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Nachiketanjali

...an offering

A Journey Into The Spiritual Realm!

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Happy Ugadi!



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ATTITUDE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Editorial



Success and failure come as a package in our lives and success comes to a person who accepts failure. When a task taken up is lucrative, we feel elevated and give credit to our own intelligence. But if something fails, we straight away blame our fate. We sulk with God. We are solely responsible for our accomplishments as well as failures. God has given us intellect and it is for us to utilize it the right way.

In our path there are thorns as well as pebbles. If we have a methodical approach it is always possible to achieve success. We strive to achieve something beyond our limits and when it fails we blame God. On the contrary if we give several trials, it is possible to achieve the impossible. We just need to have patience and perseverance.

Success cannot be achieved through shortcuts. Innovation, learning, personal growth and excellence are all impossible to achieve without overcoming setbacks and obstacles along the way. Attitude is the key to success. There are no goals that cannot be achieved. One should never give up or deviate from his goal. Even when we are aware that a person is going to die we seek out all measures to save him and give him the best treatment possible.

When Lakshmana fainted, Vibhishana told Rama that he would get Sita and that they could go back to Ayodhya, instead of facing the mighty Ravana. The reply given by Rama is a great inspiration for mankind. "Vibhishana! I am not expecting victory over Ravana just for the sake of Sita. There should be no place in this world for people like Ravana who exhibit demonic qualities. My goal is to kill him and save the world. In this attempt I don't mind staking the life of Lakshmana if it is needed. I will face any number of failures but will never give up until I achieve success. Remember that good always wins over evil."

Success is like our own shadow. Don't try to catch it, walk your own way and it will follow.

- *Subhadra K.*

Training School...

There may be many training schools for various fields but there isn't one school for simplicity, love, inner discipline or spirituality. It has to be learnt in the school called life. Our investment is life and the best output is life. Our struggle for life is life. Our mantra for life is life. Our satisfaction for life is life. Our contentment for life is life. Life is everything and once we start investing in life, we simply enjoy the highest state of being. From real spirituality everything descends like the grace of Mother, equally on all and from all directions.

An atheist who never believed in spirituality said, "Everybody is doing business in the name of spirituality and cheating innocent people. Nothing exists in spirituality. It's all in the mind." A great Sadhu who is listening patiently to the atheist says that the latter's father is not a good person. The moment Sadhu utters those words; the man gets wild and says, "My father is great and simple. You keep quiet and shut your mouth." Then the Sadhu says, "Please calm down. How are you so confident about your father and his character?" He replies, "I live with my father. I know very well what my father is." Then the Sadhu tells him, "Just as you know about your father I know about spirituality. And I don't just live with spirituality but live in spirituality. If just being *with* somebody can make you more confident, think about when you are *in* somebody. Let me tell you, Sri Rama got His lessons from life. Ma Sita flowered in life. For Laxman, Sri Rama and Ma Sita were life and for Sri Hanuman, life was revolving

around Sri Rama, Ma Sita and Laxman. Sri Anjaneya even demonstrated how Sri Rama is living in His heart. It is all because they lived in life."

If being *with* life is something to cherish for long, then being *in* life is something to cherish forever. When we are with life, we may be part of it; when we are in life then we are life. Not a part, but life by itself! When life opens up all gates of spirituality then there is nothing unknown. Have we ever tried to be what we are? This is the greatest lesson that we can learn in the school called 'Life'. Just being what we are! Life is not an illusion, it is reality. Hence leave everything behind and start swimming in the ocean called life.

Dear Sadhaka, to me, "Life is the best friend... mentor... guide... teacher... preacher... practitioner... and obviously a training school... People are there to share their views, opinions and experiences but the best thing that we can enjoy in life is our own experiences about life. Thus have faith in yourself... have faith in life... have faith in the Almighty... and then enjoy your life to the fullest... bit by bit... moment by moment..."



- Swami Nachiketananda Puri



Puja Vidhi and Science



Puja is a constant remembrance of the Supreme Self. Puja vidhi is one of the great instruments of purification of thoughts and mind. It is not a mere ritual and if performed systematically and spiritually, certainly you will experience the source of the Self. But the Puja vidhi needs to be understood scientifically and spiritually. Our sages were great scientists who knew how to harness our mind in the right direction. According to one's prakruti, Puja vidhi helps in directing the mind in a positive direction where you experience tranquility of the mind. So now let us understand the scientific and spiritual qualities of the things we use in Puja vidhi.

Objects used in Puja are:

- 1) An altar with an idol, if not idol a picture of our beloved deity
- 2) An oil lamp and a wick
- 3) Ghanta, bell for ringing
- 4) Panchapatra, a vessel with water and spoon for offering water
- 5) Chandan or sandal paste, vermilion and turmeric
- 6) Dhupa, incense sticks
- 7) Vastra, a cloth
- 8) Dipa, a small oil lamp
- 9) Naivedyam, food or fruits for offering
- 10) Pushpa, flowers kept on a plate
- 11) Karpura or camphor

The utensils used for Puja should not be used for other purposes. If some of the offerings like puspam, vastra, sacred thread etc. are not available then instead of them, akshatas can be used.

The ingredients used for puja also have spiritual and scientific values. The entire process of puja is a process of purification.

1. Altar:

Scientific: The deity carries positive energy. Worshipping the deity everyday creates positive

and healthy vibrations in the surroundings.

Spiritual: The Altar symbolizes Paramatma, the Supreme Self, who resides not only in the temple but also in our own heart. So the deity symbolizes our Atman. We are unable to experience this Supreme Self within because of layers of darkness and ignorance. So we light the lamp in order to dispel the darkness.

2. Lamp: For lighting the lamp sesame oil or ghee should be used.

In the beginning of the puja, lamp is lit and it should last till the end of the puja.

Scientific: The light of the lamp purifies bacteria and sanitizes the atmosphere.

Spiritual: Lamp signifies light, remover of darkness and ignorance. It gives knowledge and it signifies the Atman and the Supreme Self.

3. Ghanta:

Scientific: The Ghanta or bell sound is good for the ears and for the ambience.

Spiritual: We prepare ourselves mentally and physically to have the darshan of Paramatma by ringing the bell. The sound produced by Ghanta sounds like Pranava or Omkara. The Pranava drives away all negative and evil energies, welcomes all positive vibrations and prepares one for the puja. Experiencing Iswara is possible only when the mind is one pointed. So ringing the bell prepares one to enter into the shrine of the Self. It prepares one physically as well as mentally to gain higher experiences.

4. Chandan or Sandal paste

Scientific: Chandan is applied in the eyebrow centre to the Lord as well as for oneself. Chandan paste cools down your system when it is applied in between the eyebrows where lies the **pituitary gland**, an Endocrine gland which controls the Adrenal gland and other hormones. This gland is responsible for many bodily functions and the application of chandan paste brings coolness and balances the entire system.



Spiritual: It activates Ajna chakra, the third eye. Chandan paste makes mind calm and tranquil. With the application of chandan all waves of thoughts calm down. When the lake is calm then there are no repulses. Similarly when mind is one pointed and tranquil then it is easier to experience the Self.

5. Turmeric and Vermilion: Vermilion also is made up of turmeric. It is applied after chandan paste on the forehead. Vermilion signifies the Mother of the universe. So we take Her blessings and march forward in our path of Self-exploration.

Scientific: It is an antibiotic and keeps the bacteria away. That is one of the reasons why women apply turmeric paste on their feet.

Spiritual: When we walk on the path of Self discovery, with the blessings of the Mother of the universe, the world becomes beautiful and joyful. So the vermilion represents auspiciousness, good actions and good deeds. When we want to see the welfare of humanity, it demands the sacrifice of wrong thoughts and actions.

6. Dhupa: In the ancient days, dhupa used to be produced from cow dung.

Scientific: Cow dung has the great quality of purifying the environment. Cow is the greatest boon to man kind. All products of the cow are beneficial to humanity as well as to the nature.

Spiritual: Cow is our Gomata. When we light a dhupa, it prepares one for sadhana. So offering Dhupam symbolizes the sprouting of sacrifice in us.

Dhupam also conveys the great message that just as incense stick burns and loses its form to give fragrance; we need to burn and exhaust all our karmas to experience the Supreme Self within. Only when all impurities of the mind are burnt does one experience the fragrance of life.

7. Naivedya or Offering: Cooked food, dry fruits, fruits, sugar and anything you feel like offering whole heartedly can qualify as naivedya. God accepts anything if offered with utmost Bhava and Bhakti.

Scientific: The food offered to God is sanctified and carries positive vibration.

Spiritual: Though cultivation and harvesting is done by a farmer, without God's intervention we

will not be able to eat even a single morsel. The God who can create the universe doesn't need any Naivedyam from us but it is a devotional gesture we make to show our gratitude to Him. Naivedya becomes Prasada once it is offered to God. Prasad is filled with Divine grace and is always distributed to spread the spiritual and Divine vibrations of Iswara. It is the most important aspect in Puja vidhi. It doesn't matter how much and how delicious Naivedya we offer. But what definitely matters is the attitude with which it is made.

8. Naivedya and Prasad convey to us that if we offer ourselves at the lotus feet of God, our life will be filled with Divinity. And then everyone in the society seeks our guidance and company in the form of Prasadam. So when we offer and surrender ourselves at the feet of the Lord, innocence and fragrance will fill our entire beings. Once we experience Divinity we become more beautiful not externally but internally. When this inner beauty of the Self is experienced, one feels ready to offer oneself at the feet of the Paramatman which we do by offering a flower.

9. Karpuram: Offering a sacred fire

Scientific: Camphor purifies the environment.

Spiritual: In the light of sacred fire we give arati to the Almighty. He looks more beautiful and graceful in the light of the camphor. It conveys a great hidden meaning- when our ignorance dispels completely, then we can have the darshan of the eternal and beautiful Almighty. Complete ignorance is removed with the faculty of vairagya. Camphor gets burnt in a few seconds but gives beauty to the God and happiness to the devotees. Similarly, vairagya makes you see the Virat rupa of Sri Paramatma. It also conveys that to give happiness to God or to the society, one needs to have the qualities of renunciation and sacrifice as camphor.

