



Nachiketanjali

...an offering



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Siddhidhatri



Shailputri



BrahmachArini



MahAgowri



Durga Devi



Chandraghanta



KAlarAtri



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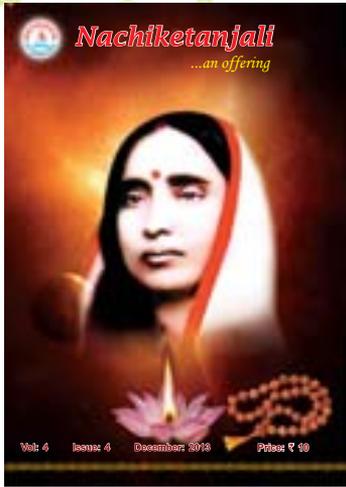
KAtyAyani



SkandamAta

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Remove that Veil!

The love we have for our brethren is articulated in various ways. We try to exhibit it in the form of service, affection, respect, compassion and so on. Such love can be infectious. Initially it starts with 'I', 'mine' or 'my family', but slowly crosses its precincts and spreads into the world. Many people are engulfed by it and get benefited. This love transforms into selfless service and our hearts melt and crave to help the needy. When this can happen with each one of us, then a sea change can take place in the world for when love spreads into every heart where is the place for hatred?

Sarada Ma who is the universal Mother always emphasized on Mantra. Mantra is the source of the universe and a divine language of the eternal SELF. Sarada Ma was a Japa Yogi who knew that Japa is the easiest and powerful medium to put an end to the cycles of birth and death. Let us do Japa and experience the lotus within.

We have to respect people, irrespective of their age, caste or creed. This in fact is the essence of true worship or devotion. We worship God in temples and in shrines at home. But will He receive our prayers when we can't love and respect His creation? 'The one who loves and serves his fellow beings is the true Bhakta' says Narada in his Bhakti Sutras. 'The one who lives and allows the other person to live, is the true devotee', says Lord Krishna in His Bhagavad Gita. Here the word 'Living' has a deeper connotation. Living in the true sense is living by aspiring for the welfare of our fellow beings, not living for our self. "Sarve Bhavanthu Sukhinaha"! Let everyone prosper and live in peace should become our motto.

One might express the doubt that it is very difficult to find such people in today's society. But there are many living examples, who steer clear of publicity and work in silence. Silence turns out to be their voice of serving humanity. Forever they are ready to extend their helping hands. They are moved by the slightest plea for help and respond instantly. God resides in such beings. There is only a thin veil that separates them from God and as their love expands into the horizon, the veil is removed and they realize that they themselves are God.

Let us try to remove that veil!

- Subhadra K.

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Real Tapas



Swami Vivekananda travelled all over India without touching money. That was the old system- without ever touching money, you have developed detachment for money. But, while handling money can you still be detached? That is a much greater achievement. A bank officer has to deal with crores of rupees. It passes through his hands. It doesn't stick there. But very often it sticks! And that is called corruption. But, the rule is, you pass it on, it is not yours, it belongs to the public. You are only handling it. That is also true with regard to a spiritual householder. He or



she is only handling the money in a spirit of detachment. And, if one can do so, he or she is better than the one who says, 'I don't touch money and still you are keeping clean and pure.' What a beautiful idea! More challenges are there before you. You overcome them.

He or she should not get lost in the day-to-day activities, pleasures, and comforts, forgetting to train one's mind to rise higher and higher. There are higher levels to attain.

So, the one clarion call of the Vedanta to every spiritual seeker is, don't stagnate at the physical level, at the sensory level. That is animal life. Human beings have the capacity to go beyond this level. So, continue to march on; don't stagnate. That is its only message; it doesn't condemn sensory life; it doesn't condemn our day-to-day actions for earning money, for running our household; not at all. There is no place for the devil in the whole of Vedanta. We are all great, we are all good, but don't stagnate. Stagnation alone is called *Samsara*. Don't be a *Samsari*; when you stagnate at the sensate level, then you are a *Samsari*. Otherwise, you are in *Samsara*, you are struggling, you are developing; just like a baby, interested only in eating, drinking, and comfort slowly develops a desire for knowledge, goes to school, reads

books, and progresses to higher levels of seeking knowledge and excellence. In that kind of life's march, you also find a stage where you go beyond sensory limitations, beyond all this *Samsara*, or stagnant sensory life. Then you begin to realize your own true nature and the tremendous possibilities hidden within you. God Himself is hidden within you and that knowledge will come to you.

The whole of that process is called *Tapas*. That *Tapas* can be done in the context of household life itself. It doesn't mean a dry asceticism; not at all. You are enjoying your day-to-day life, you have contact with society, you can smile, and you can enjoy everything. But you are not stagnant at that level. You are going higher and higher. Even if you are an educated person, you can play with children, with toys; there is no harm. You are encouraging the children thereby, so that you never become an ascetic of the dry type. Sri Ramakrishna always said. 'Don't be a dry ascetic. O Divine Mother, don't make me a dry ascetic.' That kind of asceticism, which we usually associated earlier with a very dry face, not even a smile, not even pleased to see a baby in front, that kind of asceticism has no place in *Vedanta*. Don't become a dried up ascetic. That is where this teaching has a tremendous significance. March on, march on, don't stagnate, and don't stagnate. There are so many heights to conquer.

Source: Universal Message of the Bhagavad Gita
by Swami Ranganathananda

Life of Holy Mother



Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, is the Divine consort and spiritual companion of the Great Master Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Holy Mother is a spiritual giant in Her own right. Sri Ramakrishna declared, "She is my Shakti." On another occasion referring to Her, He recited a Sanskrit couplet meaning, "Who can understand the greatness of this Mahamaya? It is by Her will that crores of Ramas and crores of Krishnas take birth, live and dissolve."

Her parents, Syamasundari Devi and Ramchandra Mukhopadhyaya, were a pious couple, poor, but content. One day when Syamasundari was returning to her village Jayarambati from a visit to her father's house (at Sihar), she sat under a tree in a wooded spot. Suddenly she heard jingling sounds and saw a small girl coming down from the tree. Tenderly the girl clasped Syamasundari about the neck. At once Syamasundari fell into a swoon. She remained unconscious for a long time, and her relatives took her home. She felt that the girl had entered into her womb.

Falling asleep after lunch one day, Ramchandra Mukhopadhyaya saw in a vivid dream a young girl of golden complexion and unusual beauty, tenderly encircling his neck with Her arms. Noticing Her precious ornaments, he asked who she was. In a musical voice she replied: 'You see, I have come to your family.'

Sarada Devi was born on Thursday, 22 December 1853, as the eldest daughter. As a child Sarada was devoted to God and spent most of Her time helping Her mother in various household chores like caring for younger siblings, looking after cattle and carrying food to Her father and others engaged in work in the field. She had no formal schooling, but managed to learn the Bengali alphabet. When She was about six years old, She was married to Sri Ramakrishna, according to the custom prevalent in India in those days.

During one of the visits to Kamarpukur, Sarada had a strange experience, which She afterwards described to Her devotees: 'I was then thirteen years old, a young daughter-in-law in the family, and would be frightened to walk alone to the village pond to bathe. One day I came out of the house by a back door and was worrying about the matter. There appeared from nowhere, eight young maidens. As I started for the pond, four of them walked in front of me and four behind. Thus guarded I walked to the water and all of us bathed together. Afterwards they brought me home.' This continued as long as Sarada lived at Kamarpukur during Her visit. She could not unravel the mystery nor did She ask the girls who they were.

Often Sri Ramakrishna talked for hours before Sarada and Her companions about spiritual matters and His inner experiences. Sometimes the young wife would become tired and fall asleep on the floor. Her companions would awaken Her and say: 'You were asleep! You have missed such priceless words.' At that, Sri Ramakrishna would say: 'No, don't wake Her up.'

If She listens to everything I say, She will not stay on this earth; She will unfold Her wings and fly away.'

Sri Ramakrishna often put Sarada's spiritual yearning to test. One day He asked Her: 'I have a duty towards you. Have you come to drag me down into worldly life?' Sarada replied: 'Why should I do so? I am here to help you in realizing your spiritual ideal.' Sarada too, one day asked Him, as She was stroking His feet, 'How do you regard me?' He replied: 'The Mother who is worshipped in the temple, and the mother who gave birth to this [pointing to His body] and is now living in the Nahabat - the same mother is now stroking my feet. Really and truly I always regard you as the embodiment of the blissful Mother of the Universe.'

On 5 June 1872, Sri Ramakrishna made a special arrangement in His own room for *Puja* of the Divine Mother. He sent for Sarada. When She came, He signed Her to sit on the special seat meant for the Deity. Then He began worshipping Her with flowers, offerings, etc. At the end of the worship, both Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada lost all awareness of the outer world and were immersed in a transcendental plane. After the worship, the Master offered Himself completely to the Divine Mother manifest in the form of Sarada, and surrendered at Her feet His rosary, Himself and everything. This was the culmination of the long years of His spiritual practices. Since the time of Shodasi Puja (the *puja* which Sri Ramakrishna did with Sarada Devi as the



“
The Mother who is worshipped in the temple, and the mother who gave birth to this [pointing to His body] and is now living in the Nahabat - the same mother is now stroking my feet. Really and truly I always regard you as the embodiment of the blissful Mother of the Universe.”

Deity), Sarada Devi's consciousness of motherhood had been awakened. No one, not even Sri Ramakrishna could hold Her back in Her acts of compassion.

Sri Ramakrishna was fully aware of Sarada Devi's future. Referring to Her one day, He said to a woman disciple: 'She is Sarasvati. She has assumed a human body to impart wisdom to men; but She has hidden Her celestial beauty lest people, by looking at Her, should befoul their minds with sinful thoughts.' The Master often reminded Her of Her future role. He gave detailed instructions about awakening the spiritual power of Her future disciples.

Holy Mother was an unusual awakener of souls. Her innate spirituality was sought by many people and She initiated them with Divine names of God. Her ways of initiating people were very simple, a reflection of Her own simplicity.

