

Nachiketanjali

...an offering



Vol: 3

Issue: 11

July: 2013

Price: ₹ 10

It's the Heart that rules

“The mind is on a constant journey - from one map to another, moving across boundaries of right and wrong but never beyond. It is the talking, judging, categorizing, dividing, pursuing, creating, assuming, dismissing, assuring, destroying, abiding, denying, and everything that is limiting, crippling and noisy.

The mind needs no holiday and nothing tries to come on its way. It continues to thrive on movement. It chases variety. It loves change. Constantly inconstant. It is the only ghost that pretends to have a life and have us believe it. It is the only apparition that frightens us with its manic dance of speed. It is a double-edged sword that convinces us that it protects us when it actually watches us bleed in silence. Our imagined fears multiply till we come upon the question of intrigue - “Who am I?”

It is only a precious few that recognise that the Heart lends its power to the mind and allows it to take centre stage for a while. It is an art that the Heart has a monopoly on; we are put under a spell or it chooses to set us free.”

*Pictured and written by
- Abir & Anisha Bordoloi*



Contents

	Editorial	2	Guru	18	
	Dakshinamoorthy	3	Upadesa Saaram	20	
	For we may never come...	4	The Spiritual Significance of Ramzan	22	
	The real nature of the Self	5	Relationships ... Lifetime Puzzle	24	
	Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara	6	The Balancing Act	25	
	God was bored	7	Stories that inspire...	26	
	A rendezvous with the Divine ...	8	Guru in my life...	27	
	Vivekanjali	10	Goswami Tulsidas	28	
	Be a king of your own dynasty !!!	11	Sanskrit Lesson - Thirty Nine	29	
	Influence & Inspiration	12	Ashram activities at a Glance...	30	
	Tree 'Gods'	13	Heart that poured out...	32	
	The Sixth Master Guru Hargobind	14	Honey	33	
	Was it a jinx?	15	Summer Camp - 2013	34	
	Tangled in Relationships	16	How you can help	35	



Cover story

**Manasa Bhajare
Guru charanam;
Dustara Bhava
sAgarataranam**

*O mind, worship the Lotus
Feet of your God and
Supreme Teacher;*

*That will take you safely
across the ocean of life and death.*

*With a myriad Samskaras that we embody,
how do we maneuver our way to the true
destination?*

*Despite friends and family, one feels like a
lone boat sailing in the distressed currents of a
vast ocean; because, for an aspirant, the battle
is mostly within oneself. It feels overwhelming
to shed all of our inferior tendencies by working
on them individually. So the Guru assures;
“Practice total surrender towards me and your
cruise is taken care of”. This doesn't mean
that someone else has reigns over our life and we
become reckless; instead total surrender comes
only as a result of intense self-effort coupled
with deep faith in the Guru.*

- Harini

Editorial

**“Evvarevvari vaado ee jeevudu
Evariki nemouno ee jeevudu ...”**

This Annamacharya Kriti reveals the authenticity of the soul and takes the listener to the depths of spirituality. It fascinates me, how many ever times I listen to it and has helped me in my inner journey.

The essence of this Kriti gives food for thought to all spiritual seekers.

“To whom does this Jeeva (being) belong and what is his relationship with others?”

He would have been a son and sibling to many in the past.

He would have disillusioned many and caused them great sorrow.

Where did this being roam about and where did he take birth in the past?

How many bodies this being would have entered previously and where is he heading to in future?”

We might know about this present birth but do we know our destination after death? What happens after death? What happens to the soul when it leaves the body? Is there rebirth? Does the *Atma* or soul truly exist? These intriguing questions surface every now and then. All spiritual aspirants try to seek answers to these questions. It is a part of their quest. But not all make sincere attempts in knowing the Truth. After a while they get engulfed by Maya or illusion and it is only when faced with the fear of death that these questions resurface.

Right from the moment we enter our mother's womb, we are heading towards death ... step by step. With every breath, our life span starts decreasing. Yogis are not perturbed by this for they are totally aware of life herein and hereafter. They perceive both on the same parameter.

Some religions do not accept life after death and preach that there is only one life and it should be enjoyed to the fullest. But in the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna has clearly stated that *Atma* or soul is eternal. Birth takes place when the soul adorns a body and death happens when the soul leaves the body. It is like shedding old clothes and wearing new clothes.

This life may end any moment. Death is inevitable. Then why not seek the Truth before the soul leaves this body?

- Subhadra K.

Founder & Managing Trustee
Vasundhara P.

Adi Praneta
Swami Nachiketananda Puri

Adhyatmik Praneta
Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri

Editor-in-Chief
Subhadra K.

Executive Editors
**Annapurna R.
Harini N.**

Design & Layout: **Shyam R.**

Young Columnists Team
Avinash A. Neetika G.

Advisory Team
Rajasekhar M., Muralidhar M.

Sale and Operation Team **Laxman M.**

Promotion Team
Vandana M., Mamta A.
Software Team
Krishna P., Purvi B.

Editorial & Publication Office

Nachiketa Tapovan

Plot No. 70, Phase I,
Kavuri Hills, Madhapur, Guttalabegumpet, Serilingampally,
R.R.District. A.P. 500 081, Tel: 9849168937

email:nachiketanjali1@gmail.com

website:www.nachiketatapovan.org

www.facebook.com/nachiketatapovan

Dakshinamoorthy

Personification of Eloquent Silence

The old disciples indicate that the seekers of the ultimate truth must be mature in mind having tested all the lower *Purusharthas* (goals in life) like *Artha*, *Kama* and *Dharma* before they are fit for the highest goal of *Moksha*. They are best among spiritual seekers.

The Upanishads, the original source of Vedanta, tell us that Brahman, the absolute, is beyond the reach of mind and words. Yet the *Rishis* have tried to indicate that reality through various methods. In his *Brahma Sutra Bhashya*, Sankara narrates the story of a Guru being approached by a disciple who wanted to know the *Atman*; the disciple asks the Master three times to teach him the *Atman*. The Master keeps silent for the first and second requests, but the third time he replies – ‘I have been teaching you – you don’t follow; the *Atman* is total silence. The Truth can be discovered only when we observe the total silence of the mind’.

How do we represent this teaching in sculpture through mystic symbolism? In the form of Dakshinamoorthy, Lord Shiva in the Guru’s role, surrounded by the four Manasa Putras of Brahma, viz. Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana and Sanat Kumara, we have the representation of this teaching through silence. Dakshinamoorthy – the south-faced Lord – the youthful Guru sitting under the banyan tree in total silence with His hand held in ‘*Chin-mudra*’ or ‘*Inana-mudra*’ (sign of knowledge), is surrounded by the old *rishis* who were the disciples listening to silence. He dispelled all their doubts by His ‘eloquent silence’. Under His right foot, crushed by it, is *Apasmara* – a demon.

The ever-smiling youthful Guru symbolizes the fact that a man of realization has transcended time and has drunk the nectar of immortality which makes him eternally youthful and joyous.

Silence is the language of realization. Unless the seekers make their mind absolutely silent, devoid of all mental agitations, the *Atman* is not discovered. This is possible only when the three bodies – Gross, Subtle and Causal – have been transcended and in the fourth state of consciousness the seeker discovers the *Atman-Brahman* identity. This is indicated by the ‘*Chin-mudra*’, wherein the last three fingers are held together representing the three bodies. The index finger, touching the thumb forming a circle and standing apart, shows its transcendence when the *Atman* is realized as one with Brahman. The crushed *Apasmara* represents the destruction of the ego.

Thus the truth of Vedanta is taught through absolute silence and the sign of knowledge, to the mature students of meditation by a competent Guru. Lord Shiva in the form of Dakshinamurthy, facing the South is indicative of the fact that the grace of the Guru, as His inner realization, is ever being showered on the disciples, who are caught up in the net of *Yama* the Lord of Death, representing mortality. The Guru leads the disciple from mortality to immortality. Thus the highest type of Vedantic teaching is symbolized in the form of ‘*Dakshinamurthy*’; the teaching through silence when there is perfect communication between the Guru and the disciple at the highest spiritual level.

- *Swami Harinamananda*
Source: ‘*Symbolism in Hinduism*’
compiled by *Swami Nityanand*

*For we may never come
together
AGAIN*

Dear Little One!

*Look at the swaying tree and you shall know it
look at the flowing river and you shall know it
look at the flying birds and you shall know it
look at the nature and you shall know it...*

*Remember! Where the rhythm is dance and dance is rhythm
so let us dance together, at least for once
because, who knows
for we may never come together again ...*

Dear Little One!

*look at the darkness and you shall know it
look at the light and you shall know it
look at the silence and you shall know it
look at the emptiness and you shall know it*

*Remember! Where the ecstasy is expression and
expression is ecstasy
silence is the only dance
so, let us dance together, at least for once
because, who knows
for we may never come together again ...*

Dear Little One!

*when the womb is a cave
when the rhythm is graceful action
when the ecstasy is signature
then,*

*how long shall we worry all
how long shall we trouble all...*

*Therefore, let us dance together, at least for once
because, who knows
for we may never come together again.*



- Swami Nachiketananda Puri



The real nature of the self

Asato ma sadgamaya

Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya

Mrityorma amrutam gamaya

Om shanti: shanti: shanti:!

Meaning: Lead me from the unreal to the real. Lead me from darkness to light. Lead me from death to immortality.

This beautiful sloka reveals who you are. You are not the physical form but you are the never-dying, never-ending, divine and immortal soul. This world including your family, relatives, even your own body is unreal. If that is so, what could be the purpose of our existence in this unreal world? Why do we get so involved in all these relationships?

Because, your relatives are like mirrors in whom you look at yourself. You look at yourself playing different roles with different members of the family and society. Whenever you cannot see yourself clearly in the mirror due to haziness of confusion you need to use your faculty of "viveka" or discrimination to clean it and reestablish your knowledge of Self.

At the same time you need to understand that your wife, husband, children, family and society are all stepping stones in your spiritual path whom none but you have chosen to be. But ignorance to this truth creates such attachment and bondage that you forget the mission with which you started this journey. This is when the need for "atma jnana" arises. Among all the vidyas, "atma jnana" is the highest knowledge. Once you know that you are the real Self, you'll be the best husband, wife or parent or child. You will love them not for their physical form but for their essence. You will find divinity in everyone.

We spend so much time in understanding and acquiring the latest developments in science and technology. But you need to understand that the pleasure it gives you is only temporary. It stands nowhere in comparison to the Science of Self which gives true happiness. With the knowledge of Self comes the gift of unconditional love which will free you from all the pain, sorrow and misery that sprout from expectation. The knowledge of self lets you enjoy that freedom which sets you free from the bonds of endless desires. This is the freedom that also gives you the courage to accept that no one except yourself can place and clear hurdles in your life.

