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...an offering

A Journey Into The Spiritual Realm!

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Varuna Gayathri



Om Jala bimbaya Vidhmahe
Nila Purushaya Dheemahe
Thanno Varunah Prachodayath

Translation: "Om. Let us meditate on the great Lord Varuna. All the waters in the world are His reflection. May that glorious Varuna Deva, whose form is a beautiful luminous blue, inspire and illumine our mind and understanding."

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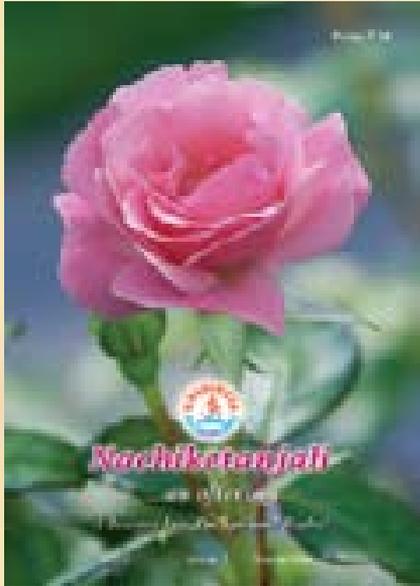
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Cover Story



A feast to the eyes,
 An epitome of beauty!
 Your poise we all can see.
 But did it come for free?
 You weathered cold winters,
 And withstood searing summers!
 Unlike of you,
 but wielded harsh thorns,
 To protect those satin petals;
 So that they kiss and
 Wither at His Lotus Feet.
 You spent all your resources,
 To suffuse fragrance and
 love in the air.
 Indeed, your life is a message,
 That we shall imbibe and cherish!

Editorial

SPIRIT OF SILENCE

“I am Silence among all secrets”- Bhagavad Gita

“If only you would be altogether Silent! For you that would be wisdom”- Bible

“Speech will guide you and Silence will protect you” - Islamic Quote

The above quotes reveal that the ‘Spirit of Silence’ is recognized by all religions. Anyone wanting to tread the path of spirituality should not only realize the importance of solitude but also of silence. Solitude is external but silence comes from within.

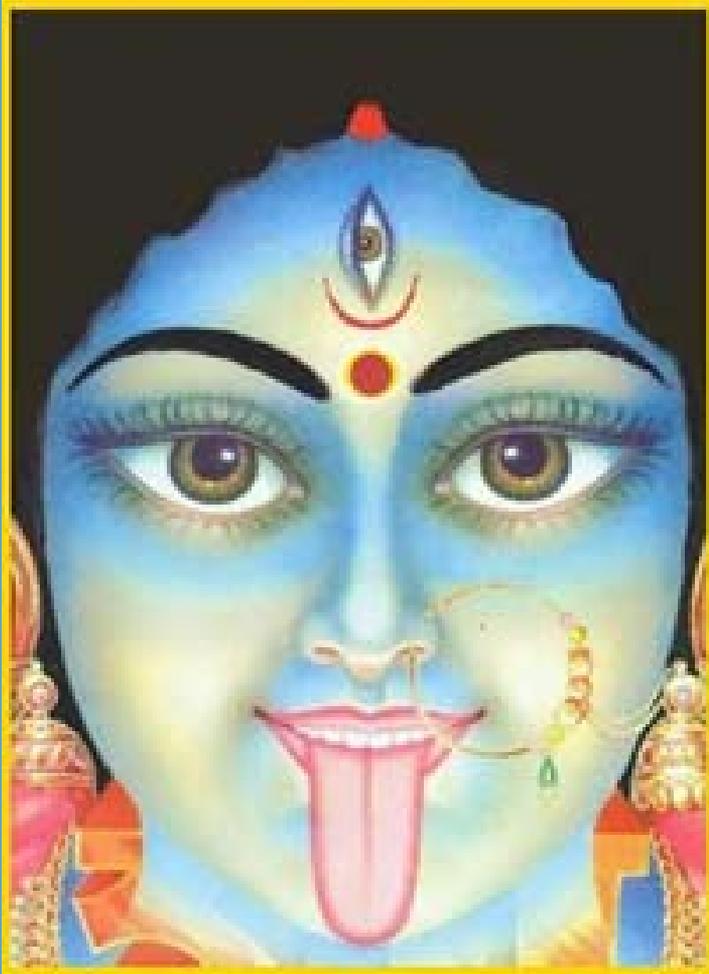
Sri Ramana Maharshi always advised His disciples to ‘know thyself’ and the tool to achieve this is solitude followed by silence. A word of caution! Solitude should never be misunderstood as seclusion. Neither is silence a speechless state. In fact it is spending time to understand oneself. Silence can be experienced through all our daily activities. Even a simple act of singing can teach you the meaning of silence. Silence can be experienced in the cuckoo’s song, in the blooming of a flower, in the falling of snow, in the hour before dawn, in the smile of a child and so on.

When we meditate, if we keenly observe, we can realize that there is a gap between two thoughts. We should try and increase that gap through our Sadhana. This will lead us to a thoughtless state and it is in this state that we experience the true silence. One can not only win over the world but also win over the Self when true silence is experienced. Rishis and Jnanis have experienced this silence and entered into a Samadhi state. Silence can be experienced only through relentless Sadhana.

It is said that when the oak is felled the whole forest echoes with its fall, but a hundred acorns are sown in silence by an unnoticed breeze. Similarly our speech echoes in the world but the whispers of the Divine can be heard only when our mind is still. God gives us many messages when we need them but they always go unnoticed. Let us learn the language of silence and listen to the inner voice- the VOICE OF GOD.

- **Subhadra K.**

Ma Kali



inner call... for the first time I was what I am supposed to be... for the first time I travelled everywhere without moving an inch... for the first time I was exhilarated... for the first time I experienced the real beauty of ecstasy.

Dear Mother, Your beauty is matchless... unparalleled... supreme. Your touch is so phenomenal that even an ordinary person can get transformed into a Divine being. Your eyes are so deep and compassionate that even one look into Your eyes and I'm lost forever. Your dark blue infinite body has a charismatic aura and a Divine pull. And what can I say about Your smile Mother! I saw trees swaying and dancing ... birds flying up in the sky and singing... animals getting intoxicated and swinging... the non-living world coming to life and conveying the essence of life... rhythmically, ecstatically...

I was frozen... immovable... speechless. No body and mind. I felt as if everything has ceased... permanently... completely... but perfectly... How long I don't remember.

Then I felt as if Mother is coming closer, lifting me by Her arm and engulfing my entire being... that very moment I lost my external consciousness and was transformed spiritually... and for the first time in my life, I realized what true freedom is... for the first time I sensed Her beautiful creation... for the first time in my life I found myself... for the first time I cried for long... for the first time I entered into silence... for the first time I treasured everything... for the first time I laughed... for the first time I listened to the

Such is the captivating, inspiring and mesmerizing personality of my Mother! Mother Kali! Ma Kali!

Dear Mother, I might not be Your best child but You are the best Mother of all Mothers.

Ma! They say there are very few chosen ones and I feel blissful and delighted when I see myself playing in Thy hands. Ma! Accept my humble Pranams for showing me the Divine path and making me Thy instrument. Om Hrim Kali Mataya Namah!



- *Swami Nachiketananda Puri*



Srimad Bhagavad Geeta

Lord Krishna is the bestower of the celestial song called Bhagavad Geeta. Before we drink the nectar of Srimad Bhagavad Geeta, let us prostrate at the lotus feet of Lord Krishna:

Vasudeva sutam Devam

Kamsa Chanoora mardhanam

Devaki paramanandam

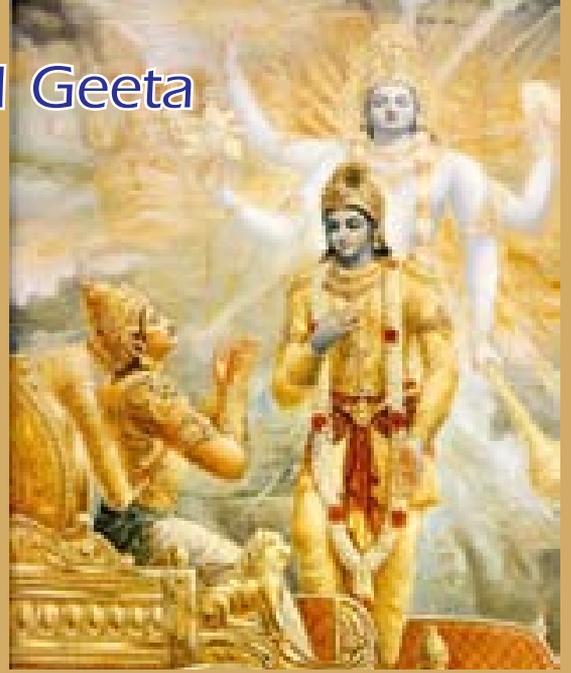
Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum

I salute to Lord Krishna, who is the Son of Vasudeva, Who killed Kamsa and Chanoora, Who is the source of Bliss to His mother Devaki and who is the Jagat Guru of the Universe.

I pay reverence to Lord Ganesha and Bhagavan Vyasa for presenting this immortal wisdom to mankind. Some believe in Bhagavad Geeta, some do not. For some, Mahabharata had never taken place in Dwapara yuga. However, there are many archaeological evidences that corroborate the fact that Mahabharata *is* a reality.