Sarada Devi as a spiritual aspirant, wife and mother is the role-model for the woman of our times. With Her loving heart, She immediately appeals to everyone as their very mother, earning for Herself the epithet, Holy Mother. Her words "Always remember that you have a mother" rings in the ears of every devotee.

- Extracts from "Life of Holy Mother".



M.

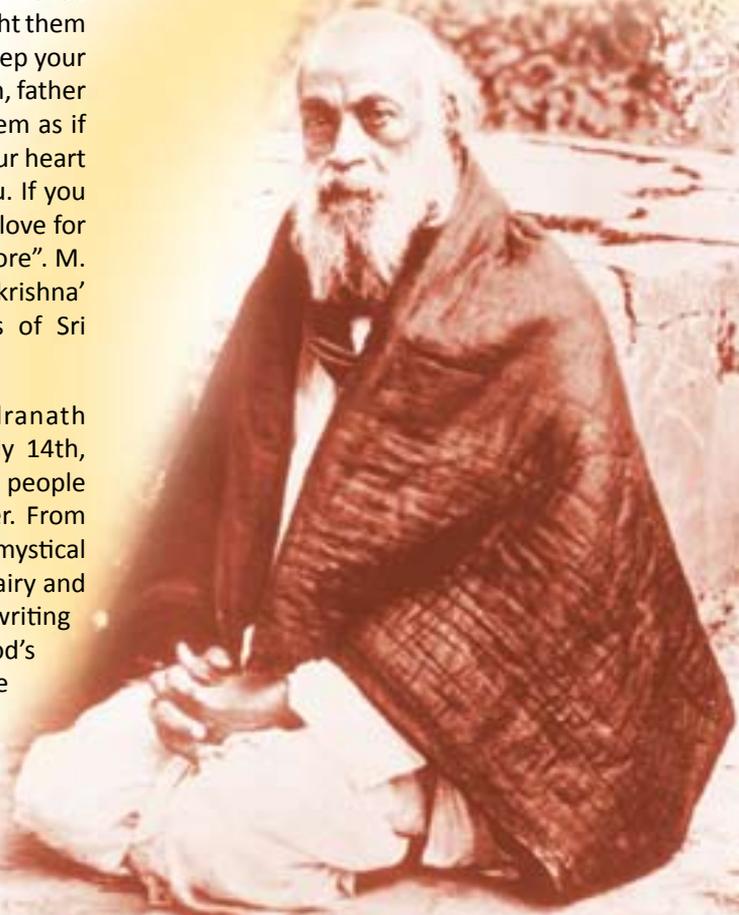
(Mahendranath Gupta)

People generally are bound to the world by their desires for wealth, sense pleasures, and name and fame. When these desires are given up, the desire for God can arise in mind. It is not possible for spiritual aspirants who are house holders to give up everything. The house holders are the main stay of the social order and their role requires family and social responsibilities. Sri Ramakrishna has given a new teaching, especially for householders; "Let the boat be in water, but let there be no water in the boat; Let an aspirant live in the world but let there be no worldliness in him". Each of His disciples along with taking care of their families, family problems, household duties, social commitments and jobs, all of them at the same time led God centered lives. Sri Ramakrishna taught them this technique: "do all your duties but keep your mind on God. Live with all – wife, children, father and mother – and serve them. Treat them as if they are very dear to you but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you. If you enter the world without first cultivating love for God, you will be entangled more and more". M. the recorder of 'The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna' was one of the householder disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

M. was the pen name of Mahendranath Gupta. He was born in Calcutta on July 14th, 1854. His parents were spiritual minded people and he was very devoted to his mother. From his childhood M. had religious and mystical inclinations. He always used to keep a dairy and this habit of his ultimately lead to his writing of 'The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'. God's Divine play in this world is such that we sometimes find suffering leading to happiness. M.'s family problems led him to think of suicide instead he found himself in the presence of Sri Ramakrishna. On this first day, M. spoke very little with the Master.

He later said to the devotees; "After meeting the Master I completely forgot my past. His towering personality and spiritual magnetism erased my sad memories."

On his second visit, M. was scolded by the Master and, as he described, his ego was crushed. It is as if M.'s belief in intellectual knowledge was overpowered by The Master's spiritual wisdom once and for all. M. asked the Master four vital questions of life. It is as though he had asked them on behalf of humanity; "1) How may we fix our minds on God? 2) How we ought to live in the world? 3) Is it possible to see God? 4) Under what conditions does one see



God?" The answers to all these questions were recorded in 'The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna'. Other incarnations of God have had someone to witness or collect their teachings, perhaps M. was this same great soul born again for that purpose.

After he had been visiting the Master for sometime M. felt the urge to renounce family life and become a monk. But the Master discouraged this idea saying "You are well established in God already. God binds the Bhagavata Pandit to the world with one tie, otherwise who would remain to explain the sacred book. That is why Divine Mother has kept you in the world". As he visited the Master more and more, he gradually lost interest in reading western philosophy and science. He thought constantly of the sayings of the Master such as "one can certainly see God through the practice of spiritual discipline." Or "the vision of God is the only goal of human life." Once when M. complained about his wife to the Master, He replied "A wife who proves to be an obstacle in the way of spiritual life is an ungodly wife but if a man has sincere love for God, then all come under his control. Sincere love of God on the husband's part may eventually help the wife to lead a spiritual life". The Master taught that religion is not a matter of preaching but of transforming oneself and thus inspiring others.

Sri Ramakrishna commissioned M. to carry His message just as He commissioned Swami Vivekananda. M. was gifted with artistic ability and an accurate memory which enabled him to recreate in writing what he had seen and heard.

On 4th June, 1932, M. left his body in full consciousness. He breathed his last saying this prayer, "Mother – Guru Deva – take me up in thy' arms". Once the Master remarked about M. "this man has no ego, there is God where there is no ego". M. offered his life at the feet of his Guru and attained eternal life and through his great life's work, 'The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna' he has been immortalized.

*They Lived with God
by Swami Chetanananda*

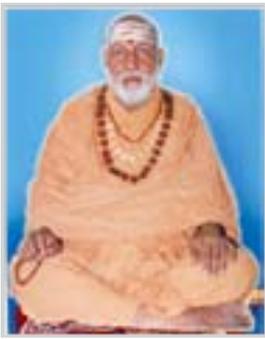


Teacher to Paramahansa Yogananda

Paramahansa Yogananda, a 20th-century philosopher and a yogi was a student of Mahendranath Gupta. Mahendranath moved to 50 Amherst Street in Calcutta, where he ran a small Boys' High School. It was also formerly Paramahansa Yogananda's family home—a site especially poignant to Yogananda because it was the site of his mother's death. In his Autobiography of a Yogi, Yogananda dedicated an entire chapter to describing his friendship with Mahendranath, which was along spiritual rather than academic lines. Yogananda described Mahendranath as having a "silky white beard and large lustrous eyes" and described his personality thus:

His role in the world was humble, as befitted the greatest man of humility I ever knew. In this Amherst Street house, Master Mahasaya conducted a small High School for boys. No words of chastisement passed his lips; no rule and ferule maintained his discipline. Higher mathematics indeed was taught in these modest classrooms, and a chemistry of love absent from the textbooks. He spread his wisdom by spiritual contagion rather than impermeable precept. Consumed by an unsophisticated passion for the Divine Mother, the saint no more demanded the outward forms of respect than a child.

Yogananda went on to describe several seemingly miraculous experiences with Mahendranath. Later, Yogananda said about him that "I would roll on the ground where he'd walked, so great was my love for him. I felt that even that ground had been sanctified."



Swami Tyag Murtiji
Founder of Sadhana Sadan

It was my loving child Mataji who always wanted to have a traditional *Sannyasa Diksha* for proper functioning of the organization and I was always ready for everything that can shape, mould and transform the society. So I accepted this simple yet more important dimension of life and set for Haridwar, the place of *Sadhus* and *Sannyasis*. They say one will be tested in *Shastras* at Varanasi but after visiting Haridwar, I felt that for *Sannyasis* this is the place where one gets tested at every step.

The moment we stepped into Haridwar we were welcomed by many *Sannyasis* from different walks of life. Sri Dashanam Sannyasa Ashram not only provided the best accommodation but also accommodated us with motherly warmth. Swami Ramananda Giri was very compassionate and was very concerned about people who were entering into the spiritual fraternity. He is the soul under whose impulsive guidance we could meet another great soul fondly called Swami Vishvatmanandaji Maharaj, a renowned *Sannyasi*, an acknowledged intellectual, and an authority on Vedanta, a humanitarian, great companion, a philanthropist and above all one who is an ardent Vedantist and has established himself into self-enquiry firmly and is well known to the traditional world.



Sadhana Sadan... a place for true hermits



H.H. Acharya Mahamandaleshwar
Swami Vishvatmananda Puriji Maharaj

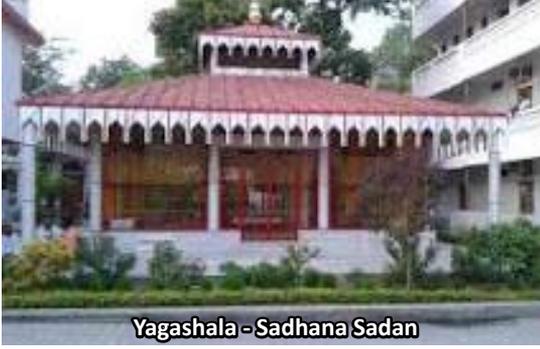
It was inspiring and enlightening to have his *Satsanga* for those few days of stay in Sadhana Sadan. The atmosphere was charged with *Poojas* and charities. He hardly had any time to interact personally but those who were inmates and had come little earlier had an opportunity to spend quality time with this great soul and get inspired.

What inspired me to a great extent was that a soul of such great caliber had set a set of simple guidelines wherein one can choose his/her own name, a Guru and even for that matter a *Mantra* as well. I always have had my conviction that *Sannyasa* can neither be given nor taken. It is an inner calling, an urge to get united with higher things, an expression of a bleeding heart and a crying soul. When one feels oneness with everything, it is true *Sannyasa*. I felt the same kind of energy when I entered into that Ashram.

