

Nachiketanjali

...an offering

A Journey Into The Spiritual Realm!



THE GLORIOUS HOUSEHOLDER



“A crane stands on the edge of a pond that is always disturbed by flowing water, mud and stones. The crane is like a householder who is disturbed in the shelter of his home ...”

-Bhaktivedanta Srila Prabhupada’s Light of the Bhagavata

The picture and commentary above gives a new found appreciation for the householder who, in spite of all the seductions, attachments and responsibilities, like the crane makes an ardent effort to soar high constantly drawing inspiration from the resplendent lotus emerging from the muddy waters. Nachiketa Tapovan’s hearty cheers to all those householders who, while fulfilling their Grihastha Dharma, are trying in their own capacity to make this world a better place, expecting nothing but eternal peace and harmony.



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Editor-in-Chief : Subhadra K.

Executive Editors: Annapurna R.

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Design & Layout: Shyam R.

Young Columnists Team:

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Sale and Operation

Team: **Laxman M.**

Promotion Team:

Vandana M.

Mamta A.

Software Team:

Krishna P.

Purvvi B.

Editorial & Publication Office

Nachiketa Tapovan

Plot No. 70, Phase I, Kavuri Hills, Madhapur,
Guttalabegumpet, Serilingampally, R.R. District. A.P. 500 081

Tel: 8008882828, 9849168937

email: nachiketanjali1@gmail.com

website: www.nachiketatapovan.org

www.facebook.com/nachiketatapovan

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Contents

Page No.

Editorial	2
O Mother!...	3
Turn around their future!	5
Srimad Bhagavad Gita	6
Yoga for your health	7
Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara	8
Ajapajapa	9
Lord Shiva's Mother	10
Free programs...	12
An Appeal	13
Hara Hara Mahadev	14
Inspiration Galore...	16
Embodied Enlightenment	17
Insights from Nature	18
There are no mistakes in life...	20
Go green	21
Events and Celebrations	22
Vision Test - Cloudy or Clear?	24
Yes, a "Crow" is my friend!	25
Suhas Gopinath	26
Elder's Advice...	27
From the Wild	28
Book Review	29
Cancer Awareness Programs	30
Sanskrit Lesson - Twenty Three	31
Tridalam Trigunakaram...	32
When you thought...	34



KAALACHAKRA



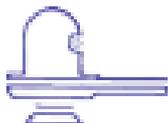
The year 2012 has arrived, bringing with it the fear of Pralaya about which there has been a lot of hype in the media for quite some time. The prediction, that the world will come to an end on December 21st 2012 is lurking in our minds and let us analyze this.

If an Era has a beginning, it will have an end too and that is a natural phenomenon. While birth can be considered as the beginning of creation, death is considered as the end of creation. The cycle of birth and death is bound by Kaalachakra or the "Time Wheel". Kaala or time is a manifestation of the Supreme Self. The entire universe functions according to His will. He holds all the secrets of creation. Sages who have understood this have valued Kaala or time.

Every thing ceases to exist in due course of time. However time continues to exist. It is not affected by the cycle of birth and death. Nature cannot destroy the Kaalachakra. We might try and remove the hands of the clock but time cannot be stopped from passing. Earth is spherical and according to the sages, time moves spherically and hence has no beginning or end.

God or the Supreme Power always exists and so do our souls which are fragments of the Supreme Self. Pralayas are only temporary. When we die we are sure to be reborn for we are bound by the Kaalachakra. Every sunrise is followed by sunset and every sunset is followed by sunrise. It is just a change taking place in God's creation. Then what is it that should cause us so much worry? Instead, why don't we utilize this precious time in knowing and understanding our true self? Let us tread the path of Dharma, utilize the powers given to us by the Supreme Self and share it with our fellow beings. This will definitely help us cross the ocean of Samsara or births and deaths and ultimately become one with the Supreme.

- *Subhadra K.*



O Mother! Let me not peep into those innocent eyes...

Nowadays, my day is always busy with construction activities. Chores like assigning work, buying material, cooking for residential inmates and maintaining accounts take up my whole day. The other day, when I was assigning work to the workers, one Amma who is working in the Ashram came to me and asked for wood that was lying behind the temple. I was busy and couldn't understand exactly her need for the wood. She knew that I was buying wood for construction work, then how can she ask for it? I simply said no to her and got back to my work. She was in tears but I didn't understand why. Again the next day she asked, "Swamiji, shall I take the wood that is lying behind the temple?" I didn't reply but shook my head in frustration and went back to supervise the cleaning inside the temple.

Though I was engrossed in the temple work, I couldn't help thinking how self-centered people are! But soon 'work' took over me and I got engaged in calculating time and the pending work that has to be done within a short time. Immediately the first thought that came to my mind was to complete the pending work and then take up the cleaning as the area was spread with waste material all over, especially behind the temple.

Next day, once again that Amma came to me and asked with a choked voice, "Swamiji, shall I take that wood?" This time I looked at her and asked, "What will you do with that wood?" Without looking in my eyes, with great difficulty she said, "Swamiji, I don't have a gas stove in the house. I need this wood for cooking."

Now it was my turn to shed tears. My throat was completely choked. I was totally speechless. I was unable to look into her eyes. I asked Mother, "O Mother! Let me not peep into those innocent eyes... for I will be swept away in the flood of innocent saga. O Dear Mother, let me not encounter

again and again such helpless eyes, for your child will never do justice to the cause."

How long she was standing there I don't remember but when I saw that she was still waiting for my permission, with great difficulty I nodded my head in affirmation, not because it was something great that I was sharing but because of what I was sharing. Immediately she left the place, took an empty cement bag and started collecting

those small-small pieces of wood, almost eaten away by termites. There was hardly sufficient wood leftover, yet very carefully she started picking up the wood removing the red soil and termites from it and kept it neatly in the bag. Her face was glowing and happiness was overflowing as if she got some precious wealth in her life.

I was silently witnessing this challenging saga... the saga of the lonely lady... the saga of love and compassion for her child... the saga of livelihood and living for the family even in dire conditions... the saga of life with every odd... the saga of struggle at every step... the saga of losing her husband at a very young age... and above all the saga of not giving up hope...

I do not know for how long I cried. I do not know how many sleepless nights I had spent. I do not know for how long I observed those compassionate, loving, caring, innocent eyes silently. But one thing, I was really moved by seeing her gesture for her own people... the struggle for survival and not giving up hope, even though the whole world seemed to be upside down.

O Dear Mother! Let me not peep into those innocent eyes...



- Swami Nachiketanaanda Puri

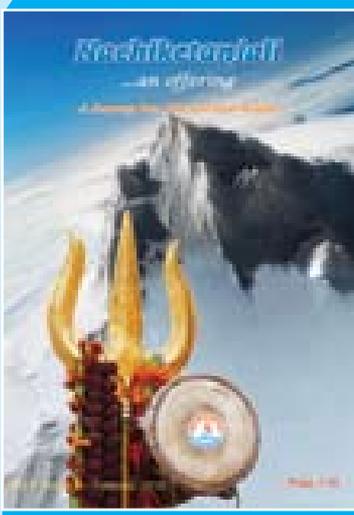
Cover Story

Scaling the heights to Supreme Bliss!

The art of symbolism in Indian religion is employed to represent aspects of deeper truths effectively. A greater appreciation ensues when we attempt to understand them.

Let us examine the adornments of Mahadeva

Trishul: Represents the place where the three main nadis, or energy channels (ida, pingala and sushumna) meet at the point between the brows. Sushumna, the central one, continues upward to the 7th chakra, or energy center; while the other two end at the brow, where the 6th chakra is located.



Damaru: When a Damaru is shaken, the sound formed denotes Nada, the cosmic sound of AUM, which can be heard during deep meditation.

Rudraksha: Rudra + Aksha = Rudraksha. What does "Rudra" mean? Rudra is Lord Shiva in His most fierce form. Aksha means "Eye". It resembles the Third eye of Lord Shiva, the discerning eye of wisdom and one-pointedness. Rudraksha greatly helps in reaching the desired goal, by providing a clear vision to the aspirant.

Adorned by Yogeswara, symbolically, these indeed are the gears essential for a yogi to scale the heights and attain the state of Sat-Chit-Ananda.

- Harini N.

Nachiketa Tapovan thanks Smt. P. Narmada and Sri P. Krishna Reddy, Director of BHANU CERGLAZE PVT. LTD. for their generous donation of Rs. 2 lakhs towards the Sponsor-a-child Corpus Fund. This thoughtful gesture which will facilitate education of 2 deserving children, is greatly appreciated by the students and management of Vidyamandir at Nachiketa Tapovan.



Smt. Manisri, volunteer of Tapovan receiving the cheque



Festivals of February 2012

- 3rd February : **Bhishma Ekadasi**
- 7th February : **Magha Purnima**
Bhairava Jayanthi
- 18th February : **Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Jayanthi**
- 20th February : **Maha Shivaratri**
- 25th February : **Sri Krishna Chaitanya Jayanthi**
- 26th February : **Sri Kanta Jayanthi**



A NOTE TO READERS

Our sincere apologies for the delay in your receiving the January issue of Nachiketanjali. It was due to a problem in the Postal dept's logistics. In future, please inform us if you do not receive the issue by the 15th of the month.



Turn around their future!

For ₹ 1 Lakh

Your donation will last a lifetime



"My father helps in cooking in the temple and my mother is a housemaid. I came to Nachiketa Tapovan when I was in 10th grade. I want to become a software engineer and serve my family and country"

- Shiva, Xth grade

"My father is a stone cutter and my mother is a housemaid. If not for our school, my sister and I would be working as maids too. I want to study hard and become a police officer"

- Shailaja, VIIIth grade



Appeal for Sponsor-a-Child Corpus Fund

Nachiketa Tapovan runs a free school for 205 children from poor families. They receive all-round, holistic academic education in English medium (LKG to 10th Std.), including, arts, crafts, spiritual and culture lessons.

Sponsoring a child is a great opportunity to help protect a child in need whilst seeing in return the real effect that your support has. Make a difference in a child's life- the chance to form a lasting, meaningful relationship with a child. All your kindness will add up to a bright future.

- ✓ Nachiketa Tapovan is working hard to build a CORPUS fund to meet the ongoing expenses and expansion needs at a consistent pace. Donating to a Corpus Fund is a great way to sustain our efforts.
- ✓ Interest accruing from the investment made out of the Corpus donations, is only used without touching the principal itself. This way your DONATION remains forever, strengthening the cause and the organization.

