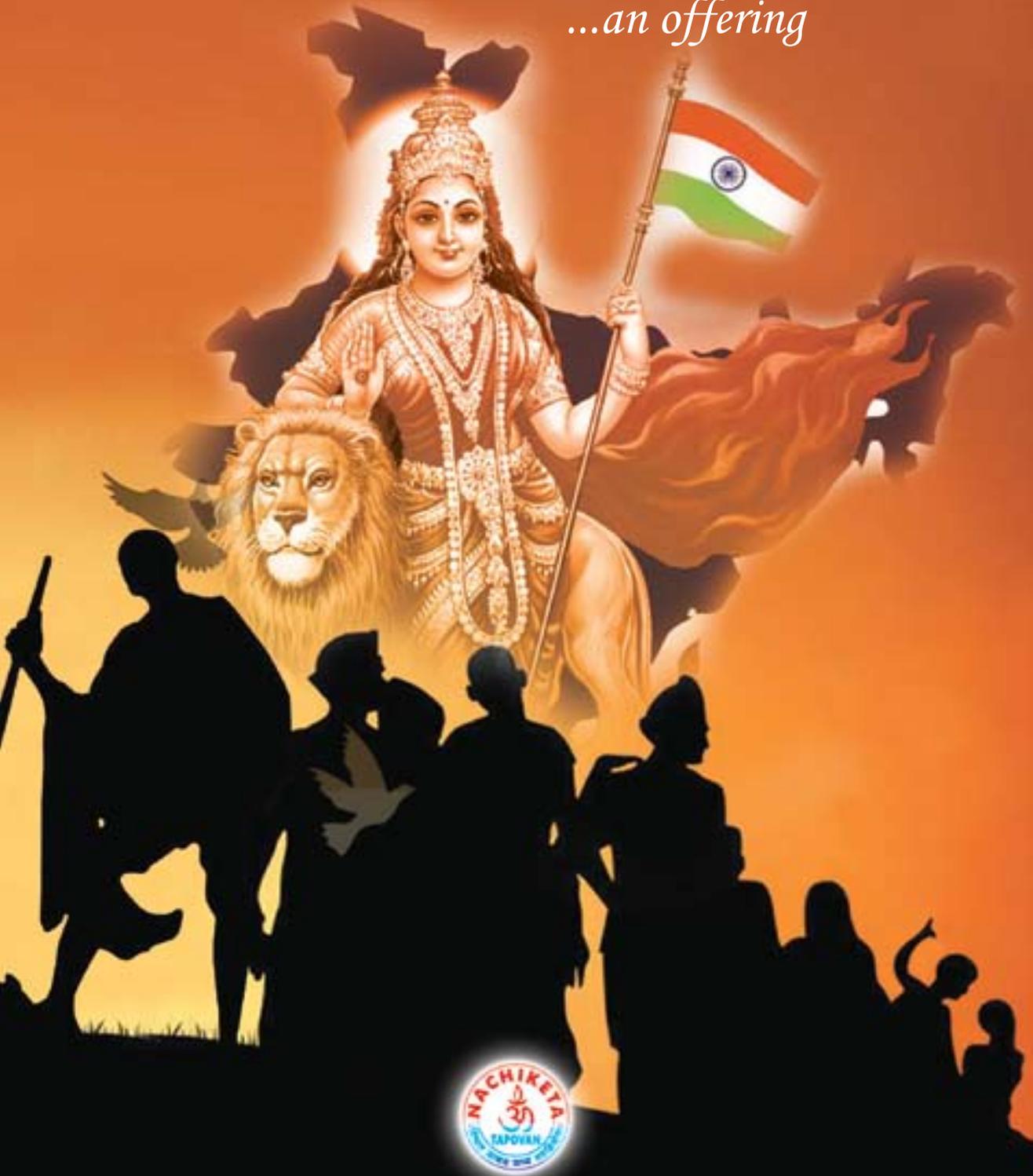


# *Nachiketanjali*

*...an offering*



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Launch of Nachiketa Tapovan's  
**THE GREEN PRINT**  
at Saptaparni on 30th June 2013



*Akhil on his guitar*



*Swamiji and Mataji applaud Malavika*



*Malavika Reddy with her creation*

*Divine music  
from  
Ramya shree*



*Swamiji enraptures the audience with his talk*



*Gautam elucidates  
'The Green Print Project'*

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## *Do not give away your precious freedom*

In God's creation human birth outshines everything else. We are born with a mind and intellect which is lacking in the rest of His creation. But it is a pity that we allow our mind to overrule us. We should learn to pull rank over the mind instead of falling prey to it.

An elephant may be difficult to tame. The mahout might find it difficult to chain it initially, but once the elephant is tamed it will go and stand near its post and will even pick up the chain with its trunk and give it to the mahout to be chained. So is our mind. A tamed mind will play to our tune but when mind is not in our control we are bound to become its slave. It is but natural for the mind to be not in control, but this is when we should use our intellect and gain control over it. We can cope with almost any situation, as long as we are aware of the mind's play.

Success in our lives always depends on our approach towards life. Every entity is unique and we need to understand this. For instance, if we look at the five elements, Earth is patience personified. It converts all the waste thrown on it into manure and helps the plantation in giving a good yield. Fire gives light by burning incessantly and transforms whatever it touches into sacred ash. Water flows carrying away all impurities with it. It purifies everything that it comes into contact. Similarly, we need to sanctify our lives by flushing away all impure thoughts from our mind. Air removes the stench from the surroundings and gives oxygen for our survival. The vast space absorbs all sounds yet appears peaceful. Its vastness illustrates how our outlook can be broadened. We need to derive inspiration from these five elements and enrich our lives instead of capsizing like a boat in sea to the mind's play.

Remember, we and our mind are not one single entity. We are independent, unique entities free from the mind. We are the Self – the birthless ... the deathless. So, let us not ever give away our precious freedom – our independence ... to the mind.

**- Subhadra K.**

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**Subhadra K.**

Executive Editors

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**Harini N.**

Design & Layout: **Shyam R.**

Young Columnists Team

**Avinash A. Neetika G.**

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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

# FREEDOM PARROT

A man, a great man, a fighter for freedom was traveling in the mountains. He stayed in a caravanserai for the night. He was amazed that in the caravanserai there was a beautiful parrot in a golden cage, continually repeating "Freedom! Freedom!" And it was such a place that when the parrot repeated the word "Freedom!" it would go on echoing in the valleys, in the mountains.

The man thought: "I have seen many parrots, and I have thought they must want to be free from those cages ... but I have never seen such a parrot whose whole day, from the morning to the evening when he goes to sleep, is spent in calling out for freedom." He had an idea. In the middle of the night, when the owner was fast asleep, he got up and opened the door of the cage. He whispered to the parrot, "Now get out."

But he was very surprised that the parrot was clinging to the bars of the cage. He said to him again and again, "Have you forgotten about freedom? Just get out! The door is open and the owner is fast asleep; nobody will ever know. You just fly into the sky; the whole sky is yours."



But the parrot was clinging so deeply, so hard, that the man said, "What is the matter? Are you mad?" He tried to take the parrot out with his own hands, but the parrot started pecking at him, and at the same time he was shouting "Freedom! Freedom!" The valleys in the night echoed and re-echoed, but the man was also stubborn; he was a freedom fighter.

He pulled the parrot out and threw him into the sky; and he was very satisfied, although his hand was hurt. The parrot had attacked him as forcefully as he could, but the man was immensely satisfied that he had made a soul free. He went to sleep.

In the morning, as the man was waking up, he heard the parrot shouting, "Freedom! Freedom!" He thought perhaps the parrot must be sitting on a tree or on a rock. But when he came out, the parrot was sitting in the cage. The door was open.

*- Osho*



# Redefining life...

There were 400 children and youth attending “Educating, Empowering & Enlightening Rural Folks” project but there was one girl among all others, who caught my attention and was something different, something unique, always bubbling with full of energy, talkative, well behaved and mannered, knew her limits and above all giving due respect to everyone and doing her job sincerely. All those above mentioned qualities packed in one place was just a 12 year old; a wonderful, cute and a divine package with huge possibilities. I could sense a wonderful person in her, a gift from Divine Mother to the world.

What I came to know about her is that she works in the house, helps her mother from household work to farming; counseling to cajoling. She is always full of energy and ready to go all out. She studies hard and always comes first in the class. I understand that people and their behavior will change with time but what I sensed in this girl was the ‘never to give up attitude’ and is ready to take up any challenging responsibility on her shoulder and above all courage to redefine the life even in utter chaotic situations.

I never saw tears in her eyes. But the other day when we had a meeting with the Collector of Mahaboobnagar District, she too came with us. In the meeting, many times, I had seen her trying to speak something with tearful eyes but couldn’t. Sometimes she was looking at the Collector and sometimes helplessly towards me. When we came out from the office, I simply asked her whether she wanted to speak to the Collector, and immediately with tears in her eyes but trying to hide those precious tears to use for some other occasion; she mumbled “yes, I wanted to speak to him.” When I asked, “what did you want to convey?” she said, “I have a brother who can’t walk since he is suffering from polio.” I didn’t pay much attention to it. But after two days, when we got the opportunity to visit her place for ‘Green Earth Drive’ to plant saplings, it was time for me to feel guilty for not paying attention to her

request. Since the meeting with the Collector was very positive, I was on seventh cloud and hence, I hardly could see her tears or feel her heartbeat in my heart.

