

Nachiketanjali

...an offering



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GLORIOUS INDIAN HERITAGE



Murudeshwar Temple

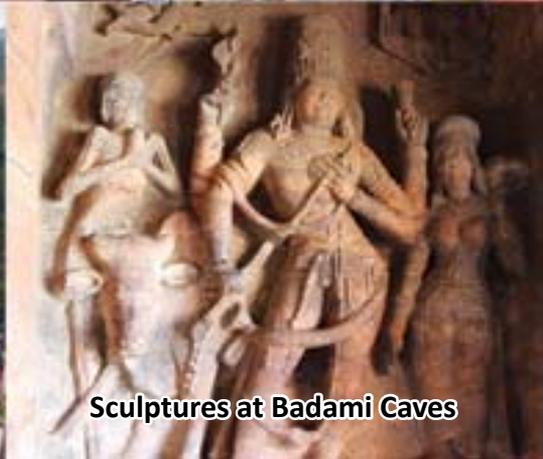


Lord Vishnu's sculpture at Badami

Pattadakal Temple



Our group at Jog Falls



Sculptures at Badami Caves

Contents

	Editorial	3	Prayer to be humble	20	
	Nachiketas	4	Stay Connected	21	
	Sri Ramakrishna's Amrita Dhara	6	Mangaladevi	22	
	You, Your Existence	7	Upbringing - Then and Now	23	
	Life of a Rain Drop	8	What about my Dream?	24	
	The Bird	9	I am not the Body ...	25	
	Vivekanjali	10	Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinaha!	26	
	Yoga - Vajrasana	11	Home Remedies...	28	
	Ramakrishna Math & Mission	12	Sanskrit Lesson - Forty Five	29	
	This too shall pass	14	Ashram News	30	
	Shame	15	Events & Celebrations	32	
	Karnataka: One state, many worlds	16	Only because of You...	35	
	What should be a good message...	18	Invitation	36	

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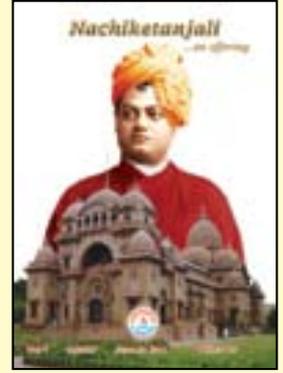
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Cover Story

During His travels all over India, Swami Vivekananda was deeply moved to see the appalling poverty and backwardness of the masses. He was the first religious leader in India to understand and openly declare that the real cause of India's downfall was the neglect of the masses. The immediate need was to provide food and other bare necessities of life to the hungry millions. He saw that, in spite of poverty, the masses clung to religion, but they had never been taught the life-giving, ennobling principles of Vedanta and how to apply them in practical life.



Thus the masses needed two kinds of knowledge: secular knowledge to improve their economic condition, and spiritual knowledge to infuse in them faith in themselves and strengthen their moral sense. The next question was, how to spread these two kinds of knowledge among the masses? Through education – this was the answer that Swamiji found.

One thing became clear to Swamiji: to carry out His plans for the spread of education and for the uplift of the poor masses, and also of women, an efficient organization of dedicated people was needed. As He said later on, He wanted “to set in motion a machinery which will bring noblest ideas to the doorstep of even the poorest and the meanest.” It was to serve as this ‘machinery’ that Swamiji founded the **Ramakrishna Mission** a few years later.

He founded on **1 May 1897** a unique type of organization known as Ramakrishna Mission, in which monks and lay people would jointly undertake propagation of Practical Vedanta, and various forms of social service, such as running hospitals, schools, colleges, hostels, rural development centres etc, and conducting massive relief and rehabilitation work for victims of earthquakes, cyclones and other calamities, in different parts of India and other countries.

In early **1898** Swami Vivekananda acquired a big plot of land on the western bank of the Ganga at a place called Belur in Kolkata to have a permanent abode for the monastery and monastic Order originally started at Baranagar, and got it registered as **Ramakrishna Math** after a couple of years.

Source: Belur Math Website

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EXPLORING THE TRUTH

Until and unless we experience the SELF, we tend to dwell only in worldliness. A child gets attracted to a toy according to his/her age. A teddy bear might not be his fancy toy as the child grows. He is fascinated with other toys along with his growing age. Correspondingly, *Puja* or other religious practices are baby steps taken by any spiritual aspirant when one begins his/her spiritual journey. But as we evolve we need to take larger strides in our spiritual journey. It is ok if a child is excited to wear an adult shirt. We are amused by the act. But isn't it comical if an adult tries to wear a child's attire?

A calf grows into a cow, a cub grows into a tiger and a child grows into an adult. But just growing physically will not suffice. We have to evolve spiritually. We need to explore the treasures hidden within us. Once we start digging within, we'll be amazed as we encounter the treasures which are beyond our human perception. Our search begins in earnest.

Eventually, as we delve deep, a great and wondrous adventure takes place. We are surprised to know that all the Gods and Goddesses we have been worshipping in temples or shrines are right there within us, existing in our various *Chakras* as presiding deities. It is mystifying! We worship Ganesha in temples as the prime deity and here is Ganesha residing in the *Mooladharachakra*. As we travel through the other *Chakras* we encounter Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara and all other Gods. More surprises are in store for the aspirant. Enormous treasures and astounding facts are revealed. Oh! What great and incredible beauty to behold! Everything inside the very body which embodies the Soul!!!

Once the truth is revealed we start considering our body as a temple and step up our research on the inner world. Every fiber of our Being cries –“WHO AM I”? We ultimately realize that we are the reflection of the ALMIGHTY! Yes, this is the Supreme TRUTH! This revelation leads us to expand our horizons. Bliss and Joy – all is bountiful. Well, this is the joy we have been searching for! We bathe in the new found Bliss! Truth now lies in the bosom, for the world to experience. Peace permeates the core of our Existence and then generates outward – into the universe, encircling and engulfing all beings on Earth.

- Subhadra K.



Nachiketas

My dear readers!

Whenever I look at our young Nachiketas, one thing comes in my mind that these are the children of immortality to watch in future. I am sure, though they are youth from poor tribal families and not doing well in academics, yet they are going to pave their own path leaving impressions far behind and their own signatures far ahead and will make thousands of people follow them.

It is not that they are not happy with what they have, but they want to make the best use of whatever little they receive from every corner. They are great fighters, God fearing souls and above all hardcore Karma yogis. They don't know much about religion or spirituality but Nachiketa's **Shraddha** is found in them abundantly, therefore for me they are potentially Divine and ready to receive wisdom from Mataji.

They are much more than robust personalities but soon wane, because of lack of basic facilities such as education, health support system and proper income generating activities. But no matter what the situation is, they are happy, content and cheerful. I have always seen them hovering around Mataji like small kids. You don't give them food, no problem; but you shouldn't take away Mataji's presence from them. She is everything for them.

Mataji's charismatic personality attracted many youth from different walks of life. It is not something unusual how a compassionate heart and loving personality attracts many, but in her case it is totally different. When we ask these youth, each of them has a different story to share but one common thing that we found out from them; there is something much deeper than social and spiritual bond with Mataji, that pulls them towards Ashram. Many of them even said that her Divine presence gives them more spiritual intoxication than any other holy company. They say, 'We just get connected to her even without talking anything'. That's the power she holds within. She says, 'Nachiketas are not created, they are born.'

When many of the youth started coming to Ashram to know the world within and without; Mataji in her simple and humble way started taking everyone under her motherly umbrella, molding and preparing them into spiritual dynamos to serve the society. She doesn't believe in baptizing or correcting them, but requests everyone not to worry about mistakes that they commit while treading the spiritual path. She encourages them to take up independent decisions as well. Perhaps, this is that conviction that brought a bigger change in their young minds and I am sure, sooner or later, society will be able to see waves after waves of bliss.

OUR YOUNG NACHIKETAS AT ASHRAM

Heeru

Age: 18

Native: Jillalagudda Tanda,
Mandal: Balanagar

Distance from Ashram: 4 ½ km

Persona: Quick learner, simple,
humble and a man of commitment

Education: B.Sc. Computer, Final year

College: Govt. College, Shadnagar

Watch out: His commitment towards the cause

When to find him in Ashram:

During holidays or on emergency call



Suman

Age: 21

Native: Peddabhai Tanda,
Mandal: Balanagar

Distance from Ashram: 2 km

Persona: Modest

Education: Engineering Diploma II year

College: Govt College, Chirala,
Prakasham District

Watch out: His simplicity

When to find him in Ashram:

During holidays.





Sindhuja

Age: 13

Native: Chinnarevally,

Distance from Ashram: 8 km

Persona: Sweet & cheerful with a caring heart

Education: 8th Class

School: St. Angelo, Jadcherla

Watch out: Her understanding towards the world at this tender age

When to find her in Ashram: During holidays



Aruna

Age: 18

Native: Peddabhai Tanda,

Distance from Ashram: 2 km

Persona: Quick learner, hardworking, passionate towards her goal

Education: B.Tech II year

College: M.R.E.M. College, Medchal

Watch out: Her passion to achieve set goals

When to find her in Ashram: During holidays



Sekhar

Age: 21

Native: Chinnarevally, Mandal: Balanagar

Distance from Ashram: 8 km

Persona: Well built, innocent

Education: B.Sc. Computer Final year

Watch out: His respect for Mataji

When to find him in Ashram: Always



Venkatesh

Age: 21

Native: Peddabhai Tanda, Mandal: Balanagar

Distance from Ashram: 2 km

Persona: Simple

Education: B.Sc. III Year

College: Govt. College, Khammam Dist

Watch out: His involvement in social activities

When to find him in Ashram: During holidays



Bhaskar

Age: 18

Native: Peddabhai Tanda,

Distance from Ashram: 2 km

Persona: Simple & fun-loving

Education: B.Sc. I year

College: City College, Hyderabad

Watch out: His entertaining approach.

