

NACHIKETANJALI

...an offering

A Journey Into The Spiritual Realm!

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Editor: Subhadra K.

EDITORIAL

Every hill and rivulet of Bharat bears the imprint of the holy feet of Gods and Goddesses in different forms. India is perhaps the only country to have a huge list of festivals and celebrations lined up one after the other. As the calendar changed from August to September, we were on the brink of a hectic season full of festivals. September started with celebrations of Krishnashtami followed by Ramzan and Ganesh chaturthi. Devotees from both Hindu and Muslim communities celebrated their festivals together. We have heard of Hindu families observing the Ramzan fast along with their Muslim friends and Ganesh processions being led by Muslim brothers. In fact it is only in Bharat where a large section of Hindus live in harmony with a large section of Muslims, without the compulsion of making any significant adjustments and sacrifices in their beliefs and practices. Each side recognizes the onerous responsibility that rests with them in maintaining peace and harmony, in the common interests of all and in the interests of India as one nation.

There are festivals in which both communities participate with equal zeal. There are Dargas to which Hindus and Muslims pay visit. There are some sects of Saivism with sizeable number of Muslim following. There are traditions in the field of arts, dance, poetry, music and singing, in which it is difficult to trace where contribution of one side ends and the other begins. Hidden in the bosom of Islam are some of the finest and the best ideals of human life that find their reflection in the core concepts of Hinduism. The differences are only in relation to practice. The present day conflicts are usually ignited by the ignorant, who are unfamiliar with the ethos of the Indian psyche.

Hindus and Muslims can co-exist, if they are willing to accept religion as an instrument of peace and harmony. It is definitely possible to enjoy and participate in all festivities if we think from a very broad perspective that the Universal creator is "ONE".

ALLAH TERO NAM ESHWAR TERO NAM!

-Subhadra K.



Because we asked for...



Because we asked for...God has given us this body and mind. With the help of this body and mind we started growing vertically as well as horizontally. We felt that, this wonderful package is something to be cherished forever. But we

forgot that, body and mind are gross bodies and one day they are going to perish forever. What is forever is not seen but experienced and what is not forever is seen but not experienced in totality. The aroma we carry because of body and mind is not permanent and leaves behind past memories which fade away permanently. If we start using the same incense sticks every day, though the fragrance is there we are hardly aware of it. Same thing is happening with us. This very package we have got many times and in that process we have lost the real aroma...that which is permanent.

Because we asked for...God has given us intellect. With the help of that intellect we have developed more rational attitude and made our journey into that of curiosity and reasoning. But this curiosity and reasoning led us nowhere and trouble started when the corrupt mind started getting involved. Then, did we stop reasoning? No! But then after reasoning, the spiritual step should be taken. That step was missing, but our true beloved 'Supreme' holding our hand in His hand started walking us on the spiritual path.

Because we asked for...God has given us 'Ego'. With the help of 'ego' we started making efforts in all directions, creating individuals after individuals but not the real society. We felt that we are always on the right side of life. We never gave importance to others. Others started living in us but we never tried to live in others. This made our lives more miserable. We developed more and more arrogance and stubbornness. We felt that

we are superior to the 'Supreme'. And in that process we lost our true identity and started searching for ourselves in others.

Because we asked for...God has given us Love. With the help of love we entered into passion and attachment. We thought clinging onto, is the ultimate love and we created many boundaries around us. We even felt insecure inspite of the boundaries and to protect ourselves we created many more boundaries. And this loving 'Supreme' beloved one, with His gentle hands taught us the art of breaking those boundaries. He revealed that we can be there where we are, without creating any boundaries and experience the lover, beloved and loving together forever; whereas when boundaries are being created the universe seems to be upside down.

Because we asked for...God has given us this 'Universe'. With the help of this universe we started learning. We learnt how to use this universe for our best but not us for the best of the Universe. In that process we became more selfish and developed a kind of blindness towards universe. We never felt how universe is going to feel if we turn ourselves from selflessness to selfishness. This made us more indifferent and created a huge gap between us and the universe. We then slowly started developing loneliness within. We had hardly any vision to see the universe and neither had any vision for the universe.

Because we asked for...God has given 'Freedom'. With the help of 'Freedom' we made an attempt to go beyond God. And that's what God wanted. But there also we failed to understand what true freedom is. We started misusing this power and thought that we are the supreme and started projecting ourselves as the supreme. The blunder that any human being can make is to claim that he is the supreme. The simple philosophy of life says once we reach that level we do not need to propagate. Everything takes care of, by itself.

Therefore even though we asked for...God has given us only what we deserve. Not more, not less. He said we are at the right place, but only need to break the boundaries and look at the self.



- Swami Nachiketananda

Navaratri

Festivals which are introduced by our sages are not mere celebrations where you can eat, enjoy and have parties. Every celebration has some thing to convey, as Sanathana Dharma is symbolic, similarly every festival is symbolic and carries a deeper meaning, through which the transformation takes in one's life. Celebrations have to be celebrated to the fullest with the right attitude. So let us understand the true significance behind Navaratri. Navaratri is very auspicious among all festivals. In Sanatana

Dharma, Mother has the highest authority. That's why our Vedas say "Matrudevo Bhava." Your mother takes care till you reach a certain age. But the Mother of the universe, not only takes care of one or two children but the whole universe. Navaratri is paying homage to the Mother, who has been nourishing us for many janmas. Navaratri comes in the month of Ashvayuja. Shiva is inactive when there is no Shakti. Shiva becomes active when there is Shakti.

In Mahabharata before war Arjuna worships Ma Durga. Even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva meditate upon Ma Durga. Ma Durga is a creator; sustainer and destroyer. There are many stories about Navaratri in Puranas. One of the stories is "Mahishasura Vadha". When all the Devas were helpless and unable to kill Mahishasura, then Ma Durga fights with him for nine days and on the tenth day-Vijaya Dashami, She wins the war against Mahishasura. This story of Mahishasura is symbolic and has to be understood and contemplated in the right way. Navaratri festival has scientific and spiritual significance behind it. During Mahishasura vadha, Ma Durga kills Mahishasura. According to symbolic and spiritual explanation, Mahisha means an ox, Asura means

devil. Devil does not refer to one who has got different shape and size, but Mahishasura means the one who has got the attitude of an ox, the one who always dwells in Bhoga, the one who always thinks about oneself (selfish). When you have all negative thoughts and energies, physically you may appear beautiful and handsome but you are Mahishasura. When you overcome all these negative thoughts by worshipping or by igniting the Mother in you, then you will win the war against Mahishasura.

Here you may have a question as to why Jagadamba has fought with him for nine days?

Navaratri means nine nights, Navaratri is a mile stone in the life of a Yogi. At night you are not as active as you are in the day. You feel more lethargic and you are filled with inertia. These nine nights is a procedure where you try to overcome all your weaknesses, negative energies and eventually try to know your strength. Truly speaking these nine days are a wonderful process where you unfold all the layers of ignorance and discover your true nature. Nine days we pray to nine different forms of Ma Durga. **Why nine forms, why not only one form?** Each form has a unique energy and again it



is symbolic. These nine nights and nine forms of Mother are like a ladder where, after climbing each step you will experience truth by yourself.

Your next question may be how to climb the ladder or what to do during the nine nights?

Human birth is the rarest birth on earth and human body is the biggest library on earth. A human being tries to experience the Sukshma sharira (subtle body) during these nine days. First let us know the nine forms of Ma Durga, because each name of Mother conveys the quality and energy of the Mother. They are 1. Shaila putri 2. Brahmacharini 3. Chandraghanta 4. Kushmanda 5. Skandamata 6. Katyayani 7. Kalaratri 8. Mahagauri 9. Siddhidhatri.

The first form of Mother is **Shaila Putri**. She is the daughter of Parvataraju, a king of Himalayas. Symbolically Himalayas are as pure as Ma Ganga. In this world nothing is more sacred than Ma Ganga. Devi Upasakas or The devotees of Ma need to have a purified mind and heart in order to have Her grace. **These nine days Yogis go through different states of Samadhis.** The first day a Yogi concentrates on **Muladhara chakra**, where Shakti is dormant and he tries to invoke the power of Shakti. On the **second day** a yogi meditates on the second form of Ma Durga called **Brahmacharini**. The meaning of Brahmacharini is the one who knows Brahma or the one who does Tapas (austerity) to know the Brahman. In this form Ma Brahmacharini performs severe austerities for thousands of years to get Lord Shiva as Her husband. Ma Brahmacharini represents austerity, sacrifice, renunciation and control over the senses. After evoking the Muladhara Chakra, on this day the Yogi tries to concentrate on **Swadhistana chakra**. The third form of Ma Durga is called **Chandraghanta**. Chandraghanta means "the one who is always fighting with evil energies by just ringing Ghanta or bell. All the evil runs away just by the sound of the bell. Third day by adopting an austere life, one climbs the third step. Here after being successful in Brahmacharya, on the third step Yogi concentrates on **Manipura chakra** where he finds the new and beautiful world where you listen to unknown sounds. That's how our sages have listened to the Vedas. Vedas are capable to fight with all the evils. So we have the experience of truth directly. The **fourth form** of Ma Durga is called **Kushmanda**. The one who creates the universe with a beautiful smile is called **Kushmanda**. Fourth day a Yogi Concentrates on **Anahat Chakra**. This chakra is an ocean of compassion, where Yogi experiences bliss and overcomes sorrow. And he will be capable of crossing this ocean of samsara. **Fifth form** of Ma Durga is named after **Skandamata**, the mother of Shanmuka is called Skandamata. Shanmuka was a captain of all the Gods and He always fights with evil energies. Shanmukha sits on the lap of Ma. Ma tells us the one who is always alert and fights against evil energies, will sit on Her lap. She gives us assurance that She will protect them. On this day a Yogi

