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# *Nachiketanjali*

*...an offering*

*A Journey Into The Spiritual Realm!*

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*Thathpurushaaya Vidhmake  
Mahadevaaya Dheemahi  
Thanno Rudra(h) Prachodayaath*



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A poet has rightly said that we are the charioteers of our lives. We live with high aspirations about our future but victory is possible only when we keep at sight our goals along with the desire to be successful. When we set out without a destination, no lantern can show us the way. Victory can be achieved through proper planning and uniformity of thoughts, words and actions. Repetition of our actions becomes habits and our habits decide our character which becomes the stepping stone for success. A person's character can be assessed by the number of friends or enemies he has. Having a good external appearance but a mind filled with malice will not suffice. Though the fish dwell in water day and night, they still stink. So we should purify our characters before setting out on our goal. A life without a goal is like a boat without an oar. The journey is taken but without knowing a destination. Day dreaming will not help us in any way but when our dreams are put into actions it is possible to attain success.

Only when we learn to enjoy the fruit of even a small victory, can we bask in the glory of a bigger success. We should be able to define the real meaning of victory or success. For, victory doesn't mean winning over the world or becoming rich. It is also not about winning trophies or accolades. Victory means happiness. Victory is seeing the goodness in other people. The goal of life is not just living but leading a noble life and this can happen when we develop self confidence. One who has no faith in himself can never trust the world. The world stands on faith whether one believes it or not. We need the support of the world to prosper and once we prosper, the world needs our support. It is for this reason that we should make the world proud by developing a good character.

Live life to the fullest, believe in yourself, be dedicated and victory is yours for sure!

- Subhadra K.

# Fluctuation...



Different countries have different foundations for existence such as economical, social, ethical, moral and spiritual. Countries keep fluctuating from economical to spiritual level as per the global market and its demands. This fluctuation sometimes causes a major impact on the psyche of the society and eventually individuals. When the society fluctuates to its peak, our core values take the back seat and allow instability to take the forefront and damage the soul of the society; leaving everybody in a dreadful situation and later expecting somebody to take charge to reconstruct the society with very limited resources and time.

It is a well-known fact that India has rich abundance of spiritual treasure. They say "When anything revolves around spirituality it never loses its essence and binds society together." That is the reason why people from different walks of life get attracted towards Mother India and tread the spiritual path. Perhaps this is the only country where we find all religions living together like a single ideal family on this Earth, without losing their identity.



'We are all one'- just saying this is not going to work, but working for all 'will work for all'. Humanity can be at its peak along with fluctuation, but needs global expression. Massacres in any form anywhere by anybody should not be spared, but should be dealt with spiritual understanding by taking into consideration the interest of the society and the country. Each one of us have the right to live and lead a peaceful life. No one has the right to take a decision on behalf of somebody. But on the whole when we look at humanity, we have certain responsibilities to shoulder, and if we play our role and leave the rest to the higher authority, then we will definitely be doing justice to the cause.

Thus my humble request to those who are more influential in the global world or market is

to think wisely before stepping into somebody's shoes. Understand that it is God's creation and He is the only authority to decide and redesign anything if necessary. Our role is limited and therefore it should be more precise and pertinent as per the situation and demand. We cannot decide the fate of anybody but can help everyone to some extent, so that their quality of life will be enhanced and the society will become more sensible towards nature.

Even though there was fluctuation in Lord Sri Rama's period, Sri Rama played His role extremely well and established Dharma that echoes even today.

Fluctuation is like churning. Sometimes this brings the best out of us like how nectar came to the surface when Gods and the Demons churned the ocean. We should not get disturbed by seeing this kind of fluctuation but accept this as a challenge. Life is nothing but a bundle of challenges and those who can accept this truth will bounce back from any crisis.

I pray for all... from Japan to nature... from Iraq to America... from Libya to France... Let the merciful God show everyone the right path, so that fluctuation can be transformed into universal dharma without compromising core principles of all religions. We all know that the climate is not the same everywhere. It is changing in every country, every day. This very principle teaches us a great lesson. No two principles are going to match. Therefore let us practice that, which is based on profound truth, unchanging principle and make everyone happy on this planet at least.

I feel silent revolution is necessary everywhere. This is possible when spiritual leaders from different walks of life come together and start inoculating spirituality in the society.

- Swami Nachiketanananda Puri



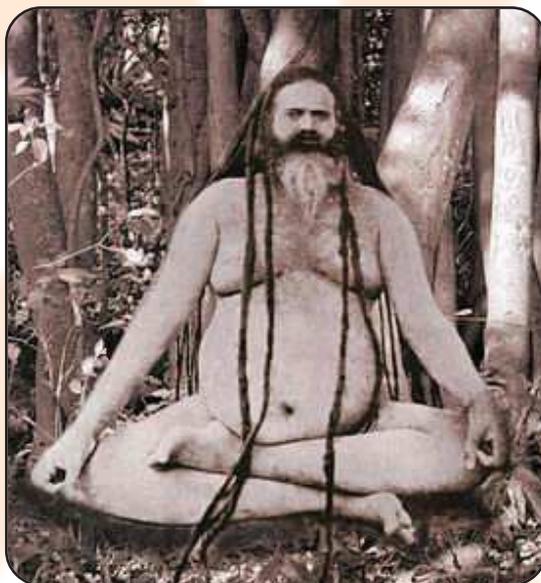
# Lineage of Nachiketa Tapovan

There are a few events in life that occur only once like birth, marriage and death. Maha Shivaratri, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011, turned out to be a lifetime experience which I'll cherish forever.

I was waiting for this moment for long, to witness the truth as it is. I was overwhelmed when I received a call from Swamiji about Purna Sannyasa Diksha. Sannyasa ashram is the fourth ashram to be adopted by a human being. Since Sannyasa ashram is the final destination, it is the nearest path to be with Ishwara and merge with Him with every single breath. Sannyasa ashram fulfills the purpose of human birth.

I have always dreamt of and experienced Sannyasa. For me Sannyasa is something like having finished all the examinations of life successfully and standing before God, with an open heart awaiting His grace. I had a desire that all samskaras of Sannyasa should take place on the day of Shivaratri. Shiva who is a loving father did fulfill my wish. It was decided that on 3<sup>rd</sup> of March I was going to get initiated into Sannyasa Diksha, and when it was destined by Shiva Himself everything happened accurately. Swamiji fulfilled my wish and made preparations to give me Sannyasa diksha on the destined day. A student in spite of having sound knowledge about a given subject has to take his examination to prove his calibre. Similarly, though I have been a sannyasi without wearing Geruva clothes since childhood, it was necessary to get associated with Adi Shankaracharya tradition, keeping in view the demands of the society.

A sannyasi should be purified within and without with the instrument called 'vairagya'. When the true and everlasting vairagya dawns, that very moment you become a sannyasi. However a sannyasi should be able to differentiate between momentary renunciation and eternal renunciation.

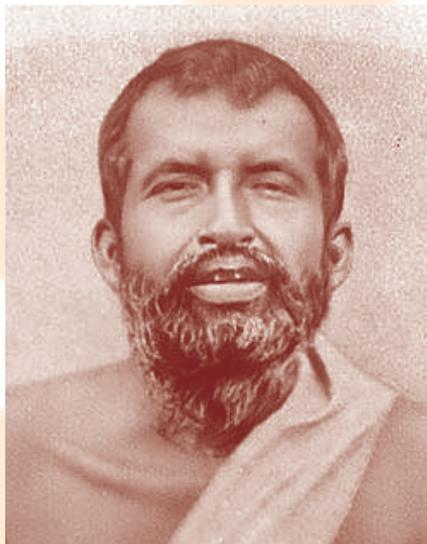


It was a wonderful experience in my life to go through all the samskaras. After my *mundan samskara*, *tarpana* and *pindadanam*, Swamiji made me perform the *Panchanga puja and homam*. At 11: 30 pm in the night, we started *Virija homam*. Virija means without impurities, experiencing

and evoking purity within. There are many powerful mantras recited in Virija homam that make you experience the subtlety of purification. In Dashanami Sannyas Ashram (a branch of Kailash Ashram) where we were staying, on one side, the Rudrabhishek with the recitation of Vedamantras was going on and on the other side, exactly in front of Shiva in the existing Yajna shala, I was performing Virija Homam. I had a lot of time to perform, so with an open heart I invited all Gods to bestow their grace on me. Really, I felt all Gods were present to bless me. While performing Virija homam I was experiencing the traditional Guru parampara energies and was seeing Shiva Himself perform the homa. The Shivatatva engulfed me. With blessings of Swamiji and Shiva, I was filled with bliss during the homam. Once Homam is completed, I had to perform the ritual of offering my clothes to Ma Ganga and receive the ochre robes from my Guru. In the morning around 5: 00 am, I went along with Swamiji to take the

blessings of Ma Ganga. On reaching there, as prescribed by Swamiji, I performed all the samskaras. After offering my clothes to Ma Ganga, I sought Her blessings and I was initiated into Naga Sannyasa, where you completely lose body consciousness and purity emerges in you. In this samskara being completely naked, I had to walk nine steps towards north with both the hands raised. Walking towards north indicates marching towards Himalayas. It is hard to imagine oneself to appear naked and the mere thought could bring some negativity. Nevertheless, the beauty of Sannyasa is that instead of having lustful thoughts you experience complete surrender at the feet of Paramatma. For a sannyasi, body is considered only as a mass of flesh and bones. In Sannyasa Diksha, a sannyasi renounces everything to Ishwara. A sannyasi experiences that which surpasses body consciousness. Nine steps indicate Navavidha bhakti and the process of realization. After the ritualistic bath in the lap of Ma Ganga, Swamiji initiated me into Sannyasa Diksha and gave me the name **SWAMI SHIVANANDA PURI**, as my tradition traces back to **Paramahansa Ishwara Tota Puri** and **Ramakrishna Paramahansa**.