When to find him in Ashram: During holidays

Saritha

Age: 15

Native: Peddabhai Tanda,

Distance from Ashram: 2 km

Persona: Sweet & jovial

Education: Inter I Year

College: Pratibha College, Jadcherla

Watch out: Her light hearted acts

When to find her in Ashram: During holidays



Jyothi

Age: 15

Native: Peddabhai Tanda,

Distance from Ashram: 2 km

Persona: Sweet & inquisitive

Education: 10th class

College: Govt. School, Shadnagar

Watch out: Her commitment towards the cause

When to find her in Ashram: During holidays



Saroja

Age: 15

Native: Tanda,

Distance from Ashram: 2 km

Persona: Simple & humble

Education: 10th class

School: Govt. School, Jadcherla

Watch out: Her love for studies

When to find her in Ashram: During holidays



- Swami Nachiketanaanda Puri





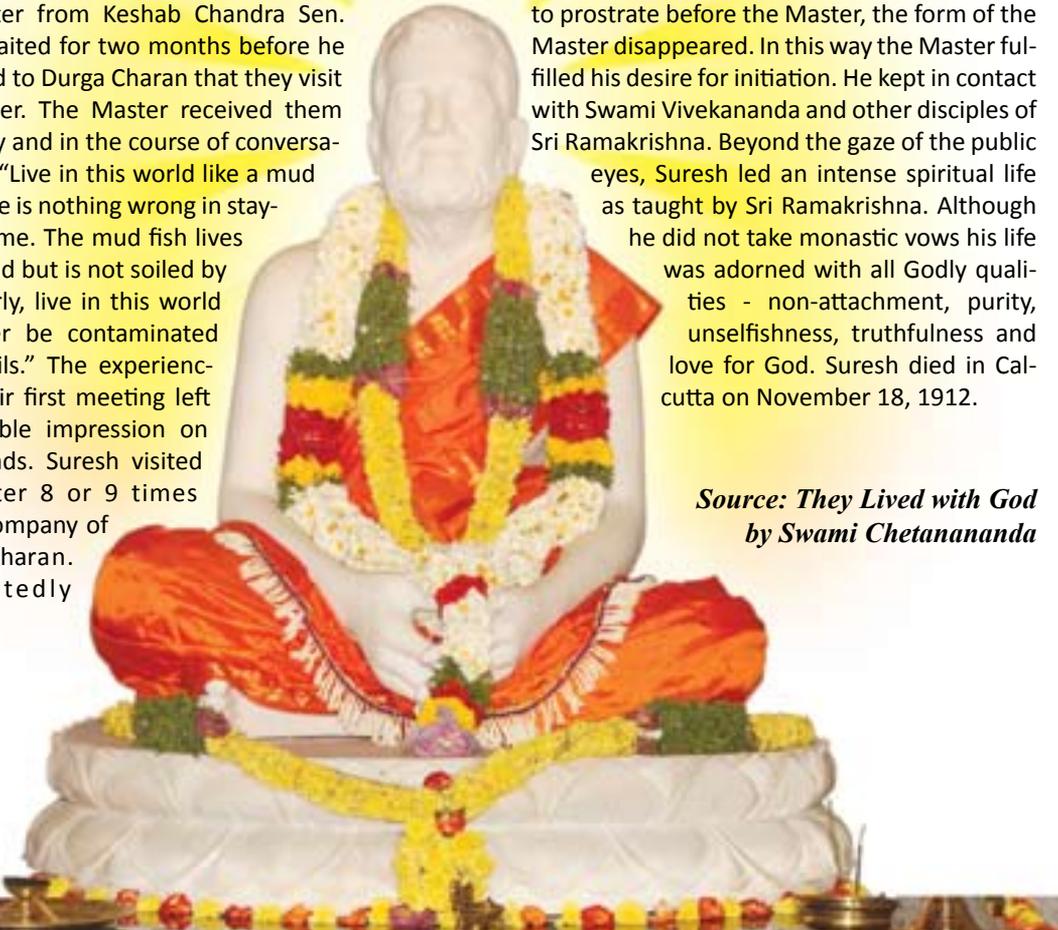
Suresh Chandra Datta

The Hindu scriptures say, 'A householder should establish his life in spirituality, he should follow the path of truth, and he should dedicate his actions and their results to the eternal being'. Human society is nothing but the sum total of individuals. If the life of an individual householder is weak, worldly, dishonest and disreputable, then the family life, social life, and national life are also polluted. Therefore for the betterment of society the character of each individual must be developed.

Suresh Chandra Datta was an ideal householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. He was born in 1850 at Hatkhola, in an aristocratic family. From boyhood Suresh was honest, humble, simple and self-reliant. Originally a Brahmo, he first heard about the Master from Keshab Chandra Sen. But he waited for two months before he suggested to Durga Charan that they visit the Master. The Master received them graciously and in the course of conversation said "Live in this world like a mud fish. There is nothing wrong in staying at home. The mud fish lives in the mud but is not soiled by it. Similarly, live in this world but never be contaminated by its evils." The experiences of their first meeting left an indelible impression on their minds. Suresh visited the Master 8 or 9 times in the company of Durga Charan. Undoubtedly

he must have visited the Master many more times alone; otherwise he could not have compiled so many of the Master's teachings which he later published in a book.

Suresh played an important role in spreading the ideas of Sri Ramakrishna. He freely distributed his book on the Master's Birth Anniversary. One day in 1886 Suresh went to see the Master to get initiation. Seeing the Master bedridden and fragile he could not bring himself to ask the Master for initiation. After the Master's passing away he repented for not having asked the Master for initiation. One night while crying to God he fell asleep on the river bank. Before day break the next morning he dreamt that the Master had come out of the water and uttered a *Mantram* in his ear. As Suresh was about to prostrate before the Master, the form of the Master disappeared. In this way the Master fulfilled his desire for initiation. He kept in contact with Swami Vivekananda and other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. Beyond the gaze of the public eyes, Suresh led an intense spiritual life as taught by Sri Ramakrishna. Although he did not take monastic vows his life was adorned with all Godly qualities - non-attachment, purity, unselfishness, truthfulness and love for God. Suresh died in Calcutta on November 18, 1912.



*Source: They Lived with God
by Swami Chetanananda*

You, YOUR EXISTENCE

**It is when we love ourselves first,
people around us love us. It is when
we feel our existence; people feel our
existence in their life.**

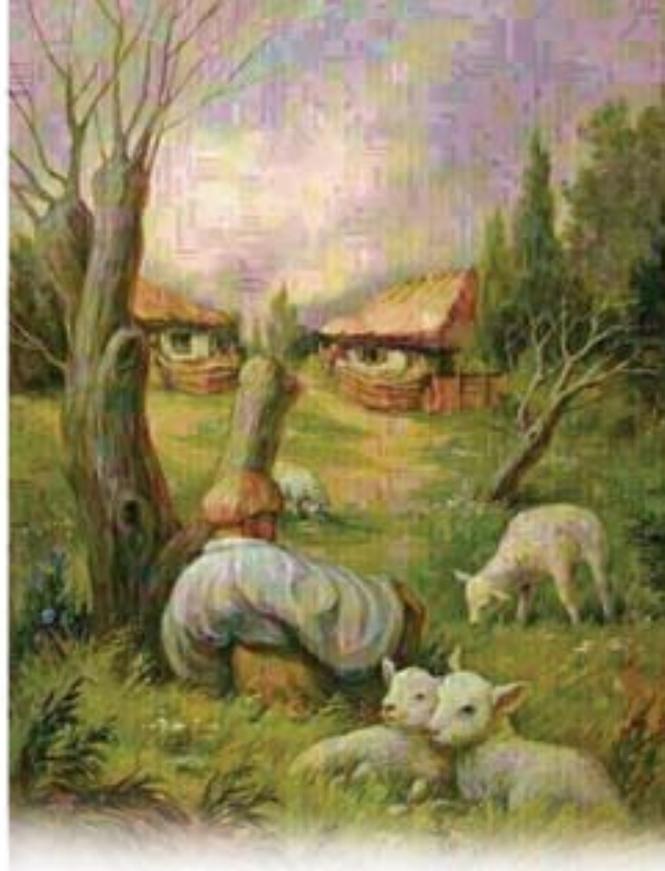
- Suruchi Singh

We all have pivotal moments in life – the moments that change the course of our life or make us realize the reason for our existence. A moment of solitude, where you find yourself.

We have all heard the various expressions of nature – of waves running towards us and surrendering to our feet, of the sky through lightning, of birds while fluttering their wings. These are the expressions of the sea, sky and birds - of their existence. But have you ever heard the expression of your breath, your heartbeat, the vibration that gushes within your body from head to toe. This expression is **“You”**, your existence.

When I run, I hear the voice of my feet touching the dirt; feel the sweat flowing down from my face to every part of my body, and my heart that feels happy and calm. This is me - my existence which I never realized also existed. All through our life, we searched for love in the eyes of other people, in their life and retired hurt and in pain as we never found love for ourselves in their life. It is then that you wonder if that is all that constituted **“You”**. It is then that we realize that it was never about searching outside; it was always about searching within.

