

Nachiketanjali



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“There’s no bond so strong in the entire world. No love so instantaneous. Motherhood is putting someone else’s happiness and well-being ahead of your own”.



Contents

	Smile and share!	5	Give ... but don't expect	22	
	Spiritual Quest	6	Events at Tapovan, Hyderabad	23	
	Maya or Daya?	8	Ayurveda	24	
	Awakenings	9	Bound by customs	26	
	Impressions	10	Unusual questions	27	
	Swami Ranganathananda's Birthday	11	My experience as a volunteer	28	
	Vivekanjali	12	Sanskrit Lesson - Sixty Nine	29	
	You hold the Key to God!	13	Beautiful is the creation	30	
	Basara	14	Pranams	31	
	History, the great teacher	16	Vedic wedding ceremony	32	
	Bhishma	18	Home Remedies for cold & cough	34	
	Various styles of Temple Architecture	20	Workaholics	36	



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Cover Story



**Ya Kundendu Tusharahara Dhavala
Ya Shubhra Vastravrita**

**Ya Veena Varadanda Manditakara
Ya Shveta Padmasana**

**Ya Brahmachyuta Shankara Prabhrיתיbihi
Devaih Sada Pujita**

**Sa Mam Pattu Saraswati Bhagavatee
Nihshesha Jadyapaha II11**

Meaning: Salutations to Devi Saraswati, Who is pure white like Jasmine, with the coolness of Moon, brightness of Snow and shines like the garland of Pearls; and Who is covered with pure white garments, Whose hands are adorned with Veena (a stringed musical instrument) and the boon-giving staff; and Who is seated on pure white Lotus, Who is always adored by Lord Brahma, Lord Achyuta (Lord Vishnu), Lord Shankara and other Devas. O Goddess Saraswati, please protect me and remove my ignorance completely.

Source: drikpanchang



Smile and Share!



There are various social norms to be followed and extending help to others is one among them. Some render help as service, some might consider helping out as their responsibility and some as mere compulsion. Now let us mull over, is there anything else that we can do for the society? What is the ultimate service that we can render to the world, which has given us a base to exist? Does everyone think of the necessity of paying back? Anyway, whom should we pay back and if at all we need to, then how? Everyone is different from each other whether it is in their way of thinking or their behavior and naturally their needs are also different. Then how can we serve everyone in common. Is there any yardstick to serve them in unison?

The answer to this is yes. Everyone of us has one thing in common to share with others and it will surely reach everyone. That is nothing but happiness. Flowers don't give fragrance only to a selected few; they spread their fragrance all around. The moon doesn't spread its light only over a few selective places. Its light showers all

over. Similarly we can spread what we have. When we feel happy why not share it with everyone. It doesn't cost us a penny. All that we need to do is just give and send love. It is an art of selfless giving. True happiness is unlimited. The more we give the more we receive.

Happiness is sought after by rich and poor alike. It is a common requirement and no one will deny it. So just share and watch. Within no time your very presence spreads happiness around. Your body language speaks of your happiness. You can't hide it even with enormous efforts. It just spills over. People automatically get attracted to you to receive that happiness. What we need to do is just preserve that happiness so that it grows multifold and starts spreading peace around.

So just be happy and share it with others!

Keep smiling and sharing!

Let Happiness spill over!

- Subhadra K.



Spiritual quest

Question: Will Sadhana affect if taken from different Gurus and practiced?

First of all, let us know what is *Sadhana* and what it means. *Sadhana* means an idea to achieve something that we want to whereas in spiritual world it is spiritual practices to achieve something higher than mere mundane goals. *Sadhana* therefore, is essential for all. Now who can initiate and guide is a question. First of all one who has been practicing pure *Sadhana* and achieved certain higher degree of understanding life is a person to look for *Sadhana*. There are many *Sadhanas* and one cannot practice everything in one life time. So it is better if one sticks to one *Sadhana* to get utmost benefit. Once one establishes properly in one *Sadhana*, one can shift to other *Sadhanas* as well. But it is not good for the person who is initiating nor useful for the receiver, if the guru hasn't established it properly.

Now the most important question is whether to get many different *Sadhanas* from different gurus and how it would harm or help. Hopefully if the person is qualified, he/she would guide you properly but if a person is unable to explain and guide properly, that is the time when you have to take a call and decide your next course of life. Anyway, there is no harm in getting different *Sadhanas* from different gurus but one needs to understand whether one can do justice to the *Sadhanas* or not.

Regarding practicing various *Sadhanas* every day, we need to know what our limitations are and how far we can stretch ourselves. There is nothing wrong if we are multitaskers and understand everything. Remember, *Sadhana* is more subtle and many times may be a combination of *mantra*, *kriya*, *asana*, *pranayama* and *dhyana*, so one has to devote more time than what actually is being asked or prescribed.



It is not something like doing *kriya* for half an hour and later enjoying life the way we want. It is like a life investment so one should be more careful than just trying out many things. There is one more aspect, if two different *Sadhanas* can work if taken from same guru then why two different *Sadhanas* should not work if taken from two different gurus. There are gurus and especially in Himalayas where they try to send their disciples to other gurus to learn new *Sadhanas*. As I said earlier, one cannot be the master of all *Sadhanas* but can understand the essence of all *Sadhanas*. It is up to the individual to decide whether one can go ahead with one or many *Sadhanas*.

One *Sadhana* is enough if it is coming from the right person. One thought is enough if it is genuine. One prayer is enough if it is coming from heart. One *kriya* is enough if done with great intensity. One change is enough in life if it is from the core of life. One smile is enough if it springs forth from the soul. One great day is enough to survive. One moment is enough to rely upon. One *Satsanga* is enough to change and get charged. 'One' therefore is more



**“If two different
Sadhanas can work if taken
from same guru then why
two different Sadhanas
should not work if taken
from two different gurus.”**

powerful than ‘many’. Have faith in your guru, your *Sadhana*, your gut feeling, your passion and see how things would start changing.

Life is terrific but not really terrifying. It is your doubt that it doesn’t have base but not your *Sadhana*. Remember when *Sadhana* comes from the right person it is always with solid foundation. Basic tenets are taken care of. Ramakrishna Math & Mission tradition is such that whoever becomes President or Vice President, they will have the power to initiate people into tradition. Such is the power of tradition, post and of course a great soul like Paramhansa Sri Ramakrishna.

Many a time, people themselves for that matter become insignificant whereas system becomes more powerful. It is not just the faith that motivates system; it is divinity that works upon. We at Nachiketa Tapovan have invented the device to simplify things to the maximum extent where everything becomes more important and useful. We have a person who is qualified, we have a system that revolves around values, and we have a post that has perfect link that connects and also gets connected to. This design is a special tool that makes sure that whoever comes in would get utmost benefit, no matter whether the person is a believer or a non-believer.

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri

**Why do we need to
direct our mind?
What is the necessity?**

For material or spiritual gains you should be the boss or owner of your own mind. Only then you can achieve success in every aspect of life. Sant Tulasidas says, “I bow down to that sage who has conquered his mind.” So, mind is a powerful instrument to experience the purpose of life. It is the greatest medium to realize the Self. Only thing is you need to understand the mechanism of the mind with the help of right practice or *sadhana* described by our sages. For me, thoughts are like scattered flowers, mind is like a thread and *sadhana* or practice is a skill which helps in making a garland.



- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri





Maya or Daya?

It was Sunday, the first day after the full moon. Sri Ramakrishna was resting after his noon meal. The midday offering had been made in the temples, and the temple doors were closed.

In the early afternoon the Master sat up on the small couch in his room. M. prostrated himself before him and sat on the floor. The Master was talking to him on the philosophy of Vedanta.

MASTER (to M.): “Self-Knowledge is discussed in the *Ashtavakra Samhita*. The non-dualists say, ‘*Soham*’, that is, ‘I am the Supreme Self.’ This is the view of the *sannyasis* of the Vedantic school. But this is not the right attitude for householders, who are conscious of doing everything themselves. That being so, how can they declare, ‘I am That, the actionless Supreme Self? According to the non-dualists the Self is unattached. Good and bad, virtue and vice, and the other pairs of opposites, cannot in any way injure the Self, though they undoubtedly afflict those who have identified themselves with their bodies. Smoke soils the wall, certainly, but it cannot in any way affect *akasa*, space. Following the Vedantists of this class, Krishnakishore used to say, ‘I am *Kha*’, meaning *akasa*. Being a great devotee, he could say that with some justification; but it is not becoming for others to do so.

“But to feel that one is a free soul is very good. By constantly repeating, ‘I am free, I am free’, a man verily becomes free. On the other hand, by constantly repeating, ‘I am bound, I am bound’, he certainly becomes bound to worldliness. The fool who says only, ‘I am a sinner, I am a sinner’, verily drowns himself in worldliness. One should rather say: ‘I have chanted the name of God. How can I be a sinner? How can I be bound?’

(To M.) “You see, I am very much depressed today. Hriday has written me that he is very ill. Why should I feel dejected about it? Is it because of *maya* or *daya*?”

M. could not find suitable words for a reply, and remained silent.

MASTER: “Do you know what *maya* is? It is attachment to relatives — parents, brother and sister, wife and children, nephew and niece. *Daya* means love for all created beings. Now what is this, my feeling about Hriday? Is it *maya* or *daya*? But Hriday did so much for me: he served me whole-heartedly and nursed me when I was ill. But later he tormented me also. The torment became so unbearable that once I was about to commit suicide by jumping into the Ganges from the top of the embankment. But he did much to serve me. Now my mind will be at rest if he gets some money. But whom shall I ask for it? Who likes to speak about such things to our rich visitors?”