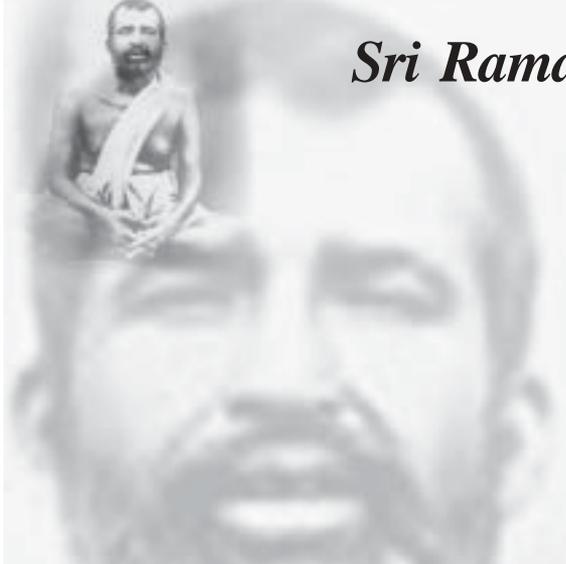
concentrates on **Vishuddi Chakra**. He experiences nivritti of all the vrittis, discovering Maya, knowing the truth, which helps him in achieving eternal peace. The **sixth form** of Ma Durga is called **Ma Katyayani**, the daughter of Maharshi Katya. **Sixth day** yogi concentrates on **Ajna chakra**, where he experiences, all his samskaras from many janmas being destroyed. And he overcomes fear, sorrow, disease and misery. **The seventh form** of Ma Durga is called **Kalaratri**. In this form Ma's body is dark in color. **The seventh day** Yogi concentrates on **Sahasrara**. And once sahasrara chakra is opened then a Yogi Experiences many occult powers and all the sins get destroyed. He becomes one with Lord Shiva. **Eighth form** of Ma Durga is called **Mahagauri**, the one who shines like a light. After severe austerity, Ma Parvati's body becomes dark, then Lord Shiva, gives bath to Her with Ganga jal, then She becomes fair and bright. When a Yogi becomes one with Shiva all the impurities and sanchita karmas get destroyed. Then he becomes a completely purified and a realized soul. **Ninth form** of Ma Durga is called **Siddhi Dhatri**, meaning the giver of all the siddhis or occult powers. There are eighteen kinds of siddhis. If we have the grace of Ma Siddhi Dhatri, we will accomplish all the worldly and spiritual responsibilities. Yogi overcomes all his weaknesses, becomes desireless and will be sitting on a high pedestal. He will be filled with knowledge of Brahman. He becomes free from all the bondages and enjoys the real freedom. Here Yogi merges with Ma Durga and discovers his true nature. Consciousness and energy come together. Yogi experiences Nirvikalpa Samadhi.



Celebrate this Navaratri to the fullest in order to fulfill the purpose of human birth. Ma Durga always showers Her blessings on true seekers of truth, those who have a thirst for truth. Let Ma Durga's grace dawn on you, unfolding layers of ignorance and letting you to discover the true shakti in you. Om Durgaya Namaha!

- Swami Shivanandamayi

Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara



His character and the spiritual radiance of His personal life were the power behind His teachings. Sri Ramakrishna did not attack any social custom. He did not preach against caste, Himself a Brahmin He had love for the downtrodden millions who were lowest in the social scale. By performing the most menial of all services which even the lowest of outcastes would shrink from doing, He revealed His utter humility.

Sri Ramakrishna selected young seekers who had the thirst for true knowledge and who sought to realise the ultimate in life. His sixteen disciples were His pride and joy and He would give undivided attention to them for their spiritual enlightenment. Swami Vivekananda was His foremost and favourite disciple. This article is the first person account of Swami Vivekananda about His Guru.

He said: "It is impossible to give others any idea of the ineffable joy we derived from the presence of the master. It is really beyond our understanding how He could train us, without knowing it, through fun and play, and thus mould us in spiritual life. Realising that the atman (self), the source of infinite strength exists in every individual, pygmy though He might be, He was able to see the potential giant in all of us. Holding that bright picture to view, He would speak highly of us and encourage us. Again He would warn us lest we should obstruct this future consummation by becoming entangled in worldly desires, and moreover He would keep us under control by carefully observing even the minute details of our lives. All this was done silently and unobtrusively. That was the secret of His training of the disciples and of His moulding of their lives."

"Wonderful were Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. Besides meditation and spiritual exercises, we used to spend a good deal of time there in sheer fun and merry making. We used to run and skip about, climb on the trees, swing from the creepers and at times hold merry picnics. Truly the master's company was a grand school for the soul. It was a stimulus to personal growth. Everyone was free to discover and realise his own potentialities but when there was a need Sri Ramakrishna did intervene."

His answers to His disciples- How to pray? "Pray in any way," He would say, "for the Lord hears even the foot fall of an ant." How to find God? "By the conquest of lust and gold." Sincerity was the main theme of His teaching. Is God Personal or impersonal? "He is both," said Sri Ramakrishna, "and yet He is beyond both: beyond any intellectual or theological dogmas." Is image-worship right or wrong? Such a question, to Sri Ramakrishna, was an idle one. Worship of anything which helps one to see God was right. Intense longing was the one thing needful.

It must be constantly borne in mind that the master's life and teachings were true to the essence of Hinduism: Not to sectarian Hinduism, but to that deep and all comprehending attitude of soul which has in a marked degree been the Hindu ideal at all times. To Sri Ramakrishna, Naren was indebted for His understanding of Hinduism. This understanding was gained by watching the Master engaged in worship, in teaching and absorbed in ecstasy. It was communicated to Naren in spite of himself. The doubting Naren was passing away: the devoted Naren, the spiritual Naren, was being born- Naren the Hindu and more than Hindu.

Naren often said: "Sri Ramakrishna was the only person who, ever since He met me, believed in me uniformly throughout, even my mother and brothers did not do so. It was His unflinching trust in me and love that bound me to Him forever. He alone knew how to love another. Worldly people only make a show of love for selfish ends."

-Compiled by Geetha K.

Spiritual Quest

I like the path of Bhakti and Yoga, then what path do I need to select?

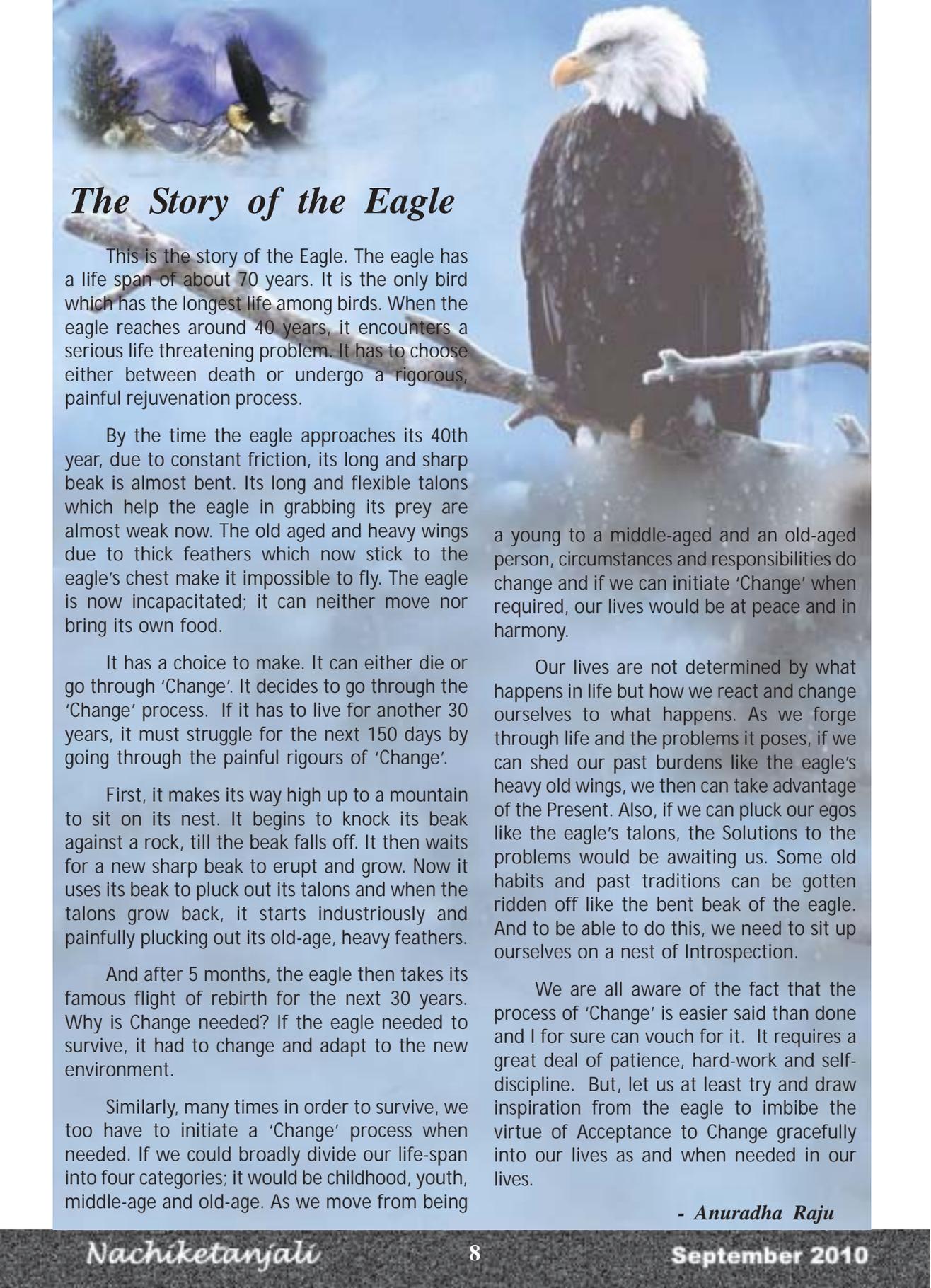
Ans: Dear Sadhaka, it is not about liking or disliking any path nor is something superior and the other inferior. Yes! When it comes to an individual, we all need to understand what kind of package we have gotten. Though we are all going to discover the same God, it might not suit our package to follow somebody or some guideline mentioned in the spiritual texts. We all have to discover what exactly we have and what we need. Many people try to imitate great souls externally and eventually they find themselves nowhere. If we want to have a real journey, then we need to find out for ourselves, the true path, that which is hidden in us. Package is fabricated very well by God without losing human touch. But in the process of living, we simply forget what we have to discover and get entangled into imitation. Then true life ends there.