Paramahansa Ishwara Tota Puri known as "Nangta Baba" was born in Punjab around 1780 A.D. He practiced forty years of severe austerities on the banks of Ma Narmada and became a Realized Soul. He was a Parivrajaka sannyasi who followed the path of Advaita Vedanta. Sri Tota Puriji was the head of the monastery and was the leader of seven hundred sannyasis. Led by the Divine will, when Sri Tota Puriji felt Ramakrishna Paramahansa was ready to become a student of Advaita Vedanta, Sri Tota Puriji goes to Dakshineswar and asks Him to renounce the world. In Advaita Vedanta only a monk gets initiation. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa took the permission from Divine



Mother. Sri Tota Puriji initiated Him into Sannyasa tradition and also Advaita Vedanta. Thus Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who was always engrossed in Divine mother, goes beyond and experiences the ultimate truth.

After I stepped into Paramahansa loka, my happiness knew no bounds. Once I finished all samskaras, before leaving Ma Ganga's lap, I wanted to take Her blessings. As I turned back and started walking towards the existing temple it started drizzling and after a few more steps it started raining. I was completely drenched in bliss. Ma Ganga showered Her love and Divine blessings in the form of rain. Ma Ganga is ever pure and the purest of the pure showered Her blessings on me. This is a big asset in my life. Swamiji took me to the Shiva's temple on the bank of Ma Ganga and made me take Lord Shiva's blessings too. In my subtle level, I was experiencing my merging with Ma Ganga. I once again wanted to go back to Ma Ganga and pay my reverence. So I went to Ma Ganga and paid my homage to Her.

This journey of Sannyasa cannot be completely expressed in words. It is the gist of life. I also cannot express my gratitude to Swamiji just by uttering a few words such as 'thank you'. I am indebted to Swamiji for showering on me, His motherly love. He made me experience the inner purity. So finally, my second birth is fruitful, meaningful and purposeful. To get associated with Dashanami Sannyasa tradition is a great honor for me. I thank everyone who helped me go through this process. This is a magnificent experience in my life, which I shall treasure forever.



- Swami Shivananda Puri

## Direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna - Swami Turiyananda

Swami Turiyananda was born in North Calcutta on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1863 and was named Harinath Chattopadhyaya. He was brought up by his elder brother as he lost his parents at a young age. He lived like an orthodox brahmacharin from a very young age and was bent towards Advaita Vedanta. The purpose of his life was to be a Jivanmukta.



He met Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa when he was a boy of thirteen at a neighbor's house. He again met Him a couple of years later at Dakshineswar and became passionately devoted to the Master. He did not like women from a young age but was advised by the Master to look at them as manifestations of the Divine Mother and to hold them in respect. Master loved Harinath dearly and would plead with him to come regularly.

After the passing away of the Master he joined the Baranagore Math and accepted the vow of sannyasa. He left the shelter of the Baranagore Math and for years travelled on foot from one holy city to another, practicing the most rigorous austerities.

He was a master of his senses and could meditate for long hours. He said 'When I sit down for meditation, I lock the entrances to my mind and after that nothing external can reach there. When I unlock them, then only can the mind recognize things outside. Write in big characters on the doors of your mind "No admission" and no outside disturbance will trouble you during meditation.'

Swami Vivekananda asked His brother disciples to get together and organize themselves to spread the message of the Master. Swami Turiyananda was not in favour of this as he enjoyed his life of tapasya too much. But later he too responded to Swamiji's call and returned to Alambazaar Math. He was in charge

of training the Brahmacharis of the Order. He helped them meditate and in studying the scriptures. When Swamiji started for America the second time, He persuaded Swami Turiyananda to accompany Him for the American work. He first worked at the Vedanta society of New York and also took additional work at Mont Clair. His very presence was a superb inspiration. He did not care much for public work and organization. He was for the few, not for big crowds. The scope for his kind of work came when he lived with a group of students in the Shanti Ashrama at California.

A Vedanta student of New York felt the need for a retreat in the West and donated 160 acres of land situated in San Antone Valley- forty miles from the nearest station. Swami Vivekananda accepted the gift and sent Swami Turiyananda to open an Ashrama there. At this place Swami Turiyananda lived in one of the most intense spiritual moods- day and night talking only of God and allowing no secular thoughts to disturb the atmosphere. The minds of the students were also kept very high through classes in meditation, the study of scriptures and so on. At times, fiery exhortation came from Swami Turiyananda to the students to make God-realization the only aim of life. 'Clench your fists and say: I will conquer! Now or never-make that your motto, even in this life I must see God.' A student who was with him at Shanti Ashrama wrote, 'To think of Swami Turiyananda is an act of purification of the mind; to remember his life, an impulse to new endeavour.'

He came back to India when his health broke due to the strenuous life at the Ashrama. He reached Belur Math after Swami Vivekananda passed away. This news was a great shock and again he spent eight years in tapasya in north India. In 1911 he developed diabetes and had a carbuncle on his back and was operated upon several times, each time without any anesthesia.

He passed away on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1922 at Ramakrishna Sevashrama at Varanasi. In the morning he made obeisance to the Divine Mother. In the afternoon he insisted on being seated in the meditation posture. He repeated salutations to the Master and then started reciting the Vedic Mantras. He asked those around him to have these repeated; and Swami Akhandananda recited

them. Hearing this ultimate Truth of the Upanishads, the Swami said 'That is enough', and entered into Mahasamadhi. Not a sign of pain or distortion was visible on his person. Those who witnessed the incident could not but come to the conclusion that life and death for such a soul were like going from one apartment to another.

- Geetha K.

## Perception

I wanted to ask  
But due to limited knowledge I could not

I wanted to express  
But due to limited understanding I could not

I wanted to pursue  
But due to limited resources I could not

I wanted to see  
But due to limited perception I could not

Then the time came, when I wanted to give up  
But due to inner voice I could not

Struggle was on, day and night  
I Sometimes felt lonely  
And at other times all alone

Then one day, Mother appeared  
She took me to her lap  
And whispered in my ears  
Look my dear child  
However it's my creation  
But it all depends on your perception

If you want blissful and peaceful life  
Then look at the world  
Through inner eye  
And world shall bestow  
What you try

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri



# When Life Falls Apart

Are you in state when everything seems to be falling apart in your life? You don't like people around you. Life seems to be taking its toll on you. Every relation appears to be fragile and temporary. The work place becomes a house of horrors. In short, unpleasant things are happening and you just cannot cope and come to terms with them. This is the stage of almost every human being who passes through that transitory phase. We know it is just momentary but still we cannot adjust with it and we look for alternatives that could have more trouble in store for us. Human life is a bundle of emotions strongly tied by the thread called attachments. The turbulent times are part and parcel of life and we cannot separate them from our lives. Yet we become dejected when something strikes our lives overnight without any hint or symptom. Some people may take years to come out of that traumatic condition while a few people appear as intact as they were before.

During my teens I read a story in a newspaper of a crow that was physically challenged, but still coping wonderfully, surviving against all odds. The story moves further; the crow seems to be made of bits and pieces and some of these bits and pieces keep falling off, yet the crow survives and seems happy about it. To begin with, the crow lost all the toes and claws of one leg, when he perched on an electric transformer a year ago. And then came the attack by a vicious tomcat that stalked him one rainy day. As his one leg could not lift his heavy body fast enough, his eye took the swipe from the cat's sharp claws. Not that the crow's spirit was dampened in any way. And then, one day the crow vanished. It was amazing, that in the highly competitive world of crows, with all his disabilities and with no one to protect him, he had somehow survived this long. He undoubtedly had the courage, which many of

us humans don't have. And then this morning he suddenly reappeared, but he no longer looked a crow. But clearly the spirit wasn't broken. His lone eye shone like a star. So inspiring were the crow's surviving skills. Do you know why? Because in that broken beak, the crow was now holding tightly a twig. He was building a nest.

This is a simple yet inspiring story that really changed my attitude towards life. The optimism of that crow made me think about my life seriously that was otherwise wayward and aimless. I used to be an outrageous guy who yelled on anything or anybody when something went wrong. The story just swept me off my feet. There was a change in my thought process. When a crow, moreover a physically disabled bird, with no thinking power, no expressing skills and no power to share his grievances could rise to survive against all odds in its short life span, why cannot we humans adjust to our surroundings? Why do we hesitate to discuss problems with our well-wishers during vacillating times? Ego that envelops our character always pulls us back. Do we have the problems that the crow had, of inability to discuss? and express or having no body who would take care? A positive look at life and realization that the times of trouble are just momentary should be cultivated. A simple attitude that life is all about cheerfulness and a little courage and confidence would make us experience the true essence of life. Just give a try.

