

Nachiketanjali

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On behalf of Nachiketa Tapovan, Ma received 1st installment of ₹20 Lakhs donation from Aurobindo's Smt. Suneela & Smt. Sarala for 5 classrooms construction at Nachiketa Tapovan.

Thank you Aurobindo & Team for your magnanimous donation and also for walking an extra mile to support the underprivileged ones. We owe a deep sense of gratitude to you for your great contribution to the underprivileged society.



A man behind philanthropic activities of Vasudha Foundation and one of the pillars of strength of Nachiketa Tapovan

Sri Manthena Venkatarama Raju

②

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Nachiketa Tapovan received ₹ 5 Lakhs cheque from Sri Dr. Rajagopal Raju on behalf of Vasudha Foundation

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Cover Story



Chhatrapathi Shivaji

The Great Maratha Warrior

One of the most progressive and sensible rulers in the history of our country was Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Tales of his bravery are countless and stories of his victories innumerable. He

was extremely secular. At a time when all kingdoms were strictly sticking to their religious beliefs and doing away with others', Shivaji was surprisingly very accommodating of all religions. But he never compromised on his own religious roots and tried reviving all the positive aspects of Hinduism. He helped people who wanted to convert to Hinduism. In fact, he married his own daughter to a converted Hindu. He had many Muslims in his military ranks as well.

As opposed to the common belief of him being a king of Hindu origin who fought Muslims. He fought other rulers, not religions, who threatened his kingdom.

He stood for the honour of women and made sure none were taken prisoners. Unlike many other rulers of the land, no one under his rule was allowed to dishonor women. Women of captured territories were left unharmed.

He fought for India first, and then his kingdom. His goal was always to establish a free kingdom in the country and motivated his troops to fight for India and not any king in particular. He was extremely caring towards the common people and never allowed raids on households or religious places.

"A true king knows how to win even when the battle is lost. A true king knows how to live even when his life is lost."

A king like Shivaji will always live in our hearts.

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The Sacred Lotus

Everyone can't be born as a saint but there is every possibility of becoming sacred. It is stated in our epics that even a snake and spider have attained *Moksha* when they surrendered to the Almighty. This shows that no matter what birth we have taken, God has given us the chance to reach Him but only when we surrender to Him. A strong will to realize Him and our *Sadhana* to achieve our goal will speed up the process of getting closer to Him. When God is pleased with our efforts, He embraces us.

A lotus is not born in the holy Manasa Sarovar or River Ganga. It is born in muddy water from where it rises and blossoms as a pure uncontaminated flower. The Lotus is rooted in the mud but floats on the water untouched by the mud and water. This is symbolic of how we should live in this world, detached with our surroundings. The Lotus is like a *Tapasvin* and has thus become a spiritual symbol. It is holy, irrespective of its birth place. Our spiritual heart is also shaped like a Lotus.

The Lotus has a place in all Hindu scriptures and it is stated in spiritual literature that all Gods and Goddesses considered the Lotus as auspicious. Though the *Parijatha* tree was born in heaven, the Lotus was given more importance in the celestial world. It is because the Lotus had adorned the navel of Lord Vishnu and hence served as the lap for Lord Brahma. He was born out of the Lotus, which emerged from Lord Vishnu's navel.

Many poets have described Lord Rama's eyes as Lotuses- *Kamala Nayana*. Saints and spiritual Masters have associated the Lotus as a metaphor for Divine feet of the Lord. This is how the term Lotus feet has originated. Goddess Lakshmi is seated on the Lotus. Lord Narayana holds the Lotus in His left hand. *Japamala*, made of Lotus

seeds is also considered to be very auspicious for *Sadhana*. 1008 Lotuses are used to worship Goddess Lalitha. Goddess Saraswathi is seated on a white Lotus, which stands for purity.

In spite of being born in the slush, the Lotus has acquired an auspicious status. It has dedicated itself in entirety for the worship of the Lord. The Lord is also pleased by its humility and has placed it on a higher pedestal. He has given the Lotus a seat in our *chakras* and it blooms with thousand petals in our seventh *chakra*- the *Sahasrara Chakra*. Saints have revealed that an evolved *Sadhaka* unites with Ishwara, residing in the Seventh *chakra*, with intense *Sadhana*. The *Kundalini*, when awakened, rises from the *Muladhara* and travels through *Swadishtana*, *Manipura*, *Anahatha*, *Visuddhi* and *Ajna chakras* and reaches the *Sahasrara* which houses the thousand-petalled Lotus. This is the source of light and a super-natural light, as bright as the sun, radiates from it. Once the *Sadhaka* reaches here then, the Knower, Knowledge and Object become One. He attains unity with Brahman.

When it is possible for a flower to acquire that sacred status, don't you think we have that potential too? Let us awaken ourselves and lead a sanctified life. Maybe, one day, we too can become as sacred as the Lotus.

- Subhadra K.



Abhay, an embodiment of hope...

Sports is something that brings people from different walks of life together, races together, societies together and nations together. We do not know but sometimes we find the highest degree of friendship just happening through sports.

There was a school football tournament for under 12 boys. Different teams were playing against each other. One can see the sportsman spirit, a kind of energy, speed, skills expressing in the most pristine form. After all, they all were below 12. The match was left without a goal but it was like a special feast for the spectators. The focal points were two center half players, Akash and Abhay. They were the boys who were dictating the play. It was their presence that was felt more. At the end of the play, though they were opponents both had become very close friends. Soon, their friendship grew in leaps and bounds and they started meeting each other, though living afar.

As friendship grew, their discussions weren't just revolving around football alone; it was also revolving around family affairs. They were meeting very often, sometimes in the garden or at the playground and sometimes in Akash's house. Though Akash was well off and good at studies, his father was never happy with his progress. He always used to criticize his sports activities.

One day, when Akash and Abhay were playing in Akash's house, Akash's father asks Abhay, "Is this what he is learning in the school? Is it not his responsibility to understand his role as a student? Tell your friend that football cannot be everything." Abhay is dumbfounded, but utters, "I shall certainly discuss what you said, Uncle." Akash's father enquires, "By the way, what is your percentage? Where do you stay? What about your parents?" Abhay keeps quiet. He doesn't open his mouth. Seeing his face Akash's father says, "Oh! I do understand... same story!"

Whatever might be the reason, for that moment, Abhay keeps himself closed. He doesn't feel bad about Akash's father's remarks. But



with great difficulty he tries to hide his tears and yet two drops silently find their way out. When they were bidding goodbye, he hears Akash murmuring in his ears, "Your upbringing has a perfect parental touch. You are blessed because of your family support." Abhay gives patient hearing and consoles him but at the same time brings to his notice that parents do feel for their children. Father is the one who feels very deeply for his family. No matter how harsh your father might appear, he has a greater plan for your life for sure. No matter what the issue is, Abhay always had a special parental package to share with his father.

Akash asks, "Anyway dear, you never invited me to your house. Why can't we meet up at your place and have a party." "Sure", says Abhay. They finalize Sunday to meet up at Abhay's house. Abhay even invites Akash's parents. On Sunday, all three of them visit Abhay's place. It was a small hamlet without proper basic amenities. A narrow, muddy road, with both the sides having an open drainage. Somehow, they manage to enter his single room house. All of them get shocked. They find his world is nothing but his bedridden mother who is not in her own senses. A small broken glass almirah stuffed neatly with books and other clothes. On one side, there is a broken chair. A kitchen platform with a manageable broken cooking range but neatly maintained. There was hardly any



place to accommodate all of them but somehow Abhay manages everything; from creating a place for sitting to arranging mats to receiving them with great enthusiasm to offering a glass of water and keeping them engaged in various topics like sports, studies to life management lessons and offering them lunch to seeing them off...

While having lunch, Akash's father asks, "What happened to your mother?" Abhay replies, "She is not feeling well." "Since when?" asks Akash's father. "I must be 8 years then, Uncle."

Akash's father further asks, "What about your siblings and cooking as I do not see anyone in the house?" "Yes uncle, I do not have any siblings. I am all alone. And regarding cooking, credit goes to my mother who taught me everything. Now I can manage my home." Akash's father asks, "Please don't misunderstand, how do you manage your expenses?" "My mother is a vegetable vendor and we keep our small shop at the roadside. So I have learnt the ethics of business and secret of savings", replies Abhay.

Akash's father feels choked completely. Yet out of curiosity, he asks, "I think, since you are my son's friend and frequently spotted together, you must be studying in the same corporate school. How do you manage your fees and go to school?" This time Abhay looked more matured. Abhay says, "Uncle, I'm not studying in the same school. I have joined at the Government school. I am very happy about my school. Uncle, I don't find much difficulty in studies. My percentage is 98% and I am a school topper. Since, I'm part of sports; I get some free time to shoulder my responsibilities and do not need to go to school regularly. So it becomes easy for me to manage the show. On holidays and weekends, I keep my shop open the whole day to get more income. Sometimes life demands greater things, so I plan my day in such a way that I still find time to play sports and to discharge my duties."

"Dear Abhay, I see your mother is completely bedridden and need constant observation, but how do you manage your day?" asks Akash's father. Abhay says, "It is simple uncle. My day starts at wee hours. I help my mother out for morning ablution. Then, I take up cooking. Once I'm done with that, I feed my mother, then eat and go to school. Since

my school is nearby, I come back during lunch break and take care of my mother."

It was time for them to bid goodbye. Akash's father who was completely shattered, while leaving asks, "Abhay, today is Sunday and I do not see your father in the house. Where is he? Why doesn't he cook? He can also contribute towards the family. Being a male doesn't give him licence to avoid household activities, isn't it?"

"Uncle, what I am today is all because of my parents only. If my mother is an embodiment of love and joy, my father is a wonderful task master and hardcore worker. I have learnt a lot from my parents. Few years ago, my father had to see a doctor. After coming back, he said everything is fine; that he will be alright. But how his health started deteriorating we don't know. Mother also was not keeping well, so both went to see the doctor. When they came back, they told me that they both do not have any problems and will soon recover... After one month, both got admitted in the hospital again. After four days, mother was brought on the stretcher by the hospital staff and I was told that my father had gone to God to take care of His house work. Since then she is bedridden and not keeping well and my father hasn't come back yet."

Akash's father and mother were unable to say a word. Though, they were on the way back to their own house they felt they lost themselves in Abhay's house. The vehicle was moving and so were the people sitting inside. But what was not moving was the thought of Abhay. Probably this was the first time that the inner churning was heard louder than the vehicle sound by the three of them.