Bhagavad Geeta is more than just a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna. Why has Krishna favored Pandavas, why not Kauravas? Have Arjuna and other Pandavas fought against and killed their own relatives only for the sake of the kingdom? Why did Krishna play the role of Arjuna's Ratha Sarathi when He could have as well given him kingdoms and all the material wealth? Mahabharata is not a war between the brothers. It is a Dharma Yuddha that testifies that God always helps those who practice Dharma. Though the Celestial Song was sung in Dwapara yuga, it is well applicable in Kali yuga. Bhagavad Geeta is the greatest means to help us out with any kind of crisis that we face. Look at and perceive Bhagavad Geeta as a symbolic event of that day applicable to today's society as well.

The immortal song is the greatest spiritual treasure to humanity. It not only helps achieve material wealth but also helps achieve spiritual wealth and realization of the Self. Bhagavad Geeta is the essence of all Vedas and the universal guideline for people of all natures. It is not an exaggeration to say that nowhere else in



the world you would ever find a scripture, which is more practical and relevant for the society. With knowledge of Samskrit, one would understand the true essence of Bhagavad Geeta. However, with tremendous faith and shraddha one can obtain the benefits of Srimad Bhagavad Geeta in spite of not knowing Samskrit.

Srimad Bhagavad Geeta comprises of 700 slokas and 18 chapters and it is an ultimate reality that helps in solving all problems of life. It helps man in evolving from one plane to another. Bhagavad Geeta is like a royal path which leads us through various Yogas or paths. These precious paths have been laid according to one's nature to achieve the eternal truth of life and helps man in transforming from manhood to Godhood. In a nut shell Srimadh Bhagavad Geeta for a warrior is the Supreme weapon, for the helpless it is the mightiest strength, for a sadhaka (aspirant) it is a cosmic ocean. For the directionless people it shows the right direction. For realized saints it is an absolute truth and supreme wisdom. So let us drink the nectar of the 'Ultimate Truth' to accomplish the purpose of human life, the rarest birth on the earth. Let us listen to the celestial song of the Paramatma with an open and pure heart and dive into the ocean of immortality.



- Swami Shivananda Puri

Yoga



Ardha chakrasana:

Yoga: Yoga is one of the greatest sciences on the earth, given by our sages to the mankind. Yoga is the greatest instrument of evolution. Yoga makes us evolve into higher realms of consciousness, where one realizes the true nature of the Self. So yoga is the greatest mechanism of the self which makes a human being the perfect human being.

Every human being might have various goals in their personal and social lives. But we should realize that there is a higher goal which needs to be achieved and discovered. Yoga helps in achieving that ultimate goal of life. This discovery of the Self destroys the misery and illusion of the world and the Self.

So let us practice one of the greatest boons given to mankind. Let us discover the life beyond.

Instructions:

Stand with legs together and hands by the side of the body. Support the back at the waist region with the help of the palms, fingers pointing forward. Inhale and bend backwards from the lumbar region. Drop the head backwards. Feel the stretches in the neck muscles. Maintain for a minute with normal breathing. Come back to the centre.

Who should not perform:

The one who is suffering from vertigo should avoid this practice.

Benefits:

Ardha Chakrasana gives flexibility to the spine. Helps in free circulation of blood to the head. Strengthens the neck muscles. Expands the chest and shoulders. Breathing problems like Asthma can be cured. Headache, Migraine, Neck pain, problems related to Hyperacidity and Constipation can be cured.

Spiritual benefits:

When we are taking the head backwards, concentration occurs in between the eyebrows, that means concentrating on Ajna chakra happens. Even the Vishuddhi chakra in throat and the Anahata chakra in chest region gets activated.



The Shiva Samhita - The Laya yoga



Ekam Jnanam nityamadyantasunyam

nanyat kincidvartate vastu satyam,

Yadbhedosminnindriyopadhina vai

jnanasyam bhasate nanyathaiva.

Meaning: The Jnana alone is eternal; it is without beginning or end; there exists no other substance. Diversities which we see in the world are results of sense-conditions; when the latter cease, then this jnana alone and nothing else, remains.

- Swami Shivananda Puri



Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara

Direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna - Swami Advaitananda

Swami Advaitananda was the oldest of the monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and was perhaps a few years older to the Master Himself. He was born in a village called Jagaddal in 24 Parganas and his given name was Gopal Chandra Ghosh. He was a married man and became desolate on the death of his wife. He was taken by a friend of his to visit the Master. It was only on the second visit to the Master that he totally surrendered to Him. He devoted himself to the service of the Master in His last illness. He was desirous of distributing some ochre cloths and rosaries to monks and expressed this to the Master. On this the Master replied, 'You won't find better monks than these young boys here. You may give the cloth and rosaries to them.' Thus were sown the seeds of the future Ramakrishna Order.

He was the first inmate at Baranagore math along with Swami Shivananda after the passing away of the Master. Later he spent five years practicing severe austerities in Varanasi. He had a penchant for neatness and lived a disciplined life. He was indifferent to worldly sights and sounds, and followed his own tenor of life in the contemplation of the Divine from day to day without any break.

When Swamiji returned to India and initiated the formation of the Ramakrishna Brotherhood, Swami Advaitananda, returned to the Math at Alambazaar. Afterwards he stayed mainly at the new monastery at Belur Math, where he looked after the management of various affairs of the monastery, specially the garden work. True to his nature, all work he undertook or supervised had to be done very systematically and with scrupulous care.

The young brahmacharis could hardly rise to his standard of perfection and had a hard time with him. They would receive mild rebukes from him, but they would take his criticisms more as a token of affection. Gopalda, however, would say later, 'The Master has shown me that it is He who is manifested through all. Then whom to blame or whom to criticize?' After this experience, Gopalda ceased from finding fault with anyone however great might be the latter's error.

Even in his old age he was self reliant and would not take anyone's help in attending to his personal needs. Being the eldest amongst his brother disciples, he was looked upon with affectionate regard by them. They also enjoyed making fun of him. Swamiji composed a comical verse in order to tease Gopalda, but that really indicated in what great esteem he was held by all.

Gopalda made strenuous efforts to mould his life according to the life and example of the Master, and would sometimes express disappointment that he fell short of the ideal. Due to his age, he did not engage himself in any public activity, philanthropic, missionary, or otherwise, so his monastic life was quite uneventful. But his uniform steadfastness to sadhana till the last day of his life elicited admiration, if not reverence, even from his brother disciples. He heard the Master say that one should never twist the truth even to make fun. Gopalda obeyed this instruction in letter and spirit and insisted on others doing likewise.

He kept good health till the end, and suffered from stomach trouble for a while before he passed away on 28th December, 1909, at the age of eighty one.

Compiled by - **Geetha K.**



The Message



Often, I wonder how God would communicate with me in case of emergency and then spend hours thinking about any kind of implications. I communicate, I speak and let it out. However, it is not the same when God wishes to tell me something, I realized. For those who believe in God, anything and everything around is God and anything simple like a rainbow is the message from the Divine. However, to those who believe in nothing but themselves, God is mere myth and the message is never delivered. Something auspicious, something strange, something unexpected, and something to be cautious about; how do you know what it is. Do you get the message well in hand? Do you know to read the message in case you are waiting for one?

Sometimes, little ones are our best guides. Words they speak and their simple deeds convey the best messages you would never imagine. The other day, while I stood at the bus stop staring at the cracking clouds and heavy hail and rain, I saw a little one smile at the lightening. When I asked, "What are you smiling at?" She replied, "God is taking a picture of mine. So, I want to look pretty in the photograph." Her mother asked "Where do you get that idea from?" She said, "Do you see the white big strike? That is the flash light." Saying so, she pulled us together to take a group photograph

as we smiled at the neat response. I would have never thought of the thunder strike to be a camera's flash light, like the little one did. To her, it was God's message. The next day again, while I stood at the bus stop staring at the clouds with a hesitant heart about my abilities and whether I can do what I wish to pursue in life, I saw a cloud that looked like a pointed finger and raised thumb indicating something like "You can do it!" I wonder if it is my perception or the reality itself, anyway things changed because I could read the message.

Therefore, anytime you feel low at heart, have asked a question several times before, and are waiting for God's response, look at things around you. They definitely have something to tell you and they have their box full of messages that they wish to deliver to you. Nature is the best mail service. You get the quickest responses through their services. So, next time you get a message, do make sure to thank the Divine for the quick and beautiful message. Make sure you never have an inbox full of unread messages because God would surely feel rejected.



- *Ramya Manasa*



Your Children are not Your Children



Followers of Buddhism believe in the concept of reincarnation. When a Master passes away, he is believed to be reborn. The Master's devoted disciples set out on quests to find this 'special' child and after a number of spiritual tests by enlightened masters, the reincarnation is confirmed. Then comes the painful part- the parents give up the child to the monastery so that all of humanity can benefit from His teachings. It is their way of life.

Every child is born with a mission, to fulfill a destiny.

Think about it. First as a child, then a parent.

Do you remember the good old days when you used to climb the compound wall or neem tree in your school? It was a moment of exhilaration when you were free to be anything you dreamt of- a sailor, a pilot, an astronaut or an actor. But as we grew up, we learned to look at those role-playing games as frivolous childhood acts. And when it was time to choose higher studies or a career, it was not even a considerable option. The pilot, sailor, astronaut and actor were dead long before they were allowed to be fully born.

With time, the child becomes a parent, weighed down by a hundred thousand worldly responsibilities. Perhaps the only fleeting moment of bliss is when you look down upon your baby sleeping peacefully in the cot- its large eyes closed and its little fingers twiddling in sleep, trying to touch the edges of some unfathomable, breathtakingly beautiful dream. And just then, you wake them up.

"Concentrate! Finish your homework first!"

"You want to go for a movie? Did you forget the marks you got in your Math test?"

"You want to be a painter? Have you lost it? Do you know how much you will have to struggle? And what if you don't make it?"