- *M. Koti Rajasekhar*



# Mother

A few years ago, I watched a film called the “March of the Penguins”, a touching documentary based on the lives of Emperor Penguins. It is the story of these birds that live on the coldest part of our planet, the ice deserts of Antarctica and their graceful suffering to give life to their young ones.

I learnt from the film that the Emperor penguins annually endure an extremely cold and dark 70 mile – 20 day march to find their breeding place. After each of the female penguins carefully selects their partner, they lay one single egg each and carefully transfer them to their partner to guard and hatch. The weak and exhausted female penguin walks back the 70 miles again to the ocean to find food for her family. The male penguins meanwhile hatch the young ones and cradle them on top of their feet to protect them from the bitter cold. After the females march back the 70 miles to the nest, the male penguins who themselves need food march back the 70 miles in search of food.

Truly amazing facts of nature! A must see for anyone who has missed it. But what really got me thinking was the fact that after all that gruelling and strenuous undertaking, the parent penguins just walk away from the little ones, leaving them behind, once they grow to about four months of age. It was shocking at first, but slowly sunk in a deep lesson... that lesson of “letting go” expectations or as they call “fruits of action”.. The message of *doing your best with utmost effort and letting go of the outcome*. I have witnessed glimpses of this in my own mother’s ways. Although she nurtured some expectations from her children, she gracefully gave us the freedom to become the individuals we wanted to be. She also gave up many of her own likes and dislikes for the sake of the harmony in the family. Many of us well agree that – “of all the human love that we experience, mother’s love is



supposed to come closest to the love of God”. In spite of all the disagreements and differences with mother, you still know that there is someone you can always count on when you need her. Motherhood conveys pure love, sacrifice and forgiveness.

This mother’s day let us feel gratitude for the existence of all who have been a “mother” in our lives. Let us give thanks in meditation to our own mother who is in earthly existence or otherwise, let us thank the countless mothers that have come in many forms to us- individuals who gave birth to a new thought, new life, new venture or a new idea; anyone who has helped us shape a noble thought or deed, anyone who has lent a shoulder to lean on unconditionally, anyone who has given birth to a Divine spark in us.

Also, let us resolve to enhance our experience of motherhood, by becoming better mothers to our children and anything else we mother- a noble venture, a worthy cause etc. Let us be more like the penguins who work with total focus and fervour but do not possess the result. Finally, let us remember the presence of the “Mother behind all mothers”, the Divine Mother.

When the great yogi Paramhansa Yogananda, as a child, grieved inconsolably over the sudden demise of His earthly mother, Divine Mother heals Him with these words- “It is I who has watched over you, life after life, in the tenderness of many mothers. See in My gaze the two black eyes, the lost beautiful eyes, thou seekest”. He says that we should be like the stubborn child towards Divine Mother. A mother tries to keep the child busy with toys and trinkets to keep him from seeking her attention. But the stubborn child can be soothed by mother’s love and attention alone.

Wish you all a Happy Mother’s Day!!

- Harini Nandakuru

# The Song of the Self

by Adi Shankara(788-820 CE)

The great Adi Shankara (first Shankaracharya) of the eighth century summarized the entirety of Advaita Vedanta (non-dualistic philosophy) in six stanzas. As a young boy of eight, while wandering in the Himalayas, seeking to find his guru, Adi Shankara encountered a sage who asked him, "Who are you?" The boy answered with these stanzas, which are known as "Nirvana Shatakam" or "Atma Shatakam." "Nirvana" is complete equanimity, peace, tranquility, freedom and joy. "Atma" is the True Self. The sage the boy was talking to was Swami Govindapada Acharya, who was indeed, the teacher he was looking for. These few verses can be of tremendous value to progress in contemplation practices that lead to Self-Realization.

Mano Buddhi Ahankara Chitta Ninaham  
Nacha Shrotra Jihve Na Cha Ghrana Netre  
Nacha Vyoma Bhoomir Na Tejo Na Vayu  
Chidananda Rupa Shivoham Shivoham

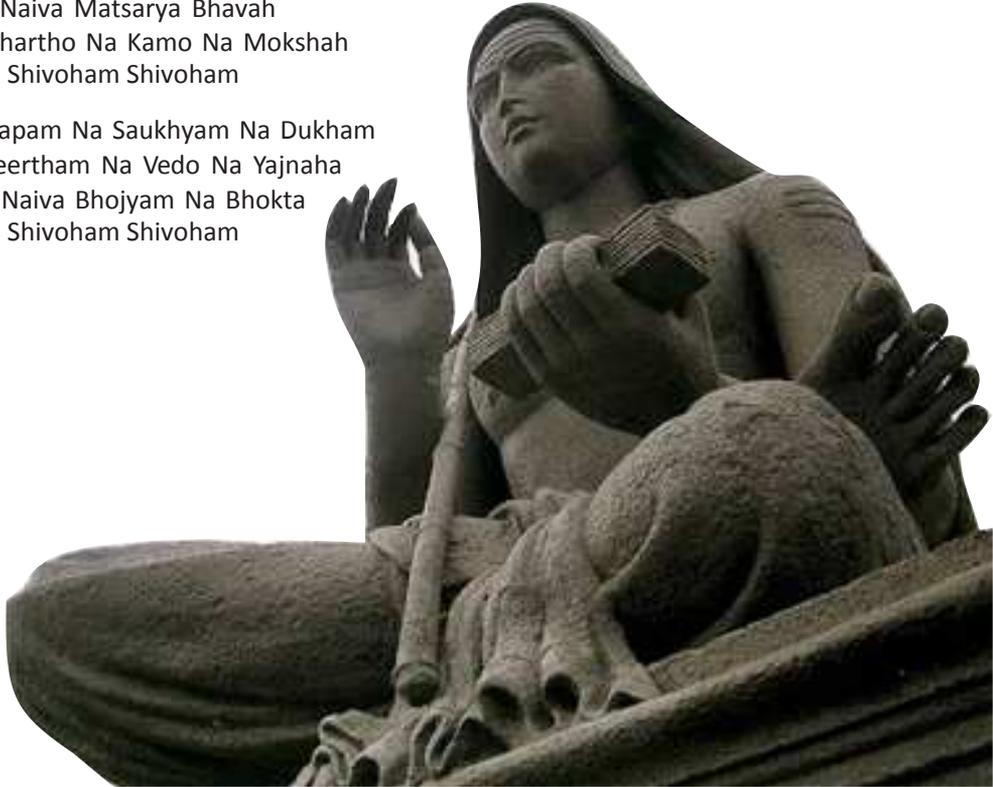
Na Cha Prana Samjno Na Vai Pancha Vayu  
Na Va Saptadhatur Na Va Pancha Koshah  
Na Vak Pani Padau Na Chopastha Payu  
Chidananda Rupa Shivoham Shivoham

Na Me Dvesha Ragau Na Me Lobha Mohau  
Mado Naiva Me Naiva Matsarya Bhavah  
Na Dharmo Na Chartho Na Kamo Na Mokshah  
Chidananda Rupa Shivoham Shivoham

Na Punyam Na Papam Na Saukhyam Na Dukham  
Na Mantra Na Teertham Na Vedo Na Yajnaha  
Aham Bhojanam Naiva Bhojyam Na Bhokta  
Chidananda Rupa Shivoham Shivoham

Na Me Mrityu Shanka Na Me Jati Bhedah  
Pita Naiva Me Naiva Mata Na Janma  
Na Bandhur Na Mitram Gurur Naiva Shishyah  
Chidananda Rupa Shivoham Shivoham

Aham Nirvikalpo Nirakara Roopaha  
Vibhur Vyapya Sarvatra Sarvendriyanam  
Sada Me Samatvam Na Muktir Na Bandhah  
Chidananda Rupa Shivoham Shivoham



# *The Song of the Self*

Translation by Swami Vivekananda

I am neither the mind nor the intellect nor the ego nor the mind-stuff; I am neither the body nor the changes of the body; I am neither the senses of hearing, taste, smell, or sight, Nor am I the ether, the earth, the fire, the air; I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute, I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham).

I am neither the prana nor the five vital airs; I am neither the materials of the body nor the five sheaths; Neither am I the organs of action nor the object of the senses; I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute, I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham).

I have neither aversion nor attachment, neither greed nor delusion; Neither egotism nor envy, neither dharma nor moksha; I am neither desire nor the objects of desire; I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute, I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham).

I am neither sin nor virtue, neither pleasure nor pain, Nor temple nor worship nor pilgrimage nor scriptures, Neither the act of enjoying, the enjoyable, nor the enjoyer; I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute, I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham).

I have neither death nor fear of death nor caste; Nor was I ever born nor had I parents, friends, and relations; I have neither guru nor disciple; I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute, I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham).

I am untouched by the senses; I am neither mukti nor knowable; I am without form, without limit, beyond space, beyond time; I am in everything; I am the basis of the universe; everywhere am I. I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute, I am He, I am He (Shivoham, Shivoham).



# The Housewife, a Homemaker

When Ma'am asks Chotu in school, he says, "My father is a doctor. My mother is a housewife." House wife?