- ✓ Being a charitable institution, we earn an interest of 9.25% annually from a Govt Bank. The annual interest on 1Lakh will fully support one child's education for one year.
- ✓ Your donation will come a long way by meeting our expenses that include Teacher's Salaries, Uniforms, Educational material, Building Maintenance and Housekeeping, Salaries for support and administration staff, Field trips and Excursions, Celebrations and Extra Curricular activities.
- ✓ At present, we only have 5 corpus sponsorships...help us reach all of our 205 children!
- ✓ Bring hope and light into their lives – as a group or individual or in the name of a loved one.
- ✓ Donors receive annual report card and are welcome to interact with our children.
- ✓ **We express our thanks to Corpus Donors by permanently inscribing their names on our recognition board in the school.**

Srimad Bhagavad Gita



As discussed in the previous issue, Arjuna, a mighty warrior had refused to fight against his own kith and kin. His mental weakness made him a victim of *Bhavaroga* and he says to Govinda; "I shall not fight" and fell silent. If the mightiest warrior became a victim of *Bhavaroga*, then what about an ordinary person? Arjuna lies within each one of us. As individuals we do come across various situations in our lives, when we are confused about our duties and many times we ignore the dharmic teachings that guide us on the path of truth.

Today's education does not equip one to overcome *Bhavaroga*, or in other words, it doesn't help us to conquer the mind. Today's education gives us information but not wisdom. Modern generation believes that science is far more advanced today than in the ancient days. But today's science is adept at explaining the scientific theory behind the entire universe but not you (soul). Modern science explains about physical body; anatomy, physiology etc, but it fails to explain the science of the soul. A great scientist can tell you the process of birth, but he cannot explain the process of death!



Lord Krishna, the "Supreme scientist" reveals the science of the soul and the universe. *Yogeshwara*, the master of yoga, reveals Srimad Bhagavad Gita to dispel the ignorance of Arjuna. The Lord commences *Samkhya Yoga* by saying, "You have spoken wise words and lamented for those who do not deserve lamentation. The wise grieve neither for the dead nor for the living."

Na tvevAham jAthu nAsham natwam neme janAdhipa I

Na chaiva na bhavishyami sarve vayamathah param II

Meaning: There was never a time when I or you or any of these kings here did not exist. And all of us shall certainly exist in the future too. Just as the embodied soul experiences the different states of the body like the childhood, adulthood and old age, it will acquire another body after death. Learned persons are never deluded about this.

Do we believe in these words of Lord Krishna? Do we accept it as the Truth? We might say that we aren't aware when we are born nor are we aware when we leave the body. Then what do we know about ourselves?

Whatever Sri Krishna said is both spiritually and scientifically true. According to science, our body is made up of atoms. Let us find out as to how old the atom really is. Atom is as old as this creation. Change is the law of the universe. Every moment there are enormous changes taking place in our bodily functions. Every second we are changing, that's how man goes through childhood, youth and old age. Thus Sri Krishna explains that although the soul undergoes innumerable changes in its outer form, life after life, it is itself beyond death and destruction.

When science is strengthened with spirituality, it thoroughly reveals the knowledge of the soul. This great science is revealed by Sri Krishna through Bhagavad Gita. Many sages have not only understood it rationally with their intellect but have had personal experience of the soul. Knowing this, great souls like Adi Shankara, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharshi and many other great sages were able to shed their body voluntarily.

This wonderful wisdom is not only for Arjuna, who existed in Dwapara yuga. It is applicable for any individual of any Yuga. Bhagavad Gita is a pure science of the soul. Anyone with complete *Shraddha* can understand and digest more of this. Whosoever practises this yogic wisdom will certainly overcome *Bhavaroga*, a chronic disease of material existence. Let us practise *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* to know Thy Self!

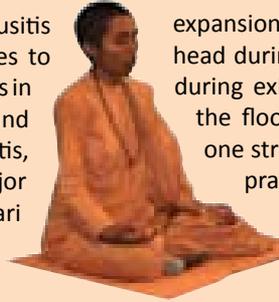


- Swami Shivananda Puri



Yoga for your health (Sinusitis)

People who are suffering from sinusitis can seek refuge in pranayama practices to overcome the problem. Pranayama helps in enhancing the vital energy to the body and gives relief from the ailment. In sinusitis, the pranayamas and kriyas play a major role. Kapalabhati, Bhastrika, Bhramari and Nadishuddhi are the pranayamas suggested for curing sinusitis. These practices can also be supplemented by Surya namaskaras, for better results.



expansion of the chest lift up the hands over your head during inhalation and drop down both hands during exhalation but do not touch the hands to the floor. One inhalation and exhalation makes one stroke. Continue for 10 strokes and stop the practice. Observe the automatic stoppage of breath. When you achieve normal breathing again resume the practice and do it for 3 more rounds.

Instructions for Pranayama:

KAPALABHATI: Breathing with abdomen

Sit in any comfortable posture with spine and neck erect, eyes closed, shoulders collapsed and relax the whole body completely by doing a deep inhalation and exhalation. Now take inhalation passively and exhalation actively by blasting out the air and vigorously flapping the abdomen in quick succession. Inhale passively and relax the abdomen muscles at the end of each expulsion. Repeat the expulsion as quickly as possible starting with 60 strokes or expulsions per minute and increase the practice up to 120 expulsions per minute. At the end of each minute i.e., after 60 rounds, stop the practice and relax. Observe an automatic suspension of breath and achievement of deep silence in the mind.

Contraindications:

- People who are suffering from spinal disorders should avoid vigorous practice of Kapalabhati, but can practice with fewer strokes depending on their capacity.
- If you feel pain in the abdominal muscles, immediately stop the pranayama.

BHASTRIKA: Breathing with chest

This practice is strictly followed by Kapalabhati practice.

Sit in any comfortable posture with spine and neck erect, eyes closed, shoulders collapsed and relax the whole body completely by doing a deep inhalation and exhalation. In this practice both inhalations and exhalations are very active. Inhale and exhale through both nostrils by expanding and contracting the chest forcefully. For better

Contraindications:

- People who are suffering from heart problems, hypertension, hernia, gastric ulcer, epilepsy or vertigo should avoid this practice. People with Asthma and chronic bronchitis are recommended to practice only under the guidance of experts.

BHRAMARI: Female humming bee breathing

Sit in any comfortable posture with spine and neck erect, eyes closed, shoulders collapsed and relax the whole body completely by doing one deep inhalation and exhalation. Now inhale deeply and while exhaling, produce the humming sound of a female bee. Prolong the breath as long as possible effortlessly and feel the vibrations of chanting throughout the body. After the chanting, feel the cessation of breath. Observe that the whole body vibrates after this practice. This is one round. Continue for 9 more rounds. This practice is suitable for people with or without any ailments.

NAADISHUDDHI: Alternate nostril breathing

Sit in any comfortable posture with spine and neck erect and eyes closed. Adopt the Naasika mudra by folding the index and middle finger. Now close your right nostril with the help of the thumb finger and exhale through the left nostril. Now inhale through the left nostril. Now close the left nostril with the ring finger and exhale through the right nostril. Again inhale through the right nostril and exhale through the left nostril. The pattern of breathing is slow and steady. This is one round. Continue for 9 more rounds. This practice is suitable for people with or without any ailments.

- Maheshwari

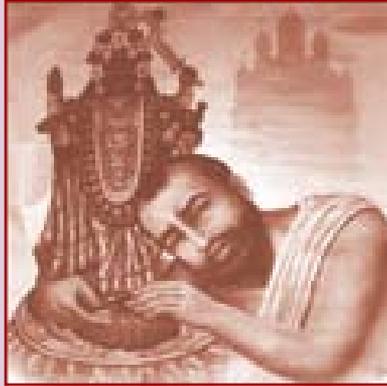
Final year student of B.Sc. Yoga,
Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samstha
(International Yoga University, Bengaluru)



Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara

Sri Ramakrishna in the mood of Ma Durga

Once Swami Saradananda related the following incident; "One day Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was seated in the Panchavati. At that time the Divine Mother, Ma Durga appeared from the Ganges, walked towards Him and merged into His body. Later, the Master told Hriday: "Mother Durga came. Look, Her footprints are still on the ground".



even if you immerse Her image in the Ganges? Can the Mother stay away from Her son? For the last three days, She has accepted your worship in the worship hall, but from today, She will accept your worship constantly, sitting in your heart." And Mathur was mollified.

Once Hriday performed Durga Puja in Bihar but the Master could not go with him. There Hriday saw the Master beside

Ramlal described how the Master had a vision of Ma Durga seated on a blue lotus: "Once Master went by steamer with Keshab Sen to visit the Eden Garden in Calcutta. He saw many blue lotuses in a pond there. He saw Mother Durga seated on a large lotus. Her right foot was hanging down, the left one was on the lotus and Ganesha was on Her lap. The lotus was gently moving. When He had that vision, the Master went into samadhi."

the image of Durga during vespers and the sandhi-puja. Later, when he returned to Dakshineswar, he described his vision to the Master. The Master said: "It is true that I felt an intense longing to see your worship during vespers and the sandhi-puja. In ecstasy I felt that in a shining body I moved along a luminous path and entered your worship hall."

Every year during Durga Puja, Mathur would invite the Master to his Calcutta residence at Janbazar. The Master passed those days joyfully with Mathur and his family. One day when the Master attended the worship service, the priest was offering food to the deity. At that time an unusual event took place. Akshay Sen wrote: "When the priest was offering the food, the Master took it in His hand and began to eat. The priest was startled. Immediately Mathur said to the priest and others: 'Now I understand that my worship of Mother Durga is successful, because the Master has taken the food'."

When Ramakrishna was in Shyampukur, being treated for cancer, while in Samadhi He travelled in His subtle form to see the Durga Puja at Surendra Mitra's house. He told His devotees: "A luminous path opened from this place to Surendra's house. I saw the presence of the Divine Mother in the image; She had been evoked by Surendra's devotion. A ray of light beamed forth from Her third eye! Rows of lamps were lit before the Goddess in the worship hall. In the courtyard Surendra was crying piteously 'Mother, Mother!' All of you go to his house right now. When he sees you he will regain his peace of mind."

As a Guru, the Master bestowed His grace on Mathur. On the last day of the Durga Puja that year, Mathur said to the Master: "Father, whatever others may say, I won't allow the Mother to be immersed in the Ganges. I have ordered the worship to be continued daily. How can I survive in this world without the Mother?"

Narendra and some others bowed down to the Master, then left for Surendra's house. When they asked Surendra, they learned that what the Master had seen in Samadhi was correct. The Master had indeed gone there in His luminous body to bless Surendra.

The Master stroked Mathur's chest and said: "Oh, is this what makes you afraid? Who has told you that you will have to live without the Mother? And where will She go

Master's 175th birthday celebrations are going to be held throughout the globe on 23rd February 2012.

Source: **How to live with God**
by Swami Chetanananda.



Ajapajapa

All of life throbs with pulsations of expansion and contraction, of intake and expulsion, of prana and apana. Every molecule, every aspect of existence vibrates with this pulse. Everything is in a continuous and spontaneous state of cyclical change. Everything is endlessly repeating a subtle mantra.

Man throbs with this pulse of life in many ways. The most obvious are the heartbeat and respiration. The ancient yogis developed a wonderful yet simple method of using this constant beat of life as a means to calm the mind and raise levels of awareness and understanding. They realized that the breath is a constant rhythm that continuously repeats a mantra. This mantra is normally known as *Soham* or *Saham*. The practice is called *ajapa*.