It's a vicious circle. You were asked these questions once upon a time, many a long year ago. And now you do the same. Perhaps that is where the problem lies.

Don't get me wrong. As a parent, you always have your child's best interests at heart. But sometimes, it is that speck of possessiveness that cataracts your vision.

As children and as growing adults, it is very necessary for us to fail, make mistakes, even fall down and bruise ourselves. Because that is how we grow stronger and learn better. It's human nature. It's a basic animal instinct for survival.

If you tell that stubborn child not to touch a hot stove, he will touch it once and see for himself. And then he will learn. Ditto in life.

Every child has a dream. Every child is an individual, a fully empowered spiritual being who will blossom into an adult, just like you did. And every parent must learn to appreciate that.

Yes, every child has a dream. Some may be achievable, some overly ambitious. Some may come true, some may not. But no one, not even the life-giving parent has the right to snatch it away from them.





ADI SHANKARA'S WISDOM

It is but natural that parents wouldn't want their children to walk down a path that they have already trodden, and failed. Or maybe not even tried. But I say, let them see for themselves.

Maybe the child has discovered a newer route, a fresher perspective or a creative solution. Ask yourself- is it right for you to cast your shadow upon every little spark of a flame that your child conjures? Because, if you continue doing that, there will be a point in his/her life when the spark dies away forever- and the child (adult) is condemned to live in a shadow forever.

My father is a successful businessman- and every day, his network of transport vehicles make their way across India's highways. My mother is a doctor, teacher, activist and homemaker. But that notwithstanding - they gave me the freedom to move out of home 5 years ago, when I was not yet 18. They let me walk on the road of my choice, sometimes even make a few mistakes to learn from. All the while, they trusted me to make the right choice. With their blessing, I did.

Today, I work as a Writer in Mumbai. I'm independent. And I've never been happier. But what makes me really proud is that my younger brother is also following his dream- he is well on his way to become the world's next Master Chef. All this was possible only because of the love, faith and trust of our parents.

Maybe the only way I can thank them today is by spreading this message I've learnt from them. In the words of the poet Khalil Gibran,

"Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you

You are the bows from which your children

As living arrows are sent forth..."

- Avinash Agarwal

currently lives in the city of Mumbai.

He works with SHOBIZ EXPERIENCE and is a Writer, by profession and by passion.



It was the time when Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya was staying at the Shringeri Peeth. One day He developed chills and a high temperature and was shivering. He overheard His disciple talking to someone, "Guruji is not feeling well and is taking rest. It is not possible to have His darshan today." On hearing this, Adi Shankaracharya called that person inside. He was none other than the King of Vijayanagar. A disciple brought two planks and offered one to his Guru and the other to the king. Adishankara made the king sit on the plank and placed His own plank against the wall. In a short while this plank started shaking and shivering. The king was surprised and asked Adi Shankara the reason.

Adi Shankara said "I have transferred my chills and fever to the plank. That is why it is shivering and you would have noticed that as I was talking to you I was quite normal." The King was stupefied and asked, "Swami, when you have the power of transferring the disease to another object, you should also have the power of not allowing the disease near you. Why are you not doing that?" Shankara replied, "So, you are asking me to become a thief? I have to reap the results of my karmas. If I don't do that it means I am not abiding by Dharma. That is equal to theft. Whatever the result of karma, we have to face it. I don't want to forsake this steadfast rule."

The King departed with a piece of Adi Shankara's wisdom.



Youth - Intoxicated and Useless?



The stars are blotted out,
The clouds are covering clouds.
It is darkness vibrant, sonant

In the roaring, whirling wind
Are the souls of a million lunatics
Just loosed from the prison-house,
Wrenching trees by the roots,
Sweeping all from the path.
The sea has joined the fray,
And swirled up mountain-waves,
To reach the pitchy sky

The flash of lurid light
Reveals on every side
A thousand, thousand shades
Of Death begrimed and black-
Scattering plagues and sorrows

Dancing mad with joy,
Come, Mother, come!
For terror is Thy name,
Death is in thy breath,
And every shaking step
Destroys a world for ever

Thou Time, the All-destroyer!
Come, O Mother, come!
Who dares misery love,
And hug the form of Death,
Dance in destruction's dance
To him the Mother comes

- Swami Vivekananda

I wish to write this piece anonymously so that I can freely express my views, without offending any group or any person implicitly or explicitly.

Our professor was wonderfully explaining something when she was disturbed by someone talking in the last bench. This was despite her requesting them a number of times. She was outraged. She said those students were betraying the trust of their parents, who work very hard to send their children to the best institutions of this country. Her last comment was intriguing: "The youth of today say we are fast, sensitive about issues and very capable. They are nothing but useless."

The same evening, there was a party organized to welcome the junior batch to the institution. After the brief introduction of the students was over, the JAM session started. Everyone began to dance joyously. Some were in their senses, some were beyond control. The latter were drunk. Girls who were inebriated were unable to distinguish with whom they were dancing. They were literally falling on boys and other girls. When the party was over and they came back to their hostels, they continued their 'nuisance' by smoking.

Contrast these two situations with what I once saw on television. A person from a modest background had cleared the civil services examination. He described how hard he had worked to come so far and said he was determined to make a change in the corrupt system. His courage and conviction in himself was inspiring.

All these three groups of people belong to the most vibrant segment of our population – the youth. For the first, listening to teachers (read good teachers) is impossible, for the second fun means to drink, smoke and dance and for the third country is everything. These three categories may overlap most of the times. Nevertheless, what worries me the most is the habit of getting intoxicated. I call it a 'habit' because a few do it regularly. I am forced to ask this question to myself – am I too conservative?



Everyone should have the freedom to choose their own way of life. But does this mean that the society should be allowed to get lost in the depths of hopelessness, that youth should be wasted away, that one should be permitted to reduce their life span by resorting to objectionable habits? Family used to act as a great restraint on such behaviour. But now with the requirement that students leave the confines of their home and state to get better education, their chances of going astray have risen significantly.

After the day of distressing events, I expressed my anger through a social networking site. The comment made by one of my friends amazed me. He said that people today consume alcohol for dignity and status; that it has become social and we 'should' accept it. Another friend in a chat expressed the view that alcohol consumption is fashion. Nevertheless, one thing made me really happy and hopeful. One of my friends who had consumed lesser quantity of alcohol due to peer pressure promised to herself that she would not do it once again, so deeply affected was she by the happenings of the day.

At this juncture, it would be apt to mention how to deal with the conflict facing the mind. The typical situation can be summarized thus – When we get out of the protective cover provided by our dear parents, we tend to feel independent, without any restrictions. We desire to become a part of the crowd which we find to be 'happening', those we feel are enjoying their life. What begins as a trial soon becomes a habit. Our subconscious definitely warns us, but we choose to drain its advice in the flood of our 'deceptive perceptions'. The following points will definitely help:

- When the mind says to do something that you did not do in nearly 15 years of your life that which your parents can never accept, practice listening to your heart. It will take you in the right direction.
- To those who blame it on company, I have one question to ask. Where is your own mind?

Under peer pressure, have you lost the ability to think? Well, when you can get so deeply influenced by such habits, why don't you get persuaded to study seeing a few other peers? Learn to identify what is important for you. In the immortal words of Swami Vivekananda, "Nothing can happen to me unless I allow it to happen."

- Think about your family. The very thought of making your loved ones sad will make you abstain from dangerous habits.
- There are other ways to enjoy. Alcoholism is no way. Understand that 'bad' does not become 'good' with change in generation.
- Learn to politely refuse, to say no to something that you don't like or consider to be incorrect. Your true friends will never force you. If someone stresses that you still do it, get away from that person. Maintain your own self, your own personality.
- Spend time exclusively with your parents more often. Make friends with them; put forward your problems before them. Ask them how they faced or would face a similar situation. Be truthful to and interactive with them. There are no other people who desire our good more than our parents. Though unnoticed or unacknowledged, they are our best friends.
- Finally, think once about society. Had you spent even a part of the money you spend on such terrible habits on some poor person, some value would have been added to the life of that person. Moreover, by getting intoxicated you are reducing your productivity and your lifespan. You have a social responsibility. Do not ever forget this.

Alcoholism is bad for the society. Someone rightly remarked, "The first thing in the human personality that dissolves in alcohol is dignity." If you love yourself and your family, don't even think of alcohol and any other intoxicating substance. Say no to anything that is capable of throwing you out of your senses, that which is bad for your health and that which can demolish your character. In any situation, it is you alone who can help yourself. And as it is rightly said, "Prevention is better than cure." Why get into habits that are capable of destroying one and repent later?

- Anonymous





Renounce, but not the Truth!

Nama Japan Kyoon chod diya tune

Krodh na choda, jhoot na choda

Satya vachan kyoon chod diya

Nama Japan Kyoon chod diya tune

-Khalsa

Meaning:

Why have you abandoned the Lord's name?

Anger you haven't left, untruth you haven't left

Why have you abandoned speaking the Truth?

Why have you abandoned the Lord's name?

The above song had a deep impact on my mind. How simple are the words but the meaning has great depth when we reflect on it. How true it is that we do not let go of anger, falsehood but drop chanting the Lord's name in the pretext of not having time.

How many of us really seek to become Divine. We proclaim that we want to get out of the ocean called Samsara but we hardly make an attempt to get out of it. We do not even try to swim; instead we let ourselves float across it. We love swirling in the whirlpool of misery. To stay in it we lie, cheat, and do anything to be called successful by the society. We always postpone chanting the Lord's name as we are entangled with this world and love every minute of the misery we live in.

Swami Nachiketananda defines Japa as: 'Japa is the repetition of the same mantra in a set rhythm. Japa is a bridge between soul and the Supreme Soul. Japa is like a boat that helps one cross the ocean of samsara and Japa leads the sadhaka to higher realms of consciousness. Japa if done regularly with absolute dedication transforms an ordinary human being into a Divine being.'

