

Nachiketanjali

...an offering

A Journey Into The Spiritual Realm!

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Bhakti is a world of mystic bliss!



*In this age work without devotion to God
has no legs to stand upon.*

It is like a foundation on sand.

First cultivate devotion.

*All other things- schools, dispensariess, etc- will,
if you like, be added to you.*

First devotion, then work.

*Work, apart from devotion or love of God,
is helpless and cannot stand.*



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Restraint Is Necessary

It was an awesome sight to watch as the kites of various shapes and colours filled the skies, on the auspicious occasion of Sankranti. I silently observed the young and old people having fun using the wind to fly their kites. The kites appeared like birds dancing in the sky. As the strong winds gusted against the kites, a string kept them in check.

It was amusing that the kites did not blow away with the wind but arose against it to achieve great heights. They tried to liberate themselves from the strong clutches of the string but the restraining string and the cumbersome tail kept them in tow. Finally, one of the kites succeeded in breaking loose. It seemed to be happy to be free at last. But its freedom did not last long. It was put at the mercy of a strong breeze. It fluttered and landed on the ground and was entangled in a mass of weeds and slush.

How much like kites we sometimes are. The Lord gives us adversity and restrictions, rules to follow, from which we can grow and gain strength. Restraint is necessary most of the time but we try to ignore it and some of us keep tugging at the rules so hard that we never soar to reach the heights we might have obtained. In our childhood we are equipped with a strong string that is knitted by our parents. They support and guide us every time we are blown by winds. We are trained to adapt to any situation. But as we grow we throw away all restraints and struggle to set ourselves free. Human life is as fragile as the kite in the wind. If we are not cautious we might meet the fate of the kite with a broken string.

Let us each rise to the great heights, realizing the restraints are in fact the steadying force that helps us ascend and achieve. Let us lift ourselves to the level of Divine Consciousness from human consciousness.

- Subhadra K.



Once again let there be a pitch dark night...

It is a pitch dark night. Ma Kali's merciful play pours heavy rains. The river is swelling every moment, threatening the village. Villagers on the bank are witnessing Ma Kali's play in astonishment. Few are outside, looking at the small thatched huts without roofs and some are trying to close the holes in the huts with whatever little they have. Few are in tears, few are crying, holding their children to their chest and few are simply shocked, standing at one place, like deer surrounded by lions.

In an otherwise scenic and tranquil village, 180 humble and God-fearing villagers are wondering what God's fury is all about. Nothing is left to live in. Few gather together to pray. Suddenly there is a lightening in the sky and in their minds as well. They turn their heads up towards the sky and feel as if Ma Kali is calling them. All of a sudden there is a silence, electrifying their bodies, pulling them towards the temple on top of the hill.

A young, fair and pristine beauty leads the entire group. All of them are following her footsteps. An open mandapam with 200 sft and 100 sft sanctum sanctorum is now clearly seen. She asks everyone to enter the mandapam. Rain is thrashing from all sides as it is open. Then stepping aside, she invites everyone into the sanctum sanctorum, the only place without chaos. Lamps highlight the beauty of the deity inside. The sanctity of the temple makes them hesitate to step inside but as the situation is tense they decide to go in. First time in their life they experience the divine proximity with Ma Kali, the ocean of compassion! It is awesome and inspiring!

Then the young lady with a golden plate and lamp in her hand enters, dancing and singing the glory of Ma Kali. Her eyes are sparkling; the glow on her face is captivating. All eyes are glued to her face. It is, as if, Ma Kali is praying to Ma Kali. Atmosphere is charged with her melodious voice and rhythmic way of prayer. Villagers are in ecstasy. All join with her in singing and dancing together like Sri Ramakrishna

Paramahansa and His devotees. They offer the lotus flowers, given by the pristine beauty. Time slips into timelessness. Dusk slips into dawn. Rain slips into Ma Earth. They bid adieu to the young lady. Then they are on their way back to the village one by one following the footsteps of Ma Kali, enjoying every drop of rain like Ma Earth.

Early morning, the pujari arrives. His piercing eyes scan and send cold waves through their spines. Pujari screams, "It is the biggest sin to enter in the sanctum sanctorum." He murmurs, "Mother will not spare even a single person, small or big, good or bad."

Villagers are still in that blissful state and narrate everything. "I don't believe," yells the pujari, "if that is true then show me the golden plate, those lotus flowers and that lady." All march towards the temple. The path is very steep and slippery and difficult to tread. Pujari begs for pardon, "Ma Kali, please forgive me for not maintaining sanctity." The mandapam is overcrowded with 50 villagers. Hundred and thirty are left outside. Pujari still in an aggressive mood opens the door of the sanctum sanctorum to find a unique fragrance in the atmosphere. He is stunned as he looks at the golden plate and 180 lotus flowers. His voice chokes as he says, "Unbelievable! 180 people in the sanctum sanctorum, singing and dancing together. Unbelievable!" Second 'unbelievable' awakens villagers. For a moment time ceases... wind carries the Divine fragrance... trees dance like Ma Kali... river sings the glory of the Mother...

Pujari experiences the pitch dark night within and a heavy rain of his own tears. The deity disappears from sight... no pristine beauty... golden plate... no lotus flowers... no singing and dancing... only emptiness pervades all over. He utters, "Blessed are those who are innocent not intellectual... spiritual not religious."

Villagers are back to normal life... but astonished... silent forever... waiting to experience once again the pitch dark night... heavy rains... the swelling and roaring river... uprooted trees... and...

- Swami Nachiketananda



Nitya Karmas

Karmakanda is meant for the people of Pravrutti marga (who always dwell in material world). Our Sages have given a perfect path of Self-realization to householders whose senses are always outward. Self realization is only possible when all the senses turn inward. For a house holder there are particular Nitya Karmas given by our sages.

Why does one need to perform Nitya Karmas?

Athochchate gruhasthasya

Nitya karma yadhavidhi I

Yakrutvanrunyamapnoti

Daivat poutrachcha maanushat II

Meaning: According to shastras, householder's regular duties (Nitya Karmas) have been decided which make him free from three types of debt; they are Pitru runa (the debt of ancestors), Daiva runa (the debt of God) and Manushya runa (the debt of man).

What are the Nitya Karmas?

Sandhya snanam japachchaviva

devatanam cha pujanam I

Vaishwa devam tahta thitvam

shatkarmani dine dine II

Meaning: Man has to perform the below mentioned six Nitya Karmas regularly. Snanam (bath), Sandhya vidhi, Japam (repetition of Mantra), Deva pujanam (praying to God), Bali Vaishva deva Yagna (serving small creatures, eg. Bird feeding) and Atithi satkar (serving guests).

1. **Snanam:** All the ablutions like passing urination, stools, brushing teeth and taking bath, are Nitya Karmas. These have to be performed in a systematic manner. There has been a particular procedure given by our sages which is completely spiritual and scientific. Example: Today taking bath became a luxury. Bath is not all about using expensive bath soaps and shampoos to take care of the body. There is a great significance of taking bath and has to be understood scientifically. It doesn't matter what kind of bathroom you have and what products



are being used. While taking bath, attitude matters. The body is a temple in which God resides and it has to be always clean and tidy in order to experience the beauty of God within. So before entering in the bath room, Achamana has to be done which involves chanting God's name three times and sipping water with each chant with the attitude of internal purification. Next, before pouring water on you, remember all the holy rivers. Bath invokes purity within and without. Unless one is not purified internally and externally, he is not eligible for other Nitya Karmas. Especially morning bath has been appreciated.

Prathah snanam charitvatha,

shudde tirtha visheshataha I

Prathah snanadyat shuddhyeta

karyo yam malinaha sada II

Nopasarpryanti vai dustaha

prata snayijanam kwachit I

Drusta drustaphalam tasmad

pratah snanam samacharet II

Meaning: Beauty, glow, strength, long life, health, austerity, and intellect are the qualities achieved by those who take bath according to shastra and pure science. After snanam, one gets ready to perform:

1. **Sandhya upasana:** It is a way of gaining knowledge and experiencing wisdom within. Sandhya is not evening, it is the time between day and night. In Sandhya vidhi, one pays gratitude to Sun God and Ma Gayatri.

2. **Japa:** Japa is the constant repetition of God's name. Japa means that which puts an end to the cycle of birth and death. In Nitya Karmas, Japa is a part of Sandhya vidhi.

3. **Deva puja:** Puja is the highest form of worship. Our sages have given us a systematic way of Puja vidhi which enhances one's intelligence and opens the doors of the heart. This shall be discussed in coming issues in detail.

4. **Bali vaishwa deva Yagnam:** Before consuming our regular meal, it is necessary to pay gratitude for the giver of food. With money, we purchase grains harvested by the farmer with his hard work. But without God's intervention nothing grows. Before we fill our belly it is necessary to pay our gratitude to God and feed other small creatures. In this yagna, after paying gratitude to God, from the meal you get, three small parts need to be taken out- first one for our ancestors, second for our Guru & Rishis and the third for Devas and all creatures. After your meal is completed, these three parts are offered to birds.

5. **Atithi satkar:** Serve guests whole heartedly, do not hesitate to give food and shelter. Use common sense but not crooked mind and intellect. It is not known in which form God comes and gives darshan.

Nitya Karmas bring not only clarity in life but also happiness, health, prosperity, intelligence and spiritual upliftment. Nitya karmas is the process for evolution.

