

Nachiketanjali

...an offering

Price: ₹ 10

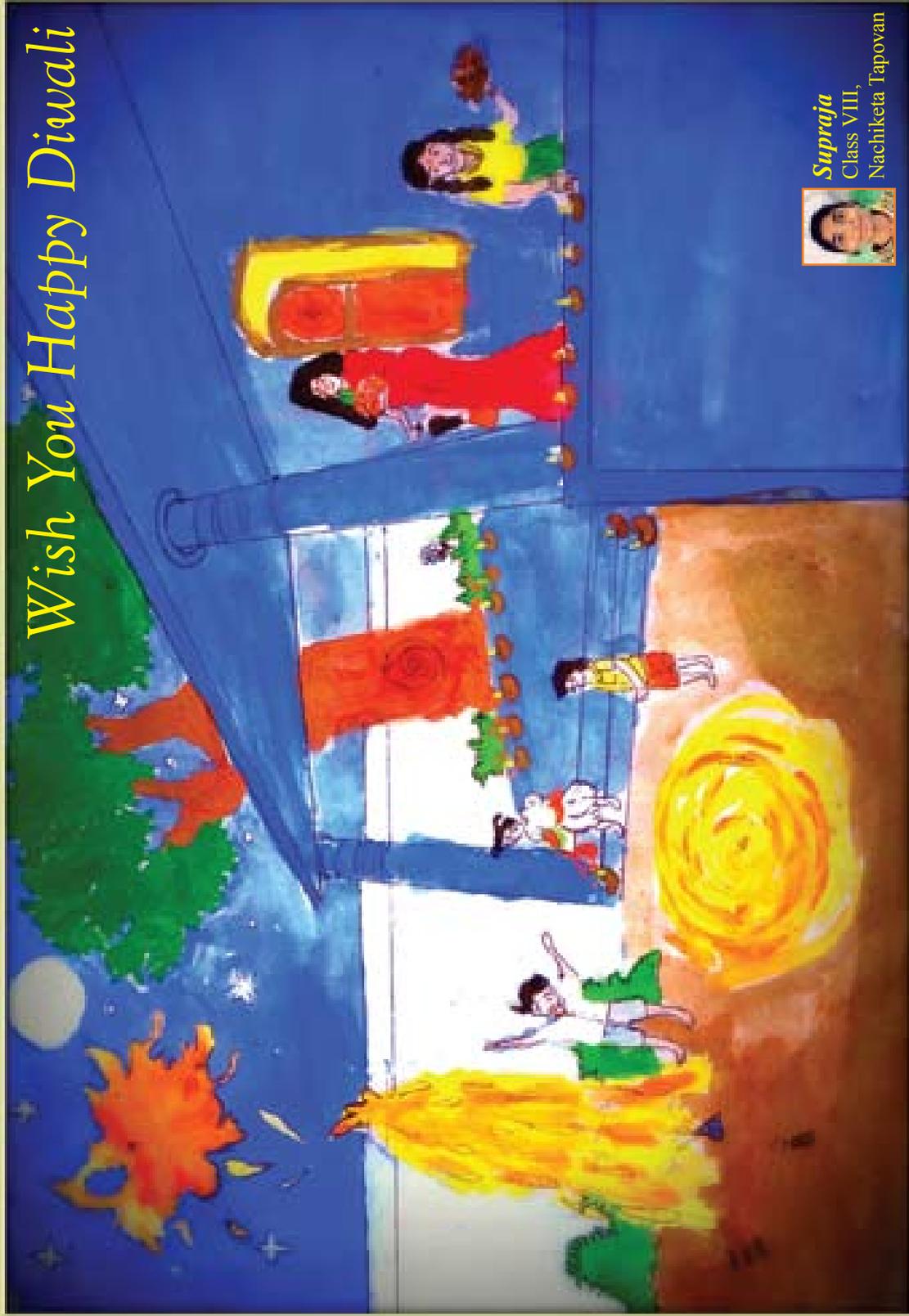


Vol: 3

Issue: 3

November: 2012

Wish You Happy Diwali



Supriya
Class VIII,
Nachiketa Tapovan



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Single Copy - ₹ 10

Subscription

1 year - ₹ 100

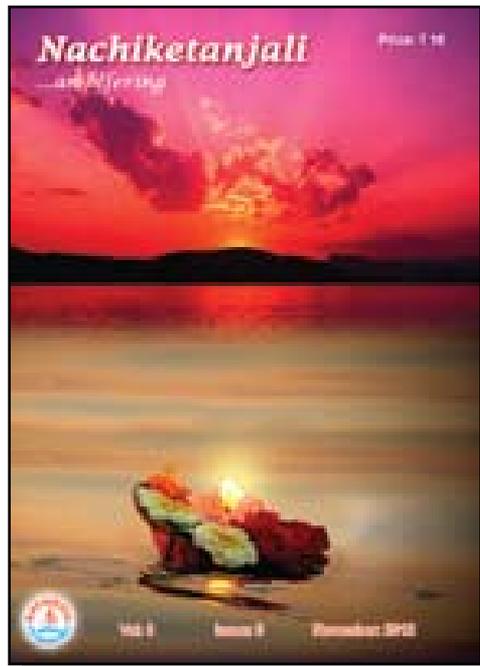
3 years - ₹ 280

5 years - ₹ 450

Subscriptions can be sent by
 MO/DD/Cheque/Cash in favour of
 "Nachiketa Tapovan".

(Plus ₹ 30 for outstation cheques)

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*rOgam shOkam tApam pApam
hara me dEvi kumathikalApam
thribhuvana sAre vasudha hAre
tvamasi gatirmama khalu samsAre*

*(Verse 9 of Ganga stotram
by Adi Shankaracharya)*

O Bhagavati! Take away my diseases, sorrows, difficulties, sins and wrong attitudes. You are the essence of the three worlds and you are like a necklace around the Earth. O Devi! You alone are my refuge in this Samsara.

Ganga Mahotsav - 25th - 28th November 2012

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Editorial

LET THE FLOWER BLOOM!

We often complain about crowded rooms, trains, buses, public places and for that matter even temples, but hardly do we ever reflect on our crammed minds and packed lives. Whether it is our house or mind or life, constricted spaces always turn out to be challenging. We should try to expand our awareness and also guide our children in this regard.

What role do the children play in our life? What is their significance? Being a part of us, they form a totality, like sugar in the milk. Till a certain age, we feel they are our entire life. We give them more importance than our own selves. Their wellbeing becomes our sole prayer. Love and sacrifice for the children are acceptable for without those it is difficult to exist in this world. But we need to shower selfless love. In the process of fostering a child no parent has the right to rob them of their individuality.

A child doesn't belong to you alone. He is the future citizen and will be a part of the society. Then is it not the parents' duty to nurture a child with values that can benefit the society? Every child can become a role model for they have the potential. We as parents should tap that potential and mould our children to become good citizens.

A child who is allowed to play with nature and learn lessons from nature is more likely to succeed in the school called LIFE. If we want our children to lead a hassle-free life then we should care for the welfare of other children as well, for it is they who will become their future counterparts.

Our city, our state, our country and our world should be safe places for our children to live in for if a flower blooms in our neighborhood we can also enjoy its fragrance. Even though Gandhi is born in the distant Porbandar, our entire Nation got its Independence through his magnanimous efforts. When we make sure that the neighborhood also belongs to us, then there is always scope for expansion in our houses, minds and lives.

- Subhadra K.

Gangavataran

Sage Bhagirath performed penance for 1000 years standing in the midst of the *Panchagni* at Gokarna Kshetra. Lord Brahma, pleased with his penance appeared to him and offered to grant a boon. Bhagirath prayed that Ganga be brought from Heaven to the Earth, as her waters alone could reanimate the souls of his ancestors and bridge the passage from the now to the thereafter and that he should also be granted with sons to continue the hierarchy of the Ikshvaku dynasty. Lord Brahma granted his wish but as it was difficult to control the force of Ganga, as she descended on to the Earth, He asked Bhagirath to pray to Lord Shiva to hold Ganga in His *Jata* (matted locks). Brahma asked Ganga to grant Bhagirath's wish. Ganga had no desire to leave the Heaven and descend to the Earth but she could not deny Lord Brahma.

Rishi Bhagirath performed penance to win over Lord Shiva's grace and pleased with his penance Shiva agreed to hold Ganga in His matted locks. On hearing this, Ganga became egoistic and asserting that no one could overpower her, she gushed down with great force. But Lord Shiva used His power and succeeded in receiving the torrents unleashed by Ganga and locked her in His matted hair. Ganga was trapped in Shiva's hair and had no outlet. The perplexed Bhagirath continued his penance and prayed to Lord Shiva to let Ganga flow down to the Earth. When Ganga asked for forgiveness, Lord Shiva allowed a small *Dhara* of Ganga's water to flow down into the Bindu Sarovar from where Ganga formed seven tributaries. The 7th tributary followed Bhagirath. All the Devathas were thrilled on watching this spectacular event and the *Devatas*, *Yakshas* and *Kinneras* followed Ganga to the Earth taking a dip in her holy waters.

Enroute, Ganga flooded Rishi Jahnu's *Yajnavatika* and the angered Rishi swallowed the waters of Ganga. On seeing this all the *Devathas* pleaded with Rishi Jahnu to let Ganga free and henceforth Ganga would be known as his



daughter Jahnavi. Rishi Jahnu let Ganga out of his ear and since then Ganga is known as Jahnavi.

Ganga, submissively followed Rishi Bhagirath and on entering the Earth, she flowed over the ashes of his ancestors, thus sanctifying and liberating those souls and fulfilled Bhagirath's wish. Lord Brahma appeared and blessed that Ganga would henceforth be known on Earth as Rishi Bhagirath's daughter and would be called Bhagirathi.

Released from Lord Shiva's hair, Ganga flows from the abode of Gods and brings with her the Divine powers of the celestial Universe. Temple cities border her course, the most important being Varanasi and devotees celebrate Ganga Dusshera in honour of the celestial descent of Goddess Ganga and seek her blessings.

- A devotee

It is just a mode of transportation...

A debate was going on. The panelists were arguing about life and death. One person says that life is more precious than death whereas another one argues that death is more precious than life. Many were attentively listening to their arguments and well polished presentations. In support of life, one panelist says, "Without life everything is like a dead body. What can this mere dead body do if there is no life? Therefore life is important". The one who supports death says, "You have only seen a dead body but not the process of death, where death can teach a great lesson. Do you know death has presented Buddha to the world? He was full of life but never knew what life is, but a dead body brought Him to life and rest is history."