I owe much to Sadhana Sadan for considering me as a part of this divine play and am really indebted to the management for providing me such a wonderful platform where freedom is considered as the highest dimension of life. Many have taken *Sannyasa Diksha* from Sadhana Sadan where Swami Vishvatmananda played the role of Guru and at other times that of an *Acharya*. Therefore my heart goes to him for setting such a wonderful tradition and bringing many people into his spiritual fold. He will remain in my heart forever.

In Sadhana Sadan, *Sannyasa Diksha* is given as per your choice. This is the right place for those who are eager to hug spiritual life but are sometimes unable to do so due to numerous barriers of time or caste or creed or religion. Moreover the Ashram is accepted by the traditional world as well.





Yagashala - Sadhana Sadan

I request sincere *Sadhakas* to visit Sadhana Sadan and get a feeling of the Ashram. Please arrange a personal meeting with Swami Vishvatmananda to know in depth whether you are ready for another dimension of life or not. He is one of the best mentors whom I ever met in my 49 years long journey into spirituality. I salute this soul from the bottom of my heart and feel always indebted to him for rendering such a wonderful service without having an expectation that the *Sannyasis* should serve his Ashram. My heart goes to such souls and organizations for considering that each one is potentially divine and is qualified to take *Sannyasa*. Therefore the step that is taken by Sadhana Sadan under Swami Vishvatmananda's expert and spiritual guidance deserves more accolades and recognition than the institutes who are confined in their own boundaries.

Traditional *Sannyasa Diksha* is given every year on the day of Maha Shivaratri.

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Sadhana Sadan Ghat



- Swami Nachiketananda Puri

Sannyasa is of two kinds:
external and internal.

External *Sannyasa* comes from a Guru, tradition or *Satsanga* whereas internal *Sannyasa* springs from within.

When we take *Sannyasa* from external source, we are prone to create boundaries around us. But when internal *Sannyasa* takes place, the boundaries get destroyed and then nothing can bind the soul. External *Sannyasa* demands and commands whereas internal *Sannyasa* obeys and accepts.



Noble and large hearted **“Untouchable”**

A *Sannyasin*, in the strictest sense of the term, is always a free soul. Like a river, he is always on the move. Sometimes he spends the night at a burning Ghat, sometimes he sleeps in the palace of the king, sometimes he rests at a railway station but he is always happy. Such a *Sannyasin* was Swami Vivekananda who once halted at a railway station in Rajasthan. People kept coming to Him all day long. They had many questions, mostly religious, and Swamiji was tireless in answering them. Three days and three nights passed in this manner. Swamiji was so engrossed in talking about spiritual matters that He did not even stop to eat. The people who flocked to Him also did not think of asking Him if He had any food to eat!

On the third night of His stay there, when the visitors had all left, a poor man came forward and said to Him lovingly, 'Swamiji, I have noticed that for three days you have been talking and talking. You have not taken even a drop of water! This has pained me very much.'

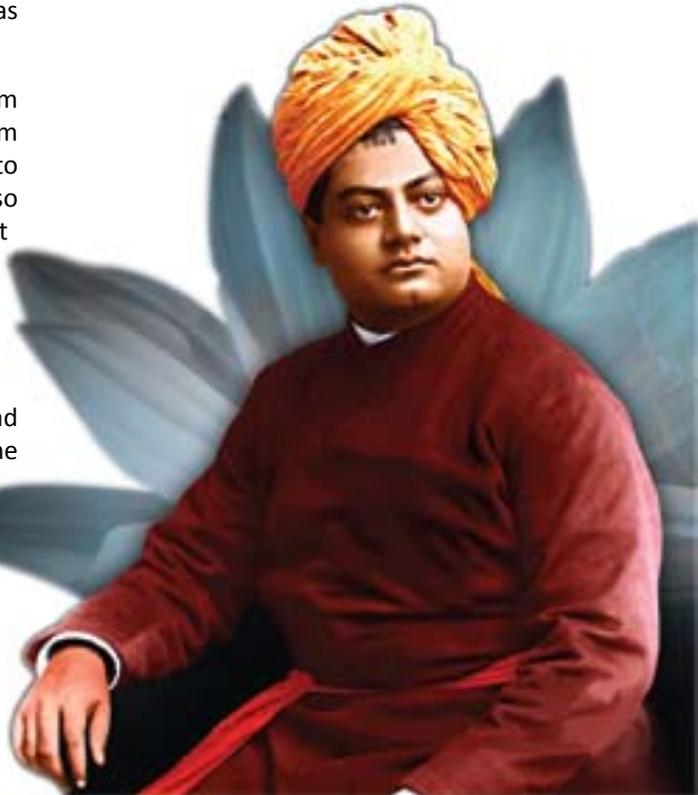
Swamiji felt that God had appeared before Him in the form of this poor man. He looked at him and said, "Will you please give me something to eat?" The man was a cobbler by profession, so he said with some hesitation, 'Swamiji, my heart yearns to give you some bread, but how can I? I have touched it. If you permit, I will bring you some coarse flour and dal and you can prepare them as you please!'

Swamiji said, 'No, my child; give me the bread you have baked. I shall be happy to eat it.' The poor man was frightened at first. He feared the king might punish him if he came to know that he, a low caste person, had prepared food for a *Sannyasin*. But the eagerness to serve a monk overpowered his fear. He hurriedly went back home and soon returned with bread freshly baked for Swamiji. The kindness and unselfish love of this penurious man brought tears to Swamiji's eyes.

How many persons like this live in the huts of our country unnoticed, He thought. They are materially poor and of so-called humble origin, yet they are so noble and large-hearted.

In the meantime, some gentlemen found that Swamiji was eating food offered by a shoemaker and were annoyed. They came to Swamiji and told Him that it was improper for Him to accept food from a man of low birth. Swamiji patiently heard them and then said, 'You people made me talk without respite for the past three days, but you did not even care to inquire if I had taken any food and rest. You claim you are gentlemen and boast of your high caste; what is more shameful, you condemn this man for being of a low caste. Can you overlook the humanity he has just shown and despise him without feeling ashamed?'

Source:<http://www.spiritualbangalore.com>

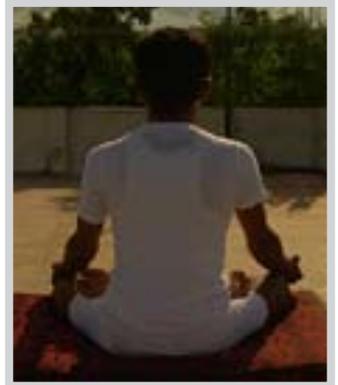
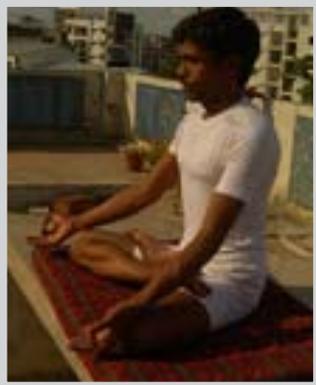


YOGA FOR YOUR HEALTH

PADMASANA



While doing any *asana*, it is very important to be alert and conscious, relaxed and focused since concentration and relaxation play a vital role in the practice of yoga. *Padmasana* is also called *Kamalasana*, which means lotus posture. The form of the legs while performing this *asana* gives the appearance of a lotus and reminds one to be like a lotus. Just as a lotus grows in the muddy water without any complaint, one should prepare oneself to grow in any given situation. In fact, we ourselves create situations that have more adverse effect on us rather than being created by the world. We let unnecessary thinking, emotional imbalance and puffed up ego bog us like mud. But the one who understands the art of survival, even in a worst situation, fills every heart like a lotus and remains calm and composed. So by performing this lotus posture, one not only gets externally united but one gets internally integrated as well. This simple posture is an amazing posture to dive deep within. It is just a matter of little bit practice and one can achieve the highest state in life. Of course without training of mind it is highly difficult, but once we start practicing *Padmasana* automatically the mind also gets integrated. Therefore dear *Sadhak*, I wish you all the best in your yogic journey.



Laxman, a volunteer illustrates the Padmasana

- Sit on the ground by spreading the legs forward.
- Place the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh.
- Place the hands on the knee joints.
- Keep the body, back and head erect.
- Eyes should be closed.
- One can do *Pranayama* in this *asana*.

Benefits:

- It helps in improving concentration.
- It helps to preserve vital fluids in the body.
- It prevents abdominal diseases and female disorders connected with the reproductive organs.
- It brings peace, solitude and longevity to the practitioner.

- *Swami Nachiketananda Puri*





Ma Gowri at Ma Yoga Shakti Peetam

I am trying to express what grace is. Words or language is a medium for communication but grace is something that cannot be expressed by mere words. Who am I to portray Divine Mother's play? Her play is beyond words. She is *Ichha*, *Kriya* and *Jnana Shakti*. Without Her compassion no creature in the world has the ability to think and act. If one is aware of Her grace which flows constantly, then man would hug only eternal relationship called spiritual life rather than worldly life.

I was eagerly waiting for the Nine Nights - Navaratri and wanted this Navaratri to be special for every *Sadhaka* who wishes to experience Divine Mother's grace. How much ever I might think but I soon realized that every thought that transformed into action was Divine Mother's play. Only reason why I asked Ma Vasundhara and Vidyamandir Management to send ten girls to the Ashram for Navaratri was not only to help me with the celebrations but also I sincerely wanted the children to explore their inner self during these nine auspicious days.

Sadhakas and eleven girl students arrived at the Ashram a day prior to Navaratri. Swamiji blessed all the children and *sadhakas* with his Divine presence before entering into mouna (silence) for 10 days. The same evening I explained to all the

NAVARATRI

children about the *Nityasevas* to be performed during Navaratri. The day begins at 2:30 am, *Abhishekam* at 3:00 am and *Alankarana* till 8:00 am. *Kumkumarchana* at 11:00 am, *Satsanga* and *Havan* from 4:30 to 6:30 pm and evening *Aarti* was at 7:00 pm.

