

# **Nachiketanjali**

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# *Maa Yoga Shakthi Peeth*



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**Contents**

**Page No.**

Editorial	2
Yes. I am a human being!	3
Srimad Bhagavad Gita	4
Yogasana	5
Shivasamhita	5
Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara	6
Whose world is it anyway?	7
My relationship with God	8
Johnny	9
Yuvanjali	10
The Animal School	10
Vaishnodevi Yatra	12
On Children	16
True Friends	16
Sow and you shall reap	17
Hari - Hara	18
Inspiration Galore...	20
One Rainy Day	21
Divine Soul	22
Natya - The Panchama Veda	23
Sumanjali	24
A Great Humanist	26
Prescription for Happiness	27
Sanskrit Lesson - Twenty	28
A trip to Vaishnodevi	28
Go Green	29
Celebrations	30
Birthday Celebrations	31
Inviting Writers	32
Subscriptions	33
Sponsor Options	34
An Appeal	35
Invitation	36

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## Cover Story



### ***Living in the moment!***

*Can anyone do this better than a child?*

*No remorse, no regret. No grief, no bitterness.*

*Such Grace, Innocence and Bliss that place them  
on the same pedestal as God*

*Because the smallest of the wonders  
give them immense joy*

*Sight of a butterfly is enough to  
generate a cascade of smiles*

*That can brighten up the darkest of the rooms*

*And lift up the heaviest of the glooms*

*As all good things come to end*

*The phase of childhood too doesn't last that long!*

*So, let's cherish those moments of children*

*When and where they come by*

*Because all children are God's angels*

*Isn't it a privilege to find something that*

*He loves so dearly*

*At the same time let's try to rekindle the  
Spirit of a child within us by shedding all the  
complexities and*

***Living in the moment...***

***- Annapurna R***

## Editorial

## REFLECTIONS

"Everyday should be a birthday. I want you to be always happy as you are today" - Swamiji's words on the occasion of His birthday were ringing in my ears even after I came home. Can this ever be possible? Maybe Yes! But this can be achieved only when we try to understand ourselves. Do we look the same as yesterday when we look at ourselves in the mirror? Every day brings change in our form. So do our lives. Today is not the same as yesterday neither can tomorrow be the same as today. In fact our lives keep changing every second the clock ticks. Our thoughts change in a fraction of a second. Every thought is new born.

As a child we were happy enjoying our Mother's love. We led a carefree life as we grew and it was only when we reached adulthood that our lives changed for the better or for the worse. Of course life of each and every individual varies. When we look at the reflections in our lives it becomes easier to retrospect on how much we have grown in all these years. And if we have chosen a spiritual path, have our lives changed for the better? Have we taken those steps to come closer to God? If the answer is yes then we should be surely spreading happiness around. If that is not the case then we should do a lot more retrospect. It is very important for us to realize how much we have grown. We should however review our lives from a new perspective. Based on this perspective we come to know how far we have come and how much more we all can grow.

When we retrospect on the past, reflect on the present and look towards the future with renewed energy, our lives become more meaningful. Our reflections would then reveal that we are happy with what we see in the mirror. And as Swamiji said, maybe everyday can be a birthday. Doing our best will make a difference not only to us but also to the society. When we clean the mirror of our mind it is possible to see the reflections of a happier world.

***- Subhadra K.***

# Yes. I am a human being!

I wanted to ask a simple question to people from different walks of life. So one day, I began my journey. The first person whom I met was from a royal family. I asked him, 'Who are you?' He just gave me an angry look and said, "Don't you see who I am? I am the King of Junagarh."

Then I saw another person and asked him the same question. He said, "Don't you know who I am? I am a politician, Member of Parliament. Don't you watch TV? I am seen often on news channels."

Then I met another person who was travelling by train. In reply to my question, he gave a beautiful smile and said, "The whole world knows me. I am a Magsaysay award winner." I was listening silently and trying to assess this person, his depth and his contribution to the society.

Next, I met another gentleman. When questioned he said, "I am Srivastava, working in an IT Company." Then another person said, "I am a businessman." Next person said, "I am a salesman." Somebody said, "I am an advocate" and other one said, "I am a famous doctor."

Next I met one lady. I asked the same question to her. She said, "Don't you see I am a lady and why do you want to know about me?"

Then I met a person who was wearing ochre robes. I asked him, 'Who are you?' He said, "My dear child, I am a Sannyasi. Look at my long hair, beard and above all, the ochre robes. I live on alms and never stay in one place. Many elite people are my disciples."

Then I met one more person. He said, "I am a social worker, working for the betterment of the society. Come and join me in the fight against the evils that exist in the society."

I entered a temple. When I put the same question, the man said, "I am the main priest in this temple." Outside the temple I met one person. He said, "I am a beggar. I beg for my survival. Please give me alms."

I met many and tried getting an answer to that question. At the end of the day I was feeling tired and totally exhausted. Probably it was more or less mental exhaustion than physical exhaustion. I saw a big shady tree and decided to rest for a while.

When I started contemplating on the answers given by people, I was more disappointed. I could not find a single person who said that she/he is a 'Human Being.' It was very painful and disgusting that people have lost their true identity and carrying the titles given by others or by themselves.

Why? Why doesn't a single person come forward and say, 'Yes! I am a human being. I always feel that the moment we experience we are human beings; we start working for the mankind. Unfortunately selfishness has engulfed our entire being where we lost the essence of being a 'Human Being' and in the process lost mankind forever.

If we want to keep the spirit of mankind alive then we should first drop our identities. Let us understand that we are all human beings. Let the identity called 'Human Being' get ripened in the process called Life. Then the phase will begin where 'Human' will get replaced by 'Divine'. Once again, let it get churned in the process called 'Selflessness' where 'Divine' gets dropped completely and what remains is 'Being'. That is our true identity. 'Being! Simply Being.' And this 'Being' has many synonyms and one such synonym is Atman... that which cannot be proclaimed but can be experienced and expressed silently.

So next time when somebody asks,  
"Who are you?"

Say proudly "Yes! I am a human being!"



- Swami Nachiketananda Puri

WHO  
ARE  
YOU?

# Srimad Bhagavad Gita

Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the profound wisdom of the Self, consists of 18 chapters and 700 slokas. The first chapter of Srimad Bhagavad Gita begins with Dhritarashtra enquiring Sanjaya as to what was happening in the battle of Kurukshetra.

Sloka1 from Chapter1 of Arjuna Vishada Yoga.

Dhritarashtra Uvacha : Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya-

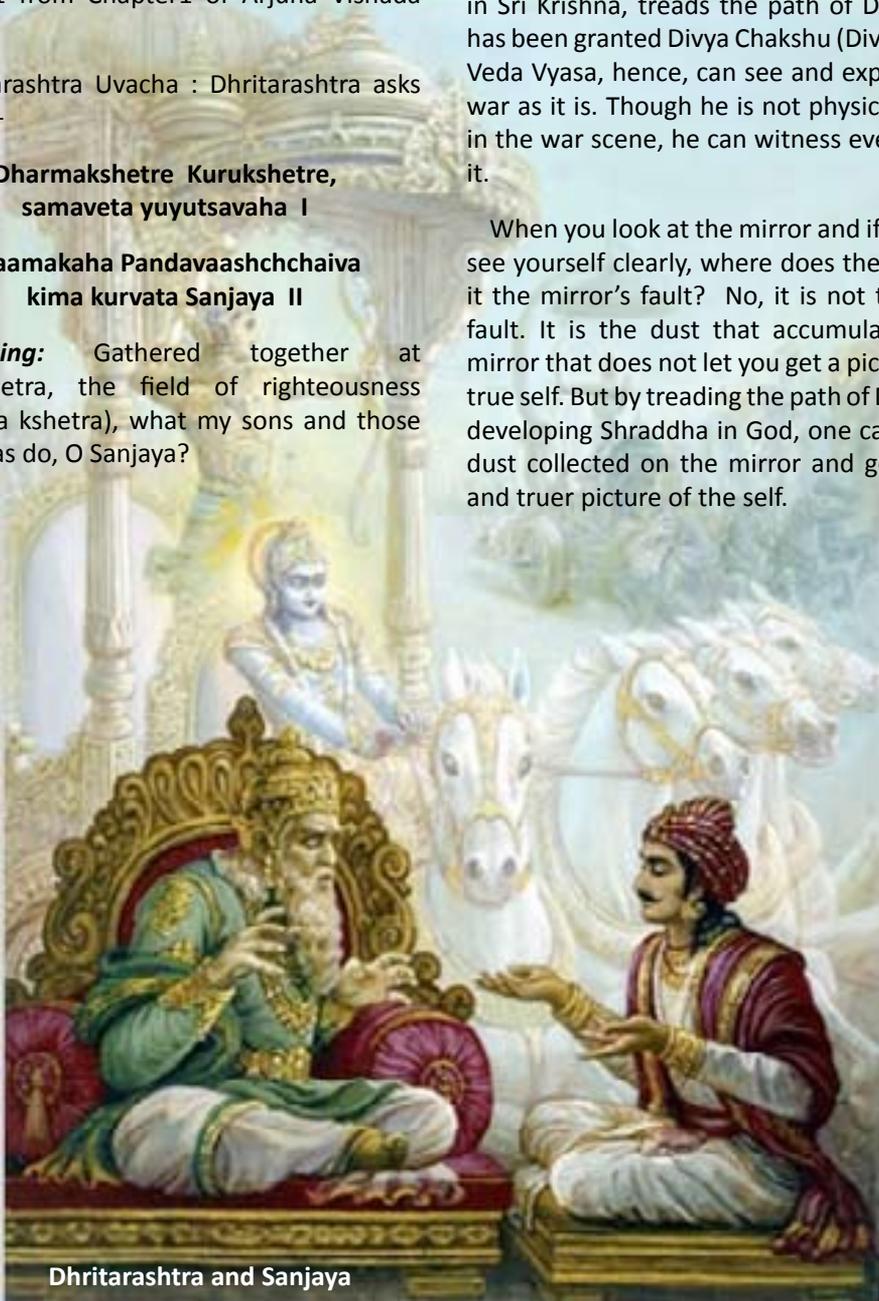
**Dharmakshetre Kurukshetre,  
samaveta yuyutsavaha I**

**Maamakaha Pandavaashchaiva  
kima kurvata Sanjaya II**

**Meaning:** Gathered together at Kurukshetra, the field of righteousness (Dharma kshetra), what my sons and those Pandavas do, O Sanjaya?