This knowledge of Self is not just an intellectual satisfaction that can be derived from reading books. But this is a pure knowledge that can be only experienced under the guidance of a real Guru. Once you know the truth of the Self, then you can experience immortality. You will realize that you are not a mere physical form but a divine soul. You will experience eternal bliss.

In Gita, Lord Krishna says, "Your life should be like a Lotus leaf". Lotus leaf lives in muddy water but still doesn't get affected by the water. It doesn't lose its identity. Similarly once you experience the knowledge of the Self you can live in this world without losing the essence of life.

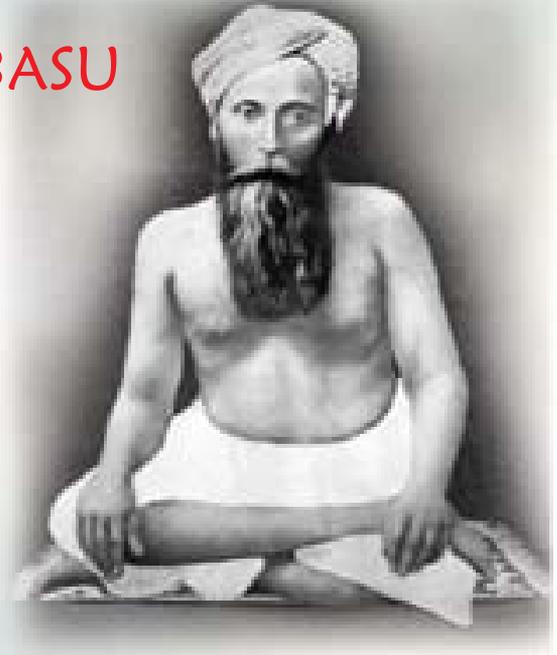
Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri



BALARAM BASU

Sri Ramakrishna usually would see His devotees and disciples in a vision or in ecstasy before they came to Him. One such devotee was Balaram Basu. He had a vision that Balaram Basu was a devotee of the inner circle of Chaitanya. Balaram was born in December 1842, in a wealthy Vaishnava family. He imbibed from his father a devotional nature and an indifference to the world. He spent several hours every morning in *Japam* and meditation. He had read about the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in the '*Sulabh Samachar*', a journal edited by Keshab Chandra Sen. He went to Dakshineswar with Ramdayal to have darshan of Sri Ramakrishna. He asked the Master if God really exists and if we can see Him? To which Master replied, "Yes, He does exist and if you pray to Him thinking of Him as dearer than your own self, He cannot but reveal Himself to you. If you take one step towards Him, He will take ten steps towards you. There is none more intimate or more affectionate than God."

Balaram's house in Calcutta had been sanctified by the Master's presence. In his house, Master frequently lost Himself in samadhi, dancing, singing or talking about God. Those of the Master's disciples who could not go to Dakshineswar visited Him there. It was here that the devotees came to know each other intimately. Radhamohan, Balaram's father, was a steadfast member of the Vaishnava sect. The Master wanted to broaden his religious outlook, so He said, "Most people are one sided. All opinions point to the One. All views- the Shakta, the Vaishnava, the Vedanta, have the One as the centre. He who is formless is again endowed with form. It is He who appears in different forms. Love God and taste His sweetness. The devotee drinks the sweet bliss of God. As a devotee cannot live without God, so also God cannot live without His devotee".



One day Balaram decided to test Master's power of omniscience. As he carried a tray of sweets to the Master, he mentally selected two of them for the Master to take. Balaram was amazed when the Master smiled at him and took those very two sweets.

Obstacles in spiritual life make a devotee strong. For those who surrender themselves to God, God removes all obstacles and makes everything favourable. During Master's illness, Balaram continued to provide all of His food. After the Master's passing away, Holy Mother moved into Balaram's house. He then arranged Her pilgrimage to Varanasi, Vrindaban and other holy places. His home was always open to Holy Mother and the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

Balaram became a victim of influenza and died on April 13th, 1890. Just before he passed away his wife had a vision in which the Master came down from the sky in a chariot, went towards where Balaram lay, and took Balaram with Him and returned to the sky. You do not need to renounce the world to reach God; by serving the needy and by virtuous deeds too you can reach God.

**Source: They lived with God
by Swami Chetanananda**



GOD WAS BORED

Yes, God was bored. He had created the universe, with its sun, its several galaxies, comprising many planets. He saw to it that they moved rhythmically and in perfect unison, without banging into each other. And, as He enjoyed the music of the spheres, He created our Earth, with its mountains, rivers, lakes, forests and animals. Still, He felt, something more should be happening, some action, some change, but how?

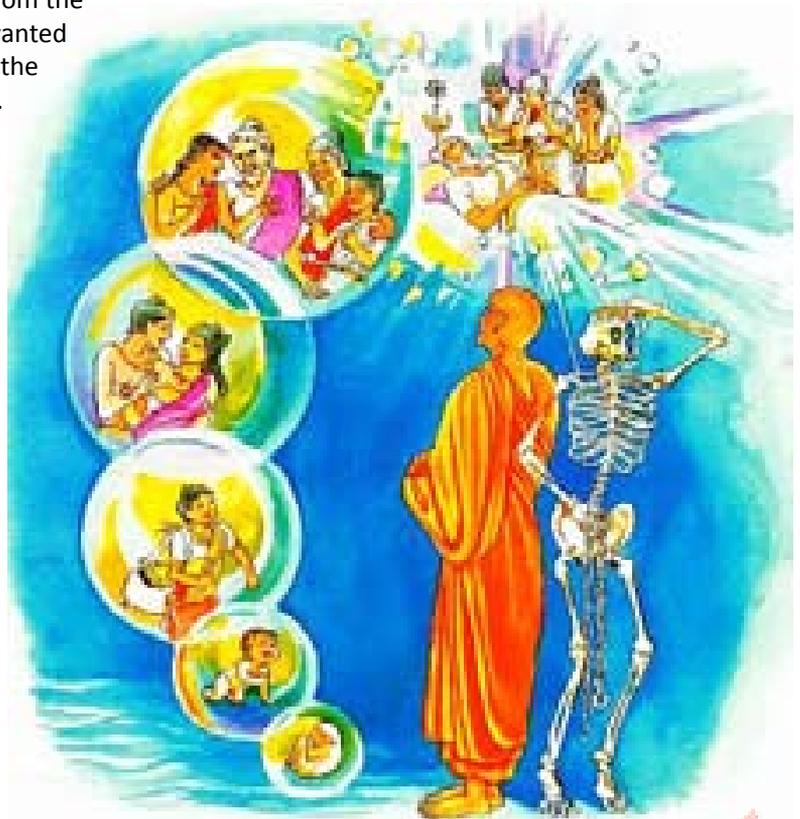
So, He created man, human beings, in His own image, with several of His qualities, and to spice things up, He allowed human beings some other qualities as well.

The animals He had created had life, but no intellect, at least not the same as His own, with logical thinking powers, knowing the difference between right and wrong. So, these humans, He decided, would have an intellect, to think and be able to make choices from the variety that was on offer. He wanted them to enjoy the beauty and the pleasures that He had created. But, He also expected that these humans would have their weaknesses, so He gave them an Ego, an irrepressible Ego, along with a conscience to keep the balance. And, because He had given them the power to think and decide for themselves, they would have feelings of greed, pride, covetousness and selfishness, leading them to lie, cheat, steal and kill. He also expected some of them to be wiser, and to preach generosity, self-sacrifice and humility, to bring the defaulters on the right track.

And, as a reward for man rising above his base nature with courage and perseverance to follow the right path, He promised a reward, a glorious comfortable stay with Him, as souls. These souls would be born again as humans to play out another edition of the human drama. And those who were not worthy enough to be rewarded would be born again and again, quickly, to work their way towards a reward.

This is how God has planned His own entertainment, imbuing man with some of His own powers, and watching the human drama unfold before Him. This drama, God's play, His amusement, is called God's Leela.

- *Lakshmi Naik*



A rendezvous with the Divine ...

When one experiences the self in the presence of Divine, what remains forever is the ecstasy of love. This is the beautiful experience that each one of us has experienced in the presence of our beloved Swami Nachiketananda, whom we lovingly call Swamiji - a Divine presence in the lives of many souls; naughty and ever smiling. I was blessed to be with Swamiji for two days at a time in my life, when I most needed his guidance and presence in my life.

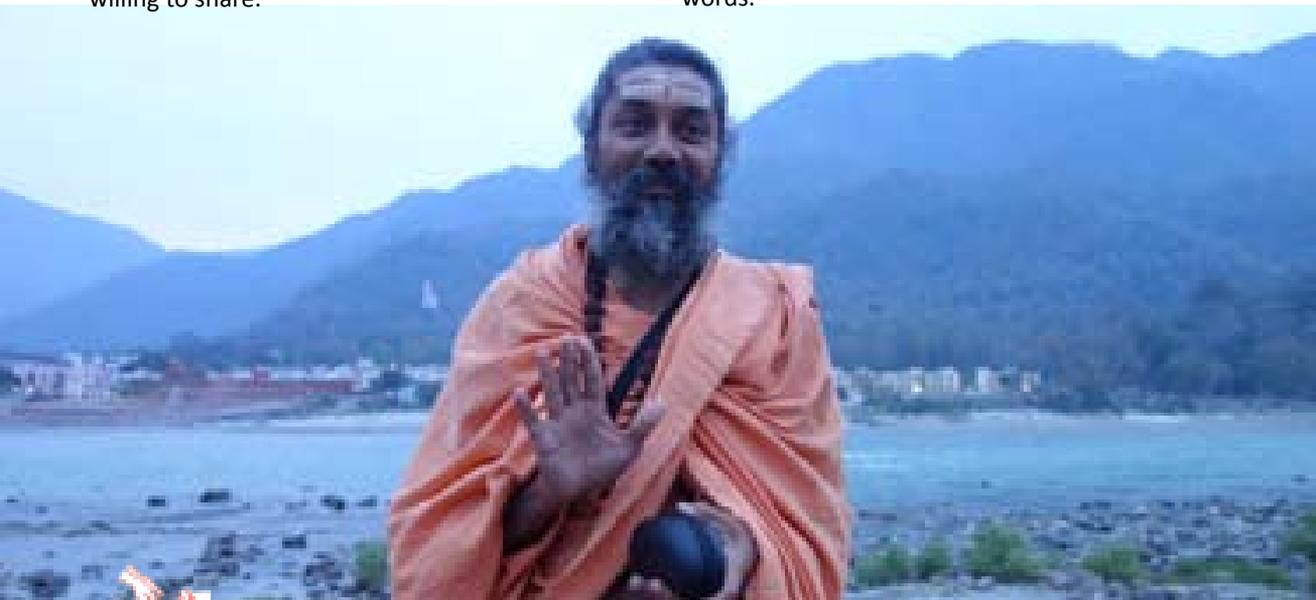
I got a beautiful email from Swamiji inviting me for a *Satsanga* at Vasundhara Ma's house. I was as usual, not sure if I could make it to the *Satsanga*. But when we make the effort, it just happens by itself and it 'did' happen this time. Everything about the *Satsanga* was beautiful ... the ambience, the love, the dedication of people attending the *Satsanga* and above all, the guidance and insights given by Swamiji and Mataji. I was mesmerized from the very beginning, not knowing what was in store for the rest of the day.