In a nutshell Puja vidhi is a gate way to invoke the spirit in you. In Puja vidhi, the static deity is brought to life and is experienced within as Paramatma. It is a wonderful process of Self-realization. Puja vidhi should be performed spiritually with proper understanding rather than mechanically. Puja vidhi, though looks simple carries behind it the great spiritual science of awakening the Paramatma or the Virat Purusha within.

- Swami Shivananda Puri

Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara

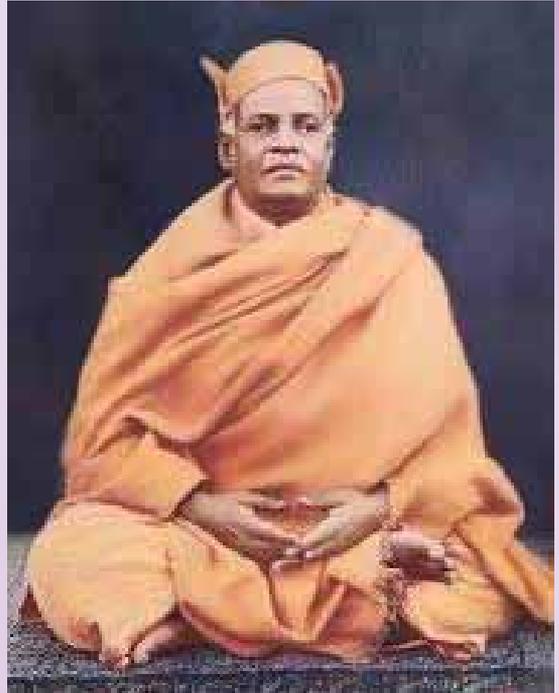
Direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna- Swami Saradananda

Swami Saradananda was born on 23rd December, 1865 in a rich and orthodox brahmin family and his pre-monastic name was Sharat Chandra Chakravarti. He was of a deeply religious nature and as a child would engage his friends in imitation worship of deities.

He was of a courteous nature and would never speak a harsh word to anybody and this remained his predominant quality all through his life. Swami Vivekananda used to remark, "Sharat's is the blood of a fish, it will never warm up." He was empathetic towards the poor and suffering and all through his life he would be found serving the sick and suffering. He was the primary caregiver of his brother disciples.

It was in October, 1883 that he along with his cousin Shashi was at Dakshineswar to meet Sri Ramakrishna. After the Master learnt that Sharat was greatly influenced by Keshab's Brahma Samaj, He said, 'Bricks and tiles, if burnt after the trademark has been stamped on them, retain these marks forever. 'As he came more and more in contact with the Master, Sharat was caught in the current of His love. The Master gave directions to watch his spiritual developments. He said 'Always think of you as Shiva and me as Shakti. I am the ultimate repository of all your powers.'

He joined the Calcutta Medical College only to leave it when the Master fell ill and served the Master along with his other brother disciples. On the 1st of January, 1886 when the Master in an ecstatic mood blessed all His devotees, Sharat along with Latu were engaged in some duty allotted to them. When asked why he did not go to the Master at that time he replied, 'I did not feel any necessity for that. Why should I? Was not the Master dearer than the dearest to me? Then



what doubt was there that He would give me, of His own accord, anything I needed? So I did not feel the least anxiety.'

In spite of his parents' opposition, he formally took up Sanyas in December 1886. He longed for a life of complete reliance on God and went to many places to practice spiritual discipline. When Swamiji's work made headway in the West, he was called to assist Him and he settled in New York to carry on the Vedanta movement in a regular and organized way. He returned to India in 1898 and was made the Secretary to the Ramakrishna Math and Mission an office which he ably held to his last day. In addition to his official duty, he also looked after the spiritual well being of the Math inmates, and he delivered lectures and held religious classes for the benefit of the public.

He was instrumental in keeping the Bengali magazine Udbodhan alive and he planned a separate office for the magazine wherein he

also ensured a shrine and residence for the Holy Mother. To repay the loan for the building constructed he wrote "Sri Ramakrishna Lilaprasanga" which has become a classic in Bengali literature. The circumstances in which he wrote that book will only show the extent of his patient and resilient nature. The house in which he lived was crowded, the Holy mother was upstairs and there would be a stream of devotees at all hours of the day. He was also the Secretary of the Mission and in spite of all this he would be found absorbed in writing this book – giving a shape to his love and devotion to the Master and the Holy Mother.

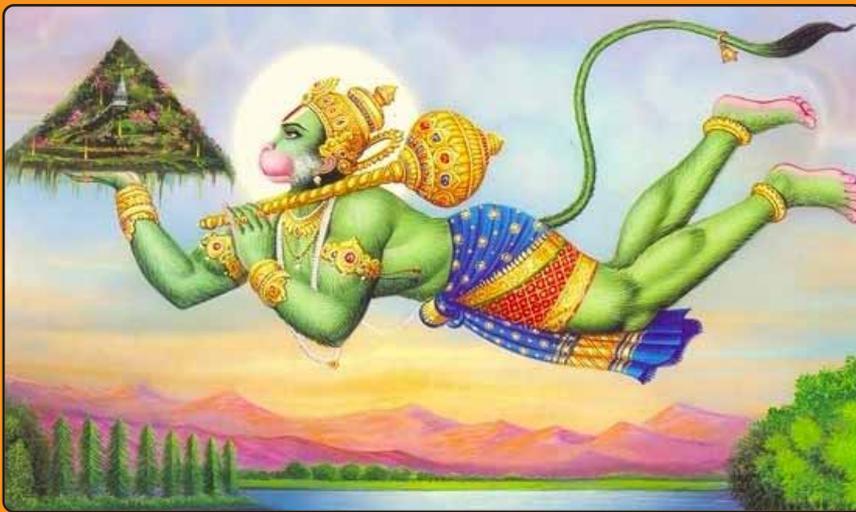
He was involved in all the flood and famine relief activities of the Math and he personally would tend to the sick and needy. From 1920 onward Swami Saradananda sustained such heavy bereavements that he became altogether broken in heart. He felt lonely and gradually withdrew his mind from work and devoted it towards meditation.

He was instrumental in building the temple at Holy Mother's birthplace Jayarambati in 1923. He also held the Ramakrishna Mission Convention at Belur Math in 1926. His welcome address was fiery and he said "Every movement passes through three stages- opposition, indifference, and acceptance. If a movement has strength to withstand the opposition then the public accepts it and showers it with praise. Then comes the real danger to the movement. For security brings a relaxation of spirits and energy, and a sudden growth of extensity quickly lessens the intensity and unity of purpose that were found among the promoters of the movement."

He left this mortal world on 6th August 1927. He was a true 'Sthithapragna' as stated in the Bhagawad Gita.

- Geetha K.

Shadripus



"Direct the six passions to God. The impulse of *lust* should be turned into the desire to have intercourse with Atman. Feel *angry* at those who stand in your way to God. Feel *greedy* for Him. If you must have the feeling of *I and mine*, then associate with God. Say, for

instance, 'My Rama, my Krishna'. If you must have *pride*, then feel like Bibhishana, who said, 'I have touched the feet of Rama with my head; I will not bow this head before anyone else.'

- Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Sri Rama Rama Ramethi

The story of Ramayana actually took place thousands of years ago, but yet His story is heard by one and all even today. Right from a beggar to a millionaire repeat Rama's name as He dwells in the hearts of Indians. It is interesting to note that Sri Rama took birth like us humans. He suffered the same way as we suffer but through His dharmic living, He could overcome all difficulties.

There is not a single instance in Ramayana where He said He is God. It is because of this humbleness that He is held in high esteem by the hindus. The mere word Rama is a Mahamantra. 'RA' is taken from the Ashtakshari mantra 'Om Namō Narayana' and 'MA' is taken from the Panchakshari mantra 'Namah Shivaya'. Thus by chanting 'Rama' it is easy to win the grace of Shiva and Keshava. According to Sankhya shastra one chant of Rama is equal to ten times of chanting Vishnunama.

His life is a perfect example for us to emulate. He showed us how to live as a perfect son, a student, a brother, a husband, a friend and a king. He is accredited with serving two Gurus who had contrasting mentalities. He had the same veneration for Sage Vishwamitra, in spite of his rajasic guna and Sage Vasishta, who was an embodiment of satwa guna. Though He was aware of His prowess, it was only after He received orders from His Guru, Vishwamitra that He broke the 'Shivadānush'. Through this act He has shown the world how a student should respect His teacher.

It was to fulfill His father's promise that He went in exile to the forest for 14 years. Though He had to go through several hardships not once did He waver from His path. Though Kaikeyi was responsible for this, He did not utter a single word against her and treated her with the same love that He had for His mother Kausalya. He equally loved His brothers Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrugna. When Lakshmana fainted, Rama wept saying, "It is



very difficult to get a brother like Lakshmana." This stands testimony for His brotherly love. When Sita was abducted, He bemoaned and asked every tree and hill if they had seen His beloved. Even though He knew it was maya, He went after the Golden deer to fulfill His wife's desire.

He treated Guha and Vibhishana with the same affection though the former was a boatman and the latter was a brother of king Ravana. He also respected the vanaras who helped Him in His mission and blessed the little squirrel thereby proving His sakhya bhakthi. By showering grace on Sabari who belonged to the sabara clan and Ahalya who was a muni patni He showed the world that He was above caste and creed. After His coronation as king He treated His subjects as His own children. He lived by example.

Lord Rama is undoubtedly the immortal Indian Hero. He is an embodiment of Human values. His life has a profound impact on family relations and helps in molding the Hindu character largely. The different roles He played provide the ideals and wisdom of common life and help to bind the people of India.

- Subhadra K.

Where we embarked on the quest

It's been many years since I left Thy nest. My family was often questioned by many out of astonishment: 'How did you send away both your daughters, your only children, off to Puttaparthy, to a boarding school?!' There is of course no rational answer to this, in a worldly sense. But as often as I wonder, now that I have two children myself, I know that my grandmother and parents took that step merely out of utmost faith and surrender to You, Swami. My sister and I were fortunate to grow up under Thy Divine guidance, in a school that nurtured spiritual values, along with good academic education, all given to us with oodles of love and care.