Dear Sadhaka, it is all about discovering that which is deep down through any means or no means. All these means are nothing but the part of our consciousness...our mind. When that real journey begins we can understand that the same path was seen through a different angle. In His creation He didn't make things complicated. But they appear complicated because we are not having that knowledge. If we take up proper learning in His school called Universe, then we can find everything is simple and easy to achieve.

Dear Sadhaka, Yes, our package is all about our likes and dislikes but made up of the same stuff. Narendra Dutta was not aware of His potentials but when Paramhansa Ramakrishna saw Him, He could understand the great potentialities in Narendra and what happened after the spiritual touch of Sri Ramakrishna is history. Sri Ramana Maharshi took a journey from "Vichara to Nirvichara" and established Himself in Samadhi. His path was the path of 'Silence'. Sri Ramakrishna practiced every path and established Himself in Samadhi. It all depends upon an individual. Leave your likes and dislikes and see where your mind gets dissolved and how that heart with full of possibilities awakens within. Leave every idea of likes and dislikes behind or bury them permanently and see the possibilities of human minds. Remember, likes can change into dislikes and vice versa at any moment. So be wise in selection or do not have any selection.

Dear Sadhaka, this very moment has everything in it. Let it pass like a cool breeze in scorching summer or sun rays in chilly winter or a shower in rainy season. We just need to feel it to discover. Om Shanti! Shanti!! Shanti:!!!

- Swami Nachiketanjali



The Story of the Eagle

This is the story of the Eagle. The eagle has a life span of about 70 years. It is the only bird which has the longest life among birds. When the eagle reaches around 40 years, it encounters a serious life threatening problem. It has to choose either between death or undergo a rigorous, painful rejuvenation process.

By the time the eagle approaches its 40th year, due to constant friction, its long and sharp beak is almost bent. Its long and flexible talons which help the eagle in grabbing its prey are almost weak now. The old aged and heavy wings due to thick feathers which now stick to the eagle's chest make it impossible to fly. The eagle is now incapacitated; it can neither move nor bring its own food.

It has a choice to make. It can either die or go through 'Change'. It decides to go through the 'Change' process. If it has to live for another 30 years, it must struggle for the next 150 days by going through the painful rigours of 'Change'.

First, it makes its way high up to a mountain to sit on its nest. It begins to knock its beak against a rock, till the beak falls off. It then waits for a new sharp beak to erupt and grow. Now it uses its beak to pluck out its talons and when the talons grow back, it starts industriously and painfully plucking out its old-age, heavy feathers.

And after 5 months, the eagle then takes its famous flight of rebirth for the next 30 years. Why is Change needed? If the eagle needed to survive, it had to change and adapt to the new environment.

Similarly, many times in order to survive, we too have to initiate a 'Change' process when needed. If we could broadly divide our life-span into four categories; it would be childhood, youth, middle-age and old-age. As we move from being

a young to a middle-aged and an old-aged person, circumstances and responsibilities do change and if we can initiate 'Change' when required, our lives would be at peace and in harmony.

Our lives are not determined by what happens in life but how we react and change ourselves to what happens. As we forge through life and the problems it poses, if we can shed our past burdens like the eagle's heavy old wings, we then can take advantage of the Present. Also, if we can pluck our egos like the eagle's talons, the Solutions to the problems would be awaiting us. Some old habits and past traditions can be gotten ridden off like the bent beak of the eagle. And to be able to do this, we need to sit up ourselves on a nest of Introspection.

We are all aware of the fact that the process of 'Change' is easier said than done and I for sure can vouch for it. It requires a great deal of patience, hard-work and self-discipline. But, let us at least try and draw inspiration from the eagle to imbibe the virtue of Acceptance to Change gracefully into our lives as and when needed in our lives.

- *Anuradha Raju*



Braving the Turbulences

As a child, I imagined that there were people out there who had fairy tale lives. Not everyone seemed to have troubles, so I thought. With age, as life forced me to look deeper, I perceived the darkness that all human beings experience, in some way or the other.

Even the enlightened ones go through pain and suffering in some form or the other. Without the heat, where comes the diamond? Besides the external field of experience, what is it that causes us suffering? It may be anything that binds us into this individual self. Philosophically speaking, it's called the 'EGO', attachment to individual self.

There are many negative states a human mind goes through like sorrow, jealousy, greed or anger etc. When we look at any of these, it feels like some manifestation of this attachment (body and/or mind). We may argue that sometimes it is attachment to someone outside of you that causes the pain, like losing a dear one or tending to a sick child. True, even so it seems to be because of being attached to our mind and its likes and dislikes. A great logic and a very good conclusion. But, for most of us, we get put off by this "wise talk" as difficult to practice or follow through. So how can we stay alive and spirited when life gives us a hard beating?

Many suggest 'having faith and hanging in there'. True, but that faith in God or guru has to have vitality. I believe that only comes with experience in being aware that our ultimate goal is self-realization and not complete peace or unending happiness or some other fulfillment of the kind. It's very hard for most of us who only seek and pray for 'good things to happen to us', to have unflinching faith when tough moments arrive.

It feels that a good practical way is to not get sucked into the quick sand of self-pity and dejection is to **practice expansiveness** and to do it **intensely**.

Practicing expansiveness: If we are convinced that the cause of our suffering is the attachment to the self and its myriad likes and dislikes then why not try to expand this little self?



Then we no longer identify ourselves with only our ups and downs but also with others' ups and downs. When the boundary gets weaker between me and the rest of the world, the emphasis of my problems will also lessen in me, thereby lessening my suffering!

Let's reach out to fellow humans and start giving ourselves. Even a little, lightens our own burden. But let's try to do this as selflessly as we can, else we only add to our burden. Slowly we will begin to have glimpses of true freedom.

Intensity: In yogic teachings, energy is recognized as the central ingredient for any thought or action. It's the same all pervading energy that makes us rage with anger, grind our teeth, makes us very elated or makes us cry miserably too.

Just ponder. If not for the energy we have, would we be able to shed tears even in grief? There comes a point of exhaustion when even crying is not possible. That's lack of energy. So is it with anger or any other emotion. The prana (energy) in us propels all emotions whether positive or negative.

The great yogi Paramhansa Yogananda suggests: "Why fight the negative tendencies and emotions? Just channelize that prana to something totally different but positive".

Hence, if only we can make use of our prana (energy) with all intensity to serve others (expansion of the self), we will shed a little 'I' ness and at the same time burn out the energy that might have otherwise fuelled self-centering thoughts and emotions.

-Harini Nandakuru



Yuvanjali



Good results can be produced only through love, through sympathy. It is a great subject and it requires several lectures to elucidate all the plans that I have in view, and all the ideas that are, in this connection coming to my mind day after day. I must therefore conclude, only reminding you of this fact that this ship of our nation, O Hindus, has been usefully plying here for ages. Today, perhaps, it has sprung a leak. Today, perhaps, it has become a little worn out. And if such is the case, it behoves you and me to try our best to stop the leak and holes. Let us tell our countrymen of the danger, let them awake and help us. I will cry at the top of my voice from one part of this country to the other, to awaken the people to the situation and their duty. Suppose they do not hear me, still I shall not have one word of abuse for them, not one word of cursing. Great has been our nation's work in the past; and if we cannot do greater things in the future, let us have this consolation that we cannot, we can sink and die together in peace. Be patriots, love the race which has done such great things for us in the past.

In the meanwhile let us work and let us not abuse our country, let us not curse and abuse weather-beaten and work-worn institutions of our thrice-holy motherland.

Remember always that there is not in the world any other country whose institutions are really better in their aims and objectives than the institutions of this country.

Carry the light and the life of the Vedanta to every door, and rouse up the divinity that is hidden within every soul. Then, whatever may be the measure of your success, you will have the satisfaction that you have lived, worked and died for a great cause

Source: The Complete Works of
Swami Vivekananda, Vol. III

Nachiketanjali



Mother's Bedtime Story

Last night, after a hard day's work, I went back home to Mother.

Laying my head in her lap I said, "Ma, tell me one of your bedtime stories."

Stroking my hair gently, she said,

"Hush now. Go to sleep. It's late already."

But the child that I was, I insisted.