I got my time with Swamiji when everyone left and I sat down with him to have a general conversation. It is beautiful how a general conversation with him turns out to be pure bliss and you just want to listen to him with full dedication, with the spirit of imbibing the knowledge and wisdom he is willing to share.

In my conversation with Swamiji, I realized that many times in our lives we are beaten to the ground and into the dirt by the decisions we make and the way we choose to live. But no matter what has happened, we always have the capability of changing our lives in many beautiful ways. And when we are blessed with the guidance of the Divine himself and if we are sincere, then there cannot exist the possibility of not reaching the goal we want to achieve in our life.

It doesn't matter how long there was darkness in our lives, the moment we decide to bring the light of Divinity within us, all the darkness from life vanishes, as if it was never there. We just have to decide to break free and then all the limitations with which we were living will turn into stepping stones and after that nothing can stop us. All the craving and aversion that we had in our lives will just go away and the wisdom will dawn upon us in a subtle way, becoming a beautiful experience in our lives.

He will never enter into our lives from outside, instead would touch our lives from within and unburden us from all the baggage we are carrying all our lives. The spirit of achieving, the enthusiasm of doing what is required for achieving the highest, fills every cell of the body, just by listening to his words.





We neither go nor come

Nature, body and mind go to death, not we. We neither go nor come. The man “Vivekananda” is in nature, is born and dies; but the Self (soul) we see as “Vivekananda” is never born and never dies. It is the eternal and unchangeable Reality.

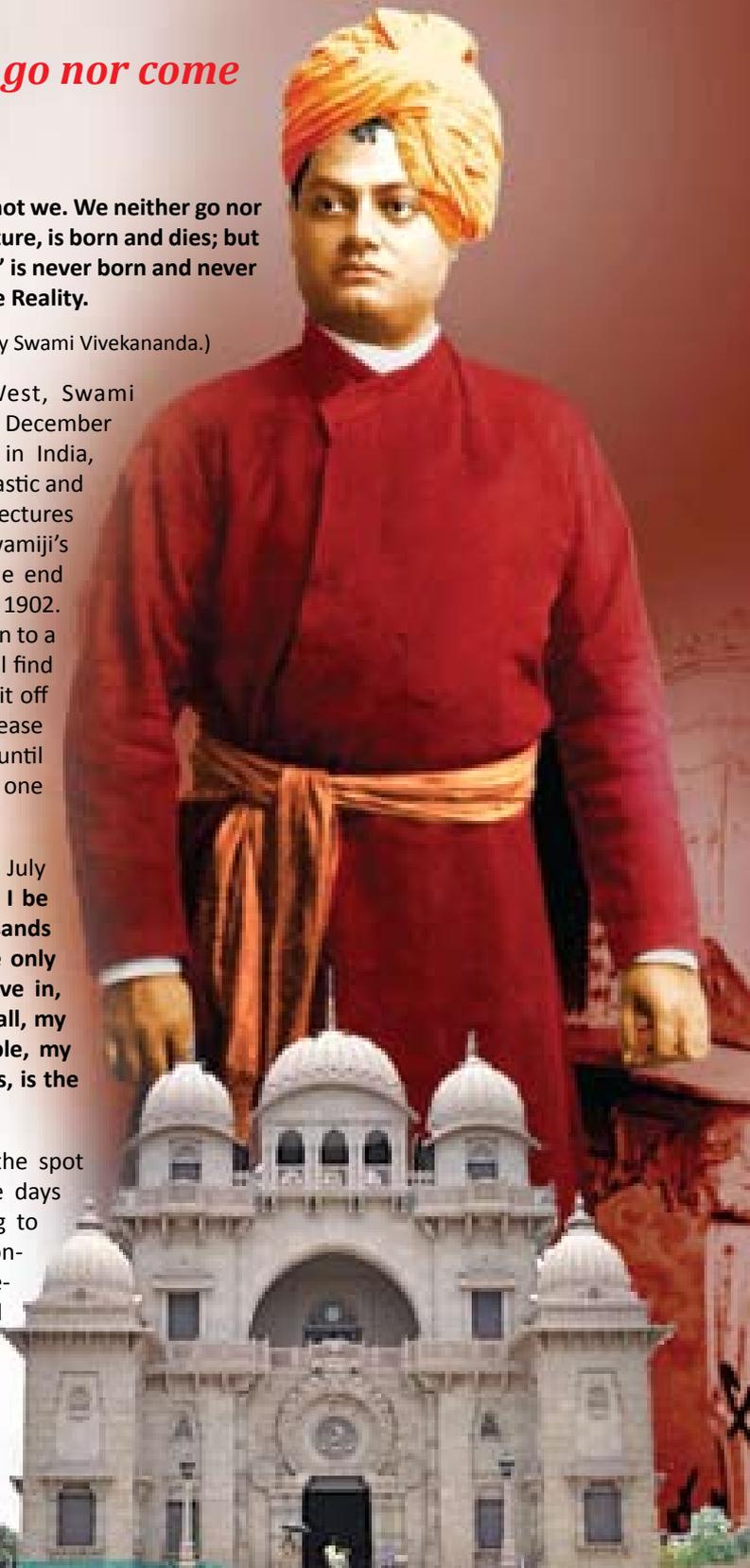
(from the book “Inspired Talks” by Swami Vivekananda.)

After His second visit to the West, Swami Vivekananda returned to Belur Math in December 1900. The rest of His life was spent in India, inspiring and guiding people, both monastic and lay. Incessant work, especially giving lectures and inspiring people, told upon Swamiji’s health. His health deteriorated and the end came quietly on the night of 4 July 1902. Before His Mahasamadhi, He had written to a Western follower: “It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body, to cast it off like a worn out garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere until the whole world shall know that it is one with God.”

In a memorable letter (to Mary Hale, July 9th 1897) the Swami exclaimed, **“May I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls: and, above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.”**

Swami Vivekananda Himself chose the spot where He was to be cremated. Three days before His passing, as He was walking to and fro on the spacious lawn of the monastery in the afternoon with Swami Premananda, Swami Vivekananda pointed to a particular spot on the bank of the Ganga, and said to him gravely, “when I give up the body, cremate it there”. On that very spot stands the temple at Belur math in His honour.

Source: Vivekananda –
A Biography in Pictures



Be a king of your own dynasty !!!



At Times

The world around might turn against you!

You may feel like you are cheated by whom you trusted most!

You may feel your ideology is caricatured and you declared unfit!

When the entire world around pushes you down ...

You will fall naturally ... and may feel the world around is ...

Materialistic, selfish, do not conform to

the social norms of your vision!

But remember...!

All Time

"If you happen to fall on the ground, ensure you fall like a seed ...!!!

When buried, get buried merrily to sprout again as a seedling,

a plant and then grow as a tree!

You may still be looked down by the world around and it might yet think ...

After all you are one single tree and you will still be ignored ...!

But you shrug off and grow with as many branches with fruits,

Ensure your seeds are disseminated and grow like a forest and keep spreading your area!

You shall now have your own dynasty, a kingdom of your ideologies sprouted from

one single seed

that is you!

Now, the world turns around you and might seek shelter in your dynasty ...

Though you perished by that time ... be with the feel that the SEED for such dynasty is

YOU!!!

- Lakshmi Narayanan S.

Principal, Kendriya Vidyalaya, AFS, Digaru. Assam



Influence & Inspiration

I have heard a lot of people say that playing violent video games makes people violent. To that my brother commented: "if violent video games make people violent, then does playing Monopoly make people rich?"

But seriously speaking, violent video games can affect people in a bad way. Why? Because of the people themselves. They allow the game to influence them, in other words they get influenced by the game, and become aggressive.

People are not just influenced by inanimate things like video games, but mainly by other like minded friends, family, elders etc. Usually influence is not related to good things. Then by whom, are



we influenced? Who is it that we spend most of our time with, besides parents? Of course, it is our friends. They can influence us in many ways. I have noticed that nowadays even small children speak foul language. This happens because the company one keeps uses foul language. They keep repeating these things again and again, so the kids pick it up.

It is the same with my previous example; the violent video games. Because of the repetitive killing in the game, people with a weak mind get affected in such a way that they think that the game is real life. People have tried to do many stupid things after watching shows and movies

like Tom and Jerry, Power Rangers etc. There are always two sides to a coin. If influence is one, then inspiration is the other. They are similar but they are opposites. For example, you get influenced by your friends, but you get inspired by Swami Vivekananda. Inspiration is something you seek from a person who is great or who you consider to be great. Is this true? No. You can seek inspiration from the worst of the worst of people; because they too have good in them. Where there is bad, there has to be good. So, you don't only seek inspiration from an individual, but you seek from the good which is within that individual. Now after reading this you might say, "My inspiration is Superman or Batman". But that is not correct. They are but characters, portrayed in movies. There is nothing wrong in having a favorite superhero. Or even aspiring to have certain characteristics like them. For example, you would want to be brave and fearless. Or loving and kind. Such are the things in a person, which should inspire you. Not that I want a suit like Iron man, you should say I want to be a genius like Iron man and use it for the good of the people. That is inspiration, properly received.

Aspiring to write great articles like me, also is a good example of good inspiration. Ha-ha. Just kidding. I didn't mean that. But actually, that is a good idea. Not the inspiration part, but the part about writing articles. To all readers out there, I request that you take up an initiative to write articles for this magazine. It will not only develop your creative writing skills, but it will also give you satisfaction that you contributed to the magazine, therefore you have contributed to Nachiketa Tapovan.

So, don't be influenced.

Be inspired and keep inspiring.

N. Rohan C. Govind

Class 9,

GT Aloha Vidya Mandir,

Chennai



Tree 'Gods'



Trees ... they only know giving, and only giving.

Giving cool shade during the sweltering heat.

Giving warm shelter in the blistering rains.

Giving loving sustenance to all, without discrimination- to birds and beasts, to man and child, to insects and worms ...

Always giving, never asking, never taking.

Who is the closest we know to 'God'?