Later I came to know that there is a special scheme under which her brother can get some remuneration for survival but it was pending since so many years. It was sad but this girl said that if the government doesn’t come forward to help them out, she shall study hard, work hard and take care of her brother and mother. She knew how her mother works in the house and in the field attending everyone without fail. She knew how her father spends money on alcohol and doesn’t work at all. Above all, she knew how her brother loves her and cannot bear any separation from her.

Now when I look back at her short but sweet journey in the Ashram, I feel more blessed than anybody else. I can see this tiny girl who has stolen my heart and never left a single opportunity to bring tears in my eyes. One day she said with total conviction, “Swamiji! I shall make something out of my life. Even if it is not something great, at least I will never let you down or bring bad name to you ... I shall follow the rules and regulations set by unseen hands and never turn them down for any reason. I shall do my best to do whatever best I can, but never stop anywhere ... I shall study hard



and bring more laurels to my family and will never bring disrespect and disgrace to anyone, even if I find myself in utter chaos...!" Today also it is echoing in my heart, and felt that she has definitely started taking baby steps towards redefining life...!



Redefining life means looking 'within' to express 'without'...

Redefining life means presenting ourselves to the best of our own abilities without distorting the truth...  
 Redefining life means bringing more color to life without borrowing even a single shade...  
 Redefining life means accepting others' feats and our defeats equally...  
 Redefining life means to know what we are in the light of life...  
 Redefining life means celebrating every moment without commotion... and I have sensed in this tiny package, everything that can redefine life, beyond life...

And dear friends, do you want to know about this boy, her brother? After our plantation when she took us to her house, her brother was there sitting right near the entrance and was not able to move, not because of polio but because he is a 'Special child' and cannot do things on his own. What a tragedy but what to say about this girl who is aware of everything but tries to hide and doesn't want anyone to label him a physically challenged one! I salute this girl for her sincerity, commitment and courage.

Dear One! My Little One! The whole idea about redefining life is to know what life is and to deliver what ever best one can, till the last breath. Many have redefined their lives by hard work, many of them by having faith in their own abilities and many of them by sheer faith in God. Therefore, next time when you find out what redefining life means to you; please remember to share with others because... who knows your awe-inspiring expression may prepare hundreds and thousands of lives to redefine their lives and they in turn many more...

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri



## *What is your Permanent Address?*

Dear Sadhakas, we have lost our permanent address; we do not know how to find out our right address. Some sadhakas are ignorant of the route. Some sadhakas know the route, but they do not want to walk on it. Some sadhakas don't want to make an attempt to know the route. Some are completely drenched in desires and enjoyment of senses. From birth to death, we go through lot of sufferings and obstacles in life and it is just because we have lost the way to our destination, we lost our permanent address.

How many days are we going to stay in a rented house? Every one wants to have an own house where one is free to live and enjoy the life. We work in the office the whole day and come back home in the evening, why? Because we know very well that we can rest in the house and relax. In the same way God wants us to discover the true abode of the Self, where we can have nectar instead of tea, where we find just not the enjoyment but the bliss and eternal freedom. As long as the ignorance is not shed there is fog in our path.

- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri



## Chunilal Basu



**W**hat is needed in spiritual life? Longing for God. And this longing does not dawn in the heart until the desire for worldly enjoyment ceases. One might have plenty of money, wonderful children, excellent health, name, fame and position - but everyone realises sooner or later that these material acquisitions do not last. It is a wise person who seeks that which is eternal, who seeks God.

Chunilal Basu was born in Baghbazaar, North Calcutta, in 1849. He had a wife, children and a job, yet he still felt an emptiness within. Chunilal was searching desperately for something or someone. One of his colleagues, who was aware of his state of mind asked him to go to Sri Ramakrishna in Dakshineswar. Chunilal went to Dakshineswar where the Master began to get acquainted with him by asking him many questions and treating him as His own. On that day the Master did not talk about devotion or renunciation. Under the grip of a restless mind, Chunilal decided to visit the holy cities of Varanasi, Vrindavan and Haridwar.

After travelling for nearly two weeks he found the aimless wandering not to his liking. So he returned home and a few days later went to see the Master. This time, in the Master's room, he met Balaram Basu, his next door neighbour. Sri Ramakrishna brought them together by telling Balaram, "Chunilal lives very close to your house. Whenever you come, please bring him along with you". In this way, travelling to and from Dakshineswar, Balaram and Chunilal became good friends.

Chunilal had received initiation from his family Guru, and he used to practice yoga secretly in a secluded place - even after meeting the Master. He did not realise that it was dangerous to practice *Pranayama* without the help of a Guru. As a result he developed various kinds of physical ailments which prevented him from visiting the Master for some time. One day when he was alone in the Master's room the Master said "Why do you practice all those things? You are a householder.

That *yoga sadhana* is not for you. Have faith and love for God. Take three doses of medicine from *Brahmachari* Gopal on your way home." Chunilal was dumbfounded because no one knew about his yoga and the cause of his illness. He was even more amazed when he recovered from his illness after taking the three doses of the medicine. From then on Chunilal had complete faith in the Master as an *Avatar*.

He was eager to serve the Master, but his poverty was an obstacle. Seeing his mental agony the Master asked him to buy a regular glass for Him to drink water. Delighted, Chunilal bought Him one. The Master had a high opinion of Chunilal, He said "Chuni's spiritual consciousness has been awakened by frequent visits to me". On the Kalpataru day, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1886, the Master blessed many devotees on the lawn of the Kasipur garden, and lifted their souls up to a higher realm of consciousness. Chunilal who came late that afternoon and heard the whole story felt sad and unfortunate that he had not received the blessings of the Master. Later that day when the Master saw Chunilal, He said "Have love and faith in this place (pointing to his body). You will also achieve everything." Those few words of the Master became the mainstay of Chunilal's life. All through his life, Chunilal remained a faithful devotee of the Master and a well wisher of the Ramakrishna Order. He passed away at his home on May 30<sup>th</sup> 1936, at the age of 87.

Source: They lived with God  
Swami Chetananda

Nachiketanjali August 2013

# Oh Mother!!

**90 people died today.** No - not because of some terrorist attack or a terrible accident. There was no natural disaster either - but 90 people still died!

There were no candle-light marches or people taking to the streets in protest of some kind of lapse on the part of those in power.

News came out but all were quiet, not knowing whom to blame but finding it very hard not to.

Today, nature was cruel. Mother Nature unveiled her cruel side and how? Today she took the lives of close to a hundred. We all have identified the perpetrator of this heinous crime but are afraid to discover the motive. We are afraid because, somewhere deep down, we know why. We realize why.

She played a dark trick, Mother Nature. She played her cards well. She has proved time and again that she has the uncanny ability of asserting power and unraveling the reality of man's situation at times that we least expect. And each time, we humans, in all our adolescent arrogance forget this ability of hers. She shows how big she is and how whimpering and laughably small we are. The fragility and vulnerability of the human race is what she mocks.

But why? Oh Mother, why?

Oh, I asked the question now, didn't I?

*How silly of me!*

How silly to forget that when you point one finger, three point right back at you!!

- *Pavani Madhira*

## *Our Condolences*



The holy places of Chardham were ripped out and washed apart by Himalayan Tsunami, affecting thousands of people, who either lost their lives or were stranded in the flood hit districts of Uttarakhand. This is one of the worst natural disasters in the recent past.

In this moment of grief and panic, Nachiketa Tapovan prays for the departed souls and offers its deepest sympathies and condolences for the families of the bereaved. We appeal to people across the world to lend support in any form that can assist the flood victims so that they can get back to normalcy as soon as possible.

# Janmashtami

Janmashtami is a sacred day dedicated to Lord Sri Krishna. It was on this day that He was born in a prison in Mathura. Krishna is Infinite wisdom. Krishna is Truth. He was born in the quiet heart-caves of the *Rishis*. Those *Rishis* gradually transmitted their knowledge to their disciples. Thus Krishna was removed from the prison to Yashoda's house – the disciple's. There is no pain in this unique delivery. The Guru gives out the child without the agony of labour pains. While we are sleeping in fatigue and exhaustion, wearied in production and destruction, we know not, that there is born a baby, called Knowledge – Krishna – in our bosom. Engaged perpetually in procuring, keeping and spending, we are fatigued and in deep sleep of midnight, the child is born, the senses are gatekeepers who slept off when Krishna was born in the prison.

As long as we are engaged in outer activities, the scriptures do not open their secrets to us. When we get fed up with these and go to sleep to forget them, in meditation, this Child is born. When we have fully enjoyed life in all aspects and find no peace out of them – in that quiet sleep, the



maturity of understanding, the Light dawns. The Scriptures are taught to such a heart. When everybody is sleeping in the prison of his Ego, when the sense organs are all asleep, the mysterious Light shines forth during meditation and in that darkness the blue boy of Brindavan is born.

