

Nachiketanjali

...an offering



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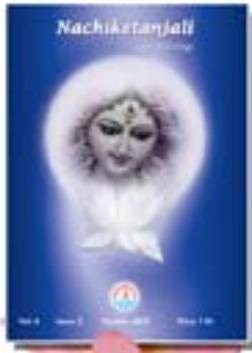
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- ✓ *Donors receive annual report card and are welcome to interact with our children.*
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'O Devi, You are the soul of Sabda-Brahman ... You are Bhagavathi embodying the Vedas ... You are the intellect, by which the essence of all scriptures is comprehended ... You are Shri who has invariably taken Her abode in the heart of Vishnu ... You are indeed Gauri who has established Herself with Shiva ... Gently smiling, pure, resembling the full moon's orb, beautiful like the splendour of excellent gold is Your face! ... O Devi I bow down to You ...'

Source: Devi Mahatmyam

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Every Failure Leads To Success

It is a true fact that almost all human beings have encountered obstacles in their life's achievements. No one is exempted. But it is only a few who have the courage to overcome them. And they are the ones who succeed in their lives. Some of us get disturbed even with trivial problems. We feel we have lost everything in our lives.

Encountering obstacles is a normal phenomenon and we need to realize that. In fact they are life's lessons. They are stepping stones to progress in life. Have we ever tried to understand why these obstacles occur in our lives? Sometimes it may be because of our over confidence or sloppiness while dealing with things. But don't get discouraged. Every problem has a solution. And all our problems are transitory. An intelligent person utilizes the obstacles as stepping stones and finally achieves success.

Success and failure are two sides of the same coin. Success works like a medicine whereas failure gives us the opportunity to try a new approach. We should learn from our failures. In this process we learn valuable lessons, which help us progress in the right way. When a child begins to walk, it might falter in the first few steps, but the child never gives up. The child rises again and learns to walk within no time. This is the right approach towards life. Tenzing Norgay could climb Mt Everest only after repeated failures. If he had given up after the first failure he would not have been known to the world. Every sports man has faced failure at least once in his life.

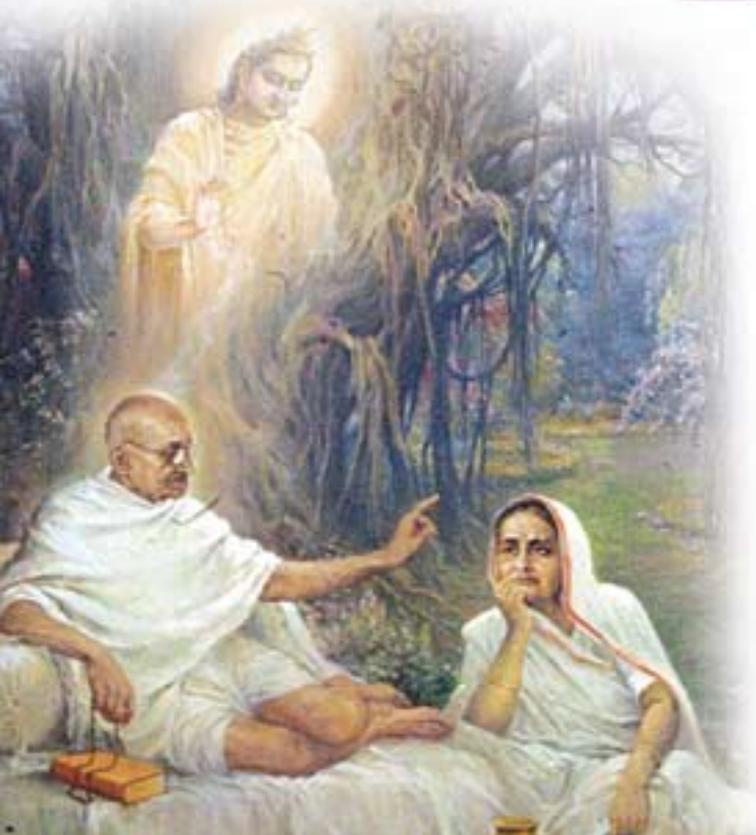
Initially the obstacles might appear like huge mountains. But when we learn to climb it step by step playing caution, it is easy to reach its peak where success awaits us. In fact if there is no failure how can we understand the value of success? We are fortunate as life has given us the scope to evolve through success and failures.

- Subhadra K.

Gandhi on **Bhagavad Gita**



‘‘*The Gita is the universal mother. She turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks. A true votary of Gita does not know what disappointment is. He ever dwells in perennial joy and peace that passeth understanding. But that peace and joy come not to skeptic or to him who is proud of his intellect or learning. It is reserved only for the humble in spirit who brings to her worship a fullness of faith and an undivided singleness of mind.*



There never was a man who worshipped her in that spirit and went disappointed. I find solace in the Bhagavad Gita that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad Gita. I find a verse here and a verse there, and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies -- and my life has been full of external tragedies -- and if they have left no visible or indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of Bhagavad Gita.’’

Religion that is misused & Spirituality that is abused!

Dear Sadhak!

It is not that easy to understand life and that too at a very tender age, especially when worldly things are right in front of our eyes, tempting like never before. You might have grown up with your education but the real quest and passion that is seen in your well behaved and mannered attitude will make you a man of wisdom and fetch you that which many *Sadhakas* are unable to get even after spending years of *Sadhana* in solitude.

People say, 'there was a time when religion was misused and today spirituality is abused.' But don't you think that it is all about our own perception that keeps modifying, not the religion or spirituality? Or is it not the misinterpretation which leads to confusion when self-experience is the testimony for life?

For me, religion is like a wild flower and spirituality is like its fragrance. Remember, religion might be received by senses but spirituality can be perceived only by heart. Religion is read but spirituality is assimilated. Religion is preached but spirituality is practised. Sages who were contemplating on life knew what spirituality is and for the sake of humanity they have presented spirituality in the form of religion. Spirituality is the subtle expression of gross religion. In fact religion is a by-product of spirituality. Just as this universe is the body of God and God is the essence, similarly religion is like a body and spirituality is its essence.

Dear Sadhak! In today's world, being a human being itself is a great thing and I can see a wonderful person in you reflecting all great qualities to know, to practice, to express and above all to hug life in its purest form. In fact your pursuit to know that which is unknown is inspiring and touching. Therefore keep doing; never stop anywhere till you find your very roots in life itself. Never ask

anything less than life in its pristine form. Never compromise with yourself when life knocks at the door.

My prayers are always with you. My best wishes are always with you. My heart is always with you. Please don't write off what you are and have because we need people like you in every field to bring back the forgotten glory. I don't want you to brood over the golden past but want you to make the best use of this very moment to make every moment a golden moment, because I believe that you are the real pillar of our nation, our glorious past, our enlightened and awakened society.



I wish, we would have many more youth like you... to inspire... to awaken ... to charge... to shake... to bang sleeping souls to awaken them to their potential and to make them stand on their own feet; to know what it means to stand on one's own feet and the kind of strength and courage it demands. Remember, you are the chosen one who will not make much difference for yourself unless you experience that you are the chosen one with all the vigor, vitality, passion and potential.

Keep that spirit alive within, because who knows when and where, how it will be useful. I hope you can make the best use of whatever you feel that you have. Don't miss the opportunity to be the first person to serve and the last person to get recognition.

I wish, I would have been there throughout with you to see you taking every step, to see you growing into religion ... eager to know, to assimilate, to process, to hug life in its pristine beauty where only spirituality exists and nothing else.

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri



The land of the Mahatma...



What makes you happy? What was the happiest moment of your life?? Simple question but very tough to answer. Well there can be few moments, instances, episodes that you can recount like buying your first car, getting into a reputed college and so on. But what about those small-small episodes that give you immense happiness accidentally, for instance getting a pat on your back by your favourite teacher, mostly such instances are forgotten but then there are some, you can cherish for a lifetime.

I want to share one such episode that happened with me. Please leave away the negativity of what happened to me, else it will ruin the very purpose of sharing this story. This happened while I was in the UK, studying at the University of Bradford. In a new country and a new setup you tend to be more aware of the surroundings, culture and behaviour, basically you are more observant because you in many ways are “under observation yourself”. I was aware of the under-currents and the cold behaviour by certain section of their society towards Asians. But when I had to face it myself it ended up being one of the most memorable moments of my life.

I was travelling in the train from Leeds to Bradford. As my station was approaching, I went and stood near the door to alight. There were 3 native youngsters around their early twenties, standing near the door. Soon after I stood next to them, one of them started coughing and his saliva fell on my face. Thinking it was by mistake,

I ignored and reached my backpack to remove some tissues. That’s when he spat on me again and then started laughing aloud. His other two friends were laughing too at this shameful act and he again repeated it. I was taken aback and disgusted. I had heard about such things, read about it and to an extent seen it myself but this was right on my face!!!

Honestly in a strange country, amongst strangers it was tough to react. My heart was revolting against the act but my mind was forcing me to handle it calmly and I don’t know how at that very moment, I just smiled back at the individual. He seemed a bit flummoxed but that was enough to boost my confidence. He seemed to have been caught off-guard with this reaction. I didn’t just want to leave them like that. What they had done was shameful and I wanted them to realize it. What an irony it was, a section of society considering itself superior than the others, then stoop down to such low practices and take pride in it!

The teaching and values you are brought up with, sub-consciously play every time, especially when you are in an adverse situation. And I guess that’s what prompted me to calmly turn around and say to the offender –“Do it again if it gives you happiness, it doesn’t bother me, because I come from the land of Mahatma”. The expression on his face at that time was priceless. He had been slapped with sweet words, the least of the reaction he had ever expected. There were no apologies but his crestfallen face was a proof that he had been humbled.

I left the train with a combined feeling, my emotions- all mixed up. I was filled with this amazing pride for our country which teaches us tolerance and dignity and moreover I realized the amazing gift we have in the form of Gandhism ... it makes you salvage any situation. I was proud of what I had done and how I had reacted. That day was one of those happiest moments I was talking about.