Mother is it? Who feeds and sustains, loves and protects, and only knows Giving.

A mother does not discriminate.

Trees are no different. Trees protect and sustain. Trees give and don't ask for anything in return.

Trees do not discriminate.

Trees are the closest we know to God, but we worship them not.

Trees shelter us, but we ignore them, and notice them not.

Trees protect us, but we take them for granted and we protect them not.

Trees sustain us, and in turn we cut them down ruthlessly.

We cut them down, Without a single thought of remorse.

We cut them down, Without an iota of care.

We cut them down, Without a drop of pain.

We cut them down, Without thought. Without restraint.

Look around, I beg you!

Under the cool shade of a tree ...

A Tyre repair shop here ... A chai stall there ...

A Paan Dabba here ... A Coconut water stall there ...

A Temple here ... A Masjid there ...

Under the cool shade of a tree, we have a cup of tea here... we offer flowers at the temple there...

But we notice not the tree.

The tree that stands quietly ... protecting, sustaining, giving ...

But we notice not the tree.

A day will come when there will be no trees.

And if such a sad day may come to be, nothing else will remain ... not the birds, not the music, not a song,

not us...

Just dry deserts ... vast, empty, barren, bereft of existence.

Next time we stand under the cool shade of a tree on a hot sweltering day ... let's take a moment to thank it and bow down to it in gratitude.

Next time we stand under the warm shelter of a tree on a blistering rainy day ... let's take a moment to thank it and bow down to it in gratitude.

Next time we stand under a tree ... let's sustain it with some water and much loving care.

Next time we look at a tree ... let's look at it as a Mother, a God, and bow down to it in reverence and gratitude.

Next time we see a tree being cut ... let's protect it as a child would protect his mother. A mother would protect her child.

And maybe, when enough saplings are planted, when enough trees are protected, when we have enough love in our hearts ... heaven will be here (on earth) for us to cherish!!!

- Gautam Vir



The Sixth Master Guru Hargobind (1595 - 1644)

Guru Hargobind was born at Wadali village in June 1595 and was the only child of Guru Arjan Dev. He was invested with the Guruship on May 25, 1606 just days before his father's martyrdom. From a young age he was educated in the sciences, sports and religion as his father had insisted. Baba Buddha was responsible for overseeing the Guru's religious teachings. During the Guruship ceremony Guru Hargobind respectfully declined to wear the Seli (woolen cord worn on the head) which had been passed down on each successive Guru since Guru Nanak. Instead the Guru asked for a sword. Baba Buddha, never having handled a sword before, placed it on the wrong side of the Guru. Guru Hargobind noticing this, asked for another sword saying "I'll wear two swords, a sword of shakti (power) and a sword of bhakti (meditation)." Henceforth the Guru would always carry two swords to symbolize his dual role of holding secular power (Miri) and spiritual authority (Piri).



Soon after his ascension to Guruship in 1606, Guru Hargobind laid the foundation of a new temple at Amritsar; the Akal Takht. The Akal Takht was built facing Harmandir Sahib (the Golden Temple). Guru Hargobind had a throne built, and would administer Sikh affairs from here. The temporal nature of the Akal Takht balanced the spiritual nature of the Golden Temple, emphasizing the dual concepts of Miri and Piri introduced by the Guru. Guru Hargobind donned the royal regalia of a king and was known by the Sikhs as Sacha Padshah (The True King).

When Jehangir met Guru Hargobind, he was quickly won over by the young Guru's charm and holiness. The Guru had a number of religious discourses with the emperor who wanted to be sure that no harm was intended to Islam by

the propagation of Sikhism. When asked which religion was better Hinduism or Islam, Guru Hargobind replied quoting Kabir:

"God first created light, all men are born out of it. The whole world came out of a single spark; who is good and who is bad? The Creator is in the creation, and the creation in the Creator, He is everywhere. The clay is the same, the potter fashions various models. There is nothing wrong with the clay or the potter. God, the true resides in all, whatever happens is His doing. He who surrenders to Him gets to know Him and God becomes his slave. God is invisible, He cannot be seen. The Guru has granted me this sweet gift. Says Kabir, my doubts are dispelled. I have seen the Pure with my own eyes." (Parbhati)

While visiting Srinagar, the Guru had a discourse with Swami Samarth Ramdas, a great spiritual teacher who would later go on to instruct Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Empire. Swami Ramdas asked the Guru : "You are on the spiritual throne of Guru Nanak, a great saint. You are wearing arms and maintain troops and horses. You allow yourself to be addressed as Sachcha Padshah, the True King. What sort of saint are you?" Guru Hargobind replied, "I display royalty only from the outside; inwardly, I'm detached like a hermit. Guru Nanak had not renounced the world. He had only renounced *Maya* (illusion and ego)." The Swami answered that this idea appealed to him and thus he thereafter changed his teachings of Hindu renunciation.

Guru Hargobind passed away in 1644 having transformed in his lifetime, the Sikhs into soldier-saints. His grandson Har Rai succeeded him as the seventh Guru.

(Guru Hargobind Jayanthi- 5th July 2013)

Extracts from Sikh Gurus – Sikhs.org

WAS IT A JINX?

a great devotee of Vishnu. Sage Agasthya is said to be his guru who guided him into the worship of Lord Vishnu. Ironically, the very devotion that King Indradyumna possessed for the Lord, paved way to a mighty ego. As a result, he ends up insulting his own guru, who in turn is said to have been 'enraged' to curse him to be born as an elephant for redemption.

It doesn't seem logical for us to conclude that a great soul like Agasthya could have cursed his disciple only out of anger, hurt and insult. A blind and bloated ego is a trait symbolized by an elephant. When Agasthya noticed this trait in Indradyumna, he understood that it is not the nature of a human but that of an elephant. If Indradyumna continued to live an 'elephant's nature' in a human form, he will get nowhere close to his Lord. Hence, out of utmost concern and unconditional love for his disciple, he ordained his elephant birth.

Sage Agasthya's curse was a hidden blessing for Indradyumna, for in the form of Gajendra, he quickly reached his true abode. This explanation that evening helped me understand that a Guru's curse is a hidden grace.

For those of us who are fortunate to have met our true teacher or for those of us who consider life itself as our teacher, let's take on the apparent 'curses' we suffer with an understanding of the subtle blessings they entail.

- Harini N.

*We are extremely thankful to
Sri Y. Janardhana Rao for
donating Rs. 2 Lacs towards
sponsor a child corpus fund on the
occasion of his marriage.
He is a great source of inspiration
to the youth.*

As we settled in with family in Bangalore a couple of months ago, we got a chance to attend some wonderful musical performances in the city as part of the month long Ramanavami celebrations. One in particular struck a special chord in me, a *Kathakalakshepam* by the renowned Visaka Hari. The 'Katha' for the evening was Gajendra Moksham from Bhagavad Purana.

Like most of us, in my years growing up with Amar Chitra Katha and listening to my granny's tales, I remember Gajendra for his total surrender to Lord Vishnu and the Divine love and protection he received from the Lord, as a consequence. The picture of Gajendra's plea to Hari has the same impression in our minds as that of Draupadi's supplication to Krishna. Visaka Hari's musical erudition along with her elucidation of the Purana, shed new light on other aspects of this famed tale.

How did a mere elephant possess the qualities of a great devotee? Gajendra is said to have been a great king called Indradyumna who was



Tangled in Relationships

now that while all these people are around us in our journey, each of our journeys is different and unique. **We are the only ones on our journey.**

Now, coming back to the topic of relationships, we are all social creatures and go on this journey of life while being entangled in a number of relationships although we are still ultimately ALONE in our journey and each person has a very unique journey that is not similar to anyone else's however close they seem to be. While most relationships have some clear boundaries in their influence on us, it is the spouse and some friends that have the potential to be lifetime and beyond.

Guess what? It suddenly dawned on me that most relationships in our life are already pre-picked for us. For example, we don't choose our parents, nor can we choose our children. The only ones that we can pick and choose are friends and in some cases spouse or co-workers. When this thought dawned on me, I suddenly felt alone and kind of excited for being on such an adventure ... I am on this long journey called 'Life' from a place I didn't pick and going towards a destination I don't know; with a whole bunch of people I didn't choose. The only control I have is in picking and choosing my friends. Now, the irony of it all is that while some of us do understand the importance of good friendships and will do whatever is possible to keep them alive, somehow they take a second seat when it comes to the needs and demands of our immediate family. So, in order to maintain harmony and live with the folks we didn't choose, we sometimes end up sacrificing the relationship with the friends that we indeed did choose...

While it is not easy to make sense of this setting and understand who is mine, what is mine, who am I, I think it is quite clear by

Somehow the relationship or bond or whatever is the right term for it - MARRIAGE to me, is the most mysterious relationship of all and I often wonder why it holds such a special place in anyone's life and does it actually liberate you and help you towards your self-realization or does it actually complicate lives? Here is a scenario: Let's say a relationship between a man and woman starts off as friendship and then something takes over their senses and they think they have 'fallen in love', they move further in their relationship and try to give a name to it which seems to be a bit more deeper than their other friendships. From this need to formalize this relationship, I think was born the tradition or ritual called 'Marriage', along with the expectation that these two humans will travel through the journey of life as life partners. (Remember, while still going through their own unique journey). There is nothing wrong until now. But, I think along with the added intimacy between these two, there come, a lot of untold expectations from each other which tend to make the relationship complicated at times. **For most couples, it takes a lifetime to understand the true role a 'life partner' plays.**

The biggest mistake or misconception that most of us start off with is that once we are married and are now a couple, we automatically

assume our lives and our journeys are the same. We expect our spouse to feel, react and act the same way as us and when he/she doesn't, we get disappointed to say the least. It makes things a lot more easier to handle and liberating if we keep reminding ourselves that inspite of being married and called 'life partners', we still continue to be unique individuals and on our different journeys.

I then, started pondering if there is such a thing as 'soul-mates' that some people seem to be lucky enough to find in their lifetime. At this point, I am not sure. All I can say is I really have a hard time believing that someone can just 'find' a soul-mate. I think it makes more sense that you become someone's soul-mate over time by being part of their journey and being interested and invested in their journey as your own.

So, to conclude, the only real role we have to play in the other person's life is to be a first line of support and first line of sharing and growing through their life's journey. With any person in your life, whether you chose them or not, to be part of your life, I think you can shape your relationship with them however you want if you put in the effort. For me, being aware and conscious about the fact that we are very distinct individuals on our own unique paths towards the supposedly common destination (Moksha) makes it both scary, lonely and liberating at the same time. It helps me be more tolerant while grappling with the differences and more open minded in accepting the differences. Especially with children, reminding myself that they are unique individuals separate from me, and that they need to go through the journey on their own, makes me feel less burdensome while accepting that my influence on them is quite limited. What about you?