- Swami Shivanandamayi



Nitya Karmas



Drop till you fly

The homa bird lives high up in the sky and never comes down to the earth, not even to lay its eggs. So the eggs that are laid in the sky begin to fall. The bird lives so high that the egg even hatches during the fall and continues to fall. The bird lives at such a height that the fledgling even grows its wings and opens its eyes during the drop. Then the young bird senses that it is dashing down towards the earth and unless it makes a movement upward it would crash and be killed. Just before it hits the ground it shoots up towards its mother in the sky. Then its one goal is to reach its mother.

People born with God-consciousness, as soon as they grow old enough, realize the danger of coming in contact with the world and start moving toward one goal- realization of God.

- Sri Ramakrishna

Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara

Direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna- Swami Premananda

Swami Premananda or Baburam as he was named was born on 10 December, 1861, in the picturesque village of Antpur, in the district of Hooghly, Bengal. His father Tarapasanna Ghosh and mother Smt Matangini Dasi were from well to do and influential Kayastha families of the village and were of devout disposition.

His sister Krishnabavini was married to Balaram Bose who was one of the most intimate householder devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. Since he was born of pious parents, he was inclined towards spirituality from a very tender age. He came to Calcutta for higher studies and as fate would have it, his headmaster was Mahendranath Gupta, the celebrated author of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and his classmate and intimate friend at school was Rakhal alias Swami Brahmananda.

Swami Premananda was just twenty when he met the Master, and He divined his absolute purity and held him very high in His estimation. He would say, 'Baburam is pure to his very marrow. No impure thought can ever cross his mind and body.'

In 1884, he appeared in the entrance examination and failed to get through. When the Master heard about it, He said, 'So much the better; he has been released from bonds', playing a pun on the Bengali expression, pash which means bondage and sounds like the English word 'pass'. Baburam's mother had already become a devotee of the Master and He requested her to leave her son with Him. In return she only asked that she might have devotion to God and that she might never live to suffer the bereavement of her children. From then on Baburam began to live constantly with the Master. He used to call him daradi i.e., the companion of His soul.

When the Master fell ill and was in Cossipore, Baburam served Him diligently. After his Master's demise he joined the monastery at Baranagore. During the Christmas tide of 1886, Narendra, took the young band of disciples to the ancestral home of Baburam at Antpur and spent a week in holy discourse and in intense meditation. On

formal initiation Narendra gave him the name Premananda as He thought it conformed to the remark of the Master that Sri Radha, the Goddess of Divine love Herself was partially incarnated in him.

After the establishment of the Math at Belur, he was entrusted with the management of the Math as Swami Brahmananda had to travel to different parts of the country. The extreme care which the Swami took in receiving and entertaining devotees betrayed to the dullest mind glimpses of his transformed outlook. He was anxious above everything that the devotees should grow in spirituality. He would snatch a few moments from his crowded hours in order to infuse into their hearts a spirit of devotion to God and the ideal of detachment. If anyone remonstrated with him for his anxiety lest it should affect his health, he would reply, "It is my nature. The service of devotees is the worship of God."



Swami Premananda mirrored more than anyone else the Master's all consuming love for all. Monks, householders, devotees, visitors, and guests, all felt the tenderness of his affection and came to regard him as the mother of the monastery.

He would say I have learnt the lesson of endurance from the feet of my Master. Swami Premananda would give utmost importance to gentleness of behavior. He would also say, 'by observing the faults of others we are gradually infected by them. We have not come to look at the faults of others and to correct them. But it is only to learn that we are here... Lord, Thou art everything.'

He entered Mahasamadhi in the presence of his brother disciples and monks of the Order on 30th July, 1918. He had a typical disregard for a sadhu of personal comfort. After his demise, diligent search could discover only an empty canvas bag and a few books which could be preserved as souvenirs.

-Compiled by Geetha K.



What is the difference between “Sayyama” and “Damana”?

Swamiji: ‘Sayyama’ means patience whereas ‘damana’ means forcibly. In ‘Shastras’, it is clearly mentioned that, we should have sayyama not damana. Damana may bounce back and destroy the person whereas sayyama will lead a person to Divinity. Our poojas, fasting or reading shastras were well designed and directed towards a disciplined life. That was the reason we always had peace, serenity and prosperity in life. If we look at history, we will come to know that many invaders tried their best to destroy the peace of Ma Bharati by force but they did not succeed. The reason was simple. They tried by force and their intention was not good. And the other reason is we were always completely drenched in patience, good intention and a disciplined life. History is true evidence for our tolerance and peace, truth and non-violence, disciplined and controlled life. That was the reason even though many have come and tried everything and many are going to come in near future, yet nothing is going to destroy Ma Bharati, as her every child is following righteous dharma, that which protects never destroys...that which carries the torch of peace not the weapon of war...that which follows sayyama not damana.

In a sadhaka’s life, pratyahara guided by sayyama is more important than pratyahara guided by damana. Shastras never permit to follow the path of damana. A disciplined life through sayyama will lead to a peaceful and happy spiritual life. Sadhakas need to understand the subtle difference between sayyama and damana. Sense organs are important and training them is more tedious in this ‘kaliyuga’. But if we take every step wisely and make sure that we are not suppressing our sense organs but training them as per simple yet effective guidelines given in Shastras, then nobody can stop the spiritual growth of one’s life.

What is Pratyahara?

Swamiji: Patanjali says “Svavishayasamprayoge chittasyasvarupanukara ivendriyanam pratyaharah.” Meaning: Pratyahara is withdrawing the sense organs from their objects so that the mind is disconnected from external objects.

Sense organs need to constantly come in contact with the respective objects but once we learn to withdraw them from the objects, it is bound to get diverted within. Hence pratyahara is more important in one’s life. But this pratyahara should be through sayyama not through damana. It is important that we should never try to withdraw our sense organs forcibly from the objects but train them in such a way that they will pick up only necessary things like how Rajhamsa picks up only milk. In pratyahara, mind plays bigger role than the sense organs. If mind is diverted towards divinity then sense organs will automatically dive within. Then seeing external beauty will not become more important but seeing within, the same beauty will inspire and lead to a simple and peaceful life.

Hence pratyahara in one’s life is more important. And this can be achieved by constant practice of sayyama not damana. Sadhakas especially should observe the prescribed guidelines given in shastras to awaken the hidden potentialities within. This inward journey is more important and once we take this journey, we will never turn back and try to see what we have left behind.

- Swami Nachiketananda

The Play called Life

Once a man went to a certain place to see a theatrical performance, carrying a mat under his arm. Hearing that it would be some time before the performance began; he spread the mat on the floor and fell asleep. When he woke up all was over. Then he returned home with the mat under his arm.

- Sri Ramakrishna

Change Does Not Come Easy



I have never dreamt that I would face this situation – when fate snatched away my loved ones, one after the other in a sequence. Death of a loved one is like a bolt out of the blue. It throws us off gear and makes us a total wreck. We crawl on all fours and try to regain our balance but thunder strikes again.

When some one we love is dying, it hurts. It hurts to see them go through what they are going through. We feel the loved one doesn't deserve this. It hurts that you cannot protect him and it hurts to realize this is not the only death you'll ever face. We feel a part of us is dying too. Many questions crop up. What will life be like without them? How can I help this person? Why do I have to see him suffer? These would be only some of our questions. Then how should we act? What can we do that will best help him? And how can we best help ourselves?

This will be a time of testing unlike any we've known. It can be extremely stressful. The stress can be overwhelming. We are probably being forced to make major changes in our life. Change does not come easy. Unwanted change is even harder to accept. It is not surprising then if this were one of the most stress-filled times we have ever known. In addition to dealing with all our emotions, we may be facing a host of disruptions in our daily life. Day-to-day care giving rituals may consume our thoughts and sap our energy. Decisions about the future may hang heavy. And this is not just a patient we are dealing with... it is someone who has worked their way into our hearts.

The situation should not be downplayed. But neither should it be painted as impossible. "It is hard but we can do it." And this is the time to learn. Life teaches us many lessons. It teaches us the most important lesson of Birth and Death. And it is high time we learnt the lesson. One might think it is possible to skip it. But 'NO', one day or other we have to learn it before moving on. And why don't we learn when the situation arises?

What is born has to perish. We too will leave this body when the time comes. Let us not crave for temporary things but utilize the time in finding out what is eternal. The distress we feel will one day subside. Life's joy can return. We are chiseled and shaped as we start learning. But we can grow from this experience. Remember! We have known times of testing before and we have survived them. We CAN yet again. Change does not come easy, but change is eternally achievable.

- *Subhadra K.*



Surrender and see what happens

Call it miracle, call it wonder; happenings that take us by surprise are nothing but God's blessings. Often we see that after we give up on something, we tend to get the best results from them. It happens so, because of the feeling in us that what we have worked on for so long has given up on us and the only ray of hope we see is the one we get from God. Until then, we don't feel His very presence but when we surrender ourselves completely to God, after all the hardships we undergo to get the best, His *mahima* comes into act and we see these Divine deeds happen. It is a wonderful experience to be under His great care. Don't you feel lucky to be one among those whom He cares for? Haven't you ever gotten the chance to experience something of this sort? Then, probably you still don't trust and confide in Him completely. Trust Him completely and then see the *maya* that happens. It is His magic that makes it the best experience ever.