Source: The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna
By Swami Nikhilananda



AWAKENINGS

Our life span is comprised entirely of awakenings; some rude and some gentle, each one is precious. However we need to develop awareness to witness every single one of them. There is no rule engraved on stone that we need to pass every test that Life puts us through. As long as we learn from them, failures have more to offer us than successes.

The so called civilized society ties one down with the chains of fear of failure which alter his/her natural behavior. As children we are afraid to disappoint our parents, let down our teachers and pals. As adults we worry about the guaranteed economic success, societal norms and approval that we avoid venturing off the track. Hence a huge gap between what we wish to do and what we actually do. Learning not to be attached to success as the outcome is the primary measure we can take to break these bonds. Stranger anxiety, stage fear, asking questions in a class, making suggestions in a company meeting are some of the less risky areas to exercise this freedom.

The Realized souls are abodes of peace since they have transcended the standards of life set by the norms and expectations and 'live' life as it comes

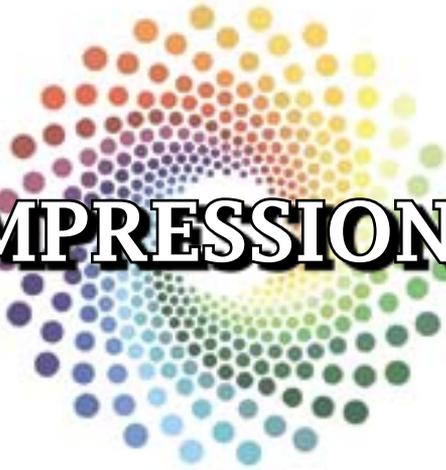
and cherish people as they are. We can achieve at least a part of this poise and contentment by following few simple remedies since we can't afford to become scientists of life and experiment with our daily duties and commitments. When something unexpected happens instead of panicking review the event from a positive angle (try hard you will find one) and I bet you will find a gem of a lesson that can be treasured.

Once by mistake I washed down my favorite jewel down the gutter. I fret about it and cursed myself for not being more careful. At one fine moment of that grief I got an insight as to how much value I was assigning to the trinket but now in the cesspool, what I called a jewel is as good as rest of the dirt! All the time it was me who valued it high and made it a part of my identity. That awakening has contributed to the alleviation of my attachment for precious 'things'. It is in our minds to make every event a learning experience and gain big even from a heavy loss. All we need is some patience and a fairly open mind.

- Annapurna R.



IMPRESSIONS



Everything I experience with my five senses, leaves an impression. An impression on my very being.

Nothing is lost. Nothing is missed. Nothing slips by. Stored in a memory bank. All of it.

Everyday, these impressions are piling. The baggage is becoming heavier. The good ones. The bad ones. The ugly ones.

Impressions for happy moments, of smiles, of joy, of tears and love... Impressions of hatred and jealousy. Of rape and lust. Anger and hurt. All piling on. Like piles of gold, piles of garbage, piles of stinking rubbish.

I wasn't aware of this for the longest time. And now, that I am beginning to see, just about becoming aware of this fact, it makes me feel claustrophobic... stifling.

I think, the meaning of enlightenment is just this...To become impression-less. To be empty. Transparent. Clear. Crystal clear.

How do I remain in this world and not be touched by it? Both by its magic and its madness, how?

I think, I know the answer to this too, at least, in part. To do things without compulsion. Prayer or party. Work or worship. Karma or Kriya...nothing with compulsion.

If, everything I do is out of my conscious awareness...every breath, every thought, every action is through an awareness, then there need not be any impressions.

In every situation, if I am what is required of me...what is necessary... what is appropriate, then impressions also become my choice.

I can meet the same person each day, as if I am meeting him anew. No past. No baggage. No bias. No impressions.

How beautiful would life be...How magical...full of wonderment and awe...

Can I make this happen for me?

- Gautam Vir

*The up going breath is like the wheels inside a clock.
Its movement is inside. When the movement of the
breath is internal, one will see the world in himself.*

- Chidakasha Gita



Swami Ranganathananda's Birthday Celebrations

Swami Ranganathananda's Birthday was celebrated on the evening of 15th December 2015 at Vinaya, Sri P. Suryanarayana Reddy & Smt Vasundhara's residence. The program started with prayer and *kirtans* by our young volunteer Ramya. Divine name permeated the surroundings, entralling the audience. The session was followed by Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri's talks. She spoke on the magnitude of Swami Ranganathananda's personality and how he influenced the society with his simplicity and modesty. Later Swami Nachiketananda Puri addressed and enlightened the gathering with his divine message and narrated the significance of his first meeting with Swami Ranganathananda. Swamiji also briefed on the current and forthcoming projects of Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram at Kodgal.



Sri Prem Kumarji from Ramakrishna Math spoke about the precious moments he had spent with Sri Ranganathananda and how he was moved by the great man's simplicity. After *mangalaharati*, *prasad* was served and Swamiji and Mataji interacted with everyone who attended the celebrations.



An Appeal

Basic education is a distant dream for hundreds of underprivileged in and around the villages of Jadcherla Mandal. Education is the fundamental right of every child. Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir strives to make basic education an achievable goal for these children.

Help us Build! Help us secure a safer place!

ONGOING PROJECTS: Classrooms



The rapidly rising costs of building materials have placed a great strain on our ability to complete the projects. With your helping hands we aim to change the course of many.

Our Requirement, Our Request

Particulars	Specification	Amount	We need
Single Classroom accommodating 25 children	Outer Dimension 30'.0" x 30'.0" Construction area: 980 sq.ft	₹ 8 Lakhs per classroom.	8 classrooms

About How You Can Help:

- ◆ by contributing to our Building Fund
- ◆ by donating building materials (steel, cement, bricks, sand, electrical fittings, tiles, flooring, paint, window glass, etc.)
- ◆ by donating classroom requirements like desks, mats, blackboards, e-learning kit, stationery etc.
- ◆ help us raise Corpus Fund for projects to become self-sustainable.

All Donations are exempted from I.T. Under 80-G & accorded permission under FCRA

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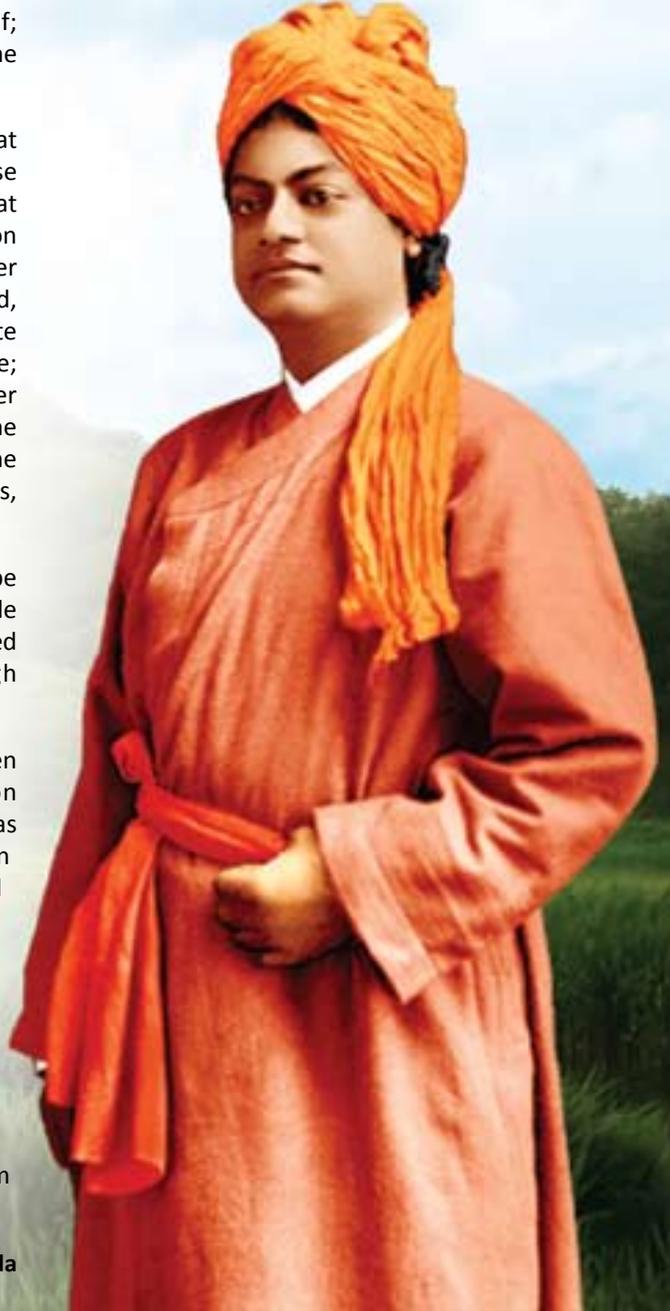
Man is like an infinite spring, coiled up in a small box, and that spring is trying to unfold itself; and all the social phenomena that we see is the result of this trying to unfold.