Ma Dakshina Kali in Ma Yoga Shakti Peetham transformed Herself into *Navadurgas* during Navaratri. Each day we would see Her in one of the Nine forms. Initially I was a little apprehensive whether these children would be able to get up early in the morning and do Mother's *seva* all day long. But something was giving me a great solace from all these doubts and was making me free from worries. I realized it was Divine Mother Herself who is the director for the upcoming play which was going to take place. Surprisingly all these girls were engrossed in Mother's service from morning till night. All the *pujas* would be completed by 9:00pm followed by *Sadhana* which would end up late in the night.

Let me tell you, I was ecstatic that children and other *sadhakas* were fortunate to witness the spectacular celebration of Navaratri in the true sense. I was touched by Divine Mother's grace which was flowing in abundance. These 13-15 year old children, who have never before meditated for more than ten minutes, started expressing their inner beauty. The Divine expression of Mother was astonishing. She was making sure that she was present to accept all prayers. Her presence was felt authentically. Almost every day all these girls experienced Her Divine presence in Ma Yoga Shakti Peetham. During and after *Havan* all these girls entered into effortless meditation for more than a couple of hours. It was not merely sitting and closing



Divine Mudras by Anuradha





Mataji & Vidya Mandir children who have taken Mantra Diksha

eyes. It was a *Dhyana* in the true sense where they travelled in different planes. Later they would discuss their experiences with me. One girl named Anuradha who studies in 9th class was able to perform various Divine *mudras*. These *mudras* are difficult to find in books. During my inner journey I received them in my state of trance. Now Anuradha could perform all the secret *Mudras* which are very mysterious and which are not known to her. All the girls expressed Divine Mother's energy marvellously. Most of them would go into deep meditative states.

Mother's grace was such that it prepared all these children and there was a cleansing process which helped them to develop a right attitude to receive the mysterious wisdom called *Mantra*.

On the tenth day there was *Mantra Diksha* which is a medium to pass on the magnificent energy to these children. During *Mantra Diksha* and even after *Mantra Diksha* their faces were glowing with divinity. The usually bubbling and cheerful children were transformed into young *Sadhakas* by Her Divine grace. It was the phenomenal gift of Mother.

I very strongly felt that, all the girls along with me and other *Sadhakas* entered Divine Mother's abode and had the privilege of sitting on Her lap. She expressed Her love and affection through all these children in various forms. Mother always loves Her children who come

to Her with a deep longing to receive Her love and grace. How can Mother disappoint anyone when they have *shraddha* in Her? How can she not express Her love when a *Sadhaka* lives for Her? Why will she not take care when a *Sadhaka* breathes for Her? How can she refrain from patting Her child when he does *Nishkamakarma* and serves Her in every form? How can she not help a *Sadhaka* to cross this ocean of *samsara* when Her refuge is sought? Our

biological mother loves us and lives for us. But Divine Mother is Mother of the universe and she loves all Her children and showers Her grace in abundance provided we have faith in Her existence.

I hope I am able to express Her love towards every *Sadhaka* who wants to get drenched in Her love and grace. To glorify Mother of the universe and Her grace, I fall short of words. Because Mother's essence can never be expressed by mere words. Her love can only be experienced. Synonym for love is Divine Mother. Her Grace is felt when you purify yourself. She wants Her children to know how much she loves them but we get so much engrossed in this world that we always ignore Her love in the web of false identities. The worldliness snatches from us the love and care of Divine Mother. In order to be aware of Her grace we need to have a longing heart and burning desire to know Her true form. Let us take refuge in Mother to know the secret of life and life after.



- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri

I believe...



There are some episodes in life which leave you shocked, disappointed and agitated. They stir your soul and shake your belief in humanity, goodness and brotherhood. You start wondering what the world has come to and where has all the goodness disappeared. But while you are feeling low and dejected, nature has its own way of lifting you up and teaching you the way of life again. I have experienced this feeling myself and have learnt an endearing lesson in the process.

On the night of 18th November, last year I was travelling from the airport to Jubilee Hills, to my residence. I was accompanied by my friend whom I had just escorted from the airport. We were reminiscing good old days and catching up on the latest in each other's life when we suddenly saw someone lying in the middle of the road at the Outer Ring Road (ORR) junction.

We pulled our car aside and stepped out. It was pitch dark outside, as there were no streetlights on ORR. What we saw sent shivers down our spine. There was a man lying right in the middle of the road in a pool of blood, his one leg dangling. He was whimpering in pain and was probably a hit and run victim. He was stark naked and was shivering from cold. On rushing close to him and exchanging few words, we realized that he was mentally unstable.

My initial reaction was to put him in my car and drive him to the nearest hospital. However, the person was bleeding profusely and definitely needed paramedics and expert help.

While my friend was trying to arrange for an ambulance I was rummaging my car to find something to cover the person with. Unfortunately I didn't seem to have anything in the car. Dejected I finally decided to keep him warm by rubbing his hands and body. It was a peak winter night and he was shivering vigorously. However my rubbing his hands seemed to at least lessen his anxiety and give him some reassurance.

Just then I saw some shepherds passing by, they were with their flock and were also carrying some rugs with them. They stopped by to "see" what was happening. I requested one of them for their rug but they were unwilling to do so without their palms being oiled. Here again I was shocked at the psychology of fellow beings, money matters more than life. I was desperate to cover the person lying in front of me battling for life. I paid the shepherds, took the rug and covered the individual. After a few minutes he seemed to have calmed a bit and his shivering reduced.

My friend in the meantime had dialed for an ambulance and given them directions. I remembered the dialogue from the movie "3 Idiots" and understood how true it was. It's truly an irony that in a nation where pizza outlets boast to deliver in

less than 30 minutes, ambulances take much-much longer. While we were waiting for the ambulance I was amazed at how no one passing by even cared to stop or enquire about what had happened. The cars passing on the road, would slow down, look with horror or disgust and then simply move on. It was unbelievable to fathom; that here, there was a man battling for his life right in the middle of the road, on a cold winter night but ignored blatantly by his fellow brethren. I couldn't digest the fact that a country which takes a moral high ground on practically every issue couldn't fulfill their basic moral duty over a fellow road mate.

In fact I had some "good Samaritans" advising me to flee the spot whilst I get caught in police enquiry!!! Are we a nation of cowards or plain insensitive individuals who walk away from a dying person to avoid the complications of a police enquiry, I wondered.

The ambulance finally arrived and after much questioning and obtaining of information, the staff volunteered to take the victim to the hospital. The whole episode left me embittered and kept on bothering me. What has the world come to, where has all the goodness vanished kept ringing in my head.

A few days had passed to this episode, when I was again travelling at night towards Hitech city. The traffic was low and hence the cars on road were vamoosing higher than the permissible speed limits. In my rear view mirror, I saw a Land cruiser speeding ahead from left, I was cautioning myself against it when it sped past me and while doing so hit a small dog on the road. The dog shrieked and fell on the road. I was just hoping it to be alive. Though I am a bit scared of dogs I was just not going to leave him in that state, so I parked my car aside and got off. But what I saw surprised me to no extent.

On that busy road that night, when most people were turning a deaf ear to the dogs crying and whimpering I saw a fellow dog who braved himself on the road, crossed the busy highway from the other end, lifted the younger one delicately with his mouth and brought him to a safe corner near the footpath.

The older dog was licking the younger one all over to calm him and soothe his pain. And the just rescued dog was wagging its tail heartily as though reciprocating the older dog's goodness. That sight perhaps was one of the most beautiful ones I have ever witnessed in my life. It was the noblest gesture I have seen anyone do. My heart was filled with an unknown feeling of happiness and belief. It probably was nature's way of restoring my lost faith and conveying that there is still hope and some goodness around us!

I stood there that night and gave a big applause to that dog that had so selflessly saved that little pup from dying. Bravo!

- Suresh Raju

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Discipline

The distance ... not even a mile, the time taken ... an hour.

Sheer waste of time and energy, in every way, in every form.

Why such a criminal waste of resources, time and energy? Lack of discipline, the only reason.

We complain about everything ... the political situation, the traffic, the rapes, the pollution and the population. We complain and yet do nothing.

And why don't we do anything? Because we aren't responsible ... It's 'them', it is always someone else. Not us. We are guilt free. We are the victims.

And that is the root of the problem, of this cancer in our society. The sheer lack of responsibility ... the complete absence of ownership.

What our ancestors were able to sustain and protect for thousands of years, we are hell bent on destroying in a single generation.

We cut the trees that sustain us, we make the soil barren and turn them into waste lands, we pollute our rivers, we rape our daughters, we break every rule possible, because rules are meant to be broken.

And then we complain that our world is turning into a living hell.

But we still won't do anything. We will continue to remain passive observers, rather not dirtying

our hands, not helping in the process of clean up, do nothing towards saving and protecting, everything that is worth protecting. Because, it is someone else's responsibility.

Stuck in a traffic jam yesterday, these thoughts flooded my mind. I was in rage.

In rage, because an ambulance was stuck a few hundred meters from the hospital but couldn't move an inch because people were so insensitive, selfish and ill disciplined, that the roads were completely lock jammed.

In our hurry to be the first to cross over and get to our destinations, we have created a mess and wasted hours worth of energy, fuel, time and perhaps, in this case, wasted even lives.

Everyday, I see this ... the utter lack of discipline. What are we teaching our coming generations? What a royal mess we are leaving as their inheritance?

Isn't it a shame? A shame on us? A shame as a people? As a nation? As a race?

The answer, if any, is discipline. Discipline, in every aspect of our lives, in every action, in every thought, in the very way of our being.

And how? Integrity, the only answer. If we don't have the integrity within ourselves, to stop this sham, this deceit, this lies, to ourselves above all else. To stop blaming others and start taking responsibility.