- *Vasantha G.*

How Should One Have Darshan in a Temple

Only when the soot formed on the lamp glass is cleaned does the bright light of the lamp spread outside. Likewise, before the actual darshan of the Deity, the soot-like covering of Tamas around us has to be eliminated and Bhava awakened within, to fully avail the benefit of Chaitanya and grace of the Deity.

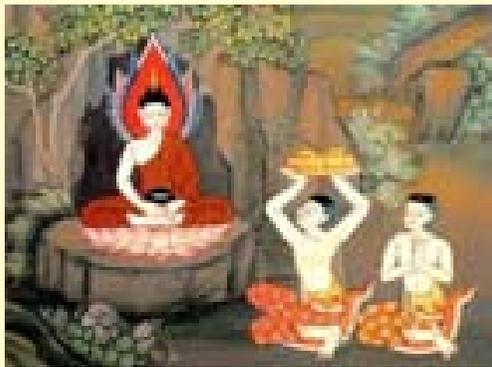
**Dr. Jayant Balaji Athavale
&
Mr. Nishad Shyam Deshmukh**



Buddhism

In the Tibetan tradition, the Guru is seen as the Buddha, the very root of spiritual realization and the basis of the path. Without the teacher, it is asserted, there can be no experience or insight.

The Dalai Lama, speaking of the importance of the Guru, said:
“Rely on the teachings to evaluate a Guru: Do not have blind faith, but also no blind criticism.”



The Essence of GURU

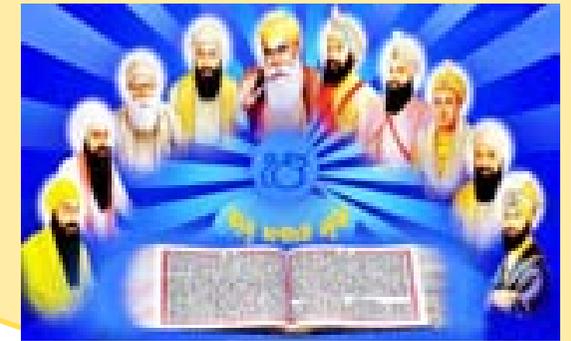
*The syllable “gu” means darkness,
The syllable “ru”, he who disperses them,
Because of the power to disperse darkness,
the guru is thus named*



Sikhism

The core beliefs of Sikhism are of belief in the One God and in ten Gurus, enshrined in **Guru Granth Sahib**, the Sikh holy book. The concept of Guru stands on two pillars i.e. Miri-Piri. ‘Piri’ means spiritual authority and ‘Miri’ means temporal authority. Therefore, Guru in Sikhism is a teacher-leader.

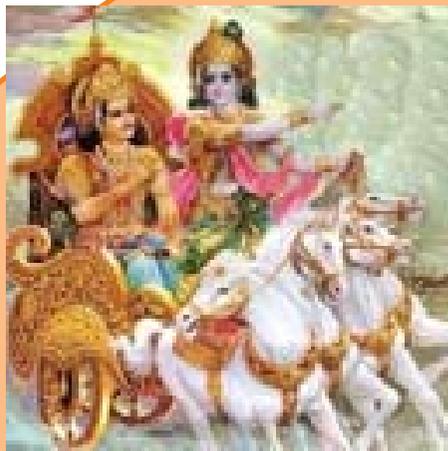
Wahe Guruji Ka Khalsa, Wahe Guruji Ki Fateh



Hinduism

The importance of finding a Guru who can impart transcendental knowledge (*vidyā*) is emphasized in Hinduism. One of the main Hindu texts, **the Bhagavad Gita**, is a dialogue between God in the form of Krishna and his friend Arjuna, a Kshatriya prince who accepts Krishna as his Guru on the battlefield, prior to a large battle. In the Gita, Krishna speaks to Arjuna of the importance of finding a Guru:

Acquire the transcendental knowledge from a Self-realized Master by humble reverence, by sincere inquiry, and by service. The wise ones who have realized the Truth will impart the Knowledge to you.



YADA YADA HI DHARMASYA
GLANIRBHAVATI BHARATA
ABHYUTTANAM ADHARMASYA
TADAATMANAAM SRUJAMYAHAM (Gita, Chapter 4, Verse 7)

O Bharata, whenever there is decline of righteousness and rise of evil, I manifest Myself.

Compiled by Neeru Mamtani

Upadesa Saaram

(Part - 1)

KarturAjnaya prApyate Phalam

Karma Kim param karma thatjadam

Meaning:

By the command or the Law of the Lord of the Universe, the results (fruits) of actions in the world are determined. How can then human action become independent and Supreme (Param)? The answer is that it is not; for action is inert (Jada).

Kruti Mahodadhau patana KAranam

PhalamasAswatam gatinirodhakam

Meaning:

The fruit of action being transient and unenduring, it becomes the cause for man's fall into a vast, shoreless ocean of Karma (action). It is thus a positive impediment to spiritual unfoldment and attainment of freedom and perennial peace.

Iswaraarpitam nechhaya Kritam

Chittasodhakam muktisaadhakam

Meaning:

Actions performed with a full sense of dedication to the Lord, freed from the ego-centric desire and attachment to the fruits thereof, purify the mind and become a means to liberation.

KAYavAngmanah kAryamuthamam

PUjanamJapah chintanam KramAth

Meaning:

The spiritual practices, done by the body as 'Puja' (worship), by the voice as 'Japa' (repetition of Lord's Names) and by the mind as 'Chintanam' (contemplation) – they excel each other in the ascending order.

Jagata Isadhi yuktasevanam

Ashtamoortibhrit deva pUjanam



Meaning:

To serve the whole world with the mind ever united with the Lord (of the world), is indeed His true worship in His eight-fold manifestation.

Uttamastava thuchhamandatah

Chithajamjapa dhyAnamuttamam

Meaning:

To chant or sing the glories of the Lord- "Stavam" is a good devotional act. But superior to that is the loud 'Japa' or loud repetition of a Mantra of the Lord. Still superior is the faint mutter of the Mantra. Much more superior and subtle is the mental Japa – Dhyana.

AajyadhAraya srotasAsamam

Saralachintanam viralatahparam

Meaning:

Steady, consistent and continuous contemplation (upon the Lord or the Truth) is like a stream of ghee (poured from one vessel into an-

other) and like the perennial flow of a river. This is superior to contemplation that is marked by interruptions.

BhedabhAvanAth sohamityasou

BhAvanAbhidA pAvanimathA

Meaning:

The non-dual form of contemplation or meditation saturated with the feeling “He is me,” is considered most sacred and superior to the meditation with a dualistic attitude (that the individual devotee is separate from the Lord or Truth).

BhAvasunya sadbhAva susthitih

BhAvanAbalAth bhaktirutthamA

Meaning:

By the strength of the unbroken current of non-dual thought-flow (Bhaava Pravaaha) – “He am I” – in meditation, there occurs at a stage, a total cessation of all thought modifications and one comes to abide in what “is”, - the singular Truth of Existence (Sat). This point of culmination is the essential state of devotion supreme.

Hritsthalemana hswasthatAKriyA

BhaktiyogabodhAschanischitam

Meaning:

Definitely it has been ascertained (by all men-of-wisdom or Masters) that the final goal of all paths, Karma, Bhakti, Yoga and Jnana – is to get the mind settled in equipoise in its natural abode which is the ‘Heart’.

VAYurodhanaa Iliyatemannah

JAlapakshivadrodhasAdhanam

Meaning:

By the restraint of Vital-airs or Praana, the mind becomes absorbed. This is a means of checking the mind in the manner of a net used to ensnare birds.

ChitthavAyavah chitkriyayuthAh

SAkhayordwayee saktimUlakA

Meaning:

The mind and the Vital-airs (Praana) are blessed with Consciousness and the Power of dynamism (Life-force) respectively. These are the two branches of the one root-energy (Sakti) of the Lord.

LayavinAsane ubhayarodhane

Layagatampunar bhawatinomritam

Meaning:

Absence of the total play of the mind takes place in two ways, Viz., ‘Laya and Vinaasa’ – temporary absorption and total annihilation. The mind that is temporarily absorbed stages a come-back and never is it dead. (If dead it, revives not).

PrAnabandhanallinamAnasam

Ekachintanaa nasametyadah

Meaning:

This mind that goes into a state of absorption by the restraint of breath and vital forces gets destroyed when seriously engaged in contemplation upon the One (Supreme Reality).

NashtamAnasot krushtayoginah

Krutyamastikim swasthitimyatah

Meaning:

What Karma (duties or works), can be there for the exalted Yogi whose mind with its sense of egoity has been extinguished and who in consequence has come to rest in his own true nature as Pure Self or Being (eternal and blissful).

**Source: Reflections of Upadesa Saaram of
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
by M. Bhimasen Rao**

The Spiritual Significance of Ramzan

Islam is one of the great brotherhoods, which has been given to mankind by Prophet Muhammad of hallowed memory. One of the Sadhanas laid down by Muhammad for the faithful was the Sadhana of fasting and prayer. This you will find to be the common Sadhana in every religion of the world. The fasting laid down by Muhammad is carried out in a special manner in one of the months of the year. That month is called the month of Ramzan. All the days of that month are observed as days of fasting. The name Ramzan is given to this entire one month's fasting. The last day of Ramzan is a very momentous day in the religion of Islam as well as in the life of the Prophet.



Muhammad was a great soul. He was born with the temperament of a saint. His time was one of violence. He was mortified by the way in which people were living. He was struggling to find out some way by which he could enlighten these people. In great disgust, he used to seclude himself and go away from Mecca into the wilderness. One of his special haunts was a mountain called Hijra. There in a cave he used to spend long periods in fasting and prayer. On one occasion, he was given no encouragement from Above. For an entire month he gave himself up to fasting and prayer and in supplication to the Lord. The Lord gave him some Light. This corresponds to Ramzan. On the last day there appeared a celestial being before

Muhammad; and it spoke to him and gave him a message from the Highest. It commissioned Muhammad to go forth amongst his brethren and spread the gospel of true life, by which people may be led away from the path of evil and may come to walk upon a path of goodness, truth, purity, forgiveness, brotherhood and thus attain the Highest Bliss. This last day is the great day of the Muhammadans—Id. It is a day of intense prayer. Muhammadans congregate in lakhs everywhere, offer prayers and also have Darshan of the moon, which is symbolic of the Light which appeared to Muhammad from the highest throne of the Almighty.