Definition

Japa can be defined as the continuous repetition of a mantra. The suffix 'a' in front of japa implies that the process of japa becomes spontaneous. That is, japa is transformed into ajapa when the mantra repeats itself without effort; the mantra has been planted so deeply through japa that one's whole being pulsates with that mantra. Japa requires conscious effort, whereas ajapa requires no effort. It is said that japa comes from the mouth whereas ajapa comes from the heart. Japa is the preliminary practice and ajapa is the perfection of japa.

Rationale

The aim is to create a situation where the chosen mantra repeats itself continuously and spontaneously twenty-four hours a day. The mantra should overwhelm your whole attention; it should be a permanent background to all thoughts and actions. No matter what you are doing, work or play, there should be constant awareness of the mantra. This brings about incredible one-pointedness of mind and in time all problems and mental fluctuations are soothed away.

The mantra should also be synchronized with respiration. Therefore, a person who has perfected ajapa will repeat the mantra about 21,600 times every day (i.e. 15 respirations per minute or 900 per hour). Actually, however, the number of mantra repetitions will be much less, for continuous practice of ajapa leads to such mental and physical relaxation that the breathing rate will drastically reduce.

At an advanced stage, the breathing rate at times may be two or three times per minute. The whole body and mind should unceasingly vibrate with the mantra. This is not easy, for at first great mental effort is required to prevent the mind wandering here and there.

Effort is required to train the mind to repeat the mantra as japa. As soon as the mind wanders then the mantra will be forgotten. But when the process becomes spontaneous as ajapa, then no effort is required. You will be forced to be attentive to the mantra; you will be attracted to the mantra like iron to a magnet. To attain this stage, however, will require much time and effort. But if the stage of continuous ajapa is reached, then one's whole life will be transformed. The mind will become a perfect reflector of experience and consciousness.

Source: *Yoga and Kriya*
By Swami Satyananda Saraswathi



Yuvanjali

Macrocosm to Microcosm



Coming and going is all pure delusion.

The soul never comes nor goes.

*Where is the place to which it shall go
when all space is in the soul?*

*When shall be the time for entering and
departing, when all time is in the soul?*

- Swami Vivekananda



LORD SHIVA'S MOTHER

In ancient days, there lived a rich merchant named Dhanadatta in Karikal in South India. He had no child. He worshipped Lord Siva. He had a daughter through the grace of the Lord. The child was called by the name Punitavati. Punitavati came to be later on called by the name Karikal Ammaiar also. She is counted as one amongst the Nayanars (the famous Siva Bhaktas of South India).

Punitavati was very intelligent, beautiful and pious. She chanted the names and praise of Lord Siva. She applied holy ash to her forehead.

She married Paramadatta, the son of a rich merchant at Nagapattam. Paramadatta also was handsome and intelligent. He possessed good character. He lived in his father-in-law's place with the permission of his father.

Punitavati used to feed the Bhaktas with intense devotion and joy, day and night and hear them singing the names of Lord Siva. She always remembered the utterance of the Vedas: "Let the guest be a God unto you—Atithi devo bhava". She and her husband took the food that remained after serving the devotees, as if it were nectar.

One day, a wandering mendicant came and gave two ripe mangoes to Paramadatta. Paramadatta gave them to his wife and attended to his business. A devotee came and asked Punitavati to give him something to eat as he was very hungry. The food was not ready. So she gave him one of the mangoes and some milk.

Paramadatta returned home and took his food. Punitavati served him the mango fruit that remained. Paramadatta found it very delicious. He asked her to bring the other fruit also. She prayed to Lord Siva. Immediately, a mango fell into her hands. It looked exactly like the one served before. She gave it to her husband. He found it a thousand times more palatable than the first one. He asked Punitavati: "My beloved

Punitavati, where did you get it from?" She narrated everything. Paramadatta said: "Get me another". Punitavati got another mango in the twinkling of an eye.

Paramadatta was struck with awe and wonder. He understood that his wife was a beloved devotee of Lord Siva. He reflected within himself: "I am a great sinner. I have treated a great devotee of Lord Siva as my servant. I cannot consider her as my wife any longer. It will be a great sin to leave her alone. But what do I do now?"

He was in a dilemma. Finally, he resolved to part from her. He told his wife that he was going out on professional business. He obtained her permission and proceeded to Madurai. He settled there and married another wife. The second wife gave birth to a daughter. Paramadatta named her Punitavati.

Punitavati was anxiously awaiting the return of her husband at the promised time. She had no news of him. She became very miserable and unhappy. After some time, she came to know the whereabouts of her husband. She proceeded to Madurai and met her husband.

Paramadatta welcomed her with intense joy and prostrated at her feet. He said to his wife: "I am a worldly man. I am passionate and greedy. You are a Goddess. I cannot take you now as my wife. Pray, pardon me".

Punitavati replied: "My Lord, I have preserved my youth and beauty for your sake only. As you do not want me, I shall seek my Lord Siva now."

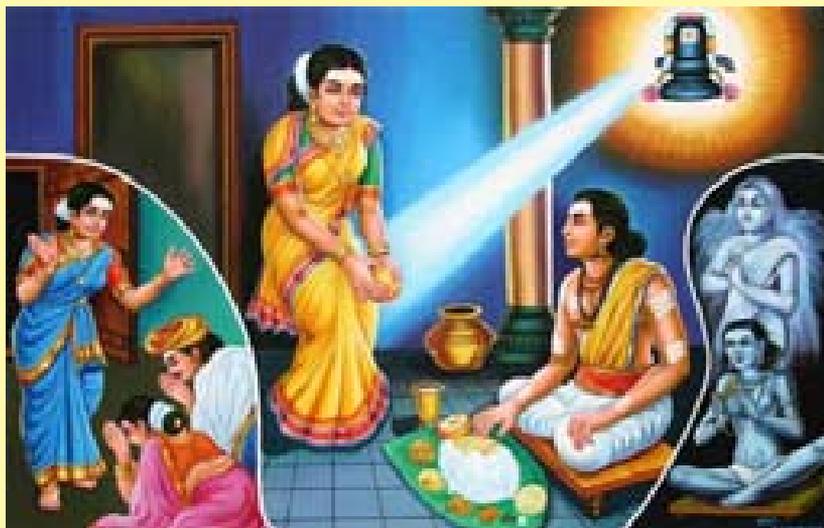
She distributed all the jewels to those assembled around. She worshipped the pious Brahmins and shook off all the flesh by the power of Yoga and looked as a mere skeleton. She marched northward.

She came to Mount Kailas. She thought it a sin to walk with one's feet in the holy Himalayas. She moved on her head through the power of her austerities.

Parvati asked Lord Siva: "Who is that person, O Lord, who is coming towards us?" Lord Siva replied: "That pious woman is My Mother, who nourished My devotees".

Lord Siva got up, moved a few steps forward, welcomed Punitavati and said: "My dear Mother, are you keeping fit?"

Punitavati fed the devotees like a mother. The Lord makes no distinction between Himself and His devotees. He has said: "The devotees form My heart and I, theirs. They do not think of anyone other than Me and I other than them".



The Supreme Lord abides in the hearts of all beings. Therefore, our guests deserve worship. The Srutis declare: "Atithi devo bhava—Let the guest be your God".

Source:
All Shaivism





Free programs conducted by **NACHIKETA TAPOVAN**

Yoga workshops:

Program of “Yoga workshops” conducted by Swami Shivananda Puri includes instruction on yogic ways of healing oneself from stress related ailments that effect daily living. This event is conducted upon request from interested groups. To arrange a workshop contact: 8008844337



Cancer Awareness workshops:

by Dr. Rohini and Dr. Shivananda Reddy.

Consultations and Guest lectures on the disease, self breast examination, support system for surgeries, steps to lower the risk, prevention and early detection. To arrange a workshop contact: 8008900764

Bala Vahini for children: a fun-filled, values and culture oriented program conducted on every Sunday at Nachiketa Tapovan’s Hyderabad Center at 10:00am.

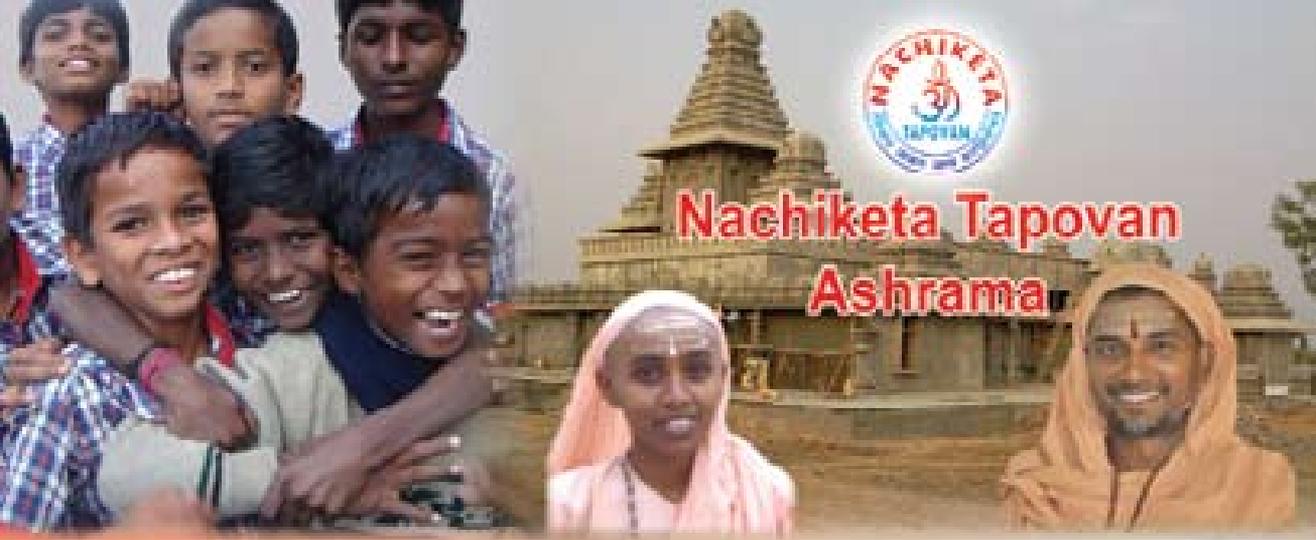


Environmental Awareness workshop:

Program conducted to educate communities on

- Learning to recycle, reuse and reduce waste
- Learning about conservation of resources
- Practicing ways to reduce pollution

To arrange a workshop contact: 9701935216



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
 - ✓ 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
- ❖ Herb 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



Hara Hara Mahadev

“Prithivyapasthejo Vayurakasath...” Lord Shiva has manifested and exists in the Panchabhuthas – Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space. On the day of Magha Bahula Chaturdhasi which we celebrate as Maha Shivaratri, Lord Shiva has manifested in the form of Linga. As Maha Shivaratri is celebrated nation wide on February 20th 2012, let us learn the significance of the Panchabhutha Shaivakshetras.