I still remember the day when I suffered from measles and had to appear for my mathematics board examination. I was not a math lover at all but struggled hard and learnt the subject as much as I could. In the examination hall, it was a tough task for me to figure out what was printed on the question paper as I had rashes all over my eyes and face. Tears rolled down my cheeks while all my friends started writing and filled the sheets with all the knowledge they had, about the subject. I looked unto God and surrendered myself to Him. After which I have no idea what made me write faster than all others did and I handed the examination sheets on time and got out of the examination hall. When the results were announced I knew nothing and expected to see nothing on my score sheet. My parents hoped that I pass in the subject but

I scored 96 / 100. Call it a wonder or a miracle, this happened with me. When I had to study I did and when it was His time to act, He did.

Talking about this very trust or *bhakti* we may call, there was this little frog whose experience can be the best example to quote. When pandavas were in the forest during their aranyavasam, Krishna visited their place quite often and one such visit of His made pandavas understand the meaning of *bhakti*. Draupadi was asked to cook porridge for Krishna and when she set water on fire to boil and came back after a while to look for boiling water to cook rice, she found that the water was still cold. Not a single person present there, understood the reason behind this strange happening. Then, Krishna came in and put His hand in the pot filled with water set on fire and took out a frog from the pot and set him free. He explained to the

pandavas that, when the pot was first set on fire, the frog struggled hard to get out of the pot and finally gave up on struggling any further after giving his best try and surrendered himself to Krishna and took His name. That is when Krishna came to his aid and rescued him. Pandavas then realized the reason behind their misery and surrendered themselves completely to Krishna and asked Him for sharanam. The *bhakti*, pandavas claimed to have for Krishna was incomplete without the trust.

Life without hardships is like an ocean without currents. Every difficulty we face should make us humble and better each time. Surrendering completely to God after every effort made, is what true *bhakti* means. True devotion to God will find the way through difficulties to success. Let the world be nothing but God Himself and nothing will be impossible to achieve. Devote yourself to God and experience His *maya*.



I love writing poems, stories and songs; compose them and sing. All I can write is about life because that is all I can experience.

Ramya Manasa Kandala, 1st Year Undergraduate Student
University of Alberta Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Yuvanjali



Sri Bhagavan Ramakrishna incarnated Himself in India, to demonstrate what the true religion of the Aryan race is; to show where amidst all its many divisions and offshoots, scattered over the land in the course of its immemorial history, lies the true unity of the Hindu religion, which

by its overwhelming number of sects discordant to superficial view, quarrelling constantly with each other and abounding in customs divergent in every way, has constituted itself a misleading enigma for our countrymen and the butt of contempt for foreigners; and above all, to hold up before men for their lasting welfare, as a living embodiment of the Sanatana Dharma, His own wonderful life into which He infused the universal spirit and character of this Dharma, so long cast into oblivion by the process of time.

This is the message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world. Care not for doctrines or for dogmas, for sects or for churches. All these count for but little compared with that essence of existence which is in each one, and called 'spirituality'. The more this develops in a man, the more powerful is he for good. He who has most of it can do most good to his fellow men. First, then, acquire that. Only those who have seen it will understand this; but such spirituality can be given to others, even though they be unconscious of the gift. Only those who have attained this power are amongst the great teachers of mankind. They are the powers of light. Then be you this! The more of such men any country produces, the higher that country is raised. That land where no such men exist is doomed. Nothing can save it. Therefore, my Master's message to the world is, 'Be ye all spiritual! Get ye first realization!' And to the young and strong of every country he would cry that the time has come for renunciation. 'Renounce for the sake of humanity! You have talked of the love of man till the thing is in danger of becoming words alone. The time has come to act. The call is now. Do! Leap into the breach and save the world!'

Source: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Vol.6*

Look on Women as Mother

When asked why He did not lead the life of a householder with His wife, the Master replied: "Kartikeya (Son of Siva) one day happened to scratch a cat with His nail. On going home, He saw that there was the mark of a scratch on the cheek of His Divine Mother, Parvati. Seeing this He asked Her, 'Mother, how did you get this ugly scratch on your cheek?' The mother of the universe replied, 'This is the work of your own hand; it is the scratch of your nail.' Kartikeya asked in wonder: 'How is it, Mother? I do not remember to have scratched you at any time. The Mother replied, 'Darling, have you forgotten the fact of your having scratched a cat this morning?' Kartikeya said, 'Yes, I did scratch a cat, but how did your cheek get the scar?' The Mother replied, 'Dear child, nothing exists in this world but Myself. The whole creation is Myself; whomsoever you may hurt, you only hurt me.' Kartikeya was greatly surprised to hear this; and then He determined never to marry. For, whom could He marry? Every woman was mother to Him. Realizing thus the motherhood of woman, He gave up marriage. I am like Kartikeya. I consider every woman as my Divine Mother."

- Sri Ramakrishna



Duty Unmindful of Results

Very recently, I had the opportunity to hear a cardiologist speak, who left his profitable practice in the United States to serve his country. He related an anecdote which had a powerful effect on me. The doctor had a patient by name John, who always



abided by time. One day, John was late. When asked by the doctor, he said it took time for him in the nursing home. Nursing homes in the US are synonymous with the old age homes in our country. When further prodded, John said he goes to the nursing home twice a day to feed his wife suffering from Alzheimer's disease. The doctor then asked him if his wife recognized him. On receiving a reply in the negative, the doctor asked John if there was any use of his going there. John's reply struck the doctor. John said, "It does not matter if she recognizes me or not. I know that she is my wife and that is enough."

'Bhakti' when translated in English becomes 'devotion'. Some of us believe in the existence of a Supernatural Being, who we perceive as God. We have given various forms to this God. A man's desire to experience a relationship with God is bhakti. To this effect, man worships God in various forms. But just as numerous small rivulets and tributaries join to form a mighty river, there is multiplicity of paths which converge to the same Divine Goal. Each person is free to choose his own path. Even the paramount legal document of our country, the Constitution, recognizes this freedom as a fundamental right. Our nation is a secular democracy and we take pride in being united in spite of the existence of various differences.

One of the ways of experiencing a close relationship with God is doing one's duty in a steadfast manner, unmindful of the results that come as a consequence. In our anecdote above, John with his kind act is forging a close bond with God. This is a path that enlightened

souls like Swami Vivekananda encouraged us to take. This state of mind, where we are not bothered about the result is difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, it is not impossible. Let us take the example of a student. A student naturally gets nervous about marks. Here it

is important to distinguish between anticipation regarding result and having the goal in mind. In the former case, a person will surely get anxious. He is worried about the result because what he has in mind is only result. However, in the latter case, when one is mindful about the goal, all he is thinking about is the path to reach there. If this is the case, he will surely carve out a nice path which will definitely take him to his destination. Orientation towards the goal is important, and then the results will automatically come.

Lord Krishna said in the Gita:

**Karmany vadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachna
Ma karmaphalehur bhurma te sangostvakarmani.**

Ch. 2, 47

Let us do our duty well and leave the rest to the Almighty!

- Neetika Gogula

Powerful Are The Inborn Tendencies

Let me tell you how powerful inborn tendencies are. A prince had, in a previous birth, been the son of a washer-man. While playing with his chums in his incarnation as the prince, he said to them: "Stop those games, I shall show you a new one. I shall lie on my belly, and you will beat the clothes on my back as the washer-man does, making swishing sound."

- Sri Ramakrishna

Love for the Divine

Narada, the *manasaputra* of Brahma is revered by the beings of all worlds and at all times. The *Trilokasanchari*, who roams freely in all the worlds symbolizing universal citizenship, the *Veenapani* who eternally sings the hymns of Narayana in utter devotion, the first Natya yogi who danced expressing his unalloyed devotion to Hari, Narada who is the guru of all earnest spiritual aspirants explains and details on various aspects of Bhakti in his creation **Narada Bhakthi Sutra** in the form of aphorisms. Here are excerpts from the ultimate ways of Devotion to God.

Atha tho Bakthim vyakyasyama

Now I will explain in detail what is meant by devotion to God (Bhakthi).

Why Bhakthi?

It is man's nature to love. From the moment he is born, a human being is seeking love- love for mortals, love for materials, love for wealth and so on until one fine day when he realizes that love for worldly things keeps him desiring for more and more, in the process causing pain and frustration and that finally evokes the need for immortal Love or Divine Love. After the need for God in one's life is realized, all that the aspirant needs is to have a personal God and earnestness in this endeavor of directing all his emotions toward God until he realizes his oneness with God. And as Sri Ramakrishna says, "He who seeks earnestly to find God will surely find Him. Know this for certain."

Saa tasmin Parama prema roopa

Devotion to God is personification of intense (highest) love towards Him.

Yallabhathva puman siddho bhavathi, amrutho bhavathi, truptho bhavathi

One who gets it becomes perfect, immortal and contented.

What is Bhakthi?

Tal lakshanathi vachyanthe nana madha bedanath.

The differing definitions of Bhakthi ("devotion") as viewed by many are listed.

Poojadhishwa anuraga ithi Parasara rya.

Intense desire to Worship Him with loving affection is "devotion" according to Sage Parasara.

Kadhadi shweethi Garga

Intense desire to hear his stories is "devotion" according to Sage Garga.

Athma rathya virodhe nethi Sandilya

"Devotion" should be done without conflict to the happiness of the soul, according to sage Sandilya.

Naradasthu thadarpithagi, lacharatha that, vismarane parama vyakulathethi.

But according to sage Narada, "devotion" is doing all duties on behalf of Him, and becoming extremely sad even if you happen to forget Him for a second.

Which is the better path to attain God?

Anyasmath saulabhyam bhakthou

This path of "devotion" is the easiest among the paths to attain God.

