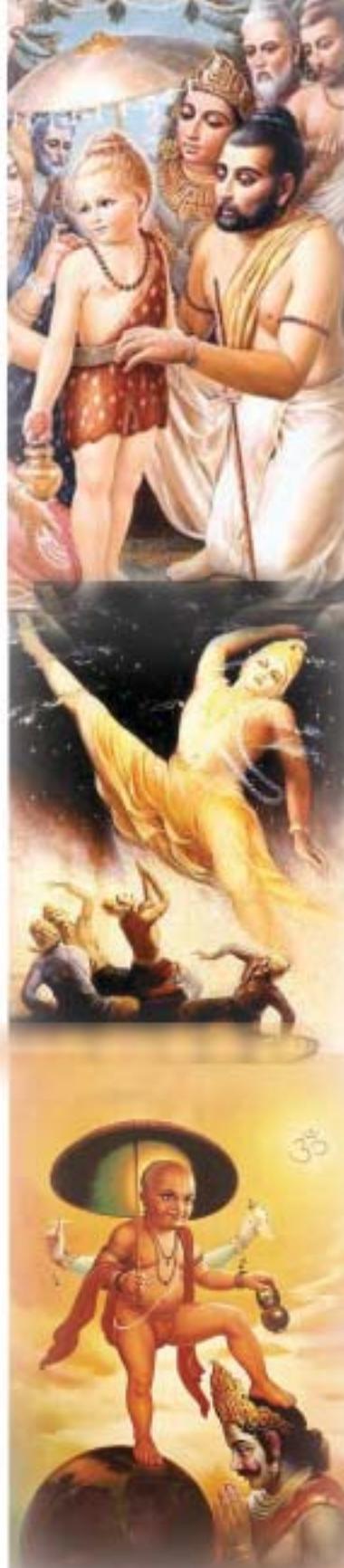
Vamana Jayanti

In Vamana Avatar, Lord Vishnu incarnates Himself as a dwarf priest in this world. Lord Vamana was born to Aditi-devi (the mother of many devas) and the great sage Kashyapa Muni – the son of Lord Brahma. BALI, the grandson of Prahlada was a very valorous and mighty asura. By his penance and might, he conquered the whole world. Indra and other gods fearing that he and asuras would conquer all the three worlds went to Lord Vishnu for help. Lord Vishnu gave them assurance and incarnated as a dwarf 'Vamana' in the household of a brahmana. He went to Bali on growing up and asked for alms. Bali was delighted to offer Him anything He requested even though his guru Sukracharya warned him that it was Lord Vishnu.

Vamana then requested for the amount of land that could come under His three feet. Bali gracefully agreed. Lord Vishnu then grew in size and covered the earth and heaven in two strides. And due to lack of space, He put his third leg on Bali himself and crushed Bali to the nether or the Patala loka, thus helping the Gods out.

Lord Vamana taught King Bali that arrogance and pride should be abandoned if any advancement in life is to be made, and that wealth should never be taken for granted since it can so easily be taken away. He was pleased by King Bali's determination and ability to keep his promise in the face of his spiritual master's curse and the prospect of losing all his wealth. Lord Vishnu named the King Mahabali since he was a Mahatma (great soul).

Vamana Jayanti celebrated on Badrapada Shuddha Dwadasi signifies the birthday of the dwarf Vamana. It is the fifth of the 10 Avatars (incarnations) of Lord Vishnu. The aim of the incarnation was to help Devas (Demi gods) who had lost their power to King Mahabali. In 2010, the date of Vamana Jayanti is September 19. In this incarnation, the vanquished (Mahabali) is more popular than the victor (Vishnu). On this auspicious day devotees observe fasting. Many devout devotees abstain from salt or even water until noon. In the morning on this very auspicious day after having a bath, people wear clean clothes and offer Lord Vamana incense, lamp and flowers. These items are offered seven times in a clockwise direction around His picture/Deity form. Then sweets are offered to Lord Vamana. Reading about the glories of Vaman Avatar and visiting a temple form a part of the celebrations. Offering Lord Vamana prayers with faith and devotion may remove all the obstacles in one's path.