Chotu doesn't really know what the word means. Nor do most of his classmates. Yet, that is what their answer always is. It's not wrong, though. She is a housewife, Chotu's mother.

Her day begins well before sunrise, when Dadaji goes out for his morning stroll. He likes a hot cup of tea with an extra spoon of milk before he leaves. Then, she has just about enough time for a quick shower before Dadiji begins her morning puja. She has to make sure that the *diyās* are washed and fresh flowers are ready in front of the deity.

By the time the clock in the drawing room strikes 6, Chotu and Pinky have to be woken up. Juggling two pieces of semi-burnt toast, pacifying the froth on the sweetened boiling milk and the groaning-moaning kids in their blankets, the housewife forgets she can indulge in two odd minutes of sitting and breathing deeply on the sofa. It's a luxury she could well afford, but only accompanied with a pang of guilt.

9 am on the clock says that it is time for a leisurely breakfast with the husband before he packs his suitcase. A non-committal grunt is his 'Thank you' and 'Bye-bye' and 'see you in the evening', all packed into one. He doesn't remember to meet her smiling eyes before slamming the main door shut behind him.

The two hours before and after lunch are her loneliest hours of the day. The maid, if she has come, is busy with the washing and cleaning. Lunch is ready. Dadaji and Dadiji are relaxing with their mid-morning or



afternoon siesta in their room. And that is when it all comes flooding back to her.

The housewife was once a school-going girl, not unlike Pinky, who used to announce her ambition proudly during Essay writing in Language class. One day an astronaut, another day an architect, the third day a lawyer and a painter the next; she felt no shame in dreaming new dreams and no fear of them possibly never turning real. It was only a dream, right? Fair enough.

The housewife was also a college-going woman once, not unlike the one Pinky shall soon be. Laughing a little too loudly in the canteen, smiling shyly at that boy from the corner of her eye and still carrying in her bag a little diary where she writes down her silly dreams. Somehow, against all odds, they had found the light to blossom from seeds into saplings. The road to her future was still an empty highway with endless crossroads. The world was her oyster. India is a developing country, they all said. You will be free to do whatever you want, they said. Fair enough.

And then it happened. One 'meeting', four functions and seven *pherās* later, she became that what she is now- a housewife. The little private world in her head came crashing down, but so stealthily, so quietly that she didn't even realize it. She still doesn't. Twelve years have gone by, with no promotion, no incentives, no leaves and no appraisals. But she still gives this job her best. Every day. Fair enough.

She has to ask for permission first, to step out of the door for anything other than fetching vegetables or to have a little chat with *bhabhiji* next door. So she doesn't ask anyone. And she doesn't go anywhere. Who will take care of the house? Will it look decent if I step out too often? Why all the trouble just for some freedom? Fair enough.

She commits the sin of losing herself just a little bit everyday, sometimes watching that interesting little episode on TV and sometimes while talking to her friend from college over the cordless phone. The TV is full of strong-headed women who make the world dance on their fingertips and telecast the blasphemous message that women are the embodiment of *Maa Shakti*. They can achieve what they want. Nothing is impossible. Fair enough.

Her friend Anita is now in the United States, freelancing as a designer. Anita gives her updates about their other classmates. Two of them are in the United States, having recently started their own little firm together. Another friend of hers is now a big shot lawyer, driving her own Honda Accord through the rowdy streets of New Delhi. The others are in her city, but not really the 'career type', so they make up for it with their monthly kitty and bi-monthly outings. She doesn't go there, though. Her husband doesn't like her mixing with 'those types'. Fair enough.

The housewife has but a few minutes to reminisce and maybe smile a broken smile until there is a faint call from the other room, beckoning her for a glass of water or some *kadak elaichi chai*. The lazy afternoon gently slips away into evening and the children are back from school. Fantastic, exaggerated tales of school woven over hot Maggi and Bournvita milk, notes in the diary about homework not being done and Chotu and Pinky's upcoming class tests keep her occupied all the way till dinner time. After dinner, an hour of TV is the ultimate reward (the kids watch their cartoons, the husband watches his movie, Dadiji's soaps or Dadaji's news) and maybe an ice cream if it is Saturday. Then goodnight it is. Tomorrow is a busy day. Fair enough.

The next morning dawns as if new, and the schedule is lived through all over again as if new. There are no complaints registered, no protests voiced, no regrets felt, no love lost.

Wait. Does this sound familiar? I can promise you I haven't plagiarized! Yet, the funny thing is, she is not a figment of my imagination. You will

not hear this story over adventurous jungle bonfires or read it in romantic novels. In fact, you will probably not even catch more than a glimpse of the main protagonist of this story, the housewife.

But maybe, just maybe, on a rainy evening when terraces and verandahs are filled with men sitting on armchairs and smiling contentedly, while children stick their tongues out with the efforts of balancing flimsy paper boats on the dancing puddles of water, you will catch a glimpse of her. There she is, the housewife, wiping the sweat off her brow while frying hot *pakor*as and stirring sweet tea for the husband and kids. You can see her through the grilled window of the kitchen, absorbed in her activity.

Oh yes, she's a very happy woman. She smiles all right. But don't be misled, because somewhere in between those 100-watt smiles and good-natured, open mouthed laughter through the day, there is a brief moment of darkness.

The darkness is not black or evil or permanent, but just like a fleeting moment when a matchstick flame goes out and another is lit. It's like one person's dream has gone away into nothingness, replaced by another dream. Only, it's not her own. Fair enough.

They call her the housewife. Some call her the homemaker. The latter, though closer to the truth, still doesn't capture it in its entirety. This is a story from somewhere in a quiet house on the corner of a bustling street in the very heart of our 'Shining India'. It may feel like a tale of yore or urban legend, but take a closer look. She is a real, living person. And this is a real, life story.

So the next time someone asks Chotu, "What does your mother do?" and he says his mother is a 'Housewife' or a 'Homemaker', I don't really know if little Chotu is right or wrong.

Do you?

**Avinash Agarwal**  
Student of St. Xavier's College,  
Mumbai





## United We Stand

“Individual commitment to a group effort — that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work,” remarked Vince Lombardi. We read and see around us many instances of how people join hands for a cause. Togetherness is the touchstone of our culture. Our mythology is abound with instances of collective effort. In fact, the institution of ‘State’, according to the ‘Social Contract Theory’ of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau came about when people collectively decided.

Few days back, I was reminiscing the past when an article that I read came to my mind. It was another boring day, when I was just flipping through the pages of a magazine. An article on how a group of school-going students made an attempt to help their less fortunate brothers and sisters had caught my attention. These children were making use of their pocket money and doing their bit. I was moved. How could children of such tender age be so considerate and compassionate?

The Times of India had launched the ‘India Poised’ initiative on 1 January, 2007 with a series of thought provoking and soul-stirring advertisements both in the print and electronic media. These advertisements intended to make the Indians reflect and think whether India could stand up to the expectations of the world and become a super power economically, politically and spiritually. This initiative was taken forward and was given the shape of the Lead India Campaign. As a part of this campaign, an amazing video was made.

In this video, a huge log blocks a main road and the traffic comes to a standstill. A kid

comes forward, shunning his inhibitions and attempts to do a mammoth task. His innocence prevents him from understanding that he cannot move the huge log all alone. Yet, he is filled with the thought that he has to get rid of the obstruction that is stopping him from going about his job. Unlike many so called matured and learned people just lamenting about the situation, unlike the policemen having fun, unlike many waiting for something to be done, the child goes forward and starts trying to move the log. In the process, many others- the rich, the commoner, and the students- join him. Together, the people get rid of the log.

A politician finds a way for himself and escapes from the scene. This signifies the indifference of the politicians to the very people who elected them. The policemen sleeping wake up after all the work is done. All this is symbolic of the dozing or rather sleeping machinery in our country.

After the job is done, the rain stops and the sun rises. This is symbolic of the fact that when we arise from our slumber and start working, dispelling the clouds of doubt, nothing can stop us. Together we can, we will. After the effort, there is camaraderie between the people. This shows that team work is integrating in nature.

The video underlines the point that age does not matter provided we have the zeal and willingness. It emphasizes upon the point that every noble effort will be encouraged and joined by many. It is an eye-opener for all those who wait for something to be done.

May all of us be inspired by the little kid in the video. If we cannot start on our own, let us strengthen the hands of those already working with the motive of Sarvejana Sukhinobhavantu!



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

# The Mirror and Mini mirrors

In the beginning, there was a mirror. It was very big and shaped like a ball. Actually, it still IS, but we just don't notice it that much because it's there everywhere we see. How big? So big that you could see everything in it. And, in any case, since it was the only thing that was there, it was also everything for now. Got it?

Let's name it Mirror with a capital M because it was the first one and we don't want to confuse with other mirrors that came up later.

One day, the lonely Mirror said to itself - "I KNOW that I can see everything. But I really would like to FEEL what that means. I mean, if you don't know what's cold, how do you feel that you are really hot, right? I can't really ask others because, not to boast, but, I can see that I'm the only all-seeing thing in this place."

So, Mirror thought hard and created billions of tiny mirrors shaped like itself. To make sure that the mini mirrors (let's just call them "Minis") could figure out what it feels like to be a mirror, it first made them forget that they were mirrors. How? It painted them with wonderful colors - pink, blue, red, etc. Now they didn't see anything because they weren't shiny anymore. Neat, right?