Immediately the panelist who was supporting life says, "Buddha might have received inspiration from the episode that shook him inside out but it was never his own death that taught him a great lesson." Everyone present over there felt that this point was convincing and for a few seconds there was pin drop silence. Everyone thought that the supporters of death have lost the debate, but suddenly one supporter says, "Look, there are evidences where people have learnt from their own death and one such example is Sri Bhagawan

Ramana Maharshi, who at a very young age encounters death and comes out completely from His own body. He was a rare yogi and one cannot deny His experience. In fact death is much closer to the self than the life.

This debate went on non-stop for many hours. Lastly it was time for the audience to present their views and a young guy who was all the while listening very attentively and patiently looks at everyone and in a gentle voice says, "I might be wrong, but what I understood from my own experience is that whether life or death... it is just a mode of transportation! You decide where you want to go and these beautiful vehicles will take you exactly there. For me, there is no difference between life and death whatsoever. Death is just a synonym for life and life a synonym for death. If we have the desire to reach the ultimate goal then any one or both can be a wonderful means of transportation. In the journey called life, death always occupies the driver's seat whereas in the journey called death, life issues the tickets. It is unfortunate that though we live in life we never understand what life is and at the end of life when we encounter death, we are already up without knowing what death is. In fact when we are nearer to death we understand what life is, isn't it? Death is such a beautiful happening that makes us understand what life is... and truly speaking if we drop the fear of death then this very life can teach us what death is. It is impossible to separate life and death. They are just the two points of a circle but where it starts and ends nobody knows. Strange! Isn't it?"

"Dear One! Life is ready to teach what death is and death is ready to shed light on life, but are we ready to learn from life and death? No and perhaps never and that is why we do think too much about death when we are living in life and about life when we are nearer to death but never do we accept whatever it is, however it is, whenever it is, wherever it is... just a mode of transportation, life or death as it is...!"

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri



CHILDREN!!



How horribly hopeless they are! They never listen to us, argue all the time, trying to convince us that only they are right! Oh! The stress of going through all this!!

How easily all this would just as rightly fit in to describe us, the parents, in the eyes of the children.

Every time something goes wrong with my plan for my child, like an 'extra-hour-play' demand when there is so much to study or an extra piece of cake when he has already had two, the above is how most of us, parents, react. But, maybe, we should tone down. Maybe we should let them learn the hard way. Not worry about him being scolded but let him face the music and learn that music is not always sweet and neither is the extra hour's play.

And there have been occasions when he has put in the extra hour of study and the test has been postponed. So, he has lost on both counts- on his play-time and he has to prepare again anyway.

Recently, I had to attend a meeting at my son's school and it took some time to be finished. By the time I came out, my son had left, getting bored of waiting, to walk home which is less than a kilometre from school. He got home thinking his grandma would be home. Not finding her there and the house locked, he waited for some time and then went to the neighbour's house, used their phone and called me.

By the time I got the call, I had gotten so panicky, (though he is 11), I was rushing home not giving a hoot to any other thought except my son. I was very near home when I got the call from an unknown number, I guessed it was my son calling and it was. It was a huge relief on both sides and tears on both sides, my son had some, I had much more. He controlled himself, I couldn't and I am 36. I explained to my neighbour that he had not known that we were not home but my son hadn't. He had simply gone there, asked for the phone and called.

He had a little bit of a choke in his voice to show that he was still a child but had behaved with a much more sense of maturity and responsibility, with a presence of mind that I never believed he had.

He simply passed over this incident lightly, asking immediately on entering the house, "what is the score?" of some cricket match that was going on. But, I still remember it, writing all about it in detail right now!!

'The child is the Father of the Man' may be a popular proverb. But, for me, 'The child is the Teacher'. He teaches us so many things, not to panic, to move on, to live the moment and so on.

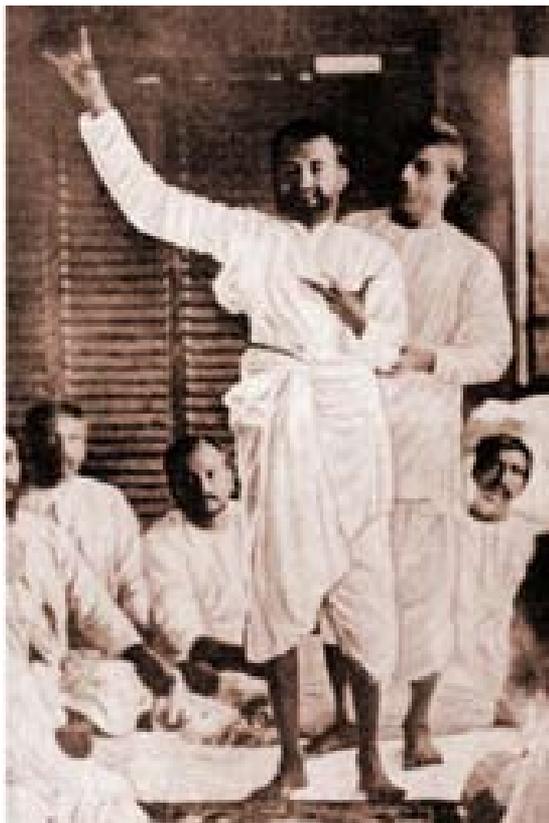
When we stop running to meet our children's deadlines and observe them taking charge of their lives themselves, we will learn a big lesson in our life - 'Trust your child'.

Celebrate Children's Day on 14 November!

- Subha Ganesh

Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara

HRIDAYRAM MUKOPADHYAY



Hriday was the grandson of Sri Ramakrishna's paternal aunt and was therefore His nephew. He was four years younger than the Master and was born in Sihar, which was only four miles from Kamarpukur, where Sri Ramakrishna was born. When Hriday was sixteen, he came to know that his maternal uncle was appointed as a priest in Dakshineshwar and he went there without delay.

Hriday was tall, handsome, and muscular. He was also bold, good-humoured and extremely energetic. It was through Divine providence that Hriday came back into Sri Ramakrishna's life when the Master was about to begin His spiritual journey, forgetting His body, surroundings, and everything else. During this long and arduous period, Hriday became His caretaker, bodyguard, cook, nurse, companion and advisor. Sri Ramakrishna said many times that without Hriday it would have been impossible for Him to protect His body

during the period of His spiritual disciplines. For this wonderful selfless service Hriday will always be gratefully remembered by Sri Ramakrishna's followers. In spite of all these good qualities, Hriday was not notably spiritual. Given the opportunity, he fully enjoyed the world, and greatly longed for worldly prosperity.

Sri Ramakrishna accepted the post of the temple priest of Goddess Kali at Dakshineshwar on the condition that Hriday would be in-charge of the jewelry. He would often see the Master going to the Panchavati and one day he mustered his courage, determined to see for himself what was going on in the dead of night in the jungle. He was startled to find his uncle seated under the tree in deep meditation, without clothes or sacred thread. He called to Him; 'Uncle, what is this? Why have you taken off your cloth and the sacred thread?' After He regained consciousness, He answered: 'Why, don't you know that this is the way one should think of God, free of all ties? From our very birth we have the eightfold fetters of hatred, shame, lineage, pride of good conduct, fear, secretiveness, caste and grief. This sacred thread means that I am a Brahmin and therefore superior to all. When calling upon the Mother, one has to set aside such ideas. So I have removed the sacred thread, which I shall put on after I have finished meditation.' Hriday was dumbfounded and quietly left the place.

Sri Ramakrishna started living in a state of God intoxication. He then could not continue the ritualistic worship and hence urged Mathur Babu to allow Hriday to perform the worship of Goddess Kali.

In 1868, Sri Ramakrishna and Hriday went to Deoghar, Varanasi, Prayag, Vrindaban and other holy places with Mathur and his family. During the Master's twelve years of Sadhana, Hriday was His faithful attendant and later, wherever the Master went, he followed as His bodyguard and companion. Shortly after their return from their pilgrimage Hriday's wife died and as a result passion became dispassion and he yearned for God.



How I got inspired!

One night Hriday saw Sri Ramakrishna going towards the Panchavati. Thinking that the Master needed His water pot and towel, he followed Him. Suddenly he saw a wonderful sight. His uncle's ordinary human body was transformed into a luminous form which radiated light in all directions. The shining feet did not touch the earth at all. He rubbed his eyes repeatedly to make sure it was not a hallucination. He experienced that he was a part and parcel of that luminous God, but he now had a separate entity in order to serve Him. This revelation overwhelmed him with joy, and forgetting himself and his surroundings he shouted frantically.

Sri Ramakrishna urged him to be silent and when he continued to shout, Sri Ramakrishna touched his chest and prayed, 'Mother, make this rascal dull and stupid again.'

Later Hriday moved out of Dakshineswar. On October 26, 1884 Hriday came to visit Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar, M recorded in the Gospel and this was the last known meeting between the two.

Later in his life Hriday would visit the Alambazaar Monastery where the monastic disciples of the Master had installed the shrine of Sri Ramakrishna. Hriday used to lunch there and would relate to the disciples, stories of Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual sadhanas, pilgrimages, meetings with distinguished people, and about the old days of Dakshineswar, Rasmani, Mathur, and also about Kamarpukur. Since none of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna knew the Master until after 1879, without Hriday it would have been almost impossible for Swami Saradananda to complete the biography of the Master.

One day before he left for home, Hriday came to the Alambazaar monastery and bowed down to the Master in the shrine. Swami Niranjanananda, greeted him, saying, 'Hello, Mukherjee. How are you?' Hriday answered: 'Brother, I am living- dead! Those days are gone. Uncle passed away, and my heart has also gone with Him. I am moving in this world with this lifeless body.' Hriday died at his village in 1899.

- **Compiled by Geetha K.**
Source: They lived with God
by Swami Chetanananda

One day while Mataji was speaking to us, among many things, she told us that in order to be a good human being; we should help someone in some way. From that day onwards the words were stuck deep in my mind. I decided that I should be of help to someone but didn't know how. One day my class teacher came and announced that some of us were called to do voluntary service at Nachiketa Tapovan's free dispensary.

I was one of the girls that were called out to help. It struck me that in this way, God has solved my problem as to how to help. I realized that if you really feel like doing something good, God will surely show you the way. I was very happy to be involved in the medical dispensary. Now, every Sunday, I come to the dispensary and I really enjoy working in it. I have never felt it as just my duty as I enjoy doing it and also benefit a lot from it. The doctors who volunteer are very friendly with us and if we are unable to understand, they are more than willing to explain it again to us.

I'm very thankful to everyone at Tapovan for giving me this opportunity to be of help to someone.



Shravani

Class IX,
 Nachiketa Tapovan



WHEN WOULD WE BE SATISFIED?