What a boy and his childhood! He is a topper in school. Best sportsman. Lost his father at a very young age and took over the whole responsibility on his shoulders. He doesn't know that his mother also has booked her ticket to God's house. What a fate... what a journey... what a life... yet what kind of a boy he is... so positive, so practical, so simple, so humble, does everything on his own. What a character!!!

- *Swami Nachiketananda Puri*





Life after Death

One day, Sri Ramakrishna arrived at Adhar's house with his attendants. Everyone was in a joyous mood. Adhar had arranged a rich feast. Many strangers were present. At Adhar's invitation, several other deputy magistrates had come; they wanted to watch the Master and judge his holiness. Among them was Bankim Chandra Chatterji, perhaps the greatest literary figure of Bengal during the later part of the nineteenth century. Sri Ramakrishna had been talking happily with the devotees when Adhar introduced several of his personal friends to him.

ADHAR (introducing Bankim): "Sir, he is a great scholar and has written many books. He has come here to see you. His name is Bankim Babu.

MASTER (to Bankim): "I understand you are a great pundit and have written many books. Please tell me what you think about man's duties? What will accompany him after death? You believe in the hereafter, don't you?"

BANKIM: "The hereafter? What is that?"

MASTER: "True. When a man dies after attaining Knowledge, he doesn't have to go to another plane of existence; he isn't born again. But as long as he has not attained Knowledge, as long as he has not realized God, he must come back to the life of this earth; he can never escape it. For such a person there is a hereafter. A man is liberated after attaining Knowledge, after realizing God. For him there is no further coming back to earth. If a boiled paddy-grain is sown, it doesn't sprout. Just so, if a man is boiled by the fire of Knowledge, he cannot take part any more in the play of creation; he cannot lead a worldly life, for he has no attachment to 'woman and gold'. What will you gain by sowing boiled paddy?"

BANKIM (smiling): "Sir, neither does a weed serve the purpose of a tree."

MASTER: "But you cannot call a *Jnāni* a weed. He who has realized God has obtained the fruit of Immortality- not a common fruit like a gourd or a pumpkin. He is free from rebirth. He is not born anywhere- on earth, in the solar world, or in the lunar world.

"Analogy is one-sided. You are a pundit; haven't you read logic? Suppose you say that a man is as terrible as a tiger. That doesn't mean that he has a fearful tail or a tiger's pot-face! (All laugh.)

"I said the same thing to Keshab. He asked me, 'Sir, is there an after-life?' I didn't commit myself either way. I said that the potters put their pots in the sun to bake. Among them you see both baked and soft pots. Sometimes cattle trample over them. When the baked pots are broken, the potters throw them away; but when the soft ones are broken they keep them. They mix them with water and put the clay on the wheel and make new pots. They don't throw away the unbaked pots. So I said to Keshab: 'The Potter won't let you go as long as you are unbaked. He will put you on the wheel of the world as long as you have not attained Knowledge, as long as you have not realized Him. He won't let you go. You will have to return to the earth again and again; there is no escape. You will be liberated only when you realize God. Then alone will the Potter let you go. It is because then you won't serve any purpose in this world of *māyā*.' The *Jnāni* has gone beyond *māyā*. What will he do in this world of *māyā*?"

"But God keeps some *jnanis* in the world of *māyā* to be teachers of men. In order to teach others the *Jnāni* lives in the world with the help of *Vidyā-māyā*. It is God Himself who keeps the *Jnāni* in the world for His work. Such was the case with Sukadeva and Sankaracharya.

Source: Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna





The Gita Teaching

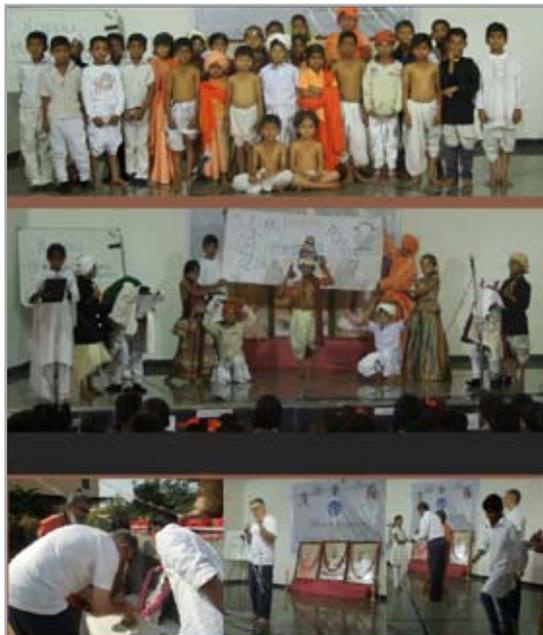
*G*ita has the miraculous power of elevating man to the plane of Godhead. Otherwise how was it possible that an ordinary soul like Arjuna was transformed into a Mahatma? The entire prospect of life with all its elevations and depressions, with all its light and darkness, with all its pleasure and pains, was revealed to Arjuna in a moment. What is that Gita-Message that lifted him to the peak of divine knowledge in such a short time?

Like the school-master who takes his student step by step through the graded lessons of his subject, Lord Krishna took his disciple by the hand, and lifted him up one step above the other, till he reached the abode of blessedness and divine freedom. Starting from the simple injunction '*mam namaskuru*' = 'Bow to me God', the disciple was taught all the spiritual laws, culminating in the Mahavakya '*tattvamasi*' – Thou art That (the supreme *Brahman*). It was out of love that Lord Krishna taught all the secrets of spiritual life. The heart of the Gita is the heart of a mother. No mother could look with unconcern when her children suffer pain and grief. So the Gita-mother, moved with infinite pity at the spectacle of human suffering, has offered every kind of relief and remedy to the innumerable shocks and ills of human life.

First the secret of *Karma Yoga* is taught, then again the doctrine of *Bhakti*. Not content with it, the method of *Dhyana* was taught. Again not satisfied with it, the knowledge of the Supreme is revealed. Thus having taught every kind of spiritual practice, and having revealed every source of strength, peace, and blessedness for mankind, the Gita-mother fulfilled her great duty to her beloved children.

Source: Gita Makarandam
by Swami Vidyaprakashananda

Swami Vivekananda's Birthday Celebrations



12th January 2017, Swami Vivekananda's birthday was celebrated at Nachiketa Tapovan. Students presented skits on social issues like Child marriages, Violence against women, Corruption and Gender discrimination. Hats off, students, for giving such thought provoking messages. Inter-House quiz competition is organized by our volunteers which was a great way to teach students about certain subjects and test their knowledge. Chief Guest congratulated the winners and awarded them with prizes. Grade 5 students came out with a wonderful presentation on a 16 point program on how to be an ideal student.





Walk tall and Football

After the final match of inter-school soccer league on 28th Jan 2017, there are only two kinds of people in Nachiketa family, those who watched the final match and those who did not.

I missed the semi-final but was lucky enough to catch the final match on time. And boy! What a cracker of match it turned out to be. It was played the way it was meant to be, with artistry and skill, similar to a top notch pro-European soccer club match.

It was an unbelievable balance of all aspects of the game, starting with the warm up routine, tactical game formation patterns, dribbling, ball possession, pass accuracy/completion, successful tackles, perfect headers, spectacular keeper saves, shots on goal, defensive play and offensive play... You name it , they've got it. It was the most comprehensive display of soccer skills.

But what captured my imagination beyond these skills and physical aspects of the game is the confidence exuded by the coach – Vikram. He bet his life when he openly expressed his confidence that Nachiketa Team will make it to the finals and I believe he even informed Nachiketa staff to plan accordingly for the grand finale. I had the privilege of chatting with him before the final match with Oakridge team, he told us a couple of remarkable

things – He told us that the biggest challenge was not about imparting soccer skills required for fighting it out externally, but to induce self-confidence and self-belief in the players to **walk tall** and fight internally against past memories of loss (against Oakridge) and fight against the anxieties of future outcomes. Remarkably this is exactly how Krishna coached Arjuna in the 3rd chapter: *“yudhyasva vigata-jvarah”* which means, Fight on without (mental) fever of repentance from past and anxiety of future, instructing him to walk tall and give his best to the present. I must mention that even I use this verse without restraint whenever my son goes to play TT tournaments. It also feels good to say it... even the simple utterance of it is motivational. I think every sportsman should remember this verse, especially during the critical moments of the game.

Vikram so passionately expressed that his goal is to ensure that Nachiketa soccer team players will be known for their excellence in soccer skills rather than associated with their underprivileged backgrounds, for richness in sports is that of skills and character, not wealth and power.

After this brief chat with Vikram, who to me personifies the highest values of coaching, my respect for him as a coach knew no bounds. Mahavir Singh Phogat did it for his daughters.





Vikram & Zaheer are doing it for underprivileged kids totally unrelated to them and against all odds. I think it is only with such passionate and selfless contributions to society and sports that coaches get elevated to greatness.

And did Nachiketa finally defeat their nemesis, Oakridge? YES they did, in the most comprehensive way possible with goal tally of 5-2. Sambha who was the top scorer of the tournament, scored two goals while Chandu scored two and Sunil rounded off the tally. Vijay's spectacular saves at the goal post were a feast for the eyes. Chinna babu and other midfielder's ability to intercept and take possession of the ball and then tackle and pass the ball to their strikers Chandu, Sambha, Sunil and other forward player was instrumental in scoring regular goals. It's only fair to say that the best opponent (Oakridge team) brought out the best in the Nachiketa team. Even though Oakridge had good talented players and an acrobatic golie (who was adjudged as the best goalkeeper) they could not capitalize and win as a team on that

afternoon. In my humble opinion the players got mixed up with their own roles/positions/duty, midfielders instead of passing the ball to forward/strikers, shot the ball themselves ... this reminded me of another important instruction that coach Krishna gave the player Arjuna: *Shreyaan swa dharmo vigunaha para dharmaat anusthitaah*, which simply means: to do one's *Dharma* (duty) is good, even if it is a small and un-rewarding job like the midfielder's. To fight doing one's duty (*Dharma*) is the best course. One should not try to do someone else's *Dharma* (striker's), because to do others jobs is dangerous. Midfield's duty is to possess, tackle and pass and Striker's duty is to take shots on goal. Fortunately, Nachiketa players seem to have understood this quite well and so the flow of goals was breathtaking and I can't express in words, how I felt when the final whistle blew ... and the rest, as they say, is history!