They fast from sunrise to sunset throughout the month. They are obliged to take something immediately after sunset, at the given hour. They sound a signal; both at the time the fast is to commence and when it is to be broken. It is severely enjoined that all should take food at a particular time. They are to take something before commencing the fast in the early morning (Brahma Muhurtha), and this should be of such a nature that at no time during the fasting period will any wind be passed and no belching experienced. If there is belching the person has to make some expiation! This is to ensure that they do not overeat at night. So strict is the injunction to fast during the day-light hours that Muhammadans spit out their spittle.

Muhammad gave this Sadhana with a deep significance attached to it. In the Gita we have a Sloka:

Yaa Nishaa Sarva-bhutaanaam Tasyaam Jaagarti Samyamee

Yasyaam Jaagrati Bhutaani Saa Nishaa Pashyato Muneh.

“That which is night to all beings, then the self-controlled man is awake; when all beings are awake, that is night for the sage who sees.”



This gives the entire significance of Ramzan fast in a nutshell. This fasting is spiritually the inner method of Yoga; the spiritual quest is diametrically opposite to the path which the ordinary man who is attached to the world follows. In the case of the worldly man, the senses take in the sum-totality of impressions of things amongst which he lives and moves during day-light. Samskaras are created more and more every day. This binds him to Samsara. The abstinence from these Vishayas is what our great Acharyas have termed fasting. The things upon which the senses feed are Ahara (food) for the man. The first injunction laid upon the spiritual aspirant is that he has to turn away from the world.

The avoidance of food is the first qualification. Physical food represents this inner Ahara that the Jiva draws unto itself through the senses. Giving up the physical food during daylight symbolizes that the one fasting is dead to the world. During the daylight hours only the world is visible. Thus the act of taking food at night symbolizes the act of the Yogi; by which he closes himself to the visible world and draws sustenance from the inner spiritual world. Thus he proceeds along



the path of Yoga. While the worldly man is busy he fasts completely. He lives in his own inner realm of the spirit and feeds himself upon the divine food of Sadhana.

Being seekers, we belong to a universal brotherhood which is gathered under the common flag of the unity of all faiths. Let us also, upon this extremely auspicious day of the first of the Ramzan month (9th July 2013) earnestly pray to Prophet Muhammed and Allah. Who is the same as Jehovah, Ahura Mazda, God Almighty, the Father in heaven or the Atma or Supreme Spirit, that we may be inspired and given the necessary inner strength to turn away from all allurements of this external physical world and to be awake unto the inner life of Yoga. Thus may we with great faith and with sustained exertion proceed upon the path of Yoga and may we be blessed with spiritual illumination, the culmination of Sadhana even as Prophet Muhammad had on the last day of Ramzan.

- Sri Swami Chidananda

Message from the book
'Forest Academy Lectures on Yoga'



Relationships ... Lifetime Puzzle

'Parables of Sri Ramakrishna', though a small book lying in the Library, once attracted my attention a while ago. This was the time I did not even start my association with Ramakrishna Math. One of the stories is about the blind people touching the elephant and what they have understood. Sri Ramakrishna would tell this story to His devotees to make them understand about the Almighty, the all pervading. God's greatness is immeasurable and unfathomable. Though the fable is lucid for people on spiritual path, this particular story has got innate message even for the worldly people. Let me share a beautiful quote of Mother Teresa 'If you start judging people, you have no time to love them'. The saying has a depth of its own significance and Divinity. Even Holy Mother's saying 'Do not find fault with others' is a beacon light for our daily lives.

What we talk about people- is it the real personality of those we talk about, or our opinion of them, or our own point of view through which we analyze them? In today's life we have little time to meet people. Every second person appears too conditional for us to continue a relationship, then what is the way out for this paradox? Have we ever thought how much time we spend in thinking of others' attitude and faults? Surely, it is more than the time we actually spend in sharing good things with them. The root cause lies in ourselves; by the time we meet the person or start discussing

about them we carry the previous experience or arguments we had with him or her on a last occasion. The remedy to bury that hatchet and to look at the person afresh may take some time but it is not impossible. If we realize and make others understand that it was purely your reaction to what he has done at that particular moment and not about him, it will subside a lot of friction in the relationship. Relationships are purely built on thoughts and ideology. It is said birds of a feather ruffle together. Likeminded people mingle easily. They do have differences, but the secret lies in accepting and continuing the relationship despite the hiccups and shortcomings. We need to stop opining and accept him as he is. Nothing is good or bad but our thinking makes it so. We should not jump to conclusions about people around us. Even great personalities like Gandhi and the like are misunderstood. Fortunately, we do not have that stupendous image to carry with us and even our so called enemies for that matter, are not of that level to affect our lives. Let us see and handle people as they are and stop looking at them with a checklist of our own. Mind you it is our own checklist that comprises our own likes and dislikes and Mr. Perfect of modern times will fall short of our expectations. Whoever may be at fault let the buck stop with us and this happens when we stop complaining and start building bridges rather than walls.

- Koti Rajasekhar M.



The Balancing Act



When things seem to go out of control and people face the most challenging problems in life, it becomes necessary to know how to balance them without losing perspective of life. This is a very difficult task. Everyone experiences this at some point in their life time. The problem does not have to be specific; it could be related to health, job, family or anything. Certain people in life have more difficult tasks than others, and no one knows why. Being a physician, I meet people who face lot of health issues.

One time, it was a speaker for cancer survivors group. The topic was “Look Good Feel Good”. This is the most difficult thing for a woman after chemotherapy. They lose their hair and their appearance changes considerably. Sometimes, this causes lot of social issues. During that meeting, one of the patients made a very strange remark. She said she does not want to look young; rather she wants to be able to look her age or even older. Later on, talking to her, I came to learn that she was fighting with Ovarian Cancer and she was only 28 years old. She had a son who was 3 years old. She felt that people are fortunate to be able to grow old. She wants to experience all the changes of aging in her life. She wants to experience her first wrinkle, her first grey hair, etc. She thought that it was a privilege to have all the above. If only she could live until she has them, she will be able to see her son grow old and could be a part of his life. With so much going on, what a perspective on life! Later I found out that more patients felt the same way.

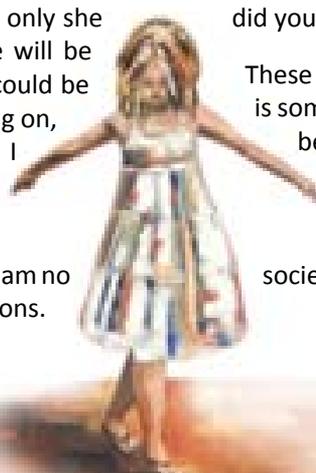
So how do you balance your life? I am no expert but I do have a few suggestions.

1. **Identify the problems**
2. **Acknowledge the problems** – this is the most difficult part. No matter how hard you try, it is still difficult.

3. **Understand the problems** – People feel differently about this, lack of understanding suits a few people, as ignorance is bliss. Most people can deal with the problem better if they have an understanding of it.
4. **Make a list of pros and cons**
5. **Prioritize** – one has to realize that which is the most important thing to solve.
6. **Do not shy from communicating with your dear ones** – you need to be able to express yourself; otherwise no one will understand you.
7. **Be the best judge of your life**— no one knows better than you how to deal with the problem. You need to find your own way. There is no definite procedure or method, it should be customized.
8. **Reduce the stress by meditation** or *Japa* or whatever suits you.
9. **Never look back, always look forward.**
10. No matter what you do, it is not the end. You did your best.

These are only a few tips. This balancing act is something we all need to master. We can be very supportive of people who have problems and understand their pain and respect, give hope and make a difference in building the society with good moral values.

- **Dr. Rohini Reganti**
Medical Oncologist



Stories that inspire - Trees That Wood



Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were discussing their hopes and dreams when the first tree said, "Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver and precious gems. I could be decorated with intricate carving and everyone would see the beauty."

Then the second tree said, "Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take kings and queens across the waters and sail to the corners of the world. Everyone will feel safe in me because of the strength of my hull."



Finally the third tree said, "I want to grow to be the tallest and straightest tree in the forest. People will see me on top of the hill and look up to my branches, and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people will always remember me."

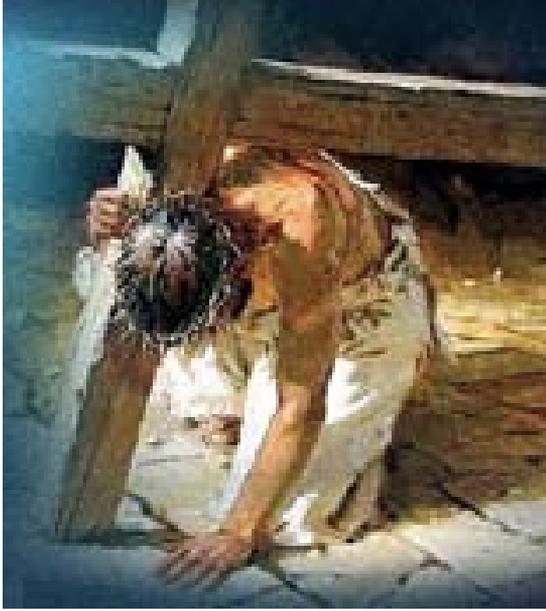
After a few years of praying that their dreams would come true, a group of woodsmen came upon the trees. When one came to the first tree he said, "This looks like a strong tree, I think I should be able to sell the wood to a carpenter" ... and he began cutting it down. The tree was happy, because he knew that the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest.

At the second tree a woodsman said, "This looks like a strong tree, I should be able to sell it to the shipyard." The second tree was happy because he knew he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship.

When the woodsmen came upon the third tree, the tree was frightened because he knew that if they cut him down his dreams would not come true. One of the woodsmen said, "I don't need anything special from my tree so I'll take this one", and he cut it down.

When the first tree arrived at the carpenters, he was made into a feed box for animals. He was then placed in a barn and filled with hay. This was not at all what he had prayed for. The second tree was cut and made into a small fishing boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying kings had come to an end. The third tree was cut into large pieces and left alone in the dark. The years went by, and the trees forgot about their dreams.

Then one day, a man and woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the hay in the feed box that was made from the first tree. The man wished that he could have made a crib for the baby, but this manger would have to do. The tree could feel the importance



of this event and knew that it had held the greatest treasure of all time. Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the second tree. One of them was tired and went to sleep. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man, and he stood and said "Peace" and the storm stopped. At this time, the tree knew that it had carried the King of Kings in its boat.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. When Sunday came, the tree came to realize that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as was possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it.

The moral of this story is that when things don't seem to be going your way, always know that God has a plan for you. If you place your trust in Him, He will give you great gifts. Each of the trees got what they wanted, just not in the way they had imagined. We don't always know what God's plans are for us. We just know that His ways are not our ways, but His ways are always best.

Source: Indian Child

Guru in my life...

