

Nachiketanjali

...an offering



Vol: 4

Issue: 1

September: 2013

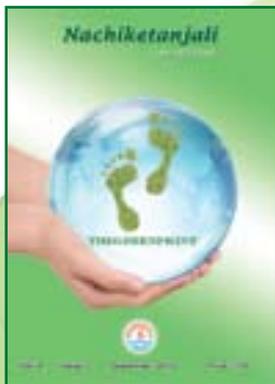
Price: ₹ 10

इति गणेशाय नमःस्तुते



Contents

	Editorial	2	Teachers' Day	18	
	Live A Life That Matters	3	Happiness	20	
	Krupaluji	4	Smile goes miles	22	
	Who is a True Guru?	5	The Greatest Gift	23	
	Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara	6	Mirror Mind	24	
	Have rAga-bhakti	7	Save Fuel	25	
	Forward!	8	Soulful Music	26	
	Vivekanjali	10	Education	28	
	Lessons of life	11	Naturopathy	29	
	The Green Print	12	Sanskrit Lesson - Forty one	30	
	The Power of Humility	14	Thanks to Donors	31	
	The First University in the World	15	Guru Purnima 2013	32	
	God's Gift	16	How you can help	35	
	Superstitions	17	Invitation	36	



'The Green Print' is a small effort on the part of Nachiketa Tapovan to restore forests/Green cover, to increase 'Green Foot Print' and reduce 'Carbon Footprint'. To have a more balanced and inclusive growth which becomes even more important, even more necessary, even more meaningful.

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., Purvvi B.

Editorial & Publication Office

Nachiketa Tapovan

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

email:nachiketanjali1@gmail.com

website:www.nachiketatapovan.org

www.facebook.com/nachiketatapovan

Editorial

Struggle ... is the name of the game

Struggle ... that's the name of the game. Our struggle starts right from the moment we are born. Struggle for survival ... Our journey starts from there ... and it is an endless journey that carries forward until our death and one might think the struggle ends there, but it is an emphatic NO. No matter how successful we are, the struggle continues, for our desires are reborn with a new form.

Even a rich person is not exempted from struggle. Initially he struggles to attain and then struggles to retain. Fame is also not easy to handle. It is daunting. The more we have, the more we need and the more we have to lose. Succumbing to pressures, a few reach a stage where they prepare to end their lives ... they feel they have had enough of this struggle and think all struggles can be put to an end when they give up this life.

But will death end the pain? There is no documented proof that death spells oblivion or ends our problems.

Life always alternates between good and bad. One follows the other. Situations in life may make it appear like the setting sun. But won't the sun rise again bringing colour and light into our lives? Why not look over the hill at the rising sun just waiting to break through the dark clouds? The darkest hour is just before dawn. There is no greater cowardice than enjoying the light and quitting the stage when the light fades.

God's gift of life should never be kicked away proving we are not worth it. Our scriptures state that people who quit life voluntarily without learning their life lessons are bound to be born to such lives again till the lessons are learnt.

So let us learn our lessons though it means accepting life with brickbats, along with bouquets. Life is bigger than death after all! And instead of struggling for the fleeting worldly pleasures let us struggle to know our True Self, which is the secret source of birth and death.

- Subhadra K.

Live A Life That Matters

**Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end.
There will be no more sunrises,
no minutes, hours, or days.**

**All the things you collected,
whether treasured or forgotten,
will pass to someone else.
Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance.**

**It will not matter what you owned
or what you were owed.
Your grudges, resentments, frustrations and jealousies will finally disappear.**

**So too, your hopes, ambitions, plans and to-do lists will expire. The wins
and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.**

**It won't matter where you came from
or on what side of the tracks you lived, at the end.**

**It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant. Even your gender
and skin color will be irrelevant.**

**So what will matter?
How will the value of your days be measured?**

**What will matter is not what you bought,
but what you built;
not what you got,
but what you gave.**

**What will matter is not your success,
but your significance.**

**What will matter is not what you learned
but what you taught.**

**What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice
that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example.**

What will matter is not your competence, but your character.

**What will matter is not how many people you knew, but how many feel a
lasting loss when you're gone.**

**What will matter is not your memories,
but the memories that live in those who loved you.
What will matter is how long you will be remembered,
by whom and for what.**

**Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident. It's not a matter of
circumstance but of choice. Choose to live a life that matters.**

- Michael Josephson



Krupaluji...

A Teacher, A Great Task Master ...

When I first met this simple looking person, I knew I had met a pious soul but was unaware of his full potential. Today, when I look back at our short journey and the limited time that we spent together, it started growing into a great spiritual bond with one and only one desire in mind, to uplift the masses. We hardly had any discussion about our rich culture and heritage or chalked out master plans for that matter, yet whenever I look at him, I see his heart throbbing incessantly for Mother Bharati. I strongly feel that he is a silent communicator.

He was working as a software engineer in USA, with a lucrative salary but something kept knocking at his heart, asking him to come back to Mother Bharati and take up something that can have a permanent impact on the society. He



Sri Krupaluji

found his passion that can bring everyone together, bind everyone together... the language, language of Gods, the most ancient language, Samskrit. He served Samskrit Bharati as secretary for a long time and then decided to resign the post and work as a full time volunteer to spread Samskrit in a better way. Since official work was restricting his passion, his decision to work at grass root level made a huge difference. That impact was seen recently when he conducted a 10-day residential camp in Hyderabad, where more than 300 Samskrit lovers had attended the Samskrit Camp. This is just a small gesture compared to the work that is going on, on a regular basis; from conducting Samskrit classes to awareness drives at various places.

He doesn't want to stop there but sincerely wants to help out every needy individual or organization that is striving for the upliftment of the society. His idea is to see that people are benefited. He is a fantastic teacher, a great task-master, a man of discipline, a man with a vision and mission, and above all a man of sacrifice. If somebody asks me to show a *Sanyasi* in ordinary clothes, I shall point my finger towards Krupaluji without second thought.

Dear One, for me, the one who breathes passion lives forever and I can see this simple looking person, while donating a huge amount, loves to keep his identity a secret and present himself in such a humble way that even great persons of the caliber of self-made masters would love to open their arms to hug him, thinking that they are getting an opportunity to embrace a living entity of sacrifice. I know Masters are born and never made, I know even sacrifice is one of the highest expressions of Divinity and not taught anywhere. But this person teaches the highest truth through his humble and simple submission while submitting at the feet of Mother Bharati. I always felt as if he is a live wire of sacrifice with

I love you all for your contribution towards needy ones. I love you all for your passion and above all I love you all for going beyond, thinking beyond - beyond, where everything gets united.



Who is a True Guru?

A true Guru is the one who is beyond miracles, name and fame. He frees you from ignorance and illusion. A true guru will never misguide you; He takes you on the right path.

You may think that in this day and age it is difficult to find a Guru like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. But if you are prepared, if you have a strong and burning desire to experience self-realization, it is very much possible to find one. God will certainly guide us. He will never leave us in the midst of Maya. When the right time comes God will take the Guru's form and take you across this ocean of illusion.

- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri

an infectious spirituality and whoever comes in contact with him gets affected spiritually.

Hats off to such souls! Dear One! Let there be many such souls ... working ceaselessly for the welfare of the society, working for the needy ones without discriminating them by gender, caste, creed or religion, looking upon them as the highest expression of Divinity. I love you all for your contribution towards needy ones. I love you all for your passion and above all I love you all for going beyond, thinking beyond - beyond where everything gets united.

Sanskrit is his passion, Sanskrit is his life, Sanskrit is his breath. Such souls have chosen their path, are living their dreams, struggling on their way but consciously accepting consequences as well.

Once Swami Vivekananda said, ***"Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life, think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success ... if we really want to be blessed, and make others blessed, we must go deeper."***

Dear one!

Now it is your turn! Today is far and tomorrow is the wildest dream!

If not now, then, it is never!

All the best! With love!

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri





Yogin-Ma

(Yogindra Mohini Biswas)

Austerity is the source of strength and also the means to liberation. Spiritual life and the practice of austerity always go together. Yogin-Ma's life is a glowing example of the ancient Indian ideal of womanhood and austerity. She was one of Sri Ramakrishna's prominent women disciples. Yogin-Ma was born on January 16th, 1851 to Prasanna Kumar Mittra, a well-known physician and specialist in midwifery. When she was seven she was married to Ambika Charan Biswas.



Yogin-Ma

Although child marriage was then the custom of society, Yogin-Ma went to live with her husband only after she had grown up. She was disappointed to discover that her husband was a drunkard and libertine. She lived with him for a few years and tried in vain to change his life. Disgusted with her husband's immoral life she returned to her parental home, with her daughter. She felt a great void in her mind. As she was passing through this mental storm, Divine grace in the form of Sri Ramakrishna opened up a new life for her.

She visited the Master frequently, listening to Him clear the doubts of His devotees and watched Him in wonder as He experienced *Samadhi*. This established a strong devotion and her mind was with the Master even while she was performing her household duties. Master confirmed her family guru's *Mantram* and told her, "your chosen deity is in this place (pointing to His body). If you think of me, it will bring re-collectedness of your chosen deity". Whenever she sat for meditation she felt the Master's presence. Yogin-Ma also met Holy

Mother, and the two were immediately drawn to one another. Holy Mother said "Yogin is my Jaya (an attendant of the Goddess Durga) - my friend, companion and attendant" Yogin-Ma's association with the God intoxicated lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother created a spiritual hunger in her mind. She diverted most of her energy to spiritual pursuits, spending her day in worship, study, *Japam* and meditation.