- Suresh Raju



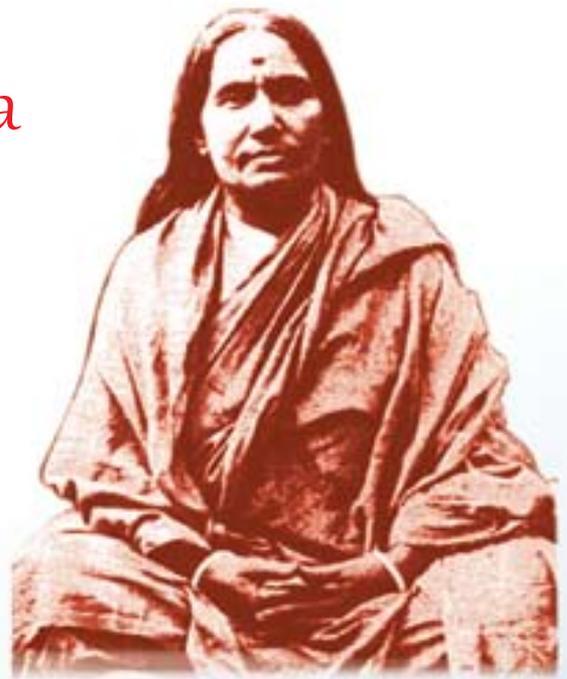


Gauri Ma

Three types of people are generally found in this world. The first type is mainly interested in worldly enjoyment; the second type enjoys the world but also keeps his mind on God; and the third type is totally devoted to spiritual pursuits.

Gauri Ma, belonged to the third group of people. Gauri Ma was born in 1857 and was the fourth child of seven children. She had two brothers and four sisters. Her father Parvati Charan Chattopadhyay, and mother Giribala Devi were both very devoted to God. Even from her very childhood she was fond of decorating the family shrine and would worship the Lord in her own way. She was a strict vegetarian and never craved for good food or fancy clothes. She was first sent to a Christian missionary school where she excelled and was rewarded with a gold medal. But she left the school because she could not tolerate the religious views of the missionaries. Other girls also followed Gauri Ma's example and enrolled in a Hindu school. When she was nine years old she ran away from home to take initiation from a holy man who had an ashram at Namita. She then returned home with the consent of her Guru. Sometime after her initiation, a nun from Vrindaban gifted her a statue of Vishnu which she accepted as her husband. For the rest of her life she carried Him wherever she went and served Him.

Observing her dispassion for the world, her relatives tried to get her married when she was thirteen. She locked herself in a room with the statue of Vishnu and refused to come out, until her mother came to her rescue and promised that they will not force her to marry. When she was eighteen years old she left with her uncle and aunt on a pilgrimage and there she disappeared into the huge crowds. Her relatives searched for her in vain. After running away from her relatives she joined a group of monks and nuns with whom she visited several holy places, travelling by train or on foot and finally reached Haridwar after



three months. In order to disguise herself she cut her hair and wore an ochre cloth. She tried to hide her physical beauty by smearing ashes and dirt on her body and at times pretended to be crazy so that no one would bother her.

For three years she observed severe austerities, repeated her *Mantra* from sunrise to sunset and often begged for food. Next she went to Vrindaban and had the vision of God and lost outward consciousness. Radhamohan, a devotee of Krishna, was greatly impressed by Gauri Ma's renunciation and devotion and invited her to his home in Calcutta. It was here that she met Balamram Basu who asked her if she would like to visit Sri Ramakrishna. To which she replied that she has seen many monks and has no desire to see another and if He has real power then He should pull her towards Him. The pull came one morning when she saw two live human feet in the place of her Vishnu statue and she felt that somebody had tied a string to her heart and was pulling it. She passed the whole day and night in a semi-conscious state. Next day Balamram took her to Sri Ramakrishna. When they arrived they found the Master winding a thread around a stick and singing a *Bhajan* on Krishna. When she bowed down to the Master she saw the same two human feet that she had seen the previous day in place of the Vishnu statue.

Gauri Ma stayed with the Holy Mother. She regarded Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother as her own parents and was very free with them. When a disciple was performing too much austerity the Master would say: “please eat your meals regularly and then practice your *Japam* and meditation. The Divine mother will not be angry if you eat first and then call on Her. It is hard to practice spiritual disciplines if one’s health is not good.” Gauri Ma was happy in Dakshineswar, but she had a desire to practice more austerities in a secluded place, so she left for Vrindaban with the Master’s blessings.

After Master’s passing away she felt an inner urge to fulfill the mission which Sri Ramakrishna had designated for her- that of educating women. In 1894 she founded the Sri Saradeshwari Ashrama for women. She travelled to various parts of the country and lectured on the need for women’s education in India. She had a magnanimous personality and the power to convince people. Although she was a penniless nun, her faith in the Master brought success. Once when Gandhiji came to Calcutta, she met him and spoke to him in fluent Hindi about *Nishkama Karma*, and mentioned the ideal of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda for the present age, ‘Serve man as God’. Gandhiji was overwhelmed with her personality, and appreciated her work among women.

An organization succeeds, not because it is big, or because it is long established, but because there are people in it who live it, sleep it, dream it and build future plans for it. Gauri Ma practiced this in her life. Because she led such a pure, dedicated and unostentatious life herself, she was a wonderful exemplar for her students. She used to tell them, “Remember, the beauty of a woman is not enhanced through clothes and cosmetics, but through physical and mental purity.” On March 1st Gauri Ma handed over her beloved image of Vishnu to Durga Devi, and passed away repeating her *Mantra* silently. Her body was cremated at Cassipore, where the body of her beloved Guru, Sri Ramakrishna had been cremated.

They lived with God by Swami Chetanananda



The Nine Nights

Navaratri is a mile stone in the life of a Yogi. At night you are not as active as you are in the day. You feel more lethargic and you are filled with inertia. These nine nights is a procedure where you try to overcome all your weaknesses, negative energies and eventually try to know your strength. Truly speaking these nine nights are a wonderful process where you unfold all the layers of ignorance and discover your true nature.

- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri

SECURITY

Whenever the world's vibratory balance of good and evil is disturbed by an accumulation of harmful vibrations, the result of man's wrong thinking and wrong doing, we will see devastation banish selfishness – of the individual, industrial, political, national, and we will have no more wars.

Individuals and nations can be protected from utter destruction if we live by heavenly ideals of brotherhood, industrial co-operation and international exchange of earthly goods and experiences.

If we call the Earth our country, then we shall, by a process of justice and international assembly, unselfishly distribute the goods of the world according to the needs of people. We shall try to be like the Divine ones who have come on earth again and again to show us the way.

Atheistic ideologies are battling to drive religion out. The one thing that will help to eliminate world suffering more than money, houses or any other material aid is to meditate and transmit to others, the Divine Consciousness that we feel. Every day we have to radiate His Consciousness to others.



God is love; His plan for creation can be rooted only in love. Every saint who has penetrated to the core of reality has testified that a Divine universal plan exists and that it is beautiful and full of joy. Those who have found God through their own Self-Realization – those who have actually experienced God, they alone can love mankind. Perhaps not impersonally, but as their blood brothers, children of the same one father.

How can anyone dare to hate any other human being, of whatever race, when God lives and breathes in all? The soul cannot be confined within man-made boundaries.

If you contact God within yourself, you will know that He is in everyone, that He has become the children of all races. If the whole world could love with that universal love, there would be no need for men to arm themselves against one another.

The broad sympathies and discerning insight needed for the healing of earthly woes cannot flow from a mere intellectual consideration of human diversities, but from knowledge of men's deepest unity with God.

The grim march of world political events points inexorably to the truth that without spiritual vision, people perish. Where indeed may man go now, if not to his source and origin, the spirit within Him?

Within itself, the human mind can and must liberate energies greater than those within stones and metals, lest the material atomic giant, newly unleashed, turn on the world in mindless destruction.

This world will always have turmoil and trouble. We have to go to the shelter of God, where the Masters have gone, and whence they are watching and helping the world.

True happiness, lasting happiness, lies only in God, 'having whom no other gain is greater'. We have no other security in the world, no other

freedom. So, we have to strive deeply to contact Him in meditation- every morning and night, as well as throughout the day in all work and duties we perform. The successful yogi can stand unshaken midst the crash of breaking worlds; he is secure in the realization. "Lord, where I am, there Thou must come".

Live for God and God alone. Outside of God there is no security; no matter where we go, delusion can attack us. We must become sons of God now and realize we are His children, so that we may be rid of this dream delusion forever. We are all pure spirit.

We have to awaken in God's immortal light! We ought not to keep our minds so absorbed in the sad and lightening dreams of this life. Why worry about the unpleasant surprises in the plot of this world movie? We are here just for a little while. We have to learn the lesson from the drama of life and find our freedom.

Just beneath the shadows of this life is God's wondrous light. The universe is a vast temple of His presence. When we meditate, we will find doors opening to Him everywhere. When we are in communion with Him, not all the ravages of the world can take away that joy and peace.

In life and death, in disease, famine, pestilence or poverty, may we ever cling to thee! We have to pray to God for help to realize that we are immortal spirit, untouched by the changes of childhood, youth, old-age and world upheavals.

- *Siluveru Sudarshan*



"The essence of all Vedas is Peace".

- **Sri Ramana Maharshi**



Reflections

"Working with the third grade class at Nachiketa Tapovan over the last six weeks has been such an informative and transformative experience. The enthusiasm that these young students bring with them into the classroom coupled with the interest and passion of the school staff, administration, and teachers has created an amazing environment for learning at Nachiketa Tapovan. It has been such a pleasure to work with such zealous children; their eagerness to learn and curiosity for the way the world around them works is inspirational. The ability of the school to harness the energy of the young students and use it to propel them into directions of success became evident quite soon after we began our volunteer work. Techniques such as meditation and programs such as the crafts initiative greatly improve the children's mental well being, allowing them to get the most out of their time in the classroom. The emphasis that the school puts on encouraging the various strengths of the different children, instead of blindly pushing all students down the same one-directional linear path, is so important, and is something that I have very rarely witnessed at other grade schools.