All in all, this year's inter school soccer league proved to be the fulfillment of all the promise they had shown in last year's soccer league. I am sure next year will be better and one day when they become national soccer stars and recount the turning points of their soccer lives, I am sure there will always be a place for this remarkable match where they learnt to **walk tall and play football**.

Yudhyasva Vigata-Jvarah!

- Ajith Nallari

Having Sravana samskara may help us to some extent. It doesn't help us in unveiling ourselves completely. Many times having mere information about something will not give us experience about it. For example, swimming. Having heard of or seen swimming, doesn't help us in gaining experience about it. In order to have experience about it, we need to jump into the water and put constant efforts in order to gain mastery of that particular skill.

- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri





Vivekanjali

We enter into creation, and then for us it becomes living. Things are dead in themselves; only we give them life, and then, like fools, we turn around and are afraid of them, or enjoy them. But be not like certain fisher-women, who, caught in a storm on their way home from market, took refuge in the house of a florist. They were lodged for the night in a room next to the garden where the air was full of the fragrance of flowers. In vain did they try to rest, until one of their number suggested that they wet their fishy baskets and place them near their heads. Then they all fell into a sound sleep.

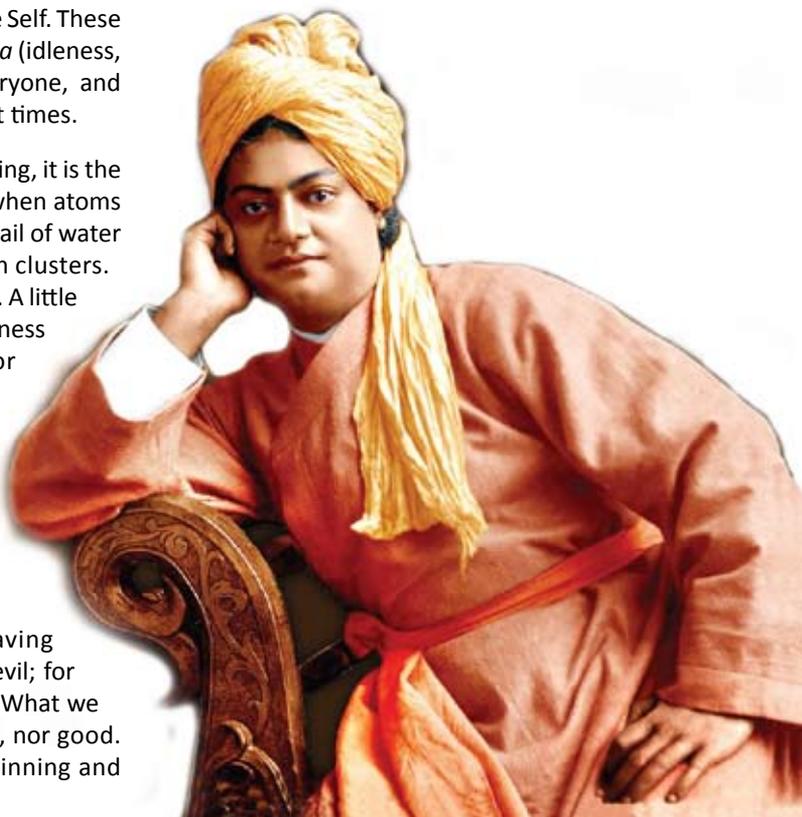
The world is our fish basket, we must not depend upon it for enjoyment. Those who do are the *Tāmasas* or the bound. Then there are the *Rājasas* or the egotistical, who talk always about “I”, “I”. They do good work sometimes and may become spiritual. But the highest are the *Sāttvikas*, the introspective, those who live only in the Self. These three qualities, *Tamas*, *Rajas*, and *Sattva* (idleness, activity, and illumination), are in everyone, and different ones predominate at different times.

Creation is not a “making” of something, it is the struggle to regain the equilibrium, as when atoms of cork are thrown to the bottom of a pail of water and rush to rise to the top, singly or in clusters. *Life is and must be accompanied by evil.* A little evil is the source of life; the little wickedness that is in the world is very good; for when the balance is regained, the world will end, because sameness and destruction are one. When this world goes, good and evil go with it; but when we can transcend this world, we get rid of both good and evil and have bliss.

There is no possibility of ever having pleasure without pain, good without evil; for living itself is just the lost equilibrium. What we want is freedom, not life, nor pleasure, nor good. Creation is infinite, without beginning and

without end — the ever-moving ripple in an infinite lake. There are yet unreached depths and others where the equilibrium has been regained; but the ripple is always progressing, the struggle to regain the balance is eternal. Life and death are only different names for the same fact, the two sides of the one coin. Both are *Maya*, the inexplicable state of striving at one time to live, and a moment later to die. Beyond this is the true nature, the *Atman*. While we recognise a God, it is really only the Self which we have separated ourselves from and worship as outside of us; but it is our true Self all the time — the one and only God.

Source: Complete works of
Swami Vivekananda



An influence – early on, in life

The dawn of the New Year brought in a different kind of an experience for me. A few hours into the New Year, I got to know that the officer I was reporting to has been assigned new responsibilities. The first working day of the year was a busy one for Sir (as I address him) with people coming in to greet him. I could get only a few minutes with him, where he addressed all my ‘problems’ even as he was busily attending to urgent work. That is Sir, always accessible to those working with him, ever empathetic to their concerns and one who obliged to their simple requests. Sometimes, it takes a moment to be influenced by someone or something. Through this article, I would like to share the positive influence that a professional senior has had on me.

My association with Sir began about four years ago, when as a college student, I got a chance to intern under his guidance. Despite his busy schedule, few hours of the afternoon of every Monday was reserved for us, interns. We were still undergraduates struggling with our projects, but he made sure that he was regularly updated of our progress and provided us necessary guidance when needed. In stark contrast to my friends who were assigned to other officers, I could always approach Sir at a short notice. My project was taken seriously and the concerned were directed to follow up on the report.

Then, about two years after my graduation, when I was reeling under failures, a call from Sir surprised me. After a short conversation, he readily welcomed me to join him. Unmindful of an attractive offer from my previous employer (who I had left to take certain competitive examinations), I joined Sir’s office. I knew the value of the opportunity that God provided me. In addition to the time I would get to study before attempting the exam again, I would also get to have an experience of a lifetime. You could say, it was my selfishness all the way.

While it is difficult to summarize all that I learnt during a little over a year, I would certainly like to identify a few things/values that I got to observe while working with Sir:

- a. **Empathy** – Ability to pre-empt problems of others is a rare virtue. Sir is blessed with it, especially for his subordinates. Sir also allows for errors, and gives a chance to his juniors to correct their mistakes.
- b. **Hard work** – There are no free lunches in life. Sir works to do complete justice to his job.
- c. **Integrity** – Personal integrity, irrespective of possible unpleasant consequences, is something that Sir stands by.
- d. **Patience** – Sir’s day would always be tiresome, but you could rarely see it on his face. Work has to be done without any delay and he always does it at the earliest possible.
- e. **Simplicity** – He exudes simplicity in everything he does, despite his high rank and post.

For me, he is an ideal in many ways. Certain things can only be felt and cannot be aptly described. I will surely miss working with him. However, the hope remains that the future will provide me a chance to learn from him again. More importantly, I will not forget the lessons learnt and the values imbibed. Perhaps this piece will be better written after I succeed in life. But this ode to a person who inspires me is a promise to lead a principled life.

- **Neetika Gogula**

An advocate and has passion for writing on social issues.



SPIRENNIAL ~ Spiritual millennial

A Millennial is the name given to the generation born between 1982 and 2004 or reaching young adulthood around the year 2000 (begin of millennium). This generation however is often associated with excessive use of technology, internet, mobiles and social media.

Though my son born in 2004 straddles the fence between Millennial and post-millennial period, I always wondered how to expose these tech savvy children to the world of spirituality without being too preachy and didactic.

Given the huge generation gap, how do we approach? ... We can get them to recite *Slokas* and moralize and memorize the meaning but can they really grasp the true essence of spiritual knowledge and understand the concept of true Identity and thereby be able to differentiate the real from unreal in this ever materialistic gadgetry world and be able to reap the benefits thereof.

While I kept dwelling into these issues, I stumbled upon a wonderful Vedantic text from Adi Shankaracharya's time - *Drig Drishya Vivekam*

which so logically and methodically explained the true identity of self and surgically distinguishes the unreal from the real in the most lucid way possible that even a post-millennial (born after 2004) would go: Aha, So that's my true Identity!

In my humble opinion, *Drig Drishya Vivekam* is one of the greatest Vedantic literary masterpieces, simply because it is able to use simple and concise analogies to metaphorically and methodically eliminate the misconceptions related to objects, body, mind, one by one in a logical sequence, to finally unveil the true Identity and further guide all the way to *Samadhi*. Just the very first verse could serve as a ready reckoner to any spiritual seeker ... I try to remember it as follows ... To be able to observe, the **Observer** and **Observed** must be separate. Hence if you can observe something, then that implicitly means that you are not that something.

Let's further elaborate this verse by applying it to our own experience and identify the Observed and Observer.



While perceiving the objects around me, **Observed:** Objects; **Observer:** Body (Sense Organs)

While perceiving my sense organs, **Observed:** Body (Sense Organs); **Observer:** Mind (thoughts)

While perceiving my Mind, **Observed:** Mind (thoughts); **Observer:** SELF

Our body changes with time (healthy, strong, sick, old, weak, etc.). Our Mind too is changing from time to time. (cheerful, sad, determined, doubtful, modest etc.), However the only Observer that is unperceivable and unchanging is the true SELF; hence **true SELF** is the permanent true Identity. This is similar to the *observer effect* in quantum physics.

Well, let me not get carried away here, expecting a post-millennial (< 12 years old) to comprehend the concept of true Identity. This way could be a bit far-fetched, after all :-)

However these timeless texts give us the inspiration and hope that Vedantic concepts like true Identity could be contextualized to the millennial world using their own day to day things by drawing simple analogies and explaining metaphorically if we may.

For example: To explain the concept of true Identity and its unchangeable and permanent nature, Let's take the one thing that every millennial carries at all times: **Mobile phone.**

Just like a human being has Body, Mind and SELF, the same way, a mobile phone has three aspects to it: Mobile Device, SIM card and Mobile Number.

Mobile device, (for e.g. Samsung s7 / iphone 6s etc.) is like our body. Just like our body the mobile device is subject to wear and tear and gets worn out over time and can be damaged severely or can even get lost.