So she began.

"My child,

This is a story about you.

And you've heard it before.

But I'm sure you'll enjoy listening again."

I nodded quietly, already hushed into silence.

I was in awe of her, every time she began talking.

"This is the story of a Forest far, far away.

Now, this Forest was a perfect land.

Mind you, there is nothing absolutely perfect in this world.

But that Forest was..."

I listened, and my eyes opened wide with wonder.

I tried hard to imagine what a perfect land would be like.

Mother paused for a moment, and then continued,

"The morning sun rose to the far-away chirping of little birds,

High in the tall trees, snuggled together in their nests.

The rays were a soft golden-yellow,

And sparkled when they touched the dew drops

Hanging at the edge of the pointed leaves.

Sometime later, a cool wind started blowing slowly,

Shaking the green trees from their night-long slumber

And they stretched themselves awake,
As if waiting for this very moment
Down on the ground, far below the sky
Was the moist, brown earth held together by
trees
Standing tall for centuries
The foliage of stems and leaves was so thick
That sunlight barely ever touched the ground
A gentle stream gurgled by,
Making perhaps the only sound in the Forest at
this hour,
As clear water splashed into a pond,
And animals, small and large,
Came by for a drink early in the morn..."
I stopped breathing,
Lost in the poetry of this land
Indeed, this was a perfect Forest.
What could possibly go wrong?
What was this Story about?
And how was it My Story?
"But then something happened that day.
Something that changed that perfect Forest for
ever..." continued Mother.
"You came there.
You came there with your large, noise-making
machines and tree-cutting vehicles.
You mowed down the trees as if they were but
clumps of grass.
You burned down the homes of these creatures
as if they were but bundles of hay."
"In moments, their perfect world shattered."
said Mother,
Her voice trembling slightly,
And eyes beginning to mist with heavy tears,
"Eggs dropped down to the ground in hundreds,
And little unborn birds were killed before they
could see the light of day.
Little monkeys scurried about, scratching their
heads,
Wondering where the branches had all gone.
Two young deer that had been gamboling about,
Were suddenly appalled to see an army of Men
at their doorstep
The little stream dried up in days,
Leaves turned cracked and yellow and fell to
the ground,

The brown, muddy earth was covered with the
bones of large animals,
And flies, ants and vultures finished off the
remains
"This is the story of a Forest far, far away.
Now, this Forest was a perfect land.
Mind you, there is nothing absolutely perfect in
this world.
But that Forest was..."
"But today,
It is just a clearing at the edge of a city,
Growing larger and larger by the day
The only sign of a Forest that once was,
As perfect as it was,
Is a lone bird that flies to the edge of the
clearing,
Every two or three days,
Wondering whether all this really happened,
Or it was just a terrible dream."
"But, my son, to tell you the truth,
This really happened.
This is happening right now, as I speak.
And this will continue to happen,
If you go to sleep now,
And don't wake up.
This is a real story.
What are you going to do about it?"
Mother covered me in a blanket and was gone,
Leaving the last question hanging in the air
I lay awake all night,
Watching silver clouds drift across the moon,
And white stars playing hide and seek.
This is a story about Me.
This is a story about all of Us.
I'm sure we've heard it before,
Our Mother's Bedtime Story..
Goodnight.

- Avinash Agarwal



Life - A Picture You Paint

When I see a drawing book, all I can think of is LIFE. Life and a drawing book have more or less the same purpose to heed. Draw a beautiful picture and paint it with colours you love, it makes a lovely picture. Do things great, fill with best moments ever, live it, it makes a life. The idea of comparing life with a picture is old and philosophical. However, it is the appropriate comparison that can be ever made.

I wonder why it makes me feel a little low sometimes and on top of the world the other times. All I can get in answer is I haven't been trained in a drawing class ever. However, I don't claim an artist to be really living a life. It is not art that makes you live. It is mere living that can make you an artist indeed. An artist is one who fills the best colours in life. Smile makes you live. In the hardest moments of life, I have learned to smile and that made me shift to living a life from surviving a life. Thus, life is a plain drawing book, God presents to each of us to fill in with the best pictures of life. Learn what is true and what is ingenuine. Discerning well in times of crisis can surely make you the award winning artist.

Life

What is so pleasing to one's eye?
A smile, a laugh or a baby's cry;
What is so pleasing to one's soul?
An unpleasant truth or a convincing foul;
Who is so pleasing to one's heart?
A lovable friend or an adorable tart.

I have always wanted to know
How to answer it though;
To learn to make it slow
And realize the pace with which lives flow.

All I could do is smile
And walk in to life each mile
This is life I say
Is easy path if I lay
It is with thought, care and I pray

My life is what I present to thee,
A picture with love and passion to see.

- *Ramya Manasa*



Living with a Divine Soul



Business has become a way of life for everyone of us. We in our limited way want to expand as much as possible without any specific goal as we are driven more by wants than by needs. What we seek is what our neighbour or colleague or relative has in his possession. We are driven by constant wants and live in a maze and never try to find our way out. In the name of commerce we are heading to a no man's zone.

Even when we go to temples we do not leave our business behind as we try to bargain as much as possible with the Lord to give us more and more in return for nothing. The Lord hence is not spared in our hands.

Spiritual organisations now are no better as they are following the same principle. Commerce has empowered even gurus heading such organisations. The success of any organisation is measured by the number of devotees, number of centres opened, the number of camps conducted etc. Due to lack of purity politics has also entered into these organisations. People hence are losing confidence in spiritual organisations as they are unable to trust them for the above reason. There is a sense of disillusionment when one cannot have faith in such organisations.

We at Nachiketa Tapovan conduct many programmes like Summer camps, workshops, Yoga camps etc wherein even a minimum fee is not levied. We also run the school Vidya Mandir wherein the student does not have to pay any fee. I initially felt that without money it would be difficult in the long run to survive and serve the society in any manner. This was not my apprehension alone but the trustees of our organisation too felt that people would not value the programme if no fee was charged. When I asked Swamiji as to why we were not charging some minimum fee, He replied that :

The first reason, He said : " We cannot charge that which does not belong to us. The knowledge and wisdom which we share with everyone is not our own.

It has descended from God directly through our sages. That is the wisdom we are carrying. When we are unable to add another dimension to that wisdom which we acquired, we do not have a right to charge for the same."

Secondly, He said: "We call ourselves a spiritual organisation, the base then should be spirituality. So money and other aspects are secondary. Money should never become primary. Hence charging would then defeat the very purpose of setting up of the organisation. Yoga is the core of our organisation. It should never be commercialised."

Then I asked Him as to how we would run the organisation? He replied: "There are people who can share and spare money and time who will come forward on their own and help the organisation. If it is possible for us not to charge for yoga and ayurveda then we should do so. When we go out in society we should play the role of a mother who loves unconditionally without expecting anything from her child."

"Swami Vivekananda wanted 100 Nachiketas to change the world. I wanted only one family who can dedicate their life to the organisation. One cannot buy dedication with money. Dedicated families are more important than money. God has been merciful and has given me many such families to help the organisation grow. I envision a growth vertically and not horizontally. Organisation can grow with limited resources and people. Hence if we do sincere work and are pure in heart, God will pave the way for us to serve the society."

- P. Vasundhara Reddy

A Flight Seldom Remembered

In a week's time I had to encounter the loss of two of my close relatives and during the mourning period I was bamboozled when a three year old questioned me, "What is death?" Leave alone the three year old, have we as adults really understood the true meaning of death? We are so wrapped up in our busy day to day lives with all its commitments, responsibilities and distractions that we hardly spend any time for reflection. We do not take time out to ponder over the higher truths of life. But if we make an attempt it is possible to have more insight into what may actually be the Truth.

Right from our school days we have learnt many lessons from our teachers and parents but have never come across the lesson 'Death'. It is not in our syllabus, but it is a lesson to be learnt in our life. In our childhood, our parents plan for our future but one thing they do not plan for their child is the last moment in their child's life. They don't realize that there is a lesson called 'The Final Moment'. But even if they cannot think of it, it cannot be stopped by them.

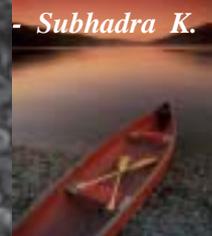
Everyone has to face death at some moment in their life and one can never assess its onset. All that is born has to die. We go into the depths of any subject. Then why is it that we fear to add this lesson in our books? Why are we not aware of where we came from and where we are going to when we die? Why do we exist at all? If life happens between birth and death, then it is clear there is also birth after death. If we came from the 'other side' then there is all possibility of returning to it. So we should not have fear of death. It is a part in God's creation. In the course of time the tree sheds its leaves and new leaves start appearing. According to modern science every second many stars get dissolved into the universe. Many new stars are born. Similarly medical science has revealed millions of cells



are born and dead every second. This shows that every creature has a specified time of life. Like time and tide death waits for none. Once the role is played we have to leave this world.

Our own attachments with our kith and kin make us feel insecure. But once we understand the truth beyond death, we can prepare the soul for an unknown flight into the realms beyond this material world. It is rewarding indeed if we can pass on all our positive thoughts, vibrations and energies to the departed soul and make the flight easy.