All the competitions and struggles and evils that we see around us are neither the causes of these unfoldments, nor the effects. As one of our great philosophers says — in the case of the irrigation of a field, the tank is somewhere upon a higher level, and the water is trying to rush into the field, and is barred by a gate. But as soon as the gate is opened, the water rushes in by its own nature; and if there is dust and dirt in the way, the water rolls over them. But dust and dirt are neither the result nor the cause of this unfolding of the divine nature of man. They are coexistent circumstances, and, therefore, can be remedied.

Now, this idea, claims the Vedanta, is to be found in all religions, whether in India or outside of it; only, in some of them, the idea is expressed through mythology, and in others, through symbology.

The Vedanta claims that there has not been one religious inspiration, one manifestation of the divine man, however great, but it has been the expression of that infinite oneness in human nature; and all that we call ethics and morality and doing good to others is also but the manifestation of this oneness. There are moments when every man feels that he is one with the universe, and he rushes forth to express it, whether he knows it or not. This expression of oneness is what we call love and sympathy, and it is the basis of all our ethics and morality. This is summed up in the Vedanta philosophy by the celebrated aphorism, *Tat Tvam Asi*, "Thou art That".

Source: Complete works of Swami Vivekananda



Nachiketa ॐवा वाहिनी

...infusing values

Do you wish to bring a change around you?

Help yourself! Help the people around you!

Nachiketa Seva Vahini is a wing of Nachiketa Tapovan to spread the moral, spiritual and cultural values through samskaravargas and service activities.

Nachiketa Tapovan invites eager minds

- who wish to make a difference in the world around them
- who are passionate to serve the society irrespective of age
- who think this change is vital in creating a positive impact at a larger level

Our Programmes:

Bala Vahini : Sowing a right seed in young minds

Yuva Vahini : Channelizing the youth energy for nation building

Matru Vahini : Translating feminine energy to transform the society

Vanaprastha Vahini : Serving the humanity with rich experiences

We are in the process of forming committees from village to national level.

You can be a member of Nachiketa Seva Vahini



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YOU HOLD THE KEY TO GOD!

God is worshipped in many forms. Most of us pray to him for his grace. But we overlook the fact that we should have a strong faith in him. If our desires are not fulfilled our faith dwindles. We look up to other forms of Gods hoping they will fulfill our desires. *Bhakthi* should never be biased. We should develop undeterred faith in the supreme and serve him selflessly. We should develop *Dasya bhakthi* (serving God selflessly) which will eventually turn into *Sakhya bhakthi* (friendship with God). We make God our friend and relate to him all our woes with an open mind. Our life is open to him. This alone is true *sakhya bhakthi*. We treat God like our best friend, always giving him a place in our thoughts. This friendship slowly converts into a bond between God and the *bhaktha*. Our thoughts become more and more God-centered. The distance between God and the *bhaktha* decreases and eventually the *bhaktha* becomes one with God.

"In whichever form my devotee worships me I'll take that form", Sri Krishna has stated in the Bhagavad Gita, which means the devotee himself holds the key to God.

The final stage of devotion is *Atmanivedhana* which means total surrender to the supreme without holding back. We should offer ourselves to God as we are. Then there is no place for 'I or Mine'. You are one with God!





Basara

Sri Gnana Saraswathi Temple

Because of Veda Vyasa's meditation this region is called as Tapobhoomi. Here Sri Veda Vyasa Rishi got *darshan* and blessings of Goddess Saraswathi. In the passage of meditation period he got a dream, in which She ordered Veda Vyasa that every day before meditation he has to bring a fistful of sand from river Godavari after having sacred bath and keep it as three heaps in the cave. After some time from the three heaps three deities appeared because of penance and meditation power of Sage Veda Vyasa as follows.

1. Maha Saraswathi 2. Maha Laxmi 3. Maha Kali

For these three deities Veda Vyasa performed *Prana Prathista* (invoking life force into the idols). As he stayed here for a long time this place was named 'VASARA' and in due course of time it became 'Baasar'.

The temple was built by Sage Veda Vyasa. During the period from 11th century to 18th century, Moghal Nawabs named Hanid Shahi, Kuthub Shahi and Barid Shahi attempted to destroy the temple and idols. At that time one young man named Sri Makkaji Patel who belongs to Veera Shaiva of Renukapuram tried to protect the temple from the attacks made by the Nawabs. A gang of youngsters belonging to Ravindrapuram, Mahathpuram, Ratnapuram and Vyasapuram helped him with this task. And under the leadership of Makkaji Patel, the temple was protected from Muslim invasions.

Every day, at the time of *Brahma Muhurtha*, *abhishekam* is performed. Pilgrims can see the sand idol of Goddess Saraswathi during this time. A *koneru* or pond is located to the east side of

The Goddess Saraswathi Devi temple located in Basar Village on the left bank of river Godavari situated in Adilabad Dist. of Telangana, is having *Pouranik* and historical importance. This is the only one and unique temple of Goddess Saraswathi in South India.

The history of the temple goes back to the times of 'MAHABHARATHA' which is nearly five thousand years old. The Goddess Saraswathi is known for initiation of "AKSHARABHYASA" and is also called as Sri Gnana Saraswathi.

Temple History

Sri Veda Vyasa after the epic war of 'Mahabharatha' traveled to South from North. He reached Dhandakaranya region and performed penance to please Goddess Saraswathi on the banks of the holy river Godavari.

Daily he used to wake up at *Brahma Muhurtha* (early morning) and go to the holy Godavari for a sacred bath and return to his meditation place and engage in his meditation till the sun set. There is a cave in this region where Veda Vyasa sat for penance.



the Main temple. It is also called 'Papaharini –Pushkarini'. In this *koneru* there are eight *thirthas* (wells) in the eight directions. The *koneru* is having the same significance as *Astha Thirtha*.

The *thirthas* are as follows:

Indra Thirtha, Surya Thirtha, Vyasa Thirtha, Valmiki Thirtha, Vishnu Thirtha, Ganesh Thirtha, Puthra Thirtha and *Shiva Thirtha*

LEGEND

According to Hindu Mythology, Saraswathi is the deity of education and knowledge. In Hindu tradition every child before joining the school seeks the blessings of Goddess Saraswathi.

"Education is a permanent asset to receive or lead a rosy future or divinity". So devotees in large scale perform *Aksharabyasam*.

It is believed that in the midst of the *koneru*, Saraswathi *Thirtha* was located. The eight directions appear even today. It was mentioned in Brahmanda Purana that by taking even one bath in this holy *pushkarini* he/she gets liberated from the various sins committed by him/her.

For the people, who observe *dheeksha*, *Madhukaram* (*Bhiksha* or seeking alm) is inevitable and certain Brahmin family members are ever ready to offer *Bhiksha* to such people.



Deeksha can be observed for seven days, eleven days, twenty one days or forty one days and even for more days. Goddess Saraswathi will appear in the dream of the *sadhaka* (devotee) and shower Her kindest blessings on him. It is a well known experience of many devotees hailing from many places.

Vasantha Panchami or Maga Shuddha Panchami, being Sri Saraswathi Devi's Birth day is celebrated with great reverence at Basara.

Source: temple tourism

(In 2016 Vasantha Panchami is celebrated on 12th February.)





History

The great teacher

Every time you visit a place, you get to learn a lot from it. Recently on a visit to Cambodia, I learned a lot of things too. Not things that people told me about the place. Instead, it was the things that people didn't tell me.

In the previous century there was a civil war of sorts going on in Cambodia. There was a lot of chaos and unrest. During a time like this the people needed a guiding light, a person who would help them achieve what they wanted. A leader. A man named Pol Pot, led a group of people known as the Khmer Rouge, along with the village people's support, helped overthrow the king and government of Cambodia. The people now started seeing him as the leader and started looking up to him. After a while when things were going on just fine, Mr. Pol Pot had a thought in his head. He thought what if, like I overthrew the king, the people decide to overthrow me? So what did he do? He realised that if anyone could get such a thought, it would only be the educated people of the country, and so he decided to send all of them to villages to work as farmers. Further, he felt that his own party members would be the ones to turn on him, so he had them and their families imprisoned, tortured and killed.

I understood very well from this how power can change people. It does not make them bad. It makes them arrogant and paranoid, which

is much, much worse. The leaders think that whatever they are doing is right. They think that because they have done something to liberate the people, and it has brought them to the position of the people's leader, they can do as they please. I have mentioned before, what the characteristics of a true leader are. A true leader would never do anything that would harm his subjects or comrades. Power changes people, but only if they allow it to get the better of them. Many leaders did not lose their mind and go crazy when they rose to power. That is the mark of a good and true powerful man, because, as the saying goes, with great power comes great responsibility.

Another thing that I learnt from this, though it did not happen in this case, is that when you do something bad to a lot of people it comes back a hundred fold at you. Pol Pot was a lucky man, for what he feared, did not happen to him. Nobody overthrew him. Everyone started to fear him. But in the case of another example, of the French Revolution; the king of France lost a lot of money and tried to get it all back by imposing heavy taxes. This and many other causes, spurred the French Revolution. The people of France were oppressed, suppressed and depressed, which is why the people who were the cause for this, paid a great price for what they did to the French.



“It is easy to do a small wrong and fall in everyone’s eyes, but it is difficult to do something great to rise back up and prove yourself.”

From this I learnt that we must treat people well, irrespective of their class, race, nationality, religion or status. Because the power of a group of people who have been scorned, cannot be matched. Always treat people with respect and courtesy, and above all, just be nice.