Only if we exist, the world around us exists. It is when we love ourselves first, people around us love us. It is when we feel our existence; people feel our existence in their life. I knew that if I was living my last string of life and if I could



find myself in this last string I would go back to the source of my creation. And this part of life was most difficult and painful. Every breath was painful as I knew that to find myself I would have to detach myself from all emotions, from everything and everyone. It is when time rolls by and you don't find reason, you find yourself. It is about putting conscious effort and being aware of each expression happening within you. It is about seeing the clear demarcation of the light and darkness. The moment this becomes our very nature, we find ourselves living in joy and bliss.

In our life there is so much to see, experience and live for. Our story of life may not have a clear beginning but it has meaning and this meaning leads us to our end. When everything external ends, we find a new beginning to our journey; to the Self - a journey which begins at every moment in every breath. In this journey of Self, in the solitude within you, you will find the real meaning of **“You”**.

Life of a Rain drop



I love the sound of rain. Sitting in the confines of the blue walls in my room, it's a welcome change from the sound of silence to hear the sheet of water droplets letting themselves fall through the sky onto the parched ground below.

I like to imagine that I was one of those drops, conceived in one of those cotton-white clouds above. Swirling around in the white mush of nothingness, sometimes cajoled by a gust of high wind, sometimes prodded by shafts of warm sunlight, I would bide my time until it was time- to fall out of the sky and fulfill my destiny. My white would age to a dull grey, then almost black, heavy with the pregnancy of the monsoons- and then it would happen.

A slap of thunder like the crack of a whip, the gurgling growl of the clouds around me, as if waiting to let out all that fury, and then the release. Together, we would float into the blue, letting gravity work its magic. And we would fall-free, light and pure. No thought, no consciousness, no being. And yet, we would be complete.

We would float down past the white clouds whose time was yet to come, then gather speed and excitement as we saw the patches of green below. And it would be a moment of inconceivable wonder for this nothing-little drop, witnessing the sheer size of the earth below and the expanse of the sky around- yet knowing that this was all still just an insignificant dot in the infinite universe around.

As we would fall down lower and lower, it would start becoming clear to us where our destinies lay- for some on the greens, for some on the grey, for some on the blue. And we would accept with a smile.

And then we would come too close, so close that all sound and color disappeared again. Sometimes we fall on parched cracks of mud and earth and are swallowed up in an instant by hungry thirst. Sometimes we would fall on minty green leaves and twinkle and sparkle and gleam on their skin. And the flowers and barks and birds would look at us in admiration, thanking us for being who we were. And sometimes we would fall into the deep blue sea, far out and away from the land, where the strong calm of the surface betrayed none of the restless motion below. And we would see ourselves for but a moment in the reflection on the surface, and begin to question who we really were, and what our purpose was, and whether we were any closer to fulfilling that promise now. And while we were caught up in this whirlwind of thought, we would meet the surface of that water, one drop at a time.

And it would surprise us to no end, realizing that this incredible body of blue, this infinite expanse and unfathomable depth of powerful water was nothing but many, many drops come together- just like us. And as we would fall with a soft plop deep into its heart, we would be greeted by many more like us- welcoming us with open arms. And in the next instant, no one would be able to tell one from another, for we would all be the same, once more.

Then, from under the water, we would look up one afternoon, at the glorious sky above that was once our home. And we would feel a pang of longing for that airy freedom, but not for long for we would be nudged by our surrounding drops playfully- sometimes a splash, sometimes a wave, sometimes a tide. And we would smile and join the flow, realizing that we were all part of this cosmic game. That we were everything to it and yet nothing at all.

And one morning, when the sun would wake up brighter and cheerier than usual, we would be in for a surprise, when we would vaporize and go all the way up again, with the lightness of air. And we would rise up, higher and higher, slow and steady and first then dizzily swiftly. It would be a mechanical reversal of that long journey to down below, and would remember that time when it happened.

And we would rise, higher and higher up, until we were back to where we came from. And we would greet the other droplets- some old, some new, some familiar, some unfamiliar, some small, some big. And we would laugh and sing and dance in the ecstasy of the moment that was and the moments that were and the moments that would be – for it would seem so much clearer to us now.

And we would come back to where we started from, for a new beginning. And it would dawn on us, the seeming endlessness of this cycle, the purposeless back and forth with its reason so simple that we were fool enough to never really see it until then. That there was really no purpose at all- that we were all but droplets of water, yet being so much more than we thought we could be. And we would continue to smile and sing and laugh, swirling around into soft cotton-white clouds, waiting for another journey to begin, all over again.



- Avinash Agarwal

Writer | Speaker | Comedian & MC | Trainer



The Bird

There was a beautiful and quite valley
Where all the lovely birds used to dally
Studded by a pond and trees all around
The flowers and butterflies it crowned

Here lived the weaver and swan
Who welcomed the frog and fawn
They enjoyed all seasons together
No matter how worse the weather

One day there came along a rare bird
Of such an elegant one no one had heard
He was elder to them all and took all pride
In being their well wisher, adviser and guide

He lectured the weaver of not weaving right
He found fault with the swan's every flight
He discouraged the frog of its dream to sing
Everything he said always had to sting

Good or bad they never heard praise
He believed that the best were his ways
Drifted, glided and preached the bird all day
Always its pride and self admiration on display

The sun was bright and the valley eerily quite
The gun shot was heard and they all turned white
The weaver weaved into its nest, the frog swam deep
The fawn hid under water, the swan dare did not peep

Witnessing all, the bird flew and soared up high
Mocking and laughing at all the animals in reply
Then came the shot and the silence swallowed all
The proud and condescending one took its fall

The mighty old bird had paved its own death
There it lay helplessly taking its very last breath
Then came realization, followed by silent sighs
The lordly and arrogant are not always wise

- Shreya Srinath

Class 10, Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School
Adyar, Chennai





Freedom

You are the omniscient, omnipresent being of the universe. But of such beings can there be many? Can there be a hundred thousand millions of omnipresent beings? Certainly not! Then, what becomes of us all? You are only one; there is only one such Self and that One Self is you. Standing behind this little nature is what we call the Soul. There is only One Being, One Existence, the ever-blessed, the omnipresent, the omniscient, the birth less and the deathless.

“Through His control the sky expands, through His control the air breathes, through His control the sun shines, and through His control all lives are.”

He is the Reality in nature, He is the Soul of your soul - nay more, you are He, you are one with Him. Wherever there are two, there is fear, there is danger, there is conflict, there is strife. When it is all One, who is there to hate, who is there to struggle with? When it is all He, with whom can you fight? This explains the true nature of life; this explains the true nature of being. This is perfection, and this is God. As long as you see the many, you are under delusion.

“In this world of many he who sees the One, in this ever-changing world, he who sees Him who never changes, as the Soul of his own soul, as his own Self - he is free, he is blessed, he has reached the goal.”

Therefore know that thou art He; thou art the God of this universe - *tat tvamasi* - (thou art That).

All these various ideas that I am a man or a woman, or sick or healthy, or strong or weak, or that I hate or I love, or have a little power, are but hallucinations. Away

with them! What makes you weak? What makes you fear? You are the One Being in the universe. What frightens you?

Stand up then and be free. Know that every thought and word that weakens you in this world is the only evil that exists. Whatever makes men weak and fear is the only evil that should be shunned. What can frighten you?

If the suns come down, and the moons crumble into dust, and systems after systems are hurled into annihilation, what is that to you? Stand as a rock; you are indestructible. You are the Self, the God of the universe. Say: “I am Existence Absolute, Bliss Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, I am He.” And like a lion breaking its cage, break your chain and be free for ever. What frightens you, what holds you down? Only ignorance and delusion; nothing else can bind you.

Jnana-Yoga, Immortality (pg 164)
- Swami Vivekananda

YOGA FOR YOUR HEALTH

Vajrasana

Dear Sadhak!

Vajrasana is very simple. *Vajra* means thunderbolt or diamond and *Asana* means posture. Through this posture, if performed properly, one can have better digestion and a stronger body. They say there is a *Vajra Nadi* in the body that starts from our big toes and gets activated and takes care of digestion and many other lower body disorders like arthritis, varicose vein, stomach disorders, sexual disorders etc. Another important aspect is that as a *Sadhak* goes to the next level, the food intake automatically reduces and at the same time digestion also slows down. Therefore it is advisable for every *Sadhak* to make this *Asana* a part of daily *Sadhana* since it takes care of digestive disorders. This posture is very useful for *Asana Siddhi* since it takes care of digestion and also removes stiffness from the lower body. It also helps in relieving sciatic pain.

Vajrasana can be performed anytime. It doesn't need any special time or place. Before eating, while eating or after eating this *Asana* can be performed and probably this is the only *Asana* that can be performed anytime.



Adi Lakshmana, a volunteer, illustrates the Vajrasana

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Sit on the floor with legs stretched out and place your hands sideways near the hips with palms down and fingers forward
 - Fold left leg and place left heel below the left buttock
 - Fold right leg and place right heel below the right buttock
 - Toes pointing outwards, heels either together or slightly apart from each other
 - Place your hands palms down on the same side knee with arms relaxed
- Straighten and extend your back and neck, bringing your head up nice and tall; look straight ahead

Benefits: The *Vajrasana* improves the flexibility of your hips, knees, and ankles, and strengthens the back. The posture is considered the perfect yoga meditation posture for those practicing celibacy. *Vajrasana* is also beneficial for various digestive problems.