What happens after death? Does our soul travel to heaven or hell? Philosophers say that heaven and hell are not places but our states of mind. We create them even in our life time. We would all have realized these states at some point of time in our lives. Most of us would have visited this nasty place called hell when we are angry, feel miserable, frustrated and tensed. If we pause for a moment and allow our wisdom to speak there is every chance of avoiding these situations. We can easily pull ourselves out. It takes enormous courage to confront hell and come out of it. On the contrary when we look at things with an open mind we can experience heaven. Hell and heaven are just like hot sun and shade. They repeat in life and it is in our hands to adjust the time duration. Nothing lasts, not even sorrow. Whenever we feel low, we have to remind ourselves that this too will pass. Let us move on with conviction that we would see a better tomorrow.



- Subhadra K.

Welcome Change



"In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned find themselves equipped to live in a world which no longer exists." -Eric Hoffer

Once upon a time, twin boys were conceived.

Weeks passed and the twins developed. As their awareness grew, they laughed for joy: "Isn't it great that we were conceived? Isn't it great to be alive? "



Together the twins explored their worlds. When they found their mother's cord that gave them life, they sang for joy! "How great our mother's love is, that she shares her own life with us!"

As weeks stretched into months, the twins noticed how much each was changing.

"What does it mean?" one asked.

"It means our stay in this world is drawing to an end," said the other.

"But I don't want to go," said one. "I want to stay here always."

"We have no choice," said the other. "But maybe there is life after birth."

"But how can there be?" responded one. "We will shed our life cord and how can life be possible without it? Besides, we have seen evidence that others were here before us, and none of them has returned to tell us there is life after birth. No, this is the end. Maybe there is no mother after all."

"But there has to be," protested the other. "How else did we get here? How do we remain live?"

"Have you ever seen our mother?" said one.

"Maybe she only lives in our minds. Maybe we made her up because the idea made us feel good."

So the last days in the womb were filled with deep questioning and fear.

Finally, the moment of birth arrived. When the twins had passed from their world, they opened their eyes and cried for joy - for what they saw exceeded their fondest dreams.

That is birth ... and that is death.

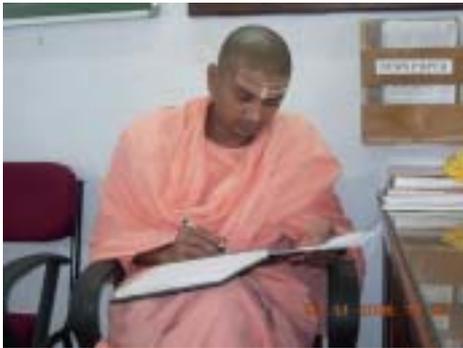
Upon reading this story, I started wondering as to how we find ourselves branding things, people, places as either 'Good' or 'Bad'. Sometimes the differentiation seems crystal clear, sometimes subtle

and at times could put us in a great dilemma. But for sure, these judgments and notions only add bumps to the ride. The less opinionated we are, smoother the flow of life is. Understanding that there is no absolute good or bad minimizes the crystallization of perceptions into opinions. Consequently less resistance do we put up against change and less fearful and more content we become.

For instance- light is considered a sign of health, life and knowledge. But can we appreciate light when it is not interrupted by the darkness of night? Setting sun gives way to the rising of moon. Only if old cells die and make place for new cells, an organism stays healthy. The economic slowdown has thrust upon the world so many changes and insecurities. People in many parts of the world are having to give up the lifestyle they wouldn't otherwise relinquish. But many, to their surprise are realizing that they are getting a chance to explore the richness of life, able to notice and relish it one morsel at a time rather than gulping it down like medicine. Though the economic slump has proved to be heavy on the wallet it did teach many of us the real value of life. Each day is another chance that God gives us to unlearn notions, accept differences and **Welcome Change** to advance in our search to find Self!



- An Aspirant



Date: 11 / 12 / 2006

Dear Atmabandhu!

Om Namah Shivaya!

Hope this letter may shed some light on your ongoing spiritual journey. Now it is time for all of us to sit together and do contemplation on Nachiketa Tapovan and its activities. How did we start? What was the main motive behind this living monument? How many people were involved? How did we work as a unit for this noble cause? And such many other questions certainly will arise from the bottom of the heart while doing contemplation. In order to grow spiritually, I feel very honestly that, we should find out answers for all such queries. Let Ma Kali and Lord Shiva guide all of us in exploring multi-dimensional life, while dedicating ourselves.

Many have shaped and many more will shape Nachiketa Tapovan in future. And I know the importance of their 'Silent presence'. I always believe that the importance of being a part of every spiritual activity is something to experience the 'External world' by drawing spiritual energy from 'Internal world' and vice versa. Therefore in order to feel oneness with God inwardly and outwardly we need to open all our windows and doors. Then only God can be seen and experienced within and without. Let us make effortless efforts while translating mere ideas into reality. And that is quite possible when we start working together in the spirit of selfless service.

As you know that we are going to start another 'Ashram' in the near future, let us think about your role in this 'Spiritual Project'. Now being a trustee or

volunteer is not enough. You have a bigger role to play. And therefore you should be ready to take up every small or big responsibility equally with the same enthusiasm and motherly-hood. I have seen great qualities in you where you were transforming every ordinary action into spiritual action. Therefore let us walk together, in order to bring new 'Sunrise' into everybody's life. God has given you beautiful life, great enthusiasm and real Karmayogi spirit to take up such challenging responsibilities. Now time has come to put everything into practice to make best use of God's gift. No matter what type of contribution yours is, on behalf of every poor and underprivileged one, I will regard your contribution as the best gift from you. You know what our country is and you know very well what our role in the society is. I hope you can understand my feelings.

Regarding expansion of organization, we have to take proper steps and need to understand many aspects of life. Just buying land and doing nothing or doing something without plan will not make any sense. We have still time to think about every aspect of true expansion. Just expanding our activities will not expand our spiritual horizon and understanding. Many souls without even acquiring one inch of land are engaged in spiritual practices and making tremendous progress in their lives. Then what is the purpose of expansion and do we really need such expansions? Do you really understand what you are expecting from yourself? Please think for a moment, take a pause in your life and ask, is only one person dreaming and doing something or are we all working together as 'Cosmic Family' members and making tremendous progress? What I have seen in my spiritual journey is, 'Universal Vision', which belongs to all. And somewhere I felt tremendously that something is springing forth from the bottom of the heart and pushing me into your 'Universal Vision'. And thus, while considering myself an instrument and a child of Ma Kali, I felt very strongly to follow the dharma to carry out the 'Universal Vision' seen by you all.



We all have different roles to play in this 'Universal Vision', which carries tremendous spiritual energy in it. So let us prepare ourselves to play our great role. Many times due to our little understanding and bulged ego, we can not understand the importance of being a part of such activities. But as we progress and involve sincerely with total dedication, many things will reveal and we can feel more elevated in spiritual life. Remember always, God has given every thing in excess to all. Let us at least try to make use of, whatever excess we have in life. No need to give what you need, but it is quite possible for you all to give whatever excess you have. So prepare yourself to win the race by losing what you do not need. Just be a part in His play and you will start losing, the excess you have, but be a true part. That is the whole philosophy of life. If you want to understand what life is, then prepare yourself and get ready to lose...Ma Kali is always there to protect you...

If 'Cosmic Vision' is clear, then we can think about few volunteers, who can be part of 'Nachiketa Tapovan's Trust board. I have few members in my mind, who have been playing an important role in the organization and can certainly make great progress in their lives by being Trustees. This is purely my opinion. No body should be held responsible for this new development. What I felt, I conveyed. Now it is up to the Trust Board Members to take a decision. Once Swami Vivekananda said, "They alone live who live for others..." and I have seen that great quality in them...truly genuine souls, struggling to see spiritual growth in all...What a great sight to see them shaping and nurturing "Nachiketa Tapovan", considering it as their own child...! Indeed, rare are those, who are forgetting themselves, while transforming others...

Hope very soon all the trustees will start working on expansion of 'Nachiketa Tapovan' to fulfill the 'Cosmic Vision'.

Yours in the service of Ma Kali

Swami Nachiketananda



*No matter
what type of
contribution
yours is,
on behalf of
every poor
and
underprivileged
one,
I will regard
your
contribution
as the best gift
from you.*





Durga Ma



Gandhi - A man who made simplicity his lifestyle, conviction his identity, selfless action his hallmark, smile his trademark, non-violence his character.

Man does everything with a sense of benefiting himself or his family at large. On the other hand there are people who make others pay for their own progress. The former are called as people good at heart and latter are termed as selfish. Everyone goes into oblivion as the time ticks away taking all in its stride. Innumerable waves are born in an ocean, unsure whether they reach the coast or not. Similarly people are born and perish, least influencing the lives of others or for that matter, their own. But there are exceptional people who are remembered forever, for their selfless acts, whether they are alive or dead. They live eternally in the fond memories of public. Their life is not limited to the span of time they lived on this earth and dwell in the hearts of people, always inspiring them, guiding them, in the process eternalizing themselves. They win over the inevitable. As Albert Einstein had rightly said about him, people would wonder if once a man of such stature lived on this earth in flesh and blood. Yes, the man I am referring to is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. A man who made simplicity his lifestyle, conviction his identity, selfless action his hallmark, smile his trademark, non-violence his character.