The other day, we went to a shopping mall. I actually needed nothing. It was meant to be a simple outing with a dear friend. Eventually, I ended up buying two dresses for myself. Remember, I **needed** nothing, but I liked the clothes so much that I could not forego them. I then came home and opened the website of a national news channel. An article struck me and made me feel bad – way worse than the way I felt the day I had my meals when 75-year old Anna Hazare was on a hunger-strike for a corruption-free India. The article sought to enlighten the readers about the plight of a 14-year old girl child who carries about 1000 bricks a day in Nalgonda to earn Rs.100. She is forced to work as she has to support her disabled mother and also repay the debts her farmer-father had incurred before committing suicide.

Wealth is there for all of us to see. There is a lot of money with us, which we squander on our wants, which are often unnecessary, without even thinking for a while. Sometimes, we care to contribute to the charity funds. And honestly speaking, most of us do it to save tax, because we rarely bother to enquire if our donations have been put to sincere and fruitful use. We get the money to spend lavishly on weddings, we find money to celebrate birthday parties in style, and we never fail to excavate our pockets to buy that one dress which is unnecessary for us! Just think what wonders we can do if we put that money to alternate uses. Just think once.

There would be many to say that it is their right to spend their hard-earned money the way they want to. I am not disputing this. I agree that one has every right to lead a life of opulence and extravagance, more often than not to 'show-off' to others. We have fallen in a society that demands this (notwithstanding the fact that it is we who make the society!). But just think; think just once with your pure heart and an unalloyed mind!



Neetika Gogula, Final year B.A. L.L.B. (Hons) has passion for writing articles on social issues.



Ego is the Janani
of Shadripus:
Kama, Krodha,
Lobha, Moha, Mada
and Matsarya. This
is the package which
we carry along with
birth and even after
death.

**Paramahansa
Swami Shivanandapuri**

YOGA FOR YOUR HEALTH

Sarala Dhanurasana

Lie down on the stomach, legs stretched, feet together and keep the hands by the side of the body. Place the chin and chest on the ground. Fold both the knees and try to catch the ankle joints with the help of both the hands. If not, try to catch the big toes of both the legs. Now inhale slowly, try to raise the head region, chin, chest region and up to the last ribcage. Here you can raise the thighs as much as your body permits or you can keep both the thighs on the floor. This is the final position. Try to maintain normal breathing. Breathing should be slow and steady. Do not force to raise the folded legs from the ankle joints or big toes of the legs. Within the limits of your body, try to attempt this

this asana before sleeping as it stimulates the adrenal glands and nervous system.

General benefits: Good for Gastro-intestinal disorders like constipation, indigestion and gastric problem etc. It tones the Adrenal gland and Pancreas and secretions from these glands are balanced. Thus it is very much useful for Diabetes. It removes the sluggishness of the liver. The extra fat around the abdomen is removed. It is a useful practice for menstrual disorders and very essential for lower back pain or cervical spondylitis when it is performed without discomfort and very much advantageous for respiratory disorders such as Asthma.



posture. While exhaling, slowly try to release the posture likewise; unfold the legs and bring the chest region and head region and try to keep the chin on the ground. Relax in Makarasana. (i.e., cross the hands, keep the palms on the shoulder, at the cross point of forearms rest the chin, keep legs apart heels facing each other).

Note: The one who is able to do Purna Dhanurasana can go for it without difficulty.

Who should not do: Those who suffer from heart related ailments, high blood pressure, hernia, colitis and peptic ulcer. Avoid practicing

Spiritual benefits:

By doing this Asana, the Vishuddhi Chakra gets activated i.e. the throat centre is the place where the divine nectar is tasted with the feeling of icy cold and sweetness. With this, one can experience the blissful state of the inner world.

- Maheshwari

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

Man is an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but the centre is located in one spot; and God is an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is everywhere. He works through all hands, sees through all eyes, walks on all feet, breathes through all bodies, lives in all life, speaks through every mouth, and thinks through every brain. Man can become like God and acquire control over the whole universe if he multiplies infinitely his centre of self-consciousness. Therefore, you must not say that you are weak.

If matter is powerful, thought is omnipotent.

You know but little of that which is within you. For behind you is the ocean of infinite power and blessedness. "This *Atman* is first to be heard of." Hear day and night that you are that Soul. Repeat it to yourselves day and night till it enters into your very veins, till it tingles in every drop of blood, till it is in your flesh and bone. Let the whole body be full of that one ideal, "I am the birthless, the deathless, the blissful, the omniscient, the omnipotent, ever-glorious Soul." Think on it day and night; think on it till it becomes part and parcel of your life. Meditate upon it and out of that will come work. Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh," and out of fullness of the heart the hand worketh also. Action will come. Fill yourselves with the ideal; whatever you do, think well on it. All your actions will be magnified, transformed, deified, by the every power of the thought. If matter is powerful, thought is omnipotent. Bring this thought to bear upon your life, fill yourselves with the thought of your almightiness, your majesty, and your glory.

Source: The complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol.II





**“Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime”-**
Ancient Chinese Proverb

Charity and Philanthropy, two closely related words, have been given a lot of mention in our ancient Indian texts. It is very much a part of our culture even today, though the forms and instruments may have transformed a bit.

Charity is defined as ‘the benevolent act of giving’, while the term Philanthropy stands for ‘a love of humanity- caring for, nourishing, developing or enhancing’. In simple words, charity is an immediate, short-term solution while philanthropy is a deep-rooted, structured approach to solving a social problem. So which one is better than the other?

That’s for you to judge.

The first question is- why do you do it? Is it because of a social trend? To be guilt-free? Or to genuinely change things and make a difference? You know your answer.

Research shows that a vast majority of ‘charitable’ people give back to society because they feel they must. It is a way to get rid of their guilt, and alleviate the lingering unease about having too much. Fair enough. So you may give a coin to a beggar or; on an auspicious day, visit a lesser-privileged community and ‘give’ to take their blessings. It’s the most common form of charity.

However, philanthropy is about making a structured change. Instead of giving a coin to a beggar boy, you adopt him and enroll him in a school. Instead of giving away a five-figure amount and getting a smiling photo clicked, you build a school or a centre with the money. That is philanthropy.

In simple terms, charity Vs philanthropy could be compared to allopathy Vs homeopathy. They both treat the same problem, but with different approaches. Immediate Vs long term, surface Vs roots. And it is upon the giver, as to how much and what they want to give- money, or money plus time plus effort?

Not everybody can be philanthropic. It requires a significant amount of your life to be dedicated for the cause. It requires you to run around, face bureaucracy, counter unforeseen challenges and give more in sweat and blood. It’s not everyone’s cup of tea. And that’s perfectly fair enough.

But what we can do, in the little way we can, is support a philanthropic cause as opposed to charity. If you have saved X rupees a month, spend it on an act of philanthropy, something which stays long, perhaps even after you’re gone. If you cannot take up the act yourself, find a philanthropic cause you believe in and support them. KNOW where your money is going and make an active effort- and the returns will be much greater. Whether it is supporting a child’s education or planting a tree- 20 years down the line you will see a smiling graduate and a full-grown tree in bloom. Isn’t that so much more fulfilling?

Nachiketa Tapovan, our spiritual home, is an act of the philanthropy and charity of many such dedicated people. Some have given money to help the functions, while some have given their life’s sweat and blood in order to do so, and they both count as much.

Let us pause for a moment here and offer a silent prayer of gratitude for such blessed souls we are surrounded with. And let us pledge to ‘give’ for the right reasons, to the right causes.

So, what do you plan to do with your fish?

So, what do you plan to give- fish or fishing net?

- Avinash Agarwal

HAMPI

Hampi, the brainchild of Krishnadevaraya, is located on the banks of the river Tungabhadra and is the seat of the famous Vijayanagar Empire. It is 74 km away from Hospet in Karnataka. The Virupaksha temple, the Vithala temple, the palaces and the 7 metres high statue of Lord Narasimha are tributes to the gifted craftsmen of Vijayanagar.

However, today Hampi mourns over the lost empires, its 14th century grandeur, its lost wealth and senseless destruction. The dilapidated monuments echo with history. Every broken image narrates the tale of artistic brilliance and senseless destruction. The place compels the tourists to stand for a while and ponder over the mind behind the destructive instinct. The history of Hampi goes back to the age of the Hindu epic 'Ramayana'.

There are many places of Tourist attractions in Hampi:

Virupaksha Temple, built in the 7th century AD is the oldest temple in Hampi. The presiding deity is Virupaksheshwara, an incarnation of Lord Shiva.

King's Balance or Tula Bhara is a popular spot in Hampi. The 16th century Balance consists of two lofty carved granite pillars about 15 ft high, supporting a stone beam about 12 ft, provided with three hoops on the underside. The thin structure amazes every history buff.

Lotus Mahal is the two storied pavilion located inside the Zenena enclosure. The elegant structure is a beautiful fusion of the Hindu and Muslim

styles of architecture. The ornamentation is Hindu in character. The pillars and arches are Islamic in character.

Vithala Temple is a superb monument and a world heritage site that dates back to the 15th century. The beautifully carved *Mandapams* and *Gopurams* are truly eye-catching. The stone chariot is the prime attraction of the temple.

Hampi Utsav:

Hampi Utsav also known as the Vijaya Utsav has a rich and colorful history. The festival dates back to the times of the Vijayanagar reign. It is held from 3rd-5th November every year. During the festival, history comes alive and the banks of river Tungabhadra dazzles like a bride. The Hampi Utsav has been reiterated as the Nada Utsava by the Government of Karnataka. Reputed artists from various corners of the country add to the grandeur of the festival. The entire scenario looks magical as the rich culture of Kannadigas in various fields of dance, music and art are wonderfully displayed. Hampi Utsav is all about rhythm, grace and colour. Renowned classical dance exponents and classical vocalists win over the visitors through their outstanding performances. The traditional craftsmen display their skills in the festival. Bright colored handicrafts, light show, leather puppets, folk songs, musical instruments and decorated elephants roll back time and offer the visitors an opportunity to view the grandeur of the Golden Era.

- A Compilation



THE TRAIN RIDE

A little girl eagerly set out on a train ride with her folks. Meandering their way through the bustling crowds in the station, she noticed the different types of compartments in the train. There were different kinds to suit everyone. Finally arriving at the 'compartment' with their seats reserved, the family settled in.

Our little girl didn't know when her final stop was and her parents wouldn't bother to tell her. They were busy attending to her baby brother. He always seemed to keep her parents busy and ever since he was born, she felt she wasn't getting the attention she deserved. Suddenly she realized that she was free to do anything she pleased to 'kill time'.