ANANT CHATURDASHI

Anant Chaturdashi is a day with twin significance. On this day the festival of Lord Ganapathi comes to an end and the installed idols of Lord Ganesha are immersed in lakes, rivers or seas. People recite and listen to the stories and legends of God Vishnu who is Lord Anant, the infinite and recite hymns from the Vedas. But there is a second significance to the day and that is what gives Anant Chaturdashi its name.

On the 14th day of Bhadrapada shukla paksha, people observe a vow in honor of Lord Vishnu. The belief is that if one maintains this vow for 14 years, it will bring immense wealth and spiritual benefit. There is a legend connected with the festival. One day, a Brahmin, Kaundinya and his wife Sushila were on their way home. They stopped by a river because Kaundinya wanted to take a bath. While he was away, Sushila observed some women praying and when she enquired, they told her that they were observing the Anant Vrata. Sushila too took the vow and started observing the vrat and soon she and Kaundinya became wealthy. When Kaundinya noticed the Anant string, he asked Sushila about it. She told him the story. But wealth has made Kaundinya haughty and dismissing it as mere superstition he broke the string and threw it away. After this all sorts of calamities happened in their lives and soon they were reduced to extreme poverty. Kaundinya repented and went in search of Anant to get his glory back.

He went into the forest where he saw a tree fully laden with mangoes, but no one was eating them. The entire tree was infested with worms. Then he saw a cow with her calf, two big lakes joining with each other, a donkey and an elephant. But nobody he asked knew who or where Anant was. In the end, a desperate Kaundinya prepared to commit suicide. At that moment, a venerable old man approached and took him into a cave. Once inside the dark

cave, the old man turned into Lord Vishnu and told Kaundinya that he would regain his lost happiness and wealth if he observed the Anant Vrata for 14 years. He also disclosed the meaning of what Kaundinya had seen during the search. He explained that the mango tree was a Brahmin, who in his previous life had acquired plenty of knowledge, but had not communicated it to anyone. The cow was the earth, which at the beginning had eaten all the seeds of plants. The two lakes were two sisters who loved each other very much, but their alms were spent on each other only. The donkey was cruelty and anger and finally the elephant, Kaundinya's pride.

Anant advised Kaundinya to lead a dharmic life and see the Lord in all beings.



On Anant Chaturdashi the image of a hooded cobra is fashioned out of Darbha (grass) and is worshipped as Anant, the divine snake on whom Vishnu lies. The snake is offered scented flowers, oil lamps, incense and special naivedhya. A string coated with red kum kum and having 14 knots is placed before the idol or picture of Lord Vishnu. Then the consecrated string is tied to the wrist. The number 14 is considered sacred for this vow. On this 14th day of the moon, 14 floral decorations are made. Similarly, 14 artis and 14 food items are offered to the deity. The vrata is observed for 14 years and ends in the fifteenth Anant Chaturdashi day.

It might not be possible for everyone to observe this vrat but we can sure remain tuned to the divine Anant, the Supreme Consciousness on this day and derive spiritual benefits.

In 2010 Anant Chaturdashi is observed on September 22nd.





Be Yourself



There was a Chinese Monk who was known for his beautiful smile. People would visit him for some advice and were greeted by his simple smile. For any problem he would revert to smile and would seldom give a word of advice verbally. One day the Chinese Monk left his mortal body. People thronged his ashram to see how his fellow monks would pay their last respects to him. Time had come and everyone were anxious. Other fellow monks came round his body and started laughing, dancing, and singing. It was a true tribute paid to the monk. He had preached a simple lesson through out his lifetime to remain calm, irrespective of the situation and most importantly not losing true self.

Today's situation does not offer us options. Choosing best among rest is a difficult task. A politician starts his career with an intention of doing some good to the public. As the time passes he realizes how difficult it is to stay in power and in the milieu loses the steam of sincerity and corrupts himself and also the system. It becomes impossible for him to think about the public, as he would be occupied with doing as much good as he can for his own people. Similarly a fresher who takes up a job in a reputable company tries to be sincere and discharges his duties with utmost honesty. But it becomes a daunting task as he gains experience in the line of working, he has to work with different team members having different mindsets and to promote himself in the line of hierarchy. In the process he may do some tricky things to retain his job or loses it. A doctor begins his practice with a thought of curing patients as early as he can. As his practice picks up he learns how to extract money from innocent public who come to him for treatment by way of advising all the tests whether required or not. In all these instances the beginning was good. In the middle it went wayward in quest of money and reputation in the respective fields. The backdrops may be different but the result remains the same of losing true self. They lost the originality and uniqueness and became a copy of someone.