Saa thu karma jnana yogebhyo apyadhigathara.

This "devotion" is far greater than the path of action (karma), the path of knowledge (gyana), and the path of disciplined contemplation (yoga).

Phala roopathwad

Because, this "devotion" is like the fruit attained by any of these methods.

Tasya gnana meva Sadana mithyeke

Some believe that knowledge alone is the path of attainment.

Anyonyasryathwa mithyanye

Some others believe that Knowledge and devotion are interdependent on each other.

Swayam phala roopathethi Brahma kumara

The son of Brahma (sage Narada) believes that "devotion" is its own result.

How to attain Bhakthi?

Thathu Vishaya tyagath, Sanga thyagath chcha

This "devotion" reaches completion only when sacrifice is made of pleasurable things and mundane social contacts.

Avyavruthabha janath

It reaches completion by forever ceaseless chanting.

Lokebhi Bhagawath guna sravana keerthanad

It also reaches completion by hearing always or singing about the qualities of God.



***Mukhythasthu Mahad krapayaiva Bhagawat
krupa leasad Vaa***

But most importantly it reaches completion only by the grace of Great learned people and by the divine grace.

Dussanga sarvathaiva thyajya

Also forever avoid the company of bad people.

***Kama, Krodha, moha , smrithibramsa , buddhi
nasa, sarva nasa karanathwaad.***

Because such a company (of bad people) leads to passion, anger, dullness, memory loss, loss of wisdom and thus leads to utter ruin.

Tharangayidha abhi me sangath samudrayanthi

These (passion, anger etc) though they initially appear in bad company as small waves, gather momentum and become like sea.

Who attains Bhakthi?

***Kastharathi kastharathi Mayam? Ya, sangam
sthyajathi yo mahanubhavam sevathe , nirmalo
bhavathi.***

Who can cross? Who can cross the veil of illusion? He who is devoid of any worldly attachment, serves wise people and does not have a feeling of "mine" can only cross the veil of illusion.

***Ya karma phalam tyajathi, karmani sanyasyathi,
thado nirdwando bhavathi.***

He who sacrifices the result of actions, He who detaches himself from actions and he who sacrifices the two opposites like heat-cold, pleasure-suffering, recognition-insult etc. can only cross the veil of illusion.

***Thad prapya thadevaavalokayathi, thadeva
srunothi, thadeva bhashayathi, thadeva
chinthayadhi.***

One who possesses this love of "devotion", is able to only see Him everywhere, is able to only hear of Him always, is able to only talk about Him always and always thinks about Him.

What are the qualities of a true Bhaktha?

***Kantavarodha romanchasrubhi parasparam
labhamana, bhavayanthi kulani prithweem.***

These devotees with tear filled eyes, with stuttering voice and hair standing out discuss always about Him and are a gift to their clan and to the world.

***Theerthi kurvanthi, theerthani sukarmi kuvanthe,
karmani sachasthri kurvanthi***

These devotees make sacred waters more sacred, actions into good actions and Holy Scriptures more holy.

Than maya

For, they are filled with God.

***Modanthe pitharo, nruthyanthi devatha sanadha
cheyam bhoorbhavathi.***

Because of them the manes rejoice, Gods dance and world gets a good leader.

***Nasthi theshu jathi vidhya roopa kula dhana
kriyadhi bedha***

Within them there is no difference by caste, by knowledge, by looks, by birth, by wealth or by actions.

Yadasthadeeya

For all of them are His.

***Guna mahathmyasakthi, roopasakthi, poojasakthi,
smaranasakthi, dasyasakthi, sakhyasakthi,
kanthasakthi, vatsalya sakthya athma
nivedanasakthi, thanmayadhasakthi,
paramavirahasakthi, roopa ekathabhya ekatha satha
bhavathi.***

Though "devotion" is one quality, it is expressed in eleven different ways depending on the individual soul viz 1. longing to hear about His greatness 2. Longing to see His great form 3. Longing to worship Him always 4. Longing to always remember Him 5. Longing to forever serve Him as a slave 6. Longing to be His most intimate friend 7. Longing to be His consort 8. Longing to be affectionate to Him like a parent 9. Longing to sacrifice our soul to Him. 10. Longing to become Himself and 11. Suffering His absence even for a second like a lover.

As Sri Ramakrishna says, "In this age (Kali-Yuga) the path of devotion and love (Bhakti-Yoga) is easy for all. The practice of Narada's Bhakti is better adapted to this Yuga. One should repeat the Holy Name of the Lord and chant His praises and with earnest and sincere heart, pray to Him, saying: O Lord, grant me Thy divine Wisdom, Thy divine Love. Do Thou open my eyes and make me realize Thee."

Compiled by Annapurna R

***Sources: Narada Bhakti Sutra translated by P R
Ramachander & Narada's way of Divine Love
by Swami Prabhavananda***

Bleating Tiger

Once, a tigress attacked a flock of goats. As she sprang on her prey, she gave birth to a cub and died. The cub grew up in the company of goats. Along with the goats the cub ate grass and bleated like a goat, though it was growing to be a tiger. Until one day, another tiger attacked the flock and was amazed to see the grass eating and bleating tiger. The wild tiger took the goat-tiger to show its reflection in water and tried to make it aware of its real nature by giving it meat to eat. The grass eating tiger refused to do so for some time but slowly took to eating meat and grasping its real nature of being a tiger and followed the wild tiger into the forest.

So also when the Guru's grace descends on one, He will let you know who you are and what your real nature is.

- Sri Ramakrishna



Learning the Lord

Everyday I wake up with the thought of knowing God. I worship Him hours together but without success. With disappointment, I proceed to my work place and as I get involved in my work, disappointment takes the back seat. The day comes to an end and I get back to my home. Before going to sleep I resolve to know Him the next morning while worshipping Him. The day begins again and the result is the same. This was the trend I followed most of the years before I began to realize where the Lord really lies. I became a witness to myself and started to learn a few things. My worship was only verbal with mind fixed on my day's tasks, which in fact has nothing to do with my day's worship. In my early days of association with Ramakrishna Math, when I heard the story of Rani Rasmani being slapped by Sri Ramakrishna, I could not understand and even ridiculed the condition of Rani Rasmani. However, within no time I came to the conclusion that it is very easy to concentrate on the Lord once we close our eyes. Even today I struggle to find Him. It's mayhem out there when I try to meditate on Him. We are in a world where everything appears so certain and at the same time uncertain.

Since my childhood days I heard stories of Rama and Krishna. But those stories did not mesmerize me as much as Gajendra Moksha and Ganga Avataram did. Gajendra Moksha is the story of an elephant that prays to God when caught by a crocodile and God rushes to rescue it, all the way from Vaikunta, unmindful of His

attire and without even informing His consort. Similarly in Ganga Avatanam, Bhagiratha a human being with his severe penance pleases Ganga to descend on to this earth through the grace of Lord Shiva. These two tales are always fresh in my mind even today. One story stands for the compassion of God towards His devotees irrespective of the stature and other portrays the height of human attempts.

My struggle still continues to realize Him. I always knew that God is all pervading and omnipresent. But where is He? Is He just in my thoughts or in my heart or in the world around me? One day I finally resolved to know Him. But the time passed on and on, hours turned into days and the result was elusive. At one moment suddenly a beautiful thought took seed in my mind, it started branching out and spread into my whole body finally resting in my heart. The very feeling brought a radical change in my thought process. My attitude towards life and people around me started changing. The focal point was always to learn the Lord but in the process I failed to turn the light of thought on me and on that memorable day I realized my mistake and made an endeavor to know what I am and the result just swept me off my feet. I was in a new world where every object wore the look of Divinity. My experiment with my ability to learn the Lord finally bore fruit of fulfillment. The path was simple and I dared to tread it. As Swami Vivekananda said, "You believe or not, gravitational force exists, similarly God exists" and he also said, "If you cannot accept people around you, how can you accept God who is not visible to you." The Divinity lies in simplicity and simplicity leads to contentment and contentment leads to thoughtlessness and the very state brings us closer to the Lord. With the same spirit I started experiencing the most beautiful moments of my life. I realized Him in the dedication that was showed by our predecessors at the time of freedom struggle. I saw His beautiful face in the smile of a baby. I experienced the fragrance of Lord in the flowers. Finally I saw His full form in the droplet of sweat of a daily laborer who ekes out his livelihood without harming others and with a humble heart expects what he deserves for his working skills. How can I show my gratitude to the Lord, Who made me learn to understand where He stays? Being a normal human I can only say, 'THANKYOU LORD for answering my prayers.'