Then, it let them out onto a real wide Billiards table - so wide you couldn't even see the end of it! It gave them the power to roll where they wanted. It didn't stop them from stumbling into each other or the walls, because Mirror knew that the Minis can only learn by trying and being free to do what they wanted. The Minis looked at each other and went, "Wow! We're all so colorful!" They learnt to roll (they were shaped like balls, after all), run into other Minis, made friends, formed teams (Pink vs. Blue vs. Red etc.), even started a few fights, but mostly they were playing like balls on a Billiards table.

They soon forgot why they were here (to figure out that they were mirrors and not just painted balls) and believed that the game was all there was to it. Mirror watched all of this like a happy parent, watchful but not exactly interfering.

One day, one of the Pink Minis bumped hard into a rough corner of the table and chipped its paint. That hurt, especially when you are painted such beautiful pink and everyone said how lovely

you looked! Why didn't the all-seeing Mirror warn the Mini, you ask? Well, Mirror knew that the Mini would be fine in the end and that chipping was a way to see better, as you will see.



The Pink Mini cried for a long time. Then it saw a shiny spot where the paint had chipped (remember that it was a mirror beneath). In that little shiny spot, it saw the reflection of the big shiny Mirror in the sky. It looked UP for the first time in its life and saw itself in the sky-mirror. It said to itself - "Hmm, that thing in the sky is so shiny! I wish I could be shiny like that too!"

It tried different tricks - jumped up and down, screamed, rolled back and forth, rolled over to different places on the game table. Nothing happened.

Then it just sat down quietly and took a careful look at itself, behind the pink color - very hard for a ball to do that, but it didn't give up. Then, as it gently started peeling off some of the paint, it found out that it was ALL Shiny underneath! It was a mirror ball too, not at all different from the big Mirror in the sky!

This realization - the feeling of its mirror-ness - made it very happy. It started telling its friends that they were not mere Minis, but true mirrors like the Mirror in the sky! But most of them thought that the Pink Mini had gone crazy - "What do you mean? There's no such thing called Mirrors! Only colorful Minis on a table!"

Most, but not all, some Minis started to look carefully into themselves to see if they were mirrors too. Mirror was now happy, one down, many more to go, but they will all figure it out one day. Its trick was working! Finally, a mirror understood what it felt to be a mirror and see everything. That's all.

What did the Mirror do after all Minis figured it out, you ask? I don't know, ask the Mirror! It sees everything!

- Vishwanath Poosala

# The Two Hands

I tried to analyze the connotation of hands on two different occasions and it was in striking contrast. When I visited Grishneshwar recently, on the day of Shivaratri, we had to walk a long way crossing barricades because of the heavy rush. As I walked past the stalls in the side walk, something attracted my attention and made me leap in fright as I was caught unawares. A hand was sticking out of a mound and was rotating a japamala. The person was not to be seen and was covered in the mound. When we enquired, it was stupefying to learn that the person had entered the pit and covered himself with mud on the eve of Shivaratri. Since then he didn't emerge from the pit and was constantly doing japa. Now, whether the person was doing it for the sake of money or as a spiritual practice is altogether a different question. But staying in the pit overnight, covered by mud is not the run of the mill. I stood there for a while observing the movement of his hand. His fingers would move the beads and stop suddenly as though He was contemplating on the Divine and would move again after a long pause. Watching this was a great experience for me.

In a week's time Japan was struck by Tsunami and there was a wide coverage by the media. Newspapers carried photos of the devastating event. On a particular day as I was browsing through the newspapers I was flabbergasted when I saw a picture of a hand sticking out of the mud. It was of a dead person buried in the earth. My thoughts immediately reflected on the Grishneshwar incident. What a stark



contrast! Perhaps the person would have cried out for help before his final call came. The hand would have made some gestures to attract attention for help. I started evaluating both these incidents. On the one hand was the hand of a spiritual person contemplating on the Divine. On the other was the hand of the person crying frantically for help. What is the role of the Divine in such instances? When He was giving bliss to the first person couldn't He have sent help to the second one? Surely He could have! Then, did He not hear the call for help? Here comes into picture the karmic theory.

Life is karma in continuous evolution and Grace is greater than any accumulated karma. Anything that happens to us is for our own good, for our liberation and not for our downfall. God does not have likes or dislikes. He is beyond any traits. The material world is the stick that helps man to walk, but of what use would it be if a person cannot walk? If the legs cannot move properly, the stick would be an extra burden. Perhaps the man in question was given a new opportunity to realize the Truth. It is beyond the mental understanding and cannot be described with words; it transcends the body, mind and intellect.

The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad says referring to Karma: "This purusa is not other than desire. Actually, what is his will, such is his action; depending on the action he does, that is the destiny that he will face."

- Subhadra K.



# Living with a Divine Soul...

## A True Sculptor

I had recently visited a sculptor's workshop at Tirupathi. It was amazing to see blocks of stone which were in various stages of completion. Some statues were half finished and some were ready for installation and also consecration. A sculptor is the artist who gives shape to the idol and pours his heart out in making it as beautiful as possible as per his imagination. But the consecration to give life to the same sculpture is done by another. But in the case of Nachiketa Tapovan the sculptor and consecrator are one and the same who is none other than Swami Nachiketananda.

When we started the organization we neither had the money nor other vital resources to run it. The office and the summer camps were conducted at my home. We conducted several camps at schools for students and teachers and slowly we had people coming in to support our cause. One day during our Bhagawad Gita class, Swamiji asked us to take up some activity in Guttala Begumpet Basti in Madhapur. We went and found that there were many children idling away their time. Swamiji suggested that we educate the children. That is how the present day Vidya Mandir took birth. Later we constructed the Tapovan building at Kavuri Hills.

Swamiji made a set of guidelines for the organization as a whole and for Vidya Mandir in particular. If anyone were to start a similar school they can do so at ease. Every aspect has been discussed in detail including uniforms, satsang in the morning and yogic techniques for the children to develop their physical, mental and spiritual health. Today we have 170 children studying in Tapovan. We have very good volunteers who dedicate their precious time in furthering their education.

Swamiji started a bank for children and wanted them to maintain it. He nominated the senior class children as managers and

cashiers and gave opportunity to all by way of rotation of duties. Every child from the 4<sup>th</sup> standard was given a pass book and since the children had no money of their own, Swamiji gave all of them Rs.10 each. The bank started with this money and the children are allowed to withdraw and deposit their money. Swamiji lays more stress on practical knowledge. This year some children who earned money from the sale of craft items and also from winning cash gifts for excellence in their class have deposited in postal bonds totaling Rs. 84,000.

Swamiji sculpted Nachiketa Tapovan and consecrated it. Sculpting can be done by anyone with a gift but giving life to the sculpture can only be done by a Divine soul. Nowadays we hardly see Swamiji at Hyderabad as He is now busy with creating and giving life to another project of Tapovan at Mahbubnagar district.

He handed over the administration of Vidya mandir and other activities at Kavuri hills to a dedicated band of volunteers. We still feel His presence in every stone, every activity and in every smile of the students of Tapovan.

His parting speech was 'Always create a platform and leave it silently for others to perform.'

- Vasundhara P.

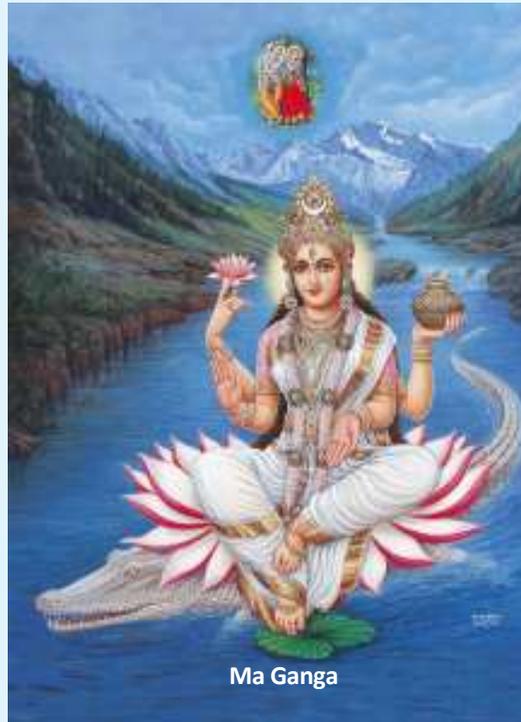


# Ganga Pushkar



Mother Ganga gushing out at Gangotri

River Ganga is personified as a Goddess and is worshipped by the Hindus, who believe that bathing in the river causes the remission of sins and facilitates liberation from the cycle of birth and death. The actual source of Holy River Ganga is at Gaumukh, set in the Gangotri Glaciers.



Ma Ganga

divides itself into several streams and drains into the Bay of Bengal.

Ganga Pushkar comes once in every 12 years. Ganga pushkar starts on May 8<sup>th</sup> and ends on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and is held at Gangotri, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Haridwar, Varanasi, Allahabad and Gangasagar. The 12 day Pushkar is very auspicious for Ganga snan and other holy rituals. Ganga Pushkar starts when the king of Pushkaras, Brihaspathi (Jupiter) enters into Ashwin nakshatra in Mesha Rashi. There is Panchagraha kutami on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, hence

these 3 days are even more auspicious for Pushkar snan. Performing yearly Pinda daan, Pitru tharpanam and many other Pitru karmas during Pushkar time is highly meritorious.