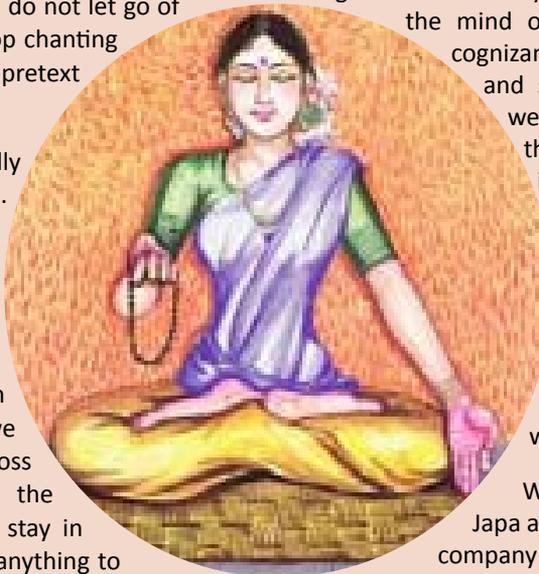
The easiest way to reach the Lord is Japa. Therefore, we must strive to utter His name everyday. We allot time for chores such as grooming, entertaining, feeding, socializing etc., prioritizing them as our responsibilities to our family. Instead, if we invest some time in ourselves, each and every day in doing Japa, we would achieve lasting happiness and also get closer to our goal.

However, we have to be extra cautious in the spiritual path too, as when we progress in prayer and japa, pride comes in through the back door without our knowledge. Even the greatest of the great rishis and sanyasis were not immune to it. Tolerance has to be consciously cultivated. Anger is the product of one's ego however subtle. Swami Ranganathananda says: 'when anger arises in

the mind one must be able to take cognizance of it. See that it is rising, and stop it then and there. A well controlled mind can do this. You can feel that anger is rising slowly i.e. getting stronger and stronger. These subtle experiences of emotional states we can easily detect with a trained mind, and we can stop its growth before it explodes on others in the world.'

We need to therefore do Japa and meditation and be in the company of holy people. Speaking truth and giving up on lies will not only cleanse our mind and soul but also give us courage to face anyone and anything in life. Sri Ramakrishna said that truthfulness alone constitutes the spiritual discipline of the Kaliyuga. If a man clings tenaciously to truth, he ultimately realizes God. Without this regard for truth one gradually loses everything. Hence we should reflect on the song above and make a beginning to tell the truth, never lie and keep anger at bay and chant the Lords name frequently.

- Vasundhara P.





Mistakes at the highest level!

The headline of the Times of India, one of the reputed newspapers of the country read thus on May 20, 2011: “India’s Most-Wanted Terror List Turns Out to be Error List”. Then it unfolded the stories of how fugitives that India alleged were sheltered in Pakistan were actually living in India, how red-corner notices still exist against those caught already and in prison or dead. The Home Minister called the error in the terror list a “genuine oversight” and a “human error”. This “genuine oversight” has embarrassed the nation. This “genuine oversight” has been used by the opposition parties to score political points.

“India’s Most-Wanted
Terror List Turns Out
to be Error List”

To take a lighter view on this, if a mistake at the national level, a mistake which embarrassed the country in front of the world can be overlooked, then may be every student who fails an exam because of a few marks should be allowed to pass; maybe a doctor who genuinely overlooks a swab in the body of a patient after surgery should not be sued for negligence; may be a driver who genuinely overlooks people sleeping on the pavement and injures them

with his vehicle should not be punished; may be a passenger who genuinely forgets to take his ticket should not be fined! This list can be endless.

The error at the national level did not affect ‘life’ as in a few of our examples. But nevertheless, it affected the credibility of the nation’s claims against a perpetrator of terror, the terror to which we as a nation lost many lives. Can a mistake be afforded at the highest level? It is expected that the

work in the top most echelons of an institution is subject to constant review and re-checking. Humans are not infallible. However, as a student, when I enter the exam hall my human nature of fallibility is not seen. I am penalized for making a mistake. The same is the case anywhere.

Here comes accountability. Accountability at every level is important. Everyone in the service of public is accountable to the people. To show that an institution is serious about what goes on, it is important that responsibility is set and the wrong-doers are brought to the book. By simply saying that it is a ‘human error’, the mistake cannot be forgiven. The culprits should be caught and the responsibility fixed.

Anyway, it has become our habit to forgive and forget, even at the cost of our nation’s honor. God save us!



Neetika Gogula, Studying 4th year of Law, has passion for writing articles on social issues.



Ordinary men, Outstanding spirits

Featuring Dr.Chandrasekhar, Sankurathri Foundation

“The best way to find your self is to lose yourself in the service of others”

-Mahatma Gandhi

At some point in life, we ourselves or someone we know well have been victims of an appalling tragedy in life. Personally, losing a dear one seems to be the deepest loss a human being might experience. As they say, out of terrible tragedies are born great opportunities - especially opportunities for personal transformation or makeover.

In his book “Dialogue with death”, Eknath Easwaran points out that when we are experiencing a tragic moment, many of us begin to ask questions like “Who am I?”, “Where did I come from?” etc.

“Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached” (‘Uthishta jagrata prapyava- ran nibodhat’), says the Katha Upanishad. The state of “Arise” is the initial state of inquiry and introspection that Easwaran refers to. But he says, very few of us proceed beyond this “opening”. We do “arise” for sometime from our sleep when we are hit with some harsh blows in life, but haven’t awakened yet.

After a while, most of us fall back asleep as everyday life and issues encase us back in to the surface life. There are a few, who actually “awake” and tread steadfastly towards the path of joyful expansion.

This also means that while many people slowly go back to weaving their old patterns in life or enduring the grief and pain by suffering lifelong and choosing to sort of “sign out” from “life”, there are also many others who take this opportunity to go deeper into the consciousness by redefining their lives. While none of this can be judged as a “right” or “wrong” way, it is fascinating to observe the last kind.



Dr. Chandrasekhar

These “victims” of life’s tragedies awake into an expanded consciousness and become creators of their own new destiny. Feeling the pain and suffering of fellow humans, they take it upon them to alleviate it and thus finding joy in their happiness. These beacons of light have shown the path not only to the poor in money but also to the poor in spirit. One such story is that of Dr. Chandrasekhar Sankurathri, the light behind Sankurathri foundation.

Having lost his wife and two young children (aged 3 and 6) in 1985, in a dreadful Air India disaster, Dr.Chandrasekhar Sankurathri was groping in darkness for some time, desperately seeking answers and meaning to what came upon him. Feeling the need to do something useful for others in order to find meaning in his existence, Dr.Chandrasekhar made his journey from Ottawa where he was a successful biologist working with Health Canada, back to the small town of Kakinada in India.

In the loving memory of his family the Sankurathri foundation was born, whose goals were to promote rural community development through education, health care and disaster relief programs.This foundation operates three institutions:

Sarada Vidyalayam: Since its inception in 1992, Sarada Vidyalayam (providing free schooling for rural children), named after Dr.Chandrasekhar's daughter has grown from one to ten grades and graduated more than 1,600 children. It boasts of a zero drop-out rate as against the national average of 50%. The fees, books, uniforms, transportation, meals, milk and even medical checkups are provided free of cost by the foundation. All the students need to contribute is discipline and a keenness to learn.

Srikiran Institute of ophthalmology: Rural India lacks the awareness regarding prevention and detection of eye ailments, which when treated early can prevent complete blindness. The Srikiran Institute of Ophthalmology, named after Dr.Chandrasekhar's son, has been providing extensive eye care to people through one base hospital, one city centre, four vision centers, community out-reach programs and children's outreach programs. The base hospital with 126 beds and modern outpatient facilities maintains world class standards for providing eye care. Thus far, more than 1,670,000 outpatient treatments and over 1, 71,000 surgeries were performed by the eye hospital. Almost 90% of the patients receive free eye care, including surgery.



Children offering prayer before eating



Dr. Chandrasekhar's Family

Spandana: This Disaster Relief program was initiated in 1998 after observing several cyclones and floods and the suffering of people affected by them. Based on the observations and discussions with affected people the program is designed to provide basic necessities to displaced persons to help them until they can move back into their homes. These people are immediately provided with food, drinking water, medical checkups, medicines and clothes.

Winning numerous awards, recognitions and accolades, nationally and world-wide, hasn't in anyway diluted the spirit and passion that the foundation carries. Dr.Chandrasekhar and his foundation haven't slowed down in their tracks but continue to expand their spirit and service for upliftment of rural India in many ways.

Nachiketa Tapovan, salutes this real life hero whose story, we hope, will continue to inspire many more lives to perform service to mankind with an outstanding spirit.

Please visit www.sankurathri.org for more information.