We have to look after that Baby. It is not an easy job, with a mischievous baby. From minute to minute He steals from the house and also the neighbouring houses. When Yasoda wants to punish Him, His very looks make her forget her own intentions. Everything she forgets. The *Gopis* may complain again and again, but nothing can be done. A thousand worries, a thousand shames the mother has to bear for His acts, but she cannot punish Him. Try any number of times, we too cannot control Him. We too are deceived by His looks. But once we start working in His Light, there is joy and happiness. We become firmly established with Krishna. We look after Him in all aspects – with body, mind and intellect. He illumines and helps us.

Janmashtami is a wonderful day. The Lord is coming, so people fast. Devaki is in pains therefore you do not eat food. Fasting is *Upasana* i.e., to live near the Lord. Attunement to the Lord through meditation is fasting. Food means satisfaction for the senses. Starve the senses. Uplift them to contemplation. The thick darkness has come. Be brave, light will dawn. There must be no fear. The Sun has dawned in our bosom. Thus we turn inward in meditation. In that silence of the heart, in spite of thunders, we must remain sufficiently long. Then only, in that long earned tranquility will we experience, the Birth of Krishna, The Light.

Compiled from a talk by  
Swami Chinmayananda

# Life in every Breath

To know Life in Every Breath ... is to know that every breath is a gift ... an opportunity to know, to see, to learn and to grow...

To know Life in Every Sunrise ... is to arise every morning and feel the golden glow ... And allow it to fill 'You' with its light and energy and give you strength to grow...

To know Life in Every Blossom ... is to smell the fragrance of the flowers and trees and feel the gratitude for the seed which gave up the safety of its peal and was willing to be vulnerable so that it may blossom into a beautiful tree...

To know Life in Every Smile ... is to feel the purity and the love in everyone you see ... to break the walls and build bridges instead!!!

To know Life in Every Tear ... is to feel the beautiful heart, filled with love, purity and joy, which cries, because it sees everything as a part of Thee ...

To know life in Every breath ... is to realize that every breath could be our last ... and so make every breath count ... to give, to love, to live and to laugh ... to become the perfect blossom we all ought to be!!!

- *Gautam Vir*





# Swami Vivekananda & India's Struggle for Freedom

The first and foremost to come under the spell of *Bande Maataram*, propounded by Bankimchandra was Swami Vivekananda. As a fiery patriotic youth, Narendra had read 'Anand Math' and was much inspired by it. He had also the opportunity to meet the seer of *Bande Maataram*, when Sri Ramakrishna sent him, and two other disciples, to the house of Bankim. Inspired by the vision of Mother Bharat presented by the seer-poet, young Narendra became a worshipper of *Shakti*. The illustrious patriot-revolutionary and younger brother of Swami Vivekananda, Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutta, emphatically declares in his magnum opus, *Swami Vivekananda—Patriot-Prophet*:

**"The primary object of Swami Vivekananda was Nationalism. To arouse the sleeping Lion of India and to put it on its proper pedestal was his life's mission".**

In the speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda, we find the direct echo of *Bhoomi Sookta* of the *Atharva Veda*, eulogizing the land as the Divine Mother, and the glory of this Holy Land as depicted in *Srimad Bhaagavatam*.

Swamiji proclaims: **"If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed *Punya Bhoomi*, to be the land to which souls on this earth must come to account for Karma, the land to which every soul wending its way Godward must come to attain its last home, the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all, the land of introspection and spirituality - It is India"...** He cried out at the top of his voice: "I am Indian—every Indian is my brother" and called out: "Say brother—the soil of India is my highest Heaven; the good of India is my good". The idea of nationalism of Swami Vivekananda was a sacred ideal and its inmost striving was to express its own conception of ideal manhood.

Sister Nivedita, the embodiment of the ideal of spiritual nationalism propounded by Swami

Vivekananda, had taken up, *at the behest of the Swami, the task of liberating the country from the thralldom (bondage) of alien rule*. She resigned from the Ramakrishna Order to dedicate herself completely to the cause of the country's political freedom. In the course of a conversation with the famous patriot-revolutionaries, Brahmabandav Upadhyaya and Aswini Kumar Datta, in 1906, she remarked: **"I remember very well, Swamiji asked me to forge a mighty weapon out of the bones of Bengali youths which can free India".**

Swami Vivekananda influenced not only the revolutionaries, but also the later nationalists and freedom fighters. Romain Rolland points out that Gandhi, in a lecture at the lawn of the Belur Math, acknowledged that "the reading of Vivekananda's books had increased his patriotism". Thus, all the militant nationalist movements culminating in Gandhiji's movement for the Independence of India, was launched after Swamiji's thundering roar, **"Arise, Awake"**.

**- Sadhu Prof. V. Rangarajan**





“She held her head up high, chin up, and with her focus ahead, she walked up to the stage. The audience was cheering and applauding as she bowed with elegance and pride. She had boldly and logically solved the problem. The problem that had everyone under their blankets. But not her. She’d faced the problem, eye to eye, and had never let go of that focus. She was a true hero.”

Now, with the paragraph above, try to imagine yourself in that girl’s place. Feel the focus, effort and determination that that girl would have put in to help her people and her community. It’s a wonderful feeling to know that your boldness is the quality that you are very well known for.

“To boldly go” is when you aren’t sure of how things are going to turn out, but you are sure that you are going to fight till you reach victory.

“To boldly go” is to have self-confidence and lift yourself up every time someone tries to push you down.

“To boldly go” is to have resilience within yourself and to care not about the ending, but about the effort and participation you’ve given. Sometimes, we try our best, and then eventually give up and try to find an easy solution.

However, “To boldly go” is to keep trying and not lose hope. It means that you don’t care about the audience’s comments or disapproval, because you know that what you are doing is right.

“To boldly go” is not saying, “It’s okay if I lose, it really doesn’t matter.” If you say that, that means you don’t have confidence within you, you don’t trust yourself.

But “to boldly go” is to have that confidence and that trust, and move forward, no matter how long it will take you.

“To boldly go” is to be patient with your own emotions and feelings, dealing with them strictly, but gently.

“To boldly go” is to take risks but never, ever give up.

“To boldly go” is to face the consequences of your own mistakes and accept them, but standing up for yourself when you’ve been unnecessarily blamed; not only for yourself, but for your loved ones as well.

“To boldly go” is to be the one who stands up when everyone else is in hiding. To fight for humanity, however little the number of people it maybe, because you know that even the slightest difference should be solved before it ends up being too huge to handle.

Conclusively, “to boldly go” is to be the true hero mentioned earlier. Now, it’s all up to you.

Do you want “to boldly go”?

- **Aadira Parakkat**  
(13 year old studying in Chirec School)

# A thought...

**“If there is no thought of success, there can be no failure,  
If there is no thought of prosperity, nothing can make you feel like a pauper,  
If there is no thought of pace, there could be no slowing down of chances,  
If there is no thought of time, why would you feel a sense of delay or denial?  
If there is no thought of confidence, what can make you diffident?  
If there is no thought of abundance, why would you question emptiness?  
If there is no thought of power, who could bully you today?  
If there is no thought of action, why would you consider inaction a waste?  
If there is no thought of companionship, where is the idea of loneliness?  
If there is no thought of thirst, can there be fear of famines?  
If there is no thought of gain, would you worry too much about losing?  
If there is no thought of ‘mine’, would “ letting go” hurt?**

It is all a thought. That’s how we give undue respect to a thought and then allow it to decide the quality of life. It is sheer abuse of a sacred power.

We have the power to choose a thought. The thought of surrender.

With it comes success, confidence, peace, joy and love. One thought triggers off the rest and more often than not, the result isn’t exactly pretty. We can choose intelligently and witness the consequences calmly.”

**- Abir & Anisha**



When I walk down the street and see people whose eyes are filled with anxiety, despair, and alienation, my mind ponders on the reason for it. Then I start to think of ways to help people around me and end up complaining that people are unwilling to receive any help. Well, do I really know their needs? Not really. Recognizing what they want is very essential to help them. Now that I think of the various instances I have tried helping people and what worked versus what did not, I realize that the biggest help I could have ever done was telling people my stories of failure to success and inspiring them. Yes, inspiration is the best gift you can give or receive, the most substantial help you can ever offer to someone. *Prerana*, in other words inspiration is very essential for us to keep going and to understand the cycle of life.

It is very easy to get tired of the monotony in life. When faced with a struggle, one tends to complain that life is hard on them and when they are fully convinced that life will be the way it is, they think that it is time to give up. Giving up is not the last step in the cycle of life. In fact, it is the beginning of a whole new cycle which leads to all the other mishaps in life.

By trying to help a person who has given up, by providing them with what we think they need, we are doing more harm than helping them. The ideal situation we believe in may not be ideal to everyone around us. We have always learnt that it is better to teach a man how to fish than to feed him. This is because in this way you teach them how to live themselves. The most dangerous situation is when one stops caring about one's own hunger which leads to despair and eventually death.

As quoted in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*, don't try to raise others, let them rise by themselves. The best you can do is to show how to rise.

**“uddhared AtmanAtmanam  
nAtmanam avasAdayeth |**

**Atmaiva hyAtmano bandhur  
Atmaiva ripur Atmanah ||**

Let a man raise himself by his own efforts. Let him not degrade himself.

Because a person's best friend or his worst enemy is none other than his own self.”