- Swami Nachiketananda Puri





Ramakrishna Math & Mission...

a place for the hermits and householders alike

My first encounter with Ramakrishna Math was through a very bizarre episode in my life. I lost my father ... I was feeling a great vacuum within. Pain was searing through me like a wildfire and I was unable to cope up with this tragedy. One fine morning, my husband suggested that I should visit Ramakrishna Math in Hyderabad and attend Swami Ranganathananda's *Satsang* for solace.

Paying attention to his advice was the turning point in my life. I was very much overwhelmed seeing an ocean of devotees and experiencing the waves of spirituality. It brought about a sea change in my life. The speechless viewer got transformed into a sheer devotee and by the end of the *Satsang* I was a new person altogether, ready to hug any challenge.

Sri Ramakrishna says, ***"The companionship of the holy and the wise is one of the main elements of spiritual progress."*** And truly speaking whenever I have visited this beautiful place ... a place for every solution ... a place for hermits and householders alike ... I was astonished because of the spell-binding response that I received from every corner which added more beauty in my life. How this fierce force pulled my husband too into its fold is not known.

My husband and other volunteers worked day and night to bring out a pictorial biography "My Life is My Work" on Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj. Those were the golden days and mo-

ments of my life when I spent every act and thought on Holy Trinity and like the squirrel in the Ramayana, I became a contributor without my knowledge. Every person around me inspired me on Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sri Sarada Ma and Swami Vivekananda and my life started revolving around Ramakrishna Math. I found so many good friends, like-minded people, passionate and compassionate souls who were always working for the noble cause. In Ramakrishna Math every act is considered as a Divine act. That was the time when I realized that one should transcend the barrier of *Samsara* to achieve the Divine goal.

Nowadays, though unable to find time to visit Ramakrishna Math, my heart always goes out to Holy Trinity for bringing more light in my life. Therefore, for me, taking refuge in Sri Ramakrishna is the ultimate and perhaps the first and the last place to relax and cherish forever. I cannot even dream anything beyond Holy Trinity and truly speaking when I look back at my journey into Holy Trinity, I feel I am more blessed than anybody else. I know that getting into Ramakrishna Math itself was a great thing but becoming one with their philosophy by working for the underprivileged ones was more elevating than anything else. I realized this truth and hugged a larger life than the life itself. My downtrodden brethren were calling me desperately.

Once, Swami Vivekananda said, ***"Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But, alas! Nobody ever did anything for them. ... Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature? ...That is to be done and we will do it."*** This was the conviction that I got while spending quality time in Ramakrishna Math in contemplation and eventually I hugged a new life to serve the underprivileged ones.

I know, 'one who has passion will never stop working and sooner or later will succeed in their attempts' whereas, I even strongly believe that 'one who



Swami Ranganathanandaji blesses our couple



Satsang with Swami Paramarthanandaji at Vinaya - Our residence

has found refuge in Ramakrishna Paramahansa is bound to see the success of the people around.' Though mine is an insignificant contribution yet it makes me feel more happy because all our efforts slowly started taking shape. The small seed that was sown in the form of Bal Samskar Varga has now become an educational centre called 'Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir' - a Free Home Schooling institution that helps students up to 10th class.

I had many mentors in my life but few stand out more prominently. One such soul who had passion for Holy Trinity, compassion for all, a most loving and kind personality was Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj whose affection and Divine blessings transformed me like never before. His presence was very elevating and inspiring. I am fortunate to have such a qualified Guru in my life who gave me *Mantra Diksha* and took me under His Divine umbrella. I am even indebted to Late Sri Swami Ananyanandaji, Late Sri Swami Paramarthanandaji, Late Sri Swami Tatvabodhanandaji, and Late Sri Swami Avimukthanandaji, for guiding me when it was most needed. I have learnt many great lessons from them. I even would like to salute many Swamijis, hundreds of devotees and sincere seekers of Vedanta, who have shaped my life knowingly or unknowingly. The list is endless so is the love and bond that I cherish with Ramakrishna Math.

I don't know whether it is timely or not but let me tell you, even in my wildest dream I cannot forget the grace that I received abundantly from Holy Trinity and Ramakrishna Math. I have grown up playing on the lap of Mother Earth but deep down somewhere I had a desire to lead the life of a recluse and the first step that I have taken into Ramakrishna Math, strengthened my spiritual desire. There were many twists and turns in my life but today when I look at my own journey into Holy Trinity, I clearly sense that it has left a mark of satisfaction and a kind of contentment behind.

Let me sign off by quoting Sri Sarada Ma, ***"In the fullness of spiritual realization, a person finds that the God who resides in his heart resides in the hearts of all – the oppressed, the persecuted, the lowly, and the untouchable. This realization makes one truly humble."***

I once again salute one and all for bringing new dimensions to my life... and for making my life more meaningful than never before. Vahe Guru Ki Fateh! Jai Sri Ramakrishna! Jai Sarada Ma! Jai Swami Vivekananda!!!

- Vasundhara P.





This Too Shall Pass

Once a king called upon all of his wise men and asked them, “Is there a *mantra* or suggestion which works in every situation, in every circumstance, in every place and in every time, in every joy, every sorrow, every defeat and every victory? One answer for all questions! Something which can help me when none of you is available to advise me. Tell me, is there any *mantra*?”

All the wise men were puzzled by the King’s question. They thought and thought. After a lengthy discussion, an old man suggested something which appealed to all of them. They went to the king and gave him something written on a paper, with a condition that the king was not to see it out of curiosity. Only in extreme danger, when the King finds himself alone and there seems to be no way, only then he can see it. The King put the paper under his diamond ring.

Sometime later, the neighbours attacked the Kingdom. The King and his army fought bravely but lost the battle. The King had to flee on his horse. The enemies were following him. They were getting closer and closer. Suddenly the King found himself standing at the end of the road - that road was not going anywhere. Underneath there was a rocky valley thousand feet deep. If he jumped

into it, he would be finished ... and he could not return because it was a small road ... the sound of enemy’s horses was approaching fast. The King became restless. There seemed to be no way.

Then suddenly he saw the diamond in his ring shining in the sun, and he remembered the message hidden in the ring. He opened the diamond and read the message. The message was - “THIS TOO SHALL PASS”.

The King read it. Again read it. Suddenly something struck him- Yes! This too will pass. Only a few days ago, I was enjoying my kingdom. I was the mightiest of all the Kings. Yet today, the Kingdom and all my pleasure has gone. I am here trying to escape from enemies. Like those days of luxuries have gone, this day of danger too will pass. A calmness appeared on his face. He continued to stand there. The place where he was standing was full of natural beauty. He had never known that such a beautiful place was also a part of his kingdom.

The revelation of the message had a great effect on him. He relaxed and forgot about those following him. After a few minutes he realized that the noise of the horses and the enemy coming was receding. They moved into some other part of the mountains and were nowhere near him.



Shame

The King was very brave. He reorganized his army and fought again. He defeated the enemy and regained his empire. When he returned to his empire after victory, he was received with much fanfare. The whole capital was rejoicing in the victory.

Everyone was in a festive mood. Flowers were being showered on the King from every house, from every corner. People were dancing and singing. For a moment the King said to himself, "I am one of the bravest and greatest Kings. It is not easy to defeat me". With all the reception and celebration he saw an ego emerging in him.

Suddenly the diamond of his ring flashed in the sunlight and reminded him of the message. He opened it and read it again: "THIS TOO SHALL PASS".

He became silent. He went through a total change - from the egoist he moved to a state of utter humbleness. If this too is going to pass, it is not mine. The defeat was not mine, the victory is not mine. I am just a watcher. Everything passes by. I am a witness of all this. I am just the perceiver. Life comes and goes. Happiness comes and goes. Sorrow comes and goes.

Now as you have read this story, just sit silently and evaluate your own life. This too will pass. Think of the moments of joy and victory in your life. Think of the moment of sorrow and defeat. Are they permanent? They all come and go.

Life just passes away. There is nothing permanent in this world. Everything changes except the law of change. Think over it from your own perspective. You have seen all the changes. You have survived all setbacks, all defeats and all sorrows. All have passed away. The problems in the present, they too will pass away. Because, nothing remains forever. Joy and sorrow are the two faces of the same coin. They both will pass away.

You are just a witness of change. Experience it, understand it, and enjoy the present moment - **this too shall pass...**

- A Seeker



I read a poem by an officer commissioned.

A poem of his disappointment and struggle.

At the age of 7, his aim was set, to serve in the army, to live and die for his nation.

At 24, he questions his fellow civilian citizens, for the disrespectful treatment meted out to him and his fellow service men.

He questions himself for his decision. His decision to live and die for this beautiful nation.

Shame! What a shame. Shame not on him but shame on us, his fellow citizens.

Ever seen an army cantonment? An air force base? The naval docks?

Cleaner, than any other part of our cleanest settlement. More disciplined than any other nations', a source of pride for the nation.

They put the nation ahead of themselves. Willing to make the ultimate sacrifice.

And yet, we respect them not. And yet, our hearts are unmoved by their struggles and sacrifices.

Our nation wouldn't remain intact without our armed forces.

We wouldn't sleep as peacefully as we do, had it not been for these brave men guarding our borders, sailing the seas and flying the skies

What a shame on us, that we respect them not.

Jai Hind!