- Harini Nandakuru

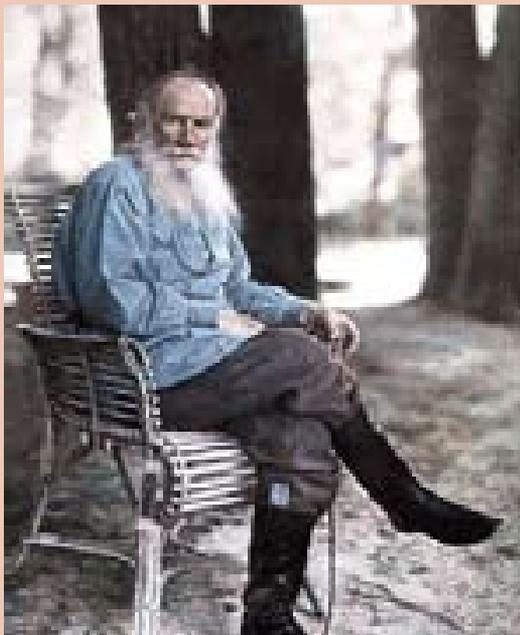




An Eternal Truth Seeker

Does Literature have the potential to influence people? If it does, to what extent? These have been the unanswered questions that test human caliber. But there is an instance in the world of literature that changed the attitude of an otherwise ordinary man and in fact worked as route map for him to bring freedom for his nation. That 'ordinary' man attained 'extraordinary' status in the hearts of his compatriots. The man being referred to is Mahatma Gandhi and the great personality who influenced his life through literary works is **Leo Tolstoy**. Tolstoy is undoubtedly one of the greatest writers of all times.

Leo Tolstoy inspired Mahatma Gandhi with the idea of non-cooperation. Gandhiji's principles of truth and non-violence almost resemble the principles of morality and spirituality, etc. taught by Tolstoy. Leo Tolstoy was a renowned novelist of Russia whose life was a great saga. He was born on 9th September 1828. His parents died at a very tender age. He joined Kajan University, but returned to his Estate in 1847. He wanted to continue his studies but failed to do so. He liked his life in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. He enjoyed all worldly comforts as he was from a royal family. But later he developed an aversion



to those comforts. He started to question- 'what is man's life for'? He joined the Army but could not continue due to the oppression of tribes during war times. He reminisced about his childhood days during those times and wrote "Childhood" a novel, apart from many stories for children. He wrote stories till 1863 but every story depicted morality and ethics as an undercurrent. He introduced a new model of education for farmers' children and also wrote books that helped them pursue education. He married Sonya in 1862. After 15 years of married life and having fathered 13 children he wrote "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina". It took seven years for him to write "War and Peace", his best-known work. This novel portrays Napoleon who invaded Russia in 1812; it depicts the Russians' reaction and aspirations. This work also depicts the theoretical and moral basis of the war. Tolstoy was also an outstanding social thinker. He wrote "A Confession," a book that spoke volumes of his struggle in knowing the realities of life. He could not find peace in the preaching of philosophers. He found solace in the words of a farmer who said, "We should not only live for ourselves but also live for the service of the Lord". These words changed the attitude of this great writer. His philosophy was coupled with great detachment. He said that God's Existence should be believed in, for cleansing one's soul. Teachings of Christ, Resurrection, Wisdom of Children, etc., are some of his other works. Particularly "Resurrection" brought a change in his life. He quit smoking and drinking. He adopted a life of austerity, wore plain clothes like farmers, worked in fields, and decided not to depend on others for his needs anymore. He participated in charity works. He became popular among the masses and people used to throng to his place. His message was simple: "Try to learn the beauty of life yourself". He denounced the way Britons treated Indians. His wife differed with his opinions and took copyrights of his works till 1880. He could not adjust with his family members who were leading a lavish life. He left home along with his youngest daughter Alexandra and his personal doctor. Where he was headed was not known but he was found dead on 20-11-1910, in a remote railway station after suffering from pneumonia.

- *Rajasekhar M*



PARENTS NATURALLY!!!



Parenting is a tough job. The toughest, if you ask me. There is retirement in all other professions, a businessman, software professional, a tailor or any other form of work. But, once a parent is always a parent. You may have promotions, as a grandparent or even a great-grandparent. But, the 'parent' is forever. You cannot even divorce it.

More so, for a conscientious parent, it gets even tougher. The questions always loom around, 'Am I a good parent?' If the kid learns slowly, 'Am I not teaching him properly?' If he learns very well, 'Am I not teaching him enough?' If he jumps around you all the time, 'Am I making him too dependent on me?' If he does not care, 'Am I not teaching compassion?' The doubts are endless and so are the situations requiring decisions.

Recently, I had the chance to encounter two very different sets of parents. There was a pair of bulbuls that had built their nest in our balcony. They kept chirping loud every time we went there. We knew about the nest and that there might be eggs and little birds but never knew that they were actually there until the parents allowed them their first outing. The chirping parents just drowned out the little chirps from the chicks all the time. Even when they were out, the parents kept hovering about, continuously chirping, probably instructing, 'be careful', 'left leg first', 'not that wing' and so on. The chicks even went as far down as the ground floor and then way back up under such able guidance.

This was in such marked contrast with the mother cat that had brought its kittens to our house sometime back. It never meddled with

the little ones. Whether they played, fell, fought or anything at all, it was up to them. The only time she really held them was when a male cat came around looking for the kittens as food. Otherwise, they were practically on their own.

Even the feeding pattern was different. The cat simply lay there. It was for the little ones to go to her and suckle up their milk, while the other parent, the bird, fed the food right down the throat.

They were also different in that the birds were parents who took utmost care whereas with the cats - the mother cat was on her own, with the male actually being a predator rather than the protector.



Such contrast!! Such marked difference!! But the Bulbuls are just as successful as the cats. Both the species are surviving and thriving in spite of different parenting techniques. In Nature, there seems to be no right or wrong way of parenting.

Only different ways. It seems to be purely instinctual. As humans, it is probably this instinct that we have lost out on, with the latest technology giving us all the information we need at the click of a button. We need to rediscover our own parental instincts that Nature has given us to perform a balancing act between the bird and the cat.

But one important lesson learnt is that both the species let go of the young ones. If we can practise this point of 'letting go' our child when he is ready, at every stage of life, we could become better parents, following the rules of Nature.

- *Subha Ganesh*



Creative Hands



P. Shekar
5th Standard



Sai Charan
6th Standard



Creating artful work builds confidence in the young ones which is key especially because of the societal layers they come from. Because there is not just one right way to make art, every child can feel pride in his or her original artistic creations.

We present here the work of little hands of Vidya Mandir, which expressed their tribute to Lord Vinayaka on the occasion of Vinayaka Chaturthi



V. Mahesh Raju
6th Standard

Ganesh is son of Paramesh
He is also called as Vignesh
Ganesh's vehicle is the mouse
He is worshipped in every house.



Durga
10th Standard



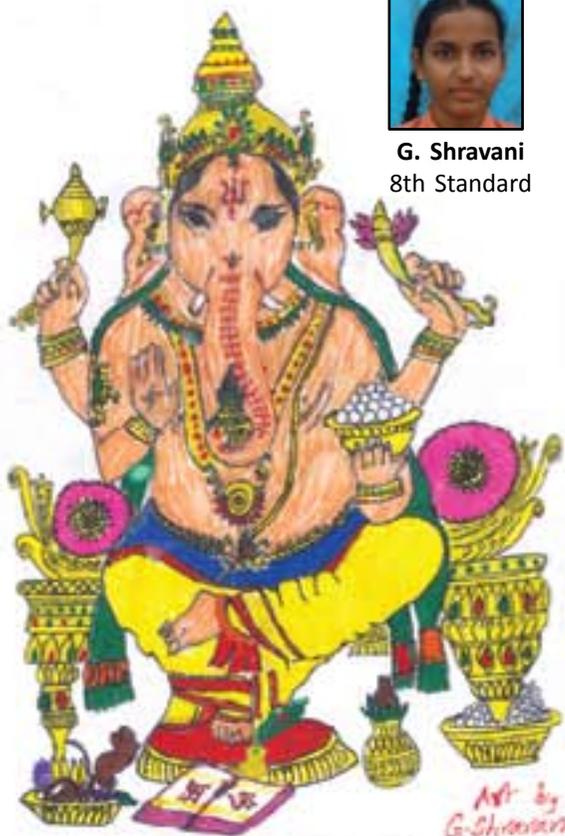
K. Ramesh
6th Standard



A. Shailaja
8th Standard



G. Shravani
8th Standard





Vegetarianism

‘Vegetarianism’ is one word that sparks many doubts and debates. Why should one be vegetarian? Is it for anatomical, ethical, philosophical or health reasons that certain cultures advocate vegetarianism? Does being vegetarian indicate or expedite one’s spiritual progress? These and many other questions require pondering over and as a result there are many pro and counter arguments of the concept-‘vegetarianism’. In the end, it all boils down to one’s philosophical convictions.

Vegetarianism and Human anatomy: So why are people vegetarian? Because, being vegetarian is natural! Human anatomical equipment- teeth, jaws, and digestive system collectively, favors a fleshless diet and bears resemblances with herbivores than carnivores. An 18th century Swedish botanist, naturalist and medical doctor named Karl von Linné stated: “Man’s structure, external and internal, compared with that of the other animals, shows that fruit and succulent vegetables constitute his natural food.”¹

Vegetarianism and non-violence: The simplest of the reasons offered in favor of vegetarianism is non-violence- that you do not want to kill something with life for your food, “How can one, who eats the flesh of others to swell his flesh, show compassion?”² Another common reason for choosing vegetarianism is based in religion. One of the religions that promotes it is Hinduism. However the fact that there are many non-vegetarian Hindus invites counter-arguments supported by instances from Vedic period making it difficult to justify not eating meat for reasons of religion.

Vegetarianism and Health & Nutrition: It is a general opinion that eating meat builds body, gives strength, stamina and physical endurance whereas vegetarian diet provides sustenance but doesn’t score high in amounts of protein, and hence is digested quickly. It is beyond doubt that protein is essential for cell repair and tissue growth but there are vegetarian sources that provide a complete spectrum of amino acids.