It was a rare opportunity that I got a chance to offer sweets to Swami during my birthday week when I was finishing school. I hesitatingly asked if I could pursue Engineering after my twelfth grade. What a relief it was to hear the consent, "Manchidi, manchidi (good, good)". I was feeling a bit of guilt not continuing my college in Baba's institution in Anantapur. As Swami was approving, He was in His own mysterious way probably letting me carve my destiny? I came out into the world and slowly realized the enormous significance of Sai Education.

I remembered the friends, food, the play, the activities and above all the love and care that Swami gave us through His many instruments. Whether we were naughty or nice as school kids, each one of us cultivated a connection with God. I'm positive that all of us, to our own extent and degree have an inner life whose roots go back to our school life in Parthy. We learnt to foster spirituality rather than religious fervor. Since we had Sai devotees in the school from all over the world, we learnt not to be

judgmental when we meet someone who thinks or acts differently from us.

Simple acts of forbearance like walking without slippers in scorching heat or having a cold water bath or waking up early on a chilly morning, all have been invaluable lessons in adapting to trying situations.

Having moved back to India after a long stint in USA, these early lessons were remembrances to gracefully embrace the changes in living conditions in India. What we learnt, we endeavor to pass on to our children too.



Swami, you taught me to serve God in man. I have for long cherished the thought to be absorbed in service to others. My family gives me the continuing opportunity to serve at home. I have crossed paths with many God loving people along the way. You have taught me many valuable lessons through all of them.

An opportunity in serving in a school for underprivileged children has been wonderful. It is Divine providence that I was steered towards these chances in my flight. An education that inspired me to strive for a balance in strengthening inner life and service oriented activities is my principle taking from Thy school and education.

Swami you taught us to be rock solid in principle like the Earth, versatile in likes and dislikes like the Water, ruthless like the Fire in eliminating negativity, pure in Spirit like the Air. Many times, we children of yours falter in our steps. But we will constantly strive to improve ourselves and become better reflections of Thee. Thank you very much.

- *Harini Nandakuru*

"Sita(Individual soul) thus confined within the boundaries of Lanka(Body, mind complex) constantly struggled against the gunas(Rakshasas)".

Sri Rama was the P a r a m a t m a n (Supreme Reality) and that Sita was the Jivatman (embodied individual soul). Each man's or woman's body was the Lanka.

Sita(Individual soul) thus confined within the boundaries of Lanka(Body, mind complex) constantly struggled against the gunas(Rakshasas) pertaining to the body for union with Rama or Paramatma.

The Jivatman which was enclosed in the body, or captured in the island of Lanka, always desired to be in affinity with the Paramatman, or Sri Rama. But the Rakshasas would not allow it, and the Rakshasas represented certain traits of character. For instance, Vibhishana represented Sattwa Guna, Ravana represented Rajas Guna and Kumbhakarna represented Tamas Guna. Sattwa Guna means goodness, Rajas means lust and passion and Tamas means darkness, stupor, avarice, malice, and its concomitants. These Gunas keep back Sita, or Jivatman, which is in the body (Lanka) from joining Paramatman (Rama).

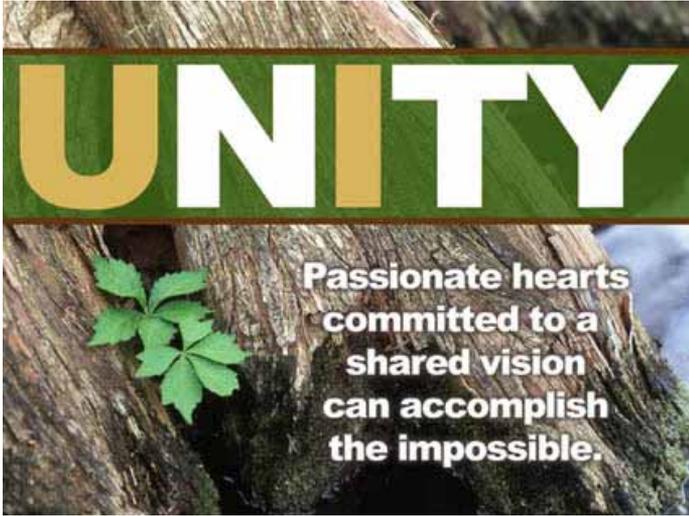
Sita, thus imprisoned and trying to unite with Her Lord, receives a visit from Hanuman, the Guru or divine teacher, who shows Her the Lord's ring, which is Brahma-Jnana, the supreme wisdom that destroys all illusions. Thus Sita finds the way to be at one with Sri Rama or in other words, the Jivatman finds itself one with the Paramatman.



This (Ramayana) is the great, ancient epic of India. Rama and Sita are the ideals of the Indian nation. All children, especially girls, worship Sita. The height of a woman's ambition is to be like Sita, the pure, the devoted, the all-suffering! When you study these characters, you can at once find out how different is the ideal in India from that of the West. For the race, Sita stands as the ideal of suffering. The West says, "Do! Show your power by doing."

India says, "Show your power by suffering." The West has solved the problem of how much a man can have: India has solved the problem of how little a man can have. The two extremes, you see. Sita is typical of India — the idealised India. The question is not whether She ever lived, whether the story is history or not, we know that the ideal is there. There is no other Paurânika story that has so permeated the whole nation, so entered into its very life, and has so tingled in every drop of blood of the race, as this ideal of Sita. Sita is the name in India for everything that is good, pure and holy — everything that in woman we call womanly. If a priest has to bless a woman he says, "Be Sita!" If he blesses a child, he says "Be Sita!" They are all children of Sita, and are struggling to be Sita, the patient, the all-suffering, the ever-faithful, the ever-pure wife. Through all this suffering She experiences, there is not one harsh word against Rama. She takes it as Her own duty, and performs Her own part in it. Think of the terrible injustice of Her being exiled to the forest! But Sita knows no bitterness. That is, again, the Indian ideal. Says the ancient Buddha, "When a man hurts you, and you turn back to hurt him, that would not cure the first injury; it would only create in the world one more wickedness." Sita was a true Indian by nature; She never returned injury.

- Swami Vivekananda



On the 30th of January this year, thousands of people took to streets in sixty different cities of our nation – all for a common cause. They were not called by some particular organization; they were not given any incentives for coming. They collected under the banner 'India Against Corruption', on a Sunday afternoon. I was lucky enough to be a part of that march in New Delhi. We marched from Ram Lila Maidan to Jantar Mantar raising strong voices against corruption, reporting which is consuming most of the news-time today. That march was an enriching experience in many ways.

First of all, it is worth noting that the crowd was varied in its composition – there were students, government and private employees, daily wage earners and labourers, in fact people from all walks of life. Secondly, everyone was patient and considerate enough to keep themselves seated in an orderly manner without any specific instructions in that regard. Thirdly, people had forgotten to which 'class' of the society they belonged to; all were feeling united, may be by the desire for a better tomorrow. A common cause united the people who had their affiliations to different organizations. I was reminded of our struggle for independence from

the British shackles. Those were the days when selflessness and feeling of nationalism were ruling the roost.

Thinking in this context about Ramayana, it was the desire of the people to make 'good' victorious that they all marched all the way to Lanka, under the leadership of Lord Rama and killed Ravana. The epic Ramayana is applicable today more than ever. We have the example of Lakshman who left everything for the love of his brother, yet we fight with our siblings for things such as property.

We have the example of the Lord Himself, who is an embodiment of righteousness, truthfulness and kindness; yet we get ready to kill in His name. We have the example of Lord Hanuman, who set a high standard of loyalty; yet we resort to corruption and cause loss to our State to satisfy our selfish motives. We have the example of the Vanar Sena, which achieved its target with unity; yet we have a thousand excuses to fight with one another.

Unity is something that can move mountains. Unity has the power of achieving the impossible. The need of the hour is that we ponder inwards, introspect ourselves and check our actions. Let us do something good for those who are helpless. Efforts like 'Nachiketa Tapovan' also show that together we can do small acts with great love. Let us realize and always remain conscious of the fact that together, we can!



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

TOLERANCE – A LOST VIRTUE?



We live in an age where people are so intolerant that they will not accept the things that are outside their viewpoint. People's acceptance towards things and people around them are taking a nosedive. Surprisingly it is not the greater things but little things that irritate us and make us lose temper in no time. This explosion has a ripple effect in spoiling relations with one another. Personal intolerance affects a family; familial intolerance infuriates the community. Communal intolerance provokes the nation and national intolerance agitates the world. Tolerance today is one of the lost virtues. Most of us think of ourselves as tolerant people until we come across things that really irritate us. We get irritated to wait at a traffic signal when the vehicle that was in front of ours crosses and the signal turns red. We have no patience to wait in long queues, delays at airports and stations, hear music that we do not like... we see the effects of intolerance all around us: tempers running high, harsh words, wounded feelings, a breakdown in communication, decline in relationships, violence, destruction and death.

To lead a peaceful family life one needs loads of tolerance. My friend was known to be stickler for good manners and order. While we were involved in an important discussion his son, a teenager returned home and a moment later a heavy drumbeat of music interrupted our discussion. My friend walked to the door and quietly closed it so that we were not disturbed. A little while later, he came again, placed a

noisy kiss on my friend's cheek and disappeared saying, "Bye Dad." I noticed that there was a smile on his face, not a fake smile, but one of genuine pleasure; the kind that comes with accepting people as they are. On subsequent visits I learned that my friend's tolerance was the binding factor in holding their family together. That family was going through many tribulations but it was the confidence and tolerance of my friend that held it together.