SIM card is like our mind. Just like our mind is a storehouse of relationships/attachments, in the same way, the SIM card stores contact numbers.

Just like the mind, even the SIM is subject to change from time to time (for e.g. change of mobile carrier Airtel to Vodafone to Idea etc.. or the change in size of SIM cards – Standard to Micro to Nano)

Mobile Number is like our true SELF (permanent unchangeable Identity). Just like the true SELF does not get affected even when the body is undergoing changes, in the same way Mobile number does not get affected even when the mobile device is changed, worn-out or is severely damaged or is lost.

Just like the true SELF does not get affected even when the mind is undergoing changes the same way, Mobile number does not change even when the SIM card is changed from one carrier to another carrier (number portability) or SIM card is changed from one size to another size (standard to micro to nano) or even if the SIM card is severely damaged or lost and is replaced. The mobile number is intact, does not get lost or does not get changed.

Identifying yourself with the body and mind is akin to providing mobile device model or SIM card number instead of the mobile phone number on the business cards.

The true identity of a mobile phone is the mobile number, it's neither the mobile device nor the SIM card, both of which are subject to change over time. In the same way your true identity is the permanent and unchangeable real true SELF, not the body and not the mind which are subject to change from time to time.

So now, even your own mobile phone that you carry all the time can serve as a constant reminder that you are not the body, you are not the mind, you are the true self.

Hope the tech savvy millennials find this "cool" enough to start identifying with their true self and embark on their spiritual journey from millennial to Spirennial - Spiritual millennial.

- *Ajith Nallari*





MATSYA AVATAR

The First Avatar of Lord Vishnu



One day Lord Brahma approached Lord Vishnu, and said that He had foreseen a disaster that would occur and wanted to warn Vishnu. Brahma told Vishnu that it was his responsibility to protect people.

One day Brahma was in a deep sleep. He kept with him the Vedas. These are really important books, like the blueprints for the whole universe. While he was asleep, a demon named Hayagriva stole them. Hayagriva swallowed the four Vedas, and hid deep inside the ocean. Without the Vedas, the world was in a lot of danger of going completely dark, like the lights going off when there is no electricity. To protect the world, Lord Vishnu incarnated as *Matsya* to save all that was good in the world before its destruction.

At that time there was a pious king called Satyavrata who was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. Satyavrata was down by the river for his morning prayers to the God Vishnu. His morning prayers were his daily ritual to Lord Vishnu. After he picked himself up off the grass, Satyavrata went over to the river to wash his hands and cleanse himself. While he was washing his hands a tiny fish swam into the gap of his cupped hands. The fish was extremely small, no bigger than his pinkie, and he assumed it was just a baby. The fish appeared frightened. Satyavrata spoke the language of the animals and proceeded to try to comfort the small fish so that it did not die from shock. The fish was pleading for his life but Satyavrata told him there was no need because he could never harm such an innocent

creature. Once Satyavrata began to talk, the fish immediately calmed down. Satyavrata found out that the name of the little fish was *Matsya* and that he had been separated from his large family by getting caught in a strong current.

Satyavrata felt bad for *Matsya*, and decided that he was going to take care of him. He cupped *Matsya* in his hand with plenty of water and walked his many miles home. He was extremely careful the whole trip and never let any of the water leave his hand. When he reached home, Satyavrata showed his wife the small little fish and asked her to find something to keep him safe. His wife, Neha, brought him a small little cup, which was more than enough room for *Matsya*. *Matsya* knew that he would always be safe in Satyavrata and Neha's protection and so he swam around in joy.

Matsya was not a normal fish, though, as they would soon find out. Within days, *Matsya* had grown to the size of Neha's small hand. She moved *Matsya* to a large bowl to make sure that he always had enough room to swim. A few days later and *Matsya* had already outgrown the bowl! Satyavrata carried the fish to the small pond that was behind their home. This growing kept happening until *Matsya* had outgrown the pond, a stream, a lake, and a river. Satyavrata was not going to give up on *Matsya* because he felt an unnatural devotion to the once small creature. He was extremely drawn to him and felt that he must protect him at any cost. *Matsya*, in return, was always grateful for the help of Satyavrata.





HAPPINESS LIES IN GIVING!

The next move and presumably the last was Satyavrata putting *Matsya* into the ocean. He was in doubt that this would even be big enough to hold him but Satyavrata was out of options, so he got on his knees and prayed to Vishnu. This triggered something in *Matsya*. He revealed himself as Vishnu and he began to speak prophecy. He told Satyavrata that he had one week to prepare for a flood that would cover the entire earth, destroying everything. He instructed Satyavrata to take all medicinal herbs, all the varieties of seeds, and to bring the seven saints along with the serpent Vasuki and other animals, and to build a big boat to put them all in. He told Satyavrata that he would be back at the end of those seven days before the flood begins.

Then to restore the Vedas, *Matsya* dived into the ocean to kill Hayagriva. A furious battle ensued between Lord Vishnu and demon Hayagriva for seven days, in which Hayagriva was defeated and killed. Vishnu restored the Vedas to Brahma. Because there was so much splashing and fighting, a big deluge (rainfall) occurred all over the Earth. Everything was in a big flood! Satyavrata made all arrangements as Vishnu had advised him and at the end of the seven days, Vishnu appeared. The Lord advised Satyavrata and others to board the boat and fastens the serpent Vasuki to his horn as a rope to the boat, and sailed all of them to a safe place.

Matsya told Satyavrata that he had been chosen because he was the most kind and loving human, Vishnu had ever seen. Satyavrata had shown his devotion to not only a God but also to a small helpless creature. Vishnu said there was hope in the world if all men were to show so much love to all creatures.

Source: Indian Temple History

There once lived a disabled old dwarf. He lived in the heart of Mexico and always dressed in armour. He wasn't very well off, but nor was he too poor. He had just enough money to fulfill his needs. His only problem was finding a job. People disliked him because of his crooked back and sluggish walk, which he could do nothing to cure.

Once in a blue moon, he received a generous gift from the nearby charity. Some of the gifts he received were a box of chocolates, a jacket and a flute. He was not afraid of anything, except going to prison. He believed that the prison cell was for criminals, and not for innocents like him. Once, out of desperation, he broke into a classroom, at twilight hoping to find some valuables. Fortunately for him, he was not caught. He believed this to be the work of his good luck charm, a marigold. Though he was not caught, he wept and cried for weeks together on how he was so unlucky to be so poor. He cried into the frozen winter and through the sunny summer. Finally, when he stopped crying, he realized that though he was so poor, he had made a mistake. "I must do a good deed to atone for my misdeed." So, he vowed to do something that would bring happiness to himself and others.

One day, he was passing by a street when he saw an old lady drop her mobile phone. Quickly, he picked up the mobile phone and ran to give it to her. Meanwhile, the lady had gotten into a cab to the airport. The dwarf ran as fast as he could, but his sluggish walk held him back. He reached the airport, sold all his gifts and purchased a ticket to the lady's destination: HOLLAND. Upon reaching, he snuck into the lady's house and let her phone under the Christmas tree. By now, it was Christmas. Then, he crept and peeked into the house from a window. The old lady entered and was amazed to see her mobile phone under the tree. The dwarf smiled, thinking "This was the best Christmas ever!"



THE END!



- *Anjali Vinodh*

Grade: 5

National Public School



ADAMBHITVAM

absence of pretence

***Amanitvam adambhitvam ahimsa ksantir arjavam
Acaryopasanam saucam sthairyam atma-vinigraha***

Verse 8 chapter 13 of the Bhagawad Gita

My Satsang group had decided to discuss on our whatsapp group one value per week based on the above *Sloka*. Members volunteered to give the background of each value and steer a discussion in the group.

The first one was *Amanitva* which I am not discussing in this article. The next value was *Adambhitvam*. The definition of the value was given as follows:

Causes of *Dambhitva* (pretence)

1. I do not feel good about myself
2. I do not accept myself as I am
3. I want to be different
4. I find myself unacceptable. So in order that others will not find me unacceptable I present myself as I think I would like to be or in a way that I think will impress others

The discussion started with the coordinator stating that she was trying not to talk about herself consciously and this was a small step she was taking.



I am a backbencher with respect to spiritual discussions as I often don't have any doubts or when I have them do not know if I am expressing it properly.

I however braved the waters and started the discussion with stating that in my official work I do not practise *Adambhitvam* during times when clients come to me with issues I have not dealt with before. I however nod knowledgeable and tell them I will get back to them at the earliest. This, when I have no clue to the solution at hand. Later I do go back and research and hand out the solution. I feel that when I don't appear knowing the solution I will easily lose the client. With respect to personal life though I haven't been conscious about practising, I however felt that I did not have to pretend to be someone different as I have always been comfortable in my own skin.

This set off a flurry of answers wherein those who were doctors said they just referred the patients to specialists and the teachers said they acknowledged their ignorance and came back with an answer later.

The coordinator then brought the discussion going with stating that she felt guilty about dyeing her hair and wearing makeup but was forced to do as otherwise people asked why she was dull etc. This set off a big discussion wherein they felt that some professions demanded that they looked good. The only exception they could think of was Rajinikanth who did not care for public appearance (he could apparently practise it as he had reached his career high). But that there was nothing wrong in wearing makeup and good clothes unless they were consumed by it. This set off another affirmation that keeping in mind that body is a temple and Iswara is the in-dweller it is okay to be well groomed at all times.

I am not condemning that one should not wear makeup etc. or be well groomed. I have tried to justify myself by not practising *Adambhitva* since I will lose my clients and as a result my livelihood.



Why haven't I thought that being honest with myself is what is necessary for me to make any spiritual progress? When I can practise dishonesty I cannot condemn the others by thinking that wearing makeup and being well groomed is not right. I however know that one cannot be unaffected by being well dressed and wearing makeup as we are well aware that we have taken the effort to look good and hold our head higher than usual. This is verified with the fact that when we are not well dressed we try to disappear in the crowd and pray not to be noticed. So, each trying to justify what we do is right is not going to help us grow spiritually.

Man always seeks attention and wants to be noticed by others. This very thought is the reason he doesn't realise his true nature. The day we start making an effort to recognise oneself, *Adhambitvam* takes place effortlessly. Every act

and expression become natural and not superficial. Whatever is natural is *Adambhitvam* and whatever is superficial/false prestige is *Dambitvam*.

I am grateful to God that He has brought to my notice now that not practising *Adambhitva* as it affects my livelihood is also not a reason for me to continue to do it.