Vegetarianism and Source of Energy:

The primary source of energy is the Sun. All organisms on the Earth derive energy from the Sun in one form or the other. The pigment melanin, present in most animals absorbs Sunlight but cannot use it for nutritional purposes. Plants are the only organisms which can absorb and convert Sun’s light through a process called photosynthesis into food and store it in a form available to other organisms. Since we cannot absorb energy directly from the Sun, we have to consume it from the next closest source which is plant kingdom. It is easy to digest the simple cells of plants and release the energy from these cells. It does not take too long for this energy to be released into our body. Animals and birds are the secondary and tertiary sources of energy. So, they have a complex cell structure in which they store this energy, so it needs more time to release this energy. They sit in the stomach and our bodies need to work extremely hard to obtain the energy. This phenomenon can be observed in the amount of time it takes one to cook non-vegetarian food versus vegetarian food.



Vegetarianism and Resource requirement:

Statistics show that resources needed for vegetarian food are minimal. By being a non-vegetarian we use up the resources of the Earth. Raising animals for food requires massive amounts of land, food, energy, and water. What one acre of land can produce for a vegetarian will take at least 15 acres of land for a non vegetarian. In the Gita, Lord Krishna says it is the Lord who is dwelling in all living organisms and He is the one who is digesting the food through four ways: munching, licking, drinking, and sucking. When He describes these four methods, He is not only mentioning the ability of a human being but of all living beings. There is God in the plants that make food from the soil. The plants are in turn eaten by animals or human beings. In other words, the life

¹Reference: <http://www.krishnapath.org/>

²TIRUVALLUVAR, Tirukkural.



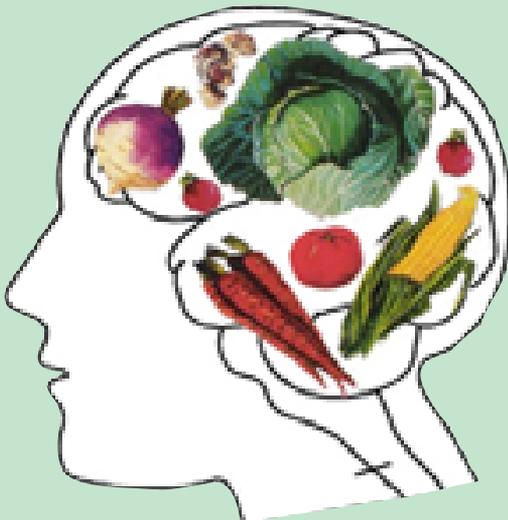


in animals and human beings is the Divinity which was in the plants. When humans or animals die, the bacteria will eat their physical beings. This is the cycle of Divinity. This cycle keeps going on at all times. But we tend to interpret that, God lives in the human being and the whole world is provided as food for the human being, so he or she is to eat whatever comes in his path to maintain his or her life. The arrogance of man is hidden in this thought process. Man feels that God has special care for man and that He created the whole world for man to consume. But this is man's imagination.

Vegetarianism and Consciousness:

One very important aspect that we need to consider while eating or discussing food is consciousness. Life should support life, which is Divinity. In other words, consciousness supports consciousness. Human beings and some members of animal kingdom recognize and respect this consciousness and its manifestation. This is amply demonstrated by pet animals and tamed wild animals. They not only respect but also protect you. For example, a Shepherd dog protects his master and his belongings.

But only Human beings have mental faculties and freedom to kill or not kill an animal. He has the freedom to eat a bird, an animal, or to be vegetarian. He has the freedom to respect this consciousness and its manifestations or not to do so. Humans have the freedom to eat the consciousness or Divinity which is in the form of plants or animals.



Among organic entities, plants have some freedom in manifesting consciousness. They have the ability and freedom to grow but not the freedom of locomotion. Animals can grow and move as well but their degree freedom of consciousness is smaller than that of humans. They may appear to be organizing a few things such as building a nest, migrate, form groups etc., but their organization is programmed and based on instinct. The highest degree of its manifestation is in the human race. Because he respects the consciousness, his survival is the survival of the highest form of consciousness. In order to survive he relies on the lowest manifestation of degree of consciousness which is in matter. Once this exhausts or doesn't meet his needs, he goes to the next higher level which is plants instead of animals. Seeking food in the lowest possible level of consciousness denotes his respect to the consciousness which is innately there in the human being. So vegetarianism essentially echoes man's respect for consciousness rather than the consideration of himsa vs ahimsa, or killing vs not killing. Only in instances when or where the plants are not available to man, then he seeks to eat meat. This is what has been illustrated in the Vedas and earlier texts- in the hilly regions where there is a lot of snow and the climate is not conducive to the growth of plants, there people ate meat, after offering it to God.

Eating vegetarian food is commonly often associated with spirituality. However, there were many great saints like Jesus Christ, Guru Nanak, Prophet Mohammed, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda who ate either meat and/or fish illustrating that vegetarianism does not necessarily cause one to being more or less spiritual. Nevertheless, in the initial stages, vegetarianism might be helpful to a spiritual aspirant due to its simplicity and quick digestibility. Like they say, "you are what you eat!"

Condensed from 'Vegetarianism: A series of lectures' by Sri N.V.Raghuram, International Yoga Professor at Vivekananda Yoga University, Bangalore, India





Sanjeevani - The Elixir of Life

Lord Hanuman brought the Sanjeevani to cure Lakshmana during the war against Ravana and it was a magnanimous effort. Aspiring to make good healthcare accessible to all, Nachiketa Tapovan has made a humble effort to give free medical aid to the deprived through our free dispensary Sanjeevani, on all Sundays from 10 am - 12.30 pm. Patients from the nearby slums are given free medical consultation and medicines since its inception in September 2005.

Services of various specialists are provided at the Free Special Health Camps organized by Nachiketa Tapovan on the 1st Sunday of every month. Long lines of potential patients get registered and screened for various ailments. An enthusiastic team of doctors render their free services and volunteers help in escorting the patients to their respective rooms. After screening by the specialists, volunteers create lists of all patients who need further treatment and guide them to the respective hospitals. In case of need for spectacles the requirement is taken and free spectacles are given in a couple of weeks. Our patients range from newborns to 80 year olds. Interest is stimulated in the patients regarding personal hygiene and preventive suggestions given to ward off dreadful diseases. The free medical aid has made stupendous difference in the lives of the patients.

Apart from this, the health and personal hygiene of students of Nachiketa Tapovan's Vidya Mandir is also closely monitored. Personal screenings are conducted for blood, eye, ear and dental disorders and necessary treatment is given.

Around 3083 patients got benefitted by our ENT, Eye, Dental, Pediatric, Diabetic, Ortho, Dermatology, Oncology, Gynecology and Acupressure health camps.

Our success is the result of the collective efforts of doctors and volunteers. We owe our gratitude to all doctors and health professionals who have shared their invaluable expertise and services and we duly acknowledge the commendable efforts of Dr Amulya, Dr Rohini, Dr Shiva Reddy, Dr Ramesh, Dr Sudhakar Reddy, Dr Chendrayudu, Dr Kavitha, Dr Vijayalakshmi, Dr Surendra,

Dr P. Ranga Rao, Dr Surekha and Dr Sukhaveni.

Statistics of Free Medical Camps

No. of patients treated	Year
806	2005
2806	2006
1892	2007
2520	2008
2558	2009
2268	2010

Special acknowledgement to the group of young volunteers of Tapovan, Tulasi, Manga and Smt Vijaya for their noble services to the needy.



Patients waiting for their turn



Volunteers of Tapovan distributing medicines





Doctors in action



Free Eye Camp at Nachiketa Tapovan

Nachiketa Tapovan conducted a free eye camp for the underprivileged on Sunday, July 24th 2011. Over eighty people from the nearby hamlets attended and benefitted from the camp. Dr. Atul Gupta who is an Ophthalmologist in Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital and Apollo Clinics examined the patients and identified seven of the patients as requiring surgery. Thirty patients were prescribed eye glasses for defective vision. We thank Dr. Gupta, his group of technicians and the volunteers immensely for conducting the eye camp.



Dr Atul Gupta and his team





Mind or Heart?!



Q: I am really confused about my career path and future. At one time, I feel the clarity in my thoughts and at other times, it's all confusion, which is taking its toll on me. I would be blessed if you could help clear my confusion.

In particular I am not sure if I should go for campus placements that offer handsome packages or go for civil services that could help me realize my dreams of serving people. I learnt from internships that I enjoy working with people and serving them in some manner. However, an immediate income through job is lucrative as it will quickly help me realize my dream of setting up a school for the less privileged children. A third alternative is to take up a job for a couple of years and then pursue civil services.

I shall be grateful for your guidance in this matter.

A: First of all I commend your hard work that has placed you in a position where you have different options to choose from. God Bless You. I am also very proud of you that when most of the youngsters are totally absorbed and obsessed with their selves, you are able to think beyond yourself and about the country. Be aware and be in touch of that part of yourself at all times and all stages of life.

First, if the heart doesn't lie in the work being done, it will only stress a person out in the long run. Secondly, there is nothing wrong in wanting to make money, the means and end of making are what give it a color. Further, values and culture add fragrance to it. Hence, selflessness and money is a potent combination. Unfortunately, today money is in the hands of extremely insecure and selfish people which explains the sad state of affairs.

My theory is that there is always a pool of resources in the world and certain number of points drawing from that pool (e.g. if it was U.S. then, now it is China, India). If good people don't avail it, money will fall into selfish hands.

In conclusion, I feel it is best to start with a corporate job that gives you a good financial foothold. Nevertheless, relentlessly continue planning towards realizing your dreams and ambitions. I suggest that in order not to lose touch with your true self, allot yourself a small service activity every day. This will help avoid the trap that the gossamer of money holds.

Set yourself a period of 3-4 years in the job, make a road map of goals and plans for yourself, in writing, for those 3-4 years. Enjoy your work and give it your best without second thoughts and regrets. However at the end of the target period, sit down with your road map, assess your achievements and then you will certainly know which path to pursue.