Tolerant people are like pearls. They become stronger and stronger day by day as they learn to adjust with conditions just as the oyster does with the grain of sand that falls into the shell. The beauty in becoming a pearl is the result of the tolerance shown by the oyster towards the grain. Tolerant people are level-headed and keep themselves under control. The secret of these people is that they are aware of the consequences, more particularly in human relations. They never impose their own opinions on others but rather try to understand. **Instead of walls, they build bridges of understanding and dialogue.** They make an attempt to find ways to relate to each other, work with each other and live together in harmony. Tolerance is hard work. It means accepting another viewpoint. Often it means being cheerful and relaxed even when those around try to exasperate them. If love is what makes the world go round, then the spirit of tolerance is surely what binds the people together. Let us try to be tolerant.

- M. Koti Rajasekhar

The Fruit of Perseverance



One day the Devarshi (the Divine sage) Narada was passing through a forest, and saw a man who had been meditating for so long that the white ants had built a huge mound round his body. He asked the Trilokasanchari (who roams the three worlds) Narada where he was going. Narada replied, "I am going to heaven." "Then ask God when He will be merciful to me; when I shall attain freedom?" Further on Narada saw another man. He was jumping about, singing,

dancing, and said, "Oh, Brahma putra (Son of Brahma) Narada, where are you going?" His voice and his gestures were wild. Narada said, "I am going to heaven." "Then ask God when I shall be free." Narada went on.

In the course of time Narada, the one who gives useful knowledge to mankind, passed by the same road again, and there was the man who had been meditating with the ant-hill round him. He enquired, "Oh, Narada, did you ask the Lord about me?" "Oh, yes." "What did He say?" "The Lord told me that you would attain freedom in four more births." Then the man, enraged, began to weep and wail, and said, "I have meditated until an ant-hill has grown around me, and I have four more births yet!"

Narada went to the other man. "Did you ask my question?" "Oh, yes. Do you see this tamarind tree? I have to tell you that as many leaves as there are on that tree, so many times, you shall be born, and then you shall attain freedom." The man began to dance for joy, and said, "Oh thank you Lord! Thank you that it isn't all the leaves of all the trees in the world! I shall have

freedom after such a short time!" A voice came, "My child, you will have freedom this minute." That was the reward for his perseverance. He was ready to work through all those births, nothing discouraged him. But the first man felt that even four more births were too long. Only perseverance and patience, like that of the man who was willing to wait aeons brings about the highest result.

- *Compiled by Annapurna R.*



Ramayana to me

As most Indians of my age, the stories of Dashavataras, Rama, Krishna, etc were the popular stories, movies and books we grew up with before Harry Potter, Percy Jackson, Wimpy kid and such took over our kids' libraries.



Coming back to the topic of what we can learn from Ramayana and how to apply it to present times:

Not to take away any credit from volumes and volumes of chapters and episodes written by Valmiki, to me there are these 3 episodes that

As I was thinking of what to write for the April edition of Nachiketanjali, I was reminded that April was also when Sri Rama Navami is celebrated. Sri Rama Navami happens to be the Birthday and Marriage Day of Lord Rama. Coincidentally, my son's class was also doing a unit on Role models. So, keeping both in mind, I wanted to re-tell what I heard about the story of Rama in a manner to interest and intrigue my 9 year old and also wanted to re-learn what that great epic was trying to convey and how we can apply it to our lives now.

One thing I always felt and still believe is that the story of Ramayana seems so close to our lives. The various episodes of Ramayana, the characters, their conflicts, emotions and dilemmas seem very real and easily applicable to today even. So, I started thinking how it would be if the same Ramayana played out in today's times... can we learn from how Lord Rama conducted Himself at that time and somehow emulate. One big difference is that Ramayana was from Treta Yuga when the Dharma bull, which symbolizes morality, stood on three legs while it stands on one leg during the current Kaliyuga. This difference is also represented by the different dharmas and gunas that prevailed then vs. now.

standout and are *defining* ones. "Define" in this context is to define Lord Rama's character as an **Ideal Son, Ideal Husband and Ideal King.**

1. Obeying father and going on a 14 year exile to the forest
2. Waging a war against Ravana and rescuing Sita
3. Sita's Agnipariksha to prove Her purity and later on abandoning Her again based on some layman's comments:

Disclaimer: I don't claim to be an expert in these topics nor have I studied Ramayana in depth. What I am trying to express here are just my honest conclusions and confusions that I came up with.

Obeying father and going on a 14 year exile to the forest: The obvious point here is that Rama showed us what it means to be an '**Ideal Son**'. He showed us what it means to follow one's Dharma which was (to Him) to obey His father and also enable His father to keep up his promise made to Kaikeyi. It is easy to question and just say 'Why should we blindly follow parents even if they are wrong?' I think the key is not 'following parents', it is 'following Dharma' and



doing your duties rightfully as children. What would have happened if He didn't obey His father and would have just stayed back in Ayodhya... we can only imagine.

Waging a war against Ravana and rescuing Sita: This, to me shows that Rama was a devoted husband and He showed us what it means to be one and how one needs to be ready to go to any extent like wage a war or go through any amount of difficulties to save/protect your loved ones. Of course, Rama was also fulfilling His duty as the yugapurusha to end the raise of evil in the form of Ravana.

Sita's Agnipariksha to prove Her purity and later on abandoning Her again based on some layman's comments: This one is difficult for me to understand. I am still not 100% sure what is being conveyed by Rama's actions here. Was it that Rama believed in Sita so much and trusted Her that She would come out of the Agnipariksha unscathed and so let Her do it more to prove to the people and to have them accept Her wholeheartedly? I keep wondering 'why couldn't He just stand by Her and say He will trust Her no matter what'. Isn't this what any woman would expect from Her husband? Why did He have to look for people's approval

to accept His wife? Also, why did He have to abandon Her again when She was pregnant because some layman commented something. But, here is another point of view, was He trying to also be an **Ideal Ruler** and so He did not want to make any explanations and exceptions and wanted to establish just one rule of Dharma for everyone no matter who in His kingdom. Was there a conflict between being an **Ideal Ruler vs. Ideal Husband** in this situation? To be an ideal ruler, He had to be spotless and so He was ready to put His better half, Sita through whatever sacrifices to become that spotless Ideal Ruler who stood by dharma.

After all this, I am convinced about one thing that is also so obvious - Our Destiny and our Life is all about the choices we make. Humans are the only beings that have this great power or gift of choice and along with this power also comes great responsibility. What Rama showed us is that there are choices we need to make at every step, the right choice of Dharma may not always be the easy one, but will be the one that will take us to our ultimate goal or Moksha. Our primary purpose in life is to follow our Dharma and do our duties at any point of time wholeheartedly.

- *Vasantha Gullapalli*

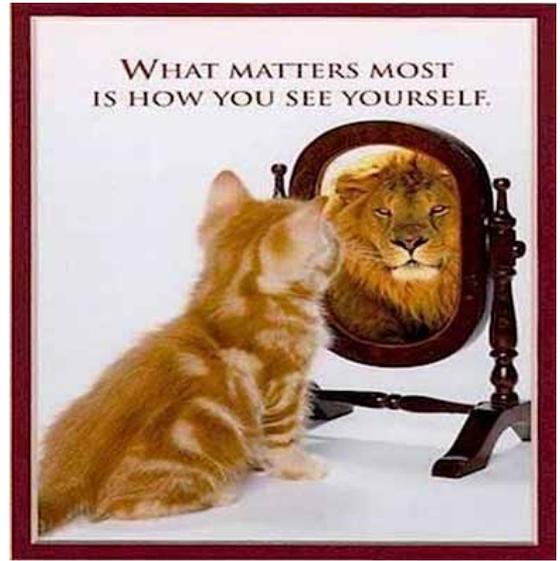
***Ramaya Ramabhadraya Ramachandraya Vedase I
Raghunathaya Nadhaya Sithayaha pathaye namaha II***

Salutations unto Lord Rama who is auspiciousness, who is in the form of the shining light (consciousness present in all beings), who is the creator, who is the Lord of the Raghu clan, the Lord of all beings and the husband of Sita.

Eyes that look

It is strange how I decided to confront some issues of my life. Every time I looked in to the mirror, I asked myself, "Do I really look older for my age?" Such questions kept bothering me for quite long. Very often, I felt bad about it. I questioned myself whether being tall and having a physique suitable to my height makes me look old! What is it that led some people to think that I look older than I really am? I know for myself that I am young and so do I look. However, I still considered convincing those who commented on my age. The anxiety really got me hyperactive sometimes. I would get angry every so often. I needed to find a way out to get some peace for my mind.

This analysis about my looks started when some people asked me questions about my age and funny it was when a lady asked me if I had missed some years of schooling when I was in my grade ten and apparently she thought I was at least two years older than I claimed to be. It definitely was an embarrassing moment. I did not want to face people sometimes. I felt low and even tried an all new hairstyle. This transformation made me look younger than my age. I did not want to look younger either. I felt I was fine with what I really am. For some time, I felt that people looked at me through a strange magnifying glass. Escaping was one temporary solution. Nevertheless, I wanted to find a permanent solution to this. After all, I could not sit and weep all the time thinking about how I look. I have better things to do. One afternoon while I looked in to the mirror, I discovered something unusual. I could see a newborn baby in the mirror reflecting my body. Strange, I thought. What could all this mean? I kept thinking and the answer came right away and I realized that perception lies in the eyes that look at my image. It is definitely in the eyes that look at. For instance, I may look at a white sheet filled with colours as a piece of art if I have a passion for it else it may look like a tainted white sheet. Eyes that look at things perceive what the mind wants to perceive. Opinion comes from within,



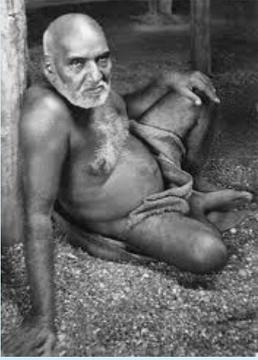
not because it is necessarily true. I found my answer and I had no reason to feel bad then after. I know what I am and what I really look like. Most people identify me as a young girl at the very first sight and the ones who do not, actually try to look for the image they are searching for.