Finally, because of the actions of Pol Pot, the whole of the educated community in Cambodia, became peasants and all the human resources were not put to the right use, and thus were wasted. This set the development of this country back by a few decades. What I learnt from this is that it is easy to step back, but it is difficult to move forward. Even in our lives, it is easy to shy away from opportunities, or take a back seat in anything. But it is difficult to rise up to the challenge and grasp what is within your reach, for that is the right thing to do.

Another way of looking at it is this. It is easy to do a small wrong and fall in everyone’s eyes, but it is difficult to do something great to rise back up and prove yourself. So be careful and watch your actions, because everyone else is watching too. We can see in the case of Cambodia, how one person’s actions led to the downfall of the country, and how the people are struggling to get back.

History is a great teacher, and we must learn all we can from it. After all, what future do we have, if we do not know our past.

N. Rohan C. Govind
Class 11,
GT Aloha Vidya Mandir, Chennai



Nachiketa

इन्द्र-इशक्ति

...a spiritual calling

Is Streeshakti a mere title? Come, let’s break the stereotype! Welcoming woman power that moulds, nurtures and transforms the world. Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram is a sanctuary where our most beloved Adhyatmik Praneta, Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri, is here to guide and initiate women

- ◆ who are passionate towards serving the needy
- ◆ who are deeply rooted in moral and spiritual values
- ◆ who look forward for Spiritual awakening

We are looking for...

- ◆ **Sevakas:** Women who are willing to work at the Ashram receiving basic salary
- ◆ **Sevavratis:** Women who prefer to offer voluntary services with or without honorarium for a duration of their choice
- ◆ **Sadhakas:** Seekers of Truth who are willing to receive Sadhana or various initiations like Yog Shakti Deeksha, Mantra Deeksha, Kriyayog and Chaturashram Deekshas like Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa Deeksha etc to explore the inner world and express inner beauty by way of Karmayoga or service to humanity

Note:

- The power of discretion and autonomy in selecting candidates and decision making lies with the Ashram Management
- Food and Accommodation with basic amenities will be provided at the Ashram
- Our gentle appeal is not to consider Ashram as an orphanage or old age home

For further details please contact:

Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal: 8008882828,
Nachiketa Tapovan, Hyderabad: 9849168937
SMS to Swamiji: 9908234545
nachiketananda@gmail.com; admin@nachiketatapovan.org
Website: www.nachiketatapovan.org



BHISHMA

The patriarch of Kuru Dynasty

Bhishma born to King Santhanu and Gangadevi is one of the most honored figures of the Indian epic, the Mahabharata. He gave up marriage and throne for his father's sake. To the people of India he is the symbol of mature wisdom.

He was the patriarch of Kuru dynasty. He loved the Pandavas as they abided by *dharma* but as luck would have it, he had to support the Kauravas though he knew that they had selfish goals. His advice to the Kurus was not heeded and the battle of Kurukshetra took place between the Pandavas and Kauravas.

On the 10th day of the Kurukshetra, the battle raged in greater fierceness. Bhishma was a terror to the enemies. Arjuna faced him and a terrible fight followed. As the fight progressed, Shikhandi appeared before Bhishma ready with weapons to fight with him. At once Bhishma threw down his bow and arrows. Arjuna's arrows had already weakened him.

He fell to the ground.

But his body did not touch the ground.

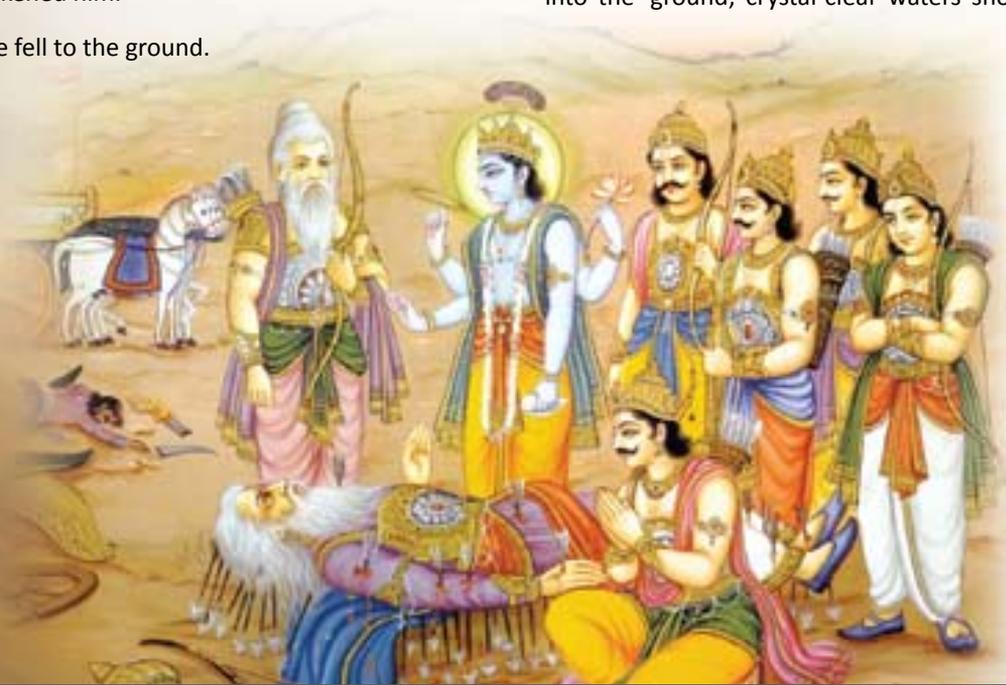
Arjuna's arrows had formed a bed for him.

Bhishma thanked Arjuna for having given him a hero's bed of piercing arrows. He said, "I want a pillow! Give me a pillow of arrows!" Arjuna raised the old warrior's head and shot arrows piercing the ground. Bhishma's head rested on them. By then Duryodhana, Karna, Kripa and other leaders of the Kaurava army raced to the spot where Bhishma lay. Yudhishtira, Bhima and others too stood near him.

Bhishma was thirsty and asked for water.

Duryodhana asked his men to bring water. Bhishma smiled even in his pain and said to him, "My son, the water I seek is not the water you offer."

He then looked at Arjuna. Arjuna understood his mind. He sent an arrow which pierced deep into the 'ground; crystal-clear waters shot up in



fountains and fell straight into the open mouth of Bhishma. The stream of water welling up from the ground was none other than Mother Ganga coming in the steam form to quench the thirst of her beloved son Bhishma. He felt the living presence of his mother and even while lying on the bed of arrows felt that he was resting on the lap of his mother.

Bhishma turned towards Duryodhana and said, "My son, give up your obstinacy. Make peace with Yudhishtira. Live happily with the Pandavas as brothers."

Bhishma had the boon to die at his own will. So he waited for *Uttarayana Punyakala*. The belief is that on the day of *Uttarayana Punyakala* the doors of Vaikuntha, where Lord Vishnu dwells, will be thrown open and the soul leaving the earth will see the Lord.

Duryodhana did not listen to Bhishma's advice. In the meanwhile, as the old sage lay on his bed of arrows the war went on. Drona, Dusshasana and Kama all died. And Duryodhana himself met with death, his thigh broken by Bhima's mace.

Yudhishtira was crowned. He went with Sri Krishna to pay his respects to Bhishma and seek his blessings. Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva

and Draupadi were all there. They touched his feet and he blessed them. His last words of advice to Yudhishtira were:

"Protect Dharma. Punish the wicked. Do not give up Truth. Give up egoism. Rule in the interests of the subjects. May you all prosper"!

Bhishma gazed upon Krishna in great joy.

He said, "Where there is Lord Krishna there is Dharma (right conduct) and where there is Dharma there is victory. I bow to you, my Master. You are the Lord of all the worlds. I am tired of this life. Dharma has triumphed and I am happy. So now I leave the earth. -

Uttarayana arrived. Bhishma's soul winged its way to Lord Vishnu's feet.

Sage Vyasa who composed Mahabharata has drawn there a clear picture of the sublime character of Bhishma.

Let us all read the Bharata and follow in the footsteps of Bhishmacharya.

Source: Great Personalities by freeindia

12



Vasant Panchami

**Festivals
&
Events of**

FEBRUARY 2016

22



Magha Purnima

13



Skanda Sashti

15



Bhishma Ashtami



Various styles of

TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

Cave Temples

Cave form of architecture in the form of temples was prominent throughout western India like the one present at Ajanta and Ellora.

Nagara Style

Nagara Style of architecture was mainly observed for building temples in Northern India during the 5th century.

The specific features of this particular style of architecture are presence of beehive-shaped and multi layered tower, called 'Shikhara'. A large round cushion-like element called 'amalaka' is present on the top of the layers of this tower or 'Shikhara'. The basic platform for the temple is square but sometimes due to the segmented walls it appears circular in shape.

This style of architecture was further modified in the later periods in which the central shaft was surrounded by many smaller reproductions of itself, which appeared like a fountain.

The most prominent examples of this style of architecture are temples of Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, Sun temple in Konark, Sun temple in Modhera, Gujarat and Ossian temple, Jain temples of medieval period like Solanki temple in Gujarat.