Gandhiji was born to Karamchand and Puthalibai on 2nd of October 1869. Had there been any recording of time, we would have read something similar to what we read about when Lord Rama or Lord Krishna took birth as human beings. They were incarnations of their respective yugas and so is Gandhiji, if I am not exaggerating, equally significant for this era. At a young age Gandhiji heard stories from the scriptures and mythology through his mother. He grew up with a commitment to truth and honesty. When he was just 13, his wedding with Kasturba was celebrated. After returning from England as a Barrister of

Gandhiji - An Epoch Maker

Law, Gandhiji went to South Africa to argue the case of Dada Abdulla Sait. There he was moved by suffering and violence undergone by Indians. The behaviour of the Whites towards the people of Indian origin was intolerable. Gandhiji established the National Indian Congress there. He strove to improve the condition of Indians there. The civil disobedience movement set the ball rolling for the ensuing freedom struggle in India. What sets him apart from other leaders is the sense of detachment with which he ventured into any movement, unlike our present leaders who do everything for a fruitful action. When he returned to India, Gandhiji was not interested in the practice of Law. He started the Satyagraha Ashram near Ahmedabad and lived there. His mind was filled with Sarvodaya ideal. Man should live by truth and non-violence, he said, and preached hatred towards none. Inspired by his lectures, even persons like Sardar Vallabhai Patel, whose lifestyle was modern, became his disciples. True Gandhi lies not in his speeches but in his lifestyle. His actions were his words. Other leaders of that time had warned the British, who were ruling India. Appearance of Gandhiji at such a time to awaken them was almost providential for Indians. A lean man with only a stick in his hand for support had come to the support of millions of Indians who were eagerly looking for a leadership that could bring freedom to this Country. He launched non-cooperation stir, civil disobedience, etc. The salt satyagraha had baffled the British. Gandhiji had dared to make salt himself, to oppose tax on it.

Gandhiji was a humanitarian. He opposed untouchability. On seeing caste clashes, he strove to banish differences between the Hindus and the Muslims. He expressed his views in his paper "Harijan". He was sentenced to jail several times for participating in the freedom struggle. He undertook Satyagraha by fasting many times. The entire nation had reposed immense confidence in Gandhiji. Following the 'Quit India' movement, there was no alternative for the British, but to grant Independence to India.

Now, the time has changed, lifestyles have changed, people are acquainted to extravagance, simplicity is ridiculed, every public issue is politically driven, safety of common man is at stakes! Do Gandhiji and his ideals hold any

relevance for today's society? The answer is 'yes'. This is not only my view but also the result of surveys conducted across the globe. According to a survey Gandhiji is voted the best leader of the world. Why is Gandhiji revered as the most inspiring leader? The reason, like his lifestyle he is simple. In simplicity lies the beauty of serious commitment; his principles did not move people like a cyclone, but touched them like a breeze of fresh air. The preachings of Gandhiji hold great value even today. He said approach the poor with the heart of poor, then you can understand their problems with a better frame of mind. Today's leaders also approach people just once in five years not for the purpose of the public but for their own benefit. Gandhiji launched freedom struggle with the mission of making India free. He worked day and night, no holidays, no working hours and no lunch breaks. He tread the length and breadth of India to understand the country better. Such was his commitment, nothing was personal, everything was for the sake of the nation. Did he expect anything in return? Of course, yes; Freedom for his own countrymen. The sense of equality that propelled him to launch freedom struggle against the British can be termed as the driving force for the historical movement. He understood that if it is not free for the people, it is not free for him too. If his fellow being is troubled, he will also be troubled sooner or later. He launched a war of Independence against an empire that had no boundaries. His weapons were not nuclear bombs or great infantry but non-violence and non-cooperation that proved more dangerous than a nuclear bomb and made the British flee. Did he stop there once our country was declared free? No, he was on a fast at Calcutta when India became Independent consoling people and still on the mission of building confidence in the community that was greatly disturbed. His dream was not only to make India free but also the people free from dogmas of communalism, violence, hatred, untouchability and religious intolerance. He was not the leader with any selfish purpose but the purpose was to make people free. He knew people collectively constitute the nation.

Unfortunately, we are struggling to find an inspirational figure which can bring people together and make the country grow not on the walls of politics but on the walls of purity and honesty. Gandhiji was not a political leader but

he was a leader of caliber that changed the face of the nation politically. Gandhiji is not a person who led the freedom struggle; he was a lifestyle that influenced the British to realize that courage lies in making the nation free than ruling it unlawfully.

Gandhiji never preached, only practiced. The principles he followed during his lifetime had become bible for the corporate world. Fundamentally Gandhiji viewed business as a form of service to the community. This was the spirit in which the business person should approach their labor. This is called Gandhi Economics. He had inspired Martin Luther King Junior, he inspired Nelson Mandela and he even influenced the ideology of Barrack Obama. He is still going strong, 76% youth had voted Gandhiji as the best leader and his autobiography "My experiments with truth" as their favourite book. But the nation is still in quest of another Gandhi. This time the movement of non-cooperation is not against any outsider but against corrupt politicians who had changed the nomenclature of the Indian Politics, the non-violence would be against their violent methods. Inspiration is lying in the pages of "My Experiments with Truth", hope in his radiating smile, confidence in his stature and detachment in his lifestyle. The Change is just a thought away, the action is just a step away. He had humbly declared "**MY LIFE IS MY MESSAGE.**" The message is loud and clear. Before that message becomes inaudible to our ignorant minds, let us ignite our souls to make this country a laboratory to experiment with truth of Bapu and make the nation peaceful and prosperous.

JAI HIND



- M. Koti Rajasekhar
koti.rajsekhargmail.com



Jai Jawan Jai Kisan

Bringing to our minds the memories of selfless, truly patriotic, principled leaders feels like inhaling a whiff of fresh jasmines amidst malodorous air. The current day politicians stand nowhere near patriotic giants like Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. He shares his birthday with Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. Unfortunately very few people know that 2nd October is the birth anniversary of Late Lal Bahadur Shastri, the 3rd Prime Minister and one of the great freedom fighters and the great Indian Hero who gave the slogan 'Jai Jawaan, Jai Kisaan'.

Shastri was regarded as man of principles. To name a few gestures that illustrate that he practiced what he preached were: Lal Bahadur was against the prevailing caste system and therefore decided to drop his surname. The title "Shastri" refers to a "scholar" given at Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi in 1925 after the completion of his graduation. He was against the prevailing "dowry system" and so refused to accept dowry but for a nominal five yards of khadi cloth. Lal Bahadur Shastri offered his resignation as Union Railway Minister; hours after he was made aware of a train accident that killed around 150 people.

Lal Bahadur Shastri was born on October 2, 1904, to Ramdulari Devi and Sharada Prasad Shrivastava, in Moghalsarai, United Province (Uttar Pradesh). His father Sharada Prasad though poor lived a life of integrity and honesty. He passed away when Lal Bahadur was two years old leaving a legacy of his values. Lal Bahadur's mother raised the family in their grandfather's house in Mirzapur where he completed his primary education. Virtues like boldness, love of adventure, patience, self-control, courtesy, and selflessness were acquired by Lal Bahadur right in his childhood. There is a very famous incident regarding Lal Bahadur Shastri's childhood which took place when he was six years old. One day, while returning from school, Lal Bahadur and his friends went to an orchard that was on the way

to home. Lal Bahadur Shastri was standing below while his friends climbed the trees to pluck mangoes. Meanwhile, the gardener came and caught hold of Lal Bahadur Shastri. He scolded Lal Bahadur Shastri and started beating him. Lal Bahadur Shastri pleaded to leave him as he was an orphan. Taking pity on Lal Bahadur, the gardener said, "Because you are an orphan, it is all the more important that you must learn better behavior." These words left a deep imprint on Lal Bahadur Shastri and he swore to behave better in the future.

For further education Lal Bahadur was sent to Varanasi, where he stayed with his maternal uncle. During this time he started imbibing the patriotic spirit and inspiration from stories and speeches of national leaders which led to the germination of the desire to participate in the Indian nationalist movement. The final impetus was supplied by a speech of Mahatma Gandhi in 1915 which changed the course of his life.

He devoted his life for the pride and honor of the country. Shastri tackled many elementary problems like food shortage, unemployment and poverty. "Green Revolution" took birth as a part of his long term strategy to overcome the acute food shortage. Apart from the Green Revolution, he was also instrumental in promoting the White Revolution. The National Dairy Development Board was formed in 1965 during Shastri's tenure as Prime Minister. After the Chinese aggression when the major cross-border-problems caused by Pakistan were faced, Shastri showing his mettle, made it very clear that India would not sit and watch. While granting liberty to the Security Forces to retaliate he said, "Force will be met with force". He was the first person to be posthumously awarded the "Bharat Ratna". Nehru, had once said, "No one could wish for a better comrade than Lal Bahadur, a man of the highest integrity and devoted to ideas."



Majestic Gravity of Success

Success is primarily an inexplicable bliss to anybody. It is an excellent and pleasant evocation.

Secondly it is a catalytic impetus for any subsequent endeavour.

By the inspiration that one gets out of any success, one can aspire for another greater or noble goal or ideal.

Success causes 'good respiration' whereas failure causes 'suffocation' which may lead to frustration. Success is the sole crave-worthy ambition in any upright path of pursuit. Yesterday's success is today's stride for any 'tomorrow'- so it can be construed and conveniently deemed. Success is a caution which makes us conscious of our responsibility of keeping up the tempo and ability-level.

Honest labour wears the crown of success and a lovely face. A honeybee is the best illustration for such tireless striving and immaculate success.

Failure or flop should reinforce your perseverance coupled with undaunted spirit. Remember the story of Bruce and Spider for their unflinching persistence of retreatless struggle and sweet accomplishment ultimately.



Bring forth to your mind Maharshi Vishwamitra who is one of the best mythological stalwart in ancient epics. He strove and throve. He attained

'Brahmarshi' status of honour only by virtue of his NEVER GO BACK POLICY in his spiritual march towards a virtuous success. So also Dhruvakumara's prolific meditational endeavor deserves recollection.