Knowing yourself is one thing and being what you are is another. People say a hundred things. Your eyes have to tell you the truth. Look for what you are than what you wish to be or ought to be. Nobody ought to be something or someone. Alter not your face, nor your dressing style to look good for someone, for the beauty or the beast lies in the eyes that look at you. Everybody has an opinion. You surely cannot change it. However, you are what you are and you know for sure that the body can't be older than it really is. Therefore, it makes no difference. Eyes that look are deceptive. Look at things with no prejudice and the truth shall be found.



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THIS PLACE AS VAIKUNTHA



The world is like milk. It is for us to get butter from it. The milk has to be well heated, cooled, turned into curds and then it is to be well churned before the butter becomes available. Similarly from within and without ourselves is all this world like the milk. This

body has to be well heated by doing Satkarmas that is by doing Tapascharya. Then some buttermilk or curds has to be added to curdle the milk. The touch or advice of a Satpurusha has to be obtained as a curdling agent. When that advice or association acts well on the heated milk in the form of this body for sometime, then the jiva attains that state similar to that of curds. Then various satkarmas in the cause of

God have to be done repeatedly like churning the curds. Churning destroys the curdled state of milk and brings out the butter. The satkarmas destroy the curdled state of jiva and bring out the butter like pure Atma within the heart. When the butter is thus ready it attracts Lord Sri Krishna who is very fond of this butter. To eat that butter Lord Sri Krishna enters our heart and sits there - to enjoy His union with the pure Atma. When He thus sits in our heart, our work is over and our aim is accomplished. In one word by sitting in one place like this and listening to all this talk at leisure is not going to help anybody. Remember "Jivacha Karuni Dahi Sari rachi Karuni Ravi Maga Ghusalitha Nigheloni, Taricha Hari Bhetel." This is an inspired couplet you should well remember.

- Upasani Maharaj

(Upasani Baba was Shri Sai's loftiest creation, a stone turned into a touch stone)



Lord Mahavira

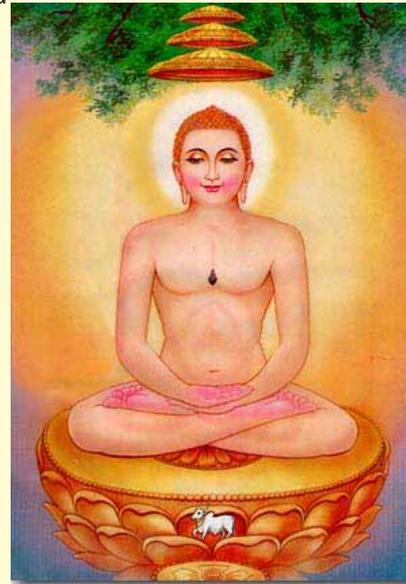
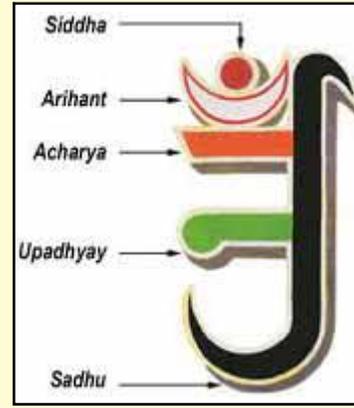
Lord Mahavira is the twenty-fourth Tirthankar, born in 599 B.C. at Kshatriyakund to King Siddhārtha and Queen Trishalā a very religious couple and the followers of Lord Pārshvanāth. Queen Trishalā had fourteen dreams (some believe sixteen dreams) when she conceived Lord Mahavira. While she was pregnant, the prosperity of King Siddhārtha grew. So when the baby was born, He was named Vardhaman, which means continuously increasing.

He was very bold and while playing he once saved his friends from a snake. Another time, Vardhaman overcame a monster (in reality a disguised heavenly angel) and earned the name "Mahavira" meaning very brave. Mahavira never took to the comforts and luxuries of a royal family and lived a simple life. When His parents died, He decided to be a monk but waited for two years as per His brother's wish while leading a totally detached life. At the age of thirty, Mahavira gave up the worldly life. He spent most of His time in austerity and in meditation. He suffered a great deal of physical pain and torture from various sources. Lord Mahavira remained calm and peaceful through all these torturous events; even when bitten by the highly poisonous snake Chandakaushik. He never lost His serenity and never developed hatred for anyone. He magnanimously forgave

all of them. After leading a highly austere life for twelve and a half years, at the age of forty-two He attained omniscience, Kevaljnan. He became Jina, the twenty-fourth Tirthankar of the present era.

As the last Tirthankar, He revived the religious order (Tirth) consisting of monks, nuns, Shravaks and Shravikas. This order is known as the Jain Sangh. Lord Mahavira added the fifth vow to the existing four great vows that a nun or monk would follow. The teachings of Lord Mahavir opened the eyes of the people against violence, and made them adopt the principle of non-violence. His sermons encouraged people to build a happy and harmonious society.

After offering guidance to the public for thirty years, Lord Mahavira attained Nirvān in 527 B.C., at the age of seventy-two. Nirvāna means that He attained liberation and became a Siddha who no longer has to undergo the cycle of birth and death.



Elements of nature in Jainism

Jainism says that five main elements of nature: Prithvi (land, soil, stones etc.), Jal (Water resources including cloud), Agni (Fire), Vayu (Air) and Vanaspati (Vegetation, trees and plants including fungi) are living creatures and must be treated as *living beings*. This very concept of Jainism advocates loving the nature and natural elements and restricts its followers (Jain) from harming any creature. This concept also limits their consumptions and helps protecting environment. Depletion and contamination of natural resources are the main cause of present day problems in environment and sustainable development.

Universal Peace and Friendship Prayer

Shivmastu Sarva Jagatah, Par hit nirata bhavantu bhutaganah,

Doshah Prayantu Nasham, Sarvatra Sukhi bhavantu lokah.

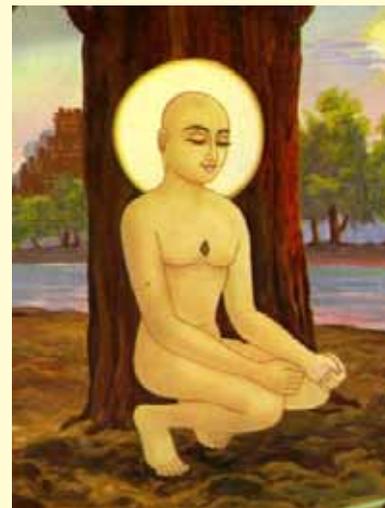
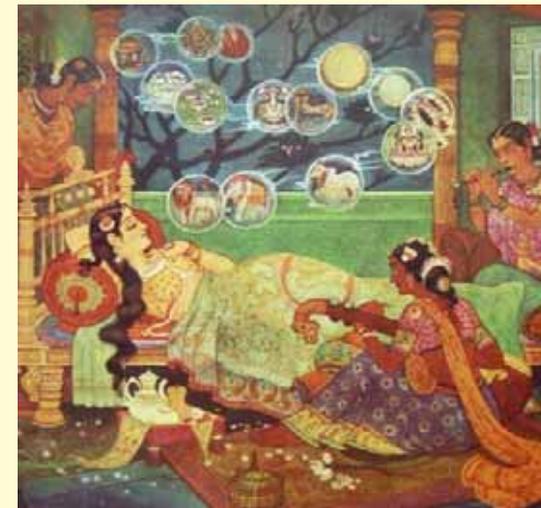
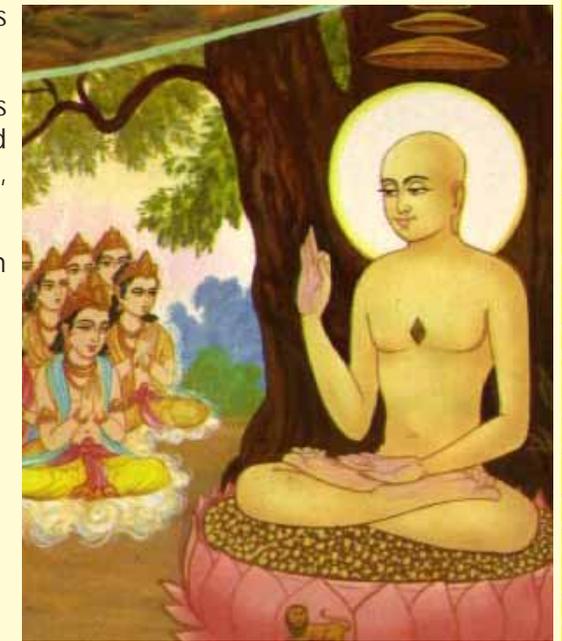
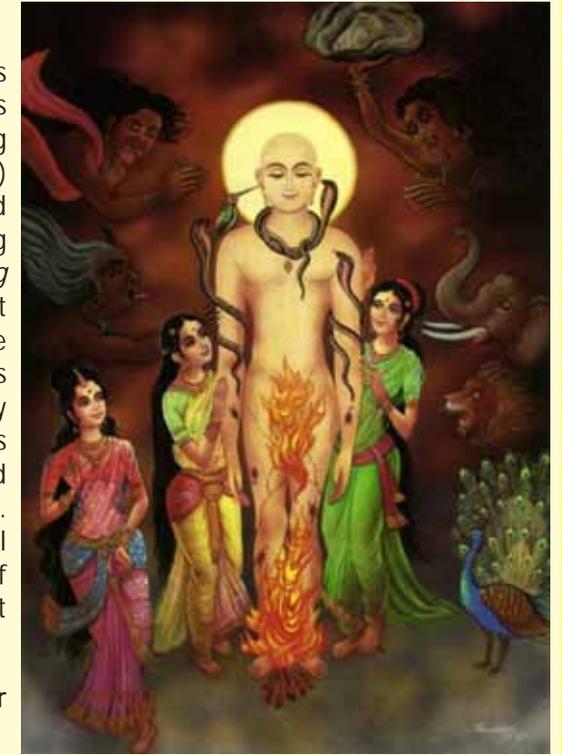
May the whole Cosmos be blessed. May all beings engage in each other's well being.

May all weakness, sickness and faults diminish and vanish. May everyone and everywhere be healthy, prosper, blissful, and peaceful.

Sources: Jain University and Jainism and Environment.