Dhritarashtra who is curious and also scared of Sri Krishna's decision of being a charioteer and the savior of Pandavas, is asking Sanjaya to relate the status quo. The physically and mentally blind and ignorant Dhritarashtra is able to perceive neither the situation of the war nor its progress. Whereas Sanjaya who has Shraddha in Sri Krishna, treads the path of Dharma, and has been granted Divya Chakshu (Divine eyes) by Veda Vyasa, hence, can see and experience the war as it is. Though he is not physically present in the war scene, he can witness every event of it.

When you look at the mirror and if you cannot see yourself clearly, where does the fault lie? Is it the mirror's fault? No, it is not the mirror's fault. It is the dust that accumulated on the mirror that does not let you get a picture of your true self. But by treading the path of Dharma and developing Shraddha in God, one can clean the dust collected on the mirror and get a clearer and truer picture of the self.



Dhritarashtra and Sanjaya

# Yogasana for Neck pain

Prior to everything, asana is spoken of as the first part of Hatha yoga. Having done asana, one gets steadiness (firmness) and lightness (flexibility) of the limbs or parts of the body. Apart from this, regular practice of Yogasanas assures a healthy body.

## Meru Vakrasana:



Sit on the floor; stretch your legs in front and place hands behind your body. Now inhale and bend your left leg at the knee, slowly cross your leg and place your left foot near the right knee on your right side. Turn slightly towards your right side keep your right hand behind your body by bending elbow slightly and left hand near your right buttock. Twist your head and trunk towards your right side. Make sure that your right hand and left hand are slightly closer to each other. This is the final posture. In final posture your head, neck and spine should be erect. While exhaling, release the posture. Repeat the practice for 5 rounds.

This asana can be performed by everyone. There are no contra-indications as such.

### Spiritual Benefits:

This asana activates the Manipura chakra which is situated in the spine behind the navel region.

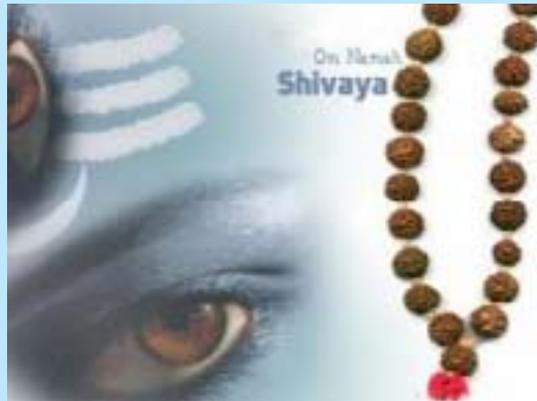
### General benefits:

It alleviates backache, neck pain, lumbago and mild forms of sciatica, stretches the spine, loosens the vertebrae and tones the nerves. In this asana, when we twist our head and trunk, there is an expansion of heart where you can feel your heart is full of vital energy.

- Maheshwari



## SHIVASAMHITHA - LAYAYOGA



**Evam vyavasita loke krityakrityavido janaah I**

**Vyamohameva gacchanti vimuktaah paapakarmabhihi II**

Being thus diversely engaged in this world, even those who still know what actions are good and what evil, though free from sin, become subject to bewilderment.





## *Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara*

**Sri Ramakrishna Says, 'Mind Is Like A Needle Covered With Mud, And God Is Like A Magnet.'**

**NEIGHBOUR:** "Sir, is it ever possible to realize God while leading the life of a householder?"

**MASTER:** "Certainly. But as I said just now, one must live in holy company and pray unceasingly. One should weep for God. When the impurities of the mind are thus washed away, one realizes God".

**The mind is like a needle covered with mud, and God is like a magnet. The needle cannot be united with the magnet unless it is free from mud. Tears wash away the mud, which is nothing but lust, anger, greed, and other evil tendencies, and the inclination to worldly enjoyments as well.**

As soon as the mud is washed away, the magnet attracts the needle, that is to say, man realizes God. Only the pure in heart see God. A fever patient has an excess of the watery element in his system. What can quinine do for him unless that is removed?

"Why shouldn't one realize God while living in the world? But, as I said, **one must live in holy company, pray to God, weeping for His grace, and now and then go into solitude. Unless the plants on a foot-path are protected at first by fences, they are destroyed by cattle.**"

**Source:** THE GOSPEL OF RAMAKRISHNA



Every wave of passion restrained is a balance in your favour. It is therefore good policy not to return anger for anger, as with all true morality. Christ said, "Resist not evil", and we do not understand it until we discover that it is not only moral but actually the best policy, for anger is loss of energy to the man who displays it. You should not allow your minds to come into those brain combinations of anger and hatred.

**- Swami  
Vivekananda**

# Whose World is it anyway?



This morning, I had gone out to the shoe rack to take my son's shoes out for polishing. I heard a sudden 'yelp' and turned to find a tiny hummingbird flying away to a nearby shrub. You see, this bird was a regular visitor to our house. It always came to use our just-washed car as its toilet. Probably a stickler for cleanliness who always used clean washrooms!! Today, I was outside probably slightly early and so had surprised it.

In the evening, I went to the balcony to dry out the clothes to be surprised by two little bulbul chicks sitting on the clothesline. The chicks were just as surprised and made to fly away while I backed off, apologising politely. After a few minutes, checking up if the coast was clear; I went to hang the clothes when the mother bulbul (I assumed) came with food in her mouth for the chicks. I told her they were not there. She went and brought the father as well and the two went on non-stop accusing me of driving their chicks away. I was trying to explain all the while that



I knew I was not expected at that time, but what could I do? It was raining and I had to hang my clothes in the balcony. It was really not my fault at all. But who was listening?! I was present at the scene of crime and that was that. Finally, through all the chirping, they looked around only to find the little ones just around the corner (branch, actually) and I was spared.

I was relieved to find the family of four together again and the relief of acquittal just gave way to immense anger and helplessness. This was my house. What was with all these members of the animal kingdom taking it over? I was treated like an intruder in a place that was rightfully mine. First, the cat with its kittens that had to be convinced that we had no malignant intentions before it would allow our entry into our store-room. Then, there were the first pair of bulbuls who raised such a hue-and-cry if we so much as stepped into our balcony. Then, the morning humming-bird who would not allow us to stand in our porch at its time of morning call. And now, these birds. Was this my house or what?

OR WAS IT? My better self had just woken up (must be a late riser). 'Is this not what you have done to THEIR home? They were here much before you and your species came about'. How true! The earth was theirs much before our time. The forests were theirs. But, we humans have taken over everything as if the world was solely ours. We read about elephants wrecking havoc in farmers' fields, leopards entering 'households', when we are the ones who have invaded their home and have taken over the resources that God had meant for all.

Now, whenever I go out, I try to be more careful and considerate to my fellow inmates, the birds and animals of the neighbourhood. It is after all, their home just as much as mine.

- *Subha Ganesh*



# *My relationship with God*



To be honest, my relationship with God is still relatively un-defined and flaky. Going by the textbook definitions of the term, the best I can describe myself is that I am perhaps in a very early stage in the spiritual path and still ways away from being termed 'Religious'.

Spirituality can refer to an ultimate or an alleged immaterial reality; an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of his/her being; or the deepest values and meanings by which people live.

Religion is a collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and world views that establishes symbols that relate humanity to spirituality and moral values.

Being born in a Hindu family, I was exposed to a fair amount of religious practices and scriptures. I remember asking questions like 'Why we have so many Gods', 'Who is the strongest of them all' etc., and used to have my share of favorite Gods and favorite festivals. That's about it and I never really took the time to establish my beliefs or lack thereof and pretty much just went with the flow. But, throughout something that Mom and Dad said struck a chord with me which was 'Hard work will never go wasted, God takes care of those who help themselves'. I took this piece of advice very seriously and from time to time when I saw Daddy's

work issues or Mommy's health issues, I started wondering 'So, why is God not taking care of them now? They are working hard, taking care of themselves...then, why is this God not doing good to them?' Whenever such questions cropped up, I heard answers like 'Whatever happens is for our own good only' or 'God knows when to give you what', etc. So, with these and other such adages that are routinely used in any typical Indian Hindu household, I got away with just brushing these questions away without digging deep or questing further to build my beliefs or foundation. I perhaps, never needed to get these resolved since life was just going on...

Another thing that I noticed and perhaps I emulated is how one remembers God mostly during festivals or difficult times. Like many others I too used to think or turn towards God mostly during those trying times. That said, thanks to the upbringing and the constant exposure to various Hindu religious books, etc I felt I had the necessary foundation from all those scriptures (myths or realities) and from watching people around me to be able to choose between right vs wrong. I was able to get away with this extent of religion and belief for many years.

Once I had kids of my own, I started thinking about what part of religion I should teach them and what the purpose should be. I felt and still

**We are not human  
beings having a spiritual  
experience...**

**We are spiritual  
beings having a human  
experience.**

do that, irrespective of whichever religion, it is quite important for kids to have a foundation of some religion, more to instill discipline and provide them with a moral guidebook.