Hope this helps. No matter what you decide, our prayers and blessings are with you. Like I tell my 21 yr old daughter- "Life is a piggy bank. If each small step you take is right, you don't have to worry about the big leaps because God will take care of those". With good intentions, hard work and a good heart, your investments are bound to give good returns. Here I share my favorite quote:

"And, when you want something, the entire universe conspires in helping you achieve it."

— Paulo Coelho

Readers are welcome to send or email their questions and concerns to 'Counsel Corner', nachiketanjali1@gmail.com

Festivals of the Month



GANESH CHATURTHI



Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated by Hindus around the world as the birthday of Lord Ganesha. It is observed in the Hindu month of Bhadrapad (September) on Bhadrapadha Shuddha Chaturthi. This festival is celebrated for 10 days and Lord Ganesha is worshipped in many forms. On the 11th day which is Ananta Chaturdashi, the idol is taken in a procession for immersion. It is recommended that we should pray to Lord Ganesha with faith and devotion to remove all obstacles not only in our worldly path but also the spiritual path. May Lord Ganesha grant us liberation from birth and death. In 2011 Ganesh Chaturthi will be celebrated on **1st September**.

MAHALAYA AMAVASYA



Mahalaya Amavasya or Pitru Amavasya is the No-moon day in the Mahalaya Paksha Shradh. Mahalaya Amavasya is the last day of Pitru Paksha, the fortnight of Bhadrapad (September) dedicated to offer Shradh rituals to our dead ancestors. On this day, a conjunction of sun and moon occurs. As per Hindu beliefs, on this auspicious day, dead ancestors leave their place and arrive in our world and live in the houses of their descendants. Shradh rituals are performed and Brahmins and poor people are fed. The food offerings and other charity reach the departed souls and the dead ancestors pleased with the charity of their descendants bless them with longer and healthy lives. Let us propitiate the spirits of our ancestors with shanthi mantras (prayers for peace). In 2011 Mahalaya Amavasya date is **27th September**.

VAMANA JAYANTHI



Lord Vamana is the 5th Avatar among the Dashavatars of Lord Maha Vishnu. The day of the manifestation of this avatar is celebrated as Vamana Jayanthi by the Vaishnavites. Devotees who observe this festival, go on a fast from the previous day and do a night long jagaran. The next day they throng the Vishnu temples and offer prayers to receive the Lord's blessings. In 2011 Vamana Jayanthi will be celebrated on **9th September**.

DURGA NAVARATRI



Durga Navaratri or Sharad Navaratri is celebrated for nine days in the month of Ashwin (October). The pujas start on the consecutive day of Mahalaya Amavasya. Devotees take a dhiksha for performing the Navaratri puja and observe fast on all the 9 days. Significance of Durga Navaratri puja is mentioned in several Puranas. The Goddess is decorated in nine different forms. The first three days are dedicated to Goddess Lakshmi, the next three days to Goddess Saraswathi and the last three days to Goddess Durga. Idols of Goddess Durga are worshipped for 9 nights and immersed in water on the 10th day which is celebrated as Vijaya Dasami- the victory of good over evil. Navaratri festival signifies wealth, prosperity and knowledge. Sharad Navaratri puja starts on **September 28th 2011**.



इबलइकरोतु इइइउण = इङ्गेतएण

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

(Contd from previous issue)

Bahuvacanam

Turning to 'akArAnta' (अकारान्त) neutral gender words, '-am' at the end becomes '-Ani', like:

भवनम् (building) – भवनानि

पुस्तकम् (book) - पुस्तकानि

मन्दिरम् (temple) - मन्दिराणि

पुष्पम् (flower) – पुष्पाणि

Notice that the 'nakArA' (न) sometimes becomes 'NakArA' (ण). (The presence of 'ra' or 'Sha' in the word before 'na' might turn it into a 'Na'.) Examples of sentences could be:

भवनानि विलसन्ति (Buildings flourish)

पुस्तकानि उत्तमानि (Books are good)

मन्दिराणि सन्ति (Temples are (there))

पुष्पाणि विकसन्ति (Flowers blossom)

Pronouns are different. Look at the following carefully:

सः – ते / एषः – एते / कः? – के?

सा – ताः / एषा – एताः / का? – काः?

तत् – तानि / एतत् – एतानि / किम्? – कानि?

भवान् – भवन्तः

भवती – भवत्यः

अहम् – वयम्

Accordingly, examples of sentences involving these are:

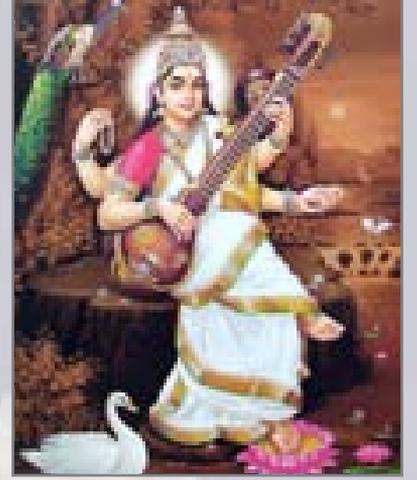
सः पश्यति – ते पश्यन्ति (They see)

सा प्रक्षालयति – ताः प्रक्षालयन्ति (They - females at a distance - wash)

कः शृणोति? – के शृण्वन्ति? (Who listen?)

किम् अस्ति? – कानि सन्ति? (Which are (there)?)

अहं गच्छामि – वयं गच्छामः (We go). Notice the '-Ami' at the end of a singular verb changes to '-AmaH' in plural of the First Person usage.



Brahmarpanam



**Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir
Brahmagnau Brahmana Hutam
Brahmaiva Tena Ghantavyam
Brahmakarma Samadhinaha**



Meaning:

The act of offering is “Brahma”. The offering itself is “Brahma”. The offering is done by “Brahma” in the sacred fire which is “Brahma”. He alone attains “Brahma” who in all actions is fully absorbed in “Brahma”.

Explanation:

Brahmarpanam – Sacrifice for whom? Sacrifice for the Brahman. Brahman means we are also Brahman, because we are all fragmental parts of the Supreme Being. Just like particles of gold is also gold, similarly, we are fragmental portions of the Supreme Being.

Brahma Havir - What we are offering or sacrificing belongs to Supreme Brahman.

Brahmagnau - The digestive fire is the energy of Supreme Brahman.

Brahmanahutam – The person offering is also a part and parcel of the Supreme Brahman.

Brahmaiva Tena Ghantavyam – In this way if we offer sacrifice, the person who is offering such sacrifice is sure to attain spiritual salvation.

Brahmakarma - Samadhina – So in this way, if we execute our daily duties, we shall attain Brahman in the end.

Significance:

The Brahmarpanam mantra is a very powerful mantra after reciting which the food is converted into prasada, since it has been offered to God. Partaking of such food, results in purification of our body, mind and soul.

Be like Camphor

Once, a coconut, a banana and camphor got into a conversation. The coconut started the conversation and declared “I am the strongest among the three of us and also the eldest”. Immediately the banana replied, “No, no, I am the sweetest and also the softest.” Camphor listened to this conversation silently. Just then the lady of the house entered the prayer room and started the prayer by breaking the coconut. The banana was peeled and offered as Naivedhya. But when the camphor was lit, it got burnt without leaving any traces.

This gives us a beautiful message. If we are egoistic like the coconut, one day our ego is bound to be shattered. If we are soft like the banana, people will take advantage of us. We would rather be like the camphor; shedding light around us and merging with the Divine, and attaining moksha (liberation) ultimately.





Guru Purnima Celebrations at Tapovan

The full moon day in the Hindu month of Ashad (July-August) is observed as the auspicious day of Guru Purnima, a day sacred to the memory of the great sage Vedavyasa. This day commemorates anew the ancient concept of the Guru and pays homage to the 'Guru Tattwa' for it is said that the "Guru is the only guarantee for the individual to transcend the bondage of sorrow and death, and experience the Consciousness of the Reality." This year it was observed on July 15th 2011.

Special Homa was performed in the Dhyana Mandir of Nachiketa Tapovan by Swami Shivananda Puri (Mataji) on this occasion, in the presence of Vidya Mandir children, teachers and other staff. Mataji explained the significance of the day to the children and talked about how Guru should be revered. She explained that true homage to the Guru is given not by mere show of worship and puja but by sincerely making an effort to walk in his footsteps and follow the teachings. All that were present obtained the blessings of Mataji and enjoyed the Prasad, snacks and new uniforms that were distributed to the children.

This was followed by another special Homa performed by Swami Shivananda Puri at the residence of Smt. Subhadra. Swami Nachiketananda Puri (Swamiji) graced the occasion. Patrons and

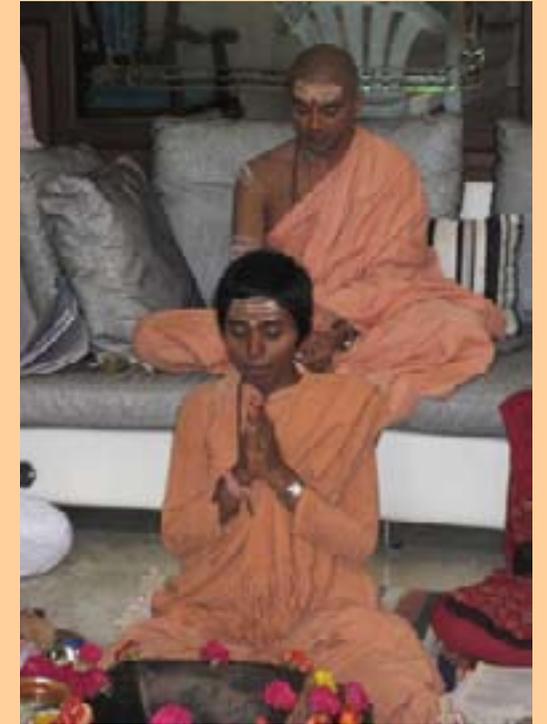
volunteers of Nachiketa Tapovan attended the Homa and Satsang. The Homa concluded with devotional bhajans and a brief meditation. Swamiji addressed the gathering about the supreme importance of Sadhana in one's spiritual life. He pointed out that the only sure way to progress in one's spiritual life is Sadhana.