Khajuraho temple

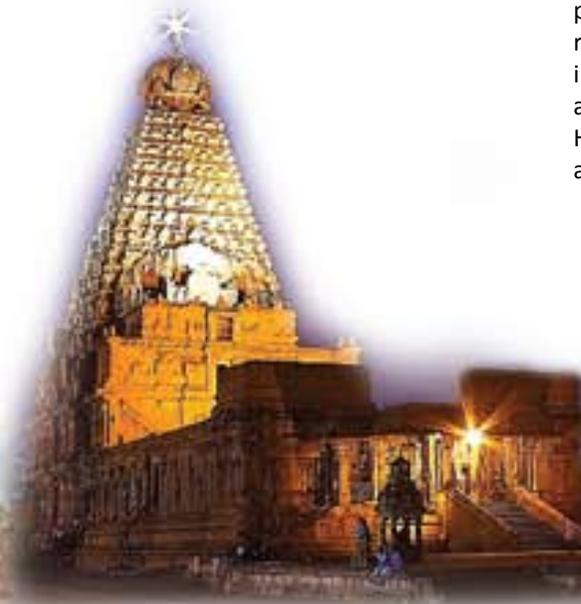


Dravidian style

Dravidian style of architecture appeared in Indian subcontinent long back during the reigns of Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyan, Chera, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Hoysalas and Vijayanagara.

The style mainly comprises of pyramid shaped temples made by intricate carving of stones to give the form of statues of deities, warriors, kings, and dancers. The specimens of the Dravidian style of architecture are currently present in the Southern Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Karnataka. The finest examples of Dravidian style are temples of Tanjore, Madurai, Mahabalipuram, Badami, Pattadakal and Kanchipuram.

Brihadeeshwar temple in Thanjavur



Hoysala or Vesara Architecture

Hoysala style of architecture developed mainly in South India in the reign of the Hoysala Empire from 11th to 14th century. The Hoysala style appeared between the Indo Aryan and Dravidian traditions. Numerous temples were built, based on this building style by the Hoysala Emperors in the Medieval Age of Indian history.

These temples were built of chloritic schist or fine grained soap stone which enabled builders for intricate sculptural carvings, further beautifying the temples.

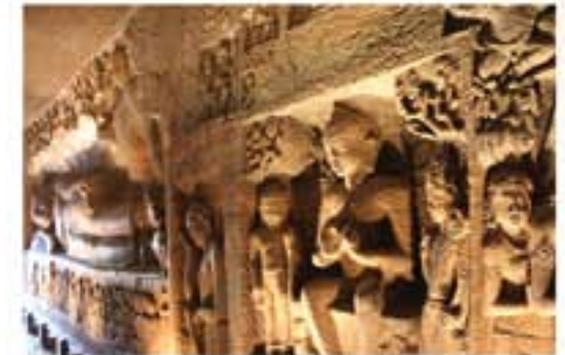
The Hoysala style of architecture has few peculiarities like the main structure of all temples, stands on the raised platform and pillars in all temples are with horizontal moldings. The other distinctive feature of this Hoysala style of architecture is presence of well sculptured grilled windows and existence of shikharas in well defined horizontal tiers.

There are about 100 temples of this Hoysala style still present in the Karnataka, making the Indian heritage richer. These temples are the major tourist attractions in the state. Few of the examples of the Hoysala architectural style are Chennakesava Temple at Belur, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu and the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura.

Chennakesava Temple in Somanathapura



Cave temples at Ajanta and Ellora



COMMONALITIES

Hindu philosophical and metaphysical concepts dominate the architecture of the temple whatever its style.

A temple usually consists of the following parts: the *Garbhagriha* (or the Sanctum Sanctorum) having the main deity, the *Vimana/Shikara*, the *Mandapa* in front of the Sanctum, the *Prakaras* around the Sanctum and the *Gopura*, the gateway to the temple.

The layout of a temple can also be analogous to the human body. The *Vimana* is the head, the Sanctum is the neck, the front *mandapa* is the stomach, the *prakara* walls are the legs, the *Gopura* is the feet and the Lord in the Sanctum is the Soul or *Jiva* of the body.

Source: Temple Architecture



GIVE

but don't expect

Once Krishna and Arjuna were walking towards a village. Arjuna was pestering Krishna, asking him why Karna should be considered an unparalleled Donor & not him.

Krishna, turned two mountains into gold.

Then said, "Arjuna, distribute these two gold mountains among villagers, but you must donate every bit of it."

Arjuna went into the village, and proclaimed he was going to donate gold to every villager, and asked them to gather near the mountain. The villagers sang his praises and Arjuna walked towards the mountains with a huffed up chest.

For two days and two nights Arjuna shoveled gold from the mountain and donated to each villager. The mountains did not diminish in the slightest.

Most villagers came back and stood in queue within minutes. Now Arjuna was exhausted, but not ready to let go of his Ego, told Krishna he couldn't go on any longer without rest.

Then Krishna called Karna and told him to donate every bit of the two gold mountains.

Karna called the villagers, and said "Those two Gold mountains are yours," and walked away.

Arjuna sat dumbfounded. Why hadn't this thought occurred to him.

Krishna smiled mischievously and told him, "Arjuna subconsciously, you were attracted to the gold, you regretfully gave it away to each villager, giving them what you thought was a generous amount. Thus the size of your donation to each villager depended only on your imagination.

Karna holds no such reservations. Look at him walking away after giving away a fortune, he doesn't expect people to sing his praises, he doesn't even care if people talk good or bad about him behind his back. That is the sign of a man already on the path of enlightenment.

Giving with an expectation of a return in the form of a compliment or thanks is not a gift, then it becomes a trade.

Give without expecting anything in return."



Events & Celebrations

Nachiketa Tapovan Hyderabad

Sharada Ma's Birthday

Sharada Ma's Birthday celebrations were held at Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir, Hyderabad. The program began by lighting of the lamp by volunteer Smt. Maniamma. Children of various classes participated in Quiz, Speech and sayings about Sharada Ma.



Christmas

Honorable Home Minister Sri N. Narsimha Reddy Garu, visited Nachiketa Vidya Mandir to celebrate Christmas. Samanvay Club members sponsored lunch and distributed water bottles and snacks among the Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir children.





Ayurveda – *A Therapeutical Treasure*

The knowledge of Ayurveda had descended from Lord Brahma to Prajapati, from Prajapati to Ashwini kumars, from them to Indra, from Indra to Bharadwaj, from him to Atreya, and to his disciples Agnivesha, Khela, Harita and others. Over a period of time it got divided into two schools of thought

1. Atreya Parampara 2. Dhanvantari Parampara.

In Atreya parampara, *Kaya-Chikitsa* (medicine/ bodily treatment) is given prime importance. The famous text of this school of thought is Charaka Samhita, named after the famous physician, Charaka.

In Dhanvantari parampara *Salya-Chikitsa* (Surgery) also had been dealt with. In the line of surgery Sushruta is considered to be an authority and the famous treatise is the Sushruta Samhita, written by him.

Apart from the above two schools of thought, Siddha medicine founded by sage Agastya is famous, even today in South India. In the yogic text Yoga Vashishta, it has been said that diseases first originate in the mental plane, slowly descend

to the *Pranic* plane and then affect various nerves, arteries and veins, which in turn result in the bodily ailments etc.

Indian medical science had linked human thoughts to human health and had evolved this therapeutic knowledge years ago; the purer and positive the thoughts, the better the health.

Today, modern medicine is slowly accepting the psychosomatic reasons for the advent of diseases. For this reason Yoga, Ayurveda and Naturopathy are becoming popular as alternative medicine to Allopathy. Our seers who had bequeathed us this knowledge have to be thanked, adored and worshipped.

Charaka Samhita, talks about a healthy person in the following lines:

**Sama dosah samagnisca samadhatu malakriyah
Prasannat mendriya manahsvasthai tyabhidhiyate**

In whom there is a balance of three *Doshas* like Vata, Kapha, seven *Dhathus* like lymph, blood, flesh, fatty tissue, bone, bone marrow and semen and *Malakriya* (proper balance excretion of faeces,



urine and sweat) and who has self control of sense organs and mind, such a person has been defined as healthy person.

Even from Vedic times the knowledge of Ayurveda had been divided into eight parts

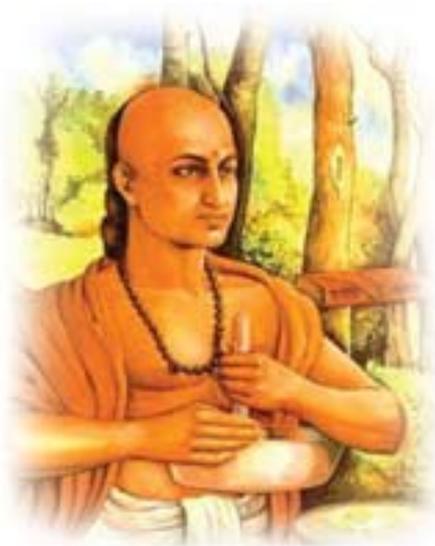
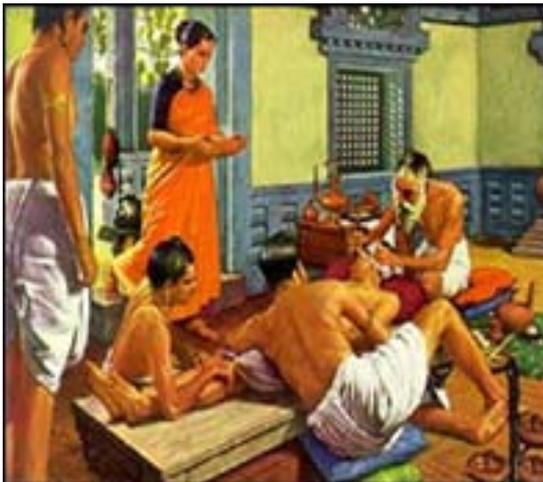
1. Kaya chikitsa - General medicine & therapeutics
2. Kaumarabhritya - Paediatrics & obstetrics
3. Shalyatantra - Surgery
4. Shalakyatantra - ENT, ophthalmology
5. Bhutavidya - Psychiatry & Para psychic studies
6. Vishatantra - Toxicology
7. Rasayana - Rejuvenation therapy
8. Vajikarana - Virilification therapy

Medicinal plants:

“Nature is bestowed with suitable and necessary medicines for all kind of diseases” says Charaka. In his Charaka Samhita around 582 kinds of medicinal plants have been mentioned. Similarly in Sushruta Samhita around 496 medicinal plants have been described. From them many medicinal preparations like powders, tonics and distillations are prepared.