PRITHVI LINGA:

In the small town of Kanchi in Tamilnadu, Lord Shiva has manifested as Prithvi Linga and is worshipped as Lord Ekambareshwar. It is said that Goddess Parvathi performed severe penance at this pilgrim place and established a Shivalinga made of Earth and ultimately merged in it. As it is made of Earth, abhishekam is done only with flowers and not with water as is the usual norm. A temple is built over this Linga and its Rajagopuram which has a height of 172 ft is considered to be one of the biggest in South India. There is a huge mango tree in the premises which is said to be 3500 years old. The interesting part of this tree is, its four branches bear four varieties of mangoes which the locals opine are replicas of the Four Vedas. There are 1008 small Shivalingas in the temple of Lord Ekambareshwar. Goddess Kamakshi has manifested as the form of Shakthi in this kshetra.

JALA LINGA:

Jambukeshwar or Thiruvanaikaval is the second among the Panchabhutha Shaiva kshetras. Lord Shiva has manifested as Jala or water in this kshetra and the constant flow of water below the Linga stands as a testimony to this fact. The locals worship the Linga as Appulingeshwar and His consort is Akhilandeshwari Devi. Strange features are attributed to this temple. It is said that Parameshwara gave Jnana to Goddess Parvathi in this Kshetra and as if to prove this, Lord Shiva faces west while Parvathi is seated facing east. As it indicates Guru-Shishya relationship, Kalyana or marriage rituals are not performed to the deities in this temple. Apart from this, the priest wears a saree, applies kajal to his eyes and dresses up like a female while performing the afternoon abhisheka rituals. This kshetra is closer to the Vaishnava kshetra, Sri Rangam.



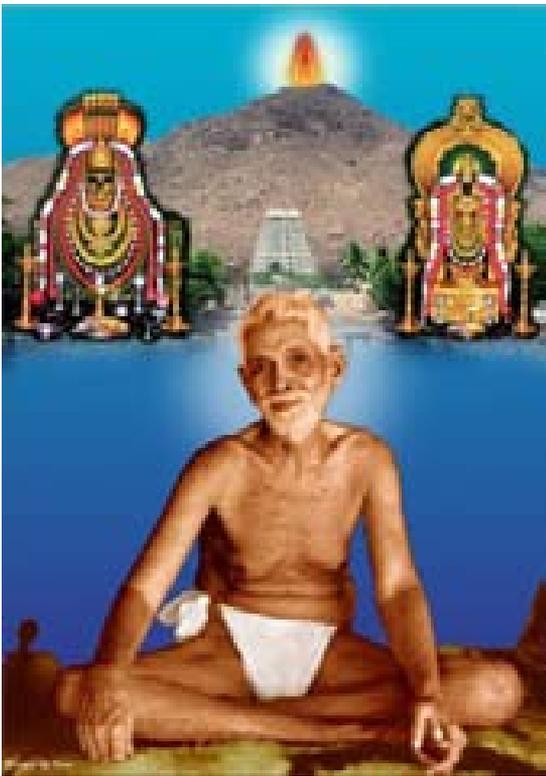
TEJO LINGA:

Lord Shiva has manifested as Agni (fire) in the famous shrine of Arunachaleshwara in Tiruvannamalai (Tamilnadu). This holy place is considered to be the heart of Mother Earth. This temple is well known for its architectural magnificence. According to the sthala purana, once when Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu had an argument about their supremacy, Lord Shiva put an end to the argument by manifesting as Tejomaya svarupa at this place on the auspicious day of Magha Bahula Chaturdasi and since then Maha Shivaratri is celebrated to mark the occasion. It is also said that Lord Shiva has given a boon of appearing as Agni Linga every year in the month of Karthika. This gave way to the annual Deepotsavam celebrations in this holy pilgrim town. Giri Pradakshina around the holy hill of Arunachala is considered as circumambulation to Lord Shiva Himself.



Ekambareshwar Temple
at Kanchipuram





Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi of Arunachala

Sri Ramana Bhagawan is said to have worshipped the Pathala Linga in the southwest corner of the holy temple. It is believed that one can attain moksha by the mere thought of Arunachala. The special feature of this temple is all the models of the Panchabhuta temples exist here and devotees who find it difficult to visit the other temples can have darshan of their replicas at this temple. Goddess has manifested as Unnamalai in this holy shrine.

VAYU LINGA:

The fourth among the Panchabhutha temples is the holy shrine of Sri Kalahasthishwara. While all the other four temples are located in Tamilnadu, Kalahasthi is situated in Andhra Pradesh. Parameshwara has manifested as Vayu (air) in this holy kshetra which is called as Dakshina Kailash. The Shiva Linga here is shaped like a rectangle and is white hued. Lamps in the shrine flicker proving the existence of Vayu (air) inside the temple. Parameshwara gave Panchakshari Mantropadesha to His consort in this holy place and as the Goddess has attained Shiva jnana, She is worshipped as Jnana

Prasunamba. This pilgrim place has also other attributes. It is here that Bhakta Kannappa, the spider, snake and elephant have attained moksha. All the pujas and rituals are performed only to the utsav murthis and no one including the priests, are allowed to touch the main Shiva Linga.

AKASH LINGA:

Mahadev has manifested as space at Chidambaram in Tamilnadu. There is no Shiva Linga in the temple but just a void. A curtain is drawn to a part of the main shrine and after puja, priests give darshan of the vacant space to the devotees. This is what is termed as Chidambara Rahasya. Apart from this, Shiva is worshipped as Nataraja in this temple as it is believed to be one of the places where Shiva has performed His thandava (divine dance). There are three sections in the sanctum sanctorum – the void, Nataraja and the spatika (crystal) form of Chandramouliswara. The curtain and vacant space indicate that it is easy to attain the Lord once the veil of ignorance is removed.

Let us worship Lord Shiva in all these five forms on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivaratri and derive religious and spiritual benefits.



Jambukeshwar Temple

- A Compilation





Renu Sharma

SHE IS NEVER TIRED

“Hello! Excuse me! Listen to what I am saying. Remember, I can be your mom, grand mom and even a girl friend, provided you concentrate!” Lo and behold! The entire class is attentively listening to whatever she says. She is no trained teacher, but has an amazing ability to connect with any generation – be it kids, her University-level students or the grown-ups. Meet Mrs. Renu Sharma, a retired District Judge, who in her words is ‘busier after retirement’. She has her hands full with a number of activities, but is always warm and welcoming. Here are excerpts from an interview with this amazing woman:

Please tell us about your education and student life and how you started your career as a judge.

In school, I was an average student who managed to get 59% marks. But once I joined Women’s College-Srinagar, things changed and I became an active student. I was the president of the Students Union, participated in national level debate competitions, mock Parliament and was the editor of the college magazine. I passed with flying colors and was ranked first in B.A. I then joined Delhi University in 1969-70 from where I got my LLB degree in 1972 with merit. After my marriage I got an opportunity to sit for the State Judicial Service exam in Madhya Pradesh and wow...I topped the list of the selected candidates. I joined as a civil judge in 1979.

How was your experience as an adjudicator? Could you tell us about one case which really moved you?

I enjoyed my work. Surely, it was hard work and at times I had to stay away from my family. I devised new ways and means to improve the justice delivery system to give quick justice. Many cases moved me as one deals with human beings. But cases of child rape or child abuse affected me the most. One was of child rape with murder of an eight year old girl in Bhopal, in which I gave death sentence.

Did being a woman ever prove to be a challenge? How did your family support you?

Being a woman was never a problem with me. But it was a problem with some men especially in those parts of the State where women are still not considered as equals and men hate to have women bosses. But then I saw to it that they have to accept the situation. I considered myself a

judicial officer and not a woman while at work place. I did not like using my gender for my career. My family has been and is very supportive. My husband Mr. Pramod Sharma is more like a friend. My kids were cooperative and considerate. I derive my inspiration from my mother who studied only till ninth class and became a widow in her forties. Never did she lament, never did she seek support from others. My father even though bed-ridden was a very bold, strong-willed, positive thinking person.

Do you think the legal system of our country is evenly poised for both the victim as well as the accused?

Law has been favouring the accused a lot and the victim is just forgotten. He is a mere witness. As an adjudicator, I was sensitive, especially in rape cases. I felt the pain of the victim.

You are always busy and bubbling with life. What are all the activities you are involved in now, post-retirement?

I think I am busier after retirement. I love gardening, cooking, reading and travelling. I am a guest faculty at the National Law Institute University, National Judicial Academy and Academy of Administration, Bhopal. And, I have adorable grandchildren who find me bossy and strict. (smiles) I have retired from a job but not life!

If given a chance, what will be the one thing that you would want to change in our justice system?

QUICK JUSTICE is one thing I want to see. It is possible but we are complacent. I wish there was more accountability on this front starting from the top.

What according to you should every individual do to make our society a better place?

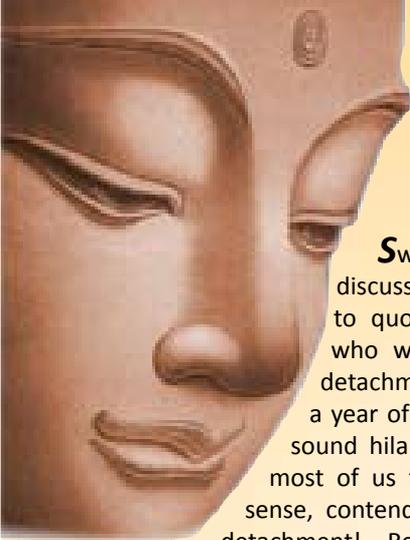
Do the job assigned to you sincerely and do to others as you would like others to do for you. This is what I learnt in my early days. Try to follow to make the world a happy place.

Nachiketa Tapovan wishes Mrs. Renu Sharma and her family a healthy and happy life. We salute her for making work her worship and inspiring many others to do so!



- Neetika Gogula





Embodied Enlightenment

Swami Vivekananda, in His discussions, very often used to quote the example of a king who would say, "I am practicing detachment renouncing one wife a year of my hundred wives". It may sound hilarious, but isn't it true that most of us think and act in the same sense, contending that we are practicing detachment! Renunciation is giving up something that is causing hindrance to our spiritual growth or holding us from distinguishing between real Vs unreal and not allowing us to quit impromptu.