It's time we made the switch. It's time we realized what utter fools we are being. What we are doing unto others and to our environment, we are doing to ourselves.

And if we don't make the switch, then nothing we have will matter... not our homes, not money, not our cars or anything else for that matter...

Because the very air we breathe, the water we drink and thoughts we think, will be poison.

- Gautam Vir



MAKE THE WORLD a better place to live

When we think back about our origin, it starts from PARENTS. The Wheel of LIFE takes us on the journey of parenthood. Each one's purpose to be here is UNIQUE, yet together we are a masterpiece, making our world a celebration. As we respect and perform our individual duties, togetherness and bliss can be felt in a marriage. Happiness is a habit to be cultivated to make ourselves and people around us happy. Responsible and respectable parents nourish children to create a better world ahead.

Universe perceived at various depths, fills us with different levels of inspiration. Life is always in alignment with time and it goes on. Man can handle what he experiences as long as he realizes he is moving on. Depression is one's own false assumption that life is stagnant and caught up in some event of life. Mind controls all the vital functions of our body. Healthy mind keeps the body healthy and renders contentment to our soul. Counting on the blessings and wondering about the creation will always keep humans smiling. Lack of smile is the first and clear indication of getting caught up into some thoughts that are not only persisting longer but taking control over your life. Smile builds the world around you. Let the experiences or suffering of your life mould you into a much wiser and happier person. Always see yourself in the big picture of creation. Be blessed for the limits set for you by Mother Nature, for you will at some point understand the sketch of your life and live a purposeful life.

- Padmaja Raju



Love is

The languorous yawn of a tigress

Tears of a mother whose son is
shot at dawn

Prayers of the penitent thief

A dimpled Bodhisattva

Volcanic longing for God

It has always been. Love.

It always is

Love IS

Tales of a visionary

Temple ruins on a hilltop

The flush of silver needle buds

Shadows of self pity

A sage's touch

It will always be. Love.

It forever is

Love IS

Gratefully,

- Abir and Anisha



*“Keep your face always toward the sunshine -
and shadows will fall behind you.” - Walt Whitman*



Bid Farewell to 2013
Dispense

- *Anxiety*
- *Disgust*
- *Grief*
- *Humiliation*
- *Conflict*



Welcome 2014
Embrace

- *Calmness*
- *Approval*
- *Contentment*
- *Respect*
- *Truce*



*“Cultivate an optimistic mind, use your imagination, always consider alternatives, and
dare to believe that you can make possible what others think is impossible.” - Rodolfo Costa*

Neeru Mamtani

The Sound of Silence

There's something about the sound of music that really gets to me. And by gets to me, I really mean 'gets' to me.

When it's the mellow flirting of the black and white piano keys, I see birds breaking into full flight and soaring into the heavens above. With each flap of their wing, they climb higher, higher and away. The sunlight bounces off their feathery backs and continues on its endless journey around the universe.

And then sometimes it's the silky pangs of a violin, with the musician lost deep in his own creation, soaking in every iota of Divinity that floats out of those strings. At those times, I feel something pulling at my heartstrings- something invisible, something powerful, something jubilant yet fabulously tragic. I don't understand how it can all happen at once, but it does. My heart skips a beat and lightens up in an instant, like a little girl skipping over stones in a rose garden.

Sometimes, it's the acoustic guitar that strikes up a hypnotic chord. And I remember the dance floor- those salsa moves so sharp they could bleed you with a cut. And I remember a love that existed only by virtue of this dance, fading away into nothingness like a puff of smoke after the music died away. And as my feet move again, I wait for the dance to come.

Then there are the drums, the bass and the electric guitar that pump up the adrenalin-enough to wake me up from my deepest stupor. Every beat of the drum pumps in more blood to my heart, which beats faster and harder, threatening to burst. And as the electric guitar reaches its climax, the very point where the strings can take no more, my hands ball into fists of steel- sometimes powered by rage, sometimes by ambition, sometimes by frustration. But it gets me moving, and that's just the point of it all.

But the loveliest sound of them all, by far the most Divine and most powerful of them all- one sound to rule them all, if I may- is the sound of silence. And I remember the verses of Simon



& Garfunkel from the last century, when they sang, "Hello darkness my old friend, I've come to talk with you again..." true that. For there can be no music without the silence, and no silence without the music. They are body and soul, soul and body, nothing without the other.

And at that point, when I soak in the silence and step down deeper into the placid blue pool of my own consciousness, I realize that I am all that I wanted to be and all I never imagined I could be. It is all here, right here, right now. The silence grows louder and louder, as if ricocheting off the empty walls inside and begins to feel like a steady hum, a dull vibration. But it's still silent.

And then it dawns upon me, I am the musician, I am the music, I am the silence. I am all the notes that make the song, and the silence in between that completes it. Silence is the music of the soul, and those who are fortunate enough to take a dip in that holy water, even for a moment, are blessed for life.

I am lucky to be standing by the poolside now. I was always standing there, I now realize. But I was stupid. So many times I was throwing stones into my own little pool, causing ripples and splashes that made it difficult to see beyond. And I stupidly cursed and screamed at the sky above. So many times I bent down to quench my thirst and felt the coolness mix with my blood and spread throughout my being, but one sound from outside, one flash of light from the other and I broke away. And I turned away. And I walked away. And I walked on for miles, for days, for continents, only until I realized that I would have to turn back on my path and go back to that source, for I was thirsty for more. This is a never-ending thirst, and yet, so strangely, I do not even know how thirsty I am until I drink.

I see a shiny film on the surface of the lake, so refreshingly blue and pure that I cannot see where it ends and meets the sky. The sunlight bounces off that shiny film and the water twinkles invitingly. I am afraid. I don't know what for. This was where I came from, and this is where I am going back to. I hesitate, and take a small

step towards the water. The sand in this part is wet, moist and holds slight traces of the lake water, like a drop of dew hanging from the pointed end of a leaf. So fragile, the way it reflects a thousand colors from its tiny being.

As I stand at the edge, a soft wave rolls up to me and caresses my feet, like a child holding my hand and saying, "Come. Come to play". I can't deny those unfairly large eyes, so I succumb. And I take my first step into the water. It's cold, almost icy cold, but welcoming. It's a respite from the filth and grime of the roads I've been running on, towards God-knows where. They seem to wash away with a moment's touch, and I am cleansed. Pure. Perfect. Born again.

As I walk on into the water, there are sounds from the outside world beckoning me back into the craziness, the humdrum, the rush hours. But I've had enough. So I shut it out. I dive headfirst into the lake. I hear my own splash for a second, before I'm deaf to it. And everything else.

There are bubbles dancing in the blue, and little rays of sunlight piercing through them with a wonderful transparency, a clarity that seems to me to show everything the world outside has to offer, all packed up in this little ball of nothingness. I reach out to touch the bubble, and it bursts. But there are more, they are endless, there's a sea full of them.

And then I hear it again- the sound of silence. The water swirls and gurgles around my head, but the silence takes over. And in that silence, once again, I hear all those sounds that I thought came from the outside. The soft dancing of the piano keys, the love song of the violin, the bold dance of the guitar and the thunderous booming of the drums in electric concert. They're all right here, I think, and burst out laughing. More bubbles. More light. More sound. More silence. And a touch of eternity.

Right here, right now.



- *Avinash Agarwal*

Writer | Speaker | Comedian & MC | Trainer

Power of Concentration

Avadoota Sadguru Sri Dattatreya was once traveling by foot to a distant village. After some distance, the road bifurcated into two roads. The *Avadoota* was in a fix. He did not know which way would lead Him to His destination. He looked around for some help but could not find anybody. He waited for a long time hoping to find a passerby who would direct Him to the right path. But since it was a remote area, nobody came. Tired and confused He started searching the surrounding area for any human trace. To His greatest relief He found a fisherman fishing in a river nearby. He loudly called out to the fisherman for help but the fisherman did not respond. Thinking that He was not loud enough to be heard, Dattatreya shouted at the top of His voice but the fisherman seemed to be stone deaf.

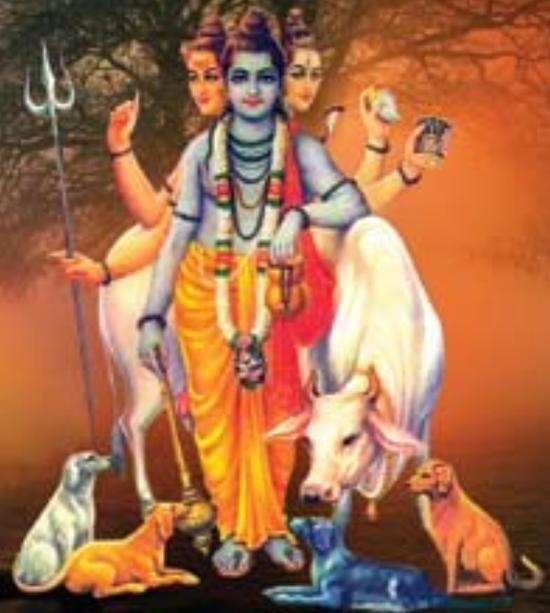
At last, Dattatreya went to the fisherman and gently patting his back said, "Son! I called you several times very loudly but you did not respond. What is the matter? Are you hard of hearing?"

The fisherman turned around and replied apologetically, "My Lord! I am not deaf. I can hear perfectly. But I was so engrossed in fishing that I could not hear your calls. My mind, my senses, everything was completely focused on the fishing rod and I became oblivious of the world around me. I am really sorry. Please forgive me for the inconvenience."

Dattatreya was surprised at the rational explanation given by the fisherman. He wondered how the fisherman could concentrate and focus on his catch to the extent of exclusion of all worldly distractions. If one develops even a fraction of such single minded concentration on the Lotus Feet of God, spiritual enlightenment is sure and certain. Considering this event as a lesson, the great *Avadoota* accepted the fisherman as one of His Gurus. Sri Dattatreya had the habit of accepting anything which taught Him an eye opening lesson as His Guru. In this way, He had as many as twenty four gurus during His lifetime.