Alchemy & Medicine:

Acharya Nagarjuna and Vagbatta had used many chemical preparations including metals and alloys as medicines. Many of the Alchemy’s methods were adopted by Arabs and from the Europeans.



Panchakarma treatment: (Methods of Internal Cleaning):

Charaka Samhita – Sutrasthana (chapter 16-verses 17-21) describes about *Panchakarma* treatment. The concept of *Panchakarma* is to keep the stomach clean from toxicities and impurities (*Tridoshas*). If the stomach (the internal furnace within the body for all metabolic reactions) is clean, the person would be free from many kinds of diseases.

1. *Vaman* - Emesis (through vomiting *doshas* are cured)
2. *Viraychanam* - Purgation
3. *Basti* - enema
4. *Nasya* - administrating medicines through nose
5. *Raktamokshan* - Bloodletting

After *Panchakarma* treatment, the sense organs work efficiently. Colour of the skin becomes bright. Person obtains enough strength and would not appear aged. In *Raktamoksha* therapy usage of leeches is popular. Today it is being called as Leech therapy. Sushruta Samhita “Sutrasthana” (13 & 19 paras) clearly describes the usage of leeches in the therapy. Kudos! To knowledge that has used mother’s milk for therapeutical usage in 70 diseases. For example it is said, that milk of women of black colour can cure many eye diseases.

The great thing about Ayurveda is that its treatments always yield side benefits, not side effects.

Source: 108 Facts



Bound by CUSTOMS

She had passed away that afternoon. The oldest lady of the household, she was blessed with relatively good health. Her eye-sight was perfect and digestion intact till the last day of her life. She peacefully left the world, in the arms of her caring daughter, who affectionately served her in the evening of her life. She was the mother, grandmother and great grandmother. The news of her death was conveyed to her relatives. People came to have a last glimpse of her and pray for the peace of her soul.

I was there too. Call me stone-hearted, but grief was momentary for me. I respected her for she was a family elder. Other than this, there was no strong bond I shared with her. Am I too selfish? I did not have the time to reflect on this. The 'procedures prescribed' by customs had begun. People who were arriving were more concerned if a particular item was brought and if so-and-so practice was followed. The list was unending and the sequence had to be adhered to. The person was taken away, but the practices continued.

These customs were probably invented to bring people together in time of grief and to keep them occupied so that they are not overwhelmed or overcome by the loss. But, I do feel that blind and strict adherence to them is very demanding and sometimes, trivializing the loss itself. Shouldn't the children or relatives of the deceased spend the time in fondly reminiscing the old times and soothing one another?

These prescriptions which say that certain number of people should be fed, or for that matter, certain things should be done by particular people

only, enrage me for the following reasons. Firstly, this is propagation of divisions in the society. The concept of purity and pollution which lies beneath these practices has been the defining aspect of our caste system. Is it not high time that the system is done away with or at least relegated? Secondly, differentiation based on gender is really unfair (I believe it has reduced to some extent, yet prevails considerably). Thirdly, a lot of expenditure is involved. I do not have a problem with money being spent. Nevertheless, it hurts when it is portrayed as though the soul will not attain peace if the procedures are not adhered to. So, by extension of this logic, does this mean that the poor man's soul is always wandering in the universe since he will not have the resources to complete the formalities? Lastly, commercialization has scooped this area too.

The situation in the cities might be different. There may be event-management companies involved even for organizing such ceremonies. But, in the villages, the practices remain the same. Probably, education is the only medicine which can cure this illness. Well, is it an illness in the first place? If so, will education succeed in driving it away?

There is always a first time for everything. So it is for change.

- Neetika Gogula

An advocate and has passion for writing on social issues.



Unusual Questions



*With stillness and complete surrender
When I look within
And feel the empty space
I know it is time to explore the open sky
And to know that even if I fall again
And smell the earth
I will still find the answer aloud
To my Unusual Question*

- Suruchi Singh

I dwelled in the word 'Magic'...

*Wondering its ability to refill life with
happiness
Lost hope, belief and faith
Each time we fall and get up
I wondered what makes us
Not give up that moment and still take
the flight of life
Now when life took a leap
I wonder why..??
Even after learning and unlearning the
ways of life
We still tremble, fall and walk again
It was in the journey within
I took the flight with the wings of
ignorance
To know about this Unusual question*

*Amidst this feeling of living and dying
Emptiness crops within me
And I walk silently
Only to know
Life wouldn't show the path to its core
If we didn't tremble, fall and walk again
And each time I slip, life seems larger
than before*

Workshop at Ramchandra Puram, BHEL

Dec 13, 2015

Nachiketa Seva Vahini

Nachiketa Seva Vahini is a wing of Nachiketa Tapovan to spread moral, spiritual and cultural values through Samskar Varga, Workshops & service activities. Come let us join in our drive... Your presence means a lot.
Muralidhar, Convener : 0 897 897 02 02
Venkatram Reddy, Convener : 0 9440 23 72 73





MY EXPERIENCE AS A VOLUNTEER AT NACHIKETA TAPOVAN

The day dawned as usual on 6th October 2011, but I was very excited and restless for the time to speed up so that I could enter the Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir premises in Kavuri Hills.

That was my first day as a volunteer and there was no looking back since then. I was accepted by the students in a very positive way. Getting associated with these children is one of the best that has happened in my life. After my two sons stepped out of the house for further education, I had all the time in the world and felt it should be used in a constructive way and I made the right choice.

According to me, education is not information but formation. It converts a closed mind into an open mind. The job of an educator is to teach students to see vitality in themselves. Learning begins with the simple phrase "I don't know".

It is only a few hours that I spend at the school but I learn a lot myself while teaching these little sweet children. Within no time I realized that it is not the hours you put in your work that counts, but the work you put in the hours.

I learnt after coming here that to give real service you must add something that cannot be bought or measured with money and that is sincerity and integrity. I feel a teacher is a compass that activates the magnets of curiosity, knowledge and wisdom in the pupil.

Here, every child can teach an adult to be happy for no reason and to always be busy with something. I teach them from the heart and not from the book. The gems cannot be polished without friction similarly a little extra effort with these children can make them reach the topmost places.

I help the children to understand that failure is the first step to success. I let them laugh during work and let them be known as positive achievers. I ask them to combine talent with hard work.

I share my knowledge with them and just when I think I knew all the answers, the children start asking new questions. Children here have extraordinary energy and determination.

Finally working as a volunteer at Nachiketa Tapovan generates enthusiasm and energy in me.

- *Mrudula*

Thanks to Donors



We are thankful to
Sri N. Govind Reddy
for his kind donation of
₹ 1 lakh Corpus Fund -
Sponsor a Child Education

We are thankful to
Smt. K. Hemalatha
for her kind donation
in the memory of Sri K. Ramachandra Reddy
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We are thankful to
Sri Vijay Basetti, Australia
for his kind donation of
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इहलङ्कारो ऽद्वयम् = इष्टम् नोद madhyamavyAyogaH



(Continued from last issue)

द्वितीयं दृश्यम्

द्वितीयः पुत्रः - क्षणं तिष्ठतु भवान्। वनान्तरे जलाशयात्
अहं पिपासां शमयितुम् इच्छामि।

Wait a second. I want to quench my thirst in the
interior of the forest.

घटोत्कचः - गत्वा पिपासां शमय। शीघ्रम् आगन्तव्यम्।
अतिक्रामति मातुः आहार-वेला।

Go and quench your thirst. Be quick. Mother's
food time is getting over.

द्वितीयः - भोः तात! एष गच्छामि। (निष्क्रान्तः)

Oh father (a way of addressing a dear one)! Here
I go. (Gone.)

घटोत्कचः - चिरायते कुमारः। (ज्येष्ठं प्रति) अयि कुमार! किं
नाम तव भ्रातुः?

Boy is getting delayed! (addressing the eldest) Oh
boy! What is your brother's name?

प्रथमः पुत्रः - तस्य नाम मध्यमः इति। His name is
'Madhyama' (the middle).

घटोत्कचः - (उच्चैः) भो मध्यम! शीघ्रम् आगच्छ!

(Aloud) Oh Madhyama! Come fast.

(ततः प्रविशति भीमसेनः) (Then enters Bhimasena)

भीमसेनः - कोऽयं मध्यम मध्यम इति शब्दैः मम व्यायाम-
विधनम् उत्पादयति? अस्तु पश्यामि।

(घटोत्कचं दृष्ट्वा) भोः पुरुष! ब्रूहि किमर्थं माम् आहवयसि?
अहम् अस्मि मध्यमः।

Who is this creating disturbance to my exercises
with sounds 'Madhyama! Madhyama!'. Ok, let
me see. (Seeing Ghatotkacha) Oh youngman! Tell
me why are you calling me? I am Madhyama
here.