At its origin, the river is referred to as Bhagirathi. The Jahnavi and Alaknanda merge with the Ganga in the Himalayas. On the banks of Alaknanda is the ancient Himalayan pilgrim town of Badrinath. Heading down through Rishikesh the river descends down to the plains at Haridwar. The Ganga then flows through the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar through the pilgrim towns of Benares and Prayag. The Triveni sangamam at Prayag marks the confluence of the river Yamuna with the Ganga. About 250 miles before reaching the ocean, the river



A tribute to Ma Ganga at Varanasi



Invoking Ma Ganga



Immersed in Japa - Haridwar



Emerging out after purification



Ganga Aarti at Rishikesh



Sandhya Aarti at Varanasi

## *Stop for a Moment Please!*

Swami Vivekananda has dropped His body voluntarily! Great people like Him are very much conscious about life and death and have a smooth transit from one phase to another. However, the one who wants to commit suicide is neither aware of the higher realms nor life and death. In such cases people need to understand the reason which drives them to commit suicide. Is it financial problems or not getting good percentage or family problems or peer pressure or is it some kind of threat or high ambitions or high standards set by ourselves or humiliation by colleagues or racism or an unsuccessful life, failure at every step of life or a serious disease or some kind of samskaras that we carry? Whatever the reason might be, it is not at all acceptable to commit suicide. Committing suicide is a big crime.

In the materialistic and success-driven society that we live in, it is not uncommon for people

to feel depressed and hopeless at times. For such people it is my sincere request not to take any extreme step in hastiness. Please try to understand life and the very purpose of life. To lead a happy and meaningful life we do not need a high salary, a huge bank balance, name and fame or status in the society. All we need is to make sure that we are able to manage with what we have. Life is all about managing life. It is a big challenge and once we accept it, we should never give up. Life teaches us lessons when we are willing to learn. There is no other teacher better than life. Then how can we simply entertain the thought of suicide in the mind?

**Probably a few simple suggestions may change this thought process and once again streamline our lives... please read and assimilate that which appeals to you more... please read at least once...**



1. If you are alone and getting suicidal thoughts then immediately talk to somebody who is nearby or just have a simple discussion with your near and dear one.
2. Leave that place immediately and try to seek holy company if possible but never be alone at that moment.
3. Do not sleep alone or in a dark room. Keep a dim light on.
4. Read some good book.
5. Take deep breaths for few minutes. Count 108 breaths and relax.
6. Don't entertain self-pity but accept the truth without brooding over it. Solutions are always at hand.
7. Sing aloud or listen to some good music.
8. Do prayer.
9. Start painting/drawing.
10. Write an inspiring letter to God/Guru/friend/parents for bestowing love and affection, then read 9 times and burn the letter.
11. Tell yourself – 'I am emotionally sound and potentially divine.'
12. Drink lemon water or eat whatever you like the most.
13. Say aloud 'I am the maker of my own destiny and I know how to transform failure into success.'
14. Remember how your mother must have taken extreme care of your life while nurturing and shaping you.
15. Remember the struggle of your parents in giving you proper food, education and livelihood.
16. Remember how lovingly your sister, brother or friend must have accepted you, with all your faults.
17. Remember how many lives depend on you.
18. Set new goals and climb step by step.
19. Remember those remarkable moments and achievements of your life.
20. Keep telling yourself affirmatively, 'I know I can achieve anything in my life.'

Thank you very much once again for starting the wonderful journey and embracing challenges in life. GOOD LUCK! Let God shower His choicest blessings on you.

This is a simple but humble effort from the family of Nachiketa Tapovan. If this simple note can bring change at least in one life then we are blessed...

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri



*As a dazzling Sun you  
shine in your heights*

# The Eight Fold Path

Buddhism has been described as a very pragmatic religion that takes a very straight-forward look at our human condition. Everything that the Buddha taught was based on His own observation of the way things are. Everything that He taught can be verified by our own observation of the way things are. All our frustrations spring from our attempts to solidify our experiences in this evanescent world. The three things: pain, impermanence and egolessness are the three marks of existence. The path to liberation from the state of misery caused by various realms of existence, as taught by the Buddha, has eight points and is known as the eightfold path.

**The first point** is called **right view** -- the right way to view the world. Wrong view occurs when we impose our expectations onto things; expectations about how we hope things will be, or about how we are afraid things might be. Right view occurs when we see things simply, as they are. It is an open and accommodating attitude. We abandon hope and fear and take joy in a simple straight-forward approach to life.

**The second point** of the path is called **right intention**. It proceeds from right view. If we are able to abandon our expectations, our hopes and fears, we no longer need to be manipulative. We work with what is. Our intentions are pure.

**The third aspect** of the path is **right speech**. Once our intentions are pure, we

no longer have to be embarrassed about our speech. We say what needs to be said, very simply in a genuine way.

**The fourth point** on the path, **right discipline**, involves a kind of renunciation. We need to give up our tendency to complicate issues. We practice simplicity. We give up all the unnecessary and frivolous complications that we usually try to cloud our relationships with.

**Right livelihood** is **the fifth step** on the path. It is only natural and right that we should earn our living. Often, many of us don't particularly enjoy our jobs. Instead of begrudging what we have, we should form a simple relationship with it. We need to perform it properly, with attention to detail.

**The sixth aspect** of the path is **right effort**. Wrong effort is struggle. We often approach a spiritual discipline as though we need to conquer our evil side and promote our good side. We are locked in combat with ourselves and try to obliterate the tiniest negative tendency. Right effort doesn't involve struggle at all. When we see things as they are, we can work with them, gently and without any kind of aggression whatsoever.

**Right mindfulness, the seventh step**, involves precision and clarity. We are mindful of the tiniest details of our experience. We are mindful of the way we talk, the way we perform our jobs, our posture, our attitude towards our friends and family, every detail.



**Right concentration** or absorption is the **eighth point** of the path. Usually we are absorbed in absentmindedness. Right absorption means that we are completely absorbed in oneness, in things as they are. This can only happen if we have some sort of discipline, such as sitting meditation. We might even say that without the discipline of sitting meditation, we can't walk the eightfold path at all. Sitting meditation cuts through our absentmindedness. It provides a space or gap in our preoccupation with ourselves.

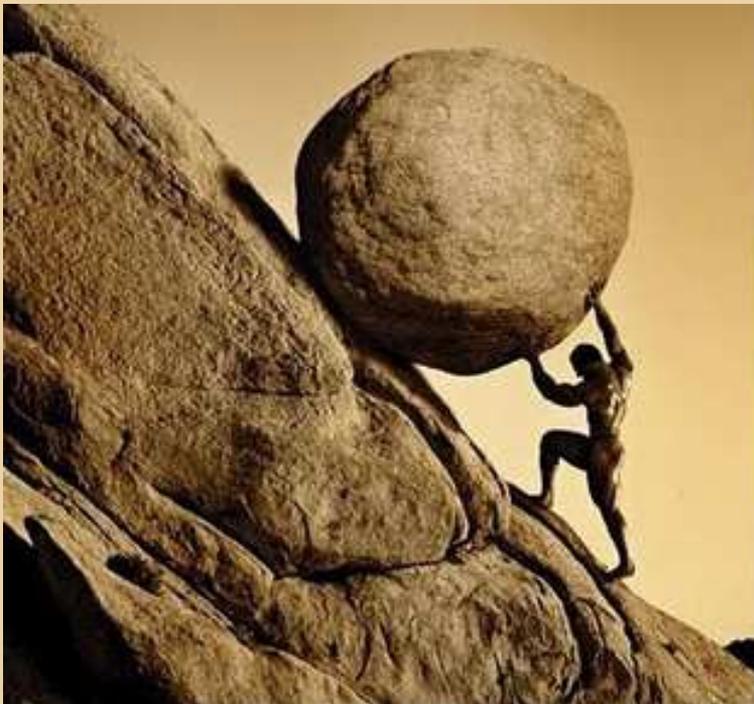
The goal of all the above is *Nirvana* which simply means cessation. It is the cessation of passion, aggression and ignorance; the cessation of the struggle to prove our existence to the world, to survive. We don't have to struggle to survive after all. We have already survived. We survive now; the struggle was just an extra complication that we added to our lives because we had lost our confidence in the way things are. We no longer need to manipulate things as they are into things as we would like them to be.

Source: Basic Buddhism Guide

## *Determination*

*Whose mind is like a rock, determined, unwavering, immovable,  
without a trace of lust of urging towards all the attractions,  
without a trace of aversion of pushing away all the repulsive,  
from what, can such a refined mind ever suffer?*

- Udana IV-4



# The Giving Tree

Having mothered two girls, seeing them grow from infants to toddlers, toddlers to little girls and then into teenagers has been every bit fulfilling and delectable. While there are countless moments that evoked cupfuls of tears of joy, millions of goose bumps, loads of laughter and clouds of warmth, no doubt there were quite a few abysmal testing moments! But what pulled me through those frantic slides? The ideals instilled by our illustrious culture, the standards raised by the selflessness and devotion of my parents, and perfect images etched by oodles of touching stories read as a child and as a mother in the course of my life. I wish to share with you this particular story authored by Shel Silverstein. It never fails to fill me with awe for the two most selfless creations of God called a Tree and a Mother who know only to give, give and give as their right as well as a privilege.