Liberation and enlightenment can happen in no time, if humans can use their power of concentration and focus on spiritual progress instead of using it to fulfill their worldly desires.

- A Seeker



INTROSPECTION TIME

Everyone is familiar with the saying, “time and tide wait for none”. Our span of life constitutes seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years. We should utilize the time well.

John Erskine, author, professor, and lecturer had said that he learned the most valuable lesson of his life when he was 14. His piano teacher asked him for how long he had practiced. The boy replied that he practiced for an hour or more. “Don’t do that,” warned the teacher. “When you grow up, time won’t come in long stretches. Practice, whenever you can – five or 10 minutes before school, after lunch, between chores. Spread the practice through the day, and music will become a part of your life.” Erskine stated that the observance of this advice enabled him to live a comparatively complete life as a creative writer, outside his regular duties as an instructor. He wrote most of Helen of Troy, his most famous work, while commuting to work.

We are almost at the fag end of a year again and New Year freshness is round the corner. It is the time to take stock of things. We come across hoardings on roads about off-season sale; clearance sale indicating that such a sale is on in a particular shop. It shows that even a businessman does not want to keep the old stocks in his shop anymore and wants to clear them off as quickly as possible so that he can bring new items to attract customers.

We can adopt the same principle to our lives also. Let us decide a day of this month to sit down quietly and write a list of our accomplishments, failures, shortcomings, weaknesses etc. Please be honest while listing out. Begin with accomplishments, feel satisfied, proud and pat ourselves and plan how better we can extend these accomplishments into the coming years. This is the way we can extend our success for longer periods. Remember it is our hard work, blood and sweat. Let us not limit it to this

year alone. Analyze failures judiciously, jot down what went wrong and where the things went just out of our control. Let us resolve not to let these happen again in the coming years. Think about shortcomings. Let us understand shortcomings as part of our lives and our success purely depends on how we react to these. These should be given least importance, since these are momentary and will not affect our plans in the long run. Sit on the weaknesses; this should top our list of issues for clearance, only to begin our introspection on a positive note. I have suggested to dwell on accomplishments before proceeding on to failures. However failures play a major role in deciding our fate whether we can succeed in our goals or not. It is very crucial to come out with a solution as to how to overcome them. Make a promise that we will minimize our weaknesses and come out of this vicious circle as early as possible. Once we are done with our analysis on clearing off the hindrances that are troubling us, I find no reason why we will not succeed in our endeavours.

- Koti Rajasekhar M.



Understanding The Meaning

“The Lord Shiva who holds a deer in his hand and who has vanquished Karindra and the Shardoola, that mountain Lord, whose form is mighty, lives in the small cave of my heart as the five faced one, so what do I have to fear.” The beauty of the verse was thus unraveled only by a persistent devotion that time did not efface.

I heard this story from an uncle of mine. Way back in the seventies he used to visit the Paramacharya of Kanchi who was then camping at Belgaum. It was customary for the people gathered there to chant *Shlokas* in the presence of the sage. One such recitation that was done was that of the *Sivanandalahari* of Sankaracharya. My uncle who knew a smattering of Sanskrit would chant this with great fervor. On a particular instance the Paramacharya corrected him for breaking the metre of the verse which reads-

**“Karalangamrigakarindhrabhango
ganashardoolavikhandanosthajantu
Girishavishadakrithischachetakuhare
Panchamukhosthumeinkuthobhihi.”**

He also told him to ask the meaning from a learned Sanskrit scholar and a devotee who lived in the same town. My uncle met the scholar several times. However he never could learn the meaning as the only other language besides Sanskrit which the scholar knew was Marathi which was something my uncle did not know. So the *Shloka* remained with my uncle as a significant memory, as something special. Nearly two decades later the meaning dawned on him by a slow process of deconstruction and he shared this with me-

I wondered at the enigmatic directions of the Paramacharya. He could have explained the meaning himself. But what he did was to keep the quest alive. To know the meaning of anything sought in casual curiosity would be to obtain a fleeting clarity. Now we can Google everything at the click of a mouse but what stays with us are garbled references. With the passage of time the intensity of the seeking is dimmed and the beauty of the journey is forgotten. Only a Master can kindle that spark which will ultimately result in true understanding.

For me the epiphany is in the sense of the *Shloka* itself. When the powerful and omniscient Lord dwells right within all beings there is no need to be anxious and troubled. Knowing or not knowing the meaning of this verse does not change the reality that subsists. This incident is a remarkable illustration of the example Ramana Maharishi would quote comparing a seeker of self-realization to a woman who searches for a lost necklace only to discover that she had been wearing it all the time.

To understand the meaning of anything worth knowing is thus a process of discovery.

- Geetha Ravichandran

Team Work



Recently for my exams, I was reading about what a cell is and how it forms tissues in the body of an organism. I realized that when they say- “Look into yourself. You will find the answer to all your questions,” they don’t mean that you should do so only spiritually but also literally. God has given us an example of moral values within our own body. One aspect of the inspiration we should take from our body is team work.

If our organs or our cells, for even a minute, feel like taking rest or feel that, “I am superior to him”, will we be alive? Just think about it. Each of us has that ‘I’ feeling in us. That is ego. You must burn your ego; else it will burn you, slowly, gradually. A person with an ego can never be part of a team. Imagine what would happen if your heart felt that it was superior to the brain. I’ll just leave that to your imagination.

When you step into a team, you become part of a new family. There is no ego in a family. Ego makes you selfish. It makes you greedy. It makes you do a lot of things you don’t want to do. And there’s no place for that in a family.

An ideal team is where everyone cooperates, has a role to play and does not need to be reminded or helped in his/her role. How is that possible without someone to administrate and delegate the jobs? Now we think, “What about a leader?” Well, the leader is a completely different story.

We now know what it’s like in a team. Now, let’s find out what it’s like to be a leader. Forget our Prime Minister, President, etc. They are no in-

spiration to us anymore, unless you want to be a liability to the nation and to others around you. If we work in a team in school, for e.g., on a project, we blame our leader saying that he is only giving work and not doing anything. That is a bad leader. Yet, if the leader takes all the work, then too he is a bad leader; and if he takes all the work saying that the others don’t know how to do it, that makes him the worst leader.

A good leader knows the strengths and weaknesses of his team. He knows where to push forth, and where to lay low. He knows the feelings of his fellow teammates and treats them as equals. A leader inspires his teammates and even other people who aren’t in his team. The main thing is that a leader doesn’t have EGO.

If the leader is so good, then what is the problem? The team will automatically follow. We see in so many movies like The Avengers, how teammates don’t get along in the beginning and then they start trusting each other slowly. This helps them to accomplish the impossible. What I am trying to say is that, if super heroes who have such huge egos and attitude problems can work together as a team, why can’t we?

United we stand, divided we fall.

Try something alone, and you won’t be able to lift a ball.

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



May We Never Forget Our Roots!

When we start anything new, there is a lot to which we are introduced; more so when we are stepping into a different territory altogether, for the first time in life. The best example is starting one's career. We are generally apprehensive about what the world has to offer us and how we would respond to the new challenges. Training programmes are a good way to welcome the so-called 'freshers' into the institution and to give them a taste of what the organization expects from them.



I got the opportunity to attend one such training programme. It was a nice experience altogether. However, the most interesting part was the session on 'etiquette at the workplace' which was conducted by a renowned personality. They told us many things, laced with anecdotes. They taught us the right way of shaking hands, handing out and receiving visiting cards, way of dressing etc. When the discussion on hand-shake was on, one of the participants in the training raised a very practical doubt. She asked, "People in the South, especially men, are not comfortable in extending a hand shake to the women. What do we do then?" I expected a different answer, but the trainer just told us that we should be courteous on our part. Before I put out what I think, perhaps recounting a few instances from the past and contemporary period would be beneficial.

1. A young man in an almost shabby look landed up in an unknown place altogether and won the hearts of countless people throughout the world, just with his intellect. His Guru was a learned man. Yes, Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa!
2. A woman dressed in simple cotton sarees, tours the country and helps out millions in distress to carve their destiny. Despite being a part of one of India's IT giants, she and her humble husband, to whom the world looks up to, still prefer to carry out their household chores by themselves. We are referring to Sudha and Narayana Murthy.
3. This noble lady welcomes everyone into the institution she dedicatedly runs, with a warm smile

and enthusiasm which is contagious. She does not shake hands or emphasize on who you are. She is concerned with the advice or suggestion that one has to offer. Yes, it is our very own Vasundhara Amma, Founder Trustee of Nachiketa Tapovan.

In the race and craze for success, we often tend to forget our roots.

Today, we emphasize on impressing the West and adopting their customs/culture, albeit in an 'Indianized' way. But, do we ever realize why the West prefers us over many other countries? Do we notice that wherever they go, they make it a point to make others conform to their practices and it is rarely the other way round? Is it that the West or rather the foreign investors are gratuitously investing in our country? Why do we tend to submit ourselves to everything, be it senseless institutions or alien customs? While dressing decently and being presentable are essentials, are they the only criteria to judge people or form an impression about them? Isn't a simple and respectful '*Namaste*' good enough, and if it is not, why do we feel happy when organizations like the airlines sport a traditional look? Is it the substance that matters or the external look?

A few days back, a friend from abroad called up and proudly told that they, a group of male students, performed Ganesh Puja in their flat by turning on the chants from YouTube! I was amused. Perhaps we realize the value of anything only when we are away from it.

By way of conclusion, it would be apt to say that neither thesis nor anti-thesis would be the right thing to adopt. It should be a synthesis, which is rational. Let us absorb the good, learn and unlearn continuously. At the same time, let us not forget our roots and our own values, for if a tree, howsoever old and big it may be, if cut from its roots, it eventually dies!



Neetika Gogula

An advocate and has passion for writing on social issues.



The 'Nobel' Poet

On 10 December, this year we will be celebrating the centenary of the conferment of Nobel Prize for Literature on Rabindranath Tagore for his anthology of poems, *Gitanjali*. Tagore referred to as an “Anglo-Indian poet” by the Nobel Academy, had translated his own poems in English while noted Irish poet, WB Yeats wrote its introduction.