- Gautam Vir

Karnataka: One state, many worlds

When news reached us that Swamiji was planning the annual *Yatra* to the beautiful Konkan region this year, we did not hesitate to sign up for another enriching experience in the company of our Tapovan family. What an enigmatic, soul-stirring, spiritual experience, it turned out to be!

We started on the 19th of October and landed in Goa, as we didn't have much time there, we rushed to pay our respects at Mangueshi temple and the Basilica of Bom Jesus which is the oldest and longest standing church in India. Those of us who wanted to see the famed beaches of Goa also had a chance the next day to get our feet wet! We proceeded on to Badami by nightfall, which is famous for its sandstone cave temples. Our hosts at the Heritage resorts ensured that each and every one of us was well taken care of and we had *Darshan* at Banashankari Devi Temple. The next day we hired a guide Panchu from the local village and explored all the cave temples of Badami, Aihole and Pattadkal, which recounted the rich history of the Chalukya dynasty. Swamiji and Mataji held *Satsang* that evening. Swamiji imparted the benefits of *Maha Chaitanya Kriya* and Mataji conducted a very energizing meditation class.

Gokarna was our next halt. This town is known for the famous Mahabaleshwar temple which houses one of the pieces of the *Atmalingam* which Ravana was granted by Lord Shiva. We visited the famed Om beach first and then had a wonderful *Darshan*, during which all of us had a

chance to do *Abhishekam* and also have *Darshan* of Lord Ganesha who ensured that Ravana's plan was not fructified. Our next stop was at the Yana caves. All of us undertook a small trek to reach this peaceful cave temple with a naturally formed *Swayambhulinga*. The water dripping inside the cave added to the sanctity of the place and we got a chance to meditate under its shade.



As a continuation to this, our next halt was at Murudeshwar where another piece of the *Atmalingam* had fallen. This seaside temple boasts of the 2nd tallest statue of Lord Shiva in the world. The temple was very well maintained with several viewpoints that look out into the Arabian Sea and also had a museum showcasing its historical significance. After a well-deserved halt, we were all reluctant to leave this beautiful place the next day.

Our next destination was to the renowned Jog Falls, the 2nd highest falls in India. Some of us undertook the steep trek down to reach the base of the falls while others stayed back and enjoyed the views from the top. By evening we reached Mookambika Devi temple in Kollur. We were greeted with music and ongoing rituals which made us fall in line and have a superb *Darshan* of Goddess Parvati and Lord Parameshwara. One could feel the energy emitting all around us at this sacred site where the Goddess vowed to reside and bless Her devotees. Till we were told that it was time to start none of us wanted to leave this heavenly place.

The following day we were fortunate enough to visit the Sri Krishna Matha of Udupi and seek *Darshan* of the Lord. It is one of the most beautiful temples that I have visited and is steeped in rich history. The idol is said to be





Hilltop Temple at Badami



Swamiji leads the trek to Yana Caves

the very one that Rukmini Devi worshipped in Dwaraka. It later reached the shores of Udupi to Shri Madhvacharya who established it there. Due to the pious worship of a devotee named Kanakadasa who was not allowed into the temple, the idol of the Lord turned towards the direction where Kanakadasa would offer prayers. So even today the idol faces this direction and devotees pay their obeisance here.

We headed to Sringeri Sharada Matha next, where the Goddess of Learning Sri Sharadha Parameshwari is worshipped. The *Matha* was established by Adi Shankaracharya in the 8th century A.D. It has been a strong advocate to all the spiritual seekers who come there to lead a life of dharma in order to fulfill one's responsibility. Swamiji gave us ample time to absorb the activities going around and all the *sadhakas* were able to perform meditation and explore the temple premises till it was time to close up.

After passing through the most scenic routes in Chikmanglur district through Ghats and dense forests we reached Hornadu. It was a serene town nestled amongst the hills and famous for the Annapurna Devi temple. Whatever said is less about this holy temple where hundreds of

people are fed sumptuous meals every day. The life-size image of the Goddess is magnificent and spellbinding. With Swamiji's grace we were all fortunate to have a most wonderful *darshan* and received the blessings of the Goddess before leaving to our next destination.

We proceeded on to Mangalore soon after and couldn't avoid a sense of melancholy as our group was going to disperse from here. Enroute we stopped over at Lord Shiva's temple in Kalasa on our Driver's insistence and were very thankful to him for taking us to such an awesome place which we would have missed otherwise. We also halted at Mudabidri which hosts Jain temples and were bowled over by the peace that pervaded all over. It was a great experience. At Mangalore we visited an ancient temple of Goddess Mangala Devi and learned about the deep heritage of that place. Mataji conducted an eventful *satsang* that night where we were given a chance to witness the power of the energy which is present in us and around us at all times waiting to be tapped.

The next day we also had the good fortune of having *darshan* of Lord Manjunath at Kadri. With this we concluded our current spiritual sojourn and I was so glad to have been a part of this trip as I found this quote that day to be so true:

"I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in." -Anonymous.

Thank You again Swamiji, Mataji & everyone else who made this such an enriching experience that I will carry for a longtime to come.



With guide Panchu at Pattadakal

- Roopa Raju



Happy New Year 2014

What would be a good message to begin our New Year with???

A small quiz for all of us

- Name the 5 wealthiest people in the world
- Name the last 5 winners of Ms. Universe
- Name the last 10 people who won the Nobel Prize



Here is another quiz

- Name 5 teachers who added to our journey through school
- Name 5 people who helped us through difficult times
- Name 5 people who taught us something worthwhile
- Name 5 people who make us feel special
- Name 5 people we enjoy spending time with

HOW DID YOU DO?

The point is, none of us remember the headlines of yesterday
Even though these people must be the best in their fields



*Applause dies, Medals are tarnished and
Achievements are forgotten!!*



EASIER...RIGHT???

The people who make a difference in our life are not the ones with
most awards and loads of money



*Life is full of ordinary people who have made the world a
better place for us! Let's cherish them! **Hold them tight!***

Perhaps, sometimes it's special to be ordinary!!!

Neeru Mamtani
&
Annapurna R.

Prayer to be **HUMBLE**

The mind tries to arrive at the incomprehensible, abstract and desperate goal of self-realization in haste and in total blindness. The mind is trying to kill itself hoping to come face to face with God. There are two voices, one louder than the other; one sermonizing and the other resisting as it were. The platform is staggeringly precarious; it is common sense to acknowledge and see clearly that a constant battle between two opposing forces cannot ever result in clarity. Anyway, in order to begin somewhere, anywhere, humility is perhaps the first sign of grace. The familiar display is the bowing to the Guru/Master/form. But then there ends humility! The intention to submit to another is great undoubtedly but one does not feel it with the whole of one's being. Besides, it is the unfulfilled desires that bring us to the doorstep of those who are beings of wisdom. We manage somewhat to feel a few moments of humility.

The little monster called 'I' is never out of action and makes humility almost impossible. Humility has been one of my challenges; I have found it very hard to observe my failings objectively. My lips

have trembled in anger almost always when I have been shown a chink in my armour. Such regular childish reactions for one who claims to read and "know". This has to be looked at with such pity! It would be wise to "know" that "I don't know." The first hint of humility is never a bad start.

I have always chased the possibility of true humility, which has led me to many conversations with our Masters. Yesterday, I needed reminding of the urgency of humility. I asked, "Why is humility such an alien thing to man? Just how much we lose when we walk with that deplorable swagger and a chip on our shoulder? How many relationships get strained because we can't tame our pride? For what good is all the arrogance and the misery that comes with it? And of what use are these questions when I don't see for myself? If I don't get it, who could possibly help me?" Yet, yet, I begged to know.

"Humility is a boon. Look at Nature. When a typhoon strikes with or without warning, what comes down first are the big trees, those giant



ones you write poems on and imagine are strong and bold to face Nature's wrath. Nothing happens to a humble blade of grass because it is too small to fall. In this vast universe and there are innumerable universes, how small should you know yourself to be?"

"Humility allows communication, forges relationships. When you are humble, you are also receptive, kind, reasonable, tolerant. Quite spontaneously. You do not lose anything. On the contrary, everything around you allows you to be. Everyone loves the presence of humility in a person; they become better people in such presence because they do not feel threatened. Humility is a gift, can you see? When you do not value humility enough to live it, every force conspires to bring you down. The consequences are almost unbearable but we do not want to see the reality of it; we choose not to. You cannot even dream of finding God if you think you are the centre of the universe and everything and everyone should go by your whims. Humility is not a concept, not an order from God. It is intrinsic to true living even if you lived by yourself, even if you were the only being on this planet."

Doesn't Emerson say, "A great man is always willing to be little?" Abraham Lincoln admits without fear, "I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day."

If it is easy for Einstein to be most naturally humble, why is it so difficult for me? He says, "A true genius admits that he or she knows nothing."

Margot Benary-Isbert's prayer is most inspiring: "I will not ask Thee for improved memory, only for a little more humility and less self-assurance when my own memory doesn't agree with that of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be wrong."

Before I begin to make humility into a task or add it to my checklist so I can tell the world I am humble when I imagine I am, Martin Luther's words are a light: "True humility does not know that it is humble. If it did, it would be proud from the contemplation of so fine a virtue."