Having the chance to interact with such phenomenal kids over the past 6 weeks has been such a pleasure for us all. We have learned far more from these kids and the wonderful school of Nachiketa Tapovan than we could ever hope to have imparted during our short time teaching. We cannot wait to see what the future holds for the fantastic students of Nachiketa Tapovan!"

- **Arathi Ponugoti**, Duke University



The Living God

He who is in you and outside you,
Who works through all hands,
Who walks on all feet,
Whose body are all ye,
Him worship, and break all other idols!

He who is at once the high and low,
The sinner and the saint,
Both God and worm,
Him worship—visible, knowable, real,
omnipresent,
Break all other idols!

In whom is neither past life,
Nor future birth nor death,
In whom we always have been
And always shall be one,
Him worship. Break all other idols!

Ye fools! Who neglect the living God,
And His infinite reflections with which the
world is full.
While ye run after imaginary shadows,
That lead alone to fights and quarrels,
Him worship, the only visible!
Break all other idols!

“May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls—and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship.”

-Swami Vivekananda



**Source: The Complete Works of
Swami Vivekananda, 5:137**

YOGA FOR YOUR HEALTH

Asana Siddhi

It is said that without *Asana Siddhi* one cannot achieve the highest goal in life. One may wonder what the difference is between doing *Asanas* and *Asana Siddhi*?

So, before shedding light on *Asana Siddhi* let me try to remind that our culture has been beautifully entwined with science and religion. The physical body and mind were trained culturally, morally, ethically and spiritually for achieving higher goals. All the energies were diverted towards knowing the truth. Therefore, if body was given more importance in religion then mind was taken care of with utmost care in order to know, to assimilate and to present the highest truth to the society. We were prepared that way. We were prepared for that. However, today's scenario is totally different. Not many are willing to believe that there is something beyond human mind and human comprehension.

Asana means a posture and *Siddhi* means occult powers. Therefore *Asana Siddhi* means 'The power of posture'. It is something like acquiring occult powers by practicing *Asana* or gaining inner knowledge of different postures. If one is able to sit for longer time then one can start developing *Asana Sthithi* but not *Siddhi*. For that, one needs to have tremendous control on mind since mind plays a major role in *Asana Siddhi*. One should be able to sit for more than 3 hrs in *Asana* initially. And it should not be for a day or two but a part of one's daily routine. People used to practice consciously or unconsciously *Asana Siddhi* while doing morning *Pooja* and *Archana*. I have seen many *Sadhakas*; they get up early in the morning

and start their special *Poojas* from *Panchopacharas* to *Shodasopacharas* that takes hours together to complete. They immerse themselves in religious practices which demands sitting in one posture for a long time. If we look at Islam religion and *Namaz*, we shall understand that quite a few exercises are for preparing and training of body and mind for the higher truth. If we look at any other religion, we shall find that more importance is attached to special posture and training of the mind.

Therefore, one must know what *Asana* they can perform or practice. One more higher, subtle and pure aspect can be noted. At times we come across great souls who are at peace. In them, *Asana Siddhi* happens on its own. It is so spontaneous and natural, that they need not make any effort. Everything happens on its own. In fact people who have touched their Self will remain calm and quiet and will be sitting hours together without changing their posture. Therefore it is important to know what this self-mastery is all about if one is willing to gain *Asana Siddhi*.

Note: You can try any sitting posture. Use the same posture every day and slowly increase the time. But at the same time please remember to channelize your mind and not engage it in external objects that might create boredom in you. Even watching TV or reading books can divert your mind. Then it is important to know how to engage our mind, is it not? The simplest remedy is to do *Japa* or contemplate on the Self.

- *Swami Nachiketananda Puri*



Siddhasana



Padmasana



Vajrasana



Death

Death is a very fascinating thing. We all acknowledge its existence but never relate it to us or our dear ones. This word is a taboo for many and no one wants to discuss it. It is one mystery which man will never be able to solve in his life time. But, we all know and accept that with death everything belonging to the individual ceases to exist. It might be painful for many but is a welcome for those who are dejected or depressed. Yet, it shows no mercy or favoritism and considers everyone the same.

Let us keep the fear part of death aside and try to understand what happens in and after the death of an individual. It is convenient and comfortable as long as we are not discussing our death. Imagine a person is dead. We all know everything that pertains to him ceases to exist and he is indifferent towards the immediate family, all wailing over the loss or his enemies rejoicing over his death. He just lays still devoid of pain or pleasure that is happening around.

Once a person is dead, the body is disposed as per the religious affiliation. Some are cremated, some are buried in the ground and some are served as food for the vultures. It is a scary thought to think for any living person, but not for the dead. Let's try to understand what happens then? When the body is put to flames what is left is ash which eventually merges into earth. Same is the case with the person who is buried; the body gets dissolved into the earth and becomes earth. If the body is made of *Pancha Tattvas* (Earth, Water, Air, Fire, Ether), at the end of the journey it gets back to those *Tattvas*. We can conclude and ascertain that the body in the end gets back to the source. A fallen twig eventually merges into its source. We can extend this to all the things on the earth -that in the end everything goes back to the source or to rephrase, **"Journey is completed when the merger happens with the source"**.

The message is clear that ultimately everything goes back to the source. This is the message conveyed by nature since time immemorial. This seems to be a message for someone that he has to reach the source to end his journey. **Who is that someone?** We do not know yet. But, the message is loud and clear and that someone has still not got the message and is in slumber. To whom is



the message conveyed? Hmm ... probably to us. US? Wait! Did we not discuss our death in the previous paragraphs? Well, we discussed about our body and not us. Deep inside we believe that, we do not perish along with the body. This is not a mere belief, if we care to hear the inner voice, it echoes the same. So, we are not dead when our body stops functioning. What a relief! Then, when do we actually die? Because, Death means we finished our journey and merged into our source. In other words, the goal is attained and the purpose served. This also brings in a new fact that we are not the body. Then who are we? What are we? We are neither the body nor the mind (that is trying to analyze and understand). We do not have answers yet for this. But, we understood that our goal in life is to go back to our source and that is when our journey ends. Now, it has become a double whammy. We are already confused about who we are? And now we also have to solve the mystery of our source. Probably, if we know who we are, then we shall know our source too.

Let us try to realize who we are. Once we do, the whole mystery unravels and we will know our source too and that marks the end of our journey (Death). I firmly believe this human birth is an opportunity to find out about ourselves and merge ourselves back to our source, in other words lets us strive for our Death.

- A Seeker

Spiritual Quest

Q: If the soul is immortal and pure then why do we behave aberrantly?

A: This can be explained through a story: Four intellectuals of Mathura decided to set out for Prayag by boat. They boarded the boat as evening caved in and were in a great hurry to reach Prayag. They rowed all night taking turns with the oars. At daybreak they thought they had reached their destination. Someone on the banks of the river shouted a greeting, “*Jai Radhey, Jai Radhey!*” then asked, “Why are you people perspiring so much?” The intellectuals answered, “We have been rowing all night in order to reach Prayag at daybreak.” The person on the banks of the river said, “But this is not Prayag! This is Mathura! You have not untied the anchor!” This anchor rope is nothing but ignorance (*Deha-Abhiman*). It keeps us tightly tied to the world and hence we remain devoid of Divinity and Divine behavior which results in aberrant deeds.

Our soul is ever free of bondage but our body as ‘doer’ invites the bondage. Due to our ignorance, our karmic aspects remain worldly and we are unable to break the cycle of birth and re-birth.

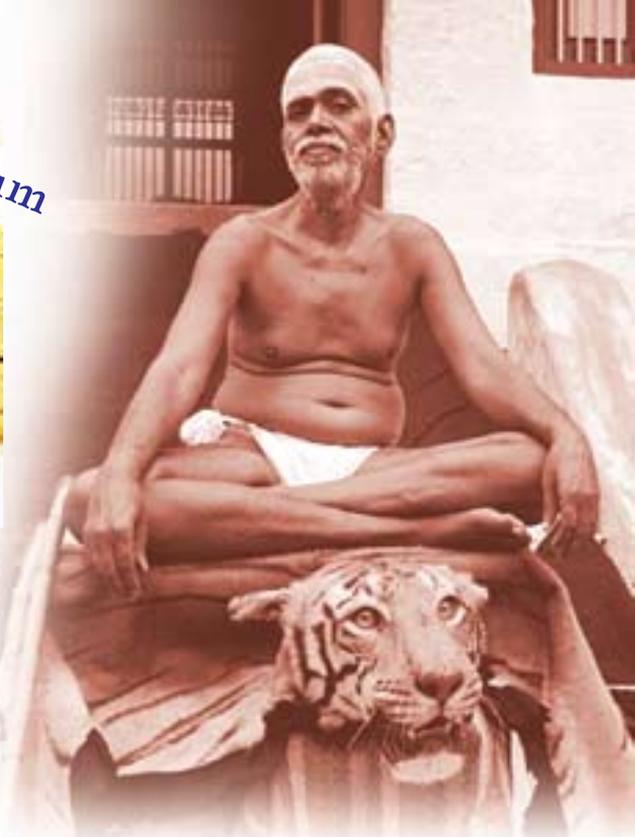
When we are free of ignorance and we establish our real being our *Atma Swarup*, the tendency to do wrong deeds vanishes. *Samskaras* are reduced to ashes.

Once a person realizes his Divine nature he serves all, seeing Divinity in all. This is *Parabhakti* - pinnacle of knowledge -- when a person sees the Lord in all. He becomes an embodiment of love and service.

**Source: WHO AM I?
Swami Dr. Vishwa Mitterji Maharaj**



The Song of the Poppadum



In 1914 or 1915, Bhagavan was living in Virupaksha Cave with his mother, who did most of the cooking. He himself was a skilled cook and both then and later often helped to prepare the food. On one occasion his mother was making *poppadum*, a thin round cake made of black gram flour fried crisp, and she called him to help her. Instead of doing so, however, he composed this poem giving instructions for spiritual development under the symbolism of making *poppadum*.