“The Palace of the Lord God is so beautiful. Within it, there are gems, rubies, pearls and flawless diamonds. A fortress of gold surrounds this Source of Nectar. How can I climb up to the Fortress without a ladder? By meditating on the Lord, through the Guru, I am blessed and exalted. The Guru is the Ladder, the Guru is the Boat, and the Guru is the Raft to take me to the Lord's Name. The Guru is the Boat to carry me across the world-ocean; the Guru is the Sacred Shrine of Pilgrimage, the Guru is the Holy River. If it pleases Him, I bathe in the Pool of Truth, and become radiant and pure.”

(Guru Nanak, Sri Rag, pg. 17)

दुर्इयाली तुडुवेइ

Tulsidas was born in Rajpur, in the district of Banda in Uttar Pradesh, in Samvat 1589 or 1532 A.D. He was a Sarayuparina Brahmin by birth and is regarded as an incarnation of Valmiki, the author of Ramayana written in Sanskrit. His father's name was Atmaram Shukla Dube and his mother's name Hushi. Tulsidas did not cry at the time of his birth. He was born with all the thirty-two teeth intact. In childhood his name was Tulsiram or Ram Bola.

Tulsidas's wife's name was Buddhimati (Ratnavali). Tulsidas's son's name was Tarak. Tulsidas was passionately attached to his wife. He could not bear even a day's separation from her. One day his wife went to her father's house without informing her husband. Tulsidas stealthily went to see her at night at his father-in-law's house. This produced a sense of shame in Buddhimati. She said to Tulsidas, "My body is but a network of flesh and bones. If you would develop for Lord Rama even half the love that you have for my filthy body, you would certainly cross the ocean of *Samsara* and attain immortality and eternal bliss". These words pierced the heart of Tulsidas like an arrow. He did not stay there even for a moment. He abandoned home and became an ascetic. He spent fourteen years in visiting the various sacred places of pilgrimage.

While returning from answering the calls of nature, Tulsidas used to throw the water that was left in his water-pot at the roots of a tree which a spirit was occupying. The spirit was very much pleased with Tulsidas. The spirit said, "O man! Get a boon from me". Tulsidas replied, "Let me have *Darshan* of Lord Rama". The spirit said, "Go to the Hanuman temple. There Hanuman comes in the guise of a leper to hear the Ramayan as the first hearer and leaves the place last of all. Get hold of him. He will help you". Accordingly, Tulsidas met Hanuman, and through His grace, had *Darshan* or vision of Lord Rama.

Tulsidas wrote twelve books. The most famous book is his Ramayan-*Ram-charit-manas*-in Hindi. He wrote this book under the directions of Hanuman. This Ramayan is read and worshipped with great reverence in every Hindu home in Northern India.

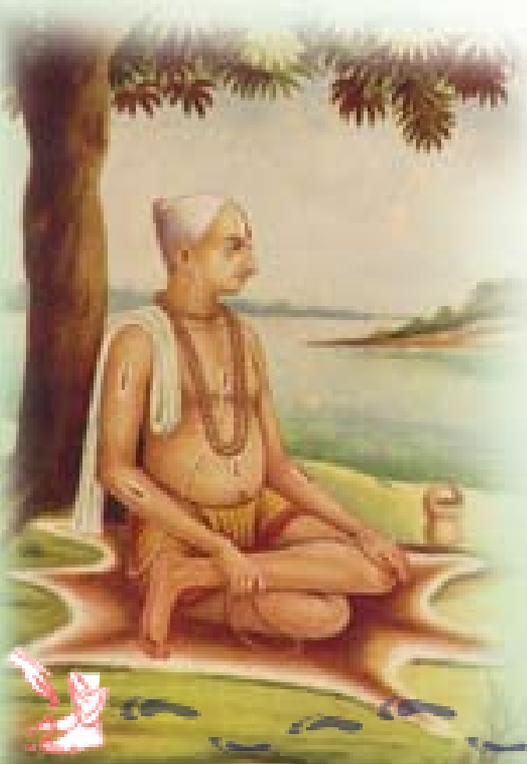
Once, some thieves came to Tulsidas's Ashram to take away his goods. They saw a blue-complexioned guard, with bow and arrow in his hands, keeping watch at the gate. Wherever they moved, the guard followed them. They were frightened. In the morning they asked Tulsidas, "O venerable saint! We saw a young guard with bow and arrow in his hands at the gate of your residence. Who is this man?" Tulsidas remained silent and wept. He came to know that Lord Rama Himself had been taking the trouble to protect his goods. He at once distributed all his wealth among the poor.

Tulsidas lived in Ayodhya for some time. Then he shifted to Varanasi.

Tulsidas once went to Brindavan. He visited a temple. He saw the image of Lord Krishna. He said, "How shall I describe Thy beauty, O Lord! But Tulsidas will bow his head only when You take up bow and arrow in Your hands". The Lord revealed Himself before Tulsidas in the form of Lord Rama with bow and arrows.

Tulsidas left his mortal coil and entered the abode of immortality and eternal bliss in 1623 A.D. at the age of ninety-one at Asighat in Varanasi.

- Extracts from Swami Shivananda's Article
(Tulasidas Jayanthi-25th July 2013)



इकलइकरोतु इइइतुन = त्तिरुतु नुनइ

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



The beneficiary

(Contd. from last issue)

Write Samskrit sentences for the following, using कृते and directly with चतुथी also in parantheses:

- 1) Please give Rs.100/- to my friend.
- 2) Don't give sweet to the old man. He has diabetes.
- 3) Money is needed for hot water.
- 4) There is no help for the use of the computer.
- 5) Save time for health.
- 6) He does not give time for sleep.
- 7) Keep the door open for air.
- 8) Give time for Samskritam.
- 9) Ink is needed for the pen.

Answers:

- १) भवान् कृपया शतं रूप्यकाणि मित्रस्य कृते (मित्राय) ददातु।
- २) भवान् वृद्धस्य कृते (वृद्धाय) मधुरं मा ददातु। तस्य मधुमेहः अस्ति।
- ३) जलस्य कृते (जलाय) धनम् आवश्यकम्।
- ४) सङ्गणकस्य उपयोगस्य कृते (उपयोगाय) साहाय्यं नास्ति।
- ५) भवान् आरोग्यस्य कृते (आरोग्याय) समयं रक्षतु।
- ६) सः निद्रायाः कृते (निद्रायै) समयं न ददाति।
- ७) पवनस्य कृते (पवनाय) भवान् द्वारं उद्घाटितं स्थापयतु। (पवनः - Wind)
- ८) संस्कृतस्य कृते (संस्कृताय) समयं ददातु।
- ९) लेखन्याः कृते (लेखन्यै) मशी आवश्यकी। (मशी - Ink)

The tool for doing a thing

I use a car to go to office. I say, I go to office by car (कार्-यानम्). अहं कार्-यानेन कार्यालयं गच्छामि।

I will go to Delhi by plane (विमानम्). अहं विमानेन देहलीं गमिष्यामि।

I speak using Samskrit (as the language) (संस्कृतम्). अहं संस्कृतेन वदामि।

I live with comfort (सुखम्) (comfortably). अहं सुखेन जीवामि।

I got headache by the heavy sound (अधिकशब्दः). अहम् अधिकशब्देन शिरोवेदनां प्राप्तवान्।

I write by hand (हस्तः). अहं हस्तेन लिखामि।

Teacher brings things by bag (स्यूतः). शिक्षकः स्यूतेन वस्तूनि आनयति।

My son goes to school by bicycle (द्विचक्रिका). मम पुत्रः द्विचक्रिकया पाठशालां गच्छति।

Sir! Please speak with kindness (कृपा). श्रीमन्! भवान् कृपया वदतु।

Daughter! Study with dedication (श्रद्धा). पुत्रि! भवती श्रद्धया पठतु।

Teacher! Mark answer sheet with red pen (रक्तलेखनी). अध्यापक! भवान् उत्तरपत्रं रक्तलेखन्या अङ्कयतु।

Tailor cuts cloth with scissors (कर्तरी). सौचिकः कर्तर्या वस्त्रं कर्तयति।

My mother spoke by telephone (दूरवाणी). मम माता दूरवाण्या उक्तवती।

(To be contd in the next issue)



Ashram activities at a Glance...

*I*t has been a strange, but remarkable journey as “Educating, Empowering & Enlightening Rural Folks” project has started bearing fruits within no time. We never expected this kind of response, especially in such a short time. How time flew from 14th April to 5th June nobody knows. It is astounding how a sincere thought got transformed and materialized into action, that too within no time.

On 14th April, we had officially launched our ambitious but important project to support the surrounding tribal and needy ones near Nachiketa Ashram. Imagine an aircraft on a runway, ready to take off and waiting for clearance ... and then comes the green signal. The aircraft speeds on the runway and then takes off. That was the experience of our most precious 400 and odd unpolished pearls. They, along with us, experienced excitement in the mind and butterflies in the stomach. They were energetic, passionate and enthusiastic; from tiny children to mothers and teenagers to adults. Mataji took them on a journey to measure the height of the sky and depth of the ocean. It was awe-inspiring for everyone to sit near Mataji’s feet and listen to her exposition on ‘Spoken English Classes’, making this journey exceptionally adventurous and amazing for everyone. She transported every individual with her depth of knowledge and transformed them, above all through her simplicity, matchless beauty and flawless spirituality.

Seeing their passion for life, Mataji realized that this is the right time to impart tender values in children and youth, so she modified the program into “Personality Development cum Spoken English Classes” and promised children that for selected ones she would conduct a “Be Your Own Signature” Personality Development Camp for three days at the end of this project. As promised, she conducted the camp from 3rd to 5th June in which she taught how an individual can have his/her own signature in life while giving due respect to others.

It is strange but true that ... in the scorching summer where sometimes temperature was crossing 45 degrees Celsius or more, our brethren were found without proper footwear, sweating and walking miles together to attend the divine discourse by Mataji; it was a spectacular scene that could challenge any Oscar winning film. Hungry minds looking at the computers and at times when the power supply was disruptive, stretching themselves beyond limits just to have a glimpse of information and technology; I could see a great thirst for knowledge and conquest of hungry stomachs at the same time. Forgetting their summer vacation and spending time in the Ashram from 6.00 am till night 8.00 pm brought tears in my eyes



Mahamood explaining Computer Skills



Reviving their cultural skills



many times. Even though, I could see a lunch box in many hands, I failed to see whole meals in any box. I had no option but to see through everything and see what best all of us could give them, if not today at least tomorrow. Thus silently I engaged in serious contemplation and found out two major areas i.e., education and health to be worked upon.