Absence of false ego is *Adambhitva*. I am going to practise *Adambhitva* by being conscious about my ego and mind. Let us all try to understand the play of 'false ego' which often ruins our life by covering our true nature.

Beauty lies in recognising the inner Self rather than seeking externally.

- **Geetha**

A ray of Midnight blue

*His skin was blue
And so was hers
They passed each other
A long time ago*



*Each wore coloured lenses
So they passed each other
Not knowing then
That they were the same within*

*They met again, after what seemed like a
whole lifetime. Or more...*

*But this time, they wore coloured lenses,
no more*

*A few moments after they spoke
Or Minutes later
Or Months later
Or Years later
It is difficult to say & it matters not*

*For they were no longer two
But had simply become one, merged*

*Merged as 'One', a ray of Midnight blue.
Pure & True.*

Shilpa & Gautam Vir

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Festive spirit of Ugadi & Gudi Padwa

Significance of Ugadi in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka

Ugadi marks a change in the lunar orbit as well as the beginning of the new Hindu lunar calendar. It also heralds the advent of spring. Mother Nature awakes from her deep slumber to give birth to new plants and cover earth in a blanket of green.

As spring accompanies new life on earth, this festival of New Year accompanies a feeling of joy, growth and prosperity. The nine day long spring festival of Vasanta Navratri begins on this day and concludes on Ramnavami.

Ugadi marks the beginning of a new Hindu lunar calendar. It is a day when *mantras* are chanted and predictions made for the New Year. The most important thing in the festival is *Panchanga Shraavanam* – hearing of the *Panchanga*.

The *Panchanga Shraavanam* is done at the temples by the priests. Before reading out the annual forecasts as predicted in the *Panchanga*, the officiating priest reminds the participants of the creator – Brahma, and the span of creation of the universe.



Gudi Padwa

Historical Legends and Beliefs

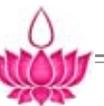
One of the sacred texts of the Hindus, the Brahma Purana states that Lord Brahma recreated the world after a raging deluge in which all time had stopped and all the people of the world, destroyed. On Gudi Padwa, time restarted and from this day on, the era of truth and justice (known as *Satya yug*) began. Therefore, Lord Brahma is worshipped on this day.

Another popular legend about the origin of this festival revolves around the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya along with his wife Sita and his brother Laxman from exile. The '*Brahmadhvaj*' or 'the flag of Brahma' (other names for the *Gudi*) is hoisted in memory of the coronation of Lord Rama. The *Gudi* is hoisted at the entrance of the household in commemoration of the



Gudi that was hoisted in Ayodhya as a victory flag. It is also believed that Lord Rama was victorious over King Bali on this day, marking this occasion.

For the people of Maharashtra, there is an added significance to this festival. It is believed that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, celebrated leader of the Maratha clan, led the troops to victory and attained freedom for the kingdom from the dominion of the Mughals in that area. The *Gudi* then is a symbol of victory and prosperity.





A New World

“Sometimes building a new world, means tearing the old one down”

-Alexander Pearce

One of my favorite quotes, from one of my favorite movies. It is the onset of March. So by now, all of you should have deposited your old notes or exchanged them for the shiny new ₹2000 and ₹500 notes. If you haven't, I suggest you do so quickly, because the RBI's liability from these notes ends on the 31st of this month. Our Prime Minister has taken a bold step into a black money free world with this move. But that is not what I want to talk about here. Today I want to tell you how making a change can have adverse effects, but if it is the right thing to do, you should do it no matter what. It doesn't matter how big or how small, a change is a change. It could range from demonetization to changing the brand of toothpaste that you use.

Change is the only constant in this world. As times change, people too must change.

Let us take the example of the issue about a temple amending its rules that I read in the news recently. This temple was very strict in its dress code and also did not allow women aged 12-40 inside. Now the dress code being implemented is reasonable as we see a lot of people walking into temples in shorts and sleeveless T-shirts. But not allowing women into the temple, because of a natural bodily process is completely unreasonable. It is even more unreasonable to consider women impure during this time of the month. In the yesteryears women worked hard for the family and prayed to God every day. Thus they were entitled to rest for these few days of the month, and to impose this rest, temples didn't allow women inside during this time. Also this temple happens to be located in the forest and women tended to attract wild animals during this time of the

month due to various bodily processes. This practice continued into the 21st century and has now become obsolete. In a time when women work and demand equal rights from men, not allowing them into temples is foolish. Thus a change needs to come about.

This reminds of feminism. I participated in a debate on this topic recently and understood a lot. Feminism in its true sense is the awareness that women deserve equal rights and respect in society. But now we see so many people, not just women, causing unnecessary trouble and



condemning people for saying things that they didn't even say, all in the name of feminism. It is true that we need a movement to bring about awareness about a problem. It is also true that when something starts, it is in its purest form and as it grows, a lot of factors may deviate it from its original goal. We hear the term 'feminazis' a lot these days. Who are they? They are people who don't promote feminism, but instead, use its name to condemn men for their every action. Thus a change needs to be brought about now. We need to remind people what feminism is all about.



When a change is brought about, there is always resistance. People will oppose it. It is human nature to resist change. But we must change our mindset and understand that it is important for our survival that we go along with the change. Especially, when it is for the good. And when people resist something, when there are haters, we know that we are in the right direction. Usually a change should be brought about slowly. They say, if you keep a frog in a bowl of hot water it will jump out, but if you keep it in a bowl of cold water and increase the temperature slowly, it won't notice and will get used to it slowly. But there are some changes which need to be brought about quickly and suddenly, so as to ensure the effectiveness. Take for example the demonetization scheme itself. We have so many corrupt politicians coming out into the open, opposing this scheme because they will be exposed. We have the opposition party, not allowing the parliament to function. Why? Because they don't want this change. Because the change is for the greater good, and they may lose more than they gain from it. Yet it must be done, because we are a nation of many, who also look after the needs of the few.

So today my message to you is,

Change is constant and always necessary,

Resisting this change is a luxury,

Going with it and cooperating,

Is the need of the century.

N. Rohan C. Govind
Class 12,

GT Aloha Vidya Mandir, Chennai



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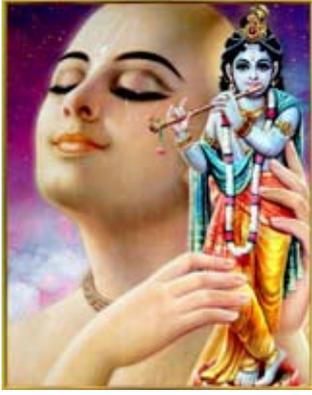
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Sri Krishna & Sri Chaitanya

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the pioneer of the modern Hare Krishna movement, appeared in Mayapur, West Bengal over 500 years ago. He is Krishna Himself, who appeared to inaugurate the *yuga-dharma* – the *Harinama Sankirtana* (congregational chanting of the holy names of the Lord). He never disclosed Himself as the incarnation of the Lord and exemplified the life of a perfect devotee, so that others can follow in His footsteps. However, this fact is corroborated in many authorized scriptures. The descriptions of Lord Chaitanya in terms of His appearance, bodily features, characteristics and pastimes as found in the several works of His celebrated associates and great devotees completely conform to those predicted in the Vedic literatures.

In the Garuda Purana,

The Supreme Lord says,

*aham purno bhavisyami yuga-sandhyau visesatah
mayapure navadvipe bhavisyami saci-sutah*

In the first part of Kali-yuga, I will appear in my complete spiritual form in Mayapura, Navadvipa and become the son of Shachi.

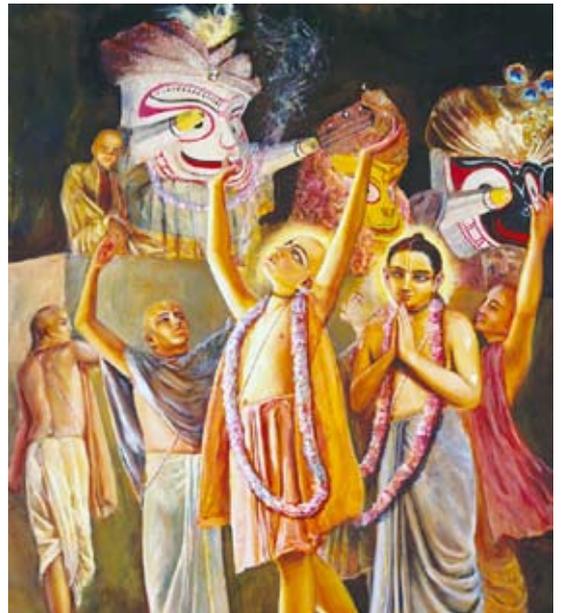


Sri Chaitanya was born in Mayapura (a subsection of the holy town of Navadvipa, West Bengal) as the son of Srimati Shachi devi in the year 1486, about 4,500 years after the beginning of the Kali-yuga.

It is also stated in this purana,

*kaleh prathama-sandhyayam laksmi-kanto
bhavisyati*

*daru-brahma-samipa-sthah sannyasi gaura-
vigraphah*



In the first part of Kali-yuga, the Supreme Lord in the golden complexion will become the husband of Lakshmi. Then He will become a *sannyasi* and reside near Lord Jagannatha.

Sri Chaitanya married His eternal consort Srimati Lakshmi-priya and later took *sannyasa* at the age of 24. After the acceptance of *sannyasa*, He left Navadvipa and resided in Puri, the holy city of Lord Jagannatha in Orissa. Lord Jagannatha in Puri is also referred to as *daru-brahma* in the Puranas as the Deities here are made from Neem wood. The word *daru* means wood in Sanskrit.

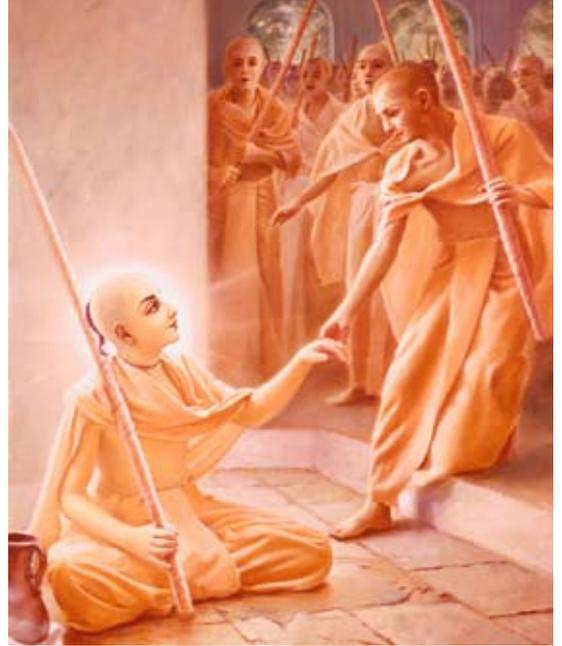
yo reme saha-ballavi ramayate vrndavane 'har-nisam

yah kamsam ni jaghana kaurava-rane yah pandavanam sakha

so 'yam vainava-danda-mandita-bhujah sannyasa-vesah svayam

nihsandeham upagatah ksiti-tale caitanya-rupah prabhuh

The Supreme Lord who took delight in His pastimes with the *gopis*, who filled the residents of Vrindavana with joy day and night, who slew Kamsa, and who made friends with the Pandavas in the battle between the Kauravas, will without



any doubt, come again to the earth. He will be a *sannyasi* with the name Chaitanya whose arm will be decorated with a bamboo stick.