*Try and make some poppadums.
Eat them and your longing satisfy.
Don't roam the world disconsolate.
Heed the word, unique, unspoken
Taught by the teacher true who teaches
The truth of Being-Awareness-Bliss.
Try and make some . . . satisfy.*

*Take the black-gram, ego-self,
Growing in the fivefold body-field
And grind it in the quern,
The wisdom-quest of 'Who am I?'
Reducing it to finest flour.
Try and make some . . . satisfy.*

*Mix it with pirandai-juice,
Which is holy company,
Add mind-control, the cummin-seed,*

*The pepper of self-restraint,
The salt of non-attachment,
And asafoetida, the aroma of virtuous inclination.
Try and make some . . . satisfy.*

*In the Heart-mortar place the dough.
And with mind-pestle inward turned,
Pound it hard with strokes of 'I', 'I',
Then flatten it with the rolling-pin
Of stillness on the level slab (of Being).
Work away, untiring, steady, cheerful.
Try and make some . . . satisfy.*

*Put the poppadum in the ghee of Brahman
Held in the pan of infinite silence
And fry it over the fire of knowledge.
Now as I transmuted into That,
Eat and taste the Self as Self,
Abiding as the Self alone.
Try and make some . . . satisfy.*

Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan

... and in silence reveals the chaos

The horizon is about to crack...
And the sun is about to rise...
Leaving the identity of what I was...
I retired to the abode of silence...

Lost in the noise of the world I never realized...
How chaotic it was inside...
While in immense pain and suffering...
I surrendered myself to the Divine silence...
From the world I live within...

Come and be with me...
In silence
In my love
In my life...
Heal me this moment...
From all the misery, pain and suffering...
Of the known and unknown...

Come and be with me...
In silence
To guide
To hold
And to let me be
In your love, compassion and in gratitude

Let me transform and transcend...
Let me ascend and bask in the beyond
Born from your heart...
Live in this world...
Like the droplets of rushing rain...
Falling on the earth...
Let me fall back in your heart again

- A Seeker

The birth of an eternal slave- Devaki Ma

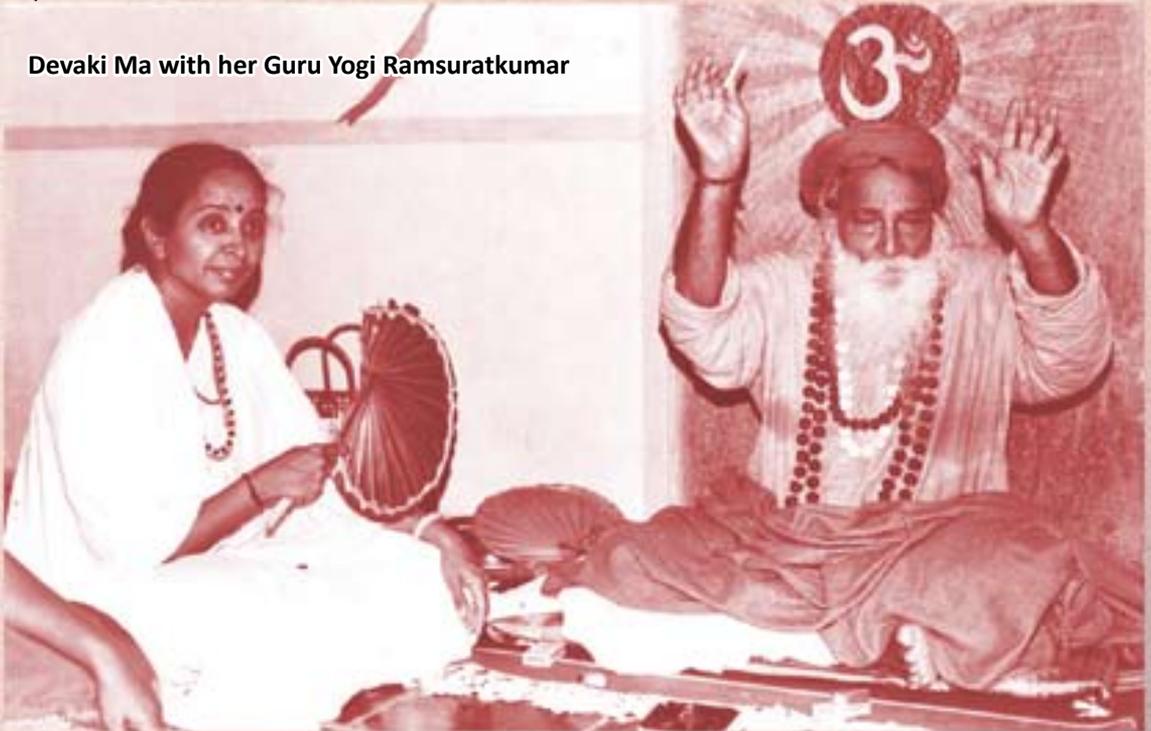
Andal, the saint poet of Tamil Nadu, in her ecstatic outpourings in praise of her beloved Krishna, says that the severe austerities practiced by her, has only one prayer as the goal, to serve the Lord in this and repeated *Janmas*, to be the slave of the Lord in every age and birth. The spirit of Andal survives today and we have many wonderful men and women who seek to serve the Lord with single minded devotion.

It was December 1986; Ramanashram at Tiruvannamalai was plunged in darkness owing to a local powercut. A young woman stood in front of Bhagavan Sri Ramana's statue with tears streaming down her face. The pain was not due to any bereavement or personal difficulty but expressed the soul's need for spiritual upliftment. "Bhagavan, I have been wandering for so many years in search of a Guru; can you not show me a person like you or Bhagavan Ramakrishna to guide me to God?"

Symbolically the lights came on, in an instant and the young woman stood transfixed before Ramana Bhagavan; with the faint stirrings of hope in her heart.

The young woman was Devaki, an M. Phil in Physics and a senior lecturer in a college. Born of middleclass Brahmin parents and seventh in a large family of nine, the girl was brilliant in her studies and excelled in whatsoever activity she undertook. She was devoted to Lord Krishna from childhood. Collegiate education endowed her with the trappings of modernity. The worldly life of her family members and her peers had only a marginal influence on her. Though distracted now and then, she rarely swerved from her path of spiritual seeking. The Ramakrishna Math very often proved her refuge, for meditation and further learning of the life of a *Sadhak*. Her wide readings of the lives of saints and her conversations with *Sadhaks* established her in the life of a *Sadhak* and all her spare time from her collegiate activity found her pursuing things spiritual. But her *Sadhana* required a direction, a focal point, as it were, because she knew that the numerous Swamijis she had met till then could not supply her with the required guidance.

Devaki Ma with her Guru Yogi Ramsuratkumar



Nevertheless, she trudged on; her restless eyes always looking for the Godman, the Mahatma, the Guru, who would finally put her on the right path and lead her to the effulgent presence of the creator. Her sharp intellect would not accept anything less, though her devotion to God and humility made her respect every *Sadhak*, every *Sannyasi*, and every person who struggled on the spiritual path.

Little did Devaki realize that her prayers before Ramana Maharishi were being answered instantly. Within the next few days she was going to experience the most momentous event of her life, the *darshan* of Bhagavan Yogi Ramsuratkumar, the realized soul, the God-child of Tiruvannamalai, who also must have been waiting for the correct disciple, much as Ramakrishna Paramahansa did, awaiting His dynamic disciples who were to transform India and spread abroad India's message over the globe in the next century.

Devaki entered the holy precincts of Sannadhi street at Tiruvannamalai into the magnetic presence of the Yogi, and her search ended. Tears streamed down her face in an emotional upheaval, which washed away the pain and sufferings of the years of search. "What does Devaki want from this beggar?" Devaki's answer was simplicity itself: "I want you to show me God."

The great saint roared with laughter; he must have immensely loved the elegance and simplicity, the directness with which this young woman approached so vast a subject.

Then began a period of severe trial and austerity when Devaki took every conceivable opportunity to be near this embodiment of God, whose very presence, every glance, every word and gesture radiated a spiritual energy which she was greedy to imbibe. Serving him became her one goal in life, when some understanding of the Yogi's ways and work ever so slowly was revealed to her. No other thoughts crossed her head. She could not even take part in a conversation unless it was about the Yogi. With reluctance bordering on aversion she continued her

job of teaching physics when her body, spirit and mind ached to be near the Master, serve him, to understand his message, to preserve it for posterity. With missionary zeal she sang his praises to everyone who would listen and to many who would not, who merely laughed derisively at her divine madness.

Yes, it was and is a divine madness that drives Devaki to serve hand and foot, this self-proclaimed beggar. She nurtures his precious body with the jealous love of a mother for her child, attends to his correspondence with the zeal of a perfect secretary, watches every moment and movement with care bordering on anxiety to see that the precious energies of this Godman are not frittered away in fruitless anger at the pathetically ignorant public which flock to him, supplicants for miracles.

Such is the total devotion of Devaki that Bhagavan Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar has finally decided to lead her into the path of total merger with the Self, for which again intense spiritual training is imparted to her. We are living in momentous times when we are privileged to witness this great process of Realization. To watch the path trod by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharishi, Parama Guru Papa Ramdas of Kanhangad, Pujya Sri Mataji Krishna Bai, Yogi Ramsuratkumar and the countless Yogis, Mahatmas and Gurus who have made this resplendent land of ours into a spiritual powerhouse for the entire world. It is my earnest prayer that at least some of us will be inspired to emulate Devaki in her single minded devotion, unswerving attachment to the eternal and the enormous sacrifice of things worldly to attain the goal of merger with God. May Yogi Ramsuratkumar grace us with strength and energy to pursue this noble end, the only worthwhile goal of humanity.