One day Yogin-Ma said to the Master, "I want to call on God more and put my mind wholly on Him, but it is hard to control the mind. What shall I do?" Master replied, "Why don't you surrender to Him? Be like a cast-off leaf in a gale. A cast-off leaf lies on the ground and flies away as the wind carries it. Similarly, one should depend on God. Let the mind move as the power of Divine consciousness moves it".

In India, aristocratic women did not go out shopping, and they were carried in a palanquin if they wanted to go out. But Sri Ramakrishna made Yogin-Ma walk to the market to buy vegetables for Holy Mother to cook for the Master and devotees. Master said, "a person cannot be perfect as long as he is subject to shame, hatred, and fear".

After practicing spiritual disciplines for some time according to the Master's instructions she decided to move to Vrindaban with the blessings of Master and the Holy Mother. She was in Vrindaban when the Master passed away. Holy Mother joined her there. Their days passed in lamentation and they could hardly attend to their daily duties. One night Master appeared to

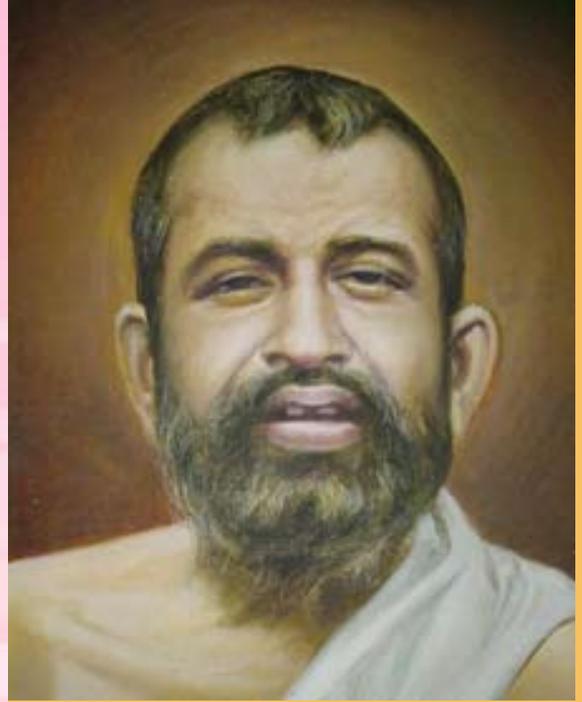
“Why don't you surrender to God? Be like a cast-off leaf in a gale. A cast-off leaf lies on the ground and flies away as the wind carries it. Similarly, one should depend on God. Let the mind move as the power of Divine consciousness moves it”.

them in a vision and said, “Why are you crying? I am here, where have I gone? It is just a change from one room to another, isn't that so?”

The disciples of the Master had great love and regard for Yogin-Ma. She treated them like her children. Holy Mother also had much regard for Yogin-Ma's judgement and would consult her not only in domestic matters but about spiritual affairs and even *mantras* as well.

Holy Mother's passing away created a tremendous void in Yogin-Ma's mind. She longed to join Her and the Master. During the last two years of Yogin-Ma's life she suffered from diabetes. She passed away on June 4th, 1924, at the Udbodhan house, next to the room where Holy Mother had lived. Swami Saradananda sat near her head at the time of her death and repeated Sri Ramakrishna's name, while a monk recited from the second chapter of the Bhagvad Gita. Once when Yogin-Ma asked the Master, “what will happen to us?” He replied, “The thousand-petaled lotus of your seventh plane (*Sahasrara*) will bloom at the time of your death. At the devotees last moment I shall appear before them and give liberation.”

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



Have rAga-bhakti

“God cannot remain unmoved if you have rAga-bhakti, that is, love of God, with passionate attachment to Him.

Do you know how fond God is of His devotee's love?

It is like the cow's fondness for fodder mixed with oil-cake.

The cow gobbles it down greedily.”

**Sri Ramakrishna
Paramahansa**



Forward!



Our inflatable raft bounced viciously and slapped the turbulent waters. The next instant, six of us were thrown into the Himalayan river- a splash of outrageous cold, an inky black darkness and the death-grip on my lungs ...

If you've ever been a victim of paralyzing fear, I'm sure you could relate to that!

It was about three months ago, in June, that we had gone river rafting in the Himalayas. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the sport- they sit you down in a bright blue raft and give you a 'safety briefing'. Then, you are dumped in the middle of a furious river with a cute yellow paddle in hand, just to make you feel like you're in control. But nobody knows if you're going to make it alive. Of course, they don't put that on the brochure!

I don't remember much about the 'safety briefing' that day, because I was too busy being Jack Dawson on the bow of the Titanic with my arms outstretched. Who needed instructions anyway? We were tough young animals bred in urban jungles, fighting daily battles on

Facebook. This river-thing was a piece of cake. And then, about 3 minutes after we had set sail, it happened.

We were in the river. The water forced itself unto me, onto me and into me. I only managed short gasps of breath on the surface, before the strong current pulled me down again. All I could see was muddy water and our raft growing smaller in the distance. It was easily the most petrified I had ever been. And if there was one thought on my mind, it was- THIS is going to be my next article for the magazine. If I get out of this alive (*fingers crossed*)!

Eventually, the river slowed down and the six of us caught up with the raft one by one. As the instructor pulled us back in, I feverishly thanked the good Lord for blessing me with this new life. Sitting down, I remembered that this was a 15 mile trip. "How much farther?" I asked the instructor, casually. "14 miles" he said, even more casually. He was doing this on purpose, I could tell. But I was going to play it cool until we were back on MY turf- dry land.

We followed the instructor's call to the letter when he called out 'FORWARD' or 'BACKWARD' or 'STOP', which meant 'stop rowing and grab the ropes'. Every time our raft neared the rapid turbulence, I grabbed the ropes and closed my eyes. All I could feel was my heart in my mouth. I didn't know why I was acting like this. I'm never so afraid of anything- are you? I mean, we're all normal people living normal lives. But is there that one thing in a dark corner that scares you too? Do you also close your eyes and grab the ropes every time?

There's nothing wrong with it, of course. Fear is what makes us human- whether you're scared of riding an elevator or flying in an airplane- whether you're afraid of a business plan crashing or yet another person breaking your heart- whether you fear drowning in a cold, unforgiving river or failing onstage with two thousand people watching - what are YOU afraid of?

I knew what I feared that day, as I sat shivering uncontrollably in the raft. The others around me seemed to be having a good time. They were even doing that weird thing with their face- what do you call it? Ah, yes- SMILING. I took a deep breath and gazed around- there were lush green hills kissing the open skies. A lazy wind swirled around us playfully, as the river gurgled below us like an excited school-kid. It was at that moment when I told myself, "I'm going to enjoy this". As if in reply, another (*gesture*) whirlpool appeared. This Mother Nature, I tell you!

As our raft danced dangerously, our instructor called out, "Steady? Steady? FORWARD!" The rapid wave lifted us into the air and we were face to face with the water- at a near-45 degree angle. At that instant, when time stopped still, I just heard one word- FORWARD- and with all my strength, I stabbed into the heart of my fear and pulled back; then again, and again. Three seconds later, we were past it! We had done it! We had won!

If I was to describe the ecstasy of that moment, that feeling I felt, it would be in the words of celebrated author Jack Canfield who said,

"Everything you want is on the other side of your fear". As the instructor cried out again, "FORWARD" I felt myself break into an unconditional smile. Ah, it felt good to be ALIVE!

Do you also have a little dark corner of your mind where a fear lurks in the shadows? Big or small, no matter, it's still fear. If you feel scared thinking about it, well that's a good sign. Because you're only going to feel that much more awesome when you face it and embrace it. Think about that!

That day, in the boat, grabbing my paddle and clenching my teeth, I shook my head and burst into another smile, realizing that I had learnt SO much about everything there was to learn on that ride, with just one word sung like a song- FORWARD!

And so, to you I say only this- FORWARD!

- Avinash Agarwal

Currently lives in the city of Mumbai.
He is a Writer by profession and passion.
e-mail: avi.794@gmail.com



What is needed, rather than running away or controlling or suppressing or any other resistance, is understanding fear; that means, watch it, learn about it, come directly into contact with it. We are to learn about fear, not how to escape from it.

- Jiddu Krishnamurti





Swami Vivekananda on Dhyana

Dhyana is spoken of and a few examples are given of what to meditate upon. Sit straight and look at the tip of your nose. Later on we shall come to know how that concentrates the mind,

how by controlling the two optic nerves one advances a long way towards the control of the arc of reaction, and so to the control of the will. Here are a few specimens of meditation. Imagine a lotus upon the top of the head, several inches up, with virtue as its centre, and knowledge as its stalk. The eight petals of the lotus are the eight powers of the Yogi. Inside, the stamens and pistils are renunciation. If the Yogi refuses the external powers he will come to salvation. So the eight petals of the lotus are the eight powers, but the internal stamens and pistils are extreme renunciation, the renunciation of all these powers. Inside of that lotus think of the Golden One, the Almighty, the Intangible, He whose name is Om, the Inexpressible, surrounded with effulgent light. Meditate on that.

Another meditation is given. Think of a space in your heart, and in the midst of that space think that a flame is burning. Think of that flame as your own soul and inside the flame is another effulgent light, and that is the Soul of your soul, God. Meditate upon that in the heart. Chastity, non-injury, forgiving even the greatest enemy, truth, faith in the Lord, these are all different Vrittis. Be not afraid if you are not perfect in all of these; work, they will come. He who has given up all attachment, all fear, and all anger, he whose whole soul has gone unto the Lord, he who has taken refuge in the Lord, whose heart has become purified, with whatsoever desire he comes to the Lord, He will grant that to him. Therefore worship Him through knowledge, love, or renunciation.