## A GIVING TREE

Once there was a tree...and she loved a little boy. And every day the boy would come and he would gather her leaves and make them into crowns and play king of the forest. He would climb up her trunk and swing from her branches and eat apples. And they would play hide-and-go-seek. And when he was tired, he would sleep in her shade. And the boy loved the tree...very much. And the tree was happy.

But time went by. And the boy grew older. And the tree was often alone. Then one day the boy came to the tree and the tree said, "Come, Boy, come and climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and eat apples and play in my shade and be happy."



"I am too big to climb and play," said the boy. "I want to buy things and have fun. I want some money. Can you give me some money?"

"I'm sorry," said the tree, "but I have no money, I have only leaves and apples. Take my apples, Boy, and sell them in the city. Then you will have money and you will be happy." And so the boy climbed up the tree and gathered her apples and carried them away. And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away for a long time... and the tree was sad. And then one day the boy came back and the tree shook with joy and she said, "Come, Boy, climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and be happy."

"I am too busy to climb trees," said the boy. "I want a house to keep me warm. I want a wife and I want children, and so I need a house. Can you give me a house?"

"I have no house," said the tree. "The forest is my house, but you may cut off my branches and build a house. Then you will be happy." And the boy cut off her branches and carried them away to build his house. And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away for a long time. And when he came back, the tree was so happy she could hardly speak. "Come, Boy," she whispered, "Come and play."

"I am too old and sad to play," said the boy. "I want a boat that can take me far away from here. Can you give me a boat?"

"Cut down my trunk and make a boat," said the tree. "Then you can sail away... and be happy." And so the boy

cut down her trunk and made a boat and sailed away. And the tree was happy... but not really. And after a long time the boy came back again.

"I am sorry, Boy," said the tree, "but I have nothing left to give you. My apples are gone."

"My teeth are too weak for apples," said the boy.

"My branches are gone," said the tree. "You cannot swing on them."

"I am too old to swing on branches," said the boy.

"My trunk is gone," said the tree. "You cannot climb."

"I am too tired to climb," said the boy.

"I am sorry," sighed the tree. "I wish that I could give you something--- but I have nothing left. I am just an old stump."

"I don't need very much now," said the boy. "Just a quiet place to sit and rest. I am very tired."



"Well," said the tree, straightening herself up as much as she could, "Well, an old stump is good for sitting and resting. Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest." And the boy did. And the tree was happy.

Celebrate Mother's Day on the 8th May and every day.

Presented by

- *Annapurna R.*



# Going Green

## “Mata bhumi putro aham prithivyaha”

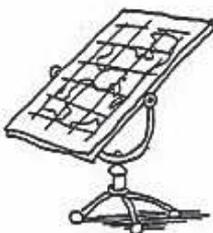
Prithvi Sukta, Atharva Veda (12.1.12)

Here the Prithvi Sukta proclaims Earth as the mother, and humanity as her children and solicits her blessings. According to Prithvi Sukta, Mother Earth is adorned with heights, slopes, plains, hills, mountains, forests, plants, herbs and treasures; and she takes care of every creature that breathes and stirs. May she give us joy, wealth, prosperity, good fortune and glory!

### PAY BACK TIME

Do you want to do your share in paying back to the mother earth? As individuals, we can effectively contribute towards achieving a sustainable environment in places where we live and work by adopting few attitudinal and behavioral changes in our habits as listed below:

- Switch off electrical appliances like lights/ fans/ACs etc when not required to save on energy costs
- Use of mug while brushing your teeth or shaving rather than keeping the tap open will help in conserving water
- Wash your car less frequently and use a car wash where typically the water is recycled
- Take a short shower or a bath with water from a bucket and save at least 20 litres of water
- If you use a dishwasher, ensure that it is full when you run it and use economy cycle if possible
- Segregate waste into dry and wet waste at the source of generation and collect them in separate bins
- Recyclable materials from waste like paper, plastic, metal and glass can be remunerative and also help in reducing the burden on waste management by 20%
- Green waste like kitchen scraps can be composted



S. IV



S. XIV



S. XVI



S. XX

# Natural Remedies

## Home Remedies for Cockroach Infestation

Hot weather increases population of domestic pests like cockroaches and mosquitoes. Pesticides that can get rid of cockroaches are widely available in market but if a product can kill a cockroach it is probably not good for humans either. Many pesticides are extremely harmful to the human nervous system, so non-toxic remedies are safer and wise choices. Some natural methods that could help you cut the cockroach population to miniscule proportions:

### To err is human...

We apologize for a misprint in Pg. No. 29, April, 2011 Nachiketanjali.

It should have been: Homeopathic Medicine for Sunstroke - NAT MUR 30, Five pills a week.

- ◆ Avoid leaving food particles hanging about. When you have finished cooking see that all the surfaces are clean. If you leave dishes in your sink ensure that they are dipped in soap solution and rinsed properly.
- ◆ After you have swept and swabbed the floors in the morning, put a thin layer of boric acid on the floor.
- ◆ Use a chlorine tablet in your toilet. Cockroaches need water to survive. By placing a chemical tablet in your toilet, you set a trap and if they drink the water they are sure to be poisoned.
- ◆ Mix equal proportions of baking soda and sugar. Leave it in the dishes in the cupboards. The soda in the mix will kill the cockroaches.
- ◆ Mix equal amounts of boric acid and flour. Add just enough confectioner's sugar to attract the cockroaches. Make soft dough with a little water. Roll the dough into little balls and scatter in corners, cupboards, etc. When the cockroaches eat this it causes them to dry out. It might take about two to three weeks before they are completely gone.
- ◆ Replace the boric acid balls every month to ensure that there is no re-infestation.
- ◆ If your house is really infested with cockroaches you may have to call an exterminator. In any event use chemicals as the last resort.

## Renewal of Subscription

*Time flies, doesn't it? Yes, it has been more than a year that Nachiketanjali has had the pleasure and privilege of being a part of your family and wishes to be so for a long time to come. The small formality of renewing your subscription of Nachiketanjali can fulfill this wish. And please spread the word among your family and friends. For details of your subscription check the address slip that comes with the magazine. To subscribe call 9849168937, 8008882828 or email: nachiketanjali1@gmail.com or check page 35 for details.*

# Inspiration

I was talking with Swamiji, Maa and Vasundhara Maa yesterday and everyone was sharing their experiences about the days when Nachiketa Tapovan and everyone associated with this wonderful organization were taking their first steps towards a common goal of making a positive difference to the society we belong, the state we live in and our nation of which we're an inseparable part.

During this reminiscing, one thing touched my heart and stayed with me. It has a very special place in my heart because I read this story during very trying phases of my life... and it gave me a lot of hope and inspiration.

Swamiji narrated it to Maa and me and I couldn't help but smile when He said that it always brings tears in His eyes, because I felt the same when I read this story for the first time and it has not changed in all these years. And I am sure that I will have tears in my eyes when I narrate this story to you...

Foot Prints... A man is walking with God and as he looks back he sees two sets of footprints, one, his own and the other, God's. But he also notices that at several places there are only one set of footprints. It bothers him when he realizes that during the most difficult times in his life, there are only one set of footprints. He cannot understand why God would abandon him when he needed God most!!!

After walking some distance, he cannot hold back any longer and asks God the reason for the same. God smiles and tells him "My Child, during your most difficult times when you see only one set of footprints, those are times when I carried you in my arms..."

Isn't it a wonderful story? When we sit back and think, we will realize that this is not 'just a story', it's the truth. Each one of us can recollect several instances in life when the going was tough, when we could not clearly see solutions to our problems and suddenly someone or something comes by, as if God sent, and everything works out just fine. These are not just coincidences, it is God Himself, who has come to our aid and rescue!!!

- Gautam Vir

# इकलङ्करोतु इङ्कण - तुरतुतु

- Krupalu Ogeti, Secretary, Samskrit Bharati, Hyderabad.  
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(Contd from previous issue)

अपरः शिवभक्तः गङ्गातीरम् आगच्छति। तत्र किं पश्यति? तीरे एकं सुन्दरलिङ्गं अस्ति, एकः भक्तः (अस्माकं भिक्षुकः) गङ्गायां स्नानं करोति। सः नूतनः एवं कार्यां 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 sand and keeps a few flowers there. Then (he) takes bath.



पुनः तृतीयः जनः आगच्छति। अत्र तीरे लिङ्गद्वयम् अस्ति, तत्र गङ्गायां भक्तद्वयं स्नानं करोति। सः 'अहं कार्याः पद्धतिम् अवगच्छामि' इति चिन्तयति। सः अपि एकं लिङ्गं निर्माति, स्नानं करोति।

एवं बहवः भक्ताः, बहूनि लिङ्गानि!

Again a third person comes. 'Here, on the shore, a couple of Lingams, there a couple of devotees taking bath'. He thinks 'I understand Kashi's tradition.'