**Extracted from 'The Introduction' to BHAGAVAN
YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR PAAMAALAI by
Sri T.P.M Meenakshisundaram**

JUST AS DARKNESS IS THE ABSENCE OF LIGHT, EVIL IS THE ABSENCE OF GOOD

Vijaya Dasami – A celebration of good over evil

Victory of Sri Rama over the powerful Ravana, King of Lanka



Ravana's 10 heads depict Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Moha (delusion), Lobha (Greed), Mada (pride), Maatsarya (Envy), Manas (the mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (Will) and Ahamkara (the Ego).

The head controls our destiny, the 10 heads of Ravana controlled his actions and ultimately led to his destruction.

In our minds, the evil force within us consistently attempts to break in and hold captive... It's up to us to awaken "the Good" to that extent that "the Evil" is bound to bow...

End of Agnyatavas of Pandavas

The Pandavas in Mahabharata had spent twelve years of *Vanavas*, or exile to the forest, followed by one year of *Agnyatavas* (period of undisclosed identity). The brothers hid their weapons in a hole in a tree, before entering the Kingdom of Virat to complete the final year of *Agnyatavas*. After that year, on Vijaya dasami, they recovered the weapons, declared their true identities and defeated Kauravas, who had attacked King Virat to steal his cattle.



This incident again depicts the triumph of Dharma over Adharma.



Devi Durga's triumph over the buffalo demon Mahisha

Mahishāsura (an ambitious demon who had observed penance) had the power not to be defeated by a male or any God. Mahishasura, thus misusing his powers, unleashed a reign of terror on earth, heaven and the nether worlds.

To gain noble virtues, all evil tendencies in the mind must be destroyed. This destruction is represented by the Goddess Durga. Mahishasura, the buffalo stands for *Tamo Guna*, the quality of laziness, darkness, ignorance and inertia. We have these qualities too. We love to sleep. Although we may have a lot of energy and potential inside us, we prefer to do nothing - just like the buffalo that likes to lie in pools of water.

In the Durga Devi Havana (sacrifice), we invoke that Divine Power within us to destroy our animalistic tendencies.

Death and destruction in the external world should not be considered as defeat. Nor should outward success and prosperity be viewed as conquest. What truly matters is the inner conquest of our lower selves in order to move closer to our true Self.



Compiled by Neeru & Harini

Going to school

It was a Monday morning. The normal hustle bustle of office goers, school buses, shops re-opening filled the roads. Ma could be seen hurrying, heading to the garage with keys in one hand and her daughter's back pack in the other. The children were still in Monday morning blues and reluctantly got into the car. They always took the back road although it was bumpy with speed breakers and mucky with wet mud in the slightest of a shower. The good part was that there was less traffic and there were no unpredictable traffic jams. Moreover you could glance at the village, the cattle, the puppies on the street and much more on this road.

Suddenly her son caught sight of a dog on the side of the road, lying still and with a stream of blood trickling down its forehead. The unusual scene although sad, excited the boy and made him alert. Soon his frightened sister and mother too happened to look. If not for the red stream, they would have easily ignored it for a sleeping dog.

It was sad, especially as they had a pet of their own. How cruel? Who could have done such a mean thing as to run over an innocent animal? He was now dead. They paid no attention – the security or the workers at the adjacent construction site. Ma and kids wanted to stop by and do something. But there wasn't anything to do plus they had just time enough to enter the school gate without getting a tardy note.

School was done and it was time to return home. They took the same road back home with the kids fighting each other to tell their mother their respective experiences that day. 'One at a time, else I cannot hear either of you', Ma advised. Soon they reached the spot where they found the bleeding dog. The three of them couldn't wait to see what happened to the poor creature. It wasn't to be seen in that spot. They looked here and there and finally Ma spotted the body a few yards away in an empty field. So someone had cleared it off the roadside.



Next day and every day after, the three of them saw the stiff white fur far away, slowly diminishing either due to decay or vultures etc feasting on it. Ma remarked, 'Death doesn't spare anyone be it a dog or a beggar or a king or a saint, we all perish the same way.' The boy thought for a while and asked, 'Ma, if we all have to die one day, why bother going to school, working hard, being good etc etc'. Mother thought for a while and replied, 'because that's exactly what we are here to do ... between every birth and death, we are all going to "school", each attending a class that befits them and attending exams accordingly. What we do – going to school, growing up, getting educated, making a living, living with family and friends is all part of that bigger "school". The realized Masters and Saints are our teachers in this "school". Just like your teachers; they come to school not to learn any more but to impart their knowledge to you children'.

The boy and the girl smiled with glee watching a little puppy crossing the road, wagging his cute brown tail. They were heading to school!

- *Harini N.*

Divine Design

Once there lived a school teacher in a village. He used to take pride of his proficiency in Mathematics. One day, in hot summer, he was going to a nearby village by walk. It was extremely hot and he was not having an umbrella to shield his bald head from the scorching Sun. There were no trees in the vicinity to at least take shelter.

After walking some distance, to his greatest relief, he saw a huge Banyan tree. He went and rested under its cool shade. While looking at the big branches with wide spread foliage, his sight fell upon the tiny fruits of the tree. He was surprised at the small size of the fruits for a huge tree. He thought perhaps God is poor in mathematics and does not have a relative sense of proportion. He created a slender pumpkin creeper with big fruits where as a large Banyan tree with such tiny fruits.

As the proud school teacher was lost in his thoughts, a strong wind blew and the tiny fruits started falling. One of the fruits hit his bald head with a force. Since it fell from a height, though the fruit was small, the impact was strong. His head reeled in pain. Wisdom dawned on the arrogant teacher as he realized that if the Banyan fruit was big in proportion to the tree; he would have been dead with a broken head. God is so kind and considerate. He knew that travelers would take shelter under this huge tree. To avoid any harm coming to them he made the fruits small. God's creation is perfect! It is foolish to judge His ways and His Divine design. Thanking God and seeking His forgiveness, the teacher left with all humility.

Petty minds cannot comprehend the Divine Design. Knowledge coupled with humility is wisdom.

- A Seeker



Anger Management



Why do you get angry? Because your mom made milk instead of coffee? Because your friend tore your notebook? Or is it because your younger brother or sister broke your phone?

Well, it could be any of these reasons. Usually a person gets angry when someone does something or something happens that he doesn't like.

Now, what do you do when you are angry? Scream your head off? Bash up the person who made you angry? Or will you sit down and try to calm yourself?

Most of you would say that you would sit down and calm yourself, but some of you who say it just do so for the sake of it.

Fact is that, when you get angry, you tend to do stupid things.

For example, some guy in school comes and hits you and you have a very short temper, you tend to react. You might hit him back very hard or use some unnecessary words. Now if this boy goes and tells the teacher, who gets into trouble? Obviously you.

So the main thing to remember when you get angry is, don't react but respond. Again, there is a great similarity but a huge difference between the meanings of these two words. Both of them mean

that you are returning something verbally, physically or mentally. But looking at the difference, to respond is nothing but to react in a favorable manner.

I read a book from the Chinmaya Yuva Kendra, which taught me an important lesson. Drop Assumptions. A person, be it a child or an adult or even a murderer, have their own reason as to why they did whatever they did. Usually their reason is valid (except in the case of a murderer). You should never assume the reason for which a person has done something, for this can lead to a lot of misunderstandings, and misunderstandings lead to unnecessary reactions.

So, as I said, don't react, respond. Let's take the same example once more, some guy comes and hits you in school. Instead of just slapping him back, you can use the grey matter given to you by The Lord. You should consider all the possibilities, like why did he hit me, was he trying to be playful or violent, was he trying to convey something or was he just messing with me? Then you ask the person the reason for the cause of his or her actions.

There are so many ways to control anger. It could be through *japa*, meditation, *kriya*, *karmayoga* or anything that soothes your mind.

Another way to face anger is to just ignore. Just forgive and forget. That is the most convenient thing to do. It's not easy but it's better than anything else. It takes some heart to try to calm yourself at the peak of your temper; it takes even more, to forgive and forget.

It might not be easy for any of you to put this into practice immediately. As far as I am concerned, I don't think it will be anywhere near easy. Everything comes with practice. Practice this, and it may become your stepping stone to success.

And remember, when you get angry, don't be a fool, be cool.

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



Sri Hastamalakacharya



In the village called Sribali, there was a learned Brahmana named Prabhakara. He was very rich. But neither his learning nor his affluence gave him any pleasure as his only son appeared to be an idiot. The boy was as lovely as Cupid, as lustrous as the sun, pleasant like the moon and patient like the earth. But he behaved like an idiot. It was with great difficulty that his *Upanayana* was performed. He never played, never talked, never got angry and never studied.

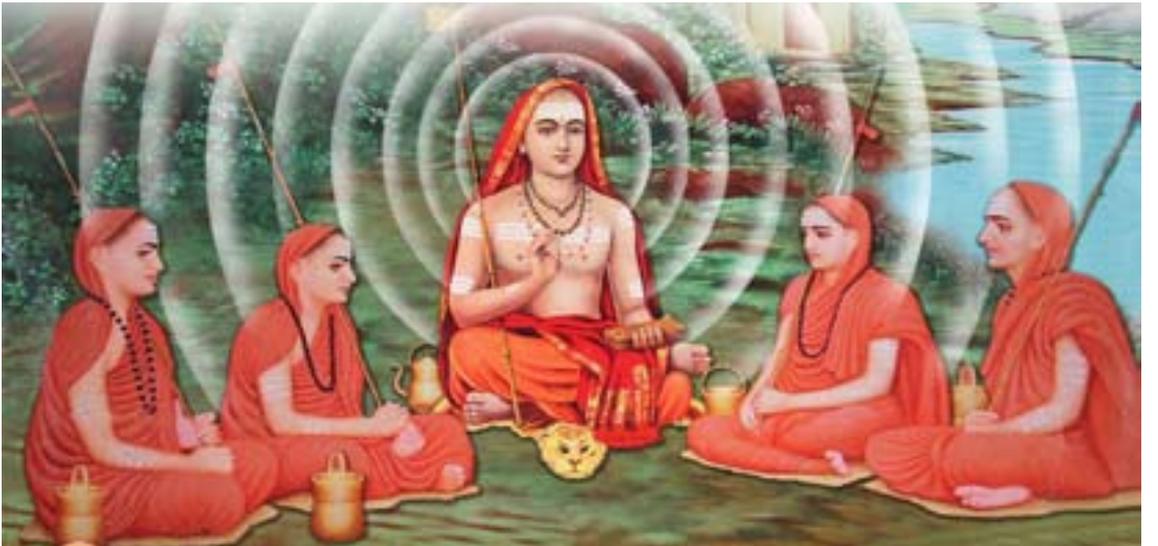
When Sri Shankara chanced to go to that village, the boy was about 13 years of age. The anxious father took his son to Shankara to see if anything could be done for him. In his first glance, the *Acharya* realized the greatness of the boy. He asked him who he was. The boy answered the question in chaste Sanskrit verse, expounding the real nature of the Self. As the boy was not suited to the life of a householder, the *Acharya* accepted him as his disciple and gave him *Sanyasa*. As the essence of truth had been so lucidly explained by the boy, like a gooseberry in one's palm, he was named Hastamalaka.