As said by Lord Krishna, "*Sambhavaami yuge yuge*", time and again the Lord Himself incarnates to preach mankind. But we fail to understand His message and wander like rolling stones gathering no mass of realization. Lord took human birth in the form of Rama and Krishna, but radiated cosmic energy through His leela. In *Kaliyuga*, He took human birth again and again and descended on earth to save the clan of men from all troubles and ferry them across *bhava saagara*. But unfortunately, we refuse to tread His path and continue to focus on material comforts, finding solace in worldly matters that are but temporary. When Lord Krishna was asked by Yudhishtara what surprises Him the most. He replied, "people weeping at the demise of their dear ones, mistaking them to be permanent on earth". If ordinary people can remember this truth, they can understand and be aware of their idiosyncrasies similar to those of the above mentioned king. The classic example is King Suddhodhana of Kapilavastu in the kingdom of Nepal. Yes, I am referring to the life of Gautama Buddha whose erstwhile name was Siddhartha. Bhagavan Buddha is considered as a reincarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Siddhartha was born at Lumbini, Nepal in 563 B.C., to King Suddhodhana and Mayadevi. Astrologers predicted that the child would become a recluse. Suddhodhana, in an attempt to avoid the fulfillment of the prophecy, took every precaution that the prince's brought up took place within the palace walls. Siddhartha was married to Yashodhara, a princess who in due time gave birth to their son Rahul. But, who can alter the fate? While on an outing, Siddhartha caught sight of a sickly person, an old man, a corpse and a holy saint.

The maya that veiled the mind of Suddhodhana, unveiled in Siddhartha and made Him desert His wife, son, state and palace in search of peace and truth. Everything appeared momentary except knowing the Self. He visited several places. He discussed the meaning of life with scholars and sages, but the knowledge thus acquired failed to convince Him. Finally, He meditated under a Bodhi tree at Gaya. He gained enlightenment after meditating for six years and thus became Buddha who preached that, "Greed is the root cause of all human suffering and sorrow". By following the eight-fold path enunciated by Gautama Buddha, man can free himself from the clutches of never-ending human aspirations. The eightfold path to enlightenment comprises of:

1. Right View
2. Right Intention
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

Buddha opposed the caste system, which was deeply rooted among Hindus. Buddha, who was born on Vaisakha Shukla Poornima day, attained His heavenly abode on the same Vaisakha Shukla Poornima day of 483 B.C. Buddhism founded by Buddha is one of the main religions in the world. Buddhism is practiced in India, China, Japan, Myanmar, South-East Asia and other countries.

As long as we limit ourselves to finding solutions in books written about incarnations that depict their teachings and works, we conveniently leave ourselves oblivious to the fact that remedy lies in us and us alone. Many incarnates may come and go but we tend to remain just human beings, unable to rise to new heights on the spiritual path.

- M. Koti Rajasekhar





INSIGHTS FROM NATURE



Waxing and waning is a constant cycle, like birth to death, growth to decay, but the inner essence is untouched.

Hard work and determination paves way to



Seek enlightenment unconditionally and courageously, no matter the perils.



strength that can handle even insurmountable tasks.





There are no mistakes in life, only lessons

Q: We are always told that making mistakes is not bad, but repeating them is. But, after making a mistake for the first time itself, there is a deep sense of regret which generally grips one and makes him feel bad for the rest of his life. Is it possible to ever get rid of this feeling of regret, especially when the result of our mistake is being experienced or rather borne by others?

A: Mistakes are a part of life. Not every student can score a 100 percent in the test given by the teacher at the end of a lesson. But the winner is the one who goes home and works on the missed answers. The same is applicable to life. The sole purpose of life in its entirety is to learn- unlearn attachment and learn detachment. In this process we are bound to make some mistakes. Every action of ours can be a lesson, if we watch ourselves. You can make a mistake but once you realize it, you think about it and analyze why, how and where it was committed. What was your role in it? Was it a reaction to someone else's action? If so, why is that particular action or person causing reaction that is unacceptable to yourself? Was this the first time you made this mistake? Depending on the answers to such questions, you can come up with a sensible understanding of your mistake and how not to repeat it. Once you attain this clarity, it is very important to stop brooding about your past action.

Don't be too harsh on yourself. Forgiving yourself helps you learn to forgive others too. Sometimes, we forgive others easily but can't forgive ourselves with the same ease. The other dimension I see to this is that it happens when we have very high expectations of ourselves. We fail to

forgive ourselves because we are too disappointed with ourselves for making a mistake. Instead, if we for a moment take the focus off of ourselves and see the big picture...



visualize ourselves against the mighty Himalayas or an endless ocean, how minute we are individually! And if we draw to scale, how much space would one action of ours take up in this whole wide universe? Does the small sub-particulate mistake deserve that much time and space of our thought? Or would it be worthy to spend the same amount of time on making the next deed of ours better and more productive! Life is all

about flowing smoothly not getting stuck and stagnant. If I refuse to move on, it is invariably my loss.

And finally, about the consequences that others are suffering because of your mistake- if it is possible, admit your mistake and explain why it happened and assure you won't repeat it ever and thank those who are taking the heat of your mistake for being accommodative. And if it is not a feasible thing to do so, convey your apologies sincerely and silently in your prayers and that works too!

Or else, each time we would be adding a burden to our existing baggage. Our plan is to get rid of the baggage not shop for more of collector's items. It is in our best interest that we put this behind and without getting discouraged, march on without remorse another step closer to our goal because,

Karmanye VAdhikaraste MA phaleshu KaDachana,

MA Karma Phala Hetur Bhurmatey Sangostva Akarmani

Ch. 2 || Bhagavad Gita

Translation

You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of its action. Never consider yourself the cause of action, and never be attached to inaction.

- Annapurna R.



NACHIKETA's Go Green Club



AN INNOVATIVE AND INEXPENSIVE LIGHTING METHOD

Despite advances in science, and growth of the economy at a rapid pace, there are many households the world over, particularly slums, in which lighting is a luxury. The houses, if we can call them so, in slums typically have roofing made of either metal or a dark-coloured sheet which makes it impossible for the light to reach inside even during the daytime, making it impossible to carry on any activity indoors. Add to this the fact that they are all cramped in a locality, do not have a window and that they do not have connection to a grid.

Thanks to the *Liter of Light* project in Manila, Philippines, many poor households have access to light, that too for free! The soda bottle-as-light bulb was first discovered in Brazil by mechanic Alfredo Moser in 2002. In the next one decade tens of thousands of people who can't afford electricity or other sources of light like candles, have turned to the water bottle light point.



When the bottle is hung through a hole in the roof and filled with water and bleach, the bottle refracts sunlight and can produce as much light as a 50- or 60-watt bulb.

Light is produced as a result of refraction of sunlight through a bottle of water fit to their roof. Surprised? When filled with water (with some bleach to keep out the algae) and snugly inserted into custom-cut

holes in a roof, plastic bottles refract the sun's rays, scattering about 55 watts of light across a would-be pitch black room.¹ The 'light' being nearly free, it has become popular at many more places. In Kenya, it is a youth group which took upon itself the responsibility to fix the bottles in the roofs of the homes.

Such innovative ideas definitely go a long way not only in lighting homes, but also in illuminating lives!

¹*Plastic-Bottle Bulbs Shed Some Light on the Situation*, available at <http://www.good.is/post/liter-of-light-outfits-filipino-shacks-with-plastic-bottle-solar-bulbs/>

- **Compiled by Neetika Gogula**



RECIPE FOR A MULTIPURPOSE CLEANER

You can reduce the usage of harsh, chemical cleaners by making your own non-toxic multi-purpose cleaner. Use it for everything, from Kitchen counters, tiles to the bathroom sink:

Simply mix together the following ingredients and pour into a medium-sized spray bottle:

- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon biodegradable dish soap
- 3/4 cup hydrogen peroxide
- splash of lemon juice
- 1 1/2 cups filtered water



Events and Celebrations

MOTHER SARADA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Nachiketa Tapovan celebrated Sarada Ma's Birthday on 22nd December 2011. The celebration began with a welcoming dance performance by some of our children from grades 6, 7, and 8. Then we had a wonderful puppet show performed by Noori art and Puppetry Center from Durgabhai



Deshmukh Colony, sponsored by one of our volunteers, Mrs. Radhika Bansal. The performers had as much fun entertaining with their talents as the children and teachers who enjoyed the show. This show was followed by a skit performed by our 3rd grade children depicting Sarada Ma's wedding. Another folk dance was performed by our 7th and 8th grade children. The function ended with the National Anthem.

TRIP TO GOLCONDA FORT

Children from grades 6th to 10th visited the Golconda fort on December 10th 2011. Thanks to one of our kind volunteers, Mrs. Radhika Bansal who sponsored the trip. Children enjoyed listening to the story behind the magnificent construction, the amazing acoustics and tired themselves out hiking up and down the fort.

MURMURA CHAT AND CRAFTS AT IMPERIAL GARDENS

On December 17th, our little chefs from Vidya Mandir hosted a stall selling Chat and handmade crafts at a carnival in Imperial Gardens, Hyderabad. While the guests enjoyed the taste of the snack, our children got a taste of preparing food professionally.





STORY TELLING BY MS.DEEPA KIRAN

Children from primary grades were fortunate to participate in a story session conducted by Ms. Deepa Kiran on December 16th 2011. A professional and passionate story teller, she completely enthralled her audience with engaging stories, entertaining songs and energizing actions. The children readily participated and were thoroughly entertained by her. Tapovan thanks her immensely for sharing her exceptional talents with our children and brightening their day.

CRAFT SALE AT CHIREC'S FETE AND ORCHID'S ANNUAL CARNIVAL

On 24th December, Chirec Public school in Kondapur organized a fund raising fete. Vidya Mandir crafts were displayed in a stall for sale. Our crafts sold for a total of Rs 2000. Our thanks to Orchids International school for dedicating a stall for our school in their annual carnival event. A total of Rs. 5000 was raised for Vidya Mandir, by the sale of crafts at the Orchid's carnival.

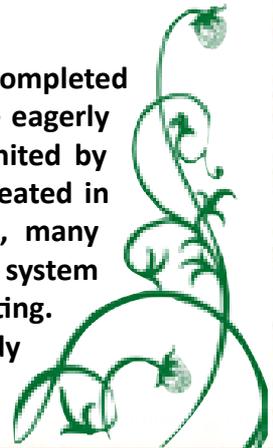
A VISIT FROM WIPRO

A team of employees from Wipro Systems visited Nachiketa Tapovan on December 17th. The spirit of Christmas was in the air as they distributed snacks, toys and donated clothes to the children. Their interaction with the children also included tips and suggestions to kids on how to celebrate festivals in a "greener" manner.

ASHRAM NEWS

The first phase of Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram construction is nearing completion. "MA YOGA SHAKTHI PEETH" has taken a wonderful shape, based on the Divine concept of Swami Nachiketananda Puri and Swami Shivananda Puri. All the idols have been shifted to the temple to facilitate Swamiji to perform special pujas prior to the consecration.

Yagashala work taken up in December 2011 was completed in just a month's time with Divine grace. Sadhakas are eagerly waiting for the day when 'Nachiketagni' would be ignited by Swamiji and Mataji. A permanent Dhuni would be created in the Yagashala during consecration. Apart from this, many workers are engaged in water works, checking drainage system and cleaning up work which is being done on a war footing. Swamiji is working round the clock to get everything ready for the consecration on March 5th 2012 and the actual inauguration on March 10th 2012.