He explained that in the beginning, just immersing oneself completely in any act, be it dance, music or any other work or art can be one's Sadhana. The key is to Divinize the actions be it mundane, intellectual or artistic.

Swamiji expressed that each and everyone regard Mataji as an ideal example of a true disciple. He pointed out that the task is difficult but not impossible to take on the spiritual quest more ardently and whole-heartedly. The significance of Pranayama was also stressed as a great tool for "withdrawing from the outside and entering the inner realms".

The Satsang concluded with distribution of Prasad by Swamiji and Mataji. A delicious lunch was served to the guests after the event.

Sri Gurubhyom Namaha!!!





Go Green

RED FACTS

The Earth in 2050

Existing natural resources shall be totally exhausted

- Days left until the end of oil- 15,521 (and counting)
- Days left until the end of gas- 60,948 (and counting)
- Days left until the end of coal- 152,118 (and counting)



The Earth - Our Home Sweet Home

Going green is no longer a catchy CSR tagline or a weekend hobby to indulge in.

Going green is a lifestyle statement. Going green is a personal choice.

It's a radical shift in the way you look at the world around you. It's the awareness you bring into every activity you perform, consequential or inconsequential.

This world is all we have. It's the one home and the only option we have.

Let's make the most of today, before it becomes too late tomorrow.

Let's Go Green.

WHY Go Green?

The world we live in is exploding with population and depleting in resources. Not a

Go Green Update

We are happy to announce that 2100 kg of recyclable waste was collected in the month of July 2011. This means that,

- our landfills were spared from 2100 kg of waste material
- 2100 kg of waste was recycled properly and efficiently
- Vidya Mandir of Nachiketa Tapovan earned Rs. 10,510/-

GREEN FACTS

By recycling one ton of paper

- You can save 17 large trees
- 7,000 gallons of water
- 380 gallons of oil and
- enough energy for a home for six months.

So, **paper saved is water saved.**



very favorable equation. We must stop living in our own, isolated homes and look at the world as our home. Let's not turn our backs to all the signs Mother Nature is giving us. It's time to make a change.

HOW to Go Green?

The Go Green page in Nachiketa is an initiative we have taken as a social organization. You can volunteer with us- your time would be the best donation! Also, we will be featuring regular 'Green' tips so you can easily make the radical shift from Red to Green.

Go Green Today :

- Use energy saving appliances
- Use water judiciously
- Reduce Reuse Recycle Plastic



Green Home Idea:

Collect water from washing vegetables, fruits, rice and use it to water plants and soaking up soiled dishes.

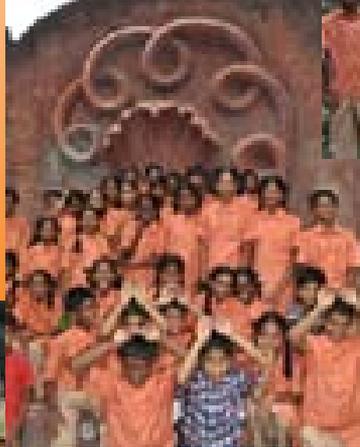
Please send your green ideas to nachiketanjali1@gmail.com



Events

Zoo Trip

On July 23rd 2011, our generous and enthusiastic volunteer, Radhika Bansal sponsored the transportation for a day out to the zoo for 5th and 6th grade children of Vidya Mandir. Four of our teachers chaperoned the children for the outing and for many of the children it was their first experience to see the wild animals and their habitats.



They saw animals and birds they have been learning about in science and never expected to see. They got to wear their best clothes, see sights, and hear noises all new to them. It was a day of adventure, fun, education and team spirit.



Crafts Exhibition

July was a very busy month for the crafts section at Nachiketa. We had four exhibitions. The handicrafts made by the children were appreciated by one and all. We would like to thank Navita Bagaria who opened her house for the exhibition. We would also like to thank Crafts Council of Hyderabad, Deepshikha Club president Smt. Neeta Jain, Deepmela in-charge Smt. Padma Sultania, Veena Marda, Shobha Bansal, Jaya Daga and Aparna Reddy "Petals" for giving us space in their exhibition to display our products.





Inviting writers for Nachiketanjali!

A humble and ardent endeavor of Nachiketa Tapovan is our monthly magazine, "Nachiketanjali". The magazine offers an arena to showcase reflections and expressions of truth, values, spirituality, viewpoints and concerns of every day existence.

We're looking for true, original, personal essays or poetry that befits the pulse of the magazine. Articles can also relate to topics on Philosophy, our cultural heritage, great Indian personalities and our great epics.

This is a wonderful opportunity to discover and share your positive ideas, dreams and reflections. As they say "Pen is mightier than the Sword" and is a great medium for motivating others, affecting positive change and building self-confidence.

Please note ...

- Articles selected and published will receive a gift subscription of Nachiketanjali for one year. They can keep it or gift to a friend
- Please encourage your friends or children to write too
- We particularly encourage young writers to participate
- Please keep the article under 300 words for one column and 500 words for one page
- Any number of Articles are accepted
- Please include your full name, address, date of birth and contact info
- Please send your articles to **nachiketanjali1@gmail.com**
- The Editor does not accept responsibility for the author's views.
- If you would like to mail in, our address is:



"Inviting Writers-Nachiketanjali"

Nachiketa Tapovan

Plot # 70, Phase 1, Kavuri Hills,
Madhapur, Guttalabegumpet,
Serilingampally
R.R Dist, Andhra Pradesh.



A request to the readers of Nachiketanjali

Dear Readers,

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Inside Page	15cm x 19cm	N. A.	₹ 5,000
Inside Strip	4cm x 15cm	N. A.	₹ 2,500



AN APPEAL TO PATRONS & SPONSORS



Ashraydatas are encouraged to become patrons of the magazine by joining Nachiketanjali's Patron's Scheme. Your donation will be deposited in the magazine's corpus fund. We express our thanks by announcing their names in the following issue of the Magazine. Donations received ₹ 5000/- and over will receive a 5 year subscription of the magazine.

Nachiketanjali ...an offering. Yes, I would like to

Subscribe / Renew _____ subscriptions to Nachiketanjali for 1 year/3 years/5years

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Donate ₹ _____ to Nachiketanjali corpus fund as patron

Amount of ₹ _____ is enclosed herewith by Draft/MO/Cheque/Cash (Add ₹ 30 for outstation cheques, drawn in favour of "Nachiketa Tapovan").

For fund transfer to bank account - Bank details shall be mailed to you, if you write to nachiketanjali1@gmail.com

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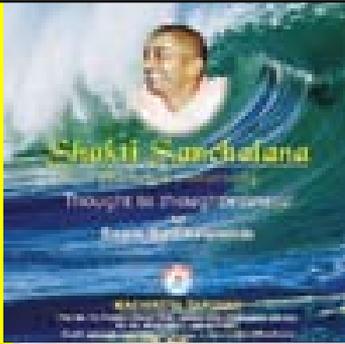
SPONSOR OPTIONS

*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 210 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.

Sponsor a Child for Lifetime	₹ 1 Lakh
Vidya Daanam (Education)	₹ 5200/year/child
Anna Daanam (Mid-day Meals)	₹ 4200/day
Alpa Aharam (Snacks)	₹ 700/day
Vastra Daanam (Uniforms)	₹ 800/2 pairs
Stationery Supplies (Copier Paper)	₹ 5000/term
Medicines (For needy people)	₹ 5000/month

PUBLICATION



A set of 8 'Yogic CDs'

The CDs comprise instructions given on different yogic techniques based on an extensive research done by Swami Nachiketananda and assisted by other Swamis and volunteers. 'Shakti sanchalana' is third of the series which takes you into the realms of Supreme Consciousness. All the CDs are available at the Nachiketa Tapovan premises at Kavuri Hills, and also in leading bookstores.

Cost of each CD is Rs. 20/-

*“Forgetting the Self is Death,
remembering It is Life”.*

- Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi

With best wishes from

Griha Constructions, Chennai



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 210 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





Nachiketa Bala Vahini

It's a Learning for Life!

We provide children tools for a joyous living and help them blossom to their full potential. Bala Vahini provides value education, awareness and appreciation of our ancient Indian culture and heritage. We also teach yoga and pranayam to energize their mind and body.



Character Development



Indian Culture



Story Telling



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For Ages 5-15 yrs

Every Sunday starting July 10th 2011

Timings: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

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Nachiketa Tapovan

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Ph: 9849168937, website:www.nachiketatapovan.org

Invitation

We cordially invite you to attend our celebrations



Ganesh Chaturthi
1st September 2011
at 10 a.m.



Teachers' Day
5th September 2011
at 2 p.m.



Diya Sale
15th September 2011
onwards

Venue:

Nachiketa Tapovan,

Plot No. 70, Phase I, Kavuri Hills, Hyderabad.



Happy Vinayaka Chaturthi



Art by **Shiva**
10th Standard



Hotel Sri Brindavan
Nampally Station Road, Hyderabad



*“Nature is God’s miracle.
God, You did a great job!”*