His extempore verses had the rare distinction of being commented on by the illustrious *Acharya* himself. Though he attended the classes held by the *Acharya*, it was more to verify his own experience than to gain proficiency in dialectics. It was suggested to the *Acharya* that, by reason of

his realization of the Self, Hastamalaka was pre-eminently competent to write a *Vartika* (Sanskrit commentary in verse) on the Sutra Bhashya. The *Acharya* negated the suggestion by pointing out that Hastamalaka's plane of consciousness always dwelt on the supernal Self. He would not stoop to write books. When the *Acharya* placed him on a higher level than those engaged in dialectics, the disciples were naturally curious to know how one who was not known to have devoted any attention to learning the *Sastras* could be proficient in realization.

Sri Shankara explained the phenomenon. On the bank of the Jamuna, a great sage was seated in contemplation when some brahmin girls came there to bathe. One of them had a baby two years old. She placed him by the side of the sage and asked him to take care of it till she bathed. The baby slowly crawled into the river and was drowned. The mother was aghast. She took out the dead body of the child and wept bitterly before the sage. The sage, quite oblivious of the happenings awoke from his *samadhi*. He was moved by pity for the grieving mother. By the powers of his yoga, he left his body and entered the body of the child. The dead child sprang into life. That child was Hastamalaka. This explained how he came to have such an all-comprehensive knowledge without any apparent instruction.

Source: Sringeri Sharadha Peetham



Reload yourself

Life is a bundle of experiences. There is no rule that it should constitute only our success. In fact there is no good or bad experience and it is only our reaction towards a particular situation that makes us conclude whether we were correct or incorrect. If correct decision brings us confidence, an incorrect one may lead us to disappointment. But it should always be treated as an experience. Experience will always help us learn to do better if not the best. But still why do we hesitate to share our experiences with people around us? It is for the fear we have within ourselves of being ridiculed if shared. We are afraid of persecution.

In our lives there are few people around us who are always there to support us and in front of whom we can be our own selves. The reason is simple- because they have seen us grow, right from a stage of nothing to becoming something. You are right, it may be our parents, sisters, brothers, or for that matter our friends. Today's modern times are giving us little time to be alone with ourselves. Most of the time goes in office or professional work, cutting down our family time and of course our own time. For few people it may be watching a movie or visiting a club, depending on one's own whims and fancies. But what is the use if it does not bring any happiness but purely sensual or worldly enjoyment.

I am not criticizing the people who visit these places. My point is only that what sort of satisfaction do we draw in the long run except for pinching our own pockets. For a spiritual seeker it may be a visit to his Guru that brings cheer and satisfaction to rejuvenate him amidst the mundane life style. For most of us it should be paying a visit to our own family or friends and these kind of meetings would act like check points to analyze ourselves and help us grow immensely. One such meeting we had arranged for ourselves recently. We had a reunion of

our friends marking the silver jubilee year of our batch of students in college. Every one was surprised to see each other after a long hiatus. They were further surprised seeing the changes, both in physical appearance and also mental make up. We had a gala time, everyone bursting with happiness. We spent the whole day together, everyone's mobile switched off and no connectivity with the world for the day. It was an occasion where we could unwind ourselves, spend time together, eat together and share together.

The striking difference of this meeting from other regular meetings was that, we were just our own selves. No attitude problems, no diplomatic answers, we were true and honest to each other. It just happens when there is no hypocrisy in the minds. It lessens the mental baggage. The whole day was filled with emotions, fun and frolic. Success and failures were equally shared and moments frozen. That day we bid adieu with a resolve that such meetings would happen on a regular basis hereafter. Every one of us has such a group of people, only thing we need is a little determination to gather them at one place. You will realize that such an experience is just a meeting away.

In today's mechanical world, how many people would be kind enough to allow us to be our own selves and lend a shoulder of support in moments of need. Just make a list of your people and be in touch with them over mobile or Facebook. Whatever the medium, the purpose should be gathering all your people at one place. In spiritual terms it is called as *Satsanga* i.e. good company and would there be a better company than our own family or friends? Happy gathering and get ready to replenish yourself. Epitomize the true self.

- Koti Rajasekhar M.



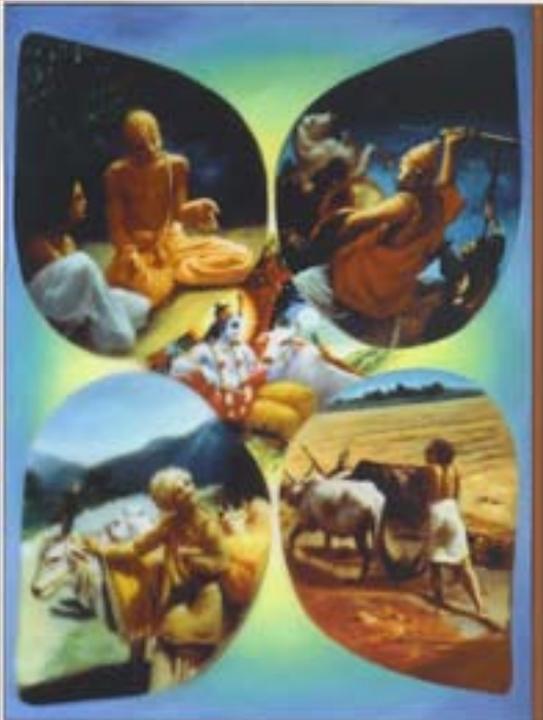
Vedas & Dharma

The main focus of Indian thought has always been the concept of Dharma. Dharma is one of those terms that is really not possible to translate. It refers to the natural laws that uphold the universe, including physical, mental and spiritual principles of right and appropriate action. The Vedas exist primarily to teach Dharma or the right way of living on all levels of our being. There is a family Dharma, the proper relationship of husband and wife, parents and children. There is the social Dharma, the proper relationship of the different groups, classes and strata of society. There is a spiritual Dharma, the pursuit of *Moksha* or the liberation of spirit. There is a Dharmic way to do everything in harmony with the greater universe of consciousness and with respect for all living beings.

All the spiritual traditions of India aim at Dharma from different angles and are therefore called 'Dharmic traditions'. Buddhism called



Lord Brahma receiving Vedas from Lord Hayagriva



itself Buddha Dharma, Jainism as Jain Dharma and Sikhism as Sikh Dharma. The different *Sampradayas* of Hinduism or Sanatan Dharma have also defined themselves as Shaiva Dharma, Shakta Dharma, Vaishnav Dharma and so on.

The term Dharma itself becomes very common in later Vedic literature, where there is an entire category of Dharma Sutras. Many of these, like the *Manu Smriti*, deal with the daily rules of personal and family life and societal conduct. Such a well codified, ceremonial and highly ritualized life, as shown in this greater Vedic literature, reflects very old and intricate customs of an advanced civilization.

**Source: Hidden Horizons
By Dr. David Frawley &
Dr. Navaratna S. Rajaram**

In Fires Will I Stand To gain Your Hand, Mangadu

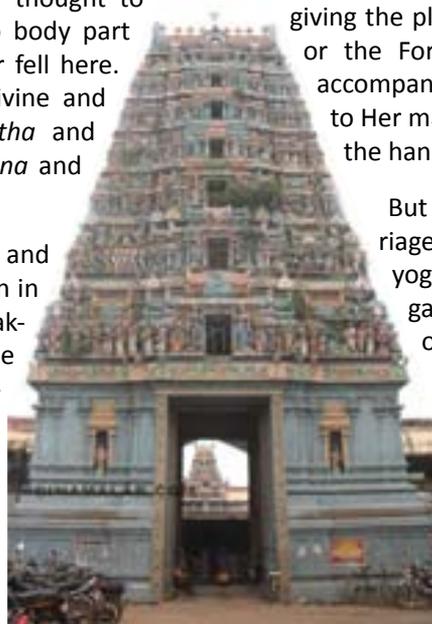


Mangadu is a small suburb in Chennai near Poonamallee. Literally it can be translated two ways, *Mangai* (mango)+ *Kaadu* (forest) or *Mana* (marriage)+*Kaadu* (forest), both having ample reasons for being the name of this place. The place is sometimes wrongly thought to be a *Shakthi Peetha*, for no body part of the burnt Dakshayini ever fell here. However, the place is as Divine and sacred as any *Shakthi Peetha* and has its own interesting *Purana* and traditions.

The fights between Shiva and Parvathi occur time and again in the *Puranas*. Rather than taking it in a negative sense, the broad mind should think beyond and realize that these tiffs were indeed 'played' for the benefit of humanity, its prosperity and well-being. The *Sthala Purana* of Mangadu too begins at one such

fight, when Shiva and Shakthi are strolling about the beautiful gardens of Kailash. Parvathi in a playful mood as ever closes Shiva's eyes throwing the entire creation into darkness and for a second, risking the sustainability of the world. Shiva flares up and in His tremor shaking anger curses Parvathi to be gone from Him.