- *Swami Sadasivananda Giri*

Stay Connected

Age 20 to 40 you easily get influenced by others actions and opinions about you. Age 40 you start feeling the exhaustion from getting influenced by others, you start regretting about wasting precious time, you struggle to fix things, continue to make an effort to get back the lost things until 60. Once 60 dawns, nobody has time to even look at you. Therefore, be connected with your inner self at a very young age. Realize and learn from others failures. Remember whatever you perceive in this creation has the depth of an ocean. Think a number of times before you make a goal for a beautiful life ahead. So that, every minute goes into reaping a good crop at the end. Learn to breathe well to stay connected with yourself. Your own mind is your best friend and your own mind is your worst enemy. The money you earn need not guarantee to nourish you in this huge universe. But feel the Bliss of the *punya* that has been nourishing you every single moment ever since you took birth and before. Get into the spiritual dimension of work and continue to work without losing time that will earn blissful future.

Align with and respecting time, accept the situations the way they are, do justice to the present, yet still never lose focus on our own life. Remember, TIME never stops. LIFE goes on. Time once lost or misused cannot be regained.

- *Padmaja Raju*



MANGALADEVI

The Goddess of Mangalore

knowledge that his kingdom was a hallowed place and it was sanctified by the activities of holy saints and sages in the past. They requested him to grant them land so that they could build their hermitage and make it a centre of their religious activities under his protection and patronage.

For Kundavarma it was really a surprise to know that his land had such a hoary history. It was from these saints he came to know that once upon a time there existed a temple in his land dedicated to Mother Mangaladevi. From them he heard the story of Vikasini and Andasura, Parasurama and the temple built by him. The two saints took the king to places where all these historical events had taken place. They asked the king to dig the place and relieve the Linga and the Dharapatra symbolizing Mangaladevi and install them in a shrine along with Nagaraja for the protection.

Kundavarma carried out the advice of the two sages. A grand shrine of Shri Mangaladevi stood on the hallowed place. The two sages themselves guided and supervised the execution of the work. The temple attained special significance, as Mother Mangaladevi granted special favors. The pious people even today believe that worship of Mangaladevi brings them prosperity and happiness.

On our recent visit to this sacred place, as part of Nachiketa Tapovan's annual spiritual tour, we found the place to be highly energized. Spiritual aspirants benefit by receiving these mystic energies. Goddess Mangaladevi is not just a deity. You can feel Her eyes searing through your heart like warm rays of the sun. She reveals Her true form flooding you with emotions and even the history of the place is exposed to the sincere devotee. Any *Kshetra* or pilgrim place has a legend behind it. The allegory is recorded by our ancient sages but over a period of time historians distort the true story according to their own varying perceptions and write their own script. However, it is possible to know the underlying reality. All that one needs to do is dive deep and experience the Truth. Silence reigns supreme as you leave the temple. You are enraptured by the grace of Goddess Mangaladevi.

Fact Source: Website of Mangaladevi Temple

Nachiketanjali January 2014



The world is full of fascinating, unexplored places and Mangaladevi Temple in Mangalore is one such place which has a charming history. Mangalore derives its name from Goddess Mangaladevi. The temple of Mangaladevi lies at a distance of 3km to the S.W of Mangalore city and was constructed in the 10th century to commemorate the princess of Malabar Mangale. Goddess Mangaladevi is revered as a symbol of 'Shakthi' in this temple.

Legend has it that there was an integral connection between the Mangaladevi Temple of Mangalore and Kadri Manjunatha Temple. This undying bond exists even today. Many hermits from Kadri Yogiraj Mutt visit and pay their obeisance to Goddess Mangaladevi.

In Tulunadu, Kundavarma, the most famous king of Alupa Dynasty was ruling. At that time, there came two sages named Matsyendranath and Goraknath from Nepal. They reached Mangalapura (today's Mangalore), crossing the river Netravathi. They chose a place near the bank of Netravathi, which was once the centre of activities of sage Kapila.

Hearing about the arrival of two saints the king came to meet them. Introducing himself as the king of Tulunadu he paid them his respects and offered them help and patronage. Pleased with the humility and virtues of the king they brought to his



Upbringing - Then and Now

Why is it that there is so much crime in today's society? I feel the fault to some extent belongs to the upbringing of children.

Years ago, all of us were leading relatively peaceful lives, with hardly much crime going around. Our days used to start with happy and peaceful expressions. Whatever our mother made for our tiffin box was good enough, what little or hardly any money that our father gave as pocket money was enough (infact it used to be a treasure for us those days). We were content with what our parents gave us. We were also secure in their love for us. No matter if we were scolded at times and felt bad and hurt, we always were sure that our parents loved us and what all we had was enough for us. Life then was not about comparisons. True, when any of our friends brought something that their parents had bought for them, to show us (which was forbidden in school), we used to oh and ah over it and that was the end. We wouldn't think that we were deprived, because each child had an understanding regarding their family's financial position so demands were hardly made by them. Once in a while, yes, we used to make requests and demands (depending on the time of year - especially birthdays) but then we would ask for things that wouldn't be a burden on our parents. We grew up with grandparents and mothers telling us stories of Ramayana and other stories of our scriptures. Life was beautiful. We were brought up with the concept of 'WE' i.e. sharing with others. 'I' was frowned upon and any signs of selfishness were ruthlessly punished. We were told to help others and we were never frightened of strangers.

Today, a child starts his/her day with the stress of that particular day's test or exam, the homework that is due and the stress of staying on top of their class. What they bring to school is a matter of comparison. Whatever money a parent gives is never enough. What a child has (that is the gadgets) is a matter of prestige and pride. Sadly many parents give things in place of

care because they are too busy. Children nowadays are more and more into the concept of 'I' and 'ME'. Parents are expected to prove their love (which is in the shape of the gifts that they give their children) which is not an expression of love. Selfishness is rampant; adjustability is a thing of the past. Sadly many parents tell their children that they can do what they want, without differentiating between right and wrong, good and bad. This is leading to egotism in children with the attitude that they can do whatever they want and they are sure that their parents will support them. This is bringing out more of negative qualities in children rather than positive qualities.

It is high time that parents sit back and reflect upon what is happening. God sent us into the world as white papers. What is written on each one by a parent or teacher is what stays forever. Let us write about good qualities. Teach them through our holy books what a person should be like. Every school should also have a specific time for moral teachings. Individual religions don't matter. The essence of each religion matters. Let us inculcate good and positive characteristics in each child so that when they grow up society as a whole will improve.

- *Sudha Raju*





What About My Dream?

The dream I am referring to here is not the one that comes to us while we are asleep. My reference is to the dreams that we all dare to dream about. Many of us nurture dreams about our life. We all have different opinions of and expectations from life. Our dreams could be anywhere from grand and lofty to simple and down-to-earth. While, the nature and nurture may have influence on the kind of dreams, as such there is no tab on what dreams one can nourish. But can dreams be realized? Why, Who and What decides whether or not our dreams are fulfilled, sometimes even the simplest of them?

When all is going well with life, we may let the dream be dormant and lurking, and preserve it in the corners of our eyelids. But... what about those in a critical condition who realized that their life has suddenly been cut so short that even the simplest of their dreams come to be farfetched and impossible? Can you imagine the pain inflicted by the harsh truth that they can't dare to dream anymore?

In the line of my service at 'Sparsh', a hospice for cancer patients, I met one wonderful 34 year old guy. He is good natured and a believer in God. Things were going well with this guy who was "happily" married, with two children, working hard and taking care of his family, until he was diagnosed with an abdominal cancer, terminal in nature. His world turned upside down! The family that meant a world to him expelled him! Besieged by the ignorance that cancer is infectious, his family, including his mother and wife dropped him like a hot potato. He was standing all alone not knowing where to go. The only shoulder in the wilderness was that of his father, indeed a very spirited man who brought him to Sparsh.

I became friends with the guy instantaneously. He started calling me "Mom". I assured him he was my adopted kid. My walking into his room always brought a smile upon his face. He would follow all my instructions given to keep him comfortable, very religiously like a good son. During our talks

he expressed his wish to see his kids before he departs. I tried very hard, tried calling his wife and mother, was willing to go to their place and bring them over to Sparsh. But I was rendered unsuccessful by his reluctant family. I can't gauge how but he came to terms and accepted the failure of the simplest dream of his.

Now he is very sick and may die before you read this story. He always asks me why his life turned out like this. Why his family left him in the lurch? All he wants is to see his kids. But can something as basic as that become an unfulfilled dream? Yes, there are a lot of unfortunate people who cannot fulfill their basic wishes.

It must be so hard to accept that your own family doesn't care for you. They may not have enough money. But they could have offered love which does not cost any money. The fact that a mother is worried about her contracting cancer more than being with her dying son in his final moments calls for redefining motherhood.

Most of this happens because of ignorance and misconceptions. What can we do about it?

- Cancer is not a contagious disease. People need to know that one will not contract cancer by touching, caring and loving.
- If the patient is suffering from tumors, lesions or other symptoms like foul smell that sometimes become a reason for disowning him/her, refer them to places like Sparsh which specialize in palliative care and pain management.
- Don't be afraid of death. Do not leave the hand of your loved one. Be human and Let him/her leave this world with contentment. Patients who receive love and care fare better clinically than the neglected and discarded ones.
- Life is precious. Make the best of every moment of LIFE, fulfill your dreams and help in whichever small way to let the fellow beings realize theirs.

- Dr Rohini Reganti

Volunteer Oncologist at Sparsh Hospice
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I Am Not The Body ...

I Am Not Even The Mind

Contrary to the above title, I am a person fully conscious about my body and my thoughts. But the recent *Dakshin Yatra* with *Pujya Swamiji* and *Mataji* changed my perception about life. Right from Day-1 of our tour, I wanted to involve myself in everything that happened around me and didn't want to miss anything, any place or any conversation in that entire journey. But whenever *Swamiji* and *Mataji* raised the topic of *Sadhana*, I chose to consciously ignore it. My whole point of issue was that, why should I sit alone and do *Sadhana* when I am not sure of what it offers, rather than have fun with people around me.