- Chapter 6, verse 5



The only way this is possible is if you are inspired yourself. You can inspire people around you by being inspired. Live your life the way you like it but first identify what you like. I like to tell stories about life, mistakes I have made and laugh at them and then narrate what happened after. However, that's just my way of doing it. I am not here to preach; I just tell a story and let people figure what to draw from it. Inspiration is the *Moolam*, the root and cause for everything we do. Uplifting people is a very simple thing to do if you know how to uplift yourself.

Inspire by being inspired. Let the magic of *Prerana* act on the society and you'll see the fruits in no time. Sow a seed a day, inspire one by one.

- *Ramya Manasa*

# I admit I made a mistake!

A few days back, I was watching an episode of a soap opera. The daughter-in-law of the particular family was allotted certain prominent responsibilities relating to the work of an NGO sponsored by the family. However, there were many goof ups on her part, mainly because of the handiwork of people jealous of her. What struck me was the uprightness and courage of the fictional character. She did not hesitate to admit her mistakes even though the specific job was in the terminal stage and her admission would bring her dishonour. She looked at the larger picture, the outcome that the mistake would have on the lives of others in the long run and accepted with grace that she made a mistake.

In our everyday life, we all make a lot of mistakes. Mistakes help us learn and hence, making mistakes is a part of growing up. However, whether we are courageous enough to admit our mistakes and apologize to the affected is what matters. The word 'sorry', howsoever simpler it may sound, is very difficult to say truly from the heart. But when we realize our mistake and take the next step of honestly apologizing, we would definitely feel better from within.

We all know the famous story of Mahatma Gandhi admitting to his parents that he indulged in objectionable habits. He could not gather the courage to directly say it to his father, but wrote

it in a letter. He accepted his error, apologized and never repeated it again. Admission should therefore entail in never repeating the same action.

The other side of the coin is the reaction of the affected parties. While in grave cases we cannot expect everyone to be saintly and rule out the craving for retribution, in simpler matters forgiveness is a virtue. While it takes great courage to admit a mistake, it is braver even to forgive the misdemeanour or misdeed, especially when we are affected. Nevertheless, everyone deserves a second chance in life if he sincerely agonizes that he has erred and seeks an opportunity to rectify the same. It would not be incorrect to say that admission of one's mistake and forgiveness go hand in hand and are both necessary for the progress of a society.

How well would it bode for our nation if our leaders were to admit their mistakes and seek the mandate of the people, rather than being defiant and defending the indefensible! How nice it would be for our society if we are conscientious and are guarded in our actions! How peaceful would our homes be if we readily acknowledge our slips and take corrective action! For, to err is human and to forgive is divine.



**Neetika Gogula,**

B.A. L.L.B. (Hons) has passion for writing articles on social issues.





# STOP START GO

Well-fitted uniform, with a cap and whistle

Mouth covered with a thin pollution mask

A walky talky, sometimes in the pocket, sometimes at hand

Not a minute to waste, guiding the vehicles speeding by

The signal does its job, but he is the one really directing the traffic

He is none other than the traffic policeman!

We all crib about the scorching heat, continuous sweat and water shortage. But did we ever try to stop and empathize with the traffic policeman? Or give a moment's thought to his life at the crossroad signal?

Standing in the sun for hours together, watching the air conditioned cars whirling by. Not even for a moment does his alertness drop- as he controls the traffic, spots drivers without seat belts or those talking on their cell phones, and gives them a lesson in road safety. In metros like Delhi and Mumbai, drivers are also fined for smoking and driving. All these rules are for our safety and protection, but how many of us really follow these rules?



And there stands the traffic police man, carrying this grueling responsibility on his shoulders, fulfilling this duty for a few thousand rupees with so many mouths to feed in his family. Be it any season, he cannot flinch from his duty. Even a water break or bio-break is difficult during his working hours, so meal times are out of the question. Think about it- is he any less courageous or his sacrifice any smaller than our brave soldiers on the borders of our country?

Swamiji once expressed, "have we ever stopped to offer a traffic policeman some relief from his conditions? A bottle of water, a snack or a packet of buttermilk maybe? The next time you spot a traffic policeman from the inside of your air-conditioned car, think about the joy such a gesture would bring to him, and to you..."

Once, we were driving past the Cantonment Area towards the Nachiketa Tapovan school. Sitting comfortably in the car, we were groaning about the A/C not working efficiently when our backs straightened up all of a sudden. We saw a battalion of army men jogging past us- in the hot summer sun. It was a moment of utter shame as our eyes opened. We were all human beings under the same sun, but look at the difference. The next instant, we switched off the A/C, rolled down the windows of the car, and did not utter a word after that!

Whenever the season takes a sudden turn, we must dedicate a moment to our army men and policemen who stand guard- be it the scorching summer or pouring rain or freezing winters. From the far-away borders of our country to the jam-packed city roads, they are standing there- perhaps waiting for a gesture or gratitude, a look of respect or even a smile from you. Will you give it to them?

Jai Jawan! Jai Kisan!

- Mamta Agarwal

# Lessons from God's own country



Every time I visit Kerala, I fall a little more in love with it. Visiting that hallowed temple town of Guruvayoor - the *Bhooloka Vaikuntham*, where Lord Maha Vishnu resides in all His resplendent glory, made me reiterate that sentiment yet again. Guruvayoor's appeal springs from the fact that everything here bears the hallmark of the Lord. From the countless little shops peddling statues of the blue hued one and His flutes, to our hotel which was called 'The Sri Krishna Inn', to the charming cradle that adorned the hotel lobby, there was no escaping the omniscient presence of the Lord and Master of Guruvayoor.

Standing before the *Sreekovil* (the sanctum sanctorum) of the 500 year old temple, I was transfixed by the sandalwood smeared beauteous form of Lord Sri Krishna. Even before I could assimilate this wondrous sight, I'm nudged by someone in the serpentine queue, reminding me that other greedy eyes were waiting to feast upon this banquet of beauty. I move on, humbled and thankful for this limited period of Grace.

Legend has it that the idol at this temple, which was initially at *Vaikuntham*, was handed over by Lord Maha Vishnu to Brahma Deva to help in the process of creation. This idol later came to be installed at Dwaraka and before Lord Krishna left this world for His heavenly abode, He handed it over to His disciple Uddhava and asked him to seek the help of Brihaspathy, the Guru of Gods, to install it at an appropriate place. The Guru and his disciple, Vayudeva (God of wind), directed by Sage Parasurama, finally reached Kerala and decided to install it at Rudratheertham, a sacred pond filled with lotus flowers. However, sensing the presence of Lord Shiva & Parvathi at the pond, they were a little hesitant, but Lord Shiva not only graciously permitted Guru and Vayu to install the idol there, but also named the place 'Guru-Vayu-oor' meaning the place of Guru and Vayu. A temple was built at that spot by none other than the celestial architect, Vishwakarma. The Lord of Guruvayoor henceforth came to be called Lord Guruvayoorappan. Lord Shiva and Parvathi moved to Mammiyoor on the opposite bank of Rudratheertham. A visit to



Seeveli Ceremony at Guruvayoor temple

Guruvayoor is considered incomplete unless you visit Mammiyoor. As our guide narrated this tale, I reminded myself never to underestimate the power of peaceful and harmonious co-existence. If our Gods can do it, why can't we?

There are many colourful rituals that form part and parcel of the temple routine. A must watch is the *Seeveli* ceremony, where grandly attired elephants carry the *Utsava* idol around the inner compound of the temple on their caparisoned backs to the accompaniment of drum beats three times a day.

Another distinctive ritual is the *Thulabharam*, where a devotee is weighed and an offering of equal weight is made to the Lord. These offerings range from bananas, sugar, jaggery and coconuts to even silver. I couldn't help wondering, why the Lord, who is the Master of this entire universe and all the riches it holds, would be interested in such paltry offerings. Instead, wouldn't it be more meaningful if each of us could renounce vices worth our weight - anger, jealousy, greed, mean-heartedness, pride and all the countless evils that plague us.

The *Deeparadhana* ceremony that takes place each evening is truly a highlight. The sanctum sanctorum is enclosed on all four sides by a brass grill-like structure with every niche holding a *Chuttuvilakku* (small oil lamp). At 6 pm each evening, devotees and volunteers rush to light up the oil wicks and the place is aglow with thousands of beautiful flickering lights. I marvel at the dazzling, indescribable beauty of the Lord as He holds court amidst this sea of glowing lights, fuelled not by oil but by the love of His countless devotees.

A quaintly endearing practice I noticed here, involved a huge *Urli* filled with bright red *Manjadikuru* seeds. I watched groups of giggling children gleefully scoop up handfuls of these red seeds and plough them back into the *Urli* three times along with money. Parents believe that if they get their little imps to engage in this ritual, little Sri Krishna, who was perpetually up to



mischief Himself, will help rid them of their errant behaviour or even cure them of skin ailments. Guruvayoor is, in fact, renowned for curing skin ailments.

As my trip to Guruvayoor drew to a close, I realized that each of us visit a pilgrim town for different reasons - to beseech a cure for a bodily ailment or a deeper one, to reiterate our faith in God or to seek succor, to address our fears or to

thank Him for His benevolence, to unburden ourselves by making Him privy to our deepest, darkest secrets or to rebuke Him for all that is not right with our lives, or even simply to be close to His divine image so some of that divinity rubs off on us. And so, we shamelessly cajole, invoke, berate, plead and pray. We do all this, secure in the knowledge that Sriman Narayana, He who keeps vigil over every tiny creature in this cosmic universe, will also watch out for us.