As years passed by and as I was experiencing life's ups and downs, I somehow drew strength by finding some logical reason for the incidents. But, witnessing the passing away of my mother was somewhat of a life changing experience. While it is impossible to describe the pain of the loss we experienced, what it made me do is question the very essence of life and I started wondering what it is we could do to make the seemingly inevitable death less painful. Like before, I tried to find solace by logically explaining it to myself that Mom's heart was too weak and having seen the pain she was in, I felt she was in a much better place after passing away. I tried to explain this to my then almost 7 year old son and he asked 'Mom, But didn't God also have the choice to make her better?' I didn't know how to logically explain this and that's when I also started wondering if it was indeed God who plays through the various life screenplays or if there is any part we indeed have or don't have in this life.

Now, I still keep questioning... 'Who am I? What is the soul? How am I different from my soul? What did I do to deserve what I have or don't have? What part does God or Fate or some other Superior (or external) force play in my life? Do I really control my destiny? Are the choices I make really mine or is it something else that makes me choose those?'

Asking these questions and trying to find answers seems like a life long journey and I think I am still close to the starting point only. Until then, there continues to be turbulence in my heart and restlessness in my head. So, as I said before my relationship with God still remains undefined and perhaps, I need to build a relationship with my true self before I can understand God well-enough to build a relationship or not.

*- Vasantha Gullapalli*



# Johnny

## Chapter 1

Once upon a time, there lived a boy named Johnny. He played cricket every day. Johnny used to go to a school called Hyderabad Public School/HPS.

He liked his school. He was a good student. He got good grades. He was an eight year old boy.

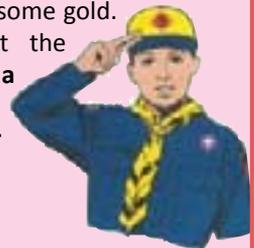
## Chapter 2

One day, he went to a shop with his mother and father. When he went to the shop he saw a man carrying a big bag of gold. The man was whispering and laughing – "I am going to be rich". He told his mother about the man. Johnny's mother told the story to Johnny's father. Johnny's father told Johnny to do something. Johnny had an idea. He wanted to stop the thief from stealing the gold. Johnny said to the thief, "I also have gold for you". The gold was actually chilly powder to throw on the thief's eyes. The thief said, "Show me", in a very low voice.



## Chapter 3

Johnny opened the packet quickly in his pocket and threw the chilly powder on the thief. The thief cried loudly, "HELP, HELP"! Johnny called the police and Johnny told him the story. The police arrested the thief. The shopkeeper saw all this and gave Johnny some gold. Johnny did not accept the gold. **He said – "I am a good citizen and a good citizen is not paid for being one".**



THE END



**Aditya Vinodh** is studying 3rd grade in Chirec Public School. Aditya adores anything cricket, plays Violin and is deeply interested in the study of snakes!



## The Potency of Thought

Good and evil thoughts are each a potent power, and they fill the universe. As vibration continues, so thought remains in the form of thought until translated into action. For example, force is latent in the man's arm until he strikes a blow, when he translates it into activity. We are the heirs of good and evil thoughts. If we make ourselves pure and the instruments of good thoughts, these will enter us. The good soul will not be receptive to evil thoughts. Evil thoughts find the best field in evil people; they are like microbes which germinate and increase only when they find a suitable soil. Mere thoughts are like little waves; fresh impulses to vibration come to them simultaneously, until at last one great wave seems to stand up and swallow up the rest. These universal thought-waves seem to recur every five hundred years, when invariably the great wave typifies and swallows up the others. It is this which constitutes a prophet. He focuses in his own mind the thought of the age in which he is living and gives it back to mankind in concrete form. Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, and Luther may be instanced as the great waves that stood up above their fellows (with a probable lapse of five hundred years between them). Always the wave that is backed by the greatest purity and the noblest character is what breaks upon the world as a movement of social reform...

**Perfect love, the heart never reacting, this is what builds character.** There is no allegiance possible where there is no character in the leader, and perfect purity ensures the most lasting allegiance and confidence.

**Take up an idea, devote yourself to it, struggle on in patience, and the sun will rise for you.**

Source: *The Complete Works by Swami Vivekananda, Vol. 6 pg. 134*



## The Animal School

Once upon a time, not so long ago, all the animals of the forest decided to get together to do something about the pathetic state of the world. To prepare for this quest, they started 'The Animal School' where all the animals would be trained in subjects like- Running, Swimming, Flying, Tree-Climbing, Jumping, Eating grass, Digging holes and so on. It was agreed unanimously that, to be able to change the world, each of them must become proficient in all of these subjects. And so it began.

The rabbit was by far the best runner, but so-so at flying. The eagle could fly the highest, but was caught cheating during the tree-climbing exam! The lion, king of the jungle, was thrown out of class, because he couldn't eat grass! The weeks rolled by, but there was no sign of improvement. In fact, the animals also started failing in the subjects they were actually good at, the subjects which they had a natural talent for- because they were trying so hard to be good at everything else. Eventually, the school was shut down.

This short story called 'The Animal School' was penned by George H Reavis in the early 1940's. But the message underlying the colorful bird feathers and vibrant animal stripes of this story- is a timeless and timely allegory. It is about the loss of individualism to the face of institutionalism. It is about how education forces children to become alike one another, when nature actually created them to be so beautifully different.

Our education system today, is very much like that of 'The Animal School'. Right from infancy, we are made to sit in rows and benches, carry back-breaking bundles of textbooks and notebooks and taught to become 'another brick in the wall'. In this whole process, the wings of the eagles are clipped away, the feet of the rabbit chopped off and the powerful roar of the lion muffled into silence. Every child- who is so special, so different - is force-fitted into this merciless rigidity of the 'system'- to be like everyone else. Their talents and aptitudes

are squandered away in the process of 'disciplining' them to be uniform. Tell me, are we working any differently from the Animal School?

My only problem is- the education system we follow today is obsolete, outdated and very irrelevant. It was formulated during the Industrialization era, in the early 1920's- and that makes it almost a century old. The sole aim of the education system back then was to produce clerks and accountants and assistants who could work on the assembly line. It is disgraceful to see that we are still doing the same even today.

If you are above 40 years old, it's been at least 25 years, a quarter of a century since the time you finished schooling. Now, you probably have children who are that age. Think about this- how much difference do you see in the subjects and textbooks your children study today? The world today is drastically different from the world twenty five years ago- globalization, the internet explosion, the social media revolution- we've grown more in the quarter of a century than we have in the last 2 centuries, perhaps. My question to you is- why then, is the education system still the same? This is a broken model that we keep trying to repair. It cannot be repaired any further. It is time to replace it with a new model, for a new tomorrow.

Today, learning in schools and colleges is merely profession-oriented. The sole aim of being a so-called educated person is so you can get a job, have a career and earn lots of money. You want to study



science? Great, you'll become a doctor or an engineer! You want to study arts and culture? Do you want to end up lying homeless and drunk on the footpath? Sadly, that's the perception, even today.

The word 'education' has its origins in the Latin word 'educō' meaning to 'lead forth' or 'take out'. In the ancient world, the civilizations of the Greeks, Romans, Chinese and Indians- education was never profession-oriented. It was soul-oriented. It was a journey of self-discovery, the pursuit of the universal truth, a path to enlightenment. Even the Sanskrit word 'Guru' means 'one who removes darkness and takes you to the light'. The goal of real education is not to pass a bunch of exams and have a certificate on the wall- it is to empower yourself to be a valued member of society, to know yourself in the truest sense of the word, and simply, the ability to be human.

Let us abolish the 'Animal Schools' that we run today. I agree, it is not possible to change it in a day. But we can slowly and surely change our perception of it. When we are awakened to the fact that the very purpose of education is to unravel the layers of our own personality, to delve deeper into our own identity, something magical happens.

Our learning is no longer limited to books and for the purpose of exams, but something much more substantial than that.

We must awaken to the realization that our life itself, is a journey of learning, and the goal is self-discovery. No one can define your path for you, except for you. Ask yourself- who are you, really? You will not get a straightforward answer, but it is then that the path will start opening up. And your real education will begin.

I'd like to quote one line that perfectly sums up the above message- **"Why do we try so hard to fit in, when we were born to stand out?"**

*- Avinash Agarwal*



# Vaishnodevi Yatra

Swamiji announced the Vaishnodevi yatra to an elated group of 32 aspirants. He was initially apprehensive about taking us to a place considered to be in the high risk zone. But, Vaishnodevi yatra was irresistible and when He got the call, He immediately made the bookings through INDO ASIA TRAVELS. Most of our group members boarded the Spicejet flight to Delhi, on 24th August 2011; other members were to join us at Delhi. From Delhi we took the flight to Jammu and from there we travelled to Katra by road, in vehicles arranged by the Travel agents. On reaching Katra, we checked into our hotel K.C. Residency which offered good food and accommodation. Swamiji charted out the next day's programme and asked us to have an early breakfast before attending the satsang.

Swamiji held a bhajan session in the morning and asked Mataji to enlighten the audience on how to make the best of Divine Darshan. Mataji spoke on the Divine aspects of God and guided us in the right way of having darshan which proved to be very beneficial. We decided to try our luck at the helipad as the choppers were not operating for the past one week due to bad weather. But after a wait of two hours the officials gave us the disappointing news that the choppers were



**Ma Vaishnodevi**

cancelled for the day too. We rushed to the spot where the palkis and horses started on the 14 kms trek, but all the palkis had already gone uphill and we were left with the option of walking or taking the pony. Swamiji encouraged us to take the ponies and a few decided to walk the path with Swamiji and Mataji. The track is well laid out though slightly slippery due to rains. But the efforts of the municipal authorities in cleaning up the track are highly commendable.