घटोत्कचः - (आत्मगतम्) न खलु अयं कुमारः! किं एषोऽपि
मध्यमः? (To himself) This is not the person, is he?
Is this person also Madhyama?

(प्रकाशम्) अहं मध्यमं शब्दापयामि। (Aloud) I am call-
ing Madhyama.

भीमसेनः - अतः खल्वहं प्राप्तः। Because of that only I
got here.

घटोत्कचः - किं भवान् अपि मध्यमः? What, are you
also Madhyama?

भीमसेनः - न तावत् अपरः। अहम् एव भ्रातृणां मध्यमः।
Not anybody else. I am the middle among
brothers.

(To be continued in the next issue)

- Krupalu Ogeti

Sanskrit Bharati, Hyderabad, okrupalu@sanskritam.net, Ph : 73962 49650



Only Because of YOU...

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at Tapovan by sponsoring:

Donations towards operation costs

Vidya Daanam (Education)	₹ 6500/year/child
Anna Daanam (Mid-day Meals)	₹ 5800/day
Alpa Aharam (Snacks)	₹ 1200/day
Vastra Daanam (Uniforms)	₹ 900/2 pairs
Stationery Supplies (Copier Paper)	₹ 5000/term
Medicines (For needy people)	₹ 5000/month
Festival at Ma Yogashakti Peetham	₹ 20000

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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

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IFSC Code : BARB0JUBILE
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Sponsor a child	₹ 1 Lakh
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* With the accrued annual interest the following will be achieved every year, respectively.

- One child's education annually.
- Mid-day Meals for children for one day annually.
- Snacks for children for one day annually.

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Bank Information

Bank Name	: State Bank of India
Branch Name & Code	: Kavuri Hills-12655
A/c Name	: Nachiketa Tapovan
A/c No	: 30953215793
IFSC Code	: SBIN0012655
SWIFT Code	: SBININBB214

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For further details please contact:

Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal: 8008882828,

Nachiketa Tapovan, Hyderabad: 9849168937

SMS to Swamiji: 9908234545

nachiketananda@gmail.com; admin@nachiketatapovan.org

Website: www.nachiketatapovan.org

Beautiful is the creation

Beautiful is the creation, wonderful is the oneness of the souls, though separated by perishable bodies. Life is connected as a whole. Knowing this design of Universe is celebration filled with blissful experiences. Observe endless universe, caring and nourishing. Everything around us exists as thoughts in our mind. Illusionary thoughts take full control on our lives and lead our journey towards possessions and self-image, separating us from the bliss of the Universe and drench us in sorrow. This unhappiness in life is due to encouraging very low vibrations that arise due to weak thoughts about us and others around us. We need to realize and generate positive, strong vibrations with pure thoughts. We are here not to put others down, but to lend a helping hand, forgive and uplift each others' lives. Together we all prosper.

Happy New Year 2016 to all the
Nachiketanjali readers!

- *Padmaja Rudraraju*



Pranams

When we meet elders our hands immediately join together doing *namaskar* or *pranams*. This depicts the humbleness of Indian culture. It is stated in our scriptures that even Gods and sages did *pranams* as a mark of respect to others. The moment we do *pranams* we are blessed by the respective person.

Touching a Guru's right foot with one's right hand and left foot with left hand and bowing down at his feet is the right way of doing *pranam*. This is a symbol of total surrender. Our *pranams* should be filled with humbleness, service attitude, respect and surrender.

Here is a story which states the significance of *pranams*. The story of Rishi Markandeya is quite popular. One day when he was still a young boy he was seated on his father's lap when a Mahatma who was passing by saw him and told his father that the boy had a very short span of life. This upset Markandeya's father Mrukanda Maharshi. He started thinking seriously as to how this danger could be averted. He asked his son to do *pranams* to every person he comes across and receive their blessings. Little Markandeya did as he was told. He used to do *pranams* to everyone whom he met. One day the *Saptarishis* came that way. As usual Markandeya did *pranams* to all of them and they blessed him profusely saying '*Dhirgayurasthu*' which meant 'Long Live'! Their blessings could not be taken back.

Rishi Vasishtha was the first to realize their mistake. "We have blessed him with a long life whereas he is destined to live only for another six months" he said. They took the boy to Lord Brahma seeking a solution. The boy did *pranams* to Lord Brahma as was his practice and Brahma too blessed him saying '*Dhirghayushman bhava*'! Vasishtha explained to him the situation. Lord Brahma said, "Do not worry Oh, sages! This boy



has won over his life with his practice of doing *pranams* to everyone. Because of their blessings he is going to have a long life. There is no more threat to his life. Rest assured!" This is the benefit of doing *pranams*.

There is another instance in Mahabharata which reveals the significance of *pranams*. When the Kurukshetra war was about to start, Yudhishtira the eldest of Pandava brothers on seeing the army of Kauravas removed his armour and footwear and walked over to the other side. All the onlookers were surprised at his attitude and wondered what could be the reason behind his action. Kauravas felt he was coming to surrender. The other four pandava brothers were also perplexed but followed their elder brother. Only Sri Krishna understood his motive. Yudhishtira went to his Guru Dronacharya and doing *pranams* to him sought his blessings and permission to fight with him. Dronacharya blessed him with victory. He also took blessings from Bhishma pitamaha, his grandfather. Bhishma blessed him and said "If you hadn't done this I would have cursed you with defeat. But now you have won over my heart. I bless you with victory Dharmaraja for you have always treaded the path of Dharma." Rest is history. Having derived the blessings of all the great men the Pandavas emerged victorious and the secret behind the victory is the blessings they received by doing *pranams* to their elders though they were in the enemy camp.

Sri Rama too did *pranams* to King Janaka. Every morning on waking up he would do *pranams* to his parents and then his gurus. Such is the significance of *pranams*. Let us also be humble towards our gurus and elders, respect them at all times and also teach our next generation the art of doing *pranams* with humility.

- Sarayu



VEDIC WEDDING CEREMONY

(Vivah Sanskar as per Vedic rites)

Vivah Sanskar or marriage has the greatest significance among the *sixteen 'Sanskaras'* or sacraments of Vedic origin.

Arya Samaj wedding rites originate from the Vedas. They are devoid of idol worship. The rituals not only bind the bridegroom and the bride in marital bond of love and respect for each other but also lay down a code of conduct towards the family and society of which they are an integral part. Every phase of the ceremony is infused with symbolic meaning and spiritual significance.

The Ceremony

The auspicious ceremony begins with the bride and bridegroom exchanging garlands symbolizing their acceptance of each other as their life partner. After welcoming the bridegroom the bride requests him to be seated. She offers him water to sprinkle on his feet and face to refresh him. She then offers water to him to drink.

Madhuparka Vidhi

In this ritual the bride offers '*madhuparka*' to the groom. *Madhuparka* is a combination of honey, ghee, and curds. Before partaking of this *madhuparka*, the groom sprinkles it in all the directions, expressing his desire to offer hospitality to guests who may come to his home from all directions. It also expresses the determination of the bride to turn any sourness in their relationship into sweetness.

Kanya Pratigrahan

In common language it is called '*kanyadaan*'. It is an emotional moment when the bride is given away in marriage to groom by her parents. The groom avers that he is happily accepting her hand.

The formal pledge

The bride and groom addressing the people witnessing the marriage ceremony state that their hearts will be united just as water from two separate glasses when poured in a bowl becomes one. Similarly, their hearts will be united and never to be differentiated.



THE *HAVAN* or *HOMA* is performed by chanting of *mantras*, oblations to fire and prayers to God to bless the couple.

Panigrahan Sanskar

The bridegroom holds the bride's right hand for trust, co-operation and promises to keep her happy by giving her marital status of a wife in his life. The bride and groom go round the fire once and stand in their respective places. The groom chants a *mantra* defining their relationship in a poetic language.

Shilarohan

The bride places her right foot on a piece of rock. This ritual is for steadfastness in married life.



Laja Homa

The bride offers puffed rice or *laja* as oblation to fire with special prayers for the longevity and well being of the groom. It is followed by three '*pheras*' or '*pradhakshana*' round the fire in which the bride groom holds the bride's hand and does the *parikrama*. This symbolizes



his taking the bride to his own house. Tying the sacred marital knot denotes binding their life together forever. *Saptapadi* or taking seven steps together by the bride and groom which are the seven vows taken by them to make their marriage sanctified and a success.

1. **First Step is for Isha** - For fulfillment of the material needs of their family and for prosperity.
2. **Second Step is for Urje** - to develop physical, mental and spiritual strength.
3. **Third Step is for Rayasposha** - to acquire wealth by diligent and righteous means and to spend it wisely.
4. **Fourth Step is Mayobhav** - to develop harmonious relationship and be happy.
5. **Fifth Step is for Praja** - progeny - to excel in raising strong and virtuous children.
6. **Sixth Step is for Ritu** - for togetherness in all times and compatibility.
7. **Seventh Step is for sakha** - friendship - to be dependable and faithful to each other and lifelong companionship. After taking the seven steps the groom and bride go round

the fire together. Sprinkling of Water on the couple's head by the groom's mother advising them to keep their minds cool.

Suryavalokan - Prayers to Surya or Sun.

Hridaya Sparsh Mantra - Bride and groom placing their right hand on each other's heart avowing to be loyal to each other.