HONEST LABOUR IS THE FATHER OF SUCCESS.

LABOUR OF PATIENCE IS
THE MOTHER OF SUCCESS.

SWEET IS THE FRUIT OF EVERY SUCCESS.

- S.P.Parvatheesam



It's ME!

Whom can I trust?

It's me I can trust,

It's me I can believe,

This makes me relieve.

What happens when someone blames you?

Nothing, because you know who you are,

What happens if someone hurts you?

Nothing, because you know who you are.

If someone leaves you,

Just remember, you are with you.

Never think I am lonely,

Feel I am the only.

Doesn't matter when no one cares,

But come up with the dare.

Cheer with delight,

That makes you enlightened.

Think I am the world,

Who can mould it?

I can define me,

Everything is me.

I am there to support me,

I am here to hear me.

Just love yourself, that's more enough to you

-Sai Harathi

9th Standard

*Sanskrit
is
the
language
of
the
God
and
Silence
is
the
language
of
the
Soul!*



Sanskrit - Lesson Eight

In Sanskrit too, there are 3 persons:- म॑ए॒ज॒ ए॒क॑म॑ए॒त॑ः (prathamapuruShaH), म॑द॒य॒म॑ ए॒क॑म॑ए॒त॑ः (madhyamapuruShaH), ए॒त॑म॑ ए॒क॑म॑ए॒त॑ः (uttamapuruShaH). They stand for English's Third person, Second person and First person respectively. Notice the difference in the order. In our anxiety to satisfy English tradition, some time ago, some Pandits seem to have adopted the English order for Sanskrit forms too. Fortunately, current Sanskrit leaning forums reverted to original Sanskrit order. This order, in my opinion, represents our Indian philosophy. We think of everybody else first, then we think of the person in front of us and finally we worry about ourselves. However, it is sad that this philosophy of ours is not much in vogue today.

In Sanskrit there is a way – perfectly grammatical – to get the meaning of म॑द॒य॒म॑ ए॒क॑म॑ए॒त॑ः using म॑ए॒ज॒ ए॒क॑म॑ए॒त॑ः construction. To understand this, let us look at the following series of simple sentences:

ख॑ए॒ इ॒श॑ ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑, ख॑ए॒ इ॒श॑ ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑, इ॒ति॑ इ॒श॑ ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑, उ॒र॑ण॑ इ॒श॑ ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑, ख॑र॑ण॑ इ॒श॑ ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑, प॑र॑ण॑ इ॒श॑ ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑ – saH tatra asti, sA tatra asti, tat tatra asti, rAmaH tatra asti, subhadra tatra asti, bhavanaM tatra asti

He is there, she is there, that is there, Rama is there, Subhadra is there, building is there. These are all म॑ए॒ज॒ ए॒क॑म॑ए॒त॑ः examples. Look at the verb form ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑ common to all genders.

तु॒व॑ इ॒श॑ ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑ – tvaM tatra asi

You are there. This is म॑द॒य॒म॑ ए॒क॑म॑ए॒त॑ः example. However, प॑र॑ण॑ इ॒श॑ ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑ (for male: bhavaN tatra asti), प॑र॑ण॑ इ॒श॑ ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑ (for female: bhavati tatra asti) is an equivalent sentence. As against a new form of verb ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑, we can continue to use ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑ (third person form) to get the second person meaning.

अ॒ह॑म॑ इ॒श॑ ए॒त॑ इ॒ति॑ – ahaM tatra asmi

I am there. This is ए॒त॑म॑ ए॒क॑म॑ए॒त॑ः example.

While तु॒व॑ इ॒श॑ and अ॒ह॑म॑ इ॒श॑ are same for male and female, प॑र॑ण॑ इ॒श॑ and प॑र॑ण॑ इ॒श॑ are gender-dependent.

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



Satsanga with Swamiji

Om Namah Shivaya...

I want to relate a small incident that occurred between me and Swamiji. I was attending the summer camp. Swamiji took me and my cousins on a small drive. As we were riding, suddenly a query stroked my mind. Given that I have little faith in God, I don't know how this question struck me? I still wonder about my question which was, "If God is everywhere then what is the need to go to a temple? Can't we worship Him from wherever we want?" Swamiji was in Brahmachari dhiksha at that time and as he was driving, he explained with a simple example. It is his beauty to convey a big message giving small examples and this happens in every satsang. This time the example that he gave was – "Servicing of Car."

Swamiji asked, "Why do we give car for servicing?" My answer was, "to clean and repair." "In the same way our body needs cleaning and repairing. Temple atmosphere helps us to relax like no other place. As vibrations in the temple are filled with positive thoughts, it gives you energy as well as new ways to deal with troubles. The silence in a temple is much powerful than anyone's advice. Also if car is damaged we cannot repair it on our own. It needs a mechanic who is an expert in his field. Thus when our mind gets saturated or stuck or disturbed, and we find no way to get out of it, we need an expert to solve our problems. Here the role is played by GOD. His blessings will guide us on our path. The block in your engine is removed in a painless way. The engine (brain) becomes as fresh as a newly bought car and is ready to get onto a race track where victory is yours for sure." I was completely satisfied with his explanation and have experienced the same.

- Pooja Kanaskar

Nava Durga



Prathamam Shailaputri cha
dvitiyam Brahmacharini |
Tritiyam Chandra ghaneti
Kooshmandeti chaturthakam ||
panchamam Skandamaateti
shashtyam Katyayaniti cha |
saptamam Kalaratritya
Mahagauriti cha astamam ||
navamam Siddhidatri cha
navadurgah prakirtitah |
uktanyetani namani
brahmaniva mahatmana ||

First is the Goddess of Inspiration, Second the Goddess of Sacred Study; third is the Goddess of the Delight of Practice, the Goddess of Purifying Austerity is fourth.

Fifth is the Goddess who Nurtures Divinity, sixth is the One Who is Ever-Pure; seventh is the Goddess of the Dark Night of Overcoming Egotism, the Goddess of the Great Radiant Light is eighth.

Ninth is the Goddess who Grants Perfection, the nine Durgas, the Relievers of Difficulties, have been enumerated, and these names have been revealed by the great soul of the Supreme himself.



Law and its Purposes

Our culture has been one that respects life and person of every individual. Our ethos teaches us to be united and move ahead together. In the words of our former Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee,

मेरे प्रभु।
मुझे इतनी ऊँचाई कभी मत देना,
गैरों को गले न लगा सकूँ,
इतनी रुखाई कभी मत देना।

Emphasis in our culture is always laid upon collective success, rather than individual success. This means that from times immemorial, society has been paramount in our culture and the mores of various communities too. Unity in diversity has been and is the cornerstone of our nation.

The Rig Veda declares:

No one is superior or inferior. All are brothers. All should strive for the interest of all and should progress collectively. (*Mandala 5, Sukta 60, Mantra 5*).

With this in mind, let us proceed to get an understanding of the purpose of law. Law is a system of rules that governs human conduct. Law has been defined by many scholars in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, it would be convenient to understand law as a means of controlling the human conduct from being detrimental to others. Law fosters systemic growth. Law may be law of the nature, a law of science or a command of the sovereign. In other words, the definition of law will depend upon the context in which the word is being used.

How does law when taken as the command of the sovereign confirm with the age-old traditions that we have been following? The ultimate purpose of law is to achieve common good, the highest goal that can be envisioned by anyone or any culture. Law aims at addressing issues being

faced by the society and their resolution by way of conciliation between various competing interests. For instance, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 does lay out a set of rules that shall govern a Hindu marriage. At the same time, the Act in its various Sections recognizes custom.¹ Legislations thereby make an attempt to harmonize the rules of different communities and create a uniform set of rules acceptable to all.

In India, we follow the common law system. Emphasis is laid upon precedent, which means that a lower court has to deliver a judgment in accordance with one given by a higher court with regard to a similar issue. This brings in certainty into the system and aids the litigator.

As known to all and sundry, the Supreme Court of India is the apex court of our land. We then have a High Court for every state, which is the highest Court in the particular state. Then there are district courts and subordinate courts. The Supreme Court has jurisdiction, meaning the authority to decide a case, all over the country whereas, the jurisdiction of High Court or a district court is limited to the particular state or district.

From this organizational structure, we may see a reflection of the system that we have been following from times immemorial. Though the word of the king was the law, yet there was a system in place to administer justice. Therefore, the ultimate aim of law is administration of justice, a sacred ideal of society which has been accorded a high status in our culture.

- Neetika Gogula
IIIrd year BA LLB

(Footnotes)

1. For example, Section 4 of the Act says that the Act shall not apply to Scheduled Tribes, thereby respecting the different customs that they follow.





Lalitha Panchami

Lalitha Panchami is the birthday or jayanthi of Goddess Lalitha. It is observed on Ashwin Shukla Panchami, the fifth day during the bright fortnight in Ashwayuja masam. On this day, Goddess Upang Lalitha is worshipped in some places of India. In South Indian states, Goddess Lalitha Tripura Sundari is worshipped on Lalitha Panchami. She is associated with the Pancha Mahabhutas or five elements. Goddess Lalitha is believed to be the representation or form of the five elements – Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Space. Creation and Sustaining of the universe is child's play to Her. She is the Chaitanya, Iccha and Gnyana Shakti Swaroopini who bestows Her grace on Sadhakas of Srividya.