India then was a colony of the British and a far-away land for most Europeans when globalisation was yet to happen. Yet, the Swedish Academy chose a poet little known in that hemisphere and whose original works could not be appreciated by his Western admirers because of language barriers. Many, who are fortunate enough to read Tagore’s poetry in his own language rue that the musicality of his verse gets lost in translation.

The Nobel Academy however found no reason to hesitate “since the founder of the Prize laid it down in set terms as his express wish and desire that, in the awarding of the Prize, no consideration should be paid to the nationality to which any proposed candidate might belong.” Tagore was not only the first non-European to win the prize for Literature but also the first Asian to be awarded the Nobel.

Europe was at that time in the grip of growing conflicts with the spectre of World War I looming large. No wonder the serenity and the spirituality reflected in his poetry appealed to the Western World. The Academy’s statement on his nomination hailed the “original and traditional elements in Rabindranath Tagore’s religious mystique and poetry”. Despite the spiritual content his poems were simple to understand yet it was not a case

where there was little to understand. In the words of the Academy “Prayers, worship and inner love flow through the song offerings he sends up to his nameless God.” He was truly the mystical sage from the East.

However, Tagore could not be present at the ceremony and the prize was collected by a British official and delivered to Calcutta. He sent a short note thanking the academy for the “breadth of understanding which has brought the distant near, and has made a stranger a brother”.

Later during his visit to Stockholm on 21 May, 1921 he delivered what is known as the “acceptance speech” before the Academy. Dwelling upon the appeal of his poetry, Tagore observed: “It is the East in me which gave to the West. For is not the East the mother of spiritual Humanity and does not the West, do not the children of the West amidst their games and plays, when they get hurt, when they get famished and hungry turn their face to that serene mother, the East... Fortunately for me I came in that very moment when the West had turned her face again to the East and was seeking for some nourishment.”

In an ever-changing, ephemeral world where some months ago even the telegram which heralded the news of his being conferred the Nobel Prize, was rendered redundant his body of poetry continues to provide sustenance to the troubled mind. No wonder Tagore wrote, “A hundred years from now who could you be reading my poem curiously?” confident that his works would be succour for generations to come.

- *Jaya Chowdhury*



The Teachers who believed in me

Against all odds
And popular opinions
They believed in me-
A back bencher,
Erratic behaviour,
Impulsive outbursts,
Quirky mannerism,
Everything unusual
Every bit strange.
Yet they saw something,
They believed somehow
Beyond the external
Behind the abnormal
They saw a light
Shining within me
Before I knew or believed possible
They loved me
Before I did myself
They encouraged and nudged,
They inspired and roused
They counselled and chiselled
They crafted and created
The person I am today
The someone you see me as now

By chasing their beliefs
By abiding to their words of wisdom
I found my own
By holding and cherishing their love
I learnt to express my own
That once upon a time
Nameless, faceless
Yet none-the-less
They are today,
Every kind word I utter
Every selfless kind act and deed
Every smile on my face
Every happy laughter and all the grace
They are the faith I learnt to have
And the love I learnt to have and show
In others as well as in myself
They are the many reasons
I can face and conquer
Vanquish and accomplish
All the fears and feats
All the many failures and defeats
I am what I am
Because, they were what they were.
(29-01-2013)

- *Mallika Sastry*



इवल्लइरगोः ।टइइठठ = ठिठपु ठिठठ

By Krupalu Ogeti, Samskrit Bharati, Hyderabad
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avyayAni

Samskrit language is rich with words which have uniform usage in all the लिङ्गानि, वचनानि and विभक्तयः (genders, numbers and declensions). These are called 'avyayam's. We have already come across a few of them, such as, सम्यक्, शीघ्रम्, मन्दम्, उच्चैः, नीचैः. Let us understand the difference between an 'avyayam' and a non-avyayam. For example, look at the difference between सम्यक् and उत्तम-, which have roughly the same meaning. I have used a hyphen after uttama to indicate that this is just the base – 'prAtipadikam'.

मम आरोग्यं सम्यक् अस्ति।

मम आरोग्यम् उत्तमम् अस्ति।

सा कथा सम्यक् अस्ति।

सा कथा उत्तमा अस्ति।

संस्कृतपाठः सम्यक् अस्ति।

संस्कृतपाठः उत्तमः अस्ति।

In the above example, we notice that 'samyak' was same in all the three genders, whereas 'uttama' had difference based on the gender of the word it was going with. Similarly,

तानि पुस्तकानि सम्यक् सन्ति।

तानि पुस्तकानि उत्तमानि सन्ति।

ताः कथाः सम्यक् सन्ति।

ताः कथाः उत्तमाः सन्ति।

संस्कृतपाठाः सम्यक् सन्ति।

संस्कृतपाठाः उत्तमाः सन्ति।

In these sentences, we notice that सम्यक् remained same for plural numbers also. Therefore, it is very easy to use अव्ययम् in Samskrit language. Let us study a few of the popular ones.

च

This word is often used with a meaning like 'and'. However, please note that this is used after the end of the list. (In other languages, we may say this just before the last element of the list.)

रामः, सीता, लक्ष्मणः च वनं गतवन्तः।

Though I have used commas to make the meaning clear, the meaning is the same without commas as well. Also, one can also say रामः च, सीता च, लक्ष्मणः च वनं गतवन्तः। However, one च will be enough at the end. In fact, in poetry, च – and a few more such single lettered words - can be used in any place just to meet the poetic-meter (छन्दस्) requirement. In such case, that word carries no meaning.

Look at the following examples of च in different vibhaktis, where we use this word with a purpose.

अहं काफीं, चायं च पिबामि।

पृथिव्या, जलेन, अनलेन, अनिलेन, आकाशेन च निर्मितम् एतत् शरीरम्। ((पृथिव्यापस्तेजोवायुराकाशाः

पञ्चभूतानि)

पिता पुत्राय, पुत्र्यै च धनं दत्तवान्।

अभिषेकार्थं गङ्गातः, गोदावरीतः, कावेरीतः च जलानि आनीतवन्तः।

द्रौपदी युधिष्ठिरस्य, भीमस्य, अर्जुनस्य, नलस्य, सहदेवस्य च पत्नी।

रामे, कृष्णे, शिवे च तस्य भक्तिः अस्ति।

(To be continued in the next issue)



Goddess Durga

navaratri = 2013

At Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram in Kodgal village, Navaratri celebrations began a day earlier with volunteers preparing for the festivities and nine-day *sadhana*. On 4th October 2013, it was the auspicious day of Mahalaya Amavasya. *Abhishekam*, *Puja* and *Aarathi* were performed to the deity of Ma Dakshina Kali at Ma Yoga Shakthi Peetham. Swamiji and Mataji briefed the *sadhakas* and young Nachiketas (Vidya Mandir students of Nachiketa Tapovan) on the 9 day programme. The children came all the way from Hyderabad to take an active participation in the festivities and what followed was their amazing display of determination, dedication and sincerity. They would wake up in the wee hours and participate in *Abhishekam*, and procuring things for the *puja* and *homam*. Their efforts turned out to be fruitful as Divine Mother showered Her choicest blessings on these young Nachiketas. Each and every child basked in the glory of Divine Mother's love. A Vidya Mandir student would do many mudras which were unknown to her and which were related to the homam. All these were done in a semi-conscious state.

Goddess Dakshina Kali manifested as Nava Durgas during the Navaratri festival. Mataji weaved her magic wand and transformed Mother as Shailaputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandamata, Kathyayani, Kalaratri, Maha Gowri and Siddhidatri. On the 10th day Mother manifested as Goddess Durga.

The number 9 has significance in spiritual science. The existence of mankind is dependent on the 9 planets. 9 forms of *bhakthi- Smaranam*, *Keerthanam*,



Mataji performs Go-puja



Mataji performing Purnahuthi



Young Nachiketas



Palanquin Seva for Goddess Durga



Swamiji performs Kumari Puja

Sravanam, Padaseva, Archana, Vandanam, Dhyanam, Sakhyam and Atmanivedanam are performed in our worship. There are also 9 *nadis* and 9 *randhras* in our body. Worshipping Divine Mother these 9 nights becomes a worship of a lifetime. It was amazing to watch Divine Mother exhibit various expressions as per the form She had manifested on any particular day. If it was *sattwa guna* the devotees' heart would melt on seeing the peace that was expressed in Her face. There are no words to describe the energies that were prevalent during the *yaga* on all the 9 days. There was not a single person who did not experience those energies, whether it was a child or an adult.

Swamiji was in *Mouna Dheeksha* but his silence enhanced the festivities on the subtle level. Smt Vasundhara, Vijaya and Lakshmi took care of the kitchen from Day-1. They played the role of Goddess Annapurna cooking and feeding everyone present. Manga and Krishna attended to the minutest details in decorating Ma Kali. Villagers attended in large numbers to witness these festivities.

All the sadhakas were successful in tuning to Divine Mother. All of them achieved victory by awakening their inner self. On the 10th day a palanquin *seva* was performed to end the festivities.



Bathukamma Puja



Blessings from Swamiji



from Vidya Mandir

Satsanga at Prakruti Kuteer Ashram

Prakruti Kuteer was started by Swami Prakrutananda, a humble person who spent his childhood and youth in contemplation of the Divine. He followed his heart when he received an inner call to hug a larger family. He dropped all his external identities and became a sannyasi.

Prakruti Kuteer had conducted a camp for children in October 2013. It is strange that though they lack even basic amenities and proper shelter yet they conducted a camp for 60 children who came from two villages. An unfinished shed without flooring, windows and doors and on top of it unpredictable heavy rains in this area couldn't deter Swamiji's desire to go ahead with the camp and he successfully completed this divine task. He has to be appreciated for his hard work, passion for Ma Bharati and above all for his crying soul for needy people. He doesn't bother about external forces and feels that it is all divine will that inspires one to carry on the good work.