It is clear from this verse that Lord Krishna Himself appeared as Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. According to the custom, a *sannyasi* is supposed to carry a bamboo stick (*danda*). Lord Chaitanya carried a single bamboo stick as He was an *eka-danda sannyasi*.

Source: Extracted from Timeless Wisdom

Chirec International School Visit

On 21st January 2017, Students of Nachiketa Tapovan were invited to Chirec International School to have some hands on experience. Students enjoyed doing some experiments in the science lab, guided by Chirec faculty members.





WHY DO STARS TWINKLE?

Every time we look up at the night sky we see millions of stars twinkling brightly. Have you ever wondered, however, why stars twinkle the way they do?

The 'twinkling' of stars is known as stellar scintillation. This happens because of a principle known as refraction. When light passes through a different medium (from air to water or from water to solid) it bends (as its speed also changes). This process is known as refraction. The bending of light in different mediums is what causes objects to appear larger to us when they are put in water. This is why the floor of a swimming pool may often seem closer to the surface than it actually is.

The earth's atmosphere is made up of pockets of air that vary in density. In space, light travels through a vacuum (absence of air). Hence, when light passes through the earth's atmosphere, it bends due to the change in density (as air is denser than a vacuum). Light bends in many different directions multiple times. When this light reaches our eyes, this bending causes it to look as though the star we see is moving. We interpret this as 'twinkling'.

Cool, isn't it?

By Ria Thimmaiahgari
Grade 11,
Indus International school

FUN FACT

Did you know that the stars we see are actually from thousands of years ago? This is because these stars are so far away from earth that light from these stars takes thousands of years to travel to our eyes.



Dr. Payal Bhargava's Session

Although all teenagers have the same basic hygiene issues, girls will need help to manage their periods. On 21st January Dr. Payal Bhargava made our children aware of personal hygiene and also made them understand that keeping clean is an important part of staying healthy. Thank you Dr. Payal for sharing the valuable information.



Mrs. Arthi,
Career counselor
guided our High
school students on
21st January.



Republic Day Celebrations

On 26th January 2017, Republic day was celebrated by hoisting the flag by our chief guest, Mrs Madhavi Kotturu. Few patriotic songs were sung by students.



Vivekachudamani

and we are in peace. Thus by adequate reasoning, the conviction of the reality about the rope is gained (*Samyag-vicaratah siddha rajju-tattva-avadharana*), which, in turn, puts an end to the great fear and misery caused by the snake worked up in the deluded mind (*Bhrantodita-mahasarpa-bhaya-dukkha-vinasini*).

Thus, the knowledge of rope gives us freedom from fear and anxiety caused by the false snake-knowledge. We then become satisfied and peaceful. As long as we are in delusion, taking the rope for a snake, we are in trouble. Similarly, most of us are in deluded state. We have taken ourselves to be the flimsy body-mind complex, thinking that we are male, female, young, old, poor, and rich, etc. The root of all our suffering is this deluded understanding. Shankara therefore asks us to shed the powerful light of reasoning and discrimination (*Samyag-vicara*) to remove this delusion (*moha*) caused by ignorance (*ajnana*). Then alone we can gain the conviction about our true nature as the Supreme Consciousness. We can then realize our true focus of freedom, which is never in the body and senses. This freedom is not to be gained from anybody. We are always free, even now. But we don't know this truth. Therefore this investigation is necessary to gain the conviction about our true nature.

- *Swami Ranganathananda*

Samyag-vicaratah siddha rajju-tattva-avadharana

Bhrantodita-mahasarpa-bhaya-dukkha-vinasini 12

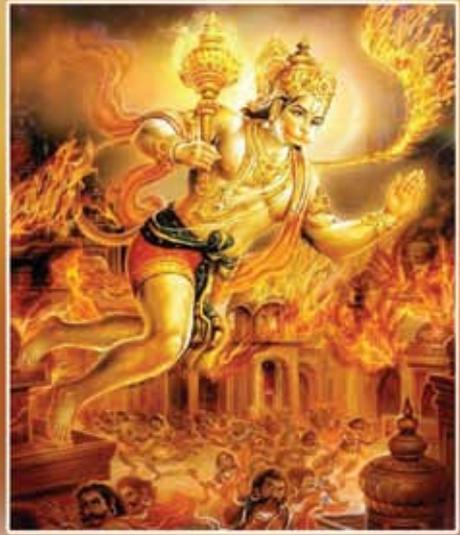
By adequate reasoning the conviction of the reality about the rope is gained, which puts an end to the great fear and misery caused by the snake worked up in the deluded mind.

Now comes an illustration to explain how through proper discrimination we gain the right conviction about truth, which, in turn, frees us from our traumatic state in delusion. It is the famous rope-snake illustration - a classic example Shankara gives in his writings. While walking in semi-darkness, we see a rope-like thing lying on the road and we take it to be a snake. With the awareness of snake come fright and nervous breakdown. But when we are informed by an onlooker that it is not a snake, we slowly regain our composure and decide to settle the puzzle ourselves. We investigate, discriminate, and reason out, and finally come to the conclusion that it is a rope. Our fright immediately disappears

***Festivals
&
Events of
MARCH
2017***



Shri Ram - Quiz



1. Where is Bharadwaja ashram?
2. What did Sumithra Devi tell her son Lakshmana who is going on exile with Sri Rama and Sita?
3. What was the punishment given by Ravana to Hanuman who came as a messenger of Sri Rama?
4. Who is the sage who drank Ganga who was going with Bhagiratha?
5. After crossing the ocean, where did Sri Rama along with the Vanara troops stay?
6. Whose lineage does Sarabhanga Mahamuni belong to?
7. At the *pattabishekam* of Sri Rama sacred waters were brought from four seas by Vanara sreshthas. Who were they?
8. What are "Vedangas"?
9. Who accompanied Vali while he was proceeding to kill Mayavi?
10. Who is the Vanara leader who was worshipping Sun God for his victory over the enemies?

By Dr. Kalluri Venkateshwar Rao, MA Ph.D
Translated by Manjula

ANSWERS:

1. It is located at a place where river Ganga and Yamuna meet.
2. Please treat Sri Rama as your father Dasaratha and Sita as your mother and the forest as Ayodhya and have a happy time.
3. As Vanaras are fond of their tail, Ravana ordered to set on fire Hanuman's tail, and parade him on the streets of Lanka.
4. Being annoyed that Ganga flooded his 'Yagnavalka' Jahnū Maharshi drank away Ganga.
5. 'Suvela' mountain top.
6. Sage Gautama.
7. Sushena, Vrushabha, Gavya, and Nala brought sacred waters from four seas.
8. Siksha, Vyakaranaṃ, Chandhassu, Niruktaṃ, Jyotisham and Kalpana are known as Vedangas.
(Vedangas literally mean the limbs of Vedas. They are six in number and they perform various supportive and augmenting functions in the study, preservation and protection of the Vedas and Vedic traditions.
www.hinduwebsite.com).
9. Sugreeva.
10. Satavali.





Grace of God

What we are today is because of the values we believe in, ideologies put forth in building our lives and the way we behave in our day to day life both on personal and professional fronts. We hear, read and learn about a few great events through elders, noble people and of course books. These create a deep impression on our mindset and make us desperate to visit places or meet people to know more and more or gather experience so that we can retain it for rest of our lives as a treasure.

I too had the same feeling one day when I heard about the *Leela* of Sri Ramakrishna on 1st January 1886 during his last days of divine play at Cossipore Garden House. This happened in 1997 and since then, this day has not remained a just 1st day of a new calendar year for me. I used to wonder time and again what would have been the mental and physical condition of all the

householder disciples who gathered at Cossipore Garden House. “May all of you be illumined” was the blessing of Sri Ramakrishna which stirred the minds of the devotees and took them to a spiritual realm which they dreamt of but were skeptical whether they would ever attain it. Few were left in *Samadhi* and few devotees had *Darshan* of Lord. All this happened in few seconds and everyone was put in a state of great and inexplicable Spiritual Bliss that did not relent for a long time.

Thus, Sri Ramakrishna fulfilled the wishes of all his devotees like a *Kalpataru*. Therefore, the day was celebrated as “*Kalpataru Day*”. This is the only day which was recorded so accurately with all the information that made me oblivious of surroundings when I heard it for the first time. The next moment I thought, will I ever be part of such an event or at least witness it?



The days rolled on and on and every New Year day, I started feeling the same way. Sometimes I had to contend myself with the thought that the place may not be in my fate to visit or on New Year's Day in particular. When I relocated myself to Kolkata, everyone said that I am lucky to live in that City where the Holy Trio spent their lives. Little did I realize that to have such an experience, the grace of God is very much essential. If living is the only way that brings spiritual growth, then all the people presently living in this city would have become Spiritual Giants by now. As Swami Vivekananda used to say 'Grace of God alone is the way to progress spiritually. Telling beads, reading books, doing charity works are only secondary'.

I too had a great feeling that I will be part of this monumental event; in fact it was my long-cherished dream to witness and participate in the celebration. When the day came, it was not an easy task for me to get access into the Garden House. The unending queue of devotees for *Darshan*, outside the temple premises, dampened my spirits. I decided to get back home without having *Darshan*. I surrendered to my human limitations. To satisfy myself I went into the temple through the main gate to have *Darshan* of Mango Tree where Sri Ramakrishna showed his divine *leela*.