**Enroute Vaishnodevi**

The day was perfect with the sun hiding behind the clouds and there was no rain. The ponies being used to this stretch carried us deftly to our destination. I had a lot of sympathy for the ponies and their caretakers for taking this trek, day in and day out, but it was their livelihood. We alighted now and then to lessen their burden and to give our legs a good stretch. After a four hour ride we reached our destination and were welcomed to the chants of 'Jai Mata Di' by fellow travelers. I felt the ride uphill is like a journey through various chapters in one's life. There is an interior aspect (devotion) and an external aspect (scenic beauty) added to it.



**At the helipad**

On reaching **BHAWAN**, the Divine abode of **MA VAISHNODEVI** we were instantly engulfed in deep devotion. This could be the result of the grandeur of the Himalayas and the fact that we have realized our dream of making it to the Almighty. The rush at the cave was moderate and we had a good darshan of **MA KALI, MA SARASWATHI** and **MA LAKSHMI** in the form of **Pindies**. We were bewildered by the magnificence of the Goddess in all three forms. It was thrilling to see the water gushing down into the old cave and also water flowing from the Shivling doing abhishek to the Pindies. We were elated on receiving Divine Blessings and teerth and prasad from the pandits. Visiting Vaishnodevi had long been my dream not primarily as a pleasure trip but more so from the spiritual point of view and this trip has awarded me many rich spiritual experiences. We took teerth (holy water) at Charanpaduka and started our return journey to our base- Katra. Once we reached Katra we took a well deserved rest after dinner.

Pony ride is not comfortable for as long as 6-8 hours. I would sincerely advice one should start early and opt for the palkis which are much more comfortable. I personally feel taking a chopper is also a bad choice, as all the scenic beauty would be missed. I later came to know from my friend who took the new walking route that there were 7-seater auto rickshaws which were available after a 5.5 km trek but tickets were to be booked much in advance.

On day-3, we packed, had an early breakfast and took a flight to **Srinagar**. On reaching



**Mataji enjoying the beauty of roses**



**At Cheshma Shahi Gardens**

Srinagar we checked into Hotel Silver Star and after lunch proceeded on a visit to the Mughal Gardens. The breath taking hues of the various flowers at **Cheshma Shahi** and **Shalimar gardens** made us awe at God's creation. After the garden visit, Swamiji took us to the nearby '**Eshwar Ashram**'- a serene and beautiful ashram pushing us into a Divine mood. The Shiva temple in the premises had many positive vibes and Swamiji made us meditate and derive those energies. Sri Vinodh Kaul, manager of the ashram was excited on seeing Swamiji and Mataji and showed us the Ashram explaining its past glories during the time of his Guru Swami Lakshman Joo. An old time devotee greeted us and offered prasad. Eshwar Ashram is a wonderful place to stay for spiritual aspirants. All of us shared beautiful experiences as we had dinner. Swamiji was delighted that we enjoyed the Ashram visit.

Swamiji made slight changes in the itinerary to entertain the youth and decided to take us to **Sonmarg** on the 4th day. We left to Sonmarg in three vans. The sacred river Sindhu joined us on the sideways. The river gurgled along with us till we reached Sonmarg. We were bowled over by the picturesque beauty of the Himalayas. Some ventured on a horse ride to view the mountain peaks at close quarters while the others settled down by the stream enjoying the beauty of the surroundings and the gushing waters of River Sindhu. Our next halt was at **KHEER BHAVANI** temple.

The serene atmosphere of the temple and the beautiful darshan of **Goddess Bhavani**

called as **RAGNYA DEVI** and **LORD SHIVA** pushed us into a tranquil mood. The temple is surrounded by a pond in which milk is poured by devotees as an offering to God. This is a unique way of worshipping the Lord. After puja, Swamiji held a bhajan and meditation session. Some of us were fortunate to attend the beautiful evening aarti.



**Awantipura ruins**

A visit to **Pahalgam** was planned for the 5th day of our tour. We halted at **Awantipura** and **Marthand temple ruins** and also **Mattan temple** and had darshan of **Sun God**. It is distressing that we had to lose such beautiful temples at the mercy of a few fanatics. We stopped at places to savor the outside view, the view of river Jhelum curving through the mountain and rock edges. The glaciers melted and came down majestically in a series of cascades and the waterfalls formed streams which gushed all along the path. The stillness of the clouds over the mountain peaks was truly amazing and Swamiji said



**Our group at Marthand Temple ruins**

that is how our mind should function- freezing our thoughts and experiencing the **Self**. The massive expanse of paddy fields and apple orchards were gorgeous. We ventured ahead on the narrow and steep roads. We crossed small towns and it is a pity that not too many locals were seen around. The fear of death hung like an invisible sword and the fear could be sensed all over. Only the horns of our vehicles shattered the silence.

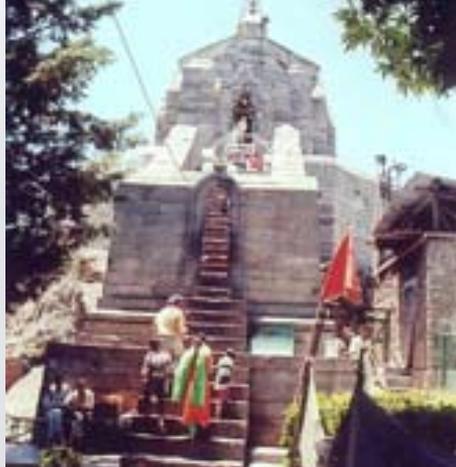
Pahalgam is perfect for a get away and boasts of some wonderful resorts. Flanked by gorgeous rain drenched hills, gushing streams, and charming blooms, Pahalgam gave us a warm welcome. Its pristine beauty was really captivating though there was a persistent drizzle. The sprawling gardens, well maintained lawns, rare species of flora and ferns added to the scenic beauty. Some of our group members wanted to go uphill after lunch but the hotel staff warned us that it was not safe as the ponies tend to slip on the wet mountain path. After clicking tons of pictures we started back to Srinagar.



**At Pahalgam**

**SARIKA temple** in the old city of Srinagar was our next halt. Most of us climbed the steps and went for darshan while a few preferred to stay back in their vehicles. Though it was a tough climb the outcome was fruitful. Right from the beginning of the tour the identity of **Shaktipeeth in Kashmir** was shrouded in doubts. Some said SARIKA temple is the Saraswathi temple while some opined it was the Durga temple. Anyway we just wanted to visit this place. At first sight

I was disappointed to see only a huge rock in the temple and a local said it was the form of Goddess Saraswathi. The place has its own ritual rhythm and interesting story about its existence. We settled down in front of the rock and as Swamiji sang bhajans the true identity of the Goddess was revealed. I was completely shaken. Nothing existed for me except me and the Goddess. I was overwhelmed by the grace of the MOTHER.



**Adi Shankaracharya Temple**

security measures at the Srinagar airport though intense showed security lapses at various checking points. All good things have to come to an end and so did our pilgrimage. From Delhi we took the Hyderabad flight and reached home.

We are greatly indebted to Swamiji and Mataji for taking extreme care of our well-being and for showering blessings on us, without which we wouldn't have achieved those spiritually enriched experiences.

***On a spiritual note from Swamiji:***

***“We should do our bit to protect our natural heritage. The fear in the locals is definitely not a pleasant experience, but in retrospect, the situation allows us to know ourselves better. Fear stops us from enjoying life. It strips us of all the joys of life. Silence sprouts from the vacuum created by fear but this is not what we need in our lives. We need silence that springs out of joy.”***



**- Subhadra K.**



**Mataji floating in Bliss at Sarika Temple**

When I opened my eyes, I saw Mataji in a Samadhi state. The tears flowing down her cheeks revealed she was lost to this mundane world and was floating in bliss. Everyone around enjoyed the Divine atmosphere. Aarti was performed by the CRPF personnel who took care of the pujas. They advised us not to stay for long as it was a danger zone. We reluctantly returned to our hotel and took rest. I enjoyed the bliss in silence.

We checked out, had breakfast and proceeded to **Shankaracharya temple** near the **Dal lake**. The 253 steps climb was not tough as anticipated. Swamiji stood there on top and was encouraging us all the while which made the climb all the more easier. Darshan of Lord Shiva invigorated our souls. We meditated for a while in the temple and also the nearby Tapasthali where **Sri Adi Shankaracharya** is said to have meditated. It was a glorious experience.

When the other members returned from their boat ride in the Dal lake we rushed to the airport. We had to catch the flight to Delhi. The stringent

## On Children

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 may give them your love but not your thoughts,  
For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,  
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,  
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them,  
but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children  
as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,  
and He bends you with His might  
that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies,  
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

- *Kahlil Gibran*



## TRUE FRIENDS

Once, there were two boys called Dave and Ryan. They were the best of friends from when they were five. They each had many friends but, no one made them more happy than each other. They played together everyday. It went on like this until adulthood, when they didn't have enough time.

One day, during a party Dave lost many friends in fights. While everybody was leaving, Dave stopped Ryan. He said "Ryan, I know I'll lose you too soon. Just go away now ! I can't bear to see my best friend leave me !" But, Ryan just put his hand on Dave's shoulder and said, "Dave, even if we have a fight, you won't lose me, I'll come back for you, like a true friend." Then he smiled and left.

Moral of the story: Many friends will leave you in life. Only **true friends will stay with you.**



*Avinash Boddu*

*Avinash is in 4th Grade, Indus International School, Hyderabad. He loves to read, bike and plays piano.*

## SOW AND YOU SHALL REAP

We are ecstatic when there is a birth in our family. We take care of the food the baby eats and clothes it wears. We start planning and arranging right from which playschool to which college it will attend. We make financial plans and save up to insure the baby's future. We do make grand plans for the baby's material life but we do nothing about the baby's spiritual life. None of us ever plan for the baby's spiritual journey. We do not give a chance, nor do we create a suitable atmosphere in the house. These days most schools have dropped moral science classes from their syllabi. Therefore, just as we strive to give our dear ones a head start with material aspects of their lives to make it smooth, we should also make an effort to provide a spiritual atmosphere that lays foundation to their real happiness and bliss.