**Source: Complete works of
Swami Vivekananda,
Volume 1, Raja-Yoga in Brief**



Lessons of life ...

Looking back at life each day, the time I have spent, the life I have lived, makes me think some moments of life are so strikingly similar and some so different. But each moment in essence is learning; lessons of life. Life is a jigsaw puzzle and we try to find the missing pieces each day, reflecting on the bigger picture and figuring out the relevance of these pieces. These missing pieces turn out of the experiences that we choose or happen as we live. These experiences can be through interacting with someone known or unknown, while sitting alone and witnessing the rain embracing Mother Earth, a fleeting thought while falling asleep. Breathing meaning into these experiences brings out the beauty of life and strengthens the quality of learning we gain from these experiences.

However much we try to keep the purity of life with our learning, we tend to contaminate it with our many fears and insecurities. Each day we tend to gamble our efforts with thoughts of “what-ifs”. By pondering much on what might happen or doesn’t happen, we tend to focus more on the fears and lose sight of the entire essence of life. We can’t realise the worth and value of life till we let go these fears and insecurities. We happen to live with these emotions since we are unaware of these emotions being created in our mind. It clouds our mind so much that we start to believe it as the reality. It continues to live within us, eventually becoming part of who we are. Then, we become our biggest enemy. And all it takes to defeat those fears is to remember that by listening to the fears we are giving it power and by shunning it we become courageous.

Spending time in nature helps clear your mind, So, I cosy up in the balcony as often as possible to watch the birds dancing to the tune of nature. So carefree and spirited the birds seemed, devoid of any worries or what-if moments. I wonder if they have any insecurities like I do, may be not, otherwise how do you explain the joy they spread wherever they are. Deep in my thoughts, suddenly there’s a splash of water and I am completely immersed; immersed in the blessing of nature, letting myself lose in the shower of love and ecstasy. Yes, it was the Divine playing with me, whispering- ‘the beauty of the moment is in now not in what-ifs’. Yes, it was the Divine’s way of whispering to me - ‘you have nothing to lose, since you don’t own anything’. These thoughts washed away my fears and insecurity of what might happen.

It was then that I realised I need to take action now or it will never happen. So, I decided to shed my fears by controlling my anxiety about the future. It was then that learning was imbibed within me. The truth is that we do not own this physical body and we will lose it one day. And when we can lose our identity of our existence to this world, why can’t we lose our fear and insecurity. Today I am free and I have learnt that with doubts in mind, I only cloud my chances to live as a free spirit. I couldn’t have lived this part of my life if I didn’t allow this learning to happen. When I allowed it to happen, there was a whole new world around me. A world where there is no end, only beginnings.

- A Seeker

THE GREEN PRINT

The Journey...

It might be pertinent to give a little background of the events which have led me here and have been the reason and inspiration for the creation of 'The Green Print'...

Even as a child, my love for 'Trees' was something that kept me busy through the day and I spent much of my time on the trees in our back yard. As children, we grew up in a much greener Hyderabad, though 'Greener', is a relative term because, my parents and theirs before them, said the same thing about their respective childhoods.

"What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another."

- Mahatma Gandhi

I wrote, 'Tree Gods' on 16th May 2012, but it took almost a year before concrete action was initiated. In the past months I shared my pain, at seeing trees being cut down ruthlessly, and the need for urgent and concrete action, with many of my friends and family. Slowly and almost magically, things started aligning themselves in such a way that 'The Green Print' was born, almost effortlessly...

As an organization, Superflo, was awarded the most 'Environmentally Conscious' company by the Jeedimetla Industrial Association. Our efforts were covered in the local Newspaper, 'Eenadu'. A friend from Mumbai wrote to us about 'Van Mahautsav' which is celebrated on the 1st of July. I reconnected very serendipitously with my dear friend, Malavika Reddy, who is a very talented artist and one of the most wonderful persons I have known, who helped me convert this idea into a beautiful artistic representation.

Around that time, Swami Nachiketananda Puri, who we all address as 'Swamiji' and Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri (Mataji) were meeting with the local administration in the Mahaboobnagar District for garnering support for the same cause. The support and encouragement that we have received from almost everyone with whom we have shared this is not only very inspiring but also a very humbling experience and **what started out as an effort to plant 10,000 saplings with much effort has transformed into an effortless initiative of planting 100,000 saplings.**

The above is the happy part of the story.

As the above mentioned events were falling in place, another horrific incident was unfolding almost simultaneously ... the flash floods in Uttarakhand!!! And everything that we are hearing, points to only one thing ...



THE GREENPRINT

this is a man-made disaster and the scale of destruction would have been much less had we maintained the nature's balance and equilibrium ... Excessive Deforestation, Global warming related temperature changes, increasing commercialization, etc. have led us to this point.

In the light of these events, this small effort on our part to restore forests/Green cover, to increase our 'Green Foot Print' and reduce 'Carbon Footprint', to have a more balanced and inclusive growth, becomes even more important, even more necessary, even more meaningful ... But this is only a start ... there is much that needs to be done, much that needs to be undone, much that needs to be protected, many trees that need to be planted.

Trees **are** indeed 'Gods'! We forget, what we breathe out (Carbon Dioxide), the trees breathe in and what they breathe out (Oxygen), we breathe in. As Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev says, 'Half our lungs are hanging outside us ... the trees'. If only, we experienced this fact ... if only, we realized that what we are doing to our environment and ourselves ... if only we acknowledged the very

fine balance of nature and realized that almost every act of ours is destroying this fine balance. We call this our 'freedom' and our 'right' to enjoy life, but in fact, what we are doing has a very direct detrimental bearing on our lives and will have very harsh implications for the generations to come.

Even though much damage has already been done, it is still possible for us to make amends ... **Because** we have done so much damage, it is imperative that we do everything in our power to bring about the necessary balance and inclusiveness in our thoughts, actions and the way we are leading our lives.

There are umpteen case studies, which show that within 5 to 7 years of planting 50,000 to 100,000 trees in very dry and arid lands, the rainfall has increased from a meager few millimeters to a healthy few centimeters, there is a substantial improvement in quality of air and water in the surrounding areas where there is an improved green cover and even more importantly the entire balance ecosystem is improved.

I conclude this using the following quotes -

"The planting of a tree, especially one of the long-living hardwood trees, is a gift which you can make to posterity at almost no cost and with almost no trouble, and if the tree takes root it will far outlive the visible effect of any of your other actions, good or evil."

- **George Orwell**

"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."

- **Franklin D. Roosevelt**

- **Gautam Vir**

Picture courtesy by Malavika Tewari

THE POWER OF HUMILITY



The monsoons have set in and so have the potholes in the roads! They used to irk me a lot earlier but after an episode last year my perception about them has altered.

Around the same time last year when the rains were lashing Hyderabad and the roads were bearing the brunt, I was on my way to office. My regular route of Banjara Hills is a very peaceful route however that day there was some commotion on the road and traffic was affected. A group of people seem to be having a brawl, as I approached nearer I noticed it was my friend who seemed to be in trouble. I promptly parked my car and went to check on him.

As I joined the group, I realized that my friend's car had accidentally and unintentionally splashed water on a nearby two wheeler. The bike rider was upset as the water splashed on his shirt. Though my friend was profusely apologizing, the affected party seemed to be unrelenting. Seeing my friend's predicament I joined in his pleading and requested the gentleman to calm down, however it backfired. Instead of letting go of the episode, he shifted his focus on me and started hurling all kinds of swear words. I soon realized that it wasn't the shirt that was affected but it was his ego that was hurt.

You can mend a soiled shirt with rough treatment but egos have to be handled very delicately. It's amazing how as individuals we quickly form opinions about certain section or class of people and then typecast them. I was a victim that day of being type-casted as a "rich and uncaring lad driving a BMW".

Prejudices and pre-formed notions of these sorts are part of us and we refuse to rise above them. We fail to realize that every individual is unique and not a factory product, stamped with common features. Well, so we were stamped "spoilt" that day! In such a situation what does one do?? Typically try being polite, calm the other person then get sterner and finally when the other

person refuses to concede, fight back, hurl abuses and walk out? Hmm but this only confirms the prejudice and you have then passed the "Final Quality check" and given an "Approved" label of the stamp put on you.

The other option is to win with a soft sword, a weapon which is so powerful that it can win borders. HUMILITY! That day instead of fighting back and losing temper I stood there with folded hands trying to pacify my fellow mate. He was tough to crack and when I offered to buy him a new shirt he chose to show me his wallet. He tried to stir and provoke by bringing in my mother and how I would react if someone had splashed water on my family etc. But I had decided to win this without reacting.

Finally when he was still not letting us go despite the inconvenience to other fellow road mates and vehicles I asked him if he would be happy if I touched his feet and apologized. YES said he; "touch my feet". Not believing my words he put it to me as a challenge in front of a nice little crowd he had managed to gather. Without a second thought I went near him stretched my right hand and I was about to touch his feet! Astounded, he literally jumped back. For a minute, there was an awkward silence, I could see him battling for words, a gasp, some whispers and few smiles from the crowd surrounding us had put him in a spot. The ball was in his court, all eyes were on him. The gentleman that day had been humbled for he came to me and gave me a tight hug and apologized and said he would touch my feet instead for my humility. The fracas was over and egos were saved.

That's what I call the power of humility. Try it next time when you are on the road instead of hurling abuses; try some magic with Sorry, Thank You and Please... Believe me, the effect of these magic words rubs on and if not immediately, someday our roads would be better places.

- Suresh Raju



The First University in the World

Takshashila (c. 500 BCE), formerly in India (now its ruins are in Pakistan), was the first university in the world.

Around 10,500 students who graduated from Takshashila University also pursued their post-graduation there.