The main queue of devotees was passing just beside the main gate through the Book Stall, Office and to the Garden House to have *Darshan* of Sri Ramakrishna at 1st floor where he lay. No sooner I had *Darshan* of this tree, rest of sequence of events just happened without my intervention and effort. Something started in my mind that compelled me to hold on; the mental stress was so strong that I felt I am missing a life time opportunity. The event I dreamt of to witness, slowly started taking its full shape in my mind. Unmindful of the gathered huge crowds I started looking patiently for the end of the queue to join and have *Darshan*. After a very long walk I found it and I entered. I was very fortunate to have *Darshan* of Sri Ramakrishna at last. It was divine. I cannot put in words the experience I had after entering his room. I can only say that on this occasion we were allowed to enter his room. Had I surrendered to my thoughts of giving up and not listened to my inner voice there was no meaning to my visit to the place. I reiterate what Swamiji said- for all things to happen, the Almighty Grace alone is required, rest all is secondary. His Grace on me on that day had no boundaries.

- **M. Koti Rajasekhar**
mkrsekhar1973@gmail.com



Love, the only thing that is everlasting
Making you feel like life is a walk in the park
It's unequivocal, beautiful, out of this world
but right there
It brings home the sun when you think
everything's dark

Making you feel like life is a walk in the park,
Warm and spreading throughout your body
like flames
It brings home the sun when you think
everything's dark
It's hidden in the beginning, but worth the
wait

Warm and spreading throughout your body
like flames
Love can be sweet or bitter, but worth the
sacrifice
It might be hidden in the beginning, but it's
worth the wait
The heart-warming smile that makes your
day

Love can be sweet or bitter, but worth the
sacrifice
It's unequivocal, beautiful, out of this world
but right there
The heart-warming smile that makes your
day
Love, the only thing that is everlasting.

- **Pratya Poosala**



My Parents

No temple is more sacred to me than the small room in my house in which hang the portraits of my father and mother with their bright smiling faces.

No music is more enchanting to me than the Adhyatma Ramayana *Kirtanas* which my mother used to sing and the Bhaja Govindam *slokams* which my father used to recite every morning.

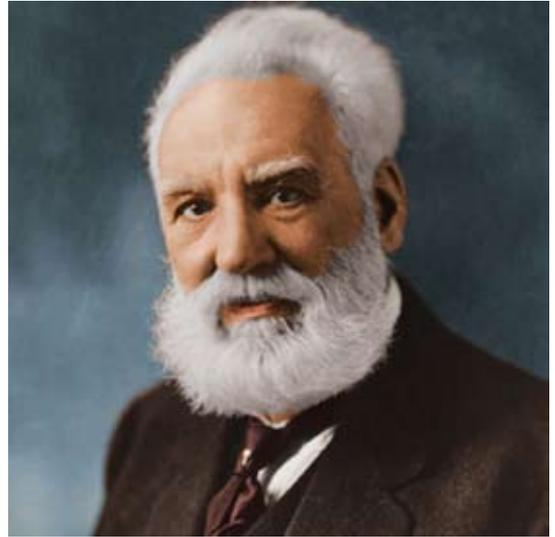
No written law is more binding on me than what they have taught me when I was a child and which still reverberate in my ears, though years ago their voices were stilled.

No pilgrimage is more alluring to me than a visit to my native place which gives me an occasion to recall to mind, the serene lives lived by my parents.

I show my children the mango tree which my father planted in his old age, yielding fruit now for the enjoyment of his grandchildren- thus spreading the message that each generation has a responsibility to discharge for the well-being of the succeeding generations.

No sacrifice appears to me more sacrosanct than the self-denial which my parents practised as is evidenced by the fact that every paisa they earned, they were utilising for the good of the children, caring little for themselves.

The telephone, which revolutionized the field of communications, was invented by Alexander Graham Bell. When his two brothers died of tuberculosis and when young Bell was also threatened with the disease. His parents were stricken with grief and they wanted to have him at any cost. His father sacrificed his successful and lucrative business in London and left for Ontario, a healthy place more suitable to young Bell. His father and grandfather trained him in the arts of public speaking and teaching



the deaf to speak, for the Bell family was dedicated to the task-of the uplift of the deaf and dumb.

Young Bell with great drive and energy studied anatomy, physiology and music to equip himself for the great work that was before him. His interest in electricity, while he was a professor of physiology in Boston University led him to develop the harmonic telegraph capable of transmission of several messages over a single line.

On March 10, 1875 Bell was hilarious when he made himself heard by his assistant in the far-off room over the telephone. His words, 'Watson, come here, I want you' ushered in a new era in the history of communications. Transmission of speech via light waves, tetrahedral kite and the hydrofoil principle used in aviation even today are some more glittering feathers in his cap of success. All this he could achieve because of the determination and sacrifice of his parents who cherished high hopes in him.

When parents drudge so much for the children, children must toil hard to gratify them.

"God! Thou art Love! I build my faith on that"!

- K.V. Ramakrishna Sastry





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.

| Date | Name of the Sponsor |
|------------|---|
| Jan 1 | Sri Premchand (Birthday: Aadhyan) Smt. Saraswathi & Friends |
| Jan 5 | Smt. Madhavi Vir (Birthday: Dharani Radhe) Sri Harischandra Prasad (In the memory of T. Nageshwar Rao) |
| Jan 6 | Sri Mallaiah (In the memory of his parents) |
| Jan 7 | Smt. Neeru |
| Jan 8 | Sri Venkateswar Rao |
| Jan 10 | Sri Susant & Bhavya (In the memory of Sri Basaveswara Rao) |
| Jan 11 | Nachiketa Tapovan |
| Jan 12 | Sri Thourya Nayak (Birthday: Lohitha) |
| Jan 17 | Smt. Madhavi Vir (Birthday: Gautam) |
| Jan 19 | Sri Jaidev & Smt Mani (Birthday: Ean Bancroft) |
| Jan 21, 25 | Smt. Sharada (In the memory of Smt. Kamala Kumari) Sri Prasad Tipparaju (Birthday: M.S. Lakshmi) |
| Jan 22 | Sri Ajith N. (Birthday: Nachiketa Vidya's J. Mohan) Sri Vijay Basetti (Smt. Suryakantham B. & Sri Laxminarayana B.) |
| Jan 27 | Sri Mahesh (Marriage Anniversary of Smt. Sarojana Bai & Sri Rama Rao) |
| Jan 29 | Sri K. Shiva & Smt. Uma Rao (In the memory of Smt. Kassama & Smt. Kamala Kumari) |
| Jan 31 | Sri Purushottam Murarka (In the memory of Smt. Radha Murarka) |

Celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, festivals, or special occasions with children of Ashram by contributing ₹4000

Contact for further assistance

Ashram: 8008882828 Tapovan: 9849168937

SMS to Swamiji: 9908234545

nachiketananda@gmail.com admin@nachiketatapovan.org

Website: www.nachiketatapovan.org

Only Because of YOU...

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

Donations towards operation costs

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Vidya Daanam (Education) | ₹ 6500/year/child |
| Anna Daanam (Mid-day Meals) | ₹ 6000/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 |

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 Information

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 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 "zeros" not letters "O")

*Corpus Fund

Sponsor a child ₹ 1 Lakh

* 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.

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 |
| IFSC Code | : SBIN0012655 |
| SWIFT Code | : SBININBB214 |

(Note: IFSC code contains the number "zeros" not letters "O")

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



The doctrine of sabda



In the beginning was the soul merged in the Lord and with the Lord. But since then aeons have passed and the soul has left its abode of peace, where it lay wrapped in bliss. The ignorance persisting for ages, and the association with the grosser elements of matter and ego have covered the subtler element to such an extent that the spirit has apparently become benumbed. In the innermost core it is still alive, but the covers that it has put on have made it insensible to the Call. It has lost its sensibilities and has become insensate to the shafts of love. They cannot pierce the dense layers the soul has put on. But at times it so happens that, when they do pierce, the experience, howsoever short-lived gives a thrill; but this effect is soon masked by the external reactions. If this temporary selflessness is allowed to sustain itself a little longer, real love will spring forth. These temporary flashes cannot lead the pilgrim Home. The successful termination of the journey presumes sustained effort and consequent joy:-

During the rains, even rivulets swell into torrents;

'Bhakti' follows the constancy of the rivers that do not dry even in summer.

Once this Bhakti is aroused in this frame, it begins to respond to the Eternal; the soul then starts upwards to the real home.

The soul has since its departure from the eternal Home been enjoying itself with the mind and the body (*Manas* and *Maya*). Like the proverbial spendthrift, it is sharing with these cheats the boon of its Home. Like an ignorant child, it has fallen into bad company and is every day descending lower and lower in search of new pleasures of a vulgar type, which makes its redemption impossible. But before the final wreck comes, it makes amends to the Father, and is forgiven. It then begins its career afresh. It only takes time to rise to the old place once more. This often happens when it is reminded in its fallen condition of its glorious past and is assured of the forgiving nature of the Father. The innate goodness is then aroused in the child. The covers of depravity are removed, it repents and then the Lord appears and makes it conscious of its fallen condition. This realization is bound to



come, as the connection of the soul is yet unbroken with the Lord. When such a stage is reached, the Guru makes His appearance. He knows the secrets of the Divine Path, and understands the malady of the aspirant. He ministers to the ailment of his new patient. To the aspirant he describes his fall and points out to him the path, following which he can reach Home.

The soul, when it lay in the Ocean of Divinity, was lying silent, calm and unruffled; but, when it started its journey downward, the loss of energy in the motion resulted in its depletion, and this process of fall produced Sound. This sound is technically termed *Sabda* in Vedanta and Yoga. At the various stages in its descent the soul adopted the form and colour of the centre through which it passed. In our world it assumed the form of '*Manas*' and '*Maya*'. If now the soul wants to return Home it has to retrace its path; it has once more to draw together all the energy it had diffused and then to proceed backwards. Just as in the wilderness in this world the traveller is guided by the sound at a distance, so also the soul on its pilgrimage is guided by the *Sabda*. The soul moves on and on in response to it. As the sound grows clearer with the soul's advance in its upward march, the speed also increases. Like the snake that gets spell-bound itself when it hears the music of the charmer's flute, the soul drinks deep of the eternal music that issues forth for itself. This music of the soul is also called by the Yogis as *Anahata*.

When the music of this world appeals to one so much, one can easily imagine what must be the condition of the soul when it hears this divine music all the time. This music the soul has brought with itself. It sustains it. It is under its influence that the devotee goes into trances. It is the password to reach Home. Mira called this *Sabda* '*NAMA*'. Without '*Nama*', she incessantly repeated, you cannot reach Him. It is in fact, the realization of man of his divinity. But this, she repeated, could be possible only with the help of the Teacher. And the Teacher will come only when the aspirant cries for the beatific vision. He gives the gift of '*NAMA*', and the path becomes accessible to the recipient.