She did have a few restrictions; like no hands out of the window, no jumping on the berths and no going to other compartments. But other than that, it was her choice as to how she spent the time. At first she began to feel all fidgety. 'Are we there yet?' was the only thing on her mind. She began to notice what her co-passengers did to keep themselves occupied. Most people on the train just sat and did nothing. The time just had to pass. Some had a book or a newspaper in hand. Others were busy texting or talking on phones. Some others were taking care of their young ones, making sure they don't burst into incessant wails. Few others kept talking with their friends/family to exhaustion or constantly listened to music. She also noticed, people were making efforts to exchange— their 'assigned' berths to gain more comfortable ones. Some were successful but others weren't indulged as well. Settling down

to sleep, she thought, 'Everyone is just trying to keep busy till they arrive at their destination - some with themselves, some with others, some others with things etc.'

When she woke up in the morning and caught the drone of the engine, she looked down from her berth and realized that some of her co-passengers had alighted when she was asleep. She was just beginning to get comfortable around them and they were gone. Some others had taken their seats. She now had to continue on her journey in their company. People travelling with you are always changing, she thought.

An elderly person had dropped his glasses from his seat; she was quick to pick it up for him. A young mother was struggling to keep her toddler interested. Our little girl took charge and entertained the baby. A boy, her age, seemed shy to talk to strangers and buried his head in a book. She made an effort to converse with him. These interactions kept her engaged as well as enriched her spirit. She was getting used to the journey at last, and she discovered new ways to relish it.

Someone announced that the train might be late by a few hours. It didn't seem to matter to the girl as to when she would get off; she realized that as long as the journey, so long was the train her only true goal, purpose and home.

En route our journey, we encounter many travelers and places along the way; let's discover our own unique ways to enjoy the ride. For we don't really know, where the tracks ahead are taking us and when we finally get off!

- Harini N.



BHAGAWAN IN FOUR FORMS

In true pilgrim-style or so we thought, we decided to take a bus to our Home, Arunachala. For those of us who aren't aware of this beautiful truth- Lord Shiva has manifested as our Arunachala Hill on this planet for devotees to love Him in a form. From Saguna to Nirguna. We go when we are called.

Trips to Arunachala and other sacred places before this particular call from Tiruvannamalai have been perfect all these years except for the slight feeling that something didn't feel quite right from our end. After a bit of understanding given to us from the Source, it struck us that one of the things about a pilgrimage is to give ourselves little or no priority. In other words, cut down on the luxury a bit if we can. After all, the final realisation is precisely this – we are not the body, much less the mind. The car we call God's has taken us to many a holy place but it has also given us enough comfort and freedom to stop at more than one place on a whim. We thought we could change this a little. Habits can be picked with ease and should be just as easily abandoned.

We went to the bus depot one Friday afternoon a little before 4 o'clock, with no idea when we would get a bus to Tiruvannamalai and how long it would take us. There stood a bus just for us and the minute we jumped into it, its engine came alive and we were off. "Four hours," the conductor assured us. We quickly noted the lines on his face; they spoke of kindness. Tiruvannamalai settlers and fellow pilgrims filled the bus.

Thoughts of Arunachala came easily to us. The bus sped on as we muttered chants watching the sky change its gown at dusk. It was a bit like those gorgeous four o'clock flowers splashing their colours across the heavens. Sheets of yellow, crimson, and orange were a perfect backdrop for beautiful birds flying back to their homes. We were happy to be where we were.

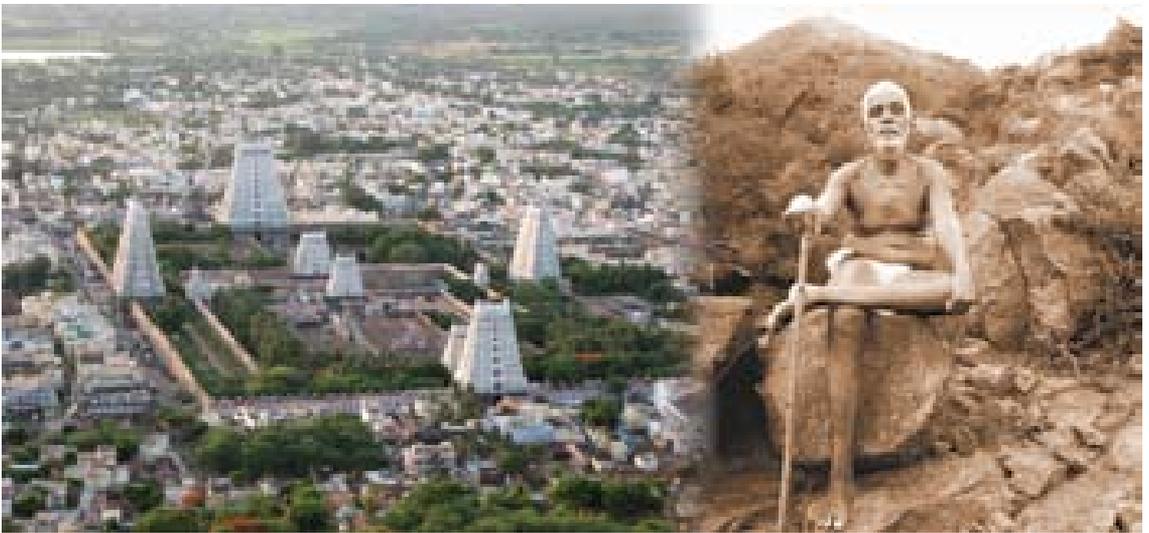
As soon as we smelt Tiruvannamalai in the air, we decided to get off at a point before the bus stand so we could get to Ramanashramam. We wanted to spend the last one hour of the day with Bhagawan Ramana before deciding where we wanted to halt

for the weekend. Mahashivaratri beckons one and all. An eager auto rickshaw brother greeted us and offered to take us to Ramanashramam. When it was time to pay him at the gate of the Ashram, it occurred to us that our wallet stayed back in the bus. "Mea culpa", we admit, and we are not proud of it. Reveries are no excuse.

The rather surprised auto man decided to take us to the bus stand hoping without actually expecting a miracle. He seemed to have ignored the fact that he didn't get his fare yet- Angel #1. We were guilty for this utter inattention. Whilst one part of us was strangely calm and did not react at all, we did look lost. Within a couple of minutes of hopping on to the auto, we got a phone call from a stranger asking us to hurry to the bus depot! The station master! "Hello, hello, Sir, thank you, thank you, thank..." After which we looked at each other and went: "Do such things happen really?" We called that voice from heaven - Angel #2, and spoke to him in Tamil to confirm, "Hello, Sir, we will be there in 15 minutes. Please wait for us." Sage Agastya wouldn't recommend anyone to learn Tamil from us but we sort of impress people with a dozen words or about, not proud of our vocabulary certainly, not even our accent and intonation, but that's another story. This pleasant auto driver seemed relieved and happy for us. We rushed to the spot where our other angel waited.

Here is how Bhagawan worked it out. The bus conductor- Angel #3, handed over a wallet to the station master with no intention to take what was not his but how did he get hold of it? A fellow passenger, Angel #4, had the greatness of heart to give it to the bus conductor. (The real Angel #1 to have started the whole chain of miracles!) Three total strangers were given a chance each to be tested by greed; they proved their integrity and dignity. The fourth did not get his fare from us but still decided to show empathy enough to take us back to the bus depot.

We couldn't make sense of the 'journey' of our wallet. We were deeply grateful and kept offering to pay a token of gratitude to the rare goodness in the form of the station master. The bus conductor



was already on his way back to Chennai. Why didn't we even get a chance to thank him? May be, another time. Having thanked the station master, we started back for Ramanashramam.

Kindness, so palpably true, in a single hour! We were struggling to follow what really happened in that brief time when we were stopped at a traffic signal by someone who seemed to know us. We noticed it was one of our co-passengers, the real Angel #1 to have begun it all! He looked really happy to see us and told us he had tears when he saw the wallet and our empty seats. He wondered what we would do in a place with no money. Not satisfied that he had done his bit, he went to Ramanashramam looking for us! Disappointed that he couldn't find us there, he was on his way back to the bus stand hoping to find us and see what he could do for us! Bhagawan! Thank you for teaching us selflessness in his form. Does such kindness touch our lives every day? We felt massively blessed. We couldn't recall feeling for anyone in this fashion before. Bhagawan, how could you still allow us this compassion? Just how you follow us everywhere in the most humble forms?

The auto brother was quite speechless at the sequence of events, and even more amazed to hear about it at a traffic signal. It seemed as if the moment, place and people involved were chosen to meet in this most unlikely fashion. We couldn't stop thanking this good human being and invited him to Chennai to bless our home. You know it wasn't about the wallet as much as the pure-hearted feeling of oneness he displayed to have

made thankless trips back and forth not once but twice to look for strangers! Wasn't it Bhagawan who never let us know it was Him?

Bhagawan Ramana was quick to have planned it perfectly:

Lesson # 1: Life is attention.

Lesson #2: In the larger picture, do believe things happen simply because they must. Don't waste your energy asking the whys of things, especially because there are none; no sign or event is ever inauspicious.

Lesson #3: Have that supreme faith that you are watched and taken care of even in your moments of forgetfulness.

Lesson #4: Bhagawan Ramana is not limited to Ramanashramam; Grace is everywhere and even takes the form of four angels at one time. Even in random places like bus stands and buses.

What can possibly go wrong when you seek Lord Arunachala Shiva? Why would Bhagawan Ramana not be your perfect host? Missing wallets to those who are careless, and the experience of Self-realisation to those whose hearts ache for freedom.

OM ARUNACHALA SHIVAYA NAMA
OM NAMO BHAGAWATE SRI RAMANAYA

- Abir and Anisha Bordoloi

Tale of two mirrors

Prelude: The all-seeing Mirror wanted to FEEL what it is to see everything. So it created Minis – mirror balls painted over in different colors – and dropped them to roam freely on a massive Billiards table. The Minis at first did not know that they were mirrors beneath, but one of them figured it out after much chipping and trying. By discovering this, they could now feel what it was to be a mirror.

Let's now start with the Tale of Two Mirrors.

It was the best time of times and the worst of times for the Mini paint ball friends Adam and Aaina.

-- A note about the names: after the first Mini realized its mirror-ness, it became a popular practice for others to be named after Mirror. Ad(d)am and Aaina mean mirror in Telugu and Hindi, respectively. Note that Adam has no relation to "The Adam" who some say was the first Mini to be created.

Adam Blueball and Aaina Pinkball had first met in a mirror maze at the local mall. It was about an hour after they had been completely lost in the maze when they found each other in one of the mirrors. They became buddies by the time they found their way out of the maze and best friends by the time they left the mall. As a mark of friendship to Aaina, Adam got himself painted half Pink in the mall, and Aaina got some Blue dots. One can say that their friendship started in a mirror maze made in heaven. (Note: they were just paint balls, but calling them "it" quickly gets confusing, so we'll call them a he and she. Fine?)