Devi, accepting Her mistake, comes down to *Bhooloka* (earth) and attracted by the mango groves near the sea (*Mangadu*) decides to stay there and undergo fierce *Tapas* to regain the hand of Shiva. She starts Her *Tapas* in the midst of *Panchagni* or Five Fires. The five fires could represent the five syllables of the *Panchakshari* (Na Ma Shi Va Ya), in eternal meditation of Her Lord or could represent the *Pancha Indriyas* (the five senses) which are to be kept controlled during the penance. The Devi stood on one leg and with one hand raised above Her holding the *Japa mala* and another held in a meditative pose, focusing all Her mind on the Lord of Kailash. The penance went on for a very long time and it is believed that Goddess Lakshmi and Saraswathi came down to keep Her company for the period of penance. In the end, the penance was of course successful and Shiva appeared before Her and agreed to accept Her hand in marriage, thus giving the place its other name, *Manakaadu* or the Forest of Marriage. Parvathi was accompanied by Lakshmi and Saraswathi to Her marriage in Kanchi where She took the hand of Maheshwara once again.



But alas, in the haste and joy of marriage, Kamakshi forgot to put off the yogic fire i.e; the *Panchagni* at Mangadu. Filled with the Divine power of Devi the fire heated up the entire place surrounding Mangadu, making it uninhabitable. Years went by and the lands surrounding Mangadu became parched. It was then that Adi Shankara happened to pass that way and sensing the presence of Ambal he braved the heat to



make it to the place where the *Tapas* was done. He felt the power that resided there and wanted to make it a place of worship for the good of humanity. To bring the heat under control he established a wondrous structure that is seen nowhere else on this planet- The *Ardha Meru*. The *Meru* is in essence a three dimensional projection of the *Sri Chakra* which is the ultimate sacred symbol for all *Shakthas*. The *Ardha Meru* is, on the other hand a half

projected version of the *Chakra* where the *Madhya Bindu* (the dot) and the triangles and circles around it remain in two dimensions, with the rest projected in all the three dimensions. Rather than being made of metal, this *Ardha Meru* was made out of herbs. The *Sthapana* of the *Ardha Meru* reduced the heat in the place and started drawing devotees to the Divine spot of penance. Even today all main *poojas* and offerings are to the *Ardha Meru* alone. *Abhisheka* is, however, not done to the *Ardha Meru* as it is herb based. Adi Shankara also established the code of worship for the place and left, blessing the land and praying for its power to remain and help the layman.

Today Mangadu remains a major temple where devotees throng along on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays to get a glimpse of Devi and the *Ardha Meru*. The sanctum also has a beautiful *Panchaloha* idol of Tapas Kamakshi (in Her penance) complete with *Panchagni* and all.

It is a popular belief that there is nothing without reason that goes ungranted here, as Devi remains in the *Kshetra* in an elated mood of winning back Her Lord. Mangadu is easily reached from Chennai and is one of the places that remains unspoiled by the madness of development.

Source: kshetrapuranas

Kali's Bazaar



Doorways are such small portals
We leave our vastness outside
Whenever we pass through one.

When you entered this world,
You left your Infinitude
On the other side of the womb.

Searching and yearning,
Forever restless,
Driven by incompleteness,
You united once again with peace
On the other side of the tomb.

Why wait?
Die while living,
Die while meditating,
And know you can never
Be severed from your
Boundless, ecstatic nature!

- Lawrence Edwards, PhD.



इकलङ्करो िइइठ = िरुपुवठ

Krupalu Ogeti, Samskrita Bharati, Hyderabad

email:okrupalu@sanskritam.net

(Continued from last issue)

Vibhaktis in order:

Though we have studied the various vibhaktis (forms of nouns) in the order of frequency of usage, let us now summarize in the normal order. However, we will for now take up only singular number (एकवचनम्). In the शब्दमञ्जरी book, you would find columns for dual number (द्विवचनम्) as well as plural numbers (बहुवचनम्). Let us look at the Sabda 'bAla' in male gender.

बालः (subject) (सः बालः मम अनुजः।)

बालम् (object) (अध्यापकः बालं तर्जयति।)

बालेन (by/with) (बालेन दोषः कृतः।)

बालाय (for) (अहं बालाय लटडुकं (laddu) दत्तवान्।)

बालात् (from) (बालात् वृद्धः रूप्यकं स्वीकृतवान्।)

(Notice that we used बालतः in place of बालात् earlier. Both mean the same.)

बालस्य (of) (बालस्य माता अत्यन्तं उत्तमा।)

बाले (in/on) (सा बाले बहु स्निह्यति (loves/ befriends))

हे बाल! (addressing) (बाल! भवान् सम्यक् पठतु।)

उपपदविभक्तिः

Just to make sure that you have understood all the sentences above, please translate them into English and write them down.

I hope you have a शब्दमञ्जरी book available with you. Study the 'rAma' Sabda and notice the similarities. It is now easy to guess the forms of other अकारान्त-पुंलिङ्ग-शब्दाः, such as गणेश, शिव, जन, पुत्र, ग्रन्थ-इत्यादयः.

You are now ready to memorize rAma-Sabda. Perhaps you are able to guess the usage of the other 2 columns of the Sabda as well. As an exercise, looking at rAma-Sabda, say jana-Sabda and grantha-Sabda aloud.

Let us look at आकारान्त-स्त्रीलिङ्ग-शब्द examples. We will take भाषा for this.

भाषा (संस्कृतम् अत्यन्तं प्राचीना भाषा।)

भाषाम् (भारतीयाः संस्कृतभाषां जानन्ति।)

भाषया (संस्कृतभाषया आरोग्यवर्धनम् अपि भवति।)

भाषायै (संस्कृतभाषायै अहं मम सर्वं ददामि।)

भाषायाः (सर्वाः भाषाः अपि संस्कृतभाषायाः एव उत्पन्नाः (born)।)

भाषायाः (अहं नित्यं संस्कृतभाषायाः उपयोगं करोमि।)

भाषायाम् (वेदाः संस्कृतभाषायाम् एव सन्ति।)

भाषे! (हे संस्कृतभाषे! मां पाहि (protect me)।)

You can now relate this with ramA-Sabda in the book. Try to memorize that Sabda too. Translate the above sentences into English as well.

(To be continued in the next issue)

Events & Celebrations

Independence Day

On 15th August 2013, Independence Day Celebrations took place at Nachiketa Tapovan. Dr. Razia Sultana, who is a retired director, Environment Protection Training and Research Institute, graced the occasion as chief guest. The cultural performances by Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir students competed with the splendor of our National flag.



Cultural Programmes by
Nachiketa Tapovan
Vidya Mandir Students

Flag hoisting by Chief guest Dr. Razia Sultana



Quiz

On 3rd August 2013, Ms. Deepthi, a software employee conducted a quiz for students of classes 7, 8, and 9 on the topic "Dasavataram." She also distributed prizes to the winners.



Smt. Bina Bhandari tests a student

Pronunciation Competition

Volunteers of Tapovan Nirupa, Anuradha & Rohan, conducted a week long coaching classes on pronunciation for students of classes 7, 8, 9 & 10. On 6th August a pronunciation competition was held. Smt. Bina Bhandari, who regularly conducts workshops on Personality Development for children at various schools, was the Chief Judge for the event. Anuradha, Supriya, Swathi & Latha were the supporting judges.

Dental Camp: On 8th August 2013, a Dental Camp was held for all the students of Nachiketa Tapovan's Vidyamandir by Panineeya Institute of Dental Sciences and Research Centre. A team of 10 dentists headed by Dr. M. Radhika took part in this camp with mobile clinical equipment. Dr. Nalini, a volunteer organized the camp.



Vidya Mandir Students being examined



Dental Camp in progress

Gita Chanting

On 10th August 2013, we had Gita Chanting by Samskrutha Bharathi, organized by Sri Ogeti Krupalu garu. The programme was attended by spiritual seekers.



Sri Krupaluji chanting Bhagavad Gita

Agastya Mobile Lab

On 10th August 2013, a 5-member team from Agastya International Foundation arranged a mobile lab for Vidya Mandir students. This was organized by a well wisher Mr. Suresh Natarajan. Students from classes 5-10 greatly benefited from an array of science experiments.



A Team member interacts with Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir Students



Nikki Sood & Miranda Goodwin helping the students

Duke University Students

In the months of July & August eight students from Duke University, US had volunteered at Tapovan for nearly 5 weeks and taken up classes for 3rd grade and 10th grade students.



Katherine, Nikki, Kelly, Arathi, Vinesh, Katia, Sarita & Miranda from Duke University pose with Tapovan Students

Rakhi Celebrations

On 19th August 2013, sponsors from **Sama** shop, Banjara Hills, celebrated Rakhi Purnima with Tapovan's Vidyamandir students. The staff of **Sama** Shop headed by their Consultant & Advisor Smt. Mamta Gupta and Store Manager Mrs. Hema, interacted with our students, tied rakhis, and distributed gifts and cakes. It was a joyful event.



Smt. Mamta & Smt. Hema tie Rakhis to Tapovan Students



Special Eye camp by Swarup Eye Centre:



Dr. Kalyani examines a student

It was a very special day in the history of Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram & mankind. Swarup Eye Centre, Abids, sent its team for an eye camp that was held at Govt. School, Peddarevally, Balanagar Mandal. It's rare to see a group of 7 young energetic youth driven by a higher goal, working seamlessly, taking utmost care of every child as if they were their own. They screened 288 children from 7th class to 10th class of Govt. school till 3.00 p.m. without a break. There was a time when a break was suggested but these young lads with white aprons were extremely enthusiastic and refused the 'break' proposal politely and continued their screening work till the last child was done with. Hats off to such souls, not only for their selfless service but also for their devotion and dedication, for their patience and perseverance, and for their commitment and constructive contribution towards the society.