Compiled by **Annapurna R.**

Sri Mahavir Jayanthi is celebrated on 16th April, 2011.



The Perfect Man in an Imperfect World

The 7th incarnation of Lord Vishnu on earth, the hero of the Ramayana, protector of the weak, vanquisher of all evil and upholder of righteousness—Lord Rama is considered to be the Perfect Man.

According to the Hindu belief system, the eternal span of time is divided into 4 epochs or eras called 'yugas'. These cycles are believed to repeat in like



seasons within a greater time-cycle of the creation and destruction of the universe. The Ramayana is based in the Treta Yuga, the second of the four yugas (Satya- yuga, Treta-yuga, Dvapar-yuga and Kali-yuga)

Under the rule of Lord Rama, there existed a period where every man was equal to the other, wealth and resources were in abundance and peace and joy was the way of life. This also led to the term 'Ram Rajya' being coined, where people aspire for the 'perfect way of life'.

BUT

Have you noticed how easy it is for us to forget the above lines as soon as we get back to our routines of everyday? Or read stories of corruption and scams in the morning news. Or look at the way people live around us, not even imagining that there can be anything better; and hoping that there would be nothing worse.

After we step out from the temple to wear our chappals, our sense of wonder at those mystic, mythological tales ceases to exist. And we begin to underestimate the power of a 'story'. A simple story of a simple prince loved by his people, who fought and won an epic battle with a 'bad man' that had taken away His wife . That's all there is to it, isn't it?

Well, yes, that's definitely a thrilling tale and leads to an interesting direction of thought, but what next? Can we learn from it even today? Can we still apply the philosophies of truth, love and *dharma* in our daily lives? Can we find the perfect man today in an imperfect world?

YES, WE CAN

And that's where the power of a story comes in. The reason that 'The Ramayana'

has survived the ravages of time and the impurities of prejudices is a simple one. It is moving. It is honest. It is brave. It is heroic. It is inspirational. It is heart-wrenching. You feel the pain, you feel the fear and you feel the euphoria. Most importantly, it is relevant; more so in today's world than ever before.

What good is a test if it is not challenging enough?

What good is a challenge if it doesn't appear insurmountable, unachievable?

What good are those achievements if they don't compel you to emerge from your sweet shell of security and break the shackles of fear?

If the world out there was 'perfect' like the *Ram Rajya*, there would really be nothing for you to do, would there? Yes, this is not the *Ram Rajya*. Because the *Ram Rajya* is too perfect, too joyous and too surreal. But that doesn't mean it is impossible to attain.

There MUST exist something in this world that drives us out of the bed in the morning, compels

us to try harder every day, inspires us to meet every need with an invention, pushes us to find the solution for a problem and make life better.

As a great philosopher once said, "you start to change the world by first changing yourself". The world out there is imperfect all right. But how perfect are you and I? If there is one thing that is totally, completely, fully in our control, it is our selves.

Nothing can stop us from becoming the PERFECT man or woman, in a seemingly imperfect world. Just like another simple man who lived and walked the earth eons ago. He labored for perfection in Himself and then in the world around Him. And He succeeded. And that's why, to this day, in the face of every failure or success, we still say, 'Jai Shri Ram'.

Avinash Agarwal

Student of St. Xaviers College,
Mumbai



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Living with a Divine Soul...



Atithi Devo Bhava

We all know the meaning of Atithi devo bhava and as per our Sanatana Dharma this value has come from time immemorial. It is a part of the verse in Taittiriya Upanishad. In this fast paced life we have forgotten this value. We feel strongly that we should practice it when we read about it in any book or when we listen about it in a satsang. But when God provides us with an opportunity to practice it either we fail completely or perform half-heartedly. We assume that some values ought to be listened to and needs no practice.

In the olden days residents of villages would offer food and shelter to all at whatever time they arrived. Maybe it is still practiced in some villages even now. But in the cities we are apprehensive of guests. We welcome them depending on whether they arrive at a time convenient to us. Even our favorite television programme should not be disturbed. No guest arriving unannounced is welcomed in our homes. There is an instance when Adi

Shankaracharya goes to one poor lady's house for biksha, she does not have any thing in the house but the urge to serve her guest was very strong in her. She searches high and low in the house and finally finds some dried amla and offers Him. Pleased by the poor lady's devoted act, Adi Shankara makes Ma Lakshmi to shower Her blessings on her.

Swami Nachiketananda Puri would always tell us, "When you have guests at home, do not ask them whether they want to eat, but bring whatever you have at home and offer them. Even if they do not partake it, doesn't matter but offer them." At the office in Tapovan He bought a water flask, 6 glasses, plates, a tray and boxes for storing snacks. Whoever comes to Tapovan, be it a postman, mechanic or a delivery boy, Swamiji told us to make them sit and offer them water to drink and something to eat. In spite of His telling us we would in our distracted world often forget to do so. It pained Him deeply that we were not able to learn to treat people properly. He always made us conscious of our duties by chanting Sant Tulasidas doha ...Is sansar me sabse miliye bhai, Na jane Kis rup me Narayan mil jaye.



I would like to enumerate a couple of instances that come to my mind with reference to this value. Swamiji had ordered some steel almirahs for Tapovan. They were delivered at 11pm in the night by six workers who unloaded them. Since Swamiji recognized their hunger, He went to check if there was some food in the kitchen but finding that there was no food, He swiftly made rice and dal and offered them. They felt fortunate to have delicious prasad and receive love and affection from Swamiji.

Swami Shivananda Puri also reminisces about one such instance, "At Tapovan we had unexpected guests from Maharashtra who arrived in the middle of the night. They had called me on the mobile at 2 am saying they were at the gate. I went down to open the gate for them. Swamiji on hearing some noise came down from His room and saw them. These guests who were on their way to Tirupathi looked tired and sleepy. Having guessed that they wouldn't have eaten their dinner, Swamiji prepared Aloo poha and some tea. They were so content to get something to eat at that hour and slept peacefully. The next morning Swamiji prepared breakfast and sent them on their way. These guests though practically unknown to Him were received with utmost respect and taken care of in every way."

Our values and traditions are strong and are taught to us from childhood by way of songs, verses and plays. We have but swerved from this path of basic values and need to find our way again.

Swami Nachiketananda Puri would often remark that listening to spiritual truths is the first step and practicing is the next step but He would always ask us to aim higher i.e. to actually experience it.

- Vasundhara P.



"SUCCESS"- a mere 7 letter word but the ultimate achievement for all!!

People follow different means and ways -both good and bad to achieve success.

But in reality the secrets to success can be found in your room itself...

Wondering how??

- The Roof says - Aim High
- Fan says - Be cool
- Door says - Do not miss the opportunity
- Window says - See the world
- Mirror says - Reflect before you act
- Calendar says - Be up to date
- Clock says - Every minute is precious



Mridula Sankaran
Student of 11th Std,
DAV Public School, Nerul

Sanskrit lesson - thirteen

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

(Contd from previous issue)

एवं क्रमशः ताम्रपात्रं पूरितं भवति। तदा भिक्षुकः चिन्तयति। मम सकाशे बहु धनं अस्ति! किं करोमि इति चिन्तयति। अन्ते अहं काशीं गच्छामि, तत्र विश्वनाथस्य दर्शनं करोमि इति निश्चयं करोति।



मार्गे धनस्य उपयोगः भवति। अत्र गृहे धनस्य पात्रं त्यजति चेत् चोरः आगच्छति, धनं चोरयति च। अतः सः भिक्षुकः धनं तेन सह नयति। बहुश्रामं करोति, अन्ते काशीं प्राप्नोति। तत्र गङ्गायाः सौन्दर्यं पश्यति। गङ्गायाः विषये बहु जानाति। परन्तु प्रथमवारं पश्यति। गङ्गायां स्नानं करोमि इति निश्चिनोति (निश्चयं करोति)।

This way slowly (regularly) the copper vessel would be filled up. Then the beggar thinks. '(There is) a lot of money with me! What do I do?' At the end, 'I go to Kashi, I do Viswanath-darshan' he decides. (I highlighted 'I go' 'I do', because the verb ending is different here.)

On the way (there) would be use of the money. If he leaves the money vessel in the house, thief comes, and steals it too. Therefore the beggar takes the money with him. He works hard, at the end reaches (gets to) Kashi. There he sees the beauty of Ganga. He

knows quite a lot in the matter of Ganga. But (he) sees it the first time. 'I take bath in the Ganga' he decides.

तस्य सकाशे धनपात्रम् अस्ति। स्नानसमये तस्य रक्षणं कथम् इति सः चिन्तयति। एकः उपायः स्फुरति। सः गङ्गायाः तीरे एकं गर्तं खनति, तस्य अन्तः ताम्रपात्रं स्थापयति, गर्तं पूरयति च। स्नानस्य अनन्तरं धनपात्रं कुत्र अस्ति इति एकं चिह्नम् आवश्यकं खलु! गङ्गातिरे किम् अस्ति? सर्वत्र सिकताः सन्ति। सिकतानां उपयोगं करोति। तत्र एकं शिवलिङ्गं निर्माति (शिवलिङ्गस्य निर्माणं करोति)। तस्य शिवलिङ्गस्य रक्षणार्थं कानिचन पुष्पाणि स्थापयति। ततः स्नानार्थं गच्छति। सुखेन स्नानं करोति।

Copper vessel is (there) with him. 'During the time of bath, how is (can be) its protection?' he thinks. One 'upaaya' (method?) lights up in (his) brain. He digs (up) a pit on the bank of Ganga, puts the copper vessel in there and fills (up) the pit. Just after the bath, an indication (symbol/post) is needed to (know) 'where the copper vessel is'. Is it not? What is there on the bank of Ganga? Everywhere sands are (there). (He) makes the use of the sands. (He) builds a Siva-Linga there. For the protection of that Siva-Linga, he keeps a few flowers (there). From there, he goes for bath. Happily (he) takes bath.