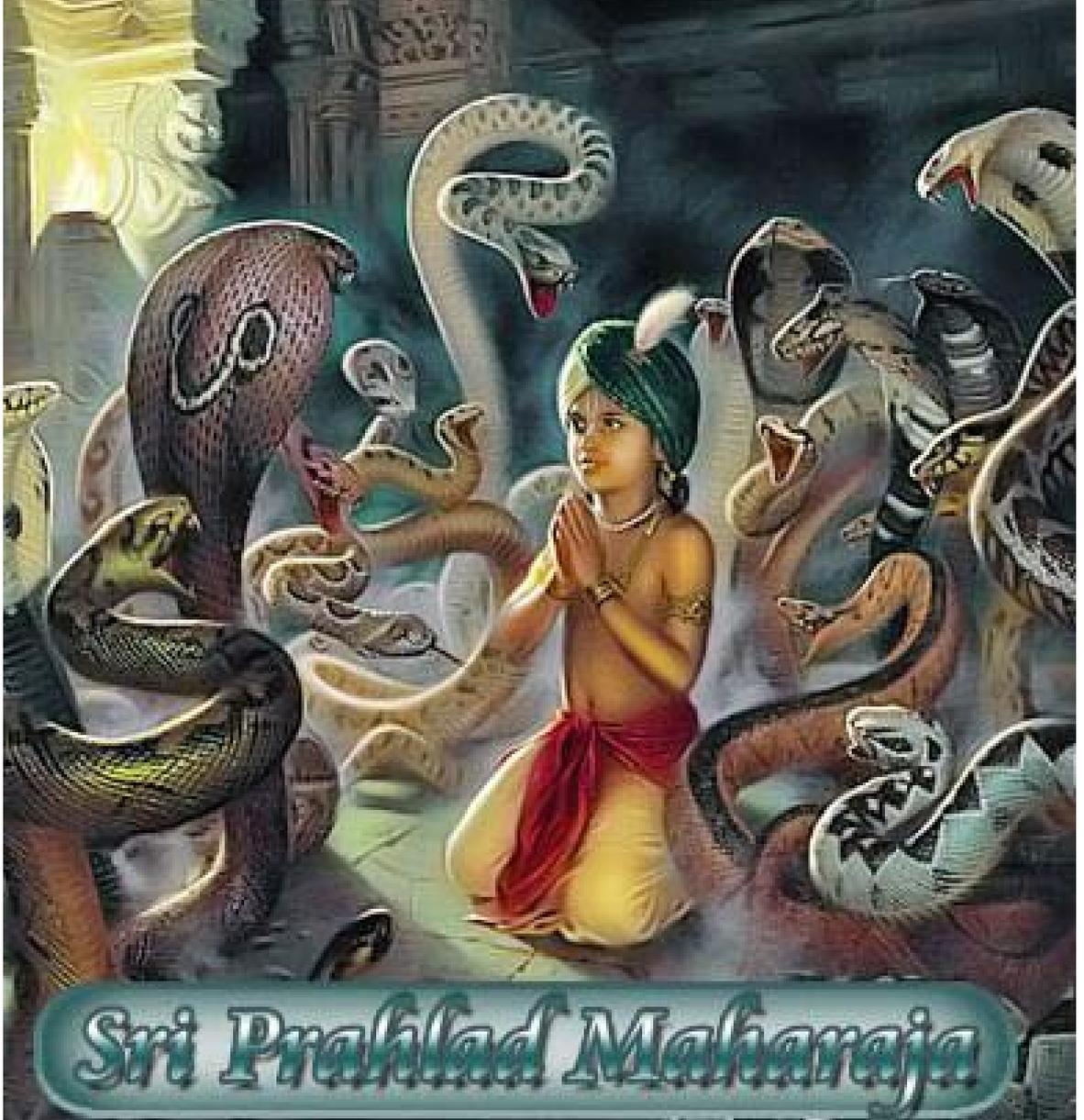
- M. Koti Rajasekhar
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From 'Hamba' to 'Tuhu'

'The cow cries "Hamba" which means "I". That is why it suffers so much. It is yoked to the plough and made to work in rain and sun. Then it may be killed by the butcher. From its hide shoes are made, and also drums, which are mercilessly beaten. Still it does not escape suffering. At last strings are made out of its entrails for the bows used in cording cotton. Then it no longer says, 'Hamba! Hamba!', 'I! I!', but 'Tuhu! Tuhu!', 'Thou! Thou!' Only then are its troubles over.'

O Lord, I am the servant; Thou art the Master. I am the child; Thou art the Mother.

- Sri Ramakrishna



Childhood memories filled my mind, as I watched Bhakta Prahlada recently; a telugu movie based on Vishnu Puran. A movie that we had watched as children and were simply in awe of brave Prahlada and his miraculous escapes.

Hiranyakashipu declared himself to be the God of the whole universe and proclaimed that there was no other God but himself, and strictly enjoined that the Omnipotent Vishnu should have no worship offered to Him anywhere; and that all the worship should henceforth be given to himself only.

The father tried to dissuade his son in many gentle ways from the worship of Vishnu but Prahlada would not give up. What made this little child so brave and fearless at heart? How did he develop the courage to face all that was inflicted on him by his own father? Having heard the glories of Lord Narayana while still in mother Leelavathi's womb, Prahlada developed very pure and unflinching love for the Lord.

All of us are aware of the travails that Prahlada's vain father Hiranyakashipu puts him through. Once, having been thrown into a

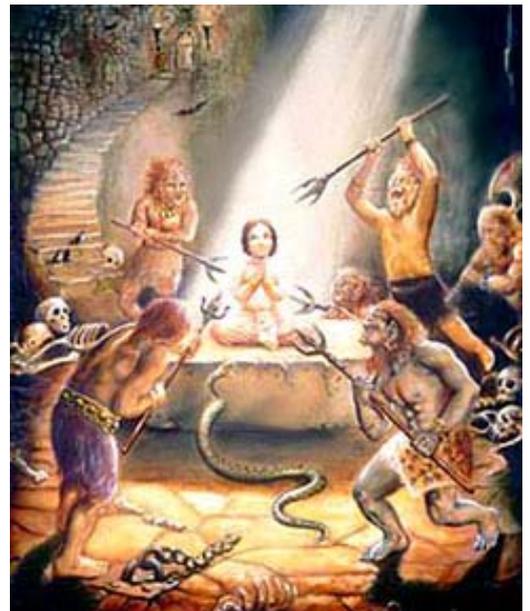
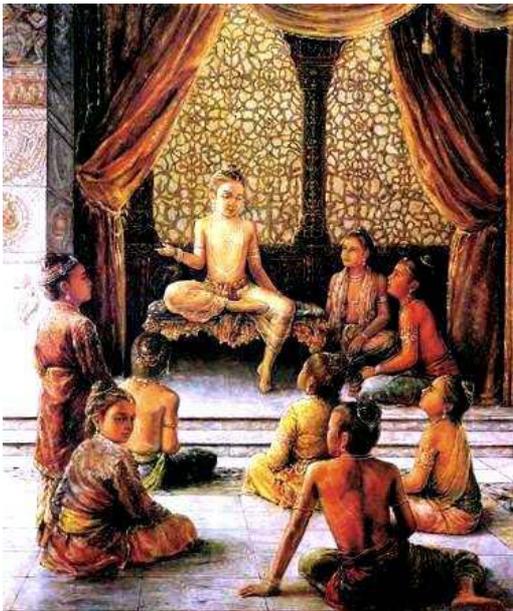
dungeon for asserting over and over again that Lord Vishnu is the only Lord of the Universe; Prahlada calmly walks into pitch darkness and intones: "You are the one who gives vision to the visualizing eyes. Darkness is only your Maya. The one who hasn't beheld your form is the one who is in real darkness."

The way he received the afflictions clearly shows how boundless courage can be drawn by experiencing immense bhakti (devotion) and complete surrender to the Lord. The conviction that his Heavenly Father, Sri Hari will take care of him completely puts a smile on his face even when his father's men fling lashes at him, to end his life. He sees

Sri Hari in the poison that is to be had, in the men that beat him up and in the poisonous snakes that coil around him. With Narayana in everything pleasant and unpleasant, whole life and its experience is turned into a delightful and divine experience.

For many of us, it is going to take a lot of unlearning and learning to develop Prahlada's devotional awareness. But in our own little ways, in our day to day lives, we can learn to practice the devotion and surrender that Prahlada exemplified. We will probably live more freely, more fearlessly and more completely, as we live in more devotion and surrender.

- Harini Nandakuru



Love may be symbolized by a triangle. The first angle is, love never begs, never asks for anything; the second, love knows no fear; the third and the apex, love for love's sake. Through the power of love the senses become finer and higher. The perfect love is very rare in human relation, for human love is almost always interdependent and mutual. But God's love is a constant stream; nothing can hurt or disturb it. When man loves God as his highest ideal, as no beggar, wanting nothing, then is love carried to the extreme of evolution, and it becomes a great power in the universe.

- Swami Vivekananda

There are five steps in human love...



1. **Santa Bhava:** The peace and stillness felt in the presence of God when we look up to our Father for everything we want — protection, food, etc.

2. **Dasya Bhava:** The love which makes man want to serve God. Here, the longing to serve the Master dominates every other feeling; indifferent of whether the master is good or bad, kind or unkind.



3. **Sakhya Bhava:** The love of a friend, the love of equals — companions, playmates. Man feels God to be his companion.



Three friends were going through a forest when they saw a tiger. One of them said, 'Brother, we are done for.' The second said, 'Why should we die? Let's call on the Lord.' And the third one said, 'No, why trouble Him? Come, let's climb a tree!'

The person who said, 'We are done for,' did not know that the Lord is the savior. He who said, 'Let's call on the Lord,' was a jnani. He knew that the Lord creates, preserves and dissolves. And he who said, 'Why should we trouble Him?'

Love is in the air...



Come, let's climb a tree,' had prema (intense love) in his heart; he had deep love for God. Such a love has this characteristic: the one who has it considers himself more powerful than the beloved. He does not want his beloved troubled. He wants to save his beloved from even the prick of a thorn.

“Attainment of God is the goal of human life”, says Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.



4. **Vatsalya Bhava:** The Motherly love. God is looked upon as a child. There is absolutely no element of fear.



5. **Madhura Bhava:** The attitude of a lover towards the beloved; love for love's sake - God the perfect, beloved one.