A few years passed and by now Adam had willingly changed his colors into a smooth mix of Blue and Pink, and Aaina had turned Pink and Blue. It was quite an adorable thing to see how they let go of their original colors (the best of times). But, sometimes, they also worried if life was becoming just a long repaint job (the worst of times).



Then, one day, Aaina started showing some mirror spots on her surface. She didn't really notice them, but Adam, being the closest to Aaina, spotted the spots. Adam told a delighted Aaina about it. Aaina had heard a lot about the first Pink Mini that had turned into a mirror and always wanted to know what it felt to be one. She told Adam that she had been trying to chip away the paints - both Pink and Blue- but that it had been a very slow business because she couldn't easily spot the paint spots on her rounded self.

Then the colorful couple hit upon a cool idea. First, Aaina helped chip some paint off of Adam so that he started reflecting like a mirror. Now, Aaina could find her remaining paint spots in that mirror and started chipping away at them. Adam did the same. It was a very reflective relationship, as you can see.

Not long after that, Adam and Aaina became what they truly were - mirrors, just like that big Mirror in the sky, and lived happily ever after.

What was the reason Adam and Aaina became friends in the first place, you ask?

The Mirror says that it was because each could help the other realize their mirror-ness faster than if they tried it alone.

Do you agree?

Is this the real reason behind all human relationships too?

- Vishy P.

Sage Yajnavalkya



The name of Yajnavalkya of Mithila stands distinguished both in the *Śrutis* and in the *Smritis*. Yajnavalkya is especially known for his unsurpassed spiritual wisdom and power. The seer of a *Veda Samhita* from Bhagavan Surya, the revealer of Brahma Jnana to Janaka, Maitreyi, Gargi and others, Yajnavalkya hails supreme among sages of sacred memory.

Yajnavalkya married two wives. One was Maitreyi and the other Katyayani. Of the two, Maitreyi was a *Brahmavadini* (lover of Brahman, philosophically and spiritually inclined) while the other wife Katyayani, the daughter of Bharadhvaja, was a woman interested in nice things of life, and through her Yajnavalkya had three sons—Chandrakanta, Mahamegha and Vijaya.

One day, Yajnavalkya decided to take to the fourth Ashrama of his life, he wished to divide his property between the two wives before starting sannyasa and conveyed Maitreyi his intentions. Then Maitreyi questions, “If my life were full of wealth, if you give me any amount of money that I want, will I be happy thereby, will I become immortal?”

Yajnavalkya replied, “No, not at all, not at all. Your life will be just like that of people who have plenty of things, but **there is no hope for immortality through wealth** (*Na asti amrtat vasya AsA vittena*).” Wealth cannot increase that desire for immortality, nor can we achieve it through wealth. On hearing this, Maitreyi requested, “I dont want these worldly goods the partition of which you want to give me when you go for *sanyasa*. Give me that which will make me immortal”. Yajnavalkya was very pleased with the intellectual caliber of Maitreyi’s query and replied, “If you wish, my dear I will explain it to you (*hanta tarhi bhavati etat vyAkhyAsyAmi te*).” Then Yajnavalkya elaborately described to her the sole greatness of the Absolute Self, the nature of Its existence, the way of attaining infinite knowledge and immortality, etc. This immortal conversation between Yajnavalkya

and Maitreyi is recorded in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The central theme of the discourse is this: “All things are dear, not for their sake, but for the sake of the Self. This Self alone exists everywhere. It cannot be understood or known, for It alone is the Understander and the Knower. Its nature cannot be said to be positively as such. It is realized through endless denials as ‘not this, not this’. The Self is self-luminous, indestructible, unthinkable. O Maitreyi, you got the instruction. This much indeed is the means of immortality”, saying thus Yajnavalkya left to take *Vidvat Sannyasa* (renunciation after the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman) and retired to the forest.

The third and the fourth chapters of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad abound with the great philosophical teachings of Yajnavalkya. Yajnavalkya was also the author of the famous *Yajnavalkya Smriti*. His other works are *Yajnavalkya Shakha*, *Pratijna Sutra*, *Satapatha Brahmana*, and *Yoga-Yajnavalkya*.

Yajnavalkya was one of the greatest sages ever known. We find him arguing with and overcoming even his teacher Uddalaka at the court of Janaka. His precepts as contained in the Upanishads stand foremost as the crest-jewel of the highest teachings on Brahma Vidya.

Yajnavalkya Jayanti is celebrated on KArtika MAsa, Sukla Paksha DvAdasi, which falls on Monday the 23 November 2012.

Sources: *Lives of Saints* by Sri Swami Sivananda

The Message of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
by Swami Ranganathananda

Glimpses from Vidya Mandir Diaries...



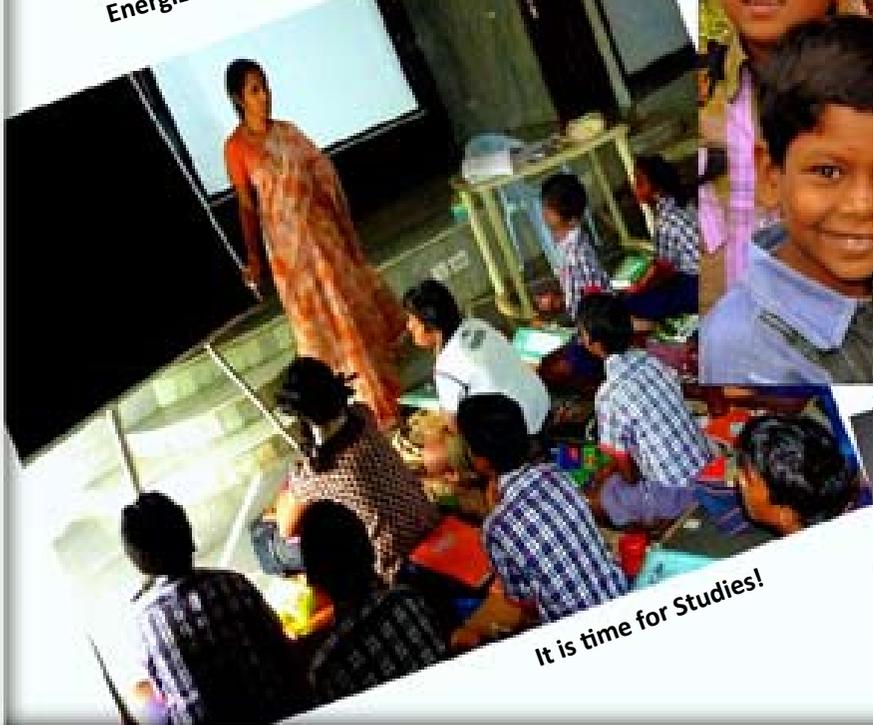
Energizing their bodies and minds through YOGA



Diya painting



Annadanam



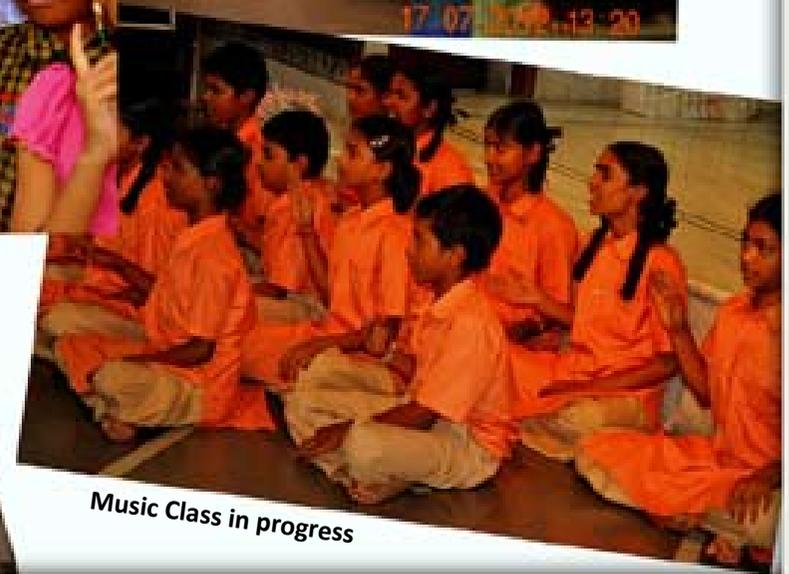
It is time for Studies!



Our Future Leaders



Play time



Music Class in progress

A MOVING EXPERIENCE FROM NEPAL

Sometimes medicine and surgery are not required for a cure. You need to transform the surrounding people who may be the cause of suffering not the disease itself. One camp was held up in the mountains in Nepal. Everyday a very large number of people came to the camp from long distances. Some travelled 2-3 days and brought the patient on their back or on improvised stretchers. The camp was located on a small flat area surrounded by snow peaked hills. The amenities were very basic, and with no electricity on the campsite, a generator was arranged. We took operating microscopes and all diagnostic tools etc. - this attracted large numbers of crowds. Everyday the number of patients would increase as people would go back to their village and talk about the love and care, new glasses, free medicine, clothes and food they had received.

An Unusual Visitor

On one occasion when our volunteers were struggling to control the crowd and pleading with them to be in a queue, there was a commotion. Everyone wanted to be first when suddenly something happened. All those who were trying to push each other to be in the front moved away. For a few seconds there was absolute silence. A man wrapped in a white sheet covering his face with a cloth walked in. The crowd parted and gave way in the same way when the Red Sea parted and Moses walked through. The volunteers were surprised.

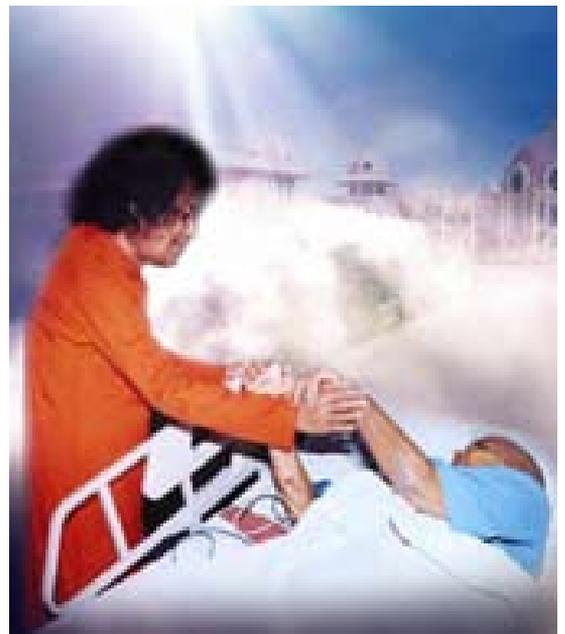
Someone started shouting that this man should not be here, he was a leper. But the volunteer who brought him from the village did not listen and carried on towards the registration desk. The poor man was shaking with fear and hiding his face. He was in tears when I asked him why he was so scared. With great difficulty and sadness he said, "Can't you see I am a leper, a

social boycott, no-one comes near me? Villagers forced my son not to contact me, and that is why I live outside the village, a self imposed exile."