अपरः शिवभक्तः गङ्गातीरम् आगच्छति। तत्र किं पश्यति? तीरे एकं सुन्दरलिङ्गं अस्ति, एकः भक्तः (अस्माकं भिक्षुकः) गङ्गायां स्नानं करोति। सः नूतनः एवं काश्यां एकः सम्प्रदायः - प्रथमं लिङ्गनिर्माणं तदनन्तरं गङ्गास्नानम् - इति चिन्तयति। सः अपि सिकताभिः एकं नूतनं लिङ्गं निर्माति, तत्र कानिचन पुष्पाणि स्थापयति च। तदा स्नानं करोति।

Another Siva-Bhakta comes to Ganga's shore. What does (he) see there? On the bank, (there) is a beautiful Lingam, one devotee (our beggar) takes bath in the Ganga. That new person thinks 'This way there is a tradition in Kashi first building (a) Lingam and immediately (then) bath in the Ganga. He also builds a Lingam using sands and keeps a few flowers there. Then (he) takes bath.

(To be contd in the next issue)

DRUG ADDICTION-A BURNING PROBLEM



“A tool is but the extension of a man's hand, and a machine is but a complex tool. And he that invents a machine augments the power of a man and the well-being of mankind,” said Henry Ward Beecher. Inventions and discoveries made by man are a sign of his intellect and his pursuit for a better and carefree life. His innovations are always aimed at solving or at least mitigating his problems.

Drugs are a very useful discovery of man, which foster the welfare and happiness of mankind. Drugs provided a hope to mankind to provide solace from the bitterness of life and a way to escape from the vale of misery. But unfortunately, man ended as a prisoner of addiction. The drugs, which he thought to be a boon, turned out to be a malediction. But the temptation of the ‘forbidden fruit’ was so unruly that he found it hard to tame notwithstanding the cramps it caused.¹ Initiated into it by friends and foes, many of the people are coming into the deadly net of drugs. Across the years, drug addiction and drug abuse have become social maladies.² Drug addiction has become a serious problem among the youth. The vicious cycle of drugs can be understood as under:

USE ADDICTION DEPENDENCY

In order to deal with this malady, the legislature has enacted many pieces of legislation. The significant ones are *THE DRUG AND COSMETIC ACT, 1940* and *THE NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES ACT, 1985*. While the former Act regulates the import, manufacture, distribution and sale of drugs and cosmetics, the latter provides for the prohibitions for the cultivation and gathering of any portion of certain plants. It also prohibits the production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transport, warehouse, use, consumption, import and export inter-state, import and export from India and transshipment of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Thus, the latter legislation is the one that addresses the question of drug addiction directly, as it has also prohibited the use and consumption of certain substances. These Acts clearly indicate that drug addiction is a social and moral problem, which requires the support of society in eradication. Therefore, it would in the interest of all to work for the benefit of society.

Human life is a boon given by God. Someone greatly said, “What God gave us is His gift to us; whatever we make of our life is our gift to God.” How can we let go of an opportunity to give a wonderful gift to God? He made us pure, how can we make any sort of undesirable alterations to His creation? It is incumbent upon us that we realize the value of our life and do everything that can enhance the same. We need to let go of our vices and cultivate emulative habits. Lest, we get lost in the depths of hopelessness!

(Footnotes)

¹ Swaroop, R., Handbook of Law Relating to Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Prelude (ALD Publications, Hyderabad) (2007)

² Ibid.



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

Live Sustainably

After many months of promising that I am going to write for Nachiketanjali, I am sitting down to key in my thoughts.

The start of this year has been a fabulous one and I have many people to thank for it...

Our Dearest of all Swamiji, my most wonderful and loving Shivanandamayi Ma, our most special and ever smiling Vasundhara Ma, quiet but ever solid Reddy Uncle and above all Madhavi, whose constant chatter and enthusiasm about the many wonderful happenings of Nachiketa Tapovan rubbed off on me and I could not help but go for the Satsang on the 1st of January.

I am going to look back very fondly at this day, which in many ways has become a very special and life changing day for me. In the last 30 days, I have found relationships and bonds which are stronger and more real than many I have known for 30 years!!

There are many things that I have experienced and many emotions I have gone through which are not easy for me to explain even to myself, let alone writing about it, so I will leave that for another day.

'Sustainability' is something that has been on my mind for the last many months... many conversations about our work environment, about life and its meaning, about the need for a 'spiritual' process in our lives and its importance, etc. have all been centered around whether or not our way of 'being' is sustainable, both within and without?

Today our very survival on this planet is in question because of the reckless way in which we have treated our Mother Earth and the resources She has given us and since the 'Environmental Club' has just started at Nachiketa Tapovan, it seems appropriate to



begin the series with 'Environmental Sustainability'.

"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."
Chief Seattle

In this day and age of population explosion and depleting natural resources on one hand, man's capacity to use technology to extract even more of these resources faster and relentlessly on the other ...What is the need of the hour?

What we need is to have a 'balance'...what we need is the realization of what we are doing to nature and therefore to ourselves... what we need right now is the awareness that if we continue at this rate, we might not leave anything of this beautiful nature for the next generation(s) to enjoy... we will be leaving this world far worse than we inherited it!!! And that is indeed, an awfully scary thought!!!

Have you ever wondered why **all** hoardings for new apartments show the entire area surrounded by greenery? Have you ever noticed that the wayside 'chai' stall or a tyre repair shop is '**always**' under the shade of a tree?? Summer is here, **have you ever imagined how a summer would be without the cool shade of large banyan tree???** Please spare a moment to close your eyes and think about these things... You will know the answers to these questions and hopefully also become aware what each one of us needs to do...

I, for one, don't want to live with this burden and as many of us who join in this endeavor to live more sustainably, the faster we will get to the point where we will be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel, where there is hope that everything is not lost...

What we need to do is not rocket science or something too big; we need to take small steps at a time. I will list a few, but this is just a start, you can add millions of more ideas and we will



be happy to hear from you...

1) Don't use a **hose pipe** to wash your cars and drive ways. Use a **bucket** of water, a mug and a broom. Washing a car or a drive way with a hose pipe can consume anywhere between 500 to 1000 liters of water whereas using a bucket and mug, the same job can be done in 20 to 100 liters of water.

2) **Plant as many trees as you can.** This birthday, don't only celebrate by cutting a cake; celebrate by planting a tree. And then sustain it, water it every day, give the right kind of earth and manure and above all, nurture it with 'love'!!!

3) Next time you go shopping, **don't use a plastic bag.** Carry your own cloth bag or a vegetable basket.

This is just a start! Please add to your list, share it with others and let's all live life sustainably!!

Om Namah Shivaya.

- *Gautam Vir*

Going green...



Nachiketa Tapovan's Environmental Awareness group drew its first formal breath on February 21st with 6th and 7th class students and some volunteers as its members. The club was named as Nachiketa's Go Green Club as voted by the majority of the students. Children wrote essays, pledged their commitment to care for and save the Mother Earth. The panel of members and students shared facts, ideas and experiences about cutting down the use of plastic bags. They also conducted a survey in the neighborhood which revealed that:

- ◆ Most of the shoppers are feeling bad about the indestructible menace- plastic bags
- ◆ **Some consumers are already following the green mantra of saying 'no to plastic bags' by carrying their own cloth/paper or reused bags**
- ◆ Many understand the seriousness of the situation but don't know how to make a difference
- ◆ Given some direction and support, shoppers are ready to give a shot at reducing the use of plastic bags

The world's annual consumption of plastic materials has increased from around 5 million tons in the 1950s to nearly 100 million tons today. India had no plastic bags till the year 1985 and now we don't know how to dump it! The amount of plastic waste generated daily in a city like Bangalore, Hyderabad or Chennai is 200 to 250 tons. Average use-time of a plastic bag is 20 minutes but it takes hundreds of years to breakdown. About 90% of the floating marine litter is plastic. Most of us think that we need not worry about using plastic bags as long as we give it to rag pickers or companies that recycle. But look at some of the facts about recycling plastic:

Plastic Facts:

- ◆ Plastic bags are rarely recycled, merely 1-3%
- ◆ It is more expensive to recycle plastic bags and bring them back into the marketplace than to create new ones
- ◆ Plastic waste in India is about 4.5 million tons a year
- ◆ Plastic bags don't degrade easily in natural environments or landfills. In fact they do not biodegrade, they only photo-degrade, which can take up to 1,000 years breaking into smaller and smaller particles (often toxic to surrounding ecosystems)
- ◆ 2007: World consumption of plastic is 100 million tons, but in the 1950s it was just 3 million tons

Plastic bag Counter

If I stop myself from using even one bag per day, I would be saving 30 bags in a month and 360 bags in a year and a group of ten such 'I's would save 3,600 bags which is nothing to sneeze at! In fact I did say 'no' to at least 10 bags in a single trip to market by carrying my own used bags and cloth bags. We welcome our readers to join 'Say no to plastic Bags' campaign. We would proudly share the no. of bags you saved and your experiences and wisdom on this journey.