It has been beautifully expressed: “Four eyes meet, a change begins to come into two souls; love comes in the middle between these two souls and makes them *one*.” ... The less we have of the physical idea, the more perfect will be our love; at last all physical thoughts will be forgotten, and the two souls will become one. We love, love always. Love comes and penetrates through the forms and sees beyond.

- Swami Vivekananda



The Fragrance of Devotion

Devotion is like a fragrance which engulfs us in bliss. It purifies our body and mind. We however, limit our devotion to God and do not make it part of our every day activity. We are under the mistaken notion that devotion involves only praying to God, fasting, singing bhajans and going to temples etc. All these and more do constitute devotion. But after doing all these rituals are we really experiencing that same devotion throughout the day? We separate our devotion from other activities. Devotion cannot be practiced for a limited time only. It has to be experienced all the time.

Swami Nachiketanda never discriminated between work and devotion. He would say that both were intermingled like fragrance in the air. On Karthika Poornima day I went to attend the bhajan and meditation programme at Tapovan. Swamiji sang bhajans with immense devotion and we were all transported to another world. Swamiji would always tell us to sing only from the heart. He added 'When you sing a bhajan feel that you are the only one in front of the Lord and He is listening to you and is enjoying the bhajan. Do not repeat like a parrot.' Every professional singer cannot be a great Bhakta. However an ordinary person who is not a professional singer can be a great Bhakta, if he has immense love and devotion to the lord. Swamiji says mad

singers like Mira, Surdas, Ramdas, Tukaram, Kabir and many more saints had attained Mukti through their devotional singing. Many times I have seen Swamiji and Ma Shivanandamayee entering into a deep meditative state in the middle of the bhajan session. On that Karthika Poornima day, after the programme I opened my eyes only to find Mataji in a deep trance. Another devotee and I sought Swamiji to do pranam before we left for the day. We went to the office room but could not find him there. We heard some noise behind the room and went to check the source. To our surprise we saw Swamiji cleaning all the serving vessels and plates. There was an annadanam that afternoon for Vidyamandir children and the helper was absent and hence the vessels remained in the cleaning area. Even now I remember how the bliss on His face while singing and the bliss I witnessed while cleaning were the same.

What we learnt in our childhood and what has been drilled through school, that 'Work is Worship' had a whole new meaning for me. If only we approach our work with the same devotion we can be free and be one with Him. Any action of Swamiji was like a prayer to the Lord. One experiences bliss when the true nature is realized.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa- Bhakti is to adore God with body, mind and words. 'With body' means to serve and worship God with our hands, go to holy places with our feet, hear the chanting of the names and glories of God with one's ears and behold the divine image with one's eyes. 'With mind' means to contemplate and meditate on God constantly and to remember and think of His Leela. 'With words' means to sing to Him and chant His name and glory.

- Vasundhara P.



The love of God

The love of God, the love of the Spirit, is an all-consuming love. Once you have experienced it, it shall lead you on and on in the eternal realms. That love will never be taken away from your heart. It shall burn there and in its fire you shall find the great magnetism of Spirit that draws others unto you and attracts whatsoever you truly need or desire.

You think you want human love and prosperity, but behind these it is your father who is calling you. If you realize He is greater than all His gifts, you will find Him. In the science of yoga and meditation India has given the answer to how to find Him. I sat at the feet of a true master. I'm not only convinced that God is, but I give you the testimony of His presence. Every blade of grass, every spark of fire, every thought you think, testifies to His presence, His intelligence. He is the source whence all things come.

Scientists do not make discoveries by prayer alone, but by application of the laws of nature. Similarly, God comes to him who follows the law, who applies the science of meditation. People, who wandered in the forest of theology, have lost themselves. In vain I went from temple to temple, seeking God; but when I found the soul temples in great lovers of God, I saw that He was there. He is not bribed by beautiful edifices. He comes to the tear washed altar of the heart that is continuously calling unto Him.

God is real. The masters who have dedicated themselves to finding Him have found Him. Never think that God does not answer your prayers. Every

word that you have whispered to Him, He has written in His heart, and someday He will answer you. If you keep watching for Him and on the many ways He responds, you will know that He answers you all the time. If you are very eager, He will answer you in greater ways. Only by persistence can He be persuaded to come.

God is the most lovable being in the Universe. Everything that you want is in Him. To seek anything else is a great mistake. Your first goal must be God. When you have found Him, when your heart is in tune with Him, then whatever He tells you to do is all right. But if you entangle yourself without first finding God, you have chosen the path of error.

The greatest romance you can have is the romance with God. Human love goes away in a little while, but your romance with God is eternal. Not one day must pass without seeing Him. It is always Him, the Father behind all fathers, the Mother behind all mothers, the Lover behind all lovers that we seek in many incarnations. He is the lover and our souls are the beloved, and when the soul meets the greatest Lover of the Universe, then the eternal romance begins. The love that you have been seeking for incarnations through all human loves is at last yours. You will never want anything else.



*An excerpt from
DIVINE ROMANCE
by Paramahansa Yogananda*

Protection Of Animals And Law



Human society is an admixture of various elements. Some are more powerful than the others. As Darwin propounded in his 'Theory of Natural Selection', the fittest survives. "Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, and he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals," said George Orwell. The heterogeneity of the society deserves to be protected. That is why we have legislations protecting wildlife, that part of nature which has been a feast to the eyes of the 'dominant' human race since time immemorial. It is needless to say that wildlife is important for the sustenance of earth, and therefore the human race.

*Pralayapayodhijale Dhritavanasi Vedam
Vihitavahitramachitramakhedam*

Keshavadhritameenashareera Jaya Jagdeesha Hare.

This is the first *sloka* of *Dashavatar stotra* composed by the 12th century poet Jayadeva.

Such is the reverence accorded to animals that they are treated as vehicles of God and in this *sloka*, a form of God. For instance, monkey is synonymous with Lord Hanuman, the eagle is considered the vehicle of Lord Vishnu and the lion is considered the vehicle of Goddess Durga. Kamadhenu was the holy wish-fulfilling cow. Many kings in ancient India also adopted the symbols containing animals as their emblems. Our stories like the *Panchatantra* and the Buddhist *Jatakas* are centred around animals. Animals have been personified in these stories to explain the follies of human nature and convey a moral message.

In our country, we have the "Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972". This Act gives an inclusive definition of wildlife. Any person who hunts any wild animal shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 years or with fine which may extend to Rs. 25000/- or with both. As wildlife is inclusive of plants also, the Act provides for safeguarding a few plants as well. By an Amendment to this Act in 2006, a National Tiger Conservation Authority has been set up in view of the fear of our national animal being ruthlessly poached.



The Constitution of India in the chapter on Fundamental Duties imposes a duty upon all citizens to safeguard the natural heritage of our nation. Thus, it is incumbent upon us that we do our bit in protecting the animals. We can contribute by ensuring that the products that we are buying are in no way made by torturing animals. If we see cruelty being perpetrated against animals, we may contact the public officials or more easily, an NGO working in that area. Organizations like PETA and the Friends of Snakes Society make considerable efforts and inspire all of us to be responsible inhabitants of the planet.

Let us not forget that God created all creatures equally and man has no right to dominate over other creatures. We have inherited a rich cultural heritage from our ancestors and it is imperative upon us that we pass on similar, if not the same, heritage.



Nitika Gogula, 3rd year B.A. L.L.B. student has passion for writing articles on social issues.

The Master Plan

"This universe is a marvelous mystery. The more I learn about it, the more curious I am. But one thing is for certain. There is a great, powerful, magical force at work." - Albert Einstein

Einstein was a man of the 20th century. But from the beginning of time, people have gazed up at the countless stars, the open skies, the bottomless oceans and the impenetrable forests in wonder. There was always one question that came to surface in their eyes. And it is now coming to yours. Can you voice it?

At first glance, the world may just look like the hapless remnants of some age-old accident called the Big Bang. Stars scattered all over the sky, rivers flowing hither and thither, a million species of living organisms over one square inch of soil fighting for survival and just about everything else. Really, what is going on? What is this big mess all about? Is there an order in the chaos? Is there a plan?

I have no straight answer. But I do have a few more questions.

Look at your life. I'm not talking about today's traffic jam, last night's dinner or tomorrow's business meeting. Look at the big, large picture of your life. Do you see a pattern? Is there an underlying subtlety that is teasing you, calling you to probe in and take a closer look? I think there is.

This journey of life is lined with coincidences, some big, some small.

Maybe you wouldn't have bumped into your old friend if you hadn't made that unscheduled stop at the supermarket on that unexpected Friday. Maybe you would've missed the train if you had been one alarm clock too late or one red signal too slow. Maybe you would've been a painter instead of a doctor if you had won that competition in school and someone had planted that dream in you with a single pat on the head.

Maybe you wouldn't have taken birth at all if one little DNA strand in a million had taken a different turn. Maybe the earth wouldn't have existed if one little asteroid had taken a detour and found its way into the atmosphere. Maybe...

You see, it seems like life is lined with coincidences. But the funny thing is there really are no coincidences. We dream, we make plans, we postpone, then we plan again. We think that we're in control. But think again.

There is a voice behind the song. There is a script behind the play. There is a painter behind the painting.

Yes, there is a plan. When you look back at life all the way from the beginning, when you connect the dots, you'll see why some things worked out just right and some didn't work out the way they were supposed to.

Play with it, touch it, laugh at it, cry with it, throw it, catch it and enjoy it.