Sindooradaan - Applying of vermilion powder by the groom in the parting line of his bride's hair to signify their sanctified marital relationship. Feeding each other with sweets symbolizing their sweet relationship. Beholding the *Dhruva Nakshatra* or Pole Star and *Arundhati Nakshatra* - for strong, steady relationship and togetherness.

Blessings to the couple - showering of flowers on the couple for their happiness.

- Swatantra Lata Sharma, M.A

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Home Remedies For Cold & Cough



DADI'S HOME REMEDIES 1

Ingredients:

- ❖ Kolkata beetle or pan leaf- 3 pieces
- ❖ Mamra Badam - 15 pieces
- ❖ A clean nonstick pan or iron pan

Method:

Heat one leaf on nonstick pan.

Place 5 pieces of mamra badam on it.

Wrap well and eat just before sleeping at night.

Repeat for 3 nights.

Note:

PLEASE DO NOT TAKE ANYTHING AFTER HAVING THE PAN WRAP.

This is to be taken for 3 nights continuously to get good results.

If the cough still persists kindly consult the doctor.

DADI'S HOME REMEDIES 2

Please do not be apprehensive that citric fruits like oranges will worsen the cough or cold.

The fibre content in oranges or any other citric fruit works like magic for relieving cough or cold.

It's very difficult to believe!

YES, FIBRE OF ONE ORANGE CAN DO MAGIC!

Method:

Peel an orange. Take only the fibres of the orange and make a small ball.

Swallow the ball with half a glass of water.

Repeat two to three times in a day.

See the difference with each dose you take.



DADI'S HOME REMEDIES 3

This is for dry cough



Ingredients:

- ❖ 1 table spoon Cow's milk malai or cream
- ❖ Black whole pepper - 2 Pieces

Method:

Just before sleeping at night mix Cow milk malai or cream with freshly crushed whole black pepper.

Chew well and sleep.

Repeat if needed the following night.

Note:

Cow milk malai or cream is important for this remedy.

- Sent by Mamtaa Agarwal



Annadhata Sukhibhava!

We thank our sponsors for their Annadanam to our Vidya Mandir children at Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal. The children are greatly benefited by your contribution.

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Workaholics



Hanuman, with much effort, traced Sita in Lanka. He convinced Sita that he was the emissary of Sri Rama and in evidence thereof, produced the ring given by Sri Rama. She recognized the ring and wailed for a while. Hanuman assured her that on being informed of her presence in Lanka, Sri Rama and his army would soon wage a war against Ravana, win over him, kill him and then take her back with all the honours. Sita was pleased at the assurance of Hanuman.

Hanuman having achieved his goal returned to Sri Rama and informed him of Sita being in the Ashoka gardens of Ravana amidst demons that guarded her day and night.

Sri Rama decided to kill Ravana and bring Sita back. With all the war strategies arrived at, Sri Rama moved swiftly and reached the vast sea which needed a bridge to cross. The kingdom of Ravana was at the other side of the sea.

The *monkey army* began to make a way by filling the sea with stones. As the story goes, the stones on which were written the name of Sri Rama floated. It was quite a long way and everyone was striving hard.

Hanuman who was the ardent devotee of Sri Rama, began to work hard. While doing so, he heard a voice. "Hanuman, I'm Shaneswar and you are destined that I should possess you for seven years." Hanuman was stunned.

He knew how Shaneswar possesses the ones who were to bear the brunt of his actions for seven years. Nobody could escape his clutches. Once it so occurred that Lord Shiva was to be possessed by Shaneswar. He personally went and told Lord Shiva beforehand. But Shiva told him, "I will hide in such a place that you will never find me." Shaneswar smiled at him and left.

Lord Shiva went round many places to hide himself but he considered no place safe as to be found by Shaneswar. He at last decided to hide

himself in the hollow of a big tree. He was sure that it was impossible for Shaneswar to locate him and possess.

To his chagrin, however, Shaneswar, appeared before him on a crow (his vehicle). Lord Shiva was aghast and told him, "It would have been very weary to have searched for me. How can you possess me?"

"My Lord, you are the resident of Kailash with all your people but you are here in this hollow of the tree. Do you know why? It is because I already possessed you. Nobody can escape from me."

Lord Shiva realized and having been under the influence of Shaneswar stayed in the hollow till the term finished. Thereafter, he went back to Kailash.

Hanuman recalled the episode and turned to Shaneswar and told him, "Sir, is it the time for you to possess me. You know how important it is for me to work without any hindrance now to build the bridge and head the army to fight with Ravana and his army. Why don't you postpone to a future date?"

"No Hanuman. I can't do that. You are destined only at this hour and I cannot help it," Shaneswar was emphatic.

Hanuman tried many ways to convince him but in vain while Shaneswar stuck to his guns.

However, Hanuman's pleadings had a little effect on him and he smiled and told him, "Hanuman, I understand your predicament. I can give you one concession. I won't possess all your body but choose one part of your body in which I can be there till the period of my possession is over."

Hanuman thought for a second and told him, "On my head, Sir."

Shaneswar happily sat on his head.



Hanuman began to work. He picked up the heaviest stone and began to carry on his head. It resulted in Shaneswar being sandwiched between his head and the heavy stone. He began to feel the pain. He could no longer bear.

"Hanuman, the stone you are carrying is crushing me," he complained.

"I cannot help it, Sir. I have to do my duty. I won't stop for a minute." He replied coolly.

Shaneswar had no other alternative than to leave him.

"I admire your intelligence Hanuman. I will leave you," he said.

"No Sir. You cannot leave me. I am destined to be possessed by you for seven years and be on my head to fulfill the orders given to you. Please don't leave me," Hanuman was vociferous and firm.

"Please permit me to go," Shaneswar requested.

"On one condition," he mellowed down and said, "You should grant me a boon."

"Will you relieve me if I grant a boon?" Shaneswar asked.

"Yes, by all means."

"Then go ahead."

"Please do not approach or possess the ones who are working hard." Hanuman came up.

"O.K.," Shaneswar said with his heart lightened and left.

That's how workaholics came into being in this world and they are intrepid and undeterred as we see.

- A. Sarala



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- ✎ Donors receive annual report card
- ✎ We express our thanks to Corpus Donors by permanently inscribing their names on the recognition board at Nachiketa Tapovan

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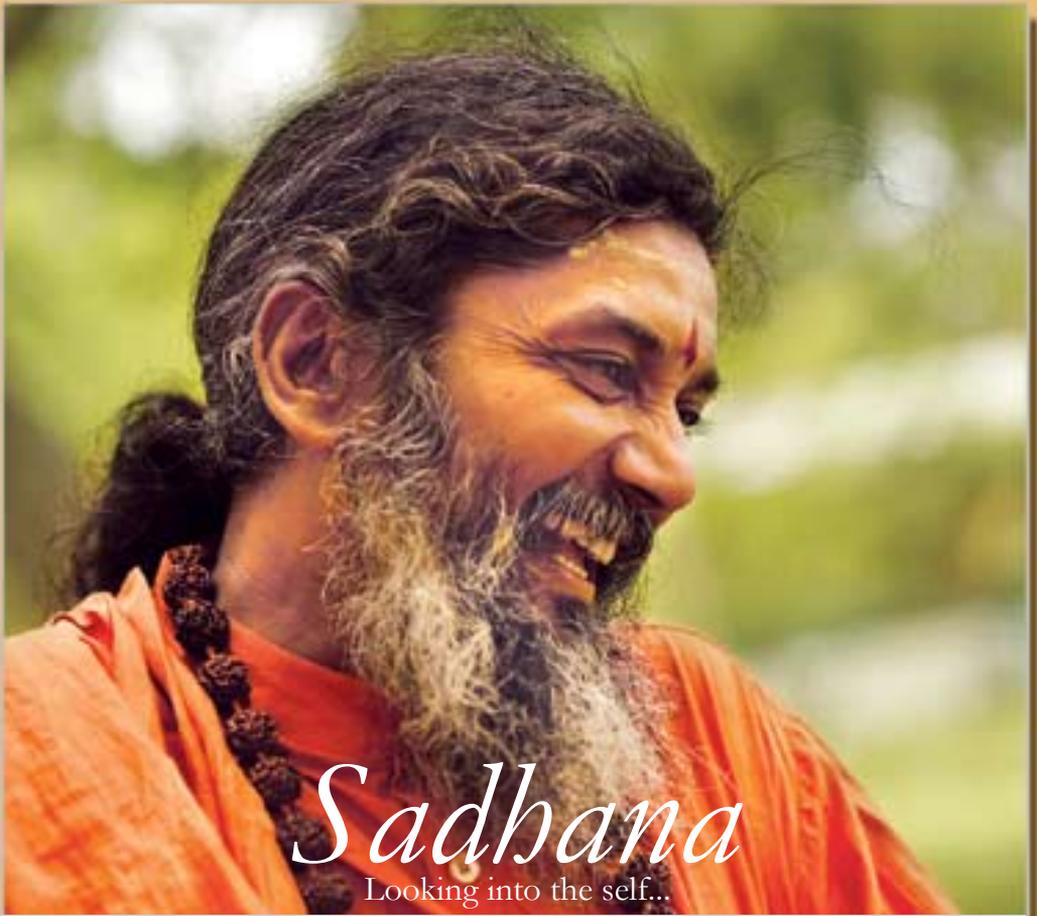
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– Gautam Vir