Sameer (Assistant) testing a student

Witnessing the humanitarian gesture of the visiting team brought to mind the adage, "A problem well put is half solved". With a few more such gestures from like-minded groups or individuals of society, we can create a "Support System- an initiative of Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram" which can further evaluate the medical needs of 30-40 children of the Tandas. The needs could be simply multivitamin supplies or medical investigations. So I would request everyone who feel for others, for society, for my needy and hungry brethren, please come forward and render your helping hands to uplift the masses and to support the "Support System" ... an initiative of Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram.

- Swamiji

Arya Samaj:

Swamiji and Mataji attended Arya Samaj Yaga on 27th Aug 2013. The programme went on very well. It is necessary for people to know how important our religious life is. Slowly we are putting aside our culture and the very essence that supports the life foundation. Mataji stressed on language that shall keep our cultural signature alive. Swamiji spoke about *Asana Siddhi* that children can achieve at a very young age if given the right amount of guidelines and practice. Sri Ravindra Garu, Municipal commissioner, District Revenue Officer and many other dignitaries were present to bless the special occasion.



Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram's THE GREEN PRINT

...An initiative to Serve Mother Earth

Let us come together to make our Earth a Green Place to live in...!

WHY THE GREEN PRINT?

- ♣ Extensive Deforestation has led to drastic climatic changes.
- ♣ Lack of rains and continuous drought has led to suicide deaths amongst the farmers and high migration.
- ♣ Green cover leads to prevention of soil erosion and maintaining fertility of the land.
- ♣ Fruit and shade are a source of additional income, nourishment and help maintain the ecological balance.

Almond, Amla, Ashoka, Badam, Bilva, Coconut, Guava, Kadamb, Lemon, Mango, Medi, Neem, Neredu, Peepul, Sapota, Teak

Donate for The Green Print

- ♣ Rs. 100/- Per Sapling*
- ♣ You can donate any number of saplings, from 1 to 100,000 saplings.
- ♣ You can also contribute towards The Green Print Corpus Fund.



A Bank Account was opened in INDIAN BANK for
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BANK : Indian Bank
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 ORGANISATION : Nachiketa Tapovan
 IFSC Code : IDIBOOOHO25
 Micr Code : 500019018
 (IFSC code contains all number zeros not the letter'o')

We appeal for generous donations for this noble cause. Let us join hands in serving our Mother Earth.

Patron Agencies:

- ♣ Collectorate ♣ Forest Department ♣ Superflo Pvt. Ltd. ♣ NTT Data ♣ TatvaSet ♣ HCL ♣ KVK Energy

***Note:** The donation includes cost of sapling, transportation, maintenance by way of water, manure and nurturing the plants for a period of two years. The Govt has given us some specific varieties of free saplings, however we are buying other sapling varieties from nurseries.

Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram, Kodgal Village, Jadcherla Mandal, Mahaboobnagar Dist.

Contact for The Green Print: 800 888 28 28; 98491 68937

'The Green Print' initiative is going on successfully with the participation of software companies.

- ♣ On 3rd August 2013, 2000 saplings were planted by members of NTT DATA, TatvaSet & HCL under the aegis of Swamiji & Mataji.
- ♣ On 15th August, Vanamahotsavam was celebrated by the Ashram, by planting trees at various Government schools in and around Jadcherla.
- ♣ On 17th August 400 saplings were planted in a stretch of 1.3 km from Peddarevally till 'Y' junction of Tirumalgiri-Chinnarevally.
- ♣ From 21st August, Avenue Plantation was taken up by the Ashram, from Tirumalgiri-Chinnarevally 'Y' junction till Ashram, covering a 7km stretch. 3.5km

stretch has been completed so far and the plantation is still going on.

- ♣ On 30th August, plants were distributed in G.H.S. Pedda Adirala, G.H.S Hemajipur, Girls High School Jadcherla, G.H.S Badepally & Balanagar Gurukul.
- ♣ On 31st August, 5046 plants were distributed:

ZPHS Kodgal	1535	ZPHS Gollapally	130
ZPHS Gangapur	1040	ZPHS Badepally	500
Pedda Adirala	570	Chinna Adirala	100
Kondareddyally	69	Hemajipur	240
Peddarevally	235	Chinnarevally	177
UPS Badepally	450	Total	5046



CIRCLE OF LOVE A kind act can only trigger another believes Vasundhara.
PHOTO: NAGARA GOPAL

Of humble beginnings

CHATLINE From teaching children under a tree to setting up a full-fledged school, P. Vasundhara has come a long way. RANJANI RAJENDRA traces her journey

Children are beautiful. Each one has an inherent goodness within. All they need is the right kind of guidance and direction," believes P. Vasundhara. Little wonder then that her greatest passion is working with underprivileged children and towards this end she even founded a school, Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir, in Madhapur that provides free education to the needy. But it is not mere academic education that Vasundhara hopes to impart. "We should also inculcate good values in them. After all if we teach them to be socially responsible, they could pass on a kind act in the future," she says with a smile that lights up the room.

Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir, which was established in 2004, currently has 240 students from L.K.G. to class X. The children are mainly orphans, or those with single parents or those who live in the slum in the vicinity. Vasundhara makes it a point to personally involve herself in the school's day-to-day activities and her camaraderie with the children is evident as eager little children excitedly shout out "Om Namah Shivaya Vasundharamma" each time she passes by a class room.

Continued on page 4

4 **METROPLUS** THE HINDU • FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 2013

Of humble beginnings

Continued from page 1

However, Vasundhara refuses to take any credit for the work she is doing. With the school functioning under the aegis of the Nachiketa Tapovan trust, Vasundhara says that Swami Nachiketanananda Puri and Swami Sivananda Puri are the main driving force behind the school. "Besides, all the work we do here is a team effort," she smiles.

The school, which is housed in a modest three-storied building right next to an international school, provides its students with everything from uniforms to stationery and even morning and afternoon meals. At every notice board in the school art works by the students are on proud display and their English too is impeccable. The school also employs 11 teachers, while the remaining are volunteers from IT companies and students who teach the students during their spare time or during vacations.

Multitasking

Vasundhara also runs a block printing unit from her Jubilee Hills home, which provides employment opportunity to underprivileged women. The profits made by this unit are what are used to fund the Vidya Mandir. For Vasundhara though, this block printing unit is more of a passion than a mere business. "I love everything about the printing business. I handle the designing and colour combination aspects of the unit. Everything else from execution to sales is looked after by my team. For me design-

6 The money from these sales goes to the students' individual account, for which their admission number works as account number. They are free to withdraw the money from here or let it build to a sizeable amount and then invest it in postal bonds

ing doesn't feel like work. It is more like a passion that I could do every single day," she says.

How it all began

"I had been running this printing unit for a long time now. Although, it kept me occupied and I love everything about designing, I still had a feeling of emptiness. That is when I got involved with the Nachiketa Tapovan ashram. We regularly attended satsangs and organised anadanam drives. One such drive was conducted on a weekly basis at Vaddera basti in Madhapur. Every time we went there we noticed that the children there didn't attend school for reasons like lack of funds, the distance between their school and home etc," says Vasundhara, who declares fondly "These are all my children."

That is when she and her associates at the ashram decided to teach the children themselves. The group began conducting classes under a tree in the area. A year later they constructed a hut on a plot of land (where the school now stands) that was owned by Vasundhara's husband. "Initially we segregated the students based on how much they knew and not by age. In 2004 we constructed the school building and from then on began functioning as a regular class. In fact, in the last couple of years we have had a few



CIRCLE OF LOVE A kind act can only trigger another believes Vasundhara. PHOTO: NAGARA GOPAL



students clear their Board exams with very high scores and they are now doing their intermediate," she says with a proud smile.

Value of money

To help the students realise the importance of money, Vasundhara proposed launching a banking system in the school itself. "The students make a lot of craft items like diyas and rakhis, which are sold. The money from these sales goes to the students' individual account, for which their admission number works as account number. They are free to withdraw the money from here or let it build to a sizeable amount and then invest it in postal bonds," she says.

What next?

While the school runs like a well-oiled machine with every individual handling a specific responsibility, Vasundhara plans to move out and focus on a new school that they plan to set up near the Nachiketa Tapovan ashram in Kodgal.

"The school is doing fine even without me. So now I would like to focus on the new school that we plan to set up. The youth and children in Kodgal are very enthusiastic and a school there will be of great help. Here the school can be efficiently managed by the other team members. I believe that an organisation revolves around principles and ideals, not around an individual. And Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir has very strong principles and ideals to fall back upon," she smiles.

Salient features

- Currently there are 240 students in the school from LKG to class X
- So far five students from the school have cleared their class X exams
- The school building was constructed in 2004. Before that students were taught in a makeshift hut at the same site
- The school has its own banking system to teach children the importance of saving
- A student's admission number is his/her account number. The money they earn by making diyas and other craft item is credited to their account
- The students are taught yoga and practice Surya Namaskaras and meditation before class every morning.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

*Anna daanam maha daanam; vidya daanam mahattaram.
Annena kshanika trupthihi yaavajjevanthu vidyaya.*

Vidya Mandir at Nachiketa Tapovan is currently able to accommodate a family of about 240 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")

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WITHIN INDIA

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3 years	₹ 280
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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. 16,550/- in the month of August and saved Mother Earth by recycling about 1839 kg of plastic and paper waste material

Invitation

We cordially invite you to attend our celebrations



Navaratri Celebrations

from 5th to 14th October 2013

Venue:

Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram

Kodgal Village, Jadcherla, Mahaboobnagar Dist.



Festivals & Events of October 2013



Krishnashtami Celebrations

@ Nachiketa Tapovan & Ashram

28th August 2013



A Vidya Mandir student dressed up as Radha



Lord Sri Krishna & Radha at Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram



A student dressed up as Gopika trying to reach for the Handi



Little Krishna and Gopikas of Nachiketa Tapovan



Vedavyasa Vidya Mandir Students at Ashram receive blessings from Mataji at the Krishna Temple



Vedavyasa Vidya Mandir Students dressed up as Krishna, Radha & Gopikas

Nachiketa Tapovan Students trying to break the Handi

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