Several years ago, when we had gone on a pilgrimage to Mayavathi, Almora in the Himalayas, we were guests in the house of a young couple of practicing ophthalmologists- Chaithi and Amit in Barielly. The couple did a lot of social work in the form of organizing eye camps offering free service in the nearby villages. In spite of their hectic schedule, they would undertake to host devotees and provide a meal before they resume their journey uphill; with a smile on their face. They were very dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna and I was in great admiration for their love and devotion. They had two children and the family would sing the Aratrikam every evening in their shrine at home. One of them would play tabla, and the other harmonium and it was a feast for the eyes and ears. How many of us actually spend time like that as a

family? It is imperative that we set aside at least half an hour of our family time to such spiritual activities so that spirituality makes way into our children's daily routine.

I have also had the fortune of meeting another family who reads spiritual books together, everyday. This kind of activity will create good vibrations and there will be a positive energy in the house. Instead of sitting around the television and letting it take over our minds we need to consciously develop this habit of doing some activity that kindles spiritualism in the family. Not everyone is aware of this spiritual path but once we are awakened we need to include our loved ones into this fold.

If we were to plant a tree, four things are necessary- soil, seed, light and water. Without any one of these a plant cannot grow perfectly. Similarly, children when they are not given the proper atmosphere to grow, fail to understand how to transform worldly activities into spiritual activities. Children should be exposed to their culture and tradition right from their childhood. Parents paying attention to this aspect would ensure holistic growth of their children.

**Swami Ranganathananda** says, ***"When a child is between seven years and ten years of age, it must be told gently that its energy within, needs to be refined. One washes one's clothes and makes them clean. Why not do a little of it for our mind also? The mind also needs to be cleaned but it cannot be cleaned by water or soap. You must have jnana to clean it. The secular, academic knowledge cannot do this. If children develop in this way, they will not only be educated but they will also become cultured."***

Ramakrishna Math, Chinmaya Mission, Nachiketa Tapovan and many such organizations are conducting Sunday classes for children. Google search would yield more information in this regard.

**- Vasundhara P.**





**Namam** depicts the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu with a red line in the middle which represents Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu.

# HARI-HARA

As per the Puranas, there is no sacred month like Karthik, as Karthik month is favourite for both Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. It is stated that observing and performing rituals and pujas during this month results in ultimate salvation for devotees. Spiritually it is the most appropriate month for any devotee to perform any Sadhana or Puja. The main rituals of Karthik month are

- Karthik Snan
- Vishnu Puja
- Karthik Somavar Vrat dedicated to Lord Shiva
- Karthik Deeparadhana (lighting of lamps)
- Tulasi Puja
- Vanabhojan
- Karthik Purana Parayana
- Charity of food and clothes to the needy

**Tripundra**- the three parallel horizontal lines drawn using vibhuti is a symbol of purification, rejuvenation and destruction. A red dot in the center of the Tripundra symbolizes Goddess Shakti.



**Shantaakaaram Bhujaga Shayanam  
Padmanaabham Suresham**

**Vishwaadhaaram Gagana Sadrusham  
Meghavarnam Subhaangam**

**Lakshmikaantam Kamalanayanam  
Yogibhir-Dhyaanagamyam**

**Vande Vishnum Bhavabhaya Haram  
Sarvalokaika Naatham**

Meaning:

**Oh, Lord Vishnu!**

Lord, of peaceful appearance, resting on the serpent, with a lotus from a navel, you are the lord of lords.

You are the basis on the whole universe, vast like the sky, colored as the cloud, every limb of you is auspicious.

Beloved of Laxmi, lotus eyed, capable of being reached through meditation by yogis.

We bow to you, the lord of all worlds, Vishnu.



Lotus or **Padmam** is a symbol of purity and represents the unfolding of creation



**Garuda's** two wings of devotion and knowledge are balanced by the tail of Karma yoga

**Vande Shambhum Uma pathim  
Suragurum Vande Jagat Kaaranam**

**Vande Pannaga Bhushanam  
Mrugadharam Vande Pashunaam Pathim**

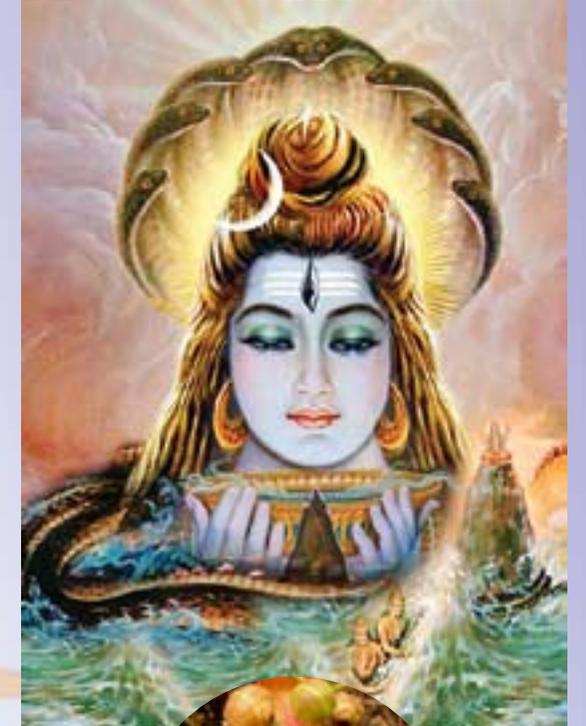
**Vande Surya Sashanka Vahni  
Nayanam Vande Mukunda Priyam**

**Vande Bhakta Janaashrayam cha Varadam  
Vande Shivam Shankaram**

Meaning:

**Lord Shiva!**

Praise to Shambhu, Husband of Uma (Parvathi), Guru of the Divine Devas, hail the cause of Universe, Praise the one whose ornaments are the gemstone bearing cobras, one who bears the animals, Praise the protector of living beings, Praise the one whose eyes are the sun, moon, and fire (of knowledge), Praise the one dear to Vishnu, Praise the one who provides refuge to devotees, to the giver of boons, Praise to the auspicious Shankara!



Sacred **Nagalinga** flowers used for Shivapooja



The calm and disciplined **Nandi**, a symbol of Dharma and an image of controlled power is the vehicle of Shiva



**Hari - Hara**

# Inspiration Galore...

## KNOWLEDGE IS HOLY, DEGREES ARE NOT!

It was the first day of my internship at the office of a Member of Parliament. I was excited, and at the same time a bit tensed. I was researching on topics of global relevance, from religion to women empowerment. When I was studying voluminous material on gender issues, a very kind person (the Personal Secretary of the MP) came up to help me.



Within half-an-hour, he handed over to me a write-up consolidating the social and legal aspects of the topic. I was amazed. This was only the trailer! His intellect slowly unfurled in a new way in the numerous short yet serious discussions we had over a period of one month.

Eager to know his qualifications, I asked him how he could remember so much on topics as varied as engineering and law. He said he studied formally only till Class X and that his interactions with people and reading of the newspaper were the sources of his knowledge. A very simple and straightforward man, he showed his articles which were published in different magazines and newspapers.

In his sixties, **Mr. Pasupathy Ayyaswamy** still has the enthusiasm of a child. The language he uses is immaculate. I was tempted to interview him. When I requested to give his blessings to the children of Nachiketa, he said he was not 'great' enough to bless them. Those truly serving them can bless them, he said. Upon much persuasion, he gave a 'type-written' message to the people behind Nachiketa Tapovan, which reads as under:

"It gives me immense pleasure that Nachiketa Tapovan is engaged in child development and welfare activities for long

and is taking up most relevant and pressing issues and is striving to secure a caring and comfortable ambience for children from the deprived sections of the society.

What the government provides, despite its much-hyped policy rhetoric and programmes in the realm of child development, is only a fraction of the sources that are needed to sustain voluntary work

by NGOs like Nachiketa Tapovan. In this selfless crusade, I am happy that your trust is aided by a team of volunteers and social workers. I wish the privileged sections of the society realize the debt they owe to the lesser privileged and come forward to contribute their might in charity and donations.

I wish your endeavor all success and a bright future in the cause of children needing support and succour."

This man touched my thoughts. He teaches us that knowledge is not the realm of the qualified alone. He shows the magic of practicality. Above all, he portrays that if one has the zeal, one can pursue whatever he wants. May he always remain hale and hearty and keep inspiring us to aspire 'higher' and perspire to achieve the same.

As this grandfatherly figure prepares to go and volunteer with NGOs working in SOS Villages of Meghalaya, I am reminded of one of my brother's words, "**Knowledge is holy, degrees are not!**"



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



# One Rainy Day

The rain fell gently over me. I was completely drenched but I felt clean and refreshed. As the rain drops fell harder, a man in an expensive suit came and stood next to me to avoid getting wet. He looked well-to-do, judging from the expensive-looking phone that he whipped out to pass the time.

Several minutes passed and the rain started to ease up a bit. I watched as another man approached us. I grew apprehensive as the man grew closer. He was swarthy and coarse and he looked like he was up to no good. I knew because I had seen him often in the vicinity, conducting his shady activities. My companion was unaware of the arrival of the new man. He was too busy talking to someone on the phone. My vague sense of unease grew stronger when I saw that the new man was drunk. It was a particularly deserted stretch of road, but I was more worried about my companion's safety than my own.

The approaching hoodlum slowly picked up a sturdy branch that was lying on the ground. I stood immobilized by fear, unable to warn my well-to-do-companion who was oblivious to what was going to happen to him. I tried to warn him, but I could not get his attention. I was determined to help my friend but was bewildered by how I could do so.