Social Outcast

He was living in shame and fear, as if it was his fault. This is the curse of ignorance, false beliefs and myths in society. He was reassured and was told that there is nothing to be ashamed of or to fear, as God will take care of him. He was examined and then a volunteer took him, cleaned him up and he was given some clothes. After an hour he was brought out for another consultation with an English colleague, and an English priest who was volunteering his services in the camp, helped him to sit down in full view of the crowd holding his hand and offered him a cup of tea.

Someone from the waiting crowd leaped forward and said, "Don't you see he is a leper, you are offering him tea, touching him and sitting next to him. You will get the disease, he should not be here."





We replied, “Sir, for us everyone is the same. We treat everyone equally and this is a treatable condition. He needs support and love, not neglect. You should not be afraid. None of the doctors, nurses or volunteers are afraid of contacting the disease.” It was difficult to convince them. He was looked after well and the volunteers made a temporary shelter (tent) for him.

Befriending the Friendless

During our stay in the camp the man stayed very near to the campsite and the volunteers took food for him, sat with him and talked to him. Initially he wanted to end his life due to the humiliation and insults that he faced, but this was a new experience for him. He felt a bit happier, shared his story on how he was under pressure from the village and his son and daughter-in-law who had left him. Now suddenly he found hope and was able to face the challenge of the disease.

We talked to him about Mother Teresa’s Leprosarium and how proudly the lepers are engaged in their craftsmanship there. We also told him about our SaiBaba and His famous saying, ‘Why fear when I am here’, and also the power of prayer. He was given Swami’s picture, his medicines and *Vibhuti*.

Departure after 9 Days

Finally the day of our departure came. We were packing and the villagers also were sad. For them these 9 days were like a festival, something new. Doctors, for them, were people who were

unapproachable and they found this a new experience. They could talk and communicate with us and they had seen a new caring and loving side to medicine.

Though free, quality was not undermined. Packing was almost finished; volunteers and some villagers were helping us bring the luggage down the hills to the road where the coach and truck were waiting. A couple approached me and asked if I could spare a few minutes.

Family Reunion

We started talking. I was surprised to find that they were the son and daughter-in-law of the leper. They had tears in their eyes and with great difficulty the son said, “Doctor, I was ignorant and afraid of a few villagers who said that if I lived with him they would not talk to me or invite me for social functions. But the team has opened our eyes. Please take us to our father.”

We could not believe our ears. Baba says, “You do the right thing and I will take care of the rest”. What a transformation!!! We were all worried what would happen to the old man when we left. But God had different plans.

First Experience of God’s Love

It was a sight unforgettable, the son holding the father’s hand. Father was crying, son was crying and there were hardly any eyes without tears, tears of Joy! The old man suddenly turned and said, “I have heard of God but this is the first time I have experienced His Grace and Love - through you all. May God bless you.”

We may have operated on many people and given thousands of prescriptions, but this healing is the sum total of Baba’s teaching. Serve the poor as if you are serving the Lord. See God in everyone, then you won’t have any reservations and the Love will flow from Swami through you. He has declared that He is ‘The healing principle in all the doctors. *VaidyoNarayanaHari*.’

Source: “**Sacrifice is the Hallmark of a Doctor**”
by Dr. S.K Upadhyay

Sri Satya Sai Baba’s birthday falls on 23rd November



What does it mean to be happy in today's world?

What exactly do we mean by Happy? I think what makes each of us happy and how we experience the feeling of happiness is different for different people. For example, I am happy if I finish my HW quickly, my Dad is happy when he gets a raise at work, and a beggar on the street is happy if he can just get one full meal a day and so on and on. How does one express his happiness? Again, this also differs from person to person. I just show my happiness by smiling, my brother jumps up and down when he is happy, you get the point.

Guess what? Even the Dictionary doesn't have a single definition: Happiness is defined as Pleasure, Joy, Contentment, etc.

And the adjective 'happy' is defined as being delighted, a positive mood, and a happy frame of mind.

While each person may be happy for different reasons, I think that it is actually just a **state of mind**. I know my mind sends me a happy signal when I am reading my favourite book or playing with my friends. I have also discovered that I am happier for longer time when I am with friends or family, doing things I enjoy doing. But, isn't such happiness that is tied to a thing or an event



a fleeting one and not a long lasting one? **Can we actually be happy without having to depend on a thing or an event or a person?**

This is very important for all of us today. Since, in today's world along with all the luxuries we enjoy, there is also lot of chaos, violence, poverty and stress all around us that can pull us down from our **'happy state of mind'**.

Here is a thought – if happiness is really just a state of mind, can we control our mind and choose to be happy no matter what? **I think so**. Now, let's examine what the common reasons are that make us happy?—I can think of **Love, Contentment and Gratitude**. No matter how much chaos and distress is surrounding us, if we tie our happiness not to things, but train our mind to always remember the people we love and never forget to be grateful for all the things we already have and be satisfied with them, then that state of happiness never really escapes us and that is true happiness and that is long lasting happiness.

To close, I want to leave you with this thought which makes me happy even in the most stressful times. All we truly need to be happy is

Someone to Love

Something to do and

Something to look forward to

I feel happy when I think of all the family and friends I have, my day to day challenges to work on and my goals and ambitions to look forward to.

I am sure you can think of just as many reasons to be happy and can choose to remain happy.



- Avinash B.

*Avinash is in 5th Grade,
Indus International School,
Hyderabad. He loves to read,
bike and plays piano.*

Pain Vs Suffering

“Pain is inevitable; suffering is optional”

– Buddhist Saying.

I first came across this saying when I started running a few years ago...and I have to admit, it *did* help put things in perspective. There were days when I was so tired and so out of breath in the first ten minutes of the run, that giving up was a very appealing option, but somehow, I kept pushing myself...I kept going...and when I ended my run an hour later, I would ‘always’ feel better than when I started.

I don’t quite know what it was that kept me going, it was not just one thing, and it was a combination of things. Things that I had read, movies that I had watched which had inspired me, it was the memory of my experiences about having felt much better when I didn’t give up when the going was tough and all this put together became a great source of motivation.

After a few months of running 50 kilometers a week on an average, I realized that it was almost meditative! I would start running and within a few minutes of finding my rhythm, I would just zone out and I was by myself, alone with nature, soaking in the sights and the sounds, enchanted by the smell of the swaying trees, the wind against my face.

Something else began to happen, I realized that I had become much more resolute in life and was dealing with many tough and painful situations in life, much more doggedly, calmly and with much more clarity.

The more I pushed myself while running, the more it helped me in dealing with life situations. The pain was very real and it hurt a lot, both in body and heart, but there was much less suffering and there was a distance between me and the pain, a clear demarcation between ‘pain’ and ‘suffering’!

After years of having dealt with many situations and emotions of fear, with pain, with hurt and learning from it, after having learnt to channelize my emotions and to putting things in perspective, keeping a distance between me and my emotions, I am in pain today and I don’t quite know the reason. I can’t put my finger on it.



My friends and family are worried about me and ask me if they can help, if they are the cause for this pain, if there is anything they can do for me. But how do I tell them what it is, for I know not what it is...I am aware that I am responsible for what is happening and this is not about making a philosophy out of it. I am saying it as ‘being aware of the fact that I am responsible’ and so naturally, spontaneously, I will do what is needed for the situation and that, which is appropriate for the situation.

I will need to dig deep into my reserves and go back to the basics, I will have to learn and unlearn and will have to rely on what I have learnt from my experiences and try to find myself anew.

I will have to learn to wait, the pain is too much right now and I don’t want to try too hard to fight it. It is, what it is right now, and I have to learn to accept that and here again, I am not saying this as a philosophy and this is not about passive acceptance, this is about trying to get to a point where one can be in ‘total acceptance’.

And perhaps, when I have truly accepted the situation and when I realize that I am still as much in love with ‘You’, in love with everything and everyone who are a part of me, who have helped me become who I am and are a constant source of inspiration by ‘being who they are’, I will find what I am looking for... I know for certain that there is something within me, an access point within me, an access point to the ‘beyond’, to the ‘Divine’ and when I am able to be in constant touch with it, there is no pain, no hurt, no you, no me. There is only bliss, there is only joy, there is only love, because that is the true nature of who I am, who you are, who we are.

Om Namah Shivaya!

- Gautam Vir

Today's Parent - Setting the Limits

Everyone is kneaded out of the same dough but not baked in the same oven.

Yiddish Proverb

Have you ever wondered why we are untrained and expected to just learn on the job for the two most important roles of our life - Spouse and Parent?

I finally got to read the much hyped "Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother". The entire book pretty much describes Chinese parenting styles and goes into detail explaining how the lady, Amy makes her kids practice Piano and Violin while they excel at them and keep winning accolades after accolades. First, I was amazed at her (the mom's) endurance through it all. While, I am sure the kids felt some hardships during the whole thing, I can only imagine how hard it must have been for Amy to be able to do all this while maintaining a busy career herself as a Law Professor in Yale University. The book constantly compares and contrasts this "Chinese" style of extreme parenting with the "Western" parenting style.

I started wondering where does "Indian" parenting fall in this and started introspecting myself. I think historically, Indian parenting is similar to the Chinese style in many regards like the assumption that "Parents always know what is best for you", "One needs to respect (almost worship) one's parents at all times", "Questioning or Correcting your parents is considered outlandish", etc., but, in other regards i.e., in inculcating the value of hard work, perseverance in the pursuit of excellence, there are extremes. On one extreme, you see parents fretting over IIT entrance coaching from the child's 10th year and on the other extreme, there are parents who want to handover everything to their kids in a silver spoon or in a BMW X5.

Up until recently, the concept of extra-curricular activities for kids was almost non-existent in India and by default the only thing parents wanted their kids to excel in was academics and that too the choices were limited- Medicine or Engineering and everything else was just that "something else" which is nearly not good enough. This is slowly, but

clearly changing now and all round development in kids is deemed important and we see kids getting an opportunity to explore lots of different activities - sports, music, dance, drama, etc., There has been a lot written and talked about highly ambitious parents enrolling kids in various classes from the age of 3, or into so many activities that some of these kids don't have time to be just a kid, etc. etc., I am not going to write about all that, but just think- once the kid and parent have chosen some activities, there is absolutely nothing wrong in expecting the kids to practice and pushing them to be the best they can.