Lord Guruvayoor

- Swathi



# India is a Free Country But Are Indians Free???

Do we practice our fundamental rights in their **FACTUAL** SENSE



## We have a **RIGHT TO SPEECH & EXPRESSION**

BUT

- ★ We hesitate to voice our opinion
- ★ We become silent about things that matter to us

*This is a Game of Artful Pondering ...  
so PLEASE EXERCISE IT*



## We have a **RIGHT TO LIFE & LIBERTY**

BUT

- ★ We hesitate to live peacefully and unitedly
- ★ We allow anyone to define us in a limiting way

*Every Life Matters ... SAVE IT*



*The fundamental rights are essential for the development of the personality  
of every individual and to preserve human dignity.*

*India has been Independent for over 65 years,  
Let's all of us take at least  
65 steps towards our **FACTUAL FREEDOM***

## We have a **RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

BUT

- ★ India is still home to largest illiterate population
- ★ Gender disparities remain deeply engrained

*Let's replace each Empty Mind with an OPEN MIND*

## We have a **RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF RELIGION**

BUT

- ★ We so often hear about communal riots
- ★ We continue to discriminate on grounds of race, religion and caste

*Religious Freedom doesn't mean freedom to  
force everyone to follow your religion*



Compiled by Neeru Mamtani

# Upadesa Saaram

(Part - 2)

**DrisyavAritam chitthamAtmanah  
Chitvadarsanam tatwadarsanam**

**Meaning:**

The mind withdrawn from the “seen” world sees itself to be of the nature of Pure Consciousness (Chit) or the Principle of knowledge. And that is the revelation of the Reality or Realization of Self.

**MAnasamtukim mArganekrite  
NaivamAnasam mArgaArjavaath**

**Meaning:**

Now on enquiring thus “What is the mind”, it transpires, there is no such thing as mind. This is the direct path for all.

**Vritthayastvaham vritthimAsritAh  
Vritthayomano vidhyahammanah**

**Meaning:**

The mind is merely the thoughts. All thoughts depend on the “I” – thought.

**Ahamayamkuto bhavatichinvatah  
Ayipatatyaham nijavichAranam**

**Meaning:**

Whence does this “I” – notion arise? For one who enquires thus, the “AhamVritti” or “I” – thought falls down and disappears. This disappearance of the “AhamVritti” is the true purport of Self-enquiry. This is the pursuit of Wisdom or Jnana.

**AhaminAsabhajyahamantayaA  
Sphuratihritswayamparamapoornasat**

**Meaning:**

When the ‘AhamVritti’ or ego-self disappears (in consequence of intense search for its source), the Heart or the Self which is of the nature of Supreme-Infinite-Existence, spontaneously un-

folds all by itself flashing its radiant effulgence of Consciousness across the mind, conferring on the seeker the ineffable experience of the Self in steady and continuous pulsation of ‘Aham - Aham’ or ‘I - I’.

**Idamahampadaabhikhyamanvaham  
AhamileenakepyalayasatthayaA**

**Meaning:**

In its true import the ‘I’ eternally signifies the Absolute Self which is of the nature of Indestructible Existence. For, in the deepest sleep (of our daily experience) even when the I-sense is completely lost for all purposes, we do not cease to exist.

**Vigrahendriya prAnadhitamah  
NAhamekasattajjadamhyasat**

**Meaning:**

I am the Pure existence, One without a second and not the body, senses, vital-airs, mind-intellect and ignorance, all of which constitute an inert structure and indeed non-existent.

**SatthvabhAsikachitkvavetara**  
**Satthayahi chit chitthayAhyaham**

**Meaning:**

Where is another Consciousness to illumine Existence (Sat) or That which alone 'IS'. For, Existence indeed is Consciousness and that Consciousness is verily who I am –THE RADIANT SELF.

**Isajeevayor veshadhibhida**  
**SatswabhAvato vastukevalam**

**Meaning:**

From the stand point of the conditioning factors of physical body and subtle body there is difference between Jeeva and Eswara with respect to their stature and status. But from the stand point of their true nature they are the Supreme Reality alone.

**VeshahAnata swAtmadarsanam**  
**Isadarsanam swAtmaroopatah**

**Meaning:**

To one who has accomplished the elimination or rejection of the whole structure of the conditioning factors (upadhis), to him the Self is spontaneously revealed. This is what is called Self-Realization. To have the vision of the Universal Lord (Eswara) as the Pure Self is indeed God-Realization.

**Aatmasamsthtih swAtmadarsanam**  
**AatmanirdwayatatmanishthathA**

**Meaning:**

Since the Self is non-dual, the abidance or settled state in the Self alone is the vision of the Self. That alone is known as 'Atma Nishthaa' or firm abidance in the Self.

**JnAnavarjita jnAnaheenachit**  
**JnAnamastikim jnatumantaram**

*“Is there a  
knowledge other  
than Consciousness  
to know the Self?  
(There is none).”*

**Meaning:**

Pure Consciousness is free of the thoughts of both knowledge and ignorance of objects. Is there then, a knowledge other than Consciousness to know the Self? (There is none).

**Kim swaroopamityAtmadarshane**  
**AvyayaabhavA pUrnachithsukham**

**Meaning:**

“What is my nature”? Enquiring thus, one realizes the Self and knows, “I am the Imperishable, Unborn, All-full, Knowledge - Bliss”.

**Bandha-muktyateetamparamsukham**  
**Vindateehajeevastudaivikah**

**Meaning:**

Here, (in this world) some rare individual with auspicious virtues or qualities attains Supreme Happiness (of the Self) which is beyond bondage and liberation.

**Ahamapetakam nijavibhAnakam**  
**Mahadidamtapo RamanaVAgiyam**

**Meaning:**

This Self-enquiry, the redeemer of ego is a great penance or austerity which reveals the Self-Light. This is the utterance of Ramana, the Seer of the Self-realized Truth.

OM SHANTHI! SHANTHI!!! SHANTHIHI!!!

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

# STORIES THAT AWAKEN

Shall I tell you a story? Ah! I can see that you are all ears! Well, everybody likes stories isn't it? Young or old, children or adults, male or female, almost everyone is interested in them. Usually, the story sessions happen in the night, just before going to sleep, when as children our grandparents or parents told us a story. Now, as adults we read them quite relaxed, lying on the bed at bedtime, which eventually give us all a good night's sleep. But the stories I am going to tell you will not put you to sleep but instead, kindle your intellect and awaken you. These are the stories with a spiritual content that stir your soul and raise your conscience.

## THE PRAYER

(A Sufi story)

One day, Moses was walking in the mountains on his own when he saw a shepherd in the distance. The man was on his knees with his hands spread out in the sky, praying. Moses was delighted. But when he got closer, he was equally stunned to hear the shepherd's prayer.

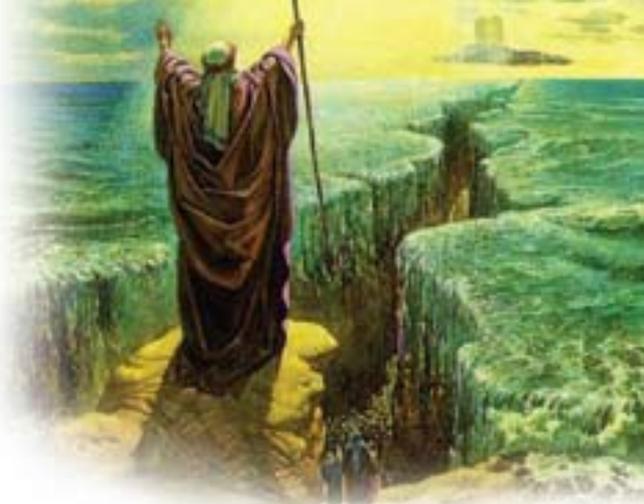
"Oh, my beloved God, I love Thee more than Thou can know. I will do anything for Thee, just say the word. Even if Thou asked me to slaughter the fattest sheep in my flock in Thy name, I would do so without hesitation. Thou would roast it and put its fat tail in Thou rice to make it tastier."

Moses inched towards the shepherd listening attentively.

"Afterwards I would wash Thy feet and clean Thy ears and pick Thy lice for Thee. That is how much I love Thee."

Having heard enough, Moses interrupted the shepherd yelling, "Stop, you ignorant man! What do you think you are doing? Do you think God eats rice? Do you think He has feet for you to wash? This is not prayer. It is sheer blasphemy."

Dazed and ashamed, the shepherd apologized repeatedly and promised to pray as decent people did. Moses taught him several prayers that afternoon. Then he went on his way, utterly pleased with himself.



But that night Moses heard a voice. It was God's.

"Oh, Moses, what have you done? You scolded that poor shepherd and failed to realize how dear he was to me. He might not be saying the right things in the right way, but he was sincere. His heart was pure and his intentions good. His words might have been blasphemy to your ears, but to me they were sweet blasphemy."