There are some people who live for others. Don't mistake me that I am referring to great people who struggled for the well being of others, I am talking about those who can't even laugh wholeheartedly or react impromptu. They have bags full of lame excuses and reasons. They feel if they laugh or enjoy the moment or act as they wish it might damage their dignity before others or the others may take them for granted. For all these silly notions and doubts they lose themselves giving importance to others. God Himself always does not come to us. Instead He creates people with a specific purpose. Thus people like Newton, Einstein, or Mother Teresa were born. Knowing for what purpose we are born and striving to achieve it should be our attitude towards life. In the name of catching up with the trend we may lose ourselves somewhere, sometimes not even known to our own people.

Swami Vivekananda would narrate a beautiful story about one's true self. There was a tiger that attacked a flock of sheep and it delivered a cub and died. The cub starts growing with the flock of sheep and forgets that it is a tiger and starts behaving like a sheep, until another tiger finds it and makes it learn its true nature. Similarly do you ever wonder at times what you are all about? One of the basic laws of human existence is find yourself, know yourself and be yourself. Furthermore a genetic scientist has said that if you had millions of brothers and sisters none of them would be exactly like you. What a marvel of creation are you! Most of the people may brand you as a failure. But certainly



there are people who think you are just perfect. There is some quantum of work that never will be done if you do not do it. There is someone who would miss you if you were gone. There is a place that you alone can fill. There is no one quite like you. All great thinkers are people who dare to be themselves. All the ingredients of success are right there inside you, if you just turn your thinking around. Just you need to get the right formula, which is eluding your success. Don't keep telling yourself you can't do this or that. You can do anything-Anything- if you think you can. As William Shakespeare rightly said "Nothing is good or bad. But your thinking makes it so". You can do tremendous things with yourself. It makes no difference how little training, money, or status you have to begin with. That is not important. The great question is what you do with what you have. Anyone can bring out wonderful things out of himself or herself. It makes no difference how unfavorable your situation is, how many hazards you met, what adversities you encounter, you still can do tremendous things with yourself. Once you recognize your real self and the enduring power it gives you, you will not be able to settle for less. Being your real self, you will be as free and happy as a human being can be in this life. We need a new generation of young people, who will be their own fine, good, honest, dedicated selves, who will be so different from the common herd that everyone will look at them in astonishment and say "I want to be myself."

- M. Koti Rajasekhar
koti.rajsekhar@gmail.com



P r a y e r



PRAYER... The Ultimate Force

A Prayer is a telephone call to God. He is always available 24/7 and never hangs up. He can chat with you on and on like a good friend.

Prayer has amazing power. It can cure all ailments and bring about completeness in life. Prayer soothes the body and mind. Whenever you are troubled and stressed, place your problems in God's hands and the rest is assured. I find great strength in Prayer. Prayer needs to be told at all times — good or bad. We should learn to share our happiness with God. There is no point in telling prayers after something goes wrong.

One should always connect with God. Prayer lengths vary from person to person. But it does not matter as long as it comes out of your Heart. Any hour, posture and place would be appropriate for a prayer.

The essence of the prayer is the feeling. External Actions do help in bringing about changes. Whether you pray after or before bathing is not the issue. But it is advisable to take bath before praying so that we are in a pure state of mind. During prayer the mind should be focused and the body still. One should learn some slokas, because on reciting these slokas, vibrations are produced by each word. These vibrations translate into positive energy. I find great strength by reciting Hanuman Chaalisa.

It is also important that one should be in an appropriate posture while offering prayers. Patience is one quality required while praying. We cannot expect God to complete our wishes as soon as we finish. It takes time but the end result is worth it.

It is like a farmer who sows the seeds and ploughs the field. He cannot expect the crop to come up as soon as he finishes the above tasks. Instead he has to wait for some time so that the final crop is ready. Similarly, one's prayers will be answered when time is ripe.

Let us too, like the farmers do our duty sincerely and always connect to 'Him' eternally through our prayers.

Prayer, thus, is truly an Amazing Power and Force.