At Takshashila 68 different subjects were taught by around 500 expert *Acharyas* (professors).

Students came not just from India, but from various parts of the world like Greece, Italy (Rome), Egypt, Iran, Iraq, China, Indonesia, Japan, etc. This university was one of its kind in the world for about 1000 years.

Another great university of India was in Nalanda (500-1300 CE), now in Bihar, India. Students from across the world came to study in Nalanda as well.

Nalanda had more than 300 lecture halls. Its library was so large that it was spread over three huge buildings. There were laboratory facilities for carrying out research in the field of space sciences. This university existed for 900 years. Various universities like these in India were destroyed by foreign invaders.

**Adapted from INDIA'S GLORIOUS CULTURE
Published by Swami Narayan Aksharpath**



GOD'S GIFT

Whenever we think of a gift from God, we always think of something pleasant, something we are happy to have or to own. People often write "God's Gift" on the rear window of their car, they name their homes, 'Ashirvaad' or 'Ishwar-kripa', they also name their children 'Prasad', or 'Aasheesh', or even 'Baksheesh', for that matter! After all, they reason, it's God-given, so why not?

But, have we ever thought about the not so welcome of God's Gifts? God brings us troubles, loss and sorrows. Do we thank Him for those? Why not? Because they are unpleasant to bear. We acknowledge only the gifts which are pleasant because those are the boons we have asked for.

Practitioners of *Reiki* start their practice with the 'Attitude of Gratitude', meaning that they are grateful for whatever their present situation may be, whether it be one of joy and happiness, or a failure in an exam, financial loss, physical/mental suffering, even the loss of a dear one. The idea behind this sentiment is:

- 1) To develop inner strength
- 2) To practice acceptance
- 3) To grow from there



We remember Kunti, who asked for troubles; because she said that when she is troubled, she remembers Krishna.

If we spend a thoughtful moment, we also realize that when we have to bear a very heavy cross, we push ourselves to an unexpected limit. We realize that we are capable of far greater courage and forbearance than we thought we had. And as we learn to steer through more and more demanding situations we build new reserves and know that we can go from strength to strength.

This is God's Gift to us. He never pushes us to breaking point; He is our loving father and teacher, and loads us with only as much as we can bear. While doing so He helps us build our strength, our confidence and our belief in ourselves.

- *Lakshmi Naik*

Happy moments, praise *God*

Quiet moments, worship God

Painful moments, trust God

Every moment, thank God.



Superstitions



I read a quote by some American comedian, which said, "A black cat crossing your path signifies ... that the animal is going somewhere." Firstly, what are superstitions? They are but beliefs, introduced a long time ago, which had a reason then, but is blindly followed by people now. Today, we live in the age of science and technology, but people still believe in superstitions. Superstitions are the result of illiteracy and unawareness. By making people aware of all the scientific happenings and by proving to them that with today's technology, anything is achievable, people will slowly let go of these superstitions.

Let me give you a few examples of how people are ignorant and how they misinterpret things. One thing that is for sure, is that our ancestors weren't fools. They did everything for a reason. For instance, they told us not to cut our nails after sunset. They did so, because in those days there were no, or very poor lighting systems. Unless you have night vision, you are bound to cut yourself if you are cutting your nails in the dark. But even today people believe in this. They don't logically reason why this has been said. Today, you go flick a switch, and you have light. So why the restraint?

Another example could be, that when you feel itchy in your palm, you will get money. That is total nonsense. That actually happened to me once; instead of me getting money, I had to lend it to someone. At the same time, we cannot call all the superstitions or beliefs as irrational. Some of them do make sense. They have been proved by science too.

For example, it is said that we should never sleep with our head towards the north. Religiously, the reason is because, Shiva cut the head of an elephant, sleeping with its head to the north, to replace Ganesha's head.

Scientifically, it is said that due to polar magnetic fields, our blood circulation will not be proper in our body.

One more superstition is that you shouldn't see a widow before doing some work. That is utter discrimination against women. The same is not

applicable in case of men, i.e. a widower. Why is it so? What if the widow was your mother? Wouldn't her blessings be invaluable to you?

Some people say that it is bad luck to walk under a ladder. I would say that you will know how bad your luck is, only once the ladder falls on you. When you walk under a ladder, you are putting yourself and the climber at risk.

Did you know that things like *Drishti* or the Evil eye are true, because they are no more than vibrations? When you say something bad or evil about someone, it sometimes happens because of the vibrations emitted by you. An experiment with rice suggests this. A man took two cups of rice and labeled one as nice, good etc., whereas he labeled the other one as waste, useless, bad, etc.. After a few days, he noticed that the rice in the cup labeled bad, had turned rotten. On the other hand, the rice in the other cup labeled good was intact. This shows how negative vibrations can become strong.

But then there are again superstitions made only to scare you. That is why our great Swami Vivekananda said that we shouldn't believe anything until we see or experience it for ourselves.

So it is up to you whether you want to be superstitious or not. Everyone has their own beliefs and sentiments, and I respect that, as long as it does not hurt others. But at the same time, I advise you to stay away from unnecessary and untrue beliefs.

Superstition is in the mind of the follower.

Where there is a will, there is a way.

Where there is a superstition, there is no way.

N. Rohan C. Govind

Class 9,

GT Aloha Vidya Mandir,

Chennai



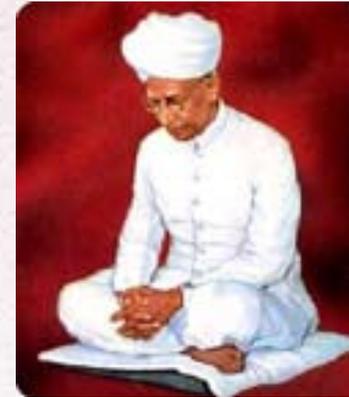
Teachers' Day

Celebrated on 5th September



No one can teach anybody.
The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Thus Vedanta says that within man is all knowledge ~ even in a boy it is so ~ and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of a teacher

- Swami Vivekananda



The end-product of education should be a free creative man, who can battle against historical circumstances and adversities of nature

- Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

Literary education is of no value, if it is not able to build up a sound character

- Mahatma Gandhi



Never regard study as a duty, but as the enviable opportunity to learn to know the liberating influence of beauty in the realm of the spirit for your own personal joy and to the profit of the community to which your later work belongs

- Albert Einstein



When learning is purposeful, creativity blossoms,
When creativity blossoms, thinking emanates,
When thinking emanates, knowledge is fully lit,
When knowledge is lit, economy flourishes

- Abdul Kalam

We Love And Respect All Our Teachers At Tapovan ...
A Big Thank You To Each One Of You !!!!!



Designed by Neeru Mamtani

Happiness

Happiness depends upon mental attitudes. Conditions are neither good nor bad; they are neutral, either depressing or encouraging because of the sad or bright attitude of the mind of the individual concerned.

We have to change our thoughts if we want to change our circumstances. We are responsible for our thoughts, so we can change them, when we realize that each thought creates according to our own nature. Therefore we have to start to think only those thoughts that will bring us health and happiness.

We need to understand that our own intelligence controls the atoms of our bodies. We have to breathe in the fresh air of vital thoughts and views of other people too. We have to cultivate vitality and receive mental nourishment from spiritually progressive minds. We have to take mental walks on the path of self-confidence. We have to exercise with the instruments of judgment, introspection and initiative.

The mind is the king and all its cellular subjects behave according to the mood of their Master. As we concern ourselves with the nutritive value of our daily food menus, so should we consider the nutritive potency of the psychological menus that we can serve daily to the mind. If we deny sorrows in our minds it will exist no longer. SELF is the hero in man. It is our Divine nature. If we want freedom from sorrows, we must assert our heroic self in all our daily activities.

If we do not choose to be happy no one can make us happy. We should not blame God. And if we choose to be happy no one can make us unhappy. God has given us freedom. We continue to suffer without making an effort to change that is why we do not find lasting peace and contentment.

We must make effort that we may go from misery, despondency to happiness and courage. When the heroic element is lacking

in the mental makeup of a person, his mind becomes susceptible to the threat of all passing sorrows. If we possess strong character, we become the happiest beings. We must know that no one has any power to add to our happiness or detract from it, unless we ourselves are so weak that we allow the adverse thoughts and wicked actions of others to affect us.

We have to awaken the victor in ourselves and Lo! No sorrow will ever again overwhelm us. The more we improve ourselves, the more we elevate ourselves and all the others around us.

The happier we become the happier will be the people around us. Why gaze down the sewers when there is loveliness all around us? We are familiar with the three little monkey figures that depict the maxim, "See no evil, Hear no evil, Speak no evil." We should emphasize the positive approach. "See that which is good, Hear that which is good, Speak that which is good."

We have to discriminate and analyze wrong thoughts and then dump them. If we only look for the good in everything, then we absorb the quality of beauty. Thinking, reading and repeating statements of truth with deep attention will help to clear away negation and to establish a positive attitude in our mind. The ever new joy of God, inherent in the soul is indestructible.

We are an image of God; we should behave like God. We should have evenness of mind wherein we are absolute, calm and free from all anger.

Nobody likes misery. We must remove moods from our mental mirror. We should think of our mind as a garden and keep it beautiful and





fragrant with divine thoughts. As the bee seeks out only those flowers that are sweet with honey, so God comes only when our life is sweet with honeyed thoughts. Perhaps our mood is in discouragement over sickness; a feeling that we will never regain health. We must try to apply the thoughts of right living that lead to a healthy, active and moral life and pray with greater faith in the healing power of God.