While I don't agree with the extreme practicing schedule that Amy describes in the book, I feel too often kids being humans like us, will be tempted to and tend to give up too soon when they are beginning to move out of their comfort zone. So, as a parent even if it means facing some tantrums and tears, it is right for us to push our kids to practice to put in their 100 or 110% into whatever it is they are working towards. Yes, don't push them against their interests and don't rub your interests on them, but even for them to find their passion, they need to put in some initial effort before truly understanding their limits.

I am sure even Sachin used to complain when he was woken up at 5 am for cricket practice and I am sure he must have thrown some tantrums or shed some tears when he had to miss a friend's birthday party to attend a practice session, but as a parent I think its perfectly ok to be the bad cop sometimes (when all other motivating tactics don't work) and just push them to overcome their fears and limitations.

Personally I feel the following life skills are vital for a child growing up in this age and time:

Time management: I find this to be a very important life skill that no school or college will teach. I feel children today have way too many distractions and activities and without proper time management, they will end up being lost or losing perspective on how to effectively use their time on things that are important for them. For example, growing up when I came home from school, I had



only 3 or 4 things that I could do - play outside, homework, eat, bathe and sleep. Today, when my kids come home, they have so many choices - ipad, wii, psp, TV, play outside, internet, HW, eat, bathe, sleep. Typically, parents tend to manage this by setting some time limits and such, but I think it is very important for kids to learn to manage their time themselves so they are not always depending on somebody else to manage their time.

With more and more families having both working parents, kids are used to being in day care, after-school care, etc from a very young age and so they are very much used to having a highly scheduled day with teachers, parents telling them what to do at every point of time. What this may do is that the child may be at a loss at managing their own time and as they grow up, this translates into them being totally lost in a corporate environment when they have to deal with ambiguity or work on projects/assignments with little to no instructions. Time management is not only important for kids, but in my opinion, an important skill to have, to be able to better manage your priorities all throughout life. ***If we don't manage our time as per our priorities, somebody else will manage it as per their needs.*** So, I think its important that we teach this important skill to our kids and get them used to managing their time wisely on things that are important for them.

Value and Appreciation for stuff: Growing up, I remember how I had 1 or 2 boxes of Nataraj pencils for the whole year. Now, I see my boys finishing up a packet in a month or less. Going out to eat was at best a once a month event and it was something special that we used to look forward to and be

excited about. Our kids today, are used to eating out at least once a week and its not even something they notice as a special event. Thanks to the booming economy and increased affordability, kids seem to be getting things too easily and they don't seem to appreciate what they have that much and often don't have anything to work towards. I think it is important for us to teach them to appreciate what they have and also help set some goals for them to work towards so they learn the important life skill of perseverance.

Handling Peer Pressure: Peer pressure is all over. Just like parenting is not easy these days with kids being exposed to too much too soon, it is even more difficult being a kid and building an identity. It is so easy to be bogged down about the gadgets one has or the video games or the exotic vacations, etc, and getting carried away thinking "being cool" means having "cool" things and doing "cool" things. But, I think it is important to somehow, (I don't know how) to teach kids where and when to draw the line and why it is ok to be different and an outcast sometimes.

It is important for kids to understand that they need to build an identity for themselves, and it is not something that can be handed over or bought.

Obviously, I am still learning and growing with my children and in the days to come, I may unlearn as much as I learn. But these are some of the epiphanies that I came across in my parenting adventures.

- Vasantha

"POLITICAL ALCHEMIST"



A famous statesman of India, Gopalakrishna Gokhale dedicated himself to the freedom struggle and was the leader of the All India Congress. Gandhiji called him his 'Political Guru' (teacher). **The Servants of India Society** founded by him is rendering notable service even now.

Born in the year 1866 in a poor Maharashtrian Brahmin family, Gokhale lost his father when he was just 13 years of age. Even during his school days, he was known for his honesty, earnestness and sincerity. He graduated from Elphinstone College, Bombay. His excellent grasp of English language revealed itself very early and he became a good parliamentarian in later years.

Gokhale's success as a teacher attracted the attention of great freedom fighters and educationists of those times, like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. For sometime, he worked in the Fergusson College, where he had himself studied.

When he was just 20, he delivered his first speech on: 'India under the British rule'. This marked his entry into the freedom struggle. He wrote articles in the English weekly "Maharatta" and in the year 1905, founded 'The Servants of India Society.' He thus fulfilled his desire of spreading the work to uplift the poor. He was greatly influenced by Mahadev Govind Ranade, a great freedom fighter.

When Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa, he was too glad to have Gokhale as his 'Political guru'. It was from Gokhale, that Gandhiji learnt the peaceful method of achieving Swaraj. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1889 and spoke against the discrimination shown by the then British rulers towards Indians.

In 1905, he was elected President of the Congress session held at Varanasi. Gokhale firmly believed that Swaraj could be achieved by peaceful means.

Exhaustion aggravated Gokhale's diabetes and cardiac asthma. Two days before the end, with a firm hand, he completed a draft scheme of constitutional reforms at the request of Lord Willingdon, Governor of Bombay State.

On February 19, 1915, the end came to Gokhale peacefully. The great leader was no more.

While the whole nation mourned his death, Gandhiji in a tribute said: "I was in quest of a really truthful hero in India and I found him in Gokhale. His love and reverence for India were truly genuine. For serving his country, he completely eschewed all happiness and self-interest."

- Koti Rajasekhar M.

*We invite you to our Diya sale from 1st November onwards
at Nachiketa Tapovan, Kavuri Hills premises.*





SAGUNA SĀKĀRA BRAHMAN

As emphasized by Ramanujacharya, *Avataras* are all the incarnations of the Divine. God incarnates. That Infinite Divine Person comes to us as a human being. We can realize God through that person. Thus, *Avatara* is a beautiful concept. But they do not remain physically with us all the time. After their mission, they dissolve their physical form and go away. *Avatara* comes again and again whenever there is a need.

Another teaching of Sri Ramanuja is the concept of *Archa* (image), the image of the deity in a temple. That is also an *Avatara*. Ramanuja said that *Avatara* is not only the occasional *Avataras*. These *Avataras* of God are present as *Archa* in the temple. Ramanuja says that the temple image is an *Archa avatara*— a wonderful conception. When we do the consecration ceremony, that image ceases to be a mere stone. It becomes the symbol of the Divine. That is called *Archaavatara* in Ramanuja's language. Everywhere we find that ordinary people can't easily understand Brahman or even the concept of *Antaryamin*. They want something concrete, and so we have the concept of temples and God with different forms.

*rUpam rUpam pratirUpo bahhUva,
tadasya rUpam pratica ksanAya*

(2.5.19 verse in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)

'Brahman transformed Himself in accordance with each form; that form of His was for the sake of making Him known.'

This Brahman assumed many forms to manifest Himself through those forms. Thus, we found that not only the world of objects and living beings are Divine, but occasionally a Divine personality also comes, and we worship Him. Therefore, in the temple we install an image, consecrate it, and see the Divine there. When we go there, what is it that we do? We have *Darśan*— that is a beautiful Sanskrit word. *Darśan* is a deeper concept than mere seeing. It is seeing from the inner point of view, from an inner realization. That is the meaning of *Darśan* and that is the purpose of visiting a temple. We go into the temple and feel that we are seeing the Divine. We have *Darśan* of the Deity; we worship, salute and even meditate for a while and come back. Thereby we feel we had some experience of the Divine. The word experience is again and again emphasized in this connection.

Thus, this temple worship in India is quite different from what people understand elsewhere as idol worship. It is an ideal we establish through a particular form. We know that the (idol) form is nothing but the stone. But we give it a kind of souling by ensouling it through the Mantras we utter. Then it becomes Divine for us. In this way we established temples, and in the *Sastras* it is said: **sAdhakAnAm hithArthAya brahmanO rUpakalpanA**, 'Brahman has no form, but forms are imagined in Brahman for the benefit of devotees, to help devotees develop their spiritual life'.

Source : **The message of the
Brihadaranyaka Upanishad**
by Swami Ranganathananda

Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak's father Kalu tried his level best to turn Nanak's mind towards worldly matters, in his youth. He put Nanak in the work of looking after the cultivation of the land. Nanak did not pay any attention to his work. He meditated even in the fields. He went out to tend the cattle, but centred his mind on the worship of God. The cattle trespassed into a neighbour's field. Kalu rebuked Nanak for his idleness. Nanak replied, "I am not idle, but am busy in guarding my own fields". Kalu asked him, "Where are your fields?" Nanak replied, "My body is a field. The mind is the ploughman. Righteousness is the cultivation. Modesty is water for irrigation. I have sown the field with the seed of the sacred Name of the Lord. Contentment is my field's harrow. Humility is its hedge. The seeds will germinate into a good crop with love and devotion. Fortunate is the house in which such a crop is brought! O sir, mammon will not accompany us to the next world. It has infatuated the whole world, but there are few who understand its delusive nature".

Then Kalu put him in charge of a small shop. Nanak distributed the things to Sadhus and poor people. He would give away in charity whatever he could lay hands on in his father's house and in the shop. Nanak said, "My shop is made of time and space. Its store consists of the commodities of truth and self-control. I am always dealing with my customers, the Sadhus and Mahatmas, contact with whom is very profitable indeed".

When Nanak was fifteen years of age, his father gave him twenty rupees and said, "Nanak, go to the market and purchase some profitable commodity". Kalu sent his servant Bala also to accompany Nanak. Nanak and Bala reached Chuhar Kana, a village about twenty miles from Talwandi. Nanak met a party of Fakirs. He thought within himself: "Let me feed these Fakirs now. This is the most profitable bargain I can make". He purchased provisions immediately and fed them sumptuously. Then he came back

to his house. The servant informed his master of his son's bargain. Kalu was very much annoyed. He gave a slap on Nanak's face.

The father thought that Nanak did not like sedentary work. Therefore he said to Nanak, "O dear son! Ride on a horse and do travelling business. This will suit you nicely". Nanak replied, "Revered father! My trade is Divine knowledge. The profits are the purseful of good deeds with which I can certainly reach the domain of the Lord".

Then Kalu Chand told Nanak: "If you do not like trade or business, you may serve in some office". Nanak replied, "I am already a servant of God. I am endeavouring to do my duty honestly and whole-heartedly in the service of my Lord. I carry out His behests implicitly. I desire fervently to get the reward of Divine grace from the Lord by serving Him untiringly and incessantly". On hearing this, the father became silent and retired from there.

- *Swami Sivananda*





A DIFFERENT DIWALI FOR US!



Diwali...the word itself brings to our mind the bursting sound of crackers, the gleam of Diyas and sparkle on all our faces. The festival of lights definitely lightens our mood and integrates us with our near and dear ones. The best part of the festival is the exchange of sweets with our loved ones. A lot of delicacies to eat and loads of great time to spend is what awaits us every festive season. Does the mention of Diwali in our Go Green page means that we would urge you not to burst crackers? No, let us chart out a different plan for this Diwali.