The Journey through Consciousness

Vision Test- Cloudy or Clear?



***Avidyamantare vartamAnAh, svayam dhIrAh panditham manyamAnAh;
DandramyamAnAh pariyaniti mUdha, andhena eva niyamAnAa yathAndhAh.***

“Ignorant of their ignorance, yet wise in their own esteem, these deluded men
Proud of their vain learning go round and round like the blind led by the blind”

-Katha Upanishad, dwitiya valli, verse 5



A tiny tot, who is making his discoveries about the world around him, happens to watch a cat pass by through a tiny slit in the door. What does he see? – First the head, then the body and then the tail. He might conclude that the body came because of the head and the tail came because of the body. That’s a perfect explanation but what if the cat walked by backwards?

It is said that –“the nature of the intellect is to narrow our vision and give it focus”. But we tend to forget this limitation and think that our intellect can understand things as a whole. Instead of opening the door and taking a look at the cat, we use the slit-information to form our opinions that lead to arguments. Most of the time, when the door is open, all arguments cease to exist.

This explains why great wars have been fought in the world in the name of ideologies, governing policies, caste and religious views. Not to mention the most evident of all - domestic squabbles. Often we hear of deeply “God-Centered” people who show terrible insensitivity to fellow humans. It doesn’t seem that it is because of double standards or that

they lack integrity in their values. I remember watching a Hindi movie, Dharm, in which the story revolves around a great devotee of Shiva, Pandit Chaturvedi, who hails from Varanasi. He is a highly respected scholar and priest, who one day realizes that the son he adopted was born to a Muslim woman. Chaturvedi engulfs himself in purification processes to cleanse his body, mind, and soul due to contact with a Muslim soul. The Hindu-Muslim riots in the city force him into a situation where he must shelter the little child from rampant Hindu extremists. He struggles through his intellect and prays hard for the right understanding and finally breaks the door to bring in a clearer vision. This is when Chaturvedi realizes that the true religion is humanity.

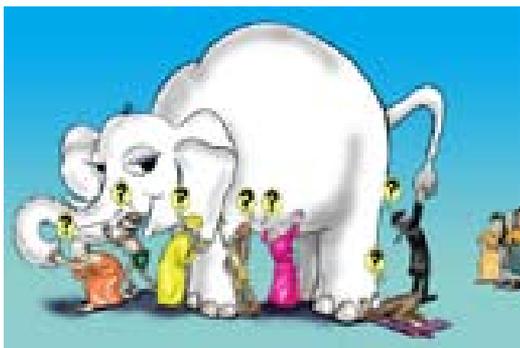
“Frog in the well” is a common phrase used for narrow vision. We have all also heard the blind men and the elephant story. It shows that the intellect makes a poor guide to the mind and senses when it sees only a part of the whole. Yama explains to Nachiketa that we will wander from death to death if we carry a clouded intellect. As humans, our true destiny is to soar high like the eagle and see life as a whole. No matter how knowledgeable we become, how devoted we are, or however fervently we hold on to so called ideals, if we do not shed our separateness, “we aren’t there yet”!

How then can we mature our intellect and broaden our vision? It is said that the mind guides the sense, the intellect guides the mind and the ego guides the intellect. Erasing the ego is an indomitable task for any ordinary human. As Swami Kriyananda suggests, the idea of “expanding the ego” seems more agreeable. Since the point of our concern is always this



little island of “I”, why not expand this island to beyond our skin, beyond our immediate family to, as Einstein puts it – “a widening circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of creation in its beauty”. The whole point of meditation is to expand this consciousness of “I” which results in a clearer vision.

Some of us might conclude that all this is easier said than done. We can climb one stair at a time. Swami Nachiketananda once said that mundane acts of singing, dancing, working, painting, spending time with a loved one etc can all be forms of meditation if done with complete awareness. In that stillness, we become “unified” with the act that we are performing. We have also had glimpses of this unification especially with nature – watching



a sunset or sunrise, beholding the Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon or the grandeur of the Himalayas. These are moments when we become one with something outside of our “body-consciousness”.

Let us try to include all we can in our “I” ness. Let us try to see things as pieces of a greater puzzle that isn’t in sight yet. The closer we are to achieving a 360° view, the further we stride on the road to realization. Small changes in the way we do everyday tasks and in our interaction with fellow humans can bring deep changes in our vision and consciousness gradually. I personally feel this is a great truth to reflect on. Let us remind ourselves of this before we rise to evaluate a situation or judge a person in our lives.

- **Harini N.**



Yes, a “crow” is my friend!

One evening, a tired me was just sitting outside and enjoying the smell of nature... just relaxing...

Just then a crow came nearby on to a branch of a mango tree which was in front of me. I just observed it in silence. It greeted, “CAW, CAW, CAW!!” I could listen to the rhythm of its song. I thought it was hungry and offered some food grains. I was very doubtful and faintly hopeful that it would come near to eat those food grains. But it came silently...ate and then flew away. I just smiled and felt happy that I could satisfy a crow’s hunger.

The next day I was really surprised to see the same crow, on the same branch, at the same time as if it was just waiting for me to come and offer some grains. I offered some, just as I did the previous day.

Days passed... The crow and I continued to meet every evening and soon we were good friends. I was very happy to have such a great friend. I felt it was true. No words, no talks, but it’s my friend.

My relatives and friends just laughed at me when I told them about my friend crow.

My granny hated my crow friend because she was so superstitious and she considered a crow as inauspicious. I tried to convince but didn’t mind after a while. No matter what others thought, I continued my friendship...

I am still happy and proud to say “A CROW IS MY BEST FRIEND!” It can’t hurt me with words. It can’t cheat me like other friends.

I feel that a friendship with an animal is much more interesting and true. I still continue my friendship though it sounds somewhat unusual.

“TRUE FRIENDS NEED NO WORDS TO SPEAK. THEY CAN BE CALM AND COMFORTABLE IN SILENCE”.

- **Sai Harathi**

X Standard, DAV BDL Public School





The Incredible Life of Suhas Gopinath



The sight of children sitting at the computer for hours together probably makes most parents very anxious because they think they may be wasting time on Facebook or video games. The parents of Suhas Gopinath, however, did not have this problem even though he was continuously on the computer and obsessed with the internet. At the age of 14, he launched a web-site Coolhindustani.com and became the world's youngest certified professional web developer. In 2000, he then set up Globals Inc., a web-solution and networking company, at San Jose, California. Since then, Globals Inc. has grown into a Multi-national IT consulting company with offices in more than 11 countries. The firm helps clients in web design, online shopping, internet security and credit card payments.

Suhas Gopinath was born on November 4th, 1986. He comes from a middle-class family in Karnataka and his father was a defense scientist. He studied in the Air Force School in Mathikere. Even though his parents were opposed to him spending so much time on the computer, he was encouraged to learn software development tools by his brother, Shreyas. When his parents refused to give him the money to set up his company, he approached and convinced Network Solution, Inc., a company in US, to finance his enterprise. Later, after observing his talent and perseverance, his father relented and bought him a computer with an internet connection.

Setting up his company was no simple undertaking. Indian laws do not permit a minor to start a company, so he chose to open his company from California in US. He even lost many projects because he could not legally sign any contracts as he was not an adult. But at age of 16 he was recognized as the world's youngest entrepreneur by CNBC and e-Business and at the age of 17, he was recognized as the World's Youngest CEO by various media companies like BBC, Washington Times, The Age and the Limca Book of Records.

While most college students spend their leisure time sitting in coffee shops with their friends, Suhas Gopinath was busy

juggling his professional life with his studies. He did his BE in Information Science at the M.S. Ramaiah Institute of Information Technology along with running his company. He had to deal with many crises. Once, his web-site was hacked into and changed from CoolHindustani.com to CoolPakistan.com. He claims that this was the worst time of his life as he received many threatening calls. Still, he was undeterred and continued to build his company which he says will be a platform for other youngsters to develop their talent in technology.

Suhas is a recipient of many awards and honors. He was the Ambassador for the 12th World Business Dialogue, Germany. On December 2, 2007, The European Parliament and International Association for Human Values conferred the "Young Achiever Award" to Mr. Suhas Gopinath at the EU Parliament, Brussels and he was also invited to address the European Parliament and other Business dignitaries assembled in the EU Parliament. He was recently announced as one of the "Young Global Leaders" for 2008-2009 by the prestigious World Economic Forum, Davos and he became the youngest member ever in the World Economic Forum's history. His co-members include US Governor Bobby Jindal, Hollywood Actor Leonardo DiCaprio, Musician A.R.Rahman, Prince of Brunei, etc.

In the year 2005, he became the youngest recipient of the prestigious *Rajyotsava Award* conferred on him by the State Government of Karnataka. Along with his professional activities, he has also volunteered as the Brand ambassador of PeTA and also the Youth Ambassador for Indo-Pak Leadership Program organized by School of Leadership, Pakistan.

Suhas Gopinath has been an inspiration to several young people who started believing that age is just a number and it's never too early to achieve something. This is not only beneficial to India, in which about more than half of the population is below 40, but the entire world to develop and advance further.

- Arnav Garg

Writer is a 13 year old student of Delhi Public School





Elder's Advice – Think about it

Why should we listen to the elderly and well wishers and take their advice at face value and believe in them blindly?

It is tough to accept when people tell us to do something in their way or try to advise us, when we think we don't need any interference in our ways of thinking. But wait a minute, they could be right, as our parents always are or our ancestors always were. They talk from experience, from seeing those things that we are unable to see or yet to experience.

Take the case of Sachin Tendulkar or other sportsmen. When they go for training, they have coaches. Why? Don't they have talent? Or don't they know how to win matches with their experience. Sportsmen also have food advisors, life style consultants and image management consultants. Can't they manage on their own? The truth is they can't. Because they are focused on something and not able to spend time or sometimes they can't see their own defects. But their coaches observe their game and life from an all round point of view and advise them as to what it looks like from far or how others think about their game and weaknesses. The player can work on those points to improve and make changes to the game and develop strategy and skills.

In a similar way, we are focused on our ideas and philosophies from our narrow view points, based on the knowledge and experience we have acquired. Though we feel it is our life

and no one can rule our minds, we must listen to those who are our well wishers and elders, who understand the future that we may not be able to see. Hence, it is always important to stop and think why elders advise us on certain things and why they sometimes stop us from doing certain things. It is their knowledge and experience that will help us. Even though for an instant we don't want to follow others, we must look into their advice and think twice on our own actions.

Next time, don't just discard or ignore or prevent elders from advising you. Ponder for a minute and get an understanding of the benefits of their counsel and helpful nature.



- Sreedhar Karri

Email: writethought@live.com

Cell: 897 837 6057



FROM THE WILD

Last week, I went to the zoo with my 4 year old cousin- not exactly by free choice! After all, don't we always prefer watching them on Discovery, from a comfortable distance, lapped in the luxury of our own drawing rooms?! I dragged myself along to the zoo with the air of doing a household chore.