Then an incident happened at *Gokarna* in *Karnataka*, which greatly influenced my thought flow. I was ecstatic seeing the beautiful sea. I was posing for pictures standing on the edge of a rock when suddenly a giant wave caught me unawares. I later realized that if I was conscious of the wave I would have been dragged into the sea and would have died instantaneously as there were many rocks surrounding it and the sea was rough. Fortunately my mind was preoccupied with my wet clothes. Later on when I looked at the pictures taken by other tour members I pondered over the incident and came to a conclusion that 10% of life is what happens and 90% of it is how you react to it. Our body is ruled by the mind and functions accordingly.

Another incident happened on the last day of our tour in *Mangalore*. I was inspired by *Mataji's* talks during a *Satsang* and religiously participated in the *Sadhana* with an open mind. I wished to gain

some experience. The ensuing meditative session overwhelmed me and I was totally absorbed by the high energies that were prevalent. I couldn't take in the energy and started sobbing. I was absolutely shaken as my body went out of my control and I also felt ashamed for weeping in public. Yet, I was grateful that the Divine has blessed me by making me experience those mysterious energies. For a person like me who thinks only of what clothes to wear the next day this experience was totally baffling. I was not prepared for it. *Mataji* came and hugged me and helped me come back to my normal state. Her touch was Divine indeed!

This awesome experience gave me food for thought. I seriously started thinking about it. Yes, God is always ready to answer our prayers but are we ready to receive them? Are we eligible to receive His grace? First let us tune ourselves to be receptacles for His grace and only then ask for His Blessings. And once grace befalls us let us develop the courage to receive it in whatever form it comes and channelize it the right way. This tour and especially this incident turned out to be a great eye-opener for me. The next time I pray for something I shall definitely think twice if I really deserve it.

I thank the Almighty, *Swamiji* and *Mataji* for making me experience this truth. Yes, the truth that I am not the body... I am not even the mind... **then who am I?** Well it is time to explore!

- *Vijaya A.*





A smile always adorns his face, a kind and an affectionate one. A simple office of a simpler person who looks younger than his age and who is young at heart, with no air of his wealth! Perhaps this is the stuff of which great people are made. Sri Manthena Venkata Rama Raju, the founder of Vasudha Foundation, shares his feelings on his work and other things with us...

Sir, please tell us about your childhood and education.

I was born in a small village, off Bhimavaram in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. None of us then knew much about education and the various opportunities it would open up for us. So, I just went with the flow and sought education in the school in the adjacent village, for my village did not have even a primary school! After Class XII, I decided to move out and explore. Hence, I went to Bhopal from where I did both Bachelors and Masters in Science. I did want to go to Delhi and pursue education there, but was constrained by many circumstances. We did not have any inspiration or driving force. It was only the zeal from within us, which encouraged us to study and toil hard.

How did you establish yourself as an industrialist?

With the knowledge I had obtained, I worked hard to establish a medium scale industry. It was very difficult to get access to credit, since the banks and other financial institutions were apprehensive of lending credit to first-generation entrepreneurs. I went from one city to another, trying to convince bankers that their money would be in safe hands. I finally succeeded and Vasudha Pharma Chem Limited was born. However, it was not without pitfalls. From 1987 to 1992 or so, I was literally penniless. My only job was selling my property to pay off the debts which I had taken from family and friends. Slowly, with perseverance, Vasudha Pharma got firmly established. I went to different European countries, learning more about chemistry and interacting with the pharmaceutical companies there. We

got orders for certain products from them. We made sure that every order received was executed before time, for we wanted to send a message that Indians are committed to fulfilling their obligations. It was immense hard work for years – we worked all seven days from 8 am to 10 pm.



Sri MVR Raju

Sir, your hard work paid off and success kissed your feet. But how did the idea of Vasudha Foundation take root?

It came very naturally. Right from my childhood, I have been service-oriented. I remember very well that once, when our servants' homes were gutted in a fire, I got food cooked in my home and personally took it to them. I also enjoyed doing errands for old people in my village. Further, my sons' birthdays would be a happy occasion when we would invite the poor, feed them and gift clothes to them. As my business stabilized, I wanted a name under which we could consolidate all the activities that we were already doing and take up newer ones. Hence, Vasudha Foundation was instituted in 2002.

Vasudha Foundation has been doing a great job, individually at its own level, as well as by financially supporting numerous institutions doing service. It addresses the issues in almost all the fields including education, healthcare, care for the old and differently abled, nutrition, shelter etc. Which is the cause closest to your heart?

While each segment has its own importance in society, education for children and care for the old are very close to my heart. While children are the future of our country, old people are the ones closest to God. Both deserve immense care, love, empathy and respect. I am proud that Vasudha Foundation extends support to about 323 organizations. We have also established a centre for the care of the aged and an orphanage for the kids at my native village. Though we do not have branches as such in other states, we still extend support whenever we can. For instance, the last time I visited Bhopal, I was moved to see a man



erving food free of cost to the patients outside a public hospital, at night. I immediately extended financial help, after preliminary enquiries.

Sir, how do you ensure that your funds are going into the right hands and are not being misused?

I understand your concerns. At Vasudha, we have two associates, Mr. Ramakrishna and Mr. Sudhir who carry out annual inspections of our benefactors. It is a surprise visit and evaluation is done on the basis of the position during the last year and the present position. Say for instance an organization which was serving 100 children last year has 150 this year. We discuss internally and decide whether the funding to such an institution is to be increased. Further, every district we service has a coordinator who is dedicated to the cause. We disburse the amount directly to the nodal authority in the organization on the same day that I visit them. They never have to come back to us. In fact, in many instances we have ourselves gone looking for good organizations. Therefore, we are putting in efforts reasonably possible for us.

How do you look at the new Companies Act, 2013, which mandates social spending of a percentage of profits of a company? Can charity be forced upon anyone?

In the current scenario, I think the government is doing the right thing by introducing provisions relating to corporate social responsibility. Many people in our country need help and voluntary contributions are never enough. At my individual level, I also urge many of my friends to donate. One should spend what he earns. Earn a lot, but be willing to spend it for good causes.

What are your views about religion?

Religion is something man created. We are all human beings first, that is how we at Vasudha see everyone. We do not discriminate on the basis of religion. Recently, at a function, about ten Muslim women came forward and enthusiastically commended the impartial work Vasudha is doing. We created a small corpus fund for them to use whenever need arises. Additionally, we told them that help would arrive within 24 hours of contacting a district coordinator. Religion or caste should never be a determining factor for anything. Everyone is equal in the eyes of God.



What is the biggest takeaway for you from the work you do?

I see this work more as a responsibility. God gave me the ability to do things for others and it is a great blessing. I derive immense happiness when I see people smile because of our work and this drives me to do even more.

How do you visualize the future of our country?

Ours is a great country. If the political system is robust, the country will flourish in every field. Our institutions have to be strengthened and new air has to be pumped into them by the entry of youth and those with fresh ideas. Then, nobody can stop us from securing our rightful place under the sun.

Sir, could you say a few words blessing the kids at Nachiketa Tapovan?

I am happy with the work that Nachiketa Tapovan is doing. It is really great to help children from the most underprivileged sections of society. The children also need to be lauded for coming out and accepting the help. The kids at Tapovan are very talented. I was amazed to see them at work during my last visit. This is nothing but an evidence of the hard work that the organization is putting into moulding them into able citizens of the country, and that the children are ably imbibing social values. Keep up the good work, and whenever you need us we are there for you.

We profusely thank Sri M.V.R. Raju garu for giving us his valuable time and continuously blessing our efforts. We also pray to the Almighty to keep him and his family hale, hearty and blessed always. Sir, you never fail to inspire us. Your motto of 'may everyone be happy' shall always be our guide. Thank you once again.



Neetika Gogula

An advocate and has passion for writing on social issues.



Home Remedies For Food Poisoning

- Tea with *moti elaichi* (cardamom) can take care of a bad stomach.



- The rind of the pomegranate fruit (as well the bark of the pomegranate tree) is an old and well-known remedy used for treating diarrhoea.

- Aloe vera juice is good for treating an upset stomach. 60 grams of aloe vera juice, taken three times a day, can have you feeling good as new the next morning.



- The acidic properties in lime kills bacteria, and makes it a great natural remedy for food poisoning. 3-4 glasses of lime juice over the course of the day will ensure you're back to normal the next morning.

- **Ginger:** It adds flavour to your dishes, but is also an excellent home remedy for curing almost all types of digestive problems. Take a tablespoon of honey with a few drops of ginger juice to reduce inflammation and pain.



- Basil is another excellent home remedy to cure infections of both – the stomach and the throat. Strain the juice of a few basil leaves and add it to a tablespoon of honey. It's bound to show positive results within a couple of hours.

- **Apple cider vinegar:** Being alkaline in nature, vinegar, specifically apple cider vinegar soothes the gastro-intestinal lining. Also, it makes the environment of the stomach inhospitable for the bacteria to breed in, which helps speed up the recovery.



- **Peppermint tea:** It's not just aromatherapy. Peppermint oil is known to have a soothing effect, which is extremely beneficial for people suffering from stomach spasms due to food poisoning. Add a few drops to your tea; your cramps will vanish in a couple of hours.