The man was very near us now. I bent low and stretched as much as I could. Just as he was about to attack my companion, I leaned forward with all my might and bumped his head. The man fell down and the branch fell away from his hand. I heaved a sigh of relief and turned towards my new friend to see if he noticed what I had done.

He had momentarily stopped his conversation to take in the whole situation, but quickly resumed his conversation. I finally got a chance to listen to what he was saying on the phone... "Yes, I'm still here... Sorry I was interrupted...no...no, nothing...just some old man fallen over...you know how these people are...yes...yes...when will the tree cutter be here? I'm right here standing under it right now... Once we get this big tree cut, there won't be any problem in widening this road... Yes...yes...I want it done as soon as possible... I'm waiting." It took me a few minutes for his words to sink in. I began to feel afraid again. You see I am the tree under which he is standing!

**Arnab Garg** is a 13-year old student of Delhi Public School. Along with his studies, he participates in the Ranga Reddy District Basketball Team. He also writes a blog and is developing a website.



# Divine Soul

## Sharing the personal experience with Swamiji and Mataji

### 1. Will God come down to Earth, if so, how do we recognize him/her?

This is how I recognize God in disguise. When I am driving, I usually tend to over speed. Swamiji had warned me against this at least four times, until I finally promised him one day that I would be cautious with my speed. Not long after this, I was walking on a rocky surface when I slipped and was about to fall on my face. Suddenly, I felt someone holding me back and breaking the fall (even though there was no one around that I could see). With His grace, I suffered only a minor cut on the jaw.

I was shaking- not from the fall, but the Divine touch that saved me from a major accident that day. From that day, whenever the car speedometer touches 60 kmph, I feel as if He and I are crossing the speed limit. I slow down and offer a silent prayer of gratitude. "Thank You Swamiji!"

### 2. OBESITY

Our burning tensions, stressful lifestyles and unhealthy food habits are a major cause of obesity. The inability to control our taste buds causes our whole body to suffer.

Some time back, I had been told strictly to avoid sweets. But I simply couldn't resist and had a few pieces quietly! I happened to visit Mataji the next day and the first thing she asked me was, 'Which sweet did you eat?' I was shocked! Yes, the Divine soul can easily see the direction we are moving in. Mataji smiled and gave me a few simple tips to keep control of this-



- Eat it in moderate amounts (resulting in obesity if that is the body's tendency!)
- Smell by taking a deep breath (this is actually very satisfying if done with awareness)
- Seeing it with awareness can also satisfy your craving
- 'MANSIK POOJA' (this takes a lot of practice, but by simply imagining it, you can satisfy the craving- for your taste buds and body! Isn't that great?)

My father was a devotee of 'Kaanha' (Krishna) and he had touched the highest level of meditation. After a lot of Divine practices and experiences, he had taught me that the best way of performing Pooja is 'Mansik Pooja'. By performing each and every step mentally, you can gain the benefits of doing it practically.

Yes, this is what happens when you are graced by such Divine Souls. Also, you actually end up losing weight and having your mind set at ease!

"Thank You Swamiji and Mataji!"

- Mamata Agarwal

# Natya - The Panchama Veda

From time immemorial dance and music have been an important offering in any ritual just like the other materials of worship such as flowers, camphor, etc. It represents Divine beauty in motion. It is an education of the whole man, his physical, mental and emotional natures which are nourished and disciplined. It is very truly said by John Dryden that "Dancing is the poetry of the foot".

Over 2000 years ago Bharata Muni wrote the Natya Shastra, the rules of which are followed to date. Dance is considered as the Panchama Veda or the 5<sup>th</sup> Veda, wherein the words were taken from the Rig Veda, gestures from Yajur, music and chanting from Sama and sentiments and emotions from Atharva Veda.

Dance has a Divine origin where literatures, religion, music, drama, are all rolled into one. Humans realized that they could express their emotions like joy, sorrow, anger, etc. through disciplined movements. These emotions are not personal human emotions but are grounded in Bhakti. The themes revolve around stories of Sri Krishna with Radha or Mother Yashoda or gopikas, or Rama and Sita or Shiva and Parvathi etc. The yearning of the dancer for the beloved in various moods of the nayiki like: the Vasika Dajjika, Khandita nayiki etc. represent the yearning of the individual soul to merge with the Divine.



The enchanting sculptural poses in the temples which are enacted in dance is a treat to the eyes, as though the temple figurines have come alive.

Initially the Bharata Natyam through which most of Indian dances have emerged was restricted only to the temples performed by "Devadasis". Termed as the servants of the Lord, they enjoyed great respect in society and were trained in 64 arts like poetry, painting etc. It is only later on that slowly dance was brought out of temples and was performed on the stage. It is truly said by Martha Graham that "Dancers are the messengers of God".

Natya communicates man's deepest and highest spiritual thoughts and emotions far better than words spoken or written. It is live poetry. It breaks down the distinction of the body and soul and the dancer and dance become one, it leads you to meditation; no Dwaita only Advaita remains.

Along with dance, students undergo rigorous training in music, Sanskrit, aesthetics, philosophy, yoga, meditation, sculpture, literature and mythology thus providing learning in so many varied aspects.

It is stress buster in modern parlance and it is yoga, a spiritual discipline to control the wayward mind, it enables to gain equipoise even among rapid changing of different moods. It is a meditation unto itself.

Many times this joy felt by the dancer is transferred to the audience and they together share this Divine joy, thus making it a universal communication and connection of hearts together.

To sum up, natya or dance is a "Sadhana" and through this sadhana the dancer communes with the Divine, therein lies fulfillment of perfection of dance.

**- Jalaja Kumar**

# Sumanjali

In a small village in the outskirts of Hyderabad, there is this small school that looks simple and cozy like a home. Happy and well groomed children are sitting neatly in their class. There is one group of kinder gardeners sitting under a shade tree learning their numbers. This is **Suma Niketan**, the dream child of **Dr Rohini and Dr Shiva Reddy**.

The couple's journey through life is like any other success story of high-aspiring, perseverant graduates who not only dream but realize them through hard work and determination and become the pride of their families. But Dr Rohini and Dr Shiva Reddy marched on and stood out as one of the very few who share their blessings with the less fortunate among us.

Ever since the onset of their careers in U.S. in 1983, Rohini and Shiva Reddy nurtured the dream of giving back to the society and to that end they set aside funds for education of orphans. They soon started helping out orphan students in the States as well as in India. Orphan Education Trust of India- U.S.A. and Reganti Orphan Education Trust of India were officially founded in 1997 with the vision of imparting education and promoting self reliance, with emphasis on the values and cultural Heritage of India. And since then Rohini, Shivananda Reddy and their family- Amarnath, Srikanth, Swati and Sowjanya have been dedicating their emotional, intellectual and material resources to support various charitable causes.

In 2002 the couple happened to visit Shankarpally when they were invited to the

local Government school. There they saw that the campus was all unkempt, children were out of their classrooms, going about in the campus aimlessly and there were dogs mingled with them. The sight disturbed the Reddy couple so much that they immediately started to think about creating a clean and special place for the local children to study in. They happened to own a small house in a piece of land in Shankarpally at that time and they wasted no time in having it remodeled into a simple yet ample school facility. And by July 2003, the facility started operating under the name Suma Niketan, named after their daughter whom they lost to muscular dystrophy. It is an English medium, Primary school benefiting the children from three villages: Dhontanpally, Maharajpet and Gopalaram of Ranga Reddy district. The school imparts

- Well rounded academic education to children with due importance to nutrition, recreation and creative aspects of it at a nominal fee of Rs. 25/- per month.
- Vocational training to young girls and women in the form of 6 month long training in sewing and embroidery in Sumaniketan's sewing workshop.

The Reganti couple enjoyed every minute of their life and career sharing their love, time and resources with fellow Americans. Dr Rohini's efforts and success in starting a **Counseling and Hospice division** in the Hospital in **Burlington, Iowa** won accolades and hearts of patients, staff and the administrators equally. But all along, the couple has cherished the dream of returning to India one day and serving their motherland. It has





been a year since the Reganti couple decided that it was the right time to realize that dream and they relinquished their highly successful and lucrative careers in U.S. as oncologist and radiologist respectively and returned to India.

Dr Rohini with all her experience in oncology identifies that on one hand Cancer is preventable if taken precautions and with regular check ups and screening. And on the other, once it afflicts someone, it is an ailment that drains not only the patients but also their families of all their monetary and emotional resources. It becomes mandatory that Cancer care includes great deal of counseling: educating, assuring, preparing, guiding, healing and standing by the patient. And this is not easily possible in a developing country like India where lot of underprivileged adults and children are affected annually by Cancer. The Regantis wish to fill in this gap by holding Cancer awareness camps following a village-by-village approach. At the same time they wish to hold free awareness programs in Secondary schools of the city to educate youth. The schools can approach **Nachiketa Tapovan** or call **9849168937** to arrange a workshop in their campus. Besides, on every Saturday from 6 p.m. - 7 p.m., free counseling and consultation will be provided by Dr. Rohini at Nachiketa Tapovan campus. In all these programs the following aspects will be covered in detail:

- Cancer Awareness
- Cancer causes
- Cancer prevention and precautions
- Self- examination techniques
- Guidance for right treatment

We invite and urge you all to join hands in this awareness campaign. Any help in providing information or resources to patients with Radiological diagnoses, free or subsidized mammograms and PAP smears will be greatly appreciated. In order to reach out to people on a larger scale networking will be very helpful. There was one recent incident that is worthy of mention to illustrate the effectiveness of networking. Through a friend, one of the Nachiketa Tapovan volunteers came to know about an adolescent boy suffering from recurring advanced **Lymphoma**. The boy was from a poor family which couldn't bear the expenses and they had exhausted all the health care benefits during the first occurrence. The NT volunteer referred the boy's parents to Dr. Rohini who was utterly moved and pained by the condition of the boy and the helplessness of his parents. She identified that without treatment the condition was terminal and on the brighter side, with immediate and right kind of treatment the condition was curable. Dr Rohini took it all upon her and immediately contacted her friends and acquaintances, tapped all the sources of information until she succeeded in arranging the necessary treatment, at no cost along with free boarding and lodging and transportation charges. Thanks to the timely intervention of kind hearted doctors like Rohini and her colleagues at HCG Cancer Centre, Vijayawada, now after 6 months the boy got a new life.