We visited Prakruti Kuteer on Swami Prakrutananda's invitation, and were mesmerized to see the children listening to Mataji attentively. Her lucid language and authority on yoga created a lot of eagerness in the children. She gave an example of a tiger cub that grows up with goats and believing that he is also one among them. But once a grown up tiger sees this cub eating grass and happily moving with goats he holds that cub and brings it near the water pond and shows him what its true nature is. Similarly she asked children to understand their true nature.

You can reachout

Swami Prakrutananda at:

Mobile No: 9247367373

Email: prakrutikuteer@gmail.com



Satsanga at Electricity Department:

A 10 day Yoga camp was conducted in two separate batches by Sanjeev Guruji at Electricity Dept, Mahaboobnagar. More than 100 employees and their family members have attended this programme and on the last day Mataji was invited to bless the *Sadhakas*. The highlight of the programme was when she said just by doing *Asanas, Pranayama* or *Kriyas* one cannot become a real Yogi whereas one who has transcended all barriers of this *Samsara* and gone beyond the three types of sorrows such as *Adhi Bhautik, Adhi Daivik* and *Adhyatmik* is truly a Yogi.



Swamiji & Mataji felicitated at the Satsang

Diwali Celebrations

Diwali was celebrated at Ashram on 3rd November 2013. *Abhisekam, Puja* and *Homam* were performed.



Reminiscences of Navaratri



Nagamani sincerely participates in the *homam*

I'm really lucky to get the opportunity to spend the nine powerful days at Nachiketa Ashram and serve Maa Kali. I felt so happy because I was going to do *Abhishekam* and *Alankarana* to our Mother Kali. In other temples there is no such opportunity where as in our temple, we get this wonderful and golden opportunity to serve the Mother and be blessed by Maa Kali. I didn't know proper meditation and *sadhana* but in those nine days I started doing *sadhana* and meditation for a long time which I never practised in my life before. I think it is Maa Kali's blessings that made me do *sadhana* and travel into my innerself and know the truth. Everyone in this world thinks of the physical body and works for the physical body, no one thinks about their inner energy or *Shakti*. We never even think about our soul. In those nine days I searched for my soul and tried my best by doing an intense *sadhana*. Our physical body is like a monitor and our soul is like a C.P.U. We should search for our C.P.U. but everyone is looking only at the monitor. Life is not earning and living just like that. Life is something else, it is enjoying our own selves

spiritually. Meditating in silence makes us a spiritual dynamo. Coming to my experiences in *sadhana*, when I did *sadhana*, in the first 3, 4 days I could hear my heart-beat very clearly. Then next two-three days I experienced a pain and some movement in my *Ajna chakra* which is located in the middle of my forehead. Last three four days I experienced sudden calmness and peace and I really forgot my physical body and entered into deep *sadhana*. I enjoyed this state.

Yagna is the most powerful thing which we didn't know before. In *yagna*, while we are chanting *mantras*, so much energy was created because of the vibrations of chanting *mantras*. *Mantra* has a powerful energy. One who knows the value of *mantra* and chants *mantra* properly can surely experience the real science. We were given *Mantra Diksha* by Mataji, which we are practising everyday in the morning. Chanting *mantra* takes us to higher levels and it increases our concentration power. I think all this had happened because of Maa Kali's blessings. I'm really thankful to Maa Kali for making me realize the truth and to understand myself better. I'm thankful to everyone who provided this opportunity to me.



Nagamani

Class X,

Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir



Shravani participates in the homam

I want to share a few things which I have learnt and experienced in those nine days of *Navaratri* at Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram, Jadcherla.

Soon after we reached Ashram, we had a *satsang* with Swamiji and Mataji. Swamiji explained the importance of Navaratri. Mataji briefed us on the activities and time table. Our day would begin by waking up at 3am and our activities started from 4am. We helped Manga akka and Krishna akka with *Abhishekam* and *Alankarana*. It's a beautiful experience as we cannot do all these directly in any other temple. When we sat for meditation after *kumkumarchana* or *homa*, I enjoyed that silence and peace. We all had different experiences in meditation. Initially I used to sit just for 10 to 15 minutes but gradually I increased my meditation time. During meditation though my eyes were closed I felt I was looking at Divine Mother directly and she smiled at me.

During *satsang* Mataji revealed to us the significance of the *Avatar*, the clothes, ornaments and weapons that Divine Mother adorned on that particular day. This proved to be informative as we had no knowledge of this. How important those nine days were? Mataji gave some books to read which had stories about the manifestation of *Avatars* which also gave some valuable information about our life.

On the last day while we were doing *homam*, I went into a deep meditative state. I closed my eyes and I was unaware of my surroundings. I

Memoirs of Navaratri 2013

was feeling very peaceful and calm and I felt some kind of vibrant energy was encircling me and when I opened my eyes I cried so much. I don't know why? On another day some of us went for *sadhana* after dinner. Mataji took us to *yagnashala*, where we had earlier done *homam*. We could still feel the warmth. Mataji told us not to speak, just stand there and she came out and stood outside. We stood there for 5 minutes. It was amazing and I felt as if someone or some life is there. I felt someone was sitting there. When I told Mataji about this experience she explained that Divine Beings come and meditate there. What a Divine place!

On the last day Mataji gave us *Mantra Diksha*. She explained the significance and benefits of *Mantra Diksha* and why we should take *Mantra Diksha*?

These are only few of my experiences. I am feeling very happy because I learnt so many things during this Navaratri. I thank Mataji and Swamiji and everyone else who gave us this golden opportunity.



**Shravani,
Class X**

Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir

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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3 years	₹ 280
5 years	₹ 450

OVERSEAS

1 year	₹ 1500 (only in INR)
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NACHIKETA'S GO GREEN CLUB...

We convey our thanks to all the participants of WOW initiative. You helped us earn Rs. 12,830/- in the month of October and saved Mother Earth by recycling about 1603 kg of plastic and paper waste material.

Invitation

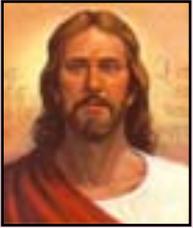
We cordially invite you to attend our celebrations



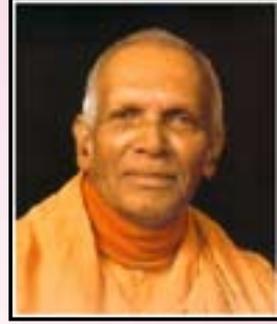
Gita Jayanti
13th December 2013
@ Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram,
Jadcherla.

Sarada Ma's Birthday

21st December 2013 at 1:30 pm.
@ Nachiketa Tapovan, Kavuri Hills, Hyd.
&
24th December 2013 (Tithi)
@ Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram, Jadcherla.



Christmas
24th December 2013
at 1 pm.
@ Nachiketa Tapovan,
Kavuri Hills, Hyderabad.



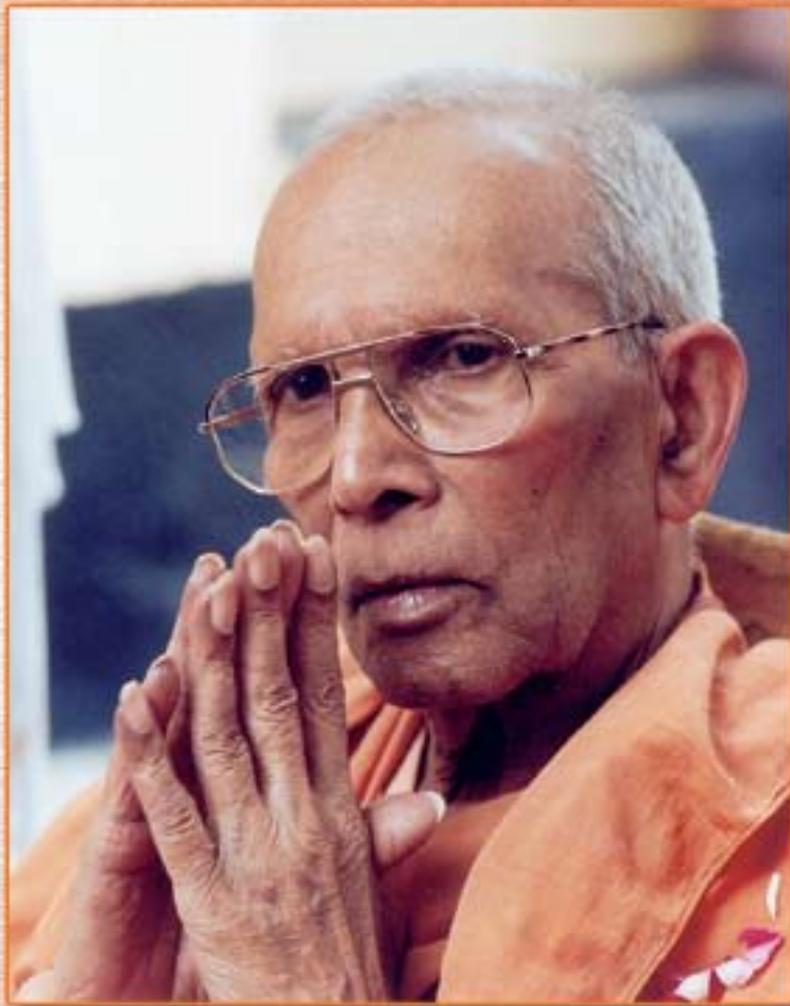
Swami Ranganathananda Birthday Celebrations

Satsang by
Swami Nachiketananda Puri
&
Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri
15th December 2013 at 6 pm.
at 1180, Road No. 45,
Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad.

Festivals & Events of December 2013



We pay our homage to Rev. Swami Ranganathanandaji on
the occasion of His Birthday
15th December



(1908 - 2005)

*Blessed is the heart that does not collect
resentments and often dwells on them.*

- Swami Ranganathananda

Hotel Sri Brindavan
Nampally Station Road, Hyderabad



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“Our life, Our choice. What do you want?
Left or Right.”



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