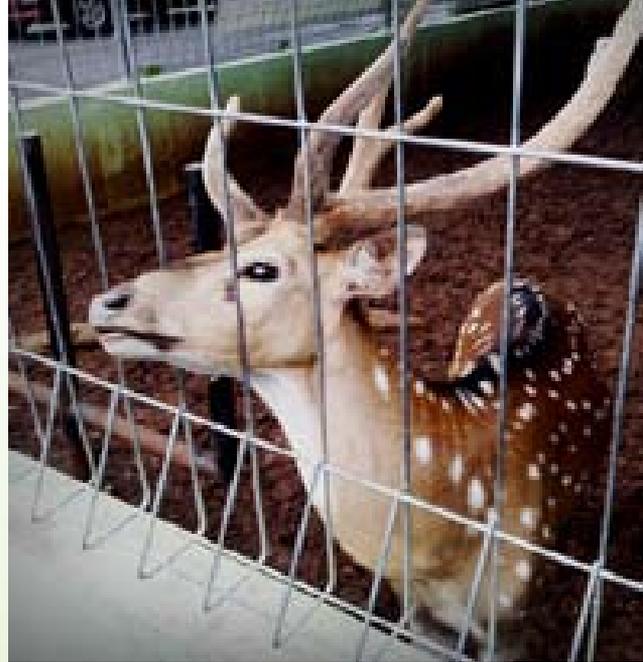
My cousin's mounting excitement as we entered the zoo was infectious. There was a jump in his step and he clapped his hands gleefully. There was an open lake with shimmering silver water that wrinkled into thin ripples on the surface; the lush greenery and the sudden drop of temperature embraced us like only Mother Nature could. I allowed myself a half-smile.

There were gorgeous golden-silver-blue-red birds strutting around in cages- obviously not too happy about being restricted to the ground. A gigantic hippo stood on its stout iron-pillar like legs, swallowing up bite after bite from a tub-sized container- the excessive body fat was making its eyes appear even smaller from the distance. A few monkey species sat on their haunches, looking out of the cages at their more-evolved successors with cameras and cell-phones in hand.

The boredom and unenthusiastic demeanor of the animals was hard to fight- it caught on. I slipped back to my bored temperament and waited with my hands in my pockets- until my cousin could finish his wide-eyed wonder-filled stares and we could lumber on to ogle at the next prisoner in the zoo.

We moved on to a more open enclosure where a small herd of brown-golden deer was nibbling on grass. This was more like it! There was an open sky right above them and no ceiling or cage restricted their view or the passage of wind. And right in the centre of the enclosure was a mother doe with two newborn babies.

We stopped in our tracks and stared at the little beauties wobbling on their weak little legs, clutching on to their mother for support. We were caught off-guard at this display of nature's love at its rawest, purest, best. As we moved



closer to the enclosure, the little deer sniffed at us curiously and took an awkward, stumbling step towards us. We moved even closer, our cameras held at the steady, ready to take the perfect shot of the mother deer and her babies.

Just then, the mother deer shrank back from her cubs and darted far backwards, her eyes wide with fear. She looked frantically at us, then at her baby, and then back at us. She was terrified. The baby, fearless as it was curious, was moving even closer, sniffing these strange new creatures. It was barely a day old. The mother dared not move closer. She went to her other baby and nuzzled it backwards.

The spell broke. Suddenly, I understood. I saw in front of me a mother afraid of the lives of two of her babies- and it wasn't without reason, this. She had been caught, probably tortured, and packed off to a makeshift zoo enclosure that was just a cheap imitation of the glorious forest that was her home. She had probably lived here all her life- as a piece of cheap public display for the amusement of a so-called higher mammal. And even at the most private moments of her life- the birth and feeding of her little baby, she was the subject of public entertainment.

I looked at my little cousin and felt the unspoken vibes passing on from him to the baby deer- through the boundaries of a cemented wall, across the limitations of being a human vs animal. It was an eye-opening moment.



I looked at the miserable, undernourished, imprisoned animals all around us. The questions that raced through my mind numbed me for a second- what if it had been the other way round? Could I live my life behind a 6x6 cage, with moving crowds of spectators jeering and peering at my every move? Could a human mother stand this unbearable shame, fear and torture? Could a proud man hold his head up high like that majestic leopard did, even in the shackles of his low-ceilinged cage? What if suddenly, all the cages disappeared, and we humans were islanded between all these 'beasts' running free? Unthinkable, isn't it?

Don't you think that the very concept of a zoo is horribly wrong? If we want to see the animal, should we be the ones to visit them in the wild or the safari? Is it justified that we rip their world apart and turn it upside down just for a few minutes of a vulgar wall-like display?

I don't know what can be or should be done about this.



Maybe that's exactly what we need to figure out- by thinking from another's point of view.

Maybe we don't have an answer or solution to this 'situation'.

Maybe we just need to ask the right question- for once.

- Avinash Agarwal

Currently lives in the city of Mumbai.
He is a Writer by profession and passion.
e-mail: avi794@gmail.com



Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master: A Yogi's Autobiography

Author: Sri M

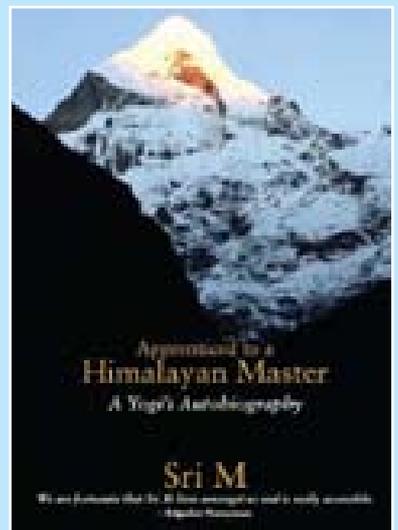
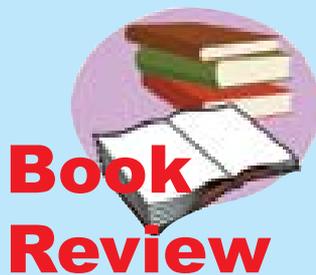
Publisher: Magenta Press

Published date: 1st Jan 2011

M.R.P: Rs 500

Pages: 328

ISBN: 9788191009606



The author, Sri M was born into a Muslim family in Kerala and was named Mumtaz Ali Khan. His childhood was colored with unusual experiences and encounters with deeply spiritual beings leading him to set out on a journey to seek his teacher and Truth in the Himalayan Mountains. The book is an unusual memoir of Sri M's life and learning. Gripping and compelling is the account of his many challenges and travails. Inspiring and encouraging is his courage and steadfastness in facing them. Emotional and evoking is the great love of a true Guru towards his disciple, which outshines the depths of any other human bond. The author recounts many extraordinary experiences during his stay at the summit, which a skeptic could underrate with disbelief. That's just one dimension of it. On the whole, the book shines with great spiritual intensity that is invaluable to any seeker. A must read!

- Harini N.



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Cancer Awareness Programs



Cancer awareness is a program through which Tapovan medical team brings knowledge about cancer and also how to reduce the risk. A camp was conducted in Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram in Kodgal on 18th December for the benefit of residents of the tandas nearby. During the camp one young woman was found to have a lump in her breast. Subsequently, reference and arrangements were made for further treatment procedures at M&J cancer centre. Along with cancer awareness the 40 attendees received consultation, check-ups by Dr. Rohini and Dr Sivananda Reddy and medicines for simple ailments as needed.

More awareness programs were conducted from 23rd-25th December in Godavari district:

1. In a small village called Mallipudi in West Godavari District in which 150 women were educated
2. In Eluru, one live TV program was broadcasted to reach people around a radius of 200 miles.
3. In Ambika Agarbathi factory, where nearly 400 women were informed about the risk factors, screening, diagnosis, treatment, prevention of cancer and the role and technique of breast self-examination.

Early diagnosis can cure many cancers!





इकलइकरोते िइइठठ = twenty three

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

KadAadya

We often have questions about time. When? कदा?

बेङ्गलूरु-यानं कदा अस्ति? When is the Bangalore train?

सप्तवादने बेङ्गलूरु-यानम् अस्ति। Bangalore train is at 7 o'clock.

विजयदशमी कदा भवति?

आश्वयुजशुद्धदशम्यां विजयदशमी भवति।

भारतस्य गणतन्त्रदिनं कदा?

प्रतिवर्षं जनवरी-मासस्य षड्-विंशति-तमे दिनाङ्के गणतन्त्रदिनं भवति। षड्-विंशति-तमे means twenty-sixth, where as षड्-विंशति: means twenty six.

कृष्णदेवरायः कदा राज्यं परिपालितवान्? When did Krishnadevaraya rule his kingdom?

षोडश-शताब्दे। In sixteenth century.

Answer the following:

१. भवतः/भवत्याः जन्मदिनं कदा?
२. भारतदेशस्य स्वातन्त्रदिनोत्सवः कदा?
३. महात्मा-गान्धी-महाभागस्य जन्मदिनं कदा?

Assume that today is Sunday.

भानुवासरः कदा?

अद्य भानुवासरः। Today

सोमवासरः कदा?

श्वः सोमवासरः। Tomorrow

मङ्गलवासरः कदा भवति?

परश्वः मङ्गलवासरः भवति। The Day-after-tomorrow

बुधवासरः कदा?

प्रपरश्वः बुधवासरः। The day after the day-after-tomorrow

Let us look at past few days:

गत-शनिवासरः कदा?

ह्यः शनिवासरः। Yesterday गत- means 'last'. Likewise आगामि- means 'next'.

गत-शुक्रवासरः कदा?

परह्यः शुक्रवासरः। Day-before-yesterday

गत-गुरुवासरः कदा?

प्रपरह्यः गुरुवासरः। The day before the day-before-yesterday

Assuming today is Tuesday, answer the following:

१. अद्य कः वासरः? What day is today?
२. मङ्गलवासरः कदा?
३. आगामि-बुधवासरः कदा?
४. गत-सोमवासरः कदा?
५. आगामि-गुरुवासरः कदा?
६. गत-भानुवासरः कदा?
७. आगामि-शुक्रवासरः कदा?
८. गत-शनिवासरः कदा?
९. परश्वः कः वासरः?
१०. प्रपरह्यः कः वासरः?

* * * * *



Tridalam Trigunakaram...



**Tridalam trigunAkAram trinetrAm cha triyAyudham
TrijanmapApasamhAram ekabilvam shivArpanam**

1st verse: Bilvashtakam

Meaning: Offer a trifoliate Bilva leaf to Lord Siva, the three-eyed Lord having a trident in His hand which destroys the sins of three births!

Shiva is the Supreme Consciousness that illuminates the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. Offering the threefold bilva leaves to the Shivalinga heralds the return to a level of consciousness beyond the three states, which is the fourth state, turiya. The dawning of that state is consonant with the awakening of the individual.