We have to make up our mind that we are not going to be moody anymore. Creative thinking is the best antidote for moods. The time when our mind is vacant is just the time it can become moody; and when we are moody, the devil comes and wields his influence on us. Keep it so busy that we have no time to indulge in moodiness. By thinking creatively we destroy these moods. We have to keep busy doing constructive things for our own self-improvement and for the benefit of others, for whoever would enter God's kingdom must also try to do good for others. We will feel the mood-dispelling joy of knowing us, when we advance mentally, physically and spiritually.

Giving happiness to others is tremendously important to our own happiness and is the most satisfying experience. To live for one's own self is the source of misery. When we came into this world, we cried and everyone else smiled. We should live our life in such a way that when we leave, everyone else will cry but we would be smiling.

We should learn to carry all the conditions of happiness within ourselves by meditating and attuning our consciousness to the ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new joy, which is God.

When we have mastery over our feelings, we abide in our true state. It is to be so happy that no matter what we are doing we enjoy it. When centered in our true self, we do every task and enjoy all good things with the joy of God.

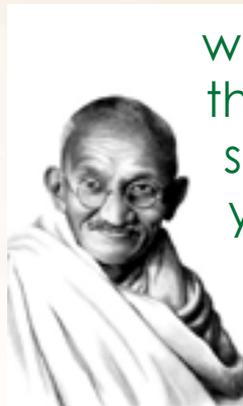
In the spiritual life one becomes just like a little child without resentment, without attachment, full of life and joy. We should be silent and calm (in meditation) every night for at least half-an-hour, preferably much longer before we retire and again in the morning before starting the day's activity. With that unchangeable happiness within, go about seeking to fulfill the demands of our daily needs.

Open the windows of calmness and we will find a sudden burst of the bright sun of joy within our very self. We do not search for happiness only in beautiful clothes, clean houses, delicious dinners, soft cushions and luxuries. These will imprison our happiness behind the bars of externality. How can we be happy if we are all the time fussing about our clothes or other possessions? We are made in God's image. We can never find lasting happiness in anything because nothing is complete except God.

Night and day we are in a state of joy. That joy is God. The happier we are, the greater will be our attunement with HIM. Those who know Him are always happy because God is joy itself.

- Siluveru Sudarshan

“Happiness is when what you think, what you say and what you do are in harmony”



-MAHATMA GANDHI





Smile goes miles

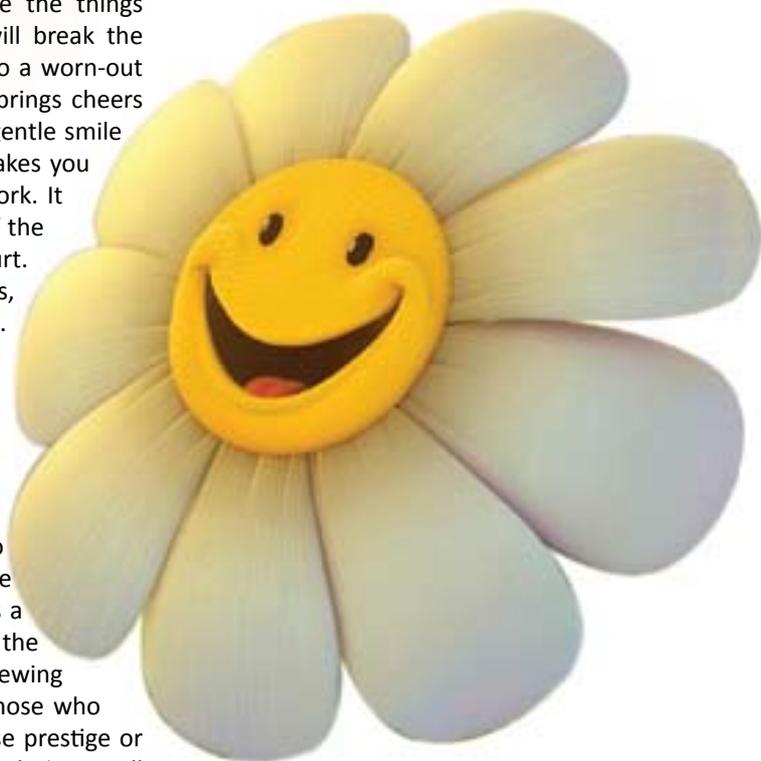


A Chinese proverb says 'if you are unable to smile, do not do business'. This underscores the importance of a smile if one wants to make it big in business. A man who is into it will realize in no time how important it is for him to keep that smile always on his lips and will surely become successful when he learns to smile heartily and makes it a part of his life. It is the smile that takes him places in his business circles as it radiates his state of mind and gives confidence to his customers and to those who deal with him. It speaks about his success, his mental balance and the ability to face the odds that he comes across day-to-day, in his profession. Surely this makes him stand apart from his competitors. The same principle applies to our personal lives as well. If we start the conversation with a smile, it will create a deep impression on others. It is the smile that is a welcome signboard to a stranger and who knows, may result in a great relation in future.

It is the smile that makes you feel comfortable, particularly in a new place and always propels you to go that extra mile to make the things happen. In relationships, a smile will break the silence and create a new platform to a worn-out relationship, to start afresh. Smile brings cheers to the people around you. It is the gentle smile on the face of your children that makes you forget all the tiredness of a day's work. It is a weapon that dismantles walls of the differences among people without hurt. Smile conveys feeling of togetherness, and creates oneness amongst us. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "If I had no humour in my life, I would have died long back". A sense of humour spontaneously brings smile on our faces. A child's smile is divine as it depicts purity and enlivens the sleepy souls. It is the greatest gift of God to mankind and no living creature has the ability to smile like we do. Smile has a soothing effect on broken hearts. It is the panacea for misunderstandings, brewing differences and a beacon light for those who ruined their lives for the sake of false prestige or egos. It shows you a way if not the solution at all

times. Sometimes it works as a starting point or a point of resumption and of course on all occasions works as a damage controller. It is the smile of a teacher that relieves the tension of a student in a new class on the first day of a new academic year in school. It is the smile of the interviewer that brings the much-needed succor to a job seeker. Well begun is half done and a smile complements it. We may spend hours together in deciding what to wear and what not to. Whether, it is a working day or a holiday, at home or in office, day or night, it does not make any sense if we fail to wear that smile for the day. So let us ensure wherever we go, whatever we do, not to forget the beauty of life – Smile. It may not matter for us, but it does matter for others around us. Let us resolve to keep smiling all day and throughout our lives. I am sure the reader's lips must have bloomed by now. Let it radiate the precincts. Keep Smiling - if not now, when?

- Koti Rajasekhar M.



The Greatest Gift

What is the best gift that we can give our children? Something that will always be with them, help them to make decisions, help them to stay grounded in times of doubt and uncertainty, something that no one can take away from them ... It is the 'Art of Praying'. Children who know to pray will bounce back from any situation. When I was a child, my sisters, cousins and I were encouraged to go out in the evenings and play to our heart's content. We were also expected to come home by sunset, wash our feet and sit for prayers. We could pray silently or aloud together, nothing was forced upon us. In most Hindu homes this was the norm.

I have heard many youngsters questioning the need for saying prayers by posing questions such as 'Am I not wasting my time because I don't even know whether God is listening to me?' 'I don't even understand the Sanskrit words that I am repeating like a parrot, so what is the use?' 'I want to pray but I don't have the time.'

It is said that when we pray, we are talking to God and when we meditate, God is talking to us. So it does not matter in which language you pray to God or whether you understand the meaning of every word you say because God understands you. The very act of saying the prayer has actually brought about a positive change in the person who is saying it. Prayers followed by meditation will help us internalize it, observe our emotions, calm our thoughts and may also give us a sudden flash of answers to solve a nagging problem. It helps us accept life in its flow. If we really want to pray, it is possible to set aside a fixed time to pray. A few minutes in the evening is a very good time for children to sit down quietly and pray just before starting their studies. It will bring focus to their Home work too. Prayer before going to bed will keep them calm and a prayer soon after getting up will help to begin the day well. These are all good habits which gradually become routines in our daily life. Children can be taught a simple Meditation which involves sitting cross legged on a mat, closing the eyes, hands facing upwards and concentrating on one's breath. Five to ten minutes should be fine.

Medical research has established that the secretion of Serotonin a relaxant neurotransmitter is increased with meditation and Japa.

Prayers have a calming effect on infants. Babies who are exposed to chanting of slokas or bhajans will turn out into babies with a sweet disposition. When children are small they love to imitate their elders and their power to grasp and recite slokas is simply amazing. Teach them young; inculcate good habits when they are still kids and set a routine for them. For this the elders have to make a few sacrifices and be more organized. If we set a T.V culture in our homes, irregular food and sleep routines, then we have no right to blame the children for being undisciplined.

Another thing about 'prayers' that I have noticed is once you get into the habit of chanting slokas, the urge to learn and recite more and more slokas gets to you. The satisfaction of reciting Sanskrit slokas in the right tune, tone and with clarity brings about a different kind of joy.

To say our prayers we need not be dependent on anything or anybody. We just need ourselves and our will power. 'Prayer' is the only thing which no one can take away from us. That is why it is the greatest gift that we can give our children.

- Pushkala Raman



Long long ago, there lived a king who was very religious. He wanted the picture of 'Krishna's *Geetopadesa*' painted on the walls of his grand palace. So he called for a meeting of all the eminent artists from his kingdom. After testing them, he selected two of the best artists amongst all to do the final paintings. The king took them to the second floor of his building and said, 'Gentlemen, I have great respect for Bhagawad Gita. I wish to have the picture of *Geetopadesa* in front of my eyes so that I can adore and admire the Divine face of Lord Krishna every moment. I want both of you to paint this picture on the walls allotted to you. Six months time will be given to you to complete the painting. The best painting will be awarded 10,000 gold coins. Meanwhile, all facilities will be given to you, including your lodging and boarding. Just focus on your work and create a painting full of life and beauty.'