- Kalidindi Sumant



On 25th July, one after the other, all vehicles reached the Kodgal Ashram. Devotees alighted from their vehicles and were warmly welcomed by Swami Nachiketananda. The occasion was Gurupurnima and also a puja, followed by homa. There are no words to describe the beauty of the surroundings and the temple at a distance stood out among the various buildings coming up at Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram. Rain God too expressed happiness in the form of showers. The devotees were soon sheltered from the pouring rain only to be drenched in the rain of Swamiji's love and grace that were simply pouring from His Being.



Guru Purnima Celebrations



After the initial puja and homa, Swamiji addressed the gathering. Everyone's attention was fervent, raptured by a soothing gush of monsoon winds. His eyes rivetted on a special group of men and women from the neighbouring tandas- the fortunate lot- for they are going to bask in the Divine Glory in the years to come. He proclaimed that He had come to live with them, to improve their quality of life by granting them all the help that is possible from Him. This brought great joy to the local residents and later Swami Shivanandamayi and Tapovan's volunteer Laxman explained in detail, the aim of the organization in establishing an Ashram at Kodgal.





Our Vidya Mandir children chanted Veda to the delight of the audience and after taking Prasad everyone participated in Tree plantation. The forest department is to be thanked for providing 5000 saplings which were planted in the premises.

As the twilight slowly crept in, stealing her share of joy at the auspicious sight of Swamiji in Jadcherla, we devotees had to leave with heavy hearts, our eyes showering tears. We had to leave a precious Gem behind, though He left His stamp of love and compassion in many a heart and mind. Swamiji bade us good-bye with great love and feeling writ on His face. He sanctified every moment of this holy occasion into perfect blessedness.

SPONSOR OPTIONS

Anna daanam maha daanam; vidya daanam mahattaram.

Annena kshanika trupthihi yaavajjevanthu 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!

Donations can be sent by MO/DD/Cheque/Cash in favor of 'Nachiketa Tapovan'.

A set of 8 'Yogic CDs'



Cost of each CD is Rs.35/-

PUBLICATION

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.

Learn Samskrit

Sanskrita Bharati

4-2-72, Badi Chowdi, Sultan Bazar, Hyderabad – 500 195

Phones: 040-2475 0111, 2475 0333, samskritabharatihyd@gmail.com

At this time, we have the following Sanskrit learning centres in the Twin Cities (Hyderabad / Secunderabad), which are planned to be run on a steady basis for the coming one year.

1. **Padmaraonagar** – Kowtha Swarajya Vihar, Near Park/Gharoanda Super Bazar
Gita Sikshana Kendram – Tue, Wed and Thu – 6:30pm to 8:30pm
2. **Madhapur** – Nachiketa Tapovan, Kavuri Hills, Phase I
Balakendram – Thu only – 2pm to 3pm
Saptahikam – Thu only – 3pm to 4:30pm
Saptahikam – Sat – 10am to 12noon (with Gita Sikshana Syllabus)
3. **Yousufguda** – Vivekanda Kendra, Near Sarathi Studios
Saptahikam – Thu only – 11am to 1pm
4. **AS Rao Nagar** – Tentatively at Sri VS Raju's House, Near Poulomi Hospital
Saptahikam – Thu only – 6:30am to 8:30am

Learn Samskrit

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.

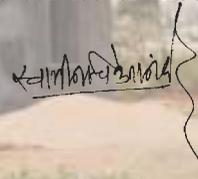
First we want to thank our supporters and well wishers for accomplishing our goals of constructing a Dhyana Mandir and Residential Campus at the Ashram. Your support was essential for meeting the substantial expenses of this Humanitarian work for which we are deeply grateful. At present our top priority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



Deepshika Club held its much awaited Annual Mela at Jewel Gardens on August 6th, 7th and 8th. There were 250 stalls from all over India and abroad. The organizers are well known for their charity work. Six to seven non-profitable organizations are given free counters for display and this year Nachiketa Tapovan is privileged to be one of them.

We thank Mrs Priyanka Jaju, president of Deepshika club, Mrs Kanta Khemani, Mrs Padma Sultania and Mrs Jaya Daga who are incharge of the mela and also the committee members for extending their support to our organization.

We owe our special thanks to Mrs Mamta Agarwal, Mrs Chanda Agarwal, Mrs Vandana Murarka, Mrs Navita Bagaria and Mrs Madhavi Vir for their commendable efforts in making Rakhis, Gift articles like handmade clocks, money envelopes, newspaper bags and other eco friendly items which sold like hotcakes. Our Mobile Muri became very popular in the Mela. We are extremely thankful to them for donating the sale proceedings to Nachiketa Tapovan.