Moses immediately understood his mistake. The next day, early in the morning, he went back to the mountains to see the shepherd. He found him praying again, except this time he was praying in the way he was instructed. In his determination to get the prayer right, he was stammering, bereft the excitement and passion of his earlier prayer. Regretting what he has done to him, Moses patted the shepherd's back and said, "My friend, I was wrong. Please forgive me. Keep praying in your own way. That is more precious in God's eyes."

The shepherd was astonished to hear this, but even deeper was his relief. Nevertheless, he did not want to go back to his old prayers. Neither did he abide by the formal prayers that Moses taught him. He had now found a new way of communicating with God. Though satisfied and blessed in his naïve devotion, he was now past that stage – beyond his sweet blasphemy.

**Do not judge the way other people connect to God. Each has his own way and his own prayer. God does not take us at our word. He looks deep into our hearts. It is not the ceremonies or rituals that make a difference but whether our hearts are sufficiently pure or not.**

- A Seeker



## DEVI...

### Yaa Devi...

*You are symbol of strength, peace, love and motherhood...*

*You are the supreme power and mother of all...*

*We confide in you for your love and protection...*

### Yaa Devi...

*Be the source of strength and compassion in our life...*

*Be the source of learning and unlearning in our life...*

*Be the source of spreading love and peace in the world...*

### Yaa Devi...

*Be the direction of our life...*

*Be the path of truth in which we walk...*

*Be the power to transcend our life from untruth to truth...*

### Yaa Devi...

*Give us vigor to fight the untruth...*

*Give us forgiveness to forgive all wrong...*

*Give us modesty to be what our true nature is...*

*Give us the thirst to achieve what we ought to achieve...*

### Yaa Devi...

*We bow down at your lovely feet...*

*In gratitude and reverence...*

*In peace and love...*

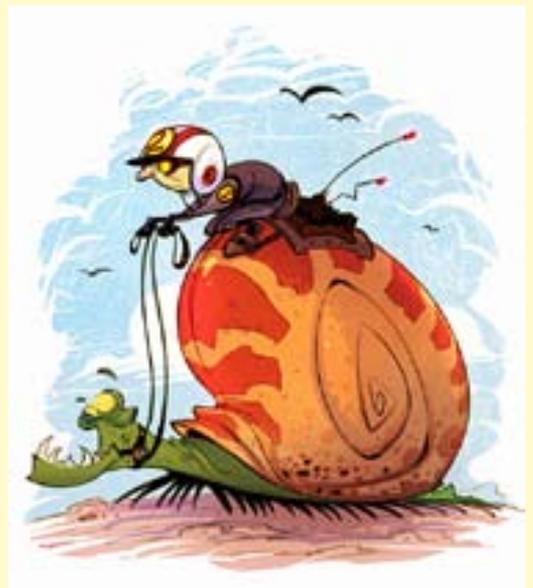
*And in complete surrender...*

**- Devi**

## *An Insight*

IF FOR ANY  
REASON, ONE  
FEELS THE FAST  
LANE OF LIFE  
IS THE ONLY  
LANE, THEN IT IS  
NECESSARY FOR  
THAT ONE TO  
LEARN FROM THE  
SNAIL.

**- Esther Ebenuah**



## *My first encounter with*

# **SWAMI DAMODARANANDAJI OF RAMAKRISHNA ORDER**

It was the month of May 2012. I was just entering in the R K MATH, Ulsoor, Bangalore. I saw one elderly Swamiji walking with two sticks along with two other Swamis of the Order. I gave my salutations to all of them. Then this elderly Swamiji asked me, "What is your name?" I just replied – "I am Lokendra Singh." Then he further asked me, "What do you do? Do you study?" I said, "No, Swamiji, I am working". He again asked me "What kind of job?" "I am working in the Defence," I replied.

The moment he heard this, he became very happy and exclaimed, "Oh! You are a military man, very good, very good". I usually do not ask any Swamiji their name, but that day I don't know what happened to me when I just asked him- "What is your name, Swamiji?" He said, "You want to know my name?" I quietly said, "Yes, Swamiji". He replied, "Swami Damodar-ananda". He spoke his name by dividing his name's letters so that I could easily understand it. Then he instructed me to go into the temple and then we would talk.

I did my salutations to the holy trio and came back to meet Swami Damodaranandaji Maharaj. But he was walking a little ahead, and hence I decided to go into the library. While I was going up the stairs, Swami exclaimed to another Swamiji by pointing at me – "See he is a military man". I again did Pranam from where I was. He then told me to go and read books. Generally I read books with my full concentration and focus but that day I don't know what Swami Damodaranandaji did to me that I was only thinking about him even while reading.

His face was extraordinarily radiant, his smile was genuine, and his every word was dipped in the ocean of love. His personality was magnetic. I was stunned that I was constantly thinking of him although I had never met him in life hitherto. Even after reaching my residence, my thoughts were overwhelmed by him. So I was eagerly waiting to meet him the next day. I felt an indescribable attraction towards him. He just mesmerized me. My first encounter with Swamiji left a tremendous impact on my mind. You might be wondering why I am writing so much about him when my interaction with him was so little. But my friends, that's what is spiritual magnetism and what it is to be in holy company. My first encounter with Swami Damodarananda was an illustration of just that.

**- Lokendra Singh**



**Swami Damodaranandaji**

# Raksha Bandhan

The Bond of Protection



## Rani Karnavati and Emperor Humayun

A popular narrative that is centered around Rakhi is that of Rani Karnavati of Chittor and Mughal Emperor Humayun which dates back to 1535 CE. When Rani Karnavati, the widowed queen of the king of Chittor realized that she could not defend against the invasion by the Sultan of Gujarat, Bahadur Shah, she sent a Rakhi to Emperor Humayun. Touched, the Emperor immediately set off with his troops to defend Chittor. Humayun arrived too late, and Bahadur Shah managed to sack the Rani's fortress. Karnavati, along with a reported 13,000 other women in the fortress, carried out *Jauhar* (self-immolation) on March 8, 1535, killing themselves to avoid dishonor. When he reached Chittor, Humayun evicted Bahadur Shah from fort and restored the kingdom to Karnavati's son, Vikramjit Singh.

## Rabindranath Tagore & Rakhi

Tagore's vision of celebrating *Raksha bandhan* was totally different. According to him Rakhi was not only a festival of the siblings but it was a celebration of mankind and of humanity. In 1905, the British Empire decided to divide Bengal on the basis of caste and religion. At the time, Rabindranath Tagore arranged a ceremony to celebrate *Raksha bandhan* to strengthen the bond of love and togetherness between the Hindus and the Muslims of Bengal. He used the platform of *Raksha bandhan* to spread the feeling of brotherhood. It was his vision to spread the nationalist spirit among people from different ethnic groups.

*Raksha Bandhan ...a promise of love*

between a brother and a sister

... spreads Peace and Harmony All Around!!!!

**Raksha Bandhan** is a Hindu festival primarily observed in India, Mauritius and Nepal. It celebrates the relationship of a brother and a sister. Raksha Bandhan symbolizes a sister's love and prayers for her brother's well-being and brother's lifelong vow to protect her. The festival falls on the full moon day (Shravan Poonnima).

## Krishna and Draupadi

In an incident in the epic Mahabharata, Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas once tore a strip of silk off her sari and tied it around Krishna's wrist to staunch the bleeding from a battlefield wound. Krishna was touched by her action and declared her as His sister. Krishna repaid the debt of the love in the assembly of King Dhritarashtra when Yudhisthira lost her to the Kauravas in gambling. At that time, Krishna indefinitely extended her Sari through Divine intervention, so it could not be removed, to save her honor in the "*Cheer-Haran*". This is how He honored His *Raksha bandhan* vow towards Draupadi.

## Yama and the Yamuna

According to another legend, *Raksha bandhan* was a ritual followed by Lord Yama (the Lord of Death) and his sister Yamuna, (the river in northern India). Yamuna tied a Rakhi to Yama and bestowed immortality. Yama was so moved by the serenity of the occasion that he declared that whoever gets a Rakhi tied from his sister and promises her protection, will become immortal.

# A friend in need- is truly a friend indeed!



Once, during my first year in the new school, where everybody was new to me, I had but one friend, who I was not yet sure, was trustworthy or not. Suddenly I fell sick with malaria. This boy hadn't known me for more than a week. We were just fast friends. He calls me suddenly, on the second or third day of my absence, and asks me the reason for my absence in school. After I tell him what happened, he didn't say, "Oh you poor, poor boy!" or any such thing, he just said, "Oh, ok! Are you well enough to take down notes and assignments?" That was his reply. A person in no way related to me; he is just an acquaintance. What was his obligation to call me? He could have left me to rot in hell. But no, he thought of helping me out.

On a lighter vein, I actually felt good to be missed, though I was a new student in the school.

A friend is a person who can tell you on your face, when you are doing something wrong. A friend is one who is always there for you, other than your parents. A friend is never jealous of what you have and can achieve. A friend is a person who is delighted to see you after a long time, wherever you come from, be it from a different city or a country or even the next street. A friend is a person who always supports you in your good decisions, but advises you when you are making a wrong one. A friend is someone you can count on. Friends are ever ready to assist you in making mischief. Most of all, friends are those whom you trust.