The Teacher or Guru will open the devotee's eyes and show him the hypocrisy of the world and its transient nature. It will be only then that

in disgust he will turn his back from the world and realize that it was a dream. This hollowness will be shown to him as stern reality as God was shown to Vivekananda by his Teacher, Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa, as a Being that 'stood face to face with him and conversed with him,' But one who for ages has been enjoying the wine administered by the body and the mind can seldom get out of the stereotyped rut to breathe the pure fresh air.

The Guru helps the disciple to shake off his covers of ignorance and help him develop faith and pure love for God. When the soul proceeds with implicit faith in the Guru, the Guru shows to the disciple his true form, then it reaches Home and merges itself in divinity... The Lord smiles and clasps the soul to His bosom. It revives from its slumber and tastes of the eternal life. This is life immortal which it now gets. The way is through the Guru, who is to impart the knowledge of the *Sabda*. There is no other way in this *Kali* age. Prepare for His arrival; for sooner or later He is bound to come. You are to be equipped, not with the riches and the wealth of the world, but with a poor man's heart, a heart that will burst forth into tears of joy at His name and in which the waves of love are constantly rising, leaving no space for any other love besides that for the Holy One:-

Narrow is the lane of love: it cannot contain two.

When enters the Lord, I cease to be: where I am, the Lord enters not.

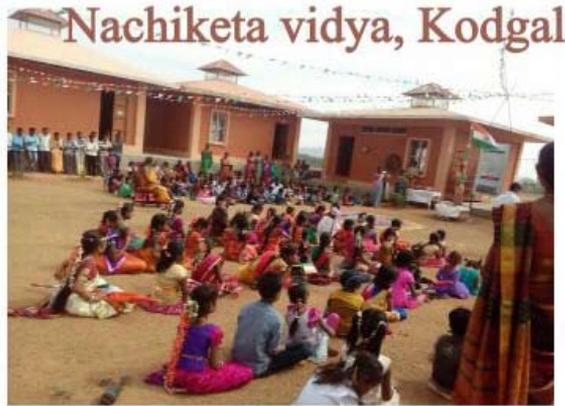
When this stage is reached, it is the climax. It is complete absorption in Him.

Mira cried, "Take the torch of '*Guru Jnana*' and steer clear through the abysmal darkness of the world." What she said will be understood only by those who have passed through the path traversed by that great devotee.

**Compilation Source: The Story of Mirabai
Gita Press, Gorakhpur**



Republic Day Celebrations



Thank you Donors!



We are extremely thankful to
The DDD and PC Charitable Trust,
Hyderabad for their kind donation of
₹ 2,74,955 towards Education

We are extremely thankful to
Sri K.V. Ramakrishna Sastry
for his kind donation of **₹1 lakh** towards
Corpus Fund - Sponsor a Child Education
Nachiketa Tapovan, Hyderabad



An event which left us spellbound

The football match

It all started with one great lady called Hitha coming forward to introduce our school boys to a game called football. She gave our boys a real wonderful coach Vikram, who acted as a sharpener to the boys.

“A pencil when sharpened has a clear defined point and writing is easily read”. That was what exactly happened here. The ‘Pencils’ were our boys and they were sharpened by Vikram, who went out of way to bring out the best in them.

The physical prowess of a nation is judged more from its performance in sports than anything else.

The morning hours of 28th January, saw us all assembling at the grounds of Turfside to witness one of the “Very Best” football match played by our boys team with three other schools - Meridian, Phoenix Greens and Oakridge.

Right from kick one, the game was awesome. There was a healthy competition between the teams and every player had a sports man spirit. It was a real treat for the people who were watching the game. The boys proved that difficulty doesn’t mean impossible, it simply means that you have to work hard.

Our boys played with all their heart. Every wakeful step, every mindful act was a direct path to victory. Their enthusiasm released the drive to carry them on. The boys learnt not to give up if they failed once or twice, for they knew failure is the only first step to get success.



With all their friends, teachers, volunteers and coach cheering for their victory, the boys kicked the ball with vigour and made goal after goal letting us know it was a definite win for them. All of us who watched the game were spell bound at their performance and we all became children at that precious time, enjoying every moment.

Coach Vikram’s tireless efforts brought out the desired fruits. The match ended with Nachiketa Tapovan boys emerging as the winners.

Our hearts swelled with pride when our Swamiji, Mataji and Vasundhara amma hugged each child and gave away certificates and medals.

The trophy was presented to the boys by Shekar sir amidst loud applause.

Thus ended, a most memorable day and all of us left the ground with a big smile glued to our face.

Our boys woke up on 28th January with determination and went back to bed at night with satisfaction.

- Mrudula



NACHIKETA'S GO GREEN CLUB...

We convey our thanks to all the participants of the WOW initiative. You helped us earn Rs. 15,604 in the month of December and helped in keeping Mother Earth cleaner by recycling about 2600 kg of plastic and paper waste material.



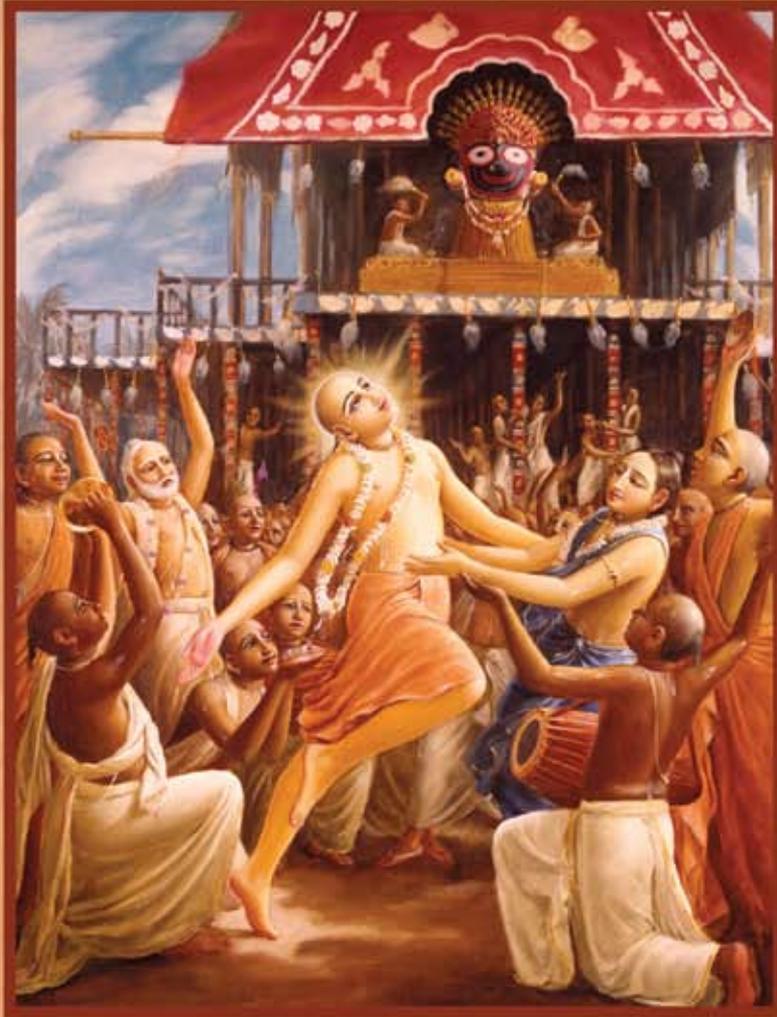
SWAMI SHIVANANDA PURI at Swami Vivekananda Seva Samithi Chaudhariguda, Shadnagar



Be Good Do Good!

-Swami Vivekananda





The Supreme Lord states:

*anandasru-kala-roma-harsa-purnam tapo-dhana
sarve mama eva draksyanti kalau sannyasa-rupinam*

O austere sage, everyone will see My transcendental form as a *sannyasi* in the age of Kali. I will be displaying symptoms like shedding tears of bliss and hairs standing on end out of ecstasy.

Lord Chaitanya was always merged in the ocean of transcendental ecstasy while chanting the names of Krishna and dancing during *sankirtana*. He felt intense separation from the Lord and due to those devotional feelings displayed various ecstatic symptoms of pure love for Krishna, such as incessant tears, voice choking up, hairs on the body standing on end etc.

- Bhavishya Purana

Today you have a choice, tomorrow may be too late...

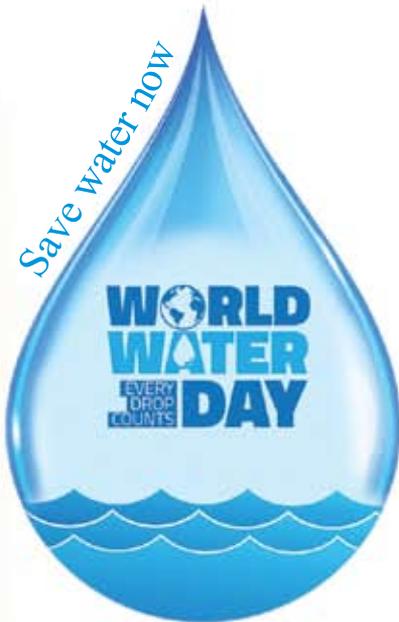
By the year 2025, 2.8 billion people, one third of the world's population will experience water scarcity. About 25 to 30% of the population in Gujarat, Rajasthan, the Gangetic Plains, West Bengal and the North Eastern Areas will have practically no water.

Consequently the water crisis will dwarf the oil crisis.

Ignore the crisis and be a part of the problem, evaluate your option and be a part of the solution. The choice is simple, so is our contribution, a **Dual Flush**.

Flush the **Superflo** way, use the **Dual Flush**.

It's small, it's smart, it's a start.



Water is the very core of life, It is life's mother (source) and medium. There is no life without water. It is high time we realize this fact and do something sensible about it.

– Gautam Vir

PATENTED



*Superflo Dual Flush Valve
Indian Patent Nos.196441 & 200284

A Dual Flush is a valve, which gives you the flexibility to discharge varying amounts of water depending on the usage.

It can be adjusted to discharge less quantity of water say 3 liters (half flush) or 6 liters (full flush).

All the leading Sanitaryware Manufacturers have chosen the **Superflo Dual Flush**.*

Use a dual flush; be a part of the drive – a drive to save the most precious resource of our planet... **water!**