Next day the contest started. Both the artists were ready and prepared to show their proficiency. The walls given to them were facing each other. Curtains were put in front of the walls to avoid any copying. The artists began their work with full vigor and zest. Six months passed by and the day to announce the prize finally came. Expert judges were invited to judge the paintings. The curtain covering the first wall was lifted. Wow! It was a spectacular sight! The painting was extremely beautiful and full of life. It looked as if Lord Krishna was Himself standing there in full grace and grandeur. The artist seemed to have put his heart and soul into the painting. Everybody was so impressed that they thought that might be the best one out of the two. Nevertheless, they proceeded to see the other painting also to make the final decision.



It so happened that the second artist, all through these six months happily ate three meals a day and did not paint anything on the wall, not even a line. Instead, he took a piece of glass and started scrubbing and polishing the wall vigorously everyday. With the result, after six months the wall became smooth and shining like a mirror. The moment the curtain in front of it was lifted, the mirror like wall reflected the painting on the opposite side with much more brilliance due to its shine and smoothness. The judges were amazed and awestruck.

What a magnificent work! The first artist painted on the wall with colours but the other one created a painting inside the wall without using any colors or brush. Brilliant idea! Exceptional job! The judges awarded the second artist the gold coins. He won the prize by just cleaning and polishing the wall without adding anything new to it.

A seeker who seeks enlightenment, need not depend on anything external not even the form of God to enlighten him. As enshrined by Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita,

**ahamAtmA gudakesA
sarvabhootAsheyasthitha**

God can be realized within oneself with introspection and insight. Because of the dust accumulated over the past several births, the mind gets contaminated and obscures the vision of Divinity within. With spiritual practices (*Sadhana*) the mind gets cleaned and shines like a mirror reflecting the Divine Splendor within. This is enlightenment.

- A Seeker

SAVE FUEL



It was infuriating!!

I go to my son's school every afternoon to give him lunch. I go, maybe 5 minutes before the bell, leave the box, wait for him to pick it up and then walk back home. Mind you, WALK. The school is just under a kilometre from our house. So, rain or shine, I walk. Whether the maid is late

even came from behind, but it was a small car and so could fit into the small gap he had left on the road, to the left! The man was simply not aware, neither did he care. It was probably 5 whole minutes by the time he came back to his car. I had actually left and had started walking back.



or early, whether I have backbreaking work at home or am jobless, I walk. The only exception I make to this rule is when I get hopelessly late and it is already lunch-time when I leave the house. Only then do I take out my vehicle. Otherwise, I strictly adhere to this rule.

These past few days, while I am waiting for my son to get his lunch, I notice some other parents also coming to leave their kids' lunch boxes. Of course, they maybe uncles or aunts as well, but the point is that, they are adults, fully aware of all the 'worldly' affairs- what is happening to our world, the global warming and other such effects. And, I have no problem with their coming to school in their vehicles.

But, I get furious when they do not turn off their vehicles when they get down to pass the lunch-bags to the kid or the watchman. They stop the vehicle, get down, go to the gate, give the bag and then go to their vehicle, the engine running all the while. What happened today was atrocious. The fellow had come in a car, had stopped the vehicle slightly to the right of the middle of the road (this is India, where the left is the right side of the road), engine and AC running, went to the gate and kept talking to the watchman, waiting for the kid to come. He had even left his car door wide open. A car

I do not understand how people can be so irresponsible. If I tell him, he is probably going to tell me that it is none of my business and he is paying for the fuel. But, it is not the money. It is the resource and consideration for others. It is not only his road. The fuel also is not just his. It is all of ours. And on top of it all, the value of everything cannot be gauged by money.

The fuel we get is the effort of hundreds of years of work by Mother Earth. It is the fruit of many hours of labour by our fellow-men under very tough conditions. And what of the plants, birds and animals we displaced and destroyed in the act of building the fuel manufacturing unit?

I do not walk all the time to school. I drive my son in the morning when he is in a hurry, and also in the evening when he has to come back and get ready for his extra-curricular classes. I am not a cent percent pure, sacrificing soul who walks all the time at all costs. But, I have the satisfaction that I am doing a little bit to save fuel by walking at least once when I can use the vehicle otherwise.

Money can buy us things but only as long as they are available!!

Please, people, show some consideration for our Mother and her resources. She is the only one we have.

-Subha Ganesh



Soulful Music

Parvathy Baul is a singer, painter and storyteller from West Bengal. She is both trained in the Baul order and studied visual arts at the Kala Bhavan University at Shantiniketan.

'Baul' are a group of mystic musicians from Bengal, whose music constitutes a national music tradition stretching back centuries, that had a great deal of influence on the poetry and music of Rabindranath Tagore amongst countless others.

SUFI Journal caught up with Parvathy to learn more about her practice and thoughts about music.

Martin Harris: Starting with the hardest question: What is music, and where does it come from?

Parvathy Baul: It is indeed hard to reply to – I don't know if there will ever be an ultimate answer – but as the Baul say we are searching and this path of searching is itself the aim of the search and the answer to this search. 'Music' exists in all of creation, in life and in death.

The Baul say that when the universe was created there was only the sound 'OM.' The sound of the *Ektara* (one-stringed instrument in the Baul *parampara*) is 'OM' – the *Ektara* is held in the right hand of the Baul singer and held very close to the right ear, which gives the singer a constant OM sound, and on this base the Baul voice travels.

Music opens the heart; music can be a vehicle to transcend, to transform, to bring a direct experience of inner happening 'here and now'.

In all our traditions of Music, the musicians were mostly *Upasakas* (spiritual practitioners), more precisely *Naad* (sound) *Upasakas*. In India, music is believed to be a direct way to connect with the Divine.

MH: How did you become a Baul singer? What drew you towards this music?

PB: I was 16 when I was first exposed to the Baul *Parampara*. I always mention an encounter which really opened my ears to Baul songs and encouraged me to search for its source in the Baul

path. I was on a train to Shantiniketan with my brother to register as a student. Somewhere in the middle of the journey a Baul singer came into our compartment – he was blind, was clad in a long orange *kurta* that had faded with time and a white *dhoti*, and had an *Ektara* made of tin. His long fingers and long nails struck the string of *Ektara*, and the sound immediately told me something that I'd known for a long time, a sound that transported me to another reality. When he started singing, all the people and train compartment disappeared from my sight; though I couldn't understand a word of the Bengali song, it left me with traces of something very deep, a path less travelled, and a world to discover.

Later, when I saw Guru Shri Sanatan Das Baul of Bankura performing, I was amazed to see how he danced, sang and played his *Ektara*, *Bama* (a small drum made of clay tied to the hip of the Baul singer) and *Nupur* (metallic anklets). I had heard singers before, but the Baul's voice came from the



Parvathy Baul

bottom of his heart, from the body; it was a voice opened to the sky... There was more to explore in the Baul lifestyle even after the concert was over – a song can take you on a journey for a lifetime, you live the song day and night, you meditate, you transcend slowly through time. I have never experienced something so complete before; in my search to become an artist I was looking for this completeness.

I went in search of my Guru Sanatan Das Baul of Bankura and I was lead to his Ashram in Khayerbani. I arrived one afternoon in spring time and found him tall and dark, standing with a straight spine with all his hair gathered carefully into a topknot drying his clothes, and he looked at me with a lot of compassion. As a young student I had a thousand things to ask, but he smiled and asked me if I had lunch. Upon saying 'no' I was served delicious warm meals by his daughters-in-law Gita and Moni, and he told me to rest and promised to talk to me afterwards. I spent fifteen days beside him, on the same small porch, and he didn't even ask my name. On the 15th day he called me to come for a walk with him to the market. On the way to the market he started singing, looked at me and said, 'stupid girl, why don't you follow me'? I started singing with him and this was the start of the long lessons I have been receiving from him for almost 20 years now. He is now in his 90s.

MH: What do you think the relationship is between music and spiritual practice?

PB: Music and spiritual practice is inseparable. Indian *yogis* have always emphasized singing as a way to experience true surrender in Divine love. In fact by invoking the beauty and the thought of the beloved you invoke the beloved inside you; it is a way to remember one's own body and the purpose of this body. Singing Baul songs for an hour leaves you recharged with positive energy, because the body, mind and soul are directed only to positive thoughts and the vibration of the sound. Sound and breath together help awakening the energy lotus chakras within. A singer definitely experiences the transformation in his or her body after a few years of *Sadhana* in Baul Music.

As once stated by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the truth and hardship of yoga is difficult for the

modern human to achieve, for their mind and body is fast moving and weak, but if they utter the name of the Beloved with pure devotion they can experience the same without effort. Singing and dancing in Divine love helps one to break free from all our daily inhibitions, and directs our emotions towards the Beloved.

MH: Does your music have a particular message, or something you want to inspire in the listener?

PB: When one listens to Baul music one is listening to a spiritual tradition which is beyond any boundaries, a space of freedom and an experience of deep love in the heart. Often the expression of 'being wounded' by a song is widely expressed by Baul masters; in many people's lives it has happened that they unintentionally heard a Baul song, and it touched them so deep that it changed everything – just like I was 'wounded' by the Baul song on that train to Shantiniketan.

MH: Is there one moment in your travels as a singer that stays with you more than others? Some time or place that resonated more deeply?

PB: We travel continuously, always meeting new people, and yes, there are moments and people or incidents that moved me deeply.