The bilva tree corresponds to the spinal column. The tree's leaves are special: each stalk has three leaflets. The three leaflets represent the three nadis: ida, pingala and sushumna. The climbing of the tree represents the ascent of the kundalini shakti from the muladhara to the ajna chakra.

The point midway between the eyebrows is called the ajna chakra and is regarded as a nexus of the three nadis: ida, pingala and sushumna. A spiritual aspirant who concentrates his or her mind on this point gains concentration and gradual control over his senses.

According to Shiva Purana, the great epic on Lord Shiva, the Bilva tree is the manifest form of Lord Shiva Himself, while all the great Tirthas (pilgrimage places) are said to reside at its base. One who worships the Shiva Linga while sitting under the Bilva tree attains the highest bliss of oneness with Lord Shiva.

Medicinal Properties of Bilva Tree

Ayurveda (science of health) values the Bilva highly for the medicinal properties contained in its root, fruit and leaves. These are used in various Ayurvedic preparations.

Root – A preparation made from the root with ginger and toasted rice cures vomiting. For the treatment of piles, dysentery and diarrhoea, a preparation is made from the root mixed with another tuberous root. The oil extracted from the Bilva root, boiled with the juice of Bilva leaves and applied to the head is excellent for nasal and ear diseases.

Fruit – Its pale tawny flesh is sweet and astringent, containing tannin, which acts as an astringent to the bowels. It has a pleasant, agreeable and aromatic flavor, and provides an excellent dietary supplement. The pulp of the dried Bilva fruit, powdered and mixed with arrowroot, is called 'dietetic Bel'. It is both a sustaining food and a curative medicine.

Leaves – The consumption of Bilva leaves alleviates diseases caused by excess vata and kapha (mucus). They are also useful in diabetes mellitus. For this, a few leaves should be chewed daily and their fresh juice drunk. They are diaphoretic (producing more perspiration), thus reducing temperature and lowering fevers, and an aphrodisiac. A decoction of leaves is a favorite remedy for ailments that often occur during seasonal changes, such as fever, flu and fatigue.

So, let us plant a Bilva tree this Maha Shivaratri and obtain its spiritual and medicinal benefits.

A Compilation



HOW YOU CAN HELP

*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 205 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.

Donations towards operation costs		*Corpus Fund Options	
Sponsor a Teacher (Dance & Music)	₹ 5,000/Month	Sponsor a child	₹ 1 Lakh
Vidya Daanam (Education)	₹ 5200/year/child	Anna Daanam (Mid-day Meals)	₹ 50,000/-
Anna Daanam (Mid-day Meals)	₹ 4200/day	Alpa Aharam (Snacks)	₹ 10,000/-
Alpa Aharam (Snacks)	₹ 700/day	* With the accrued annual interest the following will be achieved every year, respectively.	
Vastra Daanam (Uniforms)	₹ 800/2 pairs	- One child's education annually.	
Stationery Supplies (Copier Paper)	₹ 5000/term	- Mid-day Meals for the whole school for one day annually.	
Medicines (For needy people)	₹ 5000/month	- Snacks for the whole school for one day annually.	

Donations within India- Details	Overseas Donations- Details
<p>Donations can be made directly by cheque or DD in favor of "Nachiketa Tapovan". The donations in India are exempt under the U/s 80G of IT Act, 1961.</p> <p>Donations can be also directed through bank account as below</p> <p>Bank Name : Bank of Baroda Branch Name : Jubilee Hill-Hyderabad A/c Name : Nachiketa Tapovan A/c No : 18090100004093 IFSC Code : BARB0JUBILE (Note: IFSC code contains the number "zero" not letter "O")</p>	<p>Donations can be made directly by cheque or DD in favor of "Nachiketa Tapovan". Nachiketa Tapovan has permission to receive donations from abroad under FCRA act</p> <p>Bank Information Bank Name : SBI A/c Name : Nachiketa Tapovan A/c No : 30953215793 SWIFT Code : SBININBB214</p>

*"The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic willpower.
Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength."*

- Swami Vivekananda

Griha Constructions, Chennai



When You Thought I Wasn't Looking

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you hang my first picture on the refrigerator,
and I wanted to paint another one.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you feed a stray cat, and I thought
it was good to be kind to animals.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you make my favorite cake for me,
and I knew that little things are special things.*

When you thought I wasn't looking,

*I heard you say a prayer,
and I believed there was a God that I
could always talk to.*

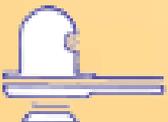
*When you thought I wasn't looking,
I felt you kiss me good night,
and I felt loved.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned
that sometimes things hurt,
but it's all right to cry.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw that you cared and I wanted to be
everything that I could be.*

*When you thought I wasn't looking,
I looked....and now I want to say thanks
for all the things I saw,
when you thought I wasn't looking.*

- Mary Rita Schilke Korzan



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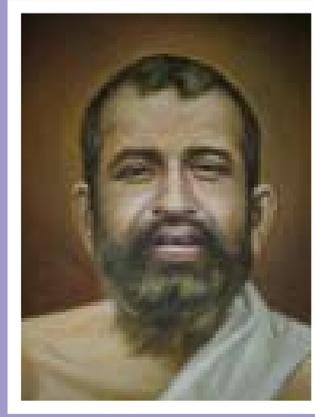
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Mahashivaratri

20th February 2012

from 10 pm



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18th February 2012

from 10 am

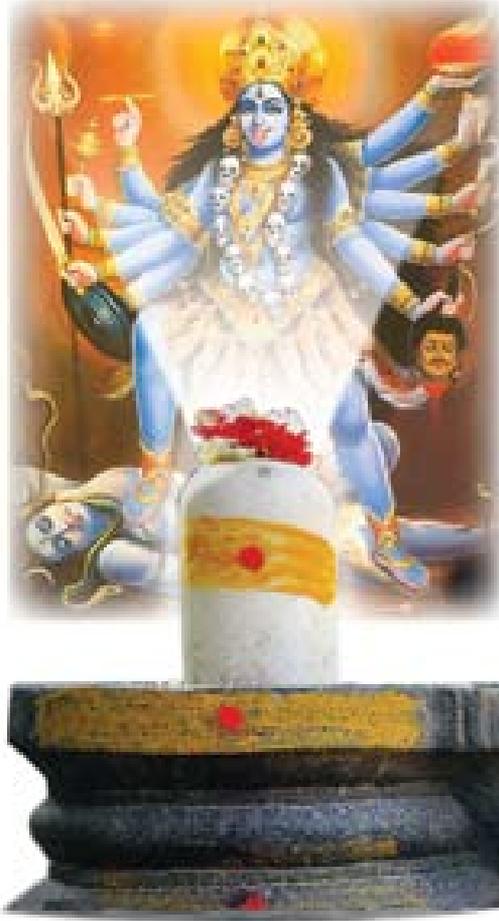
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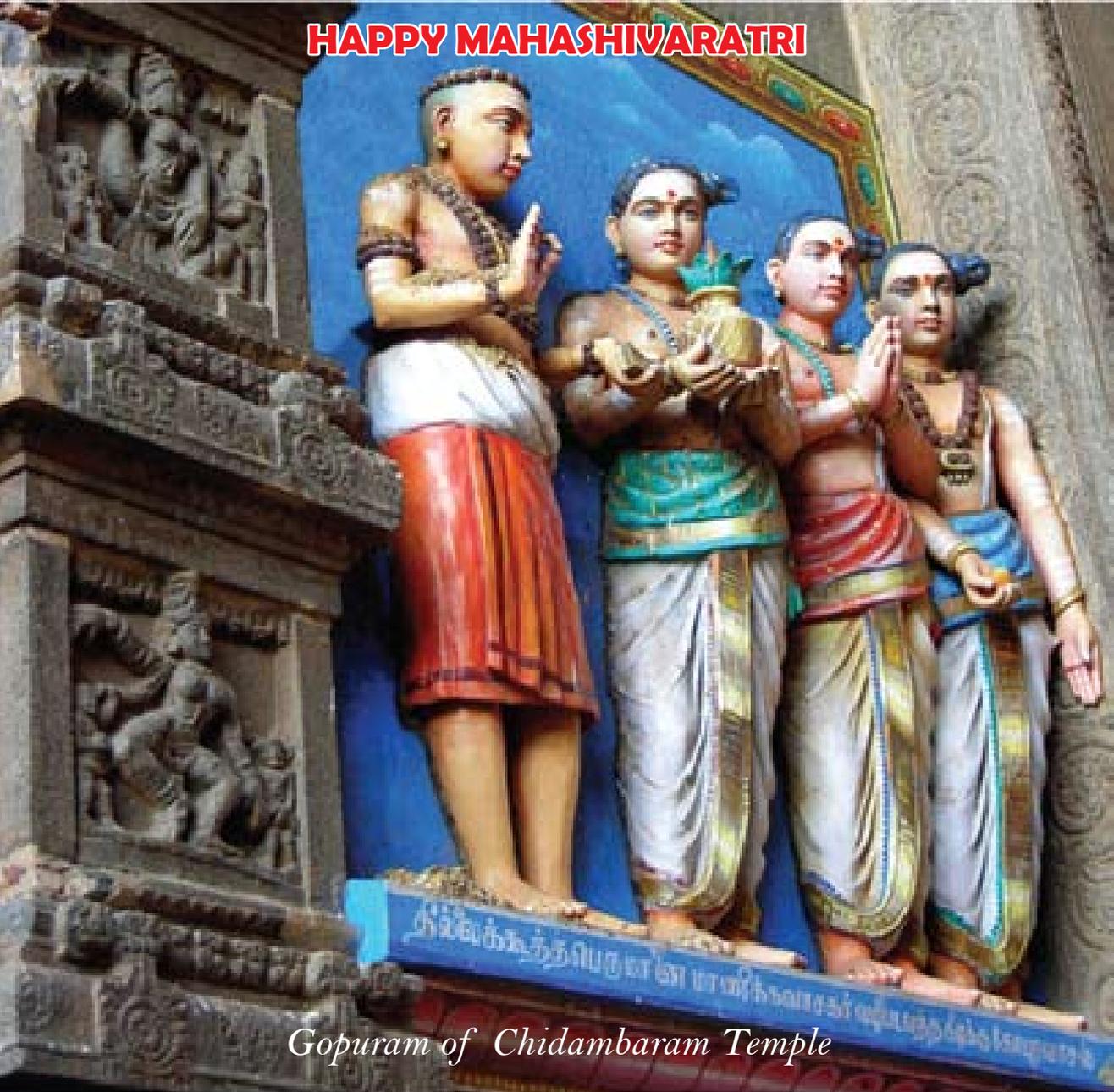
Yours in the service of Motherland
Sadhakas

Note: Special Sadhana for Temple consecration, by Swami Nachiketananda Puri and Swami Shivananda Puri, commences from 15th January. Interested Spiritual aspirants can join them from 2nd week of February. Sadhana is intensified from 3rd week of February.

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Nampally Station Road, Hyderabad

HAPPY MAHASHIVARATRI



Gopuram of Chidambaram Temple