I could go on the whole day about what friends are. But the feeling of friendship is something that cannot be conveyed through words. It can only be felt. The funny thing is, sometimes even our

parents want to be our friends, so that we can talk to them freely. This itself shows that, even if we are not our true selves in front of our parents, we are free with our friends.

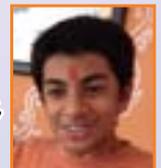
There are so many great people, who are known for their friendship. Take our Gods themselves, for instance. Krishna was a friend to all. But do you know why He loved His friend Sudhama so much? It's because He had the character that a friend should have. In the end, even when Sudhama brought just a small packet of puffed rice for Krishna, the king of Dwaraka, the latter ate it with such joy as if He were eating a sumptuous meal. That is the power of friendship.

Now you must be thinking as to why this guy is boring me with some information about friends. But I haven't been telling you all these things about friends for you to compare your friends with what I have written about. I have given you an example of what kind of a friend one should be. If one truly has all these qualities, everyone will want to be your friend.

But you should be careful in choosing your friends too, because, at first, some people might behave very nice with you and then they show their true form. Sometimes it so happens that, unknowingly you choose a bad person as your friend and so you are also considered a bad person due to the company you keep. So be a good friend and choose the good ones.

*Jahan se bhi aaya  
tera dost,  
Dost ko salaam karo.*

**N. Rohan C. Govind**  
Class 9,  
GT Aloha Vidya Mandir,  
Chennai



It is our daily good habit, or we can say a ritual, to take a bath. We do this in order to keep ourselves clean and neat, but wait, this is only external. Internally are we clean? Are our thoughts beautiful? It is our internal beauty that really counts and not external make-up, in the process of becoming a good human being. A soup with the following ingredients helps us to cultivate inner beauty:

- ✓ A bowl of meditation is very essential in order to cleanse our mind and heart and make them pure and free of all dust and germs (bad thoughts).
- ✓ 3 cups of spirituality helps us to walk with a scientific approach and thinking, so that we can rightfully differentiate between right and wrong.
- ✓ 1 cup of common sense is needed to give taste to the soup (life). Then only can we enjoy life to the fullest and live wisely.
- ✓ 2 teaspoons full of honesty plus continuous stirring stops the formation of lumps in the soup.
- ✓ Lastly, a pinch of self-dependency & responsibility is quite necessary to make the soup complete & worth consuming.

“That’s the thing about inner beauty: Unlike Physical beauty, which grabs the spotlight for itself, inner beauty shines on everyone, catching them, holding them in its embrace, making them more beautiful too.”

If we have this soup regularly, then we are bound to become healthy; not only internally but also externally. However, care must be taken to drink this soup in a clean environment so that we enjoy the soup to the fullest.

By following the path of “**Satyam Shivam Sundaram**”, we can attain our goal i.e. cultivating inner beauty and becoming a good human being. If we work hard and put in real efforts while sowing the seeds, transplanting, watering, manuring etc., then our tree is sure to produce sweet fruits. This provides an instance for the inscription on our National Emblem- “**Satya MEva Jayate**”- “Truth alone triumphs”. When we obtain sweet fruits, we are sure to be winners; and when we are winners, we will have attained true inner beauty and joy. Then, even if we die physically, we will be remembered forever for our thoughts and ideas. In this way, we will live forever.



- **Apoorva Bakshi**  
1<sup>st</sup> Year MBBS Student

# BEING HUMAN

*It* was a Monday and after a weekend freak out everybody seemed to be getting ready to attend their respective office or college or school. Everyone was in a hurry; either using their own conveyance or trying to catch a bus to reach their respective destinations in time. Commuting is a time consuming exercise for a few people who spend more time in travel than in college or office, for that matter. Traffic signals a break on our thoughts as the vehicle stops with the sound of the sudden break. We start cursing ourselves for not being punctual in leaving our homes and later excuse ourselves by attributing the delay to traffic jams. During these signal breaks, people seeking alms or roadside vendors suddenly emerge from nowhere before us, further testing our patience. In the meantime, an ambulance tries to make its way through the busy signal, where the vehicles have come to a grinding halt.

The majority of us see this situation almost daily on city roads. How we react to this situation speaks our mind. A kindhearted person may place a coin or a currency note in the hands of those seeking alms; few of us who are in the car, watching the growing vehicular traffic through the car window, just roll it down to make a purchase- whether wanted or unwanted. Few of us just raise eyebrows on the honking of an ambulance, not realizing the fact that the person in the ambulance is battling for life and needs urgent attention and care. His people are in a greater hurry than all of us who are waiting for the signal to turn green.

A guy tries to cross over from the left and the rider before him gazes at this fellow with all the anger in his eyes. If both their eyes met, in no time a heated exchange of words would take place, leading to more trouble. For a fortunate few, a beggar or a vendor or an ambulance does not make any difference. They will wholeheartedly give alms to a beggar or make a purchase from a vendor or give way to the ambulance. The place, time, situation is the same but why do some people react by losing temper, picking up arguments wasting not only their own time but also others?

Just visualize for a while, the state of mind of a man who gives way to the emergency vehicle and the simple grateful smile he gets in return. Swami Vivekananda says that real strength comes from helping others. Similarly, this man who gave way would for sure, find his day fulfilled. A simple reciprocation of happiness by the vendor after a purchase radiates through his face. A sigh of relief in the face of the rider when he realizes that the guy before him just moved aside to make way for him, would make the heart lighter.

It is not that we are changing their lives forever, by such acts. Instead we are changing ourselves by learning to be a better human being. People donate generously during a natural calamity. Some donate in lakhs, and some others just a few rupees. Small drops make a big ocean. Your contribution through service or money or guidance would collectively make a noticeable difference, for sure. Being born a human, the only creature on this earth, to think, to distinguish, to realize, to support, to learn, to grow mentally and mature, we should lend a hand to those who can make use of our support, our presence and our skills.

*- Koti Rajasekhar M.*



# Making sense of Purusharthas

Anyone curious to understand the Hindu way of life will first come across the term 'Purushartha' or the four goals of a human being. They are said to be - *Dharma* (Righteousness), *Artha* (Prosperity), *Kama* (Desire) and *Moksha* (liberation).

Most explanations of the *Purusharthas* will indicate that the purpose of the four goals of human life is to recognize a balance between material and spiritual success. But how can one be both truly material and at the same time truly spiritual?

It seemed logical to the mind to understand that one should lead a *Dharmic* life in order to attain the ultimate liberation. But how can desire and prosperity that are considered detrimental to one's spiritual progress, have anything to do with achieving ultimate freedom? Both these terms indicate bondage and self-centeredness, then how do they show the way to the ultimate *Purushartha* – liberation?

To take one step further back, while the importance of *Dharma* in one's life is more or less clear, what is the hype about *Moksha*? What is the motivation that drives one to no longer desire human birth and taste all the aromas that it offers?

A little scrutiny on the nature of human life sheds some light on the injunction of *Purusharthas*.

*Dharma* or righteousness is the pursuit of doing the 'right thing' in any given situation. How do we decide what the 'right thing' to do is? With age, experience and introspection, we can develop the maturity to pursue our *Dharma* correctly. It is the pursuit of aligning oneself to one's specific duties and his or her true calling in life.

*Kama* (desire) seems to be the pleasure one seeks either physically, emotionally, intellectually or otherwise. So according to this understanding, the desire for ice-cream or for playing a game or the pursuit for physical love are all equally *Kama*.

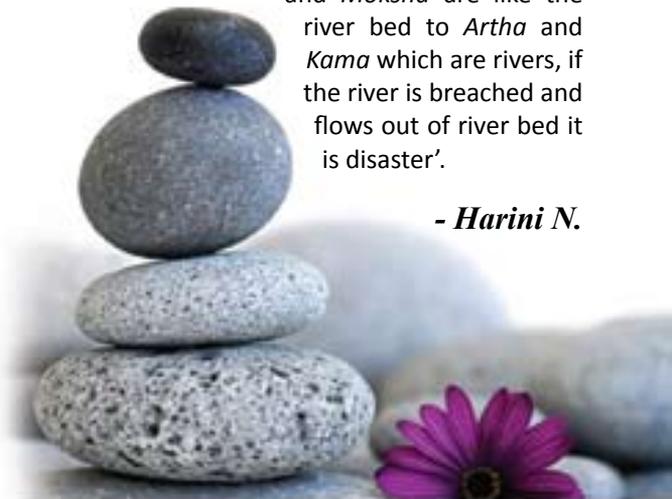
*Artha* is mostly described as wealth and prosperity. But according to Swami Dayanand Saraswati, *Artha* can be security in any form; be it material wealth, intellectual security or emotional security. Something that makes you feel protected and confident; like an insurance policy.

The pursuit of *Kama* and *Artha* give us a field of experience and a good taste of all that this world has to offer. The repeated experiences of *Kama* and *Artha* in several lifetimes, and the suffering thereof; the consequent realization that nothing lasts forever, are probably the key drivers and motivation towards seeking liberation from their hold on us. The lives of spiritual giants like Tulsidas, St. Augustine, Valmiki etc. show us that we humans who crave and thrive on worldly attachments, power and possessions, eventually will realize the futility thereof and redirect it to desire and acquire only the supreme spirit.