If I look back to my travels undertaken to meet Masters and learn from them, I was deeply touched by my other Guru, Shri Shashanko Goshai. I met him when he was 97 years old. I practiced and learned with him for 3 years and he left his body when he was 100 years old. He took *Samadhi*: himself deciding to leave his body. The last time I went to visit him he told me it would be the last. I had gone to see him because he called me in a hurry to come to him immediately. I spent three days with him as he went through all the songs he had taught me, making sure that I was uttering and remembering them in the right way. On the third night he called me close to him and said that he was leaving his body, and that night he left, leaving me alone with all of his songs to carry along with me until my last breath... a gift and a memory.

**Excerpts from an exclusive interview with
Parvathy Baul by SUFI:
a biannual International journal**



EDUCATION – from a teacher’s perspective

Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man, said Swami Vivekananda. True indeed! Since the day a baby is born, it manifests the presence of education, already been sown within. This seed, the way we nourish it, tend it, will grow imbibing the characteristics. This is the beauty of nature which we as parents, teachers, or educators need to realize and act.

Therefore I believe that we teachers have to be facilitators who will help our students to think, contemplate and ponder. Students should be guided to explore rather than collect information from different sources. Whatever they learn, whatever they achieve should be based on experience. A teacher in a class should awaken the curiosity of the students to such an extent that s/he is encouraged and motivated. A lesson becomes a pressure due to imposition, but the same lesson is a pleasure if it is approached with interest. The educator’s duty is to facilitate her students to go on the voyage of education with fun and enthusiasm.

Life is a perfect teacher. Education is an ongoing journey. Throughout one’s life one has to be a learner. Every act has a consequence. This is the basic lesson that life teaches. As educators we have to prepare our students to face the consequences of their actions.

In every doctrine, the underlying message is that education is the realization of one’s worth. The faster we understand it, the better. A teacher too has to be a habitual learner. As a teacher, one has to love knowledge and share knowledge. Knowledge shared is knowledge gained. Every student should be made aware of the advantage of sharing knowledge.

Rig-Veda tells that education should enable a man to be self-reliant. For Shankaracharya, education is the realization of the Self. Dayananda advocated education as a means for character formation and righteous living. For the

noble laureate Rabindranath Tagore, education enables the mind to find out the ultimate truth, which gives us the wealth of inner light and love and gives significance to life. And finally Gandhi’s doctrine on education was, “an all-round drawing out the best in the child and man, in body, mind and spirit.”

Education sets the learner to face the challenges in life. S/he learns that life is not always a bed of roses. And that the difficulties that come in one’s way are not always to be taken as adversities. The difficult time does render one with the lessons which will prepare one to live a full life; one evolves stronger, thus making one’s mind ready for every eventuality.

Some western thinkers have interpreted education as the capacity to feel pleasure and pain at the right moment. Besides intelligence quotient and emotional intelligence, the educator has to make the students aware of physical intelligence too. As Aristotle said, ‘Education is the creation of a sound mind in a sound body’.

Education is the complete development of the individuality of the child. Education should prepare the learner to unwind what is not relevant. It is the process of living through a continuous reconstruction of experiences. Basic meaning of education as far as I believe, is the ability to adapting and accepting for what stands right, for a higher cause. Some situations do demand selfless service. An educator must know where the demarcation line is. It is the ability to prioritize and take a decision. It is the power of restraint as well as action.

Above all, education is that which lets the learner make a choice and celebrate life with the choice that s/he has made.

- Sreekala Madhavan

Remedy for Cough in Naturopathy

REMEDY 1

Ingredients:

- Rock salt (Sendha Salt) - a pinch
- Hot Tava- after chapatti is made (without oil/ghee)
- Drinking Water - 15/20ml



Method:

- ❖ Take a hot chapatti tava. It is important to switch off the stove.
 - ❖ Pour the water on it. A little water will evaporate but rest of the remaining hot water has to be immediately collected in a small bowl.
 - ❖ Add the rock salt to it. Drink immediately as it has to be hot when one drinks.
 - ❖ This remedy can be repeated 3/4 times in a day, as per the intensity of the cough.
-



REMEDY 2

DRY COUGH (JUST BEFORE SLEEPING AT NIGHT)

Ingredients :

- Cow milk malai-1 teaspoon
- Whole Black Pepper - 2pcs

Method :

- ❖ Take the cow milk malai, add fresh grinded whole black pepper to it. Enjoy the lovely remedy and sleep well.
-

REMEDY 3

Ingredients:

- Bengal Betel (pan) Leaf - 3 pcs
- Almonds (mamra) - 4 x 3 = 12 pcs
- Non stick pan - 1

Method:

- ❖ Take a non-stick pan oil free. Place the Betel leaf on it.
- ❖ Switch on the stove, heat the leaf till it wrinkles. Switch off the stove.
- ❖ Quickly take out the leaf from the pan. Wrap 4 almonds in.
- ❖ Chew well and sleep after that. Nothing should be eaten after that.



To be taken for three continuous nights. If one night is missed then repeat the therapy from the beginning.

- Mamatha





इकलइकरो इइइठ = ठरठुठठ

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

उपपदविभक्तिः

In these examples, तृतीया-विभक्ति does not mean any tool. This vibhakti is used whenever सह/विना is used, that is all. Hence it is called 'upapadavibhakti'. There are many such usages even with other vibhaktis. We will see them later.

Have you noticed that for important सर्वनामपदानि, तृतीया-विभक्ति would be as given below:

(Contd. from last issue)

This vibhakti also goes with सह (along with) and विना (without). For example, look at this:

Father goes to shop. Son also goes with him. जनकः आपणं गच्छति। पुत्रः अपि तेन सह गच्छति। In other words, पुत्रः जनकेन सह आपणं गच्छति। Here are a few more examples:

१. रामः लक्ष्मणेन सह वनं गच्छति। सीतया अपि सह रामः वनं गच्छति।
२. प्रधानमन्त्री विदेशं गतवान्। तस्य कार्यदर्शी अपि तेन सह गतवान्।
३. अहं मम मित्रेण सह विदेशे निवासं कृतवान्।
४. सः पत्न्या सह विहारे अस्ति।

Likewise, even with विना, we can use the same vibhakti. (We can also use the द्वितीया-विभक्ति in the case of विना. However, with सह, we can use only तृतीया-विभक्ति.) Look at the examples below:

१. धनेन विना जीवनं कष्टं भवति।
२. सा तस्याः शुक्रेण विना कुत्रापि न गच्छति। सर्वदा शुक्रेण तया सह नयति।
३. क्रोधेन विना व्यवहरतु भवान् कृपया।

- सः – तेन
सा – तया
अहम् – मया
भवान् – भवता
भवती – भवत्या
वयम् – अस्माभिः
एषः – एतन
एषा – एतया
कः? – केन?
का? – कया?

Translate the following into Samskritam:

1. Pen does not write without ink.
2. Pride goes with money.
3. Man is a beast without education.
4. You buy one shirt. You get another with it.

१. शुक्रेण विना जीवनं कष्टं भवति।
२. सा तस्याः शुक्रेण विना कुत्रापि न गच्छति।
३. क्रोधेन विना व्यवहरतु भवान् कृपया।

Answers:

(To be contd in the next issue)





We thank Sri Kundha Pratap for donating ₹ 2 Lacs for Uniforms & Books to our students. On 17th June, his family distributed uniforms to all Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir students.



We thank iGate Global Solutions Ltd. for donating 1030 Notebooks on 12th July 2013 to Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir students.

Thanks to Donors



Smt. G. Shyamala
Sponsor-a-Child Corpus Fund - ₹ 1 lac

Sri Harish Kumar
Alpahaar Corpus Fund - ₹ 10,000/-

A Well wisher
Sponsor-a-Child Corpus Fund - ₹ 1 lac

A Well wisher
Sponsor-a-Child Corpus Fund - ₹ 1 lac

Dr. S. Raju, Canada
Sponsor-a-Child Corpus Fund - ₹ 1 lac

Smt. Devikarani Rao
Sponsor-a-child Corpus Fund - ₹ 1 Lac

Lalitha Charitable Trust
Sponsor-a-child Corpus Fund - ₹ 1 Lac
Annadanam Corpus Fund - ₹ 50,000/-

Smt. M.J.S. Lakshmi
In the memory of Sri M.V. Rayappa Raju
Sponsor-a-child Corpus Fund - ₹ 1 lac





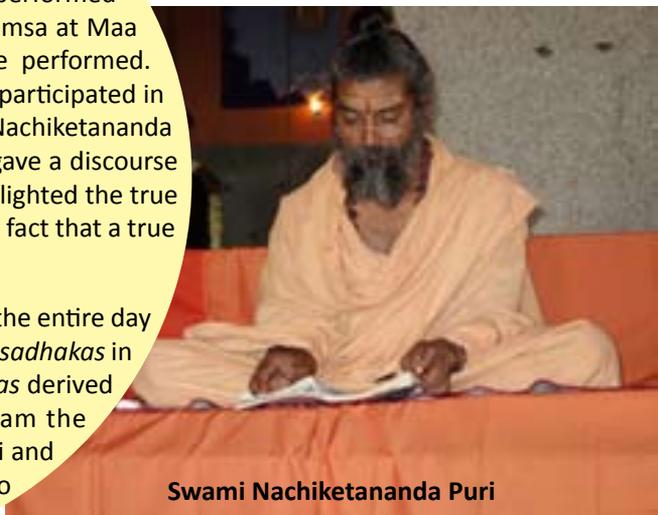
Guru Purnima 2013

Guru

Purnima 2013 was celebrated at Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram on 22nd July 2013. A two-day spiritual retreat was conducted for *sadhakas* who attended the programme. Abhishekam was performed to Lord Shiva and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Maa Yoga Shakthi Peetham. *Puja* & *homam* were performed. Vedavyasa Vidya Mandir children and teachers participated in the *homam* and received the blessings of Swami Nachiketananda Puri and Swami Shivananda Puri. Later Swamiji gave a discourse on the essence of *Guru-Shisya tattwa* which highlighted the true spirit of a Guru and his disciple. He reiterated the fact that a true Guru is never after name and fame.