**Please call 8008882828 to volunteer, contribute resources or information.**

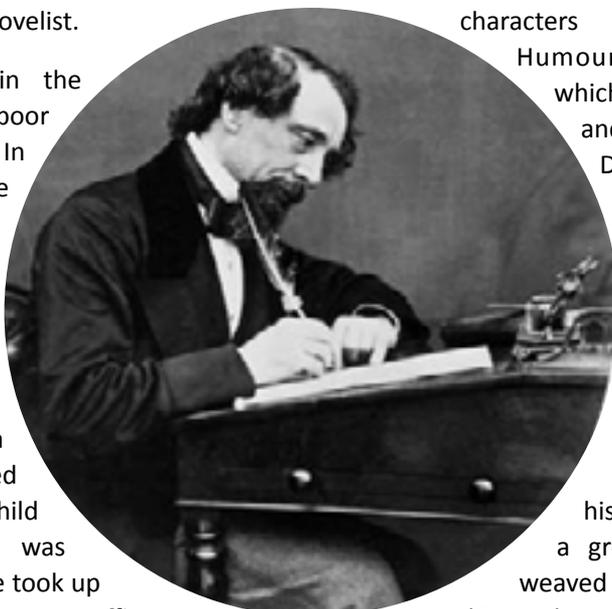
**- Annapurna R.**



## A Great Humanist

People around the world were time and again inspired by the literary works of great writers. Influence of many of these works was limited as these writers tried to convey social message as undercurrent in their writings. But a few works inspired the people like a light illuminating the room that was kept dark for years together. Authors of such stature, and authenticity who changed the human nature intellectually are very rare to come by and one among these greats is **Charles Dickens**, the world famous novelist.

He was born in the year 1812 in a poor family of England. In his childhood, he suffered financially. His father who was an ordinary clerk became bankrupt and that forced Dickens to stop his studies and at a tender age he joined an industry as a child laborer. When he was just 15 years old, he took up a job in a law firm, as an office attendant. Charles read literature during his leisure time and also learnt shorthand and became a reporter in Parliament. He contributed several articles to newspapers under the title Pickwick Papers from 1837 to 1839. This earned him fame. As time passed, he was recognized as a superb novelist. He had an extraordinary command over English. His novels depict the lives of different strata of society in general and the poor and the exploited, in particular. His satirical writings on political leaders particularly during election times, speak volumes of his convictions and values.



Ironically, our country is still reeling under the same trends that were part of the writings of Dickens. He used to touch contemporary issues in his writings and glorify the forgotten virtues such as sincerity, honesty, and compassion. These created ripples in social circles and there was a paradigm shift in the thinking of the common public. *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Pickwick Papers*, *Great Expectations*, *A Tale of Two Cities* are some of his renowned works. It was Dickens who created several memorable characters after Shakespeare.

Humour and wise cracks, which are mind refreshing, and unique features of Dickens' works. He was a great writer but had a troubled personal life; he divorced his wife Kate Hogart in 1858 and married a cine actress who was much younger to him.

Dickens would read his own novels before a group of audience and weaved magic on them through his reading skills. The audience was thrilled with his readings and used to gather in large numbers. He spent lot of time reading his novels to the audience. Eventually his health deteriorated and Charles John Hafam Dickens died in 1870 at the age of 58. Depiction of labourers and poor people in his works was perhaps the result of the difficulties he suffered in his childhood. It is said, **"Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world"** and Charles Dickens proved that through his phenomenal works.

- M. Koti Rajasekhar

## Prescription for Happiness

***Is there a prescription for happiness? Is it possible to get immune to what goes on around in the world because it causes lot of unhappiness in me? How do I not get disturbed by some kind of injustice going on around me because I cannot do anything to stop or change the same? In other words, how do I develop the wisdom to know the difference between things I can change and those I cannot change?***

There are a few things to be understood here. Feeling pain at other's difficulties is nothing but the feeling of oneness which is a lofty trait. Prince Siddhartha was so pained by worldly troubles of people that he renounced his own kingdom and pleasures to find solutions for them and became the Gautama Buddha. So, it is beyond doubt that your agony is to be appreciated and not eluded. But the perspective from which you are viewing can be changed to channel it so that you can achieve inner balance and peace.

Emotional growth according to Indian philosophy is a form of spiritual growth! A chair or table does not have emotions whereas a dog or cat has emotions because they have higher manifestation of consciousness than matter. Human being is a more developed species.



Therefore he is much more emotional. Since emotional state is directly connected with the inner consciousness, a spiritual person is one who is much more emotional than a so called non-spiritual person. This feeling is what we call compassion. It is an expression of oneness. But the trouble with compassion is that it makes us feel sad at times. This is a soft emotion, an inner experience and in this, ego dissolves. Any soft emotion is characterized by the feeling of satisfaction. It does not depend upon its manifestation outside. If we have inner awareness, then the compassion itself manifests in the form of activity where neither 'I' nor the feeling 'I do' exist. That is true karma yoga. If I start thinking, "I should do something", then the compassion is corrupted by ego. In such case it becomes bondage or helplessness. It often results in forgetting our capacities. A true state of compassion brings about awareness and does not make us impulsive.

There are a couple of ways you can strengthen your awareness. Regular Sadhana helps you increase your awareness. Sadhana will also help you discover your true mission and thus lead you to true happiness. This world disturbs you only as long as your journey is outward. Secondly, surrender all your talents, abilities and ego to the Universal Force and let Him know your earnest intentions. With that surrender comes the wisdom, which helps you differentiate things that can be changed by you from that which can't be. Once that happens, whether you find them or not, they will find you and you will be a tool working towards the change, very efficiently and smoothly, to your heart's content. This world is like a puzzle. Every nook and corner and curve of each puzzle piece has a reason for being so. And remember there are other pieces of the puzzles like you (like-minded partners) who are also being worked 24X7 to bring peace upon us.

Readers are welcome to send or email their questions and concerns to 'Counsel Corner', [nachiketanjali1@gmail.com](mailto:nachiketanjali1@gmail.com)





## इकलइकरोति षडइडोन = twenty

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

(Contd from previous issue)

### Kati Santhi

Now we will look at a new 'vibhakti'.

ग्रन्थः अस्ति श्लोकः अस्ति।

श्लोकः ग्रन्थे अस्ति। Sloka is **in** the book.

वृक्षः अस्ति पक्षी अस्ति।

पक्षी वृक्षे अस्ति। Bird is **on** the tree.

In both the above examples, we used सप्तमी विभक्तिः. This 'case' is used to indicate आधारः.. We translate this to either 'on' or 'in'. This 'case' for akArAnta-masculine words is like this:

ग्रन्थः – ग्रन्थे

वृक्षः – वृक्षे

देशः – देशे

शब्दः – शब्दे

रामः – रामे

Look at the following sentences.

आन्ध्रप्रदेशः भारतदेशे अस्ति।

शब्दे शक्तिः अस्ति।

रामे मम भक्तिः अस्ति।

Now let us turn to words of feminine gender:

लता अस्ति। पुष्पम् अस्ति।

पुष्पं लतायाम् अस्ति। Flower is on the creeper.

शाखा अस्ति। वानरः अस्ति।

वानरः शाखायाम् अस्ति। Monkey is on the branch.

(To be contd in the next issue)

## A Trip to Vaishno Devi

Having heard from numerous devotees about Maa Vaishno Devi in Jammu, I did not miss the chance of visiting the holy shrine as soon as the trip to Vaishno Devi was proposed by our Swamiji at Tapovan.

We reached Katra the day before and proceeded for our trek up the Shivalik foothills to the holy shrine. It was a trek of about 14 kms and it was an enchanting journey of places where Mata Vaishnavi spent observing various spiritual disciplines and penance. The majestic mountains on one side and the mighty Baanganga flowing on the other provided us with a wonderful vista.

As we started ascending we came across so many great souls, trying to make their way up. There were people crawling on all fours to reach up. There were families carrying their young ones, kids and even infants and I have to mention the horses, mules and donkeys providing help to the people who needed assistance climbing up the legendary mountain.

The beauty of the hills is difficult to put into words, the gurgling springs, beautiful meadows and spectacular valley views were a feast for the eyes. After a four and half hour climb we reached the temple where Devi Ma awaits in all Her splendor and glory, seated inside a cave with a waterfall cascading around Her. I could feel the vibrations in every corner and can only thank Her for presenting me with the opportunity to come seek Her blessings.

The Gita Says: **“That is the place of no return where the mind is most rested and at peace”**. That is what I experienced and carried back with me as we paid homage to Devi Ma and began our descent.

Jai Mata Di

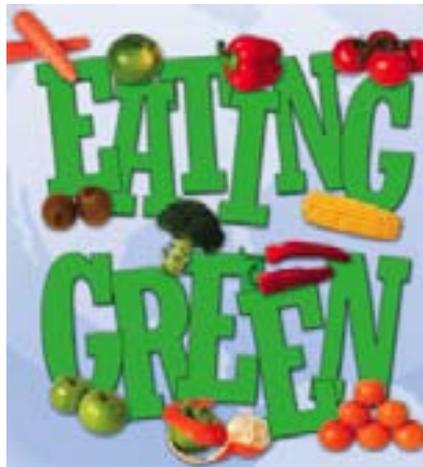


- Swarupa R.