With limited computers but unlimited technical knowledge, Mahamood, a volunteer of Nachiketa Tapovan started classes by taking their hands in his hands, making them feel his own, guiding them, patting them, encouraging them and at the same time silently imparting ethical values to them. His ways were different and so were the classes. He had to organize the gathering of 150 children and odd. Many were put on wait list due to lack of proper power supply and limited computers. Almost 8 batches were conducted by him on a regular basis.



Enthusiastic tribal children with the computers



Women Empowerment Programme conducted by Mataji and Swamiji

We noticed that gradually nomadic tribes are forgetting their tradition and traditional values and are blindly getting influenced by latest trends. For instance, once upon a time Lambadis were very good at embroidery work but are now forgetting their own cultural signature. So we felt that if we rejuvenate, and recharge them in their natural skills once again, then this could be one of the main sources of income for them. To channelize the work properly, we invited trained people from their own community, who have settled in nearby Ibrahimpattanam area. They have also visited few western countries, to share their experiences and wisdom. They taught embroidery to women of Peddabhai Tanda and girls from different areas. Nearly 60 members got their hands at embroidery and now are ready to hug a new lease of life. Thanks to Kavitha Ma & Bhujji Ma for rendering their wonderful services.

It is strange to see village folks up at early hours, taking care of their household duties and availing whatever mode of transport available, to reach the Ashram. Else, they felt they were going to miss something very precious and important in their life. But whatever might be the output; at the end of the event, I can see all are happy, enjoying every bit of Ashram ambience and above all Mataji's Divine presence! I have never seen them grumbling or quarrelling with others on any issue and I have never seen them exhausted. I have never seen them destroying the Ashram property or for that matter even littering the place.

Before signing off, with a heavy heart, let me share one more thing. I have seen them always up with wonderful energy, greeting everyone with a smiling face and above all always in a festive mood. I don't know what keeps them that way; whether it is spirituality down deep or just a kind of adjustment with life ... or a struggle for survival ...! I don't know, but whatever it might be, whenever I look at them, their smiling faces, somewhere down deep, my heart cries incessantly, asking me to do something ... if not great, at least something in a small way for their survival ... at least for their livelihood ... or if nothing else at least for their one meal ...!

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri

Heart that poured out...

Dear Atman,

Aum Namah Shivaya!



Hearts That Carried Love (HCL Team)

It was an awe-inspiring journey for all. As I was waiting for the HCL team to arrive at Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram, I was under the impression that few **middle aged members** from HCL Company, would come and spend their valuable time with our children. But when they finally arrived, I was surprised to see young, energetic and enthusiastic youth getting down from a Tempo traveler.

I found them out to be very simple, humble and above all very inquisitive in their spiritual pursuits. They came, introduced themselves and simply got into Community Social Responsibility **business** ... the business of pouring out their heart without trade, with unknown entities and that too in such an amusing way that very soon they became known to all ... close to all ... and near and dear to all ...

Strange but true! I never knew that Ramya, a soft spoken young girl, who was heading the CSR group in such an amazing way, is a fresher. I truly appreciate this wonderful gesture by HCL team for entrusting such a high responsibility to a fresher. Later, I came to know about one more thing, that this was their first CSR outing and all the 8 members were meeting each other for the **first time! WOW!**

If Vignesh was able to enthrall the computer trainees with his great knowledge, Ranganath with his dance talent, was silently infusing life skills in the young budding children. If Pratibha and Ananta Laxmi were playing a bigger role in helping children in their pursuits, Linga Reddy's calmness and Vimal's support found place in our children's hearts. If Ramya's organizational skills mesmerized our gathering, Satish's spiritual talk had enlightened them. Each one of them had their own story to share with our tribal children, who otherwise feel completely isolated from the main stream.

I had an opportunity to interact with everyone personally and found out that each soul was unique in his/her own way. Truly speaking, HCLites came, inspired and conquered our hearts and left silently while bidding adieu like a sun ... making a promise to visit us again ... again and again ... to transform and get transformed in the process!

Thanks for your visit HCLites! Thanks for all that you have done for our children! They will cherish every moment that they have spent with you all. Let me take this opportunity to wish you good-luck in your every spiritual endeavor. Your presence was refreshing, invigorating and enlightening!

We look forward for your many more such morale-boosting visits!

Dhanyavadah!

YOURS IN THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri

Nachiketa Tapovan's Vidya Mandir has reopened on 6th June 2013. Vidyarthi Homam was performed by Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri which was attended by students, teachers and volunteers of Nachiketa Tapovan. The campus echoed with the excitement of the old & new students alike.



Honey



Honey is considered to be an elixir of life. This lustrous brown liquid works wonders for your health in more than one way.

1. Immunity booster:

The antioxidants and anti-bacterial properties that honey contains, aid the improvement of the digestive system. Consuming this liquid can help boost your immune system and keep you healthy and fit.

2. Skin Care:

Honey not only helps to smoothen your skin but also keeps acne at bay. The anti-bacterial properties of this liquid can give your skin a nourishing look and feel.

3. Aids Weight Loss:

Experts recommend having honey mixed with warm water every morning. This unique combination helps you digest the fat in your body and aids the weight loss process.

4. Cancer preventive properties:

Honey contains a number of antioxidants and flavonoids that help diminish the risk of a few types of cancer. These antioxidants kill the collagen in the body.

5. Vitamins and Minerals:

Honey is rich in a number of vitamins and minerals too. Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron are primarily derived from this golden ingredient.

6. Relaxes the throat:

A commonly known benefit of eating honey is the soothing effect it provides to the throat. You must consume it or gargle with honey and water mixture when you have a sore throat. It is known to kill the infection causing bacteria, relieving you of the irritation.

7. Healing Properties:

Honey is considered to be a natural healer when applied to wounds. It cures the wound by killing the bacteria and cleans the infection too. Its antibacterial property does this magic to any kind of injury.

8. Induces Sleep:

Enjoying a sound sleep is a problem for many, especially amongst the older people. Drinking a glass of warm milk mixed with honey can solve your problem. This mixture is known to soothe you and induces sleep too.

Consuming a spoonful of honey on a daily basis can help you extract a number of golden benefits from this thick liquid. Making this tad effort can shower your body with miraculous benefits and promise a healthy life too.

Congratulations!

Nachiketanjali is very pleased to announce that our youth columnist Avinash Agarwal has made it to the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking, 2013. Besides his passion for writing, Avinash pursues his interest in public speaking and stand-up comedy along with a full time career.



Founded by Ralph C. Smedley, Toastmasters International is a non-profit educational organization operating worldwide helping its members improve their communication, public speaking and leadership skills.



Avinash, all the best for the finals at the Toastmasters 82nd Annual International Convention (August 21-24) at Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A.

Summer Camp - 2013

The Personality Development Camp'2013, conducted by Nachiketa Tapovan, was held between 5th and 12th of May. On the first day we had to introduce ourselves and were divided into groups by Gayathri Ma. Everyday would start with yoga and exercises, followed by a small game which put our motor skills to test and increased our concentration. After this we would break for half an hour to eat our breakfast. Then we would settle down and listen to a story with good moral values by Radha Ma. We then had a small bhajan session by Rohan after which we would either have a Go Green presentation by Sneha didi or a small session by Vandana Ma about why we do certain things in Hindu culture. We even had debates, which everybody enthusiastically took part in. After this we would break for another half hour to eat our lunch. This was the most fun time of all as we would exchange jokes and food.

After this we would have our craft class by Mamta Ma where we learnt how to make a lot of beautiful things from waste. We then cooled down with a session of Hanuman Chalisa by Ravi Ganesh sir. This was followed by a game which was always full of activity conducted by Gayathri Ma. We would go home at four in the evening.

On the final day, all the parents were called and we, the children presented our various talents to our parents in the form of dramas, yogasanas, go green presentations (by children), experiments etc. . We also showed our parents that we are no lesser than any Indian Idol, by singing bhajans. Finally we thanked Vasu Ma, for without her there would be no Tapovan and no camp. And we thanked Gayathri Ma, for without her there would be no games and no discipline. And we thanked both of them for all the fun we had together and all the love we shared. After this Mataji gave a speech, guiding us to be better, successful and enlightened citizens of India and the World. After this we ate our final lunch together, exchanged our e-mail id's and reluctantly bid farewell to each other

This camp has given us a lot of things, but the one inescapable thing is that it is one of those rare forms of good influence which have entered our mind, never to leave again.

- Rohan



Gayatri Ma talks to the campers



Public Speaking



Games to develop concentration



Yoga session



Mamta Ma helping with the Craft session

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 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.

Donations towards operation costs

Sponsor a Teacher (Dance & Music)	₹ 5000/Month
Vidya Daanam (Education)	₹ 6000/year/child
Anna Daanam (Mid-day Meals)	₹ 5200/day
Alpa Aharam (Snacks)	₹ 800/day
Vastra Daanam (Uniforms)	₹ 900/2 pairs
Stationery Supplies (Copier Paper)	₹ 5000/term
Medicines (For needy people)	₹ 5000/month
Sponsor a Festival in temple	₹ 3000

*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. PAN No. AAATN2406K

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	: BARBOJUBILE

(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	: State Bank of India
Branch Name & Code	: Kavuri Hills-12655
A/c Name	: Nachiketa Tapovan
A/c No	: 30953215793
IFS Code	: SBIN0012655
SWIFT Code	: SBININBB214

(Note: IFS code contains the number "zeros" not letters "O")

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

WITHIN INDIA

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

OVERSEAS

1 year	₹ 1500 (only in INR)
--------	----------------------

NACHIKETA'S GO GREEN CLUB...

We convey our thanks to all the participants of WOW initiative. You helped us earn Rs. 20,224/- in the month of May and saved Mother Earth by recycling about 1956 kgs of plastic and paper waste material.

Invitation



We invite you for *Guru Purnima celebrations*
at *Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram*
on *22nd July 2013 from 9:00 am onwards.*

Venue:

Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram

Kodgal Village, Jadcherla, Mahaboobnagar Dist.

Festivals & Events of July 2013

1	<i>Doctor's Day</i>
5	<i>Har Govind Singh Jayanti</i>
10	<i>Ramzan (Roza) month commences</i>
10	<i>Jagannath Rath Yatra</i>

11	<i>World Population Day</i>
22	<i>Guru Purnima</i>
25	<i>Tulsidas Jayanti</i>
28	<i>Parent's Day</i>





A study of the seven chakras



Playing games that develop concentration

Summer Camp - 2013

@ Nachiketa Tapovan, Hyderabad



A camper exhibits his craft



Games that bond



On the valedictory day

Hotel Sri Brindavan
Nampally Station Road, Hyderabad



“If there is magic on the planet,
it is contained in water.”

- Loren Eiseley



SUPERFLO

Quality that speaks for itself...™

www.superflo.net