Special *sadhana* was designed by Mataji for the entire day and a night long *sadhana* was done by all the *sadhakas* in Maa Yoga Shakthi Peetham. All the *sadhakas* derived great benefits. Everyone left the Ashram the next day with the blessings of Swamiji and Mataji and the great message to seek the Guru inside.



Swami Nachiketananda Puri



Mataji performing homam at Nachiketagni Yagnashala

Satsang

A satsang was held at Aparna Heights-II Club House in Kondapur which was arranged by Smt. Prathyusha on the evening of 27th July 2013. Swami Nachiketananda Puri in his discourse urged devotees to make *Sadhana* a part of daily schedule in order to advance spiritually. Discourse was followed by guided instruction on Maha Chaitanya Kriya and meditation. Mataji's words of wisdom enlightened the audience.



Satsang by Swamiji and Mataji at Aparna Heights-II



Dear Reader!



Gathering at Pedda Adhirala Village Hill



School children during Vanamahotsav



IT professionals during Vanamahotsav

It's been a long time since I interacted with you. It feels good whenever I interact with you and share whatever is happening in the Ashram for the welfare of the society and elevation of the Sadhakas. Recently, on 3rd August 2013, we completed our second Vanamahotsavam at Pedda Adirala Village Hill, Jadcherla Mandal. There was an overwhelming response from school children to teachers, MEO to DFO and rural to urban people, whose contribution was strongly felt not only in making 'The Green Print' a grand success but also keeping in mind the next generation and taking Green Drive to the next level. More than 70 IT professionals from NTT Data, 6 from TatvaSet and 20 from HCL came all the way from Hyderabad, travelling 100 km and spent the sunny day in making pits and doing plantation at Adirala Hill. Though they were exhausted, they were very enthusiastic to complete the task. We had to literally pull them back to the Ashram for lunch and do you want to know what the time was? It was 4.00 pm! When we see such people around, we feel more blessed than anybody else. I salute such great souls not only for their contribution in terms of time and money but also for their passion to serve Mother Earth selflessly. Planting of 2000 saplings was a simple and yet more effective project to bring underprivileged and privileged ones together. I thank Divine Mother for sending such a beautiful band of angels to inspire and awaken sleeping souls from their inertia.

We were all busy in making arrangements for Vanamahotsavam that was going to take place on 3rd August but in spite of the busy schedule, Mataji accepted the invitation to address 33 teachers and other volunteers of Ekopadhaya Pathashala, a project by Janahita Prakalpa run for underprivileged children from 4 to 15 years age group,

at Macharam village. Mataji enthralled the audience and instilled self-confidence in them, while speaking about Indian culture and rich heritage and explained scientifically how important it is to lead a religious life that can bring everyone closer to God. She asked them to peep within while getting engaged in karmayoga, to know what soul is or our true identity is.

There was a 10 day Yoga programme at Sanjeev Dhyana Kendra, Jadcherla, which was conducted by Sanjeev Guruji, a young enthusiastic lad with a sound yogic knowledge. Though he is a Grihastha, I can see a wonderful person in him with a great vision to elevate the masses. On 4th August, Mataji and I were called to address the Yoga gathering. I spoke about Asanasiddhi to make them aware of another dimension of Asanas whereas Mataji who spoke about how to overcome three types of sorrows and go beyond and establish into self, mesmerized the audience. A young girl in saffron robes, who is a sannyasi, addressing the cream of the society that too with authority has shown the audience what depth she has got within. They were speechless, simply glued to her speech. I was silently observing the audience, this melodrama and found that everyone present over there was riding on a kind of spiritual wave. It was as if, their entire energies were focused only on Mataji, not wanting to miss even a smallest gesture of hers. I felt as if they were drinking the divine nectar that was coming from her heart. In the end, as usual, I was left alone whereas Mataji was surrounded by people. Hum! Dhanyavadah!



Ekopadhaya Group

Swami Nachiketnanda Puri



Satsang by Swamiji and Mataji at Sanjeev Dhyana Kendra





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 240 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 39 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.**



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)
--------	----------------------

NACHIKETA'S GO GREEN CLUB...

We convey our thanks to all the participants of WOW initiative. You helped us earn Rs. 20,395/- in the month of July and saved Mother Earth by recycling about 2549 kgs of plastic and paper waste material.

INVITATION

We cordially invite you to attend our celebrations.

Sri Ganesh Chaturthi
9th September 2013



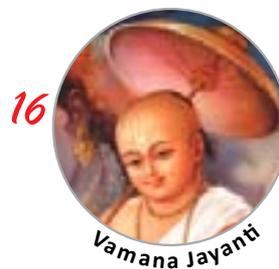
Birthday celebrations of
SWAMIJI & MATAJI
19th September 2013

Venue:

Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram
Kodgal Village, Jadcherla, Mahaboobnagar Dist.



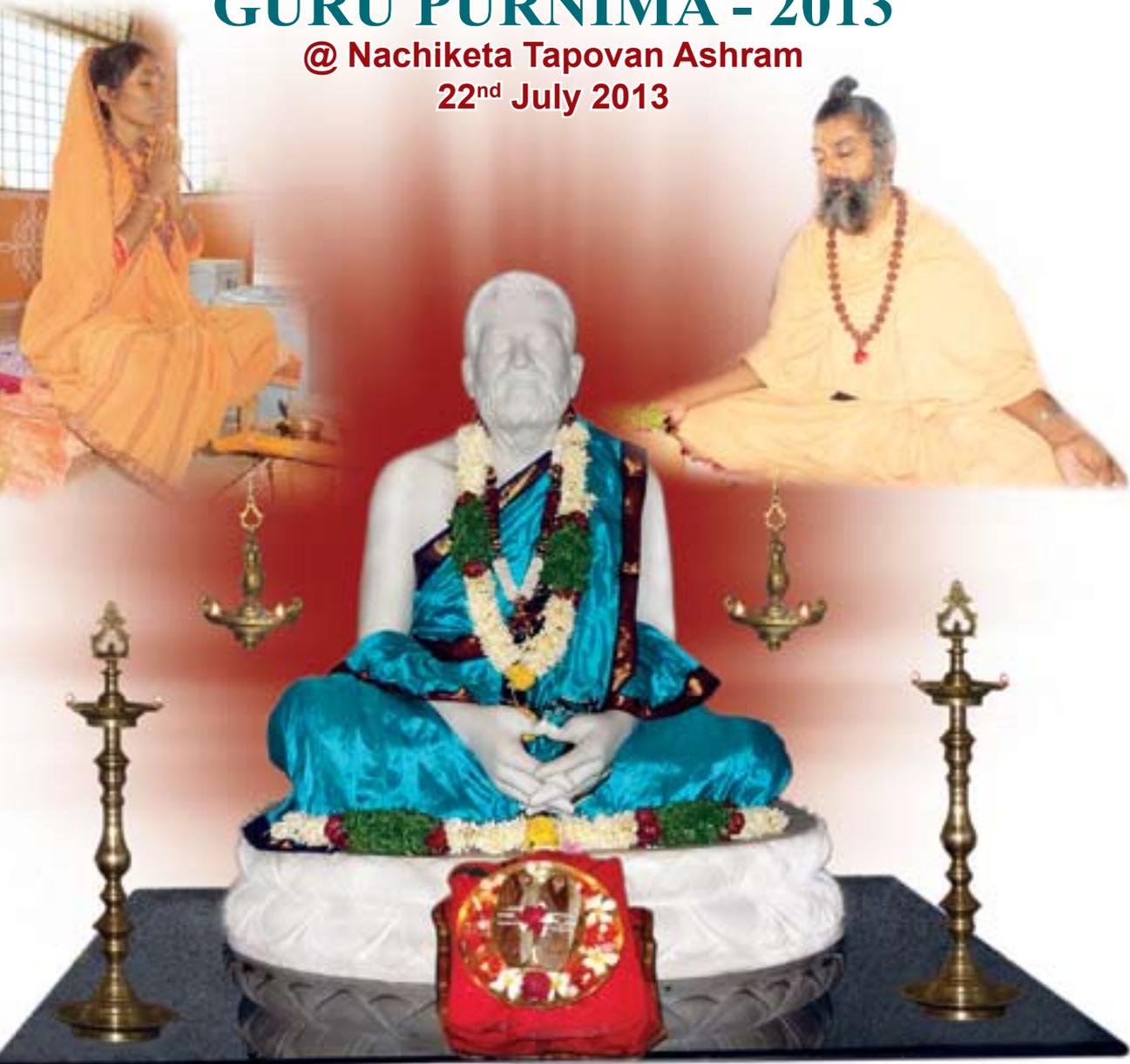
Festivals
&
Events of
September 2013



GURU PURNIMA - 2013

@ Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram

22nd July 2013



Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Ma Yoga Shakti Peetam



Pradakshina by the Students of Veda Vyasa Vidya Mandir

Swamiji distributes prasada to the students

Nachiketanjali (English Monthly) September 2013, Regd. with the Registrar of Newspaper for India Under No. APENG/2010/34641. Postal Registration No. HD/1139/2013-15

❖ Date of Publication: 20th of every month ❖ Date of Posting: 26th & 27th of every month



“Land and water are not really separate things,
but they are separate words,
and we perceive through words.”

- David Rains Wallace



SUPERFLO

Quality that speaks for itself... TM

www.superflo.net