Natural remedies

Heat Stroke



The heat is beginning to intensify like a waxing moon and already the temperatures have touched over mid thirties. It is very important to gear ourselves up for rising temperatures to avoid sunstroke

and dehydration. Here are some homemade, chemical free, low cost and effective remedies for Heatstroke:

Heat stroke can be avoided or alleviated by

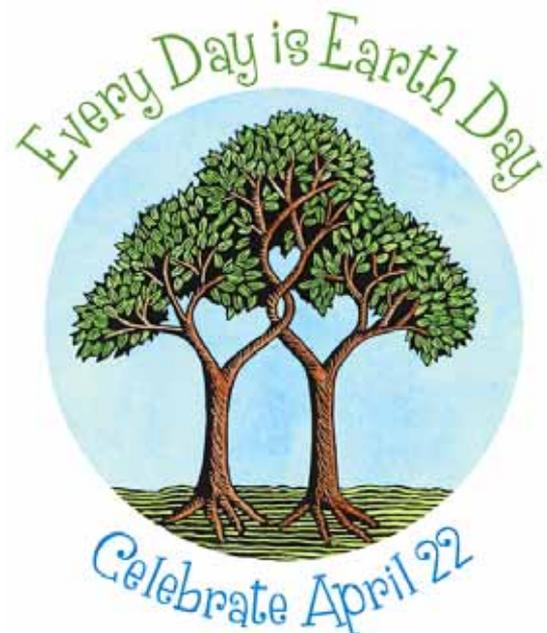
- * taking 2 table spoons onion juice after breakfast
- * application of grated onion on body before taking bath
- * placing a cotton ball dabbed in onion juice or an onion ring on the centre of the palm or centre of the sole for 7 hrs. The frequency depends on the individual's amount of exposure- for those who work regularly in heat apply at least three times every week, for moderate exposure follow the routine for 4-5 days, for just an occasional one time exposure one application will suffice.
- * keeping onion in one's pocket can avoid heat stroke
- * applying coconut oil on navel and around it while taking bath helps to avoid heat in the stomach and fight it back
- * application of dark blue color ink on the finger tips of the feet and dipping the fingertips in cold water or ice water helps

relieve headaches caused by absorption of heat by head in Sun

- * Stomach problems due to heat and dehydration can be warded off by – taking 1tsp pomegranate juice three times a day in severe cases and pomegranate with seeds twice a day in normal cases which keeps the digestive system strong
- * Sujok acupressure acupuncture- application of dark blue sketch pen color or blue ink on the center of the palm or on the center of the sole applied before leaving outdoors helps keep heatstroke at bay

Homeopathic Medicine for Sunstroke:

Xlat Mur 30 – 5 pills – once a week is recommended to keep away from heat stroke.



Celebrations - Shivarathri

Shivaratri... As much as I may try to put in words my experience of the day, I know that it will fall short and not capture everything that I felt and all that happened during those few days before and after Shivaratri.

We were all looking forward to spending the Shivaratri together in the Divine presence of Swami Nachiketananda Puri and Shivananda Puri and the feeling of disappointment was unanimous when we were informed that Swamiji and Mataji were going to be in Rishikesh during that time. But having no say in the matter, we accepted it resignedly. As the most wondrous day kept inching closer Vasundhara Maa, Reddy Uncle, Madhavi and I sat together and spoke about the plans for Shivaratri and I was feeling the excitement that I used to feel as a child before any festival or occasion.

The image of the Dhyamandir at Nachiketa Tapovan will remain etched in my memory forever as we walked in at 10 pm. Looking at the expectant and excited faces of the children sitting there, the glowing expression on Vasundhara Ma's face as she was giving the final touches to all the arrangements and the happy expression on the faces of several volunteers who were a



part of this wonderful evening, it was clear that everybody present there were feeling very privileged and happy to be part of such a magical evening.



We were treated to some wonderful bhajans by Vasundhara Ma and Sudha Ma, followed by an enchanting dance performance by the children of Tapovan. It was almost midnight by the time Vasundhara Maa took her place by Shivalinga to perform the Puja.

One of the most beautiful sights was still to unfold... I had closed my eyes and when I opened my eyes the entire place was lit with beautiful 'Diyas'.

After the Puja and offerings had been made, we all sat together and chanted the name of 'Shambho' for a long time. Some of us did our Japa, others meditated on the Divine and as the morning was coming closer, one by one, the little children were falling asleep.

The wondrous night has come and gone but something within me has changed forever... I am already looking forward to another Shivaratri to be immersed, once again, in the Divine energy of the night.

- Gautam Vir



The Gift



You've no idea how hard I've looked for a gift to bring You.

Nothing seemed right.

What's the point of bringing gold to the gold mine,
or water to the Ocean.

Everything I came up with was like
taking spices to the Orient.

It's no good giving my heart and my soul
because you already have these.

So- I've brought you a mirror.

Look at yourself and remember me.

- Jalaluddin Rumi, Essential Rumi, Coleman Barks, pg141



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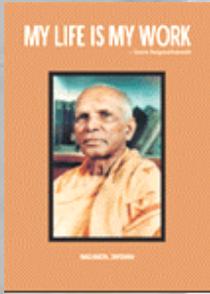
Anna daanam maha daanam; vidya daanam mahattaram.

Annena kshanika trupthihi yaavajjeevanthu vidyaya.

Vidya Mandir at Nachiketa Tapovan is currently able to accommodate a family of about 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
Alpa Aharam (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!



PUBLICATION

"My life is my work" is a pictorial biography that leads the reader through different dimensions of Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj's life providing a glimpse of his oneness with the nature through His teachings. First edition of this book was released on 1st March 2006 followed by the second edition on 11th July 2006 and 3rd edition on 22nd November 2007. The Books are available at Nachiketa Tapovan at Kavuri Hills and Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad for a subsidized price of Rs. 250/-.

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. **Yousufguda** – 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.

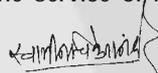
The Vidya Mandir being constructed is planned to cover an area of **50,000 sq.ft.** around an extensive central play ground. The building will have two floors, the ground floor consisting of spacious classrooms (750 sq ft) and the entire top floor rooms devoted to laboratories like math Lab, Science 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


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Ph: 9849168937, 8008882828, www.nachiketatapovan.org

Last date for registration 24th April, 2011

Hurry, 60 seats only, first come first serve



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A NOTE TO WRITERS:

- 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.
- Unpublished articles are not returned.
- Your article should be reader friendly with a positive view point.
- No controversial or political issues are published.
- Word limit for an article varies from 300 (one column) to 600 words (two columns). Writers can contact the editorial team for further details.
- The styles of references should be as per the 'Documentation of Sources' given at the end of the *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.
- Editor reserves the right to accept/ reject articles and edit the selected articles.
- Unsolicited articles are not acknowledged.
- The Editor does not accept responsibility for the author's views.
- Articles received will be published in one of the forthcoming issues.

BOOK REVIEW

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

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Single copy	₹ 10	₹ 10
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3 years	₹ 280	₹ 280
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Requests for subscriptions can be sent by MO/DD/Cheque/Cash in favor of 'Nachiketa Tapovan' (Plus ₹ 30 for outstation cheques). Please include your name, address, phone number and email ID.

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*We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors,
we borrow it from our children.*

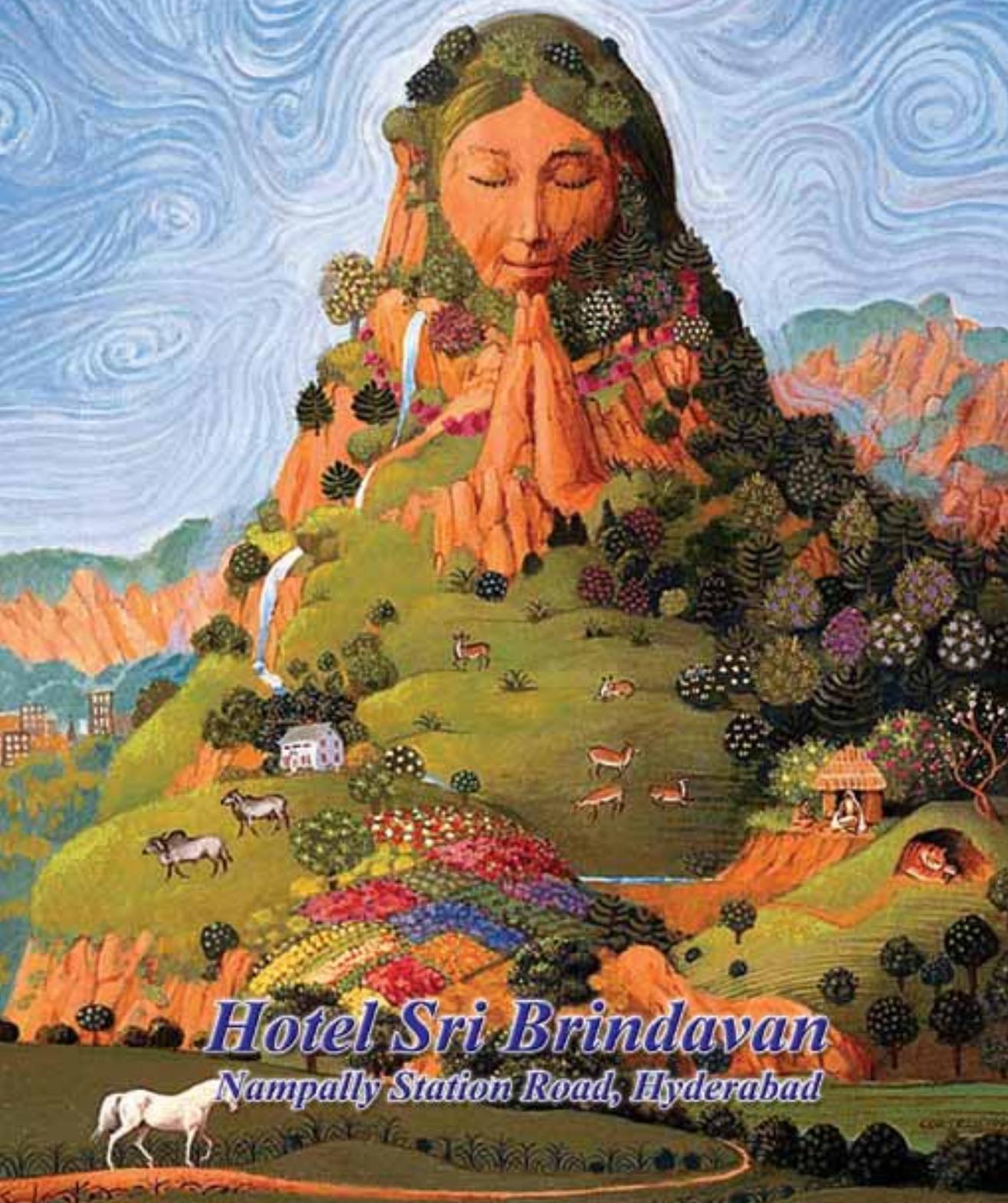
- Native American Proverb



*“... do something.
Pay your rent for the privilege of
living on this beautiful,
blue-green, living Earth.”*

- Dave Foreman

*There is a sufficiency in the world for man's need
but not for man's greed. - Mohandas K. Gandhi*



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