इवलङ्करोति इड्ठक = विरुपु रिच

By Krupalu Ogeti, Samskrit Bharati, Hyderabad
okrupalu@samskritam.net or 73962 49650

avyayAni

अपि

(Continued from last issue)

This, which means something like 'also', is quite similar to च above. However, this is more general and can be used in different sentences and many more situations. For example, सः भोजनं कृतवान् ताम्बूलम् अपि खादितवान्।

Let us say one person told another अहं संस्कृतशिक्षकः। The other persons may say अहम् अपि।

This placed at the beginning of a sentence means an enquiry as in

अपि कुशली भवान्?

Are you doing well?

अपि भवान् तेन सह गमिष्यति?

Will you also be going with him?

Sometimes both अपि and च are used together to mean 'and also' in conversational mode. To mean that 'The government does not help us. Over and above, it troubles us', one can say: सर्वकारः अस्माकं साहाय्यं न करोति। अपि च बहु पीडयति।

In many situations, अपि is an integral part of some words (which are based on किम्). Look at these sentences:

कुत्रापि जलं नास्ति।

No water anywhere.

कोऽपि (कः अपि) मम साहाय्यं न करोति।

None helps me.

अहं कदापि विदेशं न गतवान्।

I never went abroad.

सः किमपि किमपि वदति।

He says something or the other.

एतत् कार्यं भवान् कथमपि साधयतु।

Somehow you get this work done.

Have you noticed that Hindi's 'भी' is none other than अपि?

इव

This is used to mean 'like'. For example,

गङ्गाधरशास्त्री घण्टसाल-महाभागः इव गायति।

Gangadharma Sastry sings like Ghantasala.

छात्रः शिक्षकस्य पुत्रः इव आचरति।

Student behaves as if he is son of the teacher.

रामः गाम्भीर्ये समुद्रः इव आसीत्।

Rama is like the sea, when it comes to depth.

Needless to say, the objects being compared should have same vibhakti.

भवान् कृपया अनुजाय इव मह्यं अपि चाकलेहं ददातु। (मह्यम् means 'for me', चतुर्थीविभक्तिः for अहम्)

भवती एतं स्वपुत्रं इव पालयतु।

(To be continued in the next issue)



Construction work at Ashram

With the support of philanthropists, construction work of Vedavyasa Vidyalaya & Dining Hall is in progress.

- Estimate for Dining Hall (42'0"×56'0") - Rs. 12 lakhs



Dining Hall work in progress



Construction work of Vedavyasa Vidyalaya

- Estimate for Vedavyasa Vidyalaya - approximately Rs. 4 crore.
- Construction of Vedavyasa Vidyalaya will be taken up phase wise. In the first phase 12 classrooms will be constructed as per plan. Each classroom will cost Rs. 7 lakhs.

Celebrations during Kartikamasam:

Abhishekam, Puja, and Homa were performed at the Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram throughout the month of *Kartika*. *Sadhakas* and Volunteers from Hyderabad and also Villagers from near by *Tandas* surrounding the *Ashram* participated in the festivities.



Guests from Switzerland Elmar and Jacqueline Teuscher accompanied by Sri Ashok Vir visited the Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram on 18th November, 2013. They interacted with Vedavyasa Vidya Mandir children and were impressed by their enthusiasm to learn new things.





Inviting writers for Nachiketanjali!

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

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

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



Please note ...

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

"Inviting Writers-Nachiketanjali"

Nachiketa Tapovan

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

Events & Celebrations

Art of Public Speaking Workshop

Mr. Avinash Agarwal conducted a 2- day workshop on Public Speaking for the students of Nachiketa Tapovan from 5-6th November 2013. 7-10 classes students participated. Children received hands on lessons on the elements of effective public speaking in a friendly and purely interactive atmosphere. Techniques for powerful voice, effective speech, proper posture and other aspects were the takeaways. It was a fun-filled learning and bonding experience which left the students wanting more of it.



Avinash throws light on Public Speaking

Motivational Coaching Workshop on Self Development



On 14th November 2013, Motivational coaching session on self development was conducted for the benefit of our high school students by Mr. S.Nand Kumar. Children enjoyed the 3 hour interactive session. Thanks to our volunteers Smt. Swathi & Padmini Patel for introducing Mr. S.Nand Kumar.

Vidya Mandir Students' day out

On 9th of November 2013, higher class students visited Salar Jung Museum. We thank our volunteer Sri Sitaramaraju for sponsoring and also accompanying them on the trip.

On 15th November 2013, 4th Class students visited Birla Mandir and Planetarium. On 16th November 2013, 5th Class students enjoyed a Boating trip at Lumbini Park. Thanks to our volunteer Ms. Radha for sponsoring the two field trips which were greatly enjoyed by the students.

On 23rd November 2013, Class III students visited Dukes Biscuit Factory as a part of their learning experience.



Vidya Mandir Children visit Hussain Sagar Lake

Smile Meditation & Su Jok Therapy Workshop

On 22nd and 25th November 2013, Mrs. Mamtaa Agarwal gave a valuable presentation on Smile Meditation which helps in concentrating on the work at hand and Su Jok Therapy founded by Prof. Park Jae Woo on treating chronic ailments. This involves massaging and also applying pressure to certain points on the left hand which are relevant to the ailment. Children actively participated with much enthusiasm and concentration. We thank Dr. Seema Damani from Ahmedabad for visiting Nachiketa Tapovan and participating in the program. It was a rewarding experience to the participants.



Smt. Mamtaa Agarwal explains to Vidya Mandir Children about Su Jok Therapy

Extending a Helping hand!

Gautami Enclave in Kondapur has more than 500 families living in harmony and close to nature, as we proudly develop and nurture greenery around us. Gautami Enclave Residents Welfare Association, shortly known as GERWA, is an elected body that overlooks day-to-day maintenance & residents welfare related activities in the enclave. As part of our cultural activities, we have been celebrating Ganesh Pooja for the last two years. As feedback from some residents, last year we decided to auction the Ganesh Pooja Ladoo and donate the proceeds to Nachiketa Tapovan, selected based on the inputs from residents and also looking at the profile of the organization, which is striving towards providing better education to under-privileged students. What started last year as an impromptu act, has developed into an annual event at our enclave, and this year's auctioned money totaling Rs 1,24,233/- is donated for building a corpus for students. We are very proud to be associated with the organization and hope to continue with this relationship.



Sri Vishwanath Jogini presenting a cheque to Smt. Vasundhara

- Vishwanath Jogini

NACHIKETA'S GO GREEN CLUB...

*We convey our thanks to all the participants of WOW initiative. You helped us earn **Rs. 32565/-** in the month of November and saved Mother Earth by recycling about **4070 kg** of plastic and paper waste material.*





Turn around their future!

For ₹ 1 Lakh

Your donation will last a lifetime

Appeal for Sponsor-a-Child Corpus Fund

Nachiketa Tapovan runs a free Vidya Mandir for 240 children from poor families. They receive all-round, holistic academic education in English medium (LKG to 10th std.), including **arts, crafts, spiritual and culture lessons.**

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

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

✓ *Being a charitable institution, we earn an interest of 9% annually from a Govt Bank. The annual interest on 1 Lakh will fully support one child's education for one year.*

✓ *Your donation will come a long way by meeting our expenses that include Teacher's Salaries, Uniforms, Educational material, Building Maintenance and Housekeeping, Salaries for support and administration staff, Field trips and Excursions, Celebrations and Extra Curricular activities.*

✓ *At present, we only have 45 corpus sponsorships, help us reach all of our 240 children!*

✓ *Bring hope and light into their lives – as a group or individual or in the name of a loved one.*

✓ *Donors receive annual report card and are welcome to interact with our children.*

✓ **We express our thanks to Corpus Donors by permanently inscribing their names on our recognition board in the school.**



Students of Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir

Only Because of YOU...



anna dAnam mahA dAnam; vidyA dAnam mahattaram

Vidya Mandir at Nachiketa Tapovan is able to provide holistic education, stationery and nourishing milk-n-meals to 240 children studying at Nachiketa Tapovan only because of kind-hearted well wishers like you.

Celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, festivals and special occasions at Tapovan by sponsoring:

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")



GIVE THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE
...IT LASTS FOREVER

"All men, by nature, desire knowledge."

- Aristotle





Invitation

We cordially invite you to attend our celebrations



*National Youth Day
&*

Vidya Mandir Annual Day

12th January 2014 at 10:00 am

@ Nachiketa Tapovan, Kavuri Hills, Hyd.

Vivekananda Jayanthy

23rd January 2014 (Tithi)

*@ Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram,
Jadcherla.*



Republic Day

26th January 2014

from 9:30 am onwards

*@ Nachiketa Tapovan,
Kavuri Hills, Hyderabad*

&

*@ Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram,
Jadcherla.*



30

Gandhi Vardhanthi



1

HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!
New Year & Kalpataru Day



11

Vaikunta Ekadhasi



26

Republic Day



12

Vivekananda Jayanthy



18

Vamana Jayanthy



15

Sankranthi

*Festivals
&*

*Events of
January
2014*

Education for Tribal children

at Vedavyasa Vidyalaya

*Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram,
Kodgal, Mahabubnagar Dist.*



Shanta - Teaching Rhymes



Swamiji & Mataji with students



Creative Art by students



Annadanam



Pushkala Raman illustrates Picture Reading



Purvvi Bagaria with students

Hotel Sri Brindavan
Nampally Station Road, Hyderabad

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

- Jacques Cousteau



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