Thus, *Kama* and *Artha* are important stepping stones on the path to spiritual upliftment. This *Moksha* is perhaps not a transcendental destination called 'Heaven' where one enjoys eternal bliss. *Moksha* seems more of a state of being wherein one is liberated from the complex field of likes and dislikes, sorrow and joy, hate and love, fears and insecurities.

It is rightly said in the scriptures that '*Dharma* and *Moksha* are like the river bed to *Artha* and *Kama* which are rivers, if the river is breached and flows out of river bed it is disaster'.

- *Harini N.*





(Contd. from last issue)

**N**otice the new forms to indicate this aspect of using a tool:

यानम् – यानेन  
संस्कृतम् – संस्कृतेन  
हस्तः – हस्तेन  
स्यूतः – स्यूतेन  
द्विचक्रिका – द्विचक्रिकया  
श्रद्धा – श्रद्धया  
लेखनी – लेखन्या  
कर्तरी – कर्तर्या

**Write down the proper form of the word in the parentheses as in:**

१. महिला: (आभरणम्) \_\_\_\_\_ सन्तुष्यन्ति।
२. सर्वे मानवाः (सन्तोषः) \_\_\_\_\_ जीवन्तु।
३. अहं (नासिका) \_\_\_\_\_ श्वासं स्वीकरोमि।
४. भवान् (मन्त्रः) \_\_\_\_\_ अभिषेकं करोतु।
५. सः (अङ्कनी) \_\_\_\_\_ चित्रं रचयति।
६. मानवः (विद्या) \_\_\_\_\_ विनयं प्राप्नोति।
७. कर्मकरी (सम्मार्जनी – broom) \_\_\_\_\_ गृहं शुभ्रं करोति।
८. माता (चमसः) \_\_\_\_\_ क्षीरं पाययति।

**Answers:**

१. आभरणेन, २. सन्तोषेण, ३. नासिकया, ४. मन्त्रेण,
५. अङ्कन्या, ६. विद्यया, ७. सम्मार्जन्या, ८. चमसेन

## इवलङ्करोतु इङ्करोतु = ठिङ्करोतु

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

### The tool for doing a thing

**Translate the following into Samskritam:**

1. He takes bath with soap (फेनकम्).
2. This machine runs with electric cell (विद्युत्कोशः).
3. Boy is hitting (ताडयति) the dog with stick (दण्डः).
4. We get energy (शक्तिः) by food (अन्नम्).
5. Policeman (आरक्षकः) bound (बद्धवान्) the thief by/with chain (शृङ्खला).
6. I came by a nearer route (समीपमार्गः).
7. He cries (आक्रन्दनं करोति) with pain (बाधा).
8. She lifted the phone by his right hand (दक्षिण-हस्तः).
9. He praised (श्लाघितवान्) the Maharaja by a Sloka.
10. She hit her husband with the ladle (दर्वी).

**Answers:**

१. सः फेनकेन स्नानं कृतवान्।
२. एतद् यन्त्रं विद्युत्कोशेन चलति।
३. बालकः शुनकं दण्डेन ताडयति।
४. वयं अन्नेन शक्तिं प्राप्नुमः।
५. आरक्षकः चोरं शृङ्खलया बद्धवान्।
६. अहं समीपमार्गेण आगतवान्/आगरवती।
७. सः बाधया आक्रन्दनं करोति।
८. सा दक्षिणहस्तेन दूरवाणीम् उत्थापितवती।
९. सः महाराजं श्लोकेन श्लाघितवान्।
१०. सा पतिं दर्व्या ताडितवती।

(To be contd in the next issue)



**Turn around their future!**

**For ₹ 1 Lakh**

**Your donation will last a lifetime**

***Appeal for Sponsor-a-Child Corpus Fund***

Nachiketa Tapovan runs a free Vidya Mandir for 230 children from poor families. They receive all-round, holistic academic education in English medium (LKG to 10th std.), including **arts, crafts, spiritual and culture lessons.**

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

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

- ✓ *Being a charitable institution, we earn an interest of 9% annually from a Govt Bank. The annual interest on 1 Lakh will fully support one child's education for one year.*
- ✓ *Your donation will come a long way by meeting our expenses that include Teacher's Salaries, Uniforms, Educational material, Building Maintenance and Housekeeping, Salaries for support and administration staff, Field trips and Excursions, Celebrations and Extra Curricular activities.*
- ✓ *At present, we only have 36 corpus sponsorships, help us reach all of our 240 children!*
- ✓ *Bring hope and light into their lives – as a group or individual or in the name of a loved one.*
- ✓ *Donors receive annual report card and are welcome to interact with our children.*
- ✓ **We express our thanks to Corpus Donors by permanently inscribing their names on our recognition board in the school.**





## Launch of THE GREEN PRINT at Saptarni

It was a bright sunny morning on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013. Swamiji and Mataji sitting under a huge temple tree and the song 'Bloom' by Akhil was the apt setting for the launch of 'The Green Print', an initiative for planting trees to bring a positive difference to our surroundings by making it sustainable.

Swamiji started by asking us to maintain two minute silence and contemplate on the Uttarakhand tragedy and reasons for such calamities. He then explained the reason for choosing the Mahaboobnagar district to build the Ashram and how this initiative will have a direct impact on the lives of the people there. Several years ago when the Ashram project was being undertaken people were not supportive of the cause but the continuous work in terms of Health Camps, Spoken English, Computer Classes and Personality Development Programs have made a huge difference and now they are willing to get involved in this initiative.

On the 6th of July, mass plantations of about 25000 trees will be done in and around the villages surrounding the Ashram. School children and youth have come forward to help with the digging of pits and transporting the saplings. We plan to take this to one lac trees in the coming months. The focus will be on making sure they grow healthy and each of the saplings survive and grow into a tree rather than only planting more number of saplings.

Mataji gave us a spiritual aspect of nature where man needs to have a sense of gratitude while dealing with nature rather than that of conquering it. This brings a sense of harmony within ourselves and our surroundings. She explained the need to maintain this crucial yet delicate balance in nature.

An appeal to all with folded hands do join us in this initiative. Let us take these steps to do our bit for Mother Earth. Let us leave a Green Print.



Sri Ashok Vir helps Swamiji and Mataji in doing the honours



Swamiji and Mataji address the gathering



Akhil's wonderful performance on his guitar



Gautam and Purvvi explain THE GREEN PRINT project



Ramya enthralls the audience with her beautiful kirtans

# Vanamahotsav

**The Green Print** initiative was celebrated on the 6th of July on the occasion of Vanamahotsav at the Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram. Almost 500 people from various villages in the adjoining area came to the Ashram to be part of this momentous occasion. Out of these, almost 250 were school children from the various schools from the surrounding villages. Many volunteers from Hyderabad also participated in this mass tree plantation drive. The chief guest for the event was Sri Linga Rao DFO, Mahaboobnagar.

These numbers do not reflect the intensity and depth of involvement of those who were present. As Swamiji mentioned, each person present on that day, especially the children, were each equal to 150 people.

Swamiji in his most apt and inspiring speech, urged especially the children to realize that they have a very crucial role to play in making 'The Green Print' a resounding success, An initiative of not only planting trees but also protecting, nurturing and sustaining them.

Mataji, in her short but sublime talk, inspired one and all to realize the divinity in each and every tree and how important the trees are to ensure that we build a balanced and sustainable future...a future, where the Mother Earth is respected and worshipped, instead of being ill-treated and depleted.

The children of Nachiketa Tapovan school, enacted the most beautiful and heart touching dance, depicting the significance and role of a tree in our everyday lives, clearly bringing home the point that what we are doing unto our environment, we are doing unto ourselves.

It is not possible to do justice to the magic that was created in the Ashram on the 6th of July, in such few words. So watch this space for a much more detailed and delightful article in the next issue of Nachiketanjali.

- *Gautam Vir*



Children from various schools eagerly watch the performances



Sri Linga Rao, DFO, planting a sapling



Gautam Vir watering a sapling



## *Inviting writers for Nachiketanjali!*

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

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

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



### **Please note ...**

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

#### **“Inviting Writers-Nachiketanjali”**

**Nachiketa Tapovan**

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

# 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)	₹ 60,000/-
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)
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## NACHIKETA'S GO GREEN CLUB...

*We convey our thanks to all the participants of WOW initiative. You helped us earn Rs. 17,476/- in the month of June and saved Mother Earth by recycling about 1941 kgs of plastic and paper waste material.*



# Invitation

We invite you for our  
**INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS**  
on 15th August 2013 at 9am.

Venue:  
**Nachiketa Tapovan**  
# 70, Phase-1, Kavuri Hills, Madhapur, Hyderabad.

## Festivals & Events of August 2013



# VANAMAHOTSAV

@ Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram

6th July 2013



*Vidya Mandir students present a skit on saving trees*



*Tiny Tots of Vedavyasa Vidya Mandir amuse the audience*



*Swamiji addresses the gathering*



*Swamiji & Sri Linga Rao, DFO, Mahaboobnagar, planting a sapling at the Ashram*



*Mataji leads the villagers for plantation*



*Mataji planting a sapling*



*Enthusiastic villagers participate in plantation*



*Mataji supervises the plantation*



“We forget that the water cycle and the life cycle are one.”

- Jacques Cousteau



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