We acknowledge the sincere efforts of the young volunteers, Harshit Agarwal, Vaishali, Aditi Bagaria and Divya for helping us with the sales. Children of Nachiketa Tapovan need special mention for making paper bags out of old news papers as a part of our 'Save the Earth' programme.

All revolutions are spiritual at source.

With best wishes from
Infomile Solutions Pvt. Ltd.



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, 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.
- 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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Single copy	Rs. 10/-	Rs. 10/-
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5 years	Rs. 450/-	Rs. 450/-

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AN APPEAL TO PATRONS & SPONSORS

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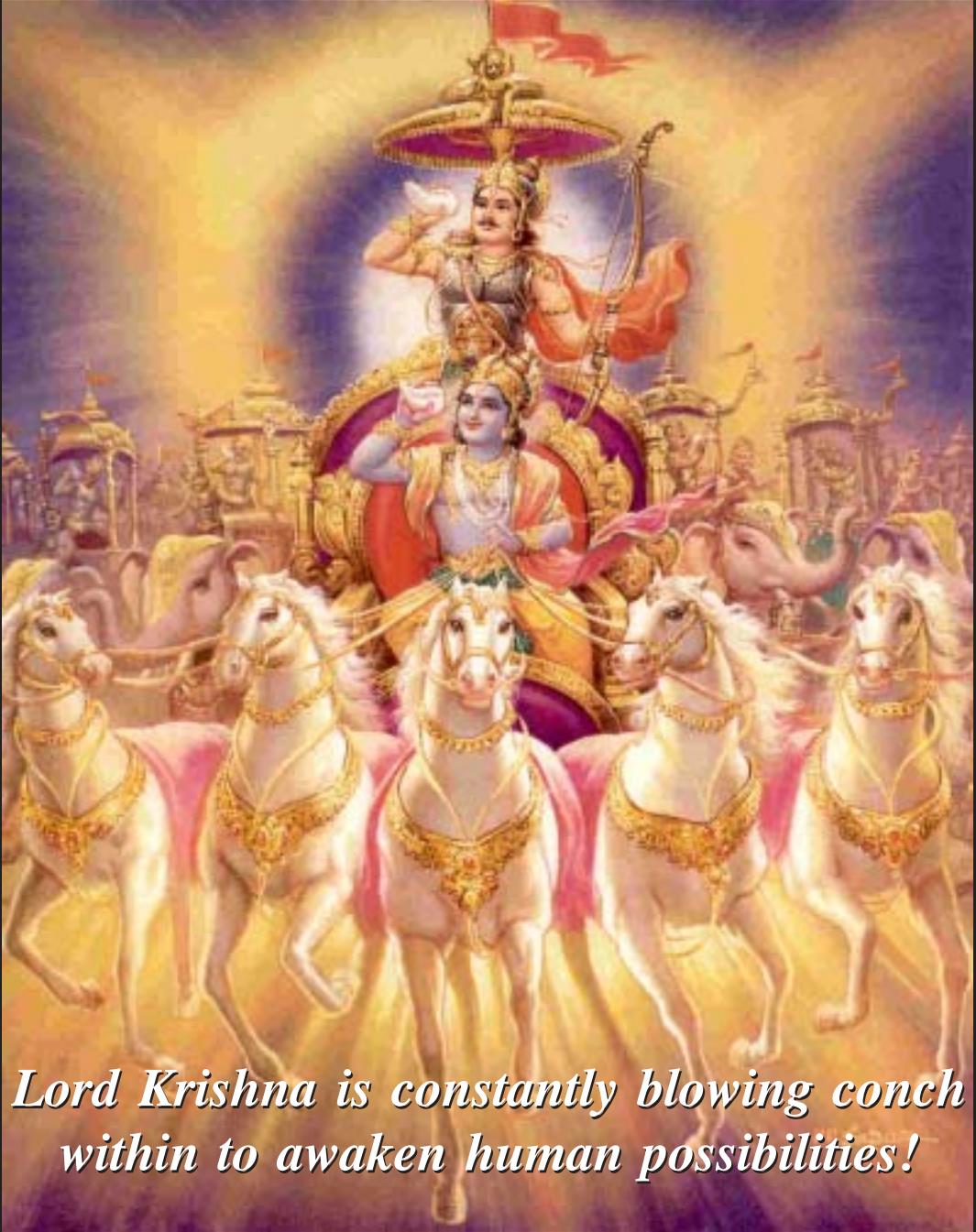
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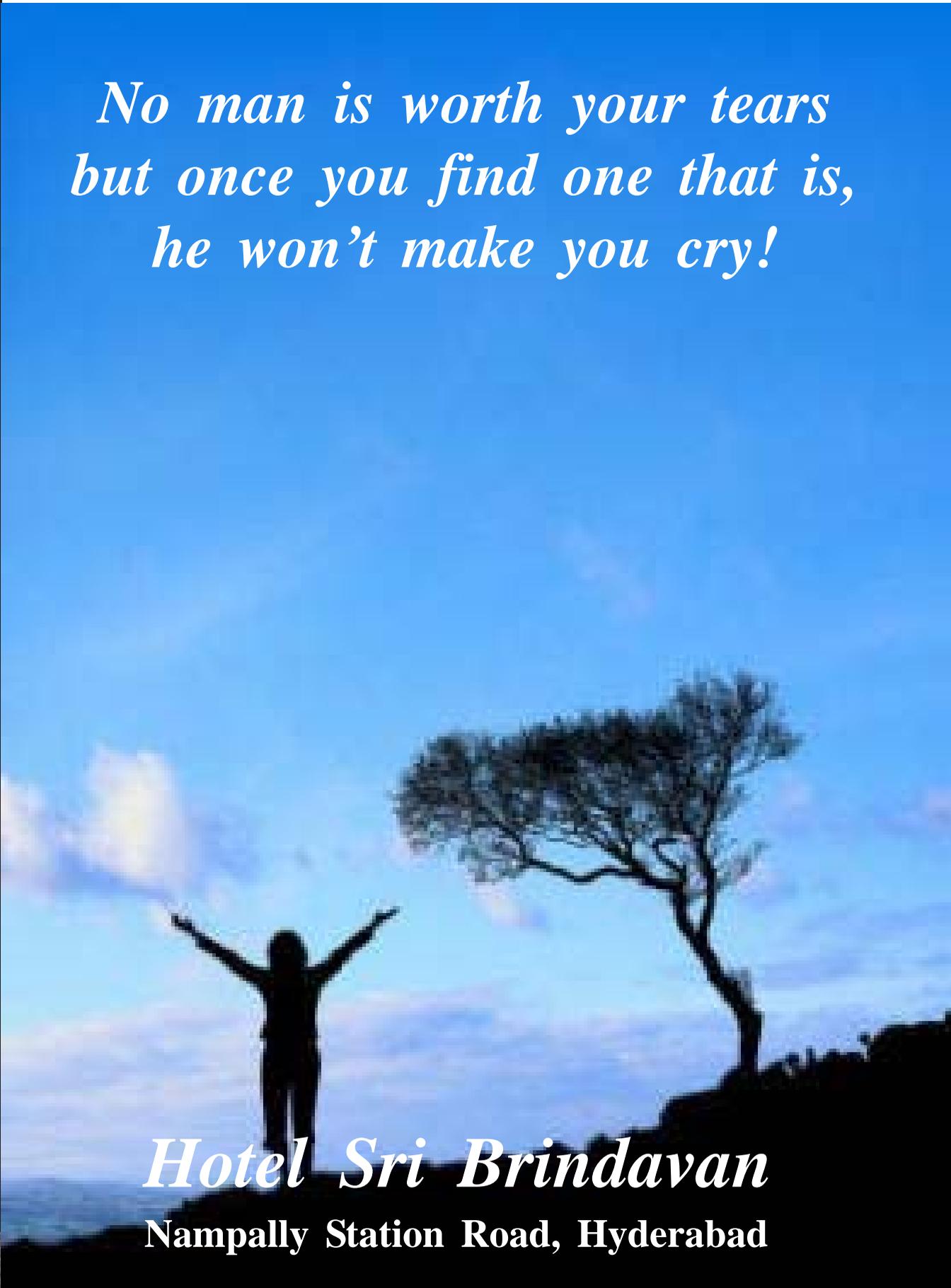
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