This way, many devotees! Many Lingams!

(To be contd in the next issue)





## *Celebrations*

### *Waste to Wealth*

**"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give" -Winston Churchill**

Suma Niketan, a school for the less fortunate, in Gandipet, Hyderabad is the noble initiative of Dr. Rohini. Children from Vidya Mandir, Nachiketa Tapovan, spent a fulfilling day in Suma Niketan on March 11th 2011.

Nachiketa Tapovan's Vidya Mandir children from senior classes taught the children at Suma Niketan the many treasures and talents they learnt in their own school. The latter were divided into small groups and our children each took charge of a group. They enjoyed teaching the Suma Niketan kids the art of making paper bags from newspapers. They were also shown how to use leftover fabric scraps to make lovely decorative flowers. The materials that were

used for the crafts were mostly recycled substances. It was a great experience for our children to share their learning, boost self confidence and above all participate in a unique environmental friendly endeavor.

Thanks to the Suma Niketan school for giving this wonderful occasion to our children.



## *Celebrations - Holi*

The festival of colors- Holi was celebrated in Tapovan on March 19th evening with great fun, play, bright colors and loads of joy.

The colors of Holi, called 'gula', in the olden days were made at home, from the flowers of certain trees like 'the flame of the forest'. This along with natural colored talc is good for the skin, unlike the chemical colors of our days.

Tapovan children used Holi colors made from natural substances like Beet root, Gulmohar, Vermilion and did their bit in practicing the "be natural" mantra.

"Holika dahan" and "kama dahanam" in the southern states of India is associated with the

legend of Lord Shiva burning Kama Deva to ashes.

As with all the other festival celebrations here at Tapovan, Holi too was celebrated with the awareness of its inner significance and importance as it applies to our inner world. Swami Shivananda Puri's message on this occasion was to perform the 'Kama dahanam' with the conscious intent to burn all bad intentions in the fire. She also educated the children to use natural materials like cow dung cakes, foliage of the mango, neem and banyan trees, in the bonfire (Kama dahanam).

The kids also enjoyed a scrumptious snack after all the fun and play.



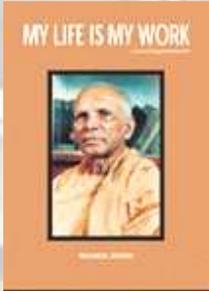
# Sponsor Options

**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)	₹ 5200/year/child
Anna Daanam (Mid-day Meals)	₹ 4200/day
Alpa Aharam (Snacks)	₹ 700/day
Vastra Daanam (Uniforms)	₹ 800/2 pairs
Dinnerware (Steel Plates & Glasses)	₹ 5000/ 50 sets
Stationery Supplies (Copier Paper)	₹ 5000/term
Medicines (For needy people)	₹ 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 Srmat 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, [sanskritabharatihyd@gmail.com](mailto:sanskritabharatihyd@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*



## An Appeal

### 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.

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.

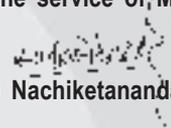
The Vidya Mandir being constructed is planned to cover an area of **50,000 sq.ft.** around an extensive central play ground. The building will have two floors, the ground floor consisting of spacious classrooms (750 sq ft) and the entire top floor rooms devoted to laboratories like math Lab, Science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

## Pitru Bhakti Brings Divine Grace

Sankara knew the real meaning of the Ved words "*mathru devo bhava, pithru devo bhava* - let the mother be your god, let the father be your god". Once when his father left the house, he told his son: "My dear son, I am daily worshipping God and distributing *naiveidya* [offering eatables to the deity or idol; *prasâdam*] to all the people. So also in my absence and in the absence of your mother you will please do like that". Sankara promised to do so without fail. He poured some milk in a cup, put it before the Idol of the Goddess and prayed to Her: "Mother! Take this milk which I am offering". Though he prayed for long time, the Mother did not take the milk nor did She appear. He was very disappointed. He said again, "Mother! Mother! You are daily taking the offerings that are given to You by my father. What sins have these hands of mine committed that You are not accepting the offering which I am giving to You?" He prayed to Her earnestly from the innermost depths of his heart. He prepared to sacrifice even his life and told himself, "My father asked me to offer this milk to the Goddess but I am not able to do so because the Goddess is not receiving the offering, which is made. It is better that I die". He went out and brought a big stone to kill himself. The Mother of the Universe is very compassionate and She was very moved and touched by Sankara's sincerity. She at once appeared before him and drank the milk that he offered. She drank the whole milk and placed the empty cup before him. The boy was very glad that the Mother of the Universe came and drank the milk but there was nothing in the cup.

He thought that his father would certainly ask for the *naiveidya* of the God after his return. He feared that the father may think that he drank away all the milk and may be



angry with him. Therefore he prayed to the Goddess. "Goddess, give me at least one drop of milk so that I may be able to give it to my father". But the Goddess did not come. He again sincerely continued to pray; the Goddess was moved and She appeared. Because She was not able to give the milk that She drank, She gave Her own milk and filled the cup. There is a belief that because Sankara tasted the divine milk, he was able to attain the highest learning, knowledge and wisdom that are ever possible. So the essence of the grace of the Goddess became the essence of learning of Sankara. In order to please his father, he tried hard and was able to get the Goddess of the Universe to manifest Herself before him.

Source – Chinna Katha



## 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.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS:

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

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.

### AN APPEAL TO PATRONS & SPONSORS

Ashraydatas are encouraged to become patrons of the magazine by joining Nachiketanjali's Patron's Scheme. You can become patrons by donating ₹ 5000/- which will be deposited in the magazine's corpus fund. We express our thanks by announcing their names in the following issue of the Magazine and the patron will also receive a 5 year subscription of the same.

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contentment the greatest wealth,  
faithfulness the best relationship. - Buddha*

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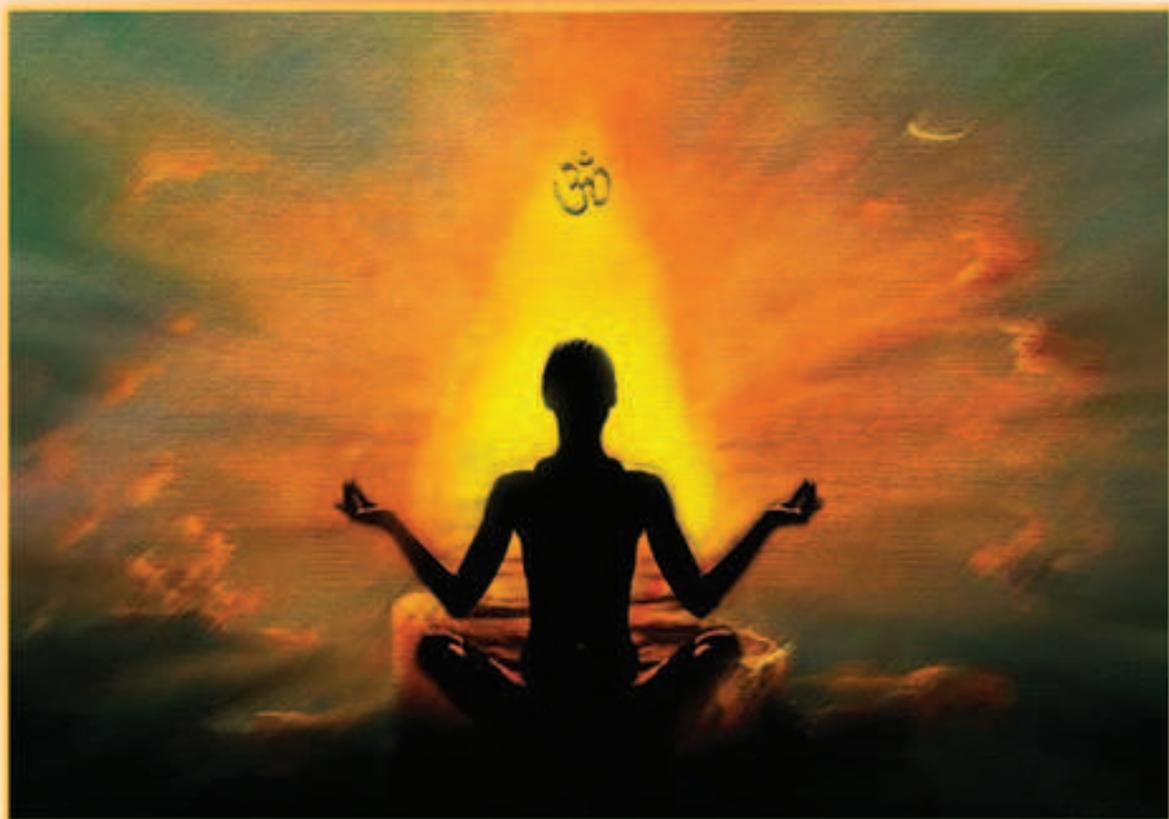
*yad yad vibhutimat sattvam srimad urjitam eva va  
tat tad eva vagaccha tvam mama tejo-'msa-sambhavam*

Bhagavadgita Chapter 10 Shloka 41

Certainly wherever and whatever is majestic,  
beautiful or magnificent; you must  
certainly know that all these manifestations arise  
from but a fraction of My glory.



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