That is how the Master plan works. Don't you think?!



Avinash Agarwal is a student of St. Xaviers College, Mumbai and has a deep flair for writing. He has written many thought provoking essays.



इत्थं इति = इति

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

Let us turn to time.

समयः कः? इदानीं समयः पञ्चवादनम्। *samayaH kaH? idAnIM samayaH pa~jcavAdanam.*

What is the time? Now the time is 5 o'clock.

एवम् एव (*evam eva*) likewise

षड्वादनम्, सप्तवादनम्, दशवादनम्, एकादशवादनम्, द्वादशवादनम् – *shaDvAdanam, saptavAdanam, daSavAdanam, ekAdaSavAdanam, dvAdaSavAdanam*

6 o'clock, 7 o'clock, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock

However the first 4 numbers have different forms:

एकवादनम्, द्विवादनम्, त्रिवादनम्, चतुर्वादनम् – *ekavAdanam, dvivAdanam, trivAdanam, caturvAdanam*

When it is half past 5 or 10, it is:

सार्धपञ्चवादनम्, सार्धदशवादनम् *sArdha-pa~jcavAdanam, sArdha-daSavAdanam*
Adding सार्ध (*sArdha-*) as prefix, we can get meaning of 'half past'.

When it is quarter past 5 or 10, it would be:

सपादपञ्चवादनम्, सपाददशवादनम् *sapAda-pa~jcavAdanam, sapAda-daSavAdanam*
Adding सपाद (*sapAda-*) as prefix, we can get meaning of 'quarter past'.

Likewise, when it is quarter to 5 or 10, we say:

पादोनपञ्चवादनम्, पादोनदशवादनम् *pAdona-pa~jcavAdanam, pAdona-daSavAdanam*
Adding पादोन (*pAdona-*) as prefix, we can get meaning of 'quarter to'. पादोन (*pAdona*) is a combination of two components पाद (*pAda* - quarter) and ऊन (*Una* - short).

Likewise, when it is a few minutes ahead of the hour, we can say

पञ्चाधिकषड्वादनम्, दशाधिकसप्तवादनम्, द्वादशाधिकनववादनम् *pa~jcAdhika-ShaDvAdanam, daSAadhika-saptavAdanam, dvAdaSAadhika-navavAdanam*

5 (minutes) past 6 o'clock, 10 past 7 o'clock, 12 past 9 o'clock

When there are few more minutes to go for the hour,

पञ्चोनषड्वादनम्, सप्तोनद्विवादनम्, विंशत्यूनद्वादशवादनम् *pa~jconaShaDvAdanam, saptonadvivAdanam, viMSatyUnadvAdaSavAdanam*

5 (minutes) to 6 o'clock, 7 to 2 o'clock, 20 to 12 o'clock.

Notice that it is 'viMSatyUna'. This is because of a *sandhi* there. Combining विंशति (*viMSati*) ऊन (*Una*), you get विंशत्यून (*viMSatyUna*).



The Subject tonight is Love

The subject tonight is Love
And for tomorrow night as well,
As a matter of fact
I know of no better topic
For us to discuss
Until we all
Die!

- Written by Hafiz and
translated by Daniel Ladinsky



Wake Up Sleeping Beauty... You Have Slept For So Long

Sleeping beauty is a popular story or rather a fairy tale we often read to our children, telling them about the beauty who fell into a deep slumber and the handsome prince who awakened her with a kiss. I always had a fancy for this story and I even used to repeat it to my children when they went to bed.

Until I went on a pilgrimage with Swamiji, I didn't realize that I was also sleeping. Sleeping beauty was sleeping at the physical level but I was sleeping at the level of the soul. Our soul is like that of sleeping beauty, lying dormant for ages. It requires the kiss of the saint to awaken us. That kiss will not awaken us at the level of the mind and body but it will rouse us spiritually. How can we wake up? This was the question which I always had in mind. Fortunately I had the privilege of travelling with Swamiji

who had journeyed into the beyond, who can teach us how to try it ourselves. He taught me how to meditate, how to withdraw our attention from the outer world and focus within to get in touch with the Divine.

I always used to seek pleasure in singing the Lord's name and I used to feel happy that I was able to sing well but something was missing in it. What is it? This was the question that always bothered me. But when I saw Swamiji singing with closed eyes, His body vibrating, I found the answer. Yes, this is it. This vibration was missing- the vibration that emanated from the Creator, the 'bhav' which is brought into being. Swamiji showed by example, how to contact the stream of light and sound and creative vibration. Now I am able to concentrate more while singing.

During one of the meditation sessions Swamiji helped to experience the divine. He taught me that meditation is mere concentration and that it can be practiced by anyone, anywhere and at any age. He helped me focus on the light and sound of God. Even after coming back from the pilgrimage, I could tune myself to the divine. I feel Swamiji is asking us to rise above body consciousness and explore the regions of light. He is my 'Living Master' who guides me in all aspects.

We are all sleeping beauties until this awakening takes place. I thank Swamiji for showing me the right path and pray He gives me all the energy to 'Arise, Awake and Stop not till the Goal is reached!'

- K. Ramadevi



If

If you can disentangle
yourself from your selfish self
all heavenly spirits
will stand ready to serve you

If you can finally hunt down
your own beastly self
you have the right
to claim Solomon's kingdom

You are that blessed soul who
belongs to the garden of paradise
is it fair to let yourself
fall apart in a shattered house

You are the bird of happiness
in the magic of existence
what a pity when you let
yourself be chained and caged

But if you can break free
from this dark prison named body
soon you will see
you are the sage and the fountain
of life

Written by Jalaluddin Rumi and
Translated by Nader Khalili





The Significance of “108”

“Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti”

Truth is one, but scholars say it in different ways.

Indian knowledge echoes it throughout. The ultimate truth is that the creation is manifested from God, sustained within God and gets dissolved in God.

The whole of creation, which includes heavens, galaxies, planets, stars, human beings and other creatures, is created, sustained and merged accordingly in that Divine principle. There is a rhythm, a pattern, and a discipline in the whole universe. Ancient Indians knew that. That rhythm is symbolized as “108 factor number”.

The mystic number 108 is so sacred to ancient Indians. In all spiritual practices 108 is given utmost importance.



There are 108 beads on a “Japa mala”, that are counted while repeating a mantra and the equal number of names of a God or Goddess chanted during Puja while offering flowers.

In explaining the number of beads on a Japa mala, it is said that 108 are the number of steps a soul takes to reach the Divine within himself. With this sacred number appearing in so many intersections between the Divine and the human, it is no wonder that all Indians including Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs and Taoists find that offerings of 108 help us remain in harmony with God’s perfect universe.



In Astronomy, Vedic seers calculated that

- ◆ The distance between the Earth and Moon is 108 times the diameter of the Moon.
- ◆ The distance between the Earth and Sun is 108 times the diameter of the Sun.
- ◆ The diameter of the Sun is 108 times the diameter of the Earth.

These numbers are remarkably close to the results of calculations based on modern scientific measurements using the average distances between Earth and the Moon and Earth and the Sun.

Ayurveda tells us that there are 108 “Marma” points in the body, where consciousness and flesh intersect to give life to the living being. The chain of 108 ‘links’ is held together by 107 joints, which is the number of marmas, or Vital points, of the body in Ayurveda.



Similarly, the lines of the mystical, mesmerizing Sri Chakra Yantra intersect in 54 points, each with a masculine and feminine quality, totalling 108.

Vedic Astrology divides the heavens into 27 moon signs, called Nakshatras, each with 4 padas, making 108 padas in all, giving 108 basic kinds of human nature. The pada occupied by the moon at the time of birth indicates the nature of one’s career, pleasures, family and path to liberation.



In Indian Astrology, there are 12 houses and 9 planets. 12 times 9 equals 108.

Tantra estimates the average number of breaths per day at 21,600, of which 10,800 are solar energy, and 10,800 are lunar energy. Multiplying 108 by 100 is 10,800. Multiplying 2 X 10,800 equals 21,600.

The Natya Sastra of Bharata speaks of the 108 karanas— combined movements of hand and feet of dance.

There are 18 Puranas, 108 Upanishads, 18 chapters of Bhagavad Gita, many great literary Sanskrit works have 108 verses and many saints prefix their name with 108, 1008.

There are 54 letters in Sanskrit. Each letter is mentioned as masculine (Shiva) and feminine (Shakti) aspects, i.e. 54 times 2 are 108.



According to Ancient Indian Time measure, one day of Brahma is equal to 43,20,000 years covered by four yugas, which is factor of 108.

In numerology, the 108 number breaks down to 1+0+8= 9. Nine is a mystically charged number, and the sum of the digits resulting from any number multiplied by 9 always returns to 9. It is said that 1 stands for God or higher Truth, 0 stands for emptiness or completeness in spiritual practice and 8 stands for infinity of space in eight directions.

Power of 1,2 and 3 in Maths: 1 to 1st power =1; 2 to 2nd power = 4(2x2); 3 to 3rd power =27 (3x3x3).

$$1 \times 4 \times 27 = 108 \text{ i.e. } 1 * 1 * 2 * 2 * 3 * 3 * 3 = 108$$

Ref: Eternally Talented India 108 facts



A Peacock That Tasted Opium

A man once fed a peacock with a pill of opium at four o'clock in the afternoon. The next day, exactly at that time, the peacock came back. It had felt the intoxication of the drug and returned just in time to have another dose. Similarly, a devotee who had the good fortune to meet the Master felt an uncontrollable desire to meet Him again and again.