1. Bursting of crackers, we would definitely do. But we would check before buying them. If they do not mention that children have not been used (NCLU or NCLE) in the making of the crackers, we would definitely ignore that brand.
2. We shall enjoy the noise, but according to the prescribed rules of the administration regarding the time we are allowed to burst them. Also, we would limit our bursting. Maybe a day would come when we would voluntarily leave exploding crackers for our love for Mother Nature.
3. We shall take all precautions so that we do not harm ourselves or our property.
4. We may try to do away with the idea of buying sweets. Let us plan with our friends and neighbours and together make them at home. Those moments would definitely take us back to our school and college days.
5. This time, we will also keep some money in our budget to gift someone in need. Happiness increases when shared.
6. Let's celebrate this Diwali by planting a tree or gifting a plant or herb which by all means outlasts a sweet box.
7. We shall avoid decorations made of plastic and go with real flowers.
8. Avoid plastic and glossy gift wraps. Have fun making your own giftwrap- decorate newspapers or packing paper by stamping with soda bottle bottoms or leaves or the scribbles of your young one.

May all be as joyous as ever this festival season and derive immeasurable pleasure in the company of loved ones! Happy and a safe Diwali!



Anjali
1st Std
Chirec Public School

NEVER SPOIL NATURE !!

Once upon a time there lived a very spoilt man and a girl. One day the man was cutting trees. When he was cutting them the girl passed him. She said "don't cut trees". The man asked "Why?" The girl said "because they provide us oxygen. Do you want to die?" The man said "NO". The girl said "Then don't cut trees". The next day the man was shooting animals. The girl saw again. She said "Don't shoot the animals". The man asked "Why?" The girl said "because they give us Food. Do you want to beg for food". The man said "NO". The girl said "Then don't"

NEVER SPOIL NATURE !!



Ganesh Chaturthi and Swamiji's Birthday

This year, Swamiji's birthday coincided with Ganesh Chaturthi on 19th September 2012.

Abhishekam and Puja were performed to *Yoga Ganapathi* at *Ma Yoga Shakthi Peetham* in Nachiketa Ashram at Jadcherla. Later, all the students of Veda Vyasa Vidya Mandir, volunteers and visitors participated in the homam performed by Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri (Mataji). Swamiji taught concentration techniques to the children to participate in the homam.



Swamiji in deep meditation

It was a feast to see the children greeting Swamiji on his birthday with balloons and small gifts. Swamiji was immensely pleased to receive the many Greeting cards made lovingly by the students of Nachiketa Tapovan's Hyderabad centre.

In the evening there was Aarti at the temple and all the visitors and volunteers participated in a meditation session. Everyone had Prasad along with Swamiji and Mataji before they left the Ashram.



Birthday wishes from Veda Vyasa Vidya Mandir Children



Mataji performing Aarti to Yoga Ganapathi

Health Awareness Camps in Mahaboobnagar

Two Cancer Awareness sessions were organized by Nachiketa Tapovan on 25th and 27th September in NTR college and Vivekananda college in Mahaboobnagar respectively. Swami Shivananda Puri and Swami Nachiketnanda Puri graced both the occasions. Oncologist Dr. Rohini and Radiation Oncologist Dr. Sivananda Reddy in their informal and endearing style, talked to students on how to balance their demanding and stressful lives with proper nutrition, hygiene and care. Later they went on to instill awareness in them, about some common cancers and their prevention. The question-answer cum counseling sessions that followed the talks were very well

availed of by the students who formed long lines seeking answers for their health related questions from the doctors. Swami Shivananda Puri addressed the gathering and demonstrated Yogasanas.



Dr. Rohini talking to the students

Events and Celebrations at Nachiketa Tapovan, Hyderabad



On 9th August 2012, iGate employees distributed 1410 note books to Vidya Mandir children at Tapovan. A group of nearly 20 members of iGate Company made this event a great success.

Crafts Mela was held on 17th and 18th of September 2012 at Taj Krishna with the assistance of many volunteers of Tapovan who shared their valuable time in shifts at the stall and they had a sale of diyas and all craft items made by the children of Tapovan.



Crafts made by Vidya Mandir Children



Mataji

A satsang was held at Mrs. Yash Sultania's home at Jubilee Hills in the second week of September. *Satsang* was conducted by Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri with a group of 14 members. She spoke about *Japa* and there was a meditation session after which Mataji answered different questions from participants of *satsang*.

On 21st September 2012, at Gautham Enclave which is beside Chirec School, Kondapur; a group of 15 children from class 6th to 9th had performed a classical dance on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi and there was also a sale of Diyas and craft items which were made by children of Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir.



Dance performance by Vidya Mandir Children



इकलइकरो टइइठ = थोत्पु ठठ

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

(Contd from last issue)

QUESTIONS' GALORE

While speaking in any language, you might need to ask a lot of questions. We have seen some words which help us in our questions. Let us review them.

तत्र किम् अस्ति? – तत्र पुस्तकम् अस्ति।

भवतः गृहं कुत्र अस्ति? – मम गृहं हिमायनगरे अस्ति।

कण्डोले कति आम्रफलानि सन्ति? – कण्डोले एकादश आम्राणि सन्ति।

संस्कृतदिनोत्सवः कदा भवति? – संस्कृतदिनोत्सवः श्रावणपूर्णिमायां भवति।

पर्णं कुतः पतति? – पर्णं वृक्षतः पतति।

मम वदनं कथं अस्ति? – भवत्याः वदनं अत्यन्तं सुन्दरम् अस्ति।

भवान् किमर्थं संस्कृतम् इच्छति? – संस्कृतं भारतस्य मूलभाषा इति अहं संस्कृतम् इच्छामि।

१. किम्? – For the 'what' part of your question

२. कुत्र? – स्थलविषये प्रश्नार्थम्

३. कति? – सङ्ख्याविषये प्रश्नार्थम्

४. कदा? – समयविषये प्रश्नार्थम्

५. कुतः? – For the 'from where' part

६. कथम्? – For the 'how' part

७. किमर्थम्? – For the 'why' part

It would be a good idea to keep these 'saptakArAH' by heart. Repeat them aloud several times until you can say them without reading them.

In the above, किम् can take various forms. It can be in 3 lingas, their 7 vibhaktis and numbers (singular, dual and plural). Let us illustrate this point with a few examples.

तत्र किम् अस्ति? – पुस्तकम्। (प्रथमा, नपुंसकलिङ्गे – नपुंसके)

तत्र कः अस्ति? – मम पुत्रः। (प्रथमा, पुंसि)

तत्र का अस्ति? – मित्रस्य पत्नी। (प्रथमा, स्त्रियाम्)

इदानीम् अहं किं पुस्तकम् पठामि? – भगवद्गीतां पठतु भवान्। (एवम् एव द्वितीयायाम्, त्रिषु लिङ्गेषु)

अहं कं पृच्छामि? – भवान् द्वारपालकं पृच्छतु।

कृष्णः कां परिणयति? – रुक्मिणीम्।

कस्य वेगः अधिकः? – मनोवेगः अधिकः। (एवम् एव षष्ठ्याम्, त्रिषु लिङ्गेषु)

कस्य नाम गणेशः? – शिवस्य पुत्रस्य।

कस्याः नाम पार्वती? – पर्वतराजस्य पुत्र्याः।

And so on. We have looked at just singular number.

Like above, in Samskrit, how many examples can be given totally under 'kim' with just one per case? Come up with a number and verify it with somebody who is familiar with Samskritam.

Translate the following questions into Samskrit:

1. Where is Samskrit class?
2. What is on the table?
3. From where are you bringing water? (To a female)
4. How is my painting (picture)?
5. Why are you doing this? (To a male)
6. How many are Pandavas?
7. When do we celebrate Samkranti?
8. Who is there? (Boss asking his servant)
9. Who is cooking food today? (Father knows that his wife is doing it and not his daughter, but still asks his son)
10. Why are we here?
11. For what (why) are you coming today?
12. How many of you are coming today for food.

(To be contd in the next issue)

Nachiketanjali's **LIBRARY SCHEME**

Nachiketanjali is a monthly magazine, published by Nachiketa Tapovan, a non-profit organization. The content of the magazine is a good balance of various aspects that could contribute to well-rounded development of individuals including youth and children. The pages come alive with articles on yoga, Indian culture, inspiration, youth expressions and insights on practical spirituality.

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— Swami Vivekananda

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Annena kshanika trupthihi yaavajjeevanthu vidyaya.*

Vidya Mandir at Nachiketa Tapovan is currently able to accommodate a family of about 230 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.

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*Corpus Fund Options

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Sponsor a child | ₹ 1 Lakh |
| Anna Daanam (Mid-day Meals) | ₹ 50,000/- |
| Alpa Aharam (Snacks) | ₹ 10,000/- |

* With the accrued annual interest the following will be achieved every year, respectively.

- One child's education annually.
- Mid-day Meals for the whole school for one day annually.
- Snacks for the whole school for one day annually.

Donations within India- Details

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.

Donations can be also directed through bank account as below

Bank Name : Bank of Baroda
Branch Name : Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad
A/c Name : Nachiketa Tapovan
A/c No : 18090100004093
IFSC Code : BARB0JUBILE
(Note: IFSC code contains the number "zero" not letter "O")

Overseas Donations- Details

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

Bank Information

Bank Name : SBI
A/c Name : Nachiketa Tapovan
A/c No : 30953215793
SWIFT Code : SBININBB214



*"So blessed be God,
the best of the creators!"*

— HOLY QURAN, 23:14

Griha Constructions, Chennai

Invitation

We cordially invite you to attend our celebrations



Diwali

13th November 2012

Venue:

Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram

Gairan Tanda, Kodgal Village,
Jadcherla, Mahaboobnagar Dist.

Children's Day

10th November 2012

Venue:

Nachiketa Tapovan

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

Festivals & Events of November 2012



Karwa Chauth



Hampi Festival



Diwali



Children's Day



Govardhan Puja



Nagula Chavithi



Naga Panchami



Yagnavalkya Jayanthi



Muharram



Puri Beach Festival



Ganga Mahotsav



Guru Nanak Jayanthi



Karthika Purnima

NACHIKETA ASHRAM

Jadcherla



AUM saha navavatu, saha nau bhunaktu
Saha veeryam karvaavahai
Tejasvi naa vadhita mastu
maa vid vishaa va hai
Om Shanti Shanti Shantihi



Hotel Sri Brindavan
Nampally Station Road, Hyderabad



*“The doorstep to our temple of wisdom
is the knowledge of our own ignorance”*

- Benjamin Franklin



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