# NACHIKETA's Go Green Club

The choices we make about the food we eat each day really can have some major environmental consequences. It's easy to forget about the energy, water, chemicals and effort used to produce everyday food items like chocolate bars, soft drink or a packet of chips. Not to mention the fuel burnt getting these items to you. Here are a few ideas for reducing that impact.

- Eat lower on the food chain - Meat production can be energy, resource and pollution intensive
- Eating a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes is healthier and easier on the planet
- Consider exploring vegetarian options
- Eat locally – it saves transportation costs and helps the local economy, too!



- Take only as much as you can eat
- Avoid disposable plates, cups, spoons and trays. Carry and use your reusable mug
- Eat at food service areas where you can use ceramic plates and cups, metal silverware and reusable trays
- Avoid take-out food which is over-packaged
- Grow a kitchen garden; it can be real de-stresser. Look out this space for tips regarding the same.

Source: [www.go-green.ae](http://www.go-green.ae)



Most of us use Marigold garlands to decorate during this festival season. But did you know that these marigolds can be dried and powdered and can be used as natural and safe Holi colors.



Tip shared by **Smt. Kalpana, Trimulgherry**

Please send green ideas to [nachiketanjali1@gmail.com](mailto:nachiketanjali1@gmail.com)

## GREEN UPDATE

Our Thanks to Trimulgherry residents for hosting and spending the sunny morning of September 23rd with us and exchanging day to day green awareness tips and practices with Nachiketa Go Green club.

We appreciate all the contributions to WOW initiative. We collected 3000 kg and generated Rs. 6,500/- over September-October, 2011.



## GREEN TIPS

### Keep mosquitoes at bay

- Place a small bowl with water in it and add crushed camphor to it. Leave it open for the mosquitoes to get repelled. When not needed cover with a lid. Replace the contents every 2-3 days.
- While taking bath, mix some lemon juice in the last mug of water and pour over yourself to keep mosquitoes away.



# Teacher's day celebrations



Teachers Day was celebrated on 5th September, 2011 at Nachiketa Tapovan. Children paid respects to their teachers, through their presentations on the importance of teachers in their lives and also entertained the teachers by conducting various games.

Sri Manthana Venkata Ramaraju of Vasudha Foundation who graced the occasion gave a talk on the significance of education and also donated stationery and ₹ 50,000/- to Nachiketa Tapovan. 'Prasad' was distributed and the teachers basked in the warmth and love showered by the students.



# Birthday Celebrations...

It was a beautiful morning and continued to remain a beautiful day... It was as though, the Divine Mother wanted to make sure that the birthday celebrations of our most loved **Nachiketananda Swamiji** and **Shivanandamayi Maa** are to be perfect.

When we reached the Ashram, a group of volunteers were already with Swamiji and Maa and were being greeted and shown around the Ashram with their characteristic warmth and joyous attitude.

In between innumerable phone calls from the Nachiketa Tapovan students, all of who wanted to wish both Swamiji and Maa individually, posing for photographs being taken by the volunteers, explaining the immediate future plans at the Ashram... Swamiji was gently guiding us towards the Temple, '**Maa Yoga Shakti Peeth**'.

At the Temple, Swamiji explained the significance of each of the temples, the Sadhana that will be done there and various other aspects. Just being at the Temple had such a peaceful and calming effect on everyone... The cool breeze and the trees surrounding the temple make for an ideal setting for pursuing the higher spiritual goals in one's life. I can't wait to be a part of the consecration process and for the moment when the consecration of the Temple is complete.

After the tour of the Ashram, we had the most wonderful Satsang with Swamiji and Maa about '**Dharma**' and its importance in today's scenario



**The Loving Mother and Child.**

and the difference between '**Social Reformer**' and '**Spiritual Transformer**'. Swamiji and Maa very beautifully expounded and explained the meaning of each of the above and the difference between them.

It was a very simple yet wonderful perspective and if I can put it simply, "Social reform is a subset of Spiritual transformation but the reverse need not necessarily be true. Social reform is very necessary and important but social reform just for the sake of change is not complete in itself, something may still be missing and that is the spiritual 'seed'. Spiritual transformation, on the other hand, will necessarily lead to positive change and social reform and therefore is complete in itself".

After the Satsang, everyone was enthralled by beautiful bhajans by Swamiji, Vasundhara Maa and Subhadra Maa. A very delicious and healthy meal was served in the form of 'Prasad' to everyone soon after.

We left for our respective homes/offices soon after the lunch, but even now wonderful spiritual energy that was so evident and omnipresent at the Ashram still lingers on in my heart and I want to go back to the Ashram at the earliest opportunity.

Once again, on behalf of each and everyone associated with Nachiketa Tapovan, I would like to take this opportunity to wish Swamiji and Maa a Very Happy Birthday and would like to thank them for their Divine presence in our lives... Our lives are more fragrant, joyous and complete because of our association with 'You' and everything You have been doing for each one of us.



**Devaki and Yashodha giving Aarti**

Om Namah Shivaya.

- **Gautam Vir**



## *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**

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

*We congratulate Aditya Vinodh, Avinash Boddu  
and Arnav Garg for winning a one year free  
subscription of Nachiketanjali for their beautiful  
stories which are printed in this issue.*

*We thank our patrons for joining Nachiketanjali's Patron Scheme:*

N. Umamaheswari - ₹ 5,000

Smt. Raji Kumar - ₹ 5,000

## A request to the readers of Nachiketanjali

Dear Readers,

Thank you all for supporting our Magazine.

### Did you know...

- You can gift a subscription to a friend
- You can request an ecopy of Nachiketanjali
- Your feedback is most welcome
- You can inform us if you are receiving double copies

Write to us at : [nachiketanjali1@gmail.com](mailto:nachiketanjali1@gmail.com)

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### 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.*

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Subscribe / Renew \_\_\_\_\_ subscriptions to Nachiketanjali for 1 year/3 years/5years  
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Donate ₹ \_\_\_\_\_ to Nachiketanjali corpus fund as patron

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**Bank details to transfer funds: State Bank of India, Jubilee Hills Branch, Hyderabad.**

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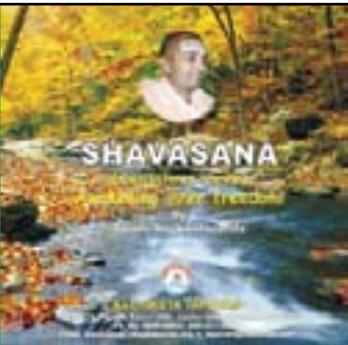
*Anna daanam maha daanam; vidya daanam mahattaram.*

*Annena kshanika trupthihi yaavajjeevanthu vidyaya.*

Vidya Mandir at Nachiketa Tapovan is currently able to accommodate a family of about 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
Sponsor a Teacher (Dance & Music)	₹ 5,000/Month
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. 'Shavasana' is fourth 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/-*

*Not seeking what is other than the Self  
is detachment*

**- Sri Ramana Maharshi**

*With best wishes from*

***Griha Constructions, Chennai***



## Nachiketa Tapovan Ashrama

**“The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted- let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.”**

– Swami Vivekananda

### An Appeal

Dear Patron,

Mahboobnagar District, the second largest district in Andhra Pradesh, is situated within a 2 hr drive from Hyderabad. It is known to be one of the most backward areas in education and health in the state. In an effort to change the lives of the rural population, largely comprising of tribal communities in this region, Nachiketa Ashrama project in Kodgal village has been undertaken.

Our efforts are towards making the rural people self-reliant.

- ❖ We want to realize this by providing
  - ✓ Free vocational training,
  - ✓ Free basic education and
  - ✓ Free medical dispensaries
- ❖ The ashram will also be home to spiritual activities
- ❖ It will also serve as a retreat to all those who seek spiritual rejuvenation

To work towards our endeavor, we need your help in the form of generous donations towards the following projects:

- ❖ Drip irrigation
- ❖ Solar Power project
- ❖ Laying of roads
- ❖ Rain-water harvesting
- ❖ Construction of the compound wall
- ❖ Herbal garden
- ❖ Construction of Vidya Mandir-Free School

We look forward to your generous and valuable support and contribution.

Yours in the service of Motherland



Swami Shivananda Puri



## Vidya Mandir Children rock at Waverock

On 30th September 2011, about 40 children and a few volunteers went to Waverock at Gachibowli for a cultural show and crafts exhibition.

The children did Veda chanting and demonstrated the yoga pyramid. The girls had dressed up beautifully for the diya dance. These were appreciated very much by the corporates. The crafts exhibition was also very well received; the children had painted diyas, made greeting cards and few other handcrafted items. TSI



business had also arranged for display of painting made by children of Nachiketa Tapovan, these were put up for sale to encourage young artists. We would also like to thank another very talented artist who had made many paintings and had decided to give all the proceeds to the school. Thank you, Arushi Jain. It was indeed a lovely gesture!

We would also like to thank the entire Waverock and TSI team for their support in making this day truly special.



### *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.

- **Indian Culture, Energizing Yoga**
- **Character Development**
- **Story Telling, Fun and Games**

**THIS IS A FREE SERVICE**

**For Ages 5-15 yrs**

Every Sunday starting July 10th 2011

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

**Nachiketa Tapovan**

Plot # 70, Phase I, Kavuri Hills, Madhapur,  
R.R.District. A.P. 500 081 Ph: 9849168937,  
website:www.nachiketatapovan.org

### *Invitation*

*We cordially invite you to attend*

***Children's Day Celebrations***

***14th November 2011 at 10 a.m.***



*Venue:*

**Nachiketa Tapovan,**

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



*With best wishes*  
***Hotel Sri Brindavan***  
*Nampally Station Road, Hyderabad*



## *Happy Children's Day*