- Sri Ramakrishna

celebrations at nachiketa tapovan

Sarada Jayanthi:

The auspicious day was celebrated in the Vidya Mandir and Tapovan on December 27th 2010. Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, was the wife of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Sri Sarada Ma played Her role in this world with a great spiritual attitude and served Sri Ramakrishna's work and mission immensely. Smt Archana Bhagat, founder of the Cubs Pre-school was the chief guest to grace the event. Her penchant for little children and their education was evident in her address to the children. Beautiful bhajans rendered by primary children was well loved by all. Some of the children from higher classes narrated sayings of Sarada Ma in different languages and explained their significance. A skit presenting the spiritual passion and devotion of Sarada Ma was very well enacted by the children.

Orchids International School Annual Carnival:

Our friendly neighbour, Orchids International School, held their annual children's carnival on 23rd December 2010. On being invited to participate in their stalls at the carnival, Tapovan staff and volunteers worked promptly to put together crafts for sale, handmade by the children of Vidya Mandir. Our stall at the carnival was received very well and we were glad to have a great sale through the day. Our heartfelt gratitude to Orchids for helping encourage our children and raise money for their benefit and education.



Jubilee Hills International Centre:

Our heartfelt gratitude to Crafts council of A.P for permitting us to participate in the 'Aakruti Vastra 2011', an arts fair held in the Jubilee Hills International Centre on January 6th and 7th 2011. Nachiketa Tapovan was given a stall to showcase the arts and crafts made by the children of Vidya mandir. We had a wonderful sale of items and all proceeds from the sale benefit children's education. It was also a wonderful opportunity for other participants and art patrons in the city, to get introduced to Tapovan and the work we are passionate about.





Christmas Celebrations:

The joy of Christmas came to Tapovan with a wonderfully decorated Christmas tree that the children loved very much. Volunteers and staff at Vidya Mandir lovingly wrapped little presents for all the children and placed them at the Christmas tree. What a wonderful way to celebrate the true spirit of Christmas which is, the joy shared by giving and caring. Children presented a skit on Jesus and Mother Mary. The older children narrated a few teachings from the Bible. Ms Ujjwala, a Vidya Mandir teacher shared a few precious gems from the Bible too.

The celebrations ended with Annadanam for all at Vidya Mandir.



Science Fair:

Vidya Mandir children from 6th standard participated for the first time in an inter school science competition on December 29th 2010. Everyone at Tapovan rejoiced and delighted as we won the third place in the junior category. More than fifteen schools from the city participated and Ms. Nagamani and Ms. Tejaswini did us proud by winning the prize. They had a working model of the water cycle demonstrating evaporation and condensation. Thanks to Ms. Shyamala, science teacher at Tapovan for actively guiding them in building the model. We hope to encourage the kids to participate in more upcoming events like these

to help boost their confidence and to learn face the outside world.

The Youth Day- Vivekananda Jayanthi:

The birthday of the great saint and leader of the last century, Swami Vivekananda was observed in Tapovan on January 7th 2011. The students put up an inspiring drama called: "Face the brutes!" The story of Swami being chased by monkeys in Varanasi and the seer's advice to him to face the brutes was vividly brought to life conveying a timely message; not to run away from one's fears and problems but to face them boldly. Everyone applauded the biography



of Swami that was rendered beautifully in Telugu, by a student Ms. Sravani.

Vibrant Rangolis adorned the hallway as children participated in Rangoli competition and prizes were given away to the winners. Motivational quotes of Swami Vivekananda were shared by some of the older children and all of them enjoyed a joyous meal after the celebrations.



SPONSOR OPTIONS

Anna daanam maha daanam; vidya daanam mahattaram.

Annena kshanika trupthihi yaavajjeevanthu vidyaya.

Vidya Mandir at Nachiketa Tapovan is currently able to accommodate a family of about 170 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)	₹ 4500/year/child
Anna Daanam (Mid-day Meals)	₹ 3500/day
Ksheera Daanam (Morning Milk)	₹ 700/day
Alpaharam (Snacks)	₹ 500/day
Vastra Daanam (Uniforms)	₹ 600/2 pairs
Dinnerware (Steel Plates & Glasses)	₹ 5000/50 sets
Stationery Supplies (Copier Paper)	₹ 5000/term
Festivals Celebration	₹ 1500/festival
Oushadhi (Medical Supplies)	₹ 5000/month

Celebrate your Special Days with the Children at Nachiketa Tapovan!

A set of 8 'Yogic CDs'



Cost of each CD is ₹20

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.

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, # 70, Phase I, Kavuri Hills, Madhapur, Hyderabad
Balakendram – Thu only – 2.00pm to 3.00pm
Saptahikam – Thu only – 3.00pm to 4:30pm
Saptahikam – Sat & Sun – 10am to 12noon & 1.00pm to 3.00pm (Gita Sikshana)
- 3. Youselfguda** – Vivekananda Kendra, Near Sarathi Studios
Saptahikam – Thu only – 11.00am to 1.00pm
- 4. AS Rao Nagar** – Tentatively at Sri VS Raju's House, Near Poulomi Hospital
Saptahikam – Thu only – 6:30am to 8:30am

Learn Sanskrit



Dear Atman

"When a person really desires something, all the universe conspires to help that person to realize his dream." This is truer when a selfless desire is pursued by a group of ardent seekers. This was proven by the multifarious growth of Nachiketa Tapovan from a humble hut into a 3-storeyed building in Kavuri Hills and onto a 40 acre spiritual haven in Gairan Tanda in Jadcherla with His blessings and your good wishes. The small group has now multiplied into a big joint family of Karma yogis.

Imparting literacy, combined with love, care and cultural values to children from impoverished families was in the fore front ever since the inception of Nachiketa Tapovan. Whether this objective has been accomplished or not, can be well illustrated by the progress being made by the children of Vidya Mandir who are winning accolades in all areas from academics to vocational skills to arts to yoga and chanting Vedas. The Vidya Mandir at Nachiketa Tapovan, Hyderabad is not satisfied with giving just breadwinning education but is striving to create a learning platform for each child to receive a man-making education. Thanks to the donors, well wishers, volunteers and teachers who are making this endeavor successful.

Nachiketa Tapovan's efforts to extend the same education to children from the rural areas of Gairan Tanda in Jadcherla, Mahaboobnagar are in full swing, with plans to start classes from June 2011. If Nachiketa Tapovan, located in the heart of HiTec city known for its sprawling growth, is benefiting 170 children, it is needless to mention how many will be benefited by another such Vidya Mandir in the rural areas far placed from technology, comfort and convenience.

The Vidya Mandir being constructed is planned to cover an area of **50,000 sq.ft.** around an extensive central play ground. The building will have two floors, the ground floor consisting of spacious classrooms (750 sq ft) and the entire top floor rooms devoted to laboratories like math Lab, Science lab, language lab etc. and a library. The two floors will enclose a copious 10 ft. verandah. The facility has been planned to provide character building education up to X class (progressively) under the S.S.C. board. However, materialization of this progressive project into a reality requires additional monetary and human resources.

Estimated cost of this project is ₹ 3.8 crores

In this time and age when people are far removed from truth and true spiritual values, the way to build a happy and healthy society lies in strengthening the spiritual base of the country and Nachiketa Tapovan has been trying to achieve this by exposing the children of Vidya Mandir to our great heritage contained in Upanishads, Epics and Puranas. We hereby fervently appeal for generous donations. Please participate in this Vidya Dana Yaga being performed to benefit the underprivileged children and thereby strengthen the cultural and spiritual values of our nation.

It may kindly be noted that donations to Nachiketa Tapovan are exempted from IncomeTax 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. We acknowledge the generous contributions made by donors.

Yours in the service of Motherland

Swami Nachiketanda

Invitation



Sri Ramakrishna Jayanti

Date: 18th February 2011

Time: 11.00 a.m.

Venue:

NACHIKETA TAPOVAN



Shivaratri

Date: 2nd March 2011

Time: 10.00 p.m. onwards



You are He!

- Sri Ramana Maharshi



A NOTE TO WRITERS:

- a) You can send articles by email to nachiketanjali1@gmail.com or by post to Nachiketanjali, Nachiketa Tapovan, Plot No.70, Phase I, Kavuri Hills, Madhapur, Guttlabegumpet, Serilingampally, Ranga Reddy District. A.P., with your full name, address and contact details.
- b) Unpublished articles are not 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 300 (one column) to 600 words (two columns). Writers can contact the editorial team for further details.
- f) The styles of references should be as per the 'Documentation of Sources' given at the end of the *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.
- g) Editor reserves the right to accept/ reject articles and edit the selected articles.
- h) Unsolicited articles are not acknowledged.
- i) The Editor does not accept responsibility for the author's views.
- j) Articles received will be published in one of the forthcoming issues.

BOOK REVIEW

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

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SUBSCRIPTIONS	INDIA	GIFT
Single copy	₹ 10	₹ 10
1 year	₹ 100	₹ 100
3 years	₹ 280	₹ 280
5 years	₹ 450	₹ 450

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

(Plus ₹ 30 for outstation cheques)

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You are That!

- Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Essence
of all Vedas
is “Peace”.

- Sri Ramana Maharshi



*A boat may stay in water,
but water should not stay in the boat.
An aspirant may live in the world,
but the world should not live within him.*

Hotel Sri Brindavan
Nampally Station Road, Hyderabad



*Let Divine energy
engulf your being!*