Goddess Lalitha is an incarnation of Shakti that appeared to annihilate demon Bhandasura who was created from the ashes of Kama or Manmadha. Kama had tried to disturb the intense tapas performed by Lord Shiva. An angry Shiva opened His third eye and reduced Kama to ashes. One of Shiva's Ganas took the ashes and drew a portrait of a man and when Shiva glanced at the figure it came to life. As we know Lord Shiva is called as Bhola Shankar. He blessed the live form of ashes, which became a demon called Bhandasura. On receiving the blessings of Lord Shiva, Bhandasura started to rule the world and showed demonic characteristics. Indra performed a yagna and Shakti appeared sitting on Srichakra in the form of Lalitha. Bhandasura was killed and his original form of Manmadha was restored.

In 2010, the date of Lalitha Panchami is October 11th. The day is of great significance in Gujarat and parts of Maharashtra. Some people observe a fast known as Lalitha Panchami Vrat. It is also customary to gather the books in the house and place them at the feet of the Goddess to seek Her blessings. Let us stay tuned to Goddess Lalitha on this day by worshipping and meditating on Her form.



Bathukamma Festival

Bathukamma is the biggest festival in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh, India. Bathukamma is the representation of Goddess Maha Gauri. The festival is celebrated by women and unmarried girls during the nine days of Durga Navaratri. It starts on Bhadrapada Amavasya, also known as Mahalaya Amavasya or Pitru Amavasya and ends on Ashwayuja Ashtami, popularly known as Durgashtami.

The legend of Bathukamma Panduga is mentioned in one of the historical texts scripted in Telugu. Centuries ago, King Dharmangada of Chola Dynasty used to rule South India. He was childless for many years after marriage. After performing many pujas and rituals, his wife gave birth to Goddess Lakshmi. The child survived many accidents. So, her parents named her Bathukamma (Bathuku-life, Amma-suffix to mother). Since then Bathukamma festival is celebrated by young girls in Telangana region. The main purpose of this festival is to worship the Goddess in the belief that the young girls would get husbands as per their wish.

There is another legend or katha about Bathukamma. Daksha performed a yagna and invited everyone but his youngest daughter, Gauri, who married Lord Shiva against his wish. Against Shiva's will, Gauri went to the yagna and was insulted along with Lord Shiva. She was unable to tolerate the insult and sacrificed Her life by setting Herself ablaze. Wishing to bring Her back, women present Her flowers and make turmeric idol of the Goddess and sing and dance around the idol of Bathukamma.

First day of the festival is called as "Engili Poolu," sixth day is "Arremu" and the final day or the main festival of Bathukamma is referred as "Chaddula Bathukamma". On the final day Bathukamma Nimajjanam is performed with utmost enthusiasm in Telangana cities, towns and villages. In 2010 the festival starts from 7th October and ends on 15th October, which is Durgashtami.

Source: Festivals of Telangana



Maharshi Valmiki

Maharshi Valmiki, the author of the great Indian epic Ramayana, was a Hindu sage who lived around the beginning of the first millennium B.C. He is referred to as 'Adikavi', the original creator of the Hindu 'sloka'- a verse form in which most of the epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas are composed.

He was a Brahman by birth belonging to the lineage of Bhrgu. Fate consigned him to a family of robbers which brought him up. But his life changed when he met sage Narada. By the repetition of Ramnama he attained the supreme state of a Maharshi or great sage. Since a 'Valmika' or an anthill had grown over his body during his long period of penance he came to be known as Valmiki.

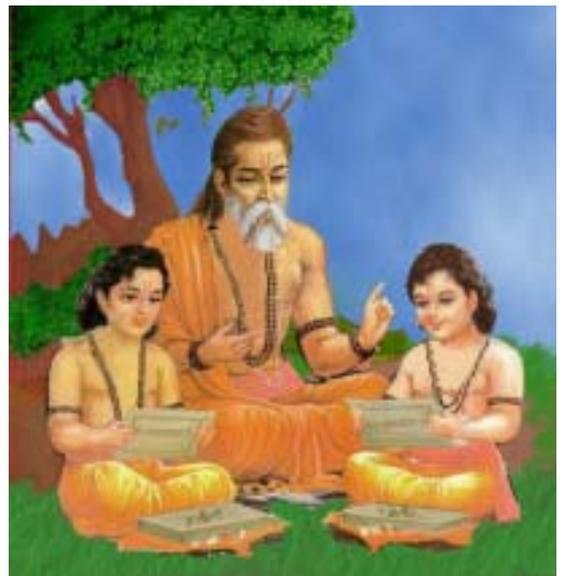
When the mythical sage Narada came to his hermitage, Valmiki who received him with due honor posed him a question – Who was the ideal man? The reply came from Narada in the form of 'Samkshepa Ramayana' which formed the foundation on which the magnificent 24,000 verse edifice was built by Valmiki. Then immersed deep into this story, Valmiki left for the river Tamasa with his disciple Bharadwaj. The pleasant and placid river reminded the seer of the mature and modest quality of his hero. He visualized a pure and pious man's mind reflected in the deep waters. In the next instant he witnessed a heartless hunter mercilessly killing a male bird that was in love with its mate. The piteous wailing of the distressed female moved the heart of the sage so much that he spontaneously uttered a curse on the hunter. However, this curse came out of his mouth in the form of a sloka, a perfectly metrical composition, which surprised the sage himself. The sage had turned into a poet.



His powerful emotions found equally powerful medium for his manifestation. It was a spontaneous outburst of his inner voice motivated by divine will. When he returned to his hermitage, Brahma- the four faced God appeared before him and commanded him to compose an epic poem on the story of Rama as he had heard it from the great sage Narada. He also gave him the boon of the visions of all the incidents and the revelation of all the secrets connected with the story. Accordingly, Valmiki composed the epic and named it Ramayana. He not only wrote the Ramayana, he was in fact part of the story itself. He gave shelter to Rama's consort Sitadevi who was left in the forest. Her two sons Luv and Kush grew up in his Ashram.

His birthday falls on the full moon day (Pournima) in the month of Ashwin. In 2010 Valmiki Jayanthi will fall on 22nd October, Friday. This day is very popular in Northern India and is known as 'Pargat Diwas'. There are many temples dedicated to Maharshi Valmiki in Madhya Pradesh and Valmiki Jayanthi is celebrated with immense joy. On this day people offer special prayers and processions are taken out. Some devotees also go to the temple and narrate the Ramayana in his memory.

Source: Biography of Maharshi Valmiki





The story is about a woman named Karva who was very devoted to her husband. Her intense love and dedication towards him gave her the *pativrata shakti* (spiritual power). One day while bathing at a river, her husband was caught by a crocodile. Karva bound the crocodile with a cotton yarn and asked Yama (the God of death) to take the crocodile to hell. But Yama refused. Karva who was so bent on rescuing her husband didn't hesitate to threaten to curse Yama. Yama who was the God of death himself was afraid of being cursed by a Pativrata and accordingly sent the crocodile to hell and blessed Karva's husband with long life. Karva and her husband enjoyed many more years of wedded bliss. Karva Chauth celebration signifies the strong role a pure minded and steadfast woman plays in the well-being of her companion and the family as a whole and is therefore celebrated with faith and belief. Karva Chauth festival comes 9 days before Diwali which will be the 26th October 2010.

It is the most important and difficult fast observed by married women in the northern and western parts of India, especially, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, seeking the longevity, well-being and prosperity of their husbands. The term 'Chauth' means the 'fourth day' (fourth day after the full moon following Dussehra) and 'Karwa' stands for an earthen pot with a spout which is a symbol of peace and prosperity hence the name 'Karwa Chauth'. It begins before sunrise and ends only after offering prayers and worshiping the moon at night. No food or water can be taken after sunrise.

Karwachauth



The married women get up early in the morning, perform their ablutions and wear new and festive attire. Fasting women from all over the neighborhood gather in a group and narrate mythological stories that highlight the significance of Karwa Chauth. Shiva, Parvati and their son Kartikeya are worshiped on this day along with the 10 'karwas' filled with sweets. The Karwas are given to daughters and sisters along with gifts. There is an elaborate and customary puja that is performed in the evening in a verandah or the open courtyard. The puja place is decorated with kharia mitti, which has been soaked in water two to three hours earlier and takes a semi-liquid form. A chowk is decorated on the floor and placed against a wall on one side, where a similarly decorated patta is kept, on which the Gauri Mata is seated. Those who have observed the vrat, with their chunris and in red or pink clothes and bindi on their foreheads, now gather around the place and follow more puja rituals, narrate stories, chant mantras and worship the deity with rice. At night when the moon appears, women break their fast after offering water to the moon.



Independence Day and Raksha Bandhan



Nachiketa Tapovan's Vidya Mandir children celebrated Independence day, Raksha Bandhan, Krishnashtami and Teacher's Day with great enthusiasm spreading joy all around.





Krishnashtami



Teacher's Day



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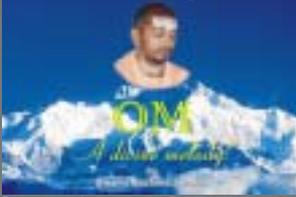
***Anna daanam maha daanam; vidya daanam mahattaram.
Annena kshanika trupthihi yaavajjeevanthu vidyaya.***

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- 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** – Vivekananda Kendra, Near Sarathi Studios
Saptahikam – Thu only – 11am to 1pm
- 4. AS Rao Nagar** – Tentatively at Sri VS Raju's House, Near Poulomi Hospital
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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.

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you to the



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Venue:

Nachiketa Tapovan

Date:

October 18th & 19th

Time:

10.00 am to 05.00 pm

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in our hearts in
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Ma Laxmi to
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- 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.

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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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