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Cover Story



“Before giving, the mind of the giver is happy; while giving, the mind of the giver is made peaceful; and having given, the mind of the giver is uplifted.”

- Buddha

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The Journey

We embark on our life's journey right from the moment we are born and it ends only when this life concludes. We are all co-pilgrims in this life's journey. Some may drop out early when they reach their destination but our journey continues until our last breath. Whether we encounter joys or travails of life, the journey doesn't stop. It carries on unaffected.

Our life is like an arrow. Once it comes out of God's quiver it has to reach its destination, no matter what comes in its way. It accomplishes its set target for this lifetime and only then stops. What for and why this journey, are questions with no answers. Even if there is an answer it is difficult for us to understand. Only a *jnani* can find answers for these questions because of the intensity of his quest.

Our life's script is already written, even before we are born. Our duty is only to enact the role premeditated for us. How efficiently we play this role, is left to us. Our efficiency in fact influences our future births as well. Many others come into our lives and play their roles as co-actors

and disappear over time. We develop a strong bond with them and grieve when they suddenly disappear from this world's stage.

We encounter problems, which can't be tackled and face the ensuing sorrow, yet our life's journey does not come to a standstill. It just goes on. We continue as a pilgrim, for stopping the journey is not in our hands. A doubt might arise 'what if we forcefully end this journey'? This is not accepted and we have to face the consequences in the other world and come back in another body, with a more penalizing package and go through the same destiny in a more difficult way and complete that which we are destined for. There is no alternative. God will see to it that we complete our role in his play. God is like a strict parent trying to discipline the erratic child. So isn't it better to travel in the destined path rather than coming back with added burdens? When it is difficult to bear the actuals, how can we bear the add-ons?

Our parents can help us in our journey in the preliminary stage. The guru can take up after a certain stage, if we do bother to seek one. But he too can't take away all the skirmishes of your life. He can give us the strength to face our problems which are the resultant of our own doings. He acts like a balm to appease our pain. It is then left to us to continue our journey. God alone can help us succeed in this journey if we have a strong faith in Him and surrender to Him. His strategy is flawless. He will give us only that much that we can endure.

So let us continue this mandatory journey with his largesse. Let us unwrap and eat what we have brought along with us in this beautiful life's pilgrimage, without any qualms. Once we accomplish our mission successfully, maybe we'll return to undertake a more beautiful and blissful journey. The journey can draw to a close when we realize the ultimate reality and experience oneness with the Supreme.

- Subhadra K.

"We are not human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey.,"

Stephen R. Covey

Vikas

The Doctor... The Captain... an Army Man... on his way to transform!!!

I do not know whether I will be able to do justice to his journey and the sacrifice that our army men are making, but here is a small attempt to let you know what our men in green are doing out there. It's a journey of a human being whom I know from childhood. Vikas was a regular visitor to Nachiketa Tapovan. Very naughty and at times stubborn is what I would say about him. He was an unmanageable kid... restless child... iconoclastic

student... but what I see now is a wonderful human being who is serving the army that too at a place like Siachen.

He joined the army as a doctor and straight away was sent to the foothills of Himalayas to get initial training. After that he was posted at Siachen where -40 degree Celsius temperature is common. Serving at such a place where one is placed at more than 19000 feet above the sea level, one will know what oxygen means. It is not only that, even sleep and food also become distant dreams. What is a struggle for good sleep, one would know only at such a high altitude and not the people who have lost their sleep in acquiring more and more wealth or for no reason at all. Whatever it may be, but truly speaking, sleep is just a superficial sleep over there. Loss of memory is a common symptom. Then imagine the plight of our men guarding our borders. Although our men in green have superficial sleep or at times no sleep at all, or loss of memory, we the so-called civilians have sound sleep no matter what is going on at the border or such places where survival is always at stake.

Vikas narrated many stories on returning. "Night blackout is something terrible", he said. They have to use light for only a couple of hours while eating, then everything else has to rest in the hands of night. Many times, a drone would fly overhead and it becomes mandatory to switch off all lights. At times, doctors have to forget their primary job and carry ammunition; guns etc. and get ready for any danger. Such is the situation that demands more of mental strength than physical. He says, "Think about the frozen temperatures. Even after wearing heavy woollens, one cannot protect himself completely. One has to walk in neck deep snow for hours together. Walking is such a challenging job that every 10 steps one has to take a break, stop for a while and then resume journey





once again. Since oxygen is very less, every half an hour to one hour, soldiers do wake up, take deep breath for few seconds and go back to sleep.”

Dear Readers! Then think, how difficult it becomes when they have to climb up or climb down to serve other posts. But one who feels to serve our nation knows what it means to serve our army men. Vikas lost more than 15kg weight, experiencing even today a loss of memory. Yet once again he is ready to go back to Siachen to serve our army men... our country!

What I have heard from Vikas is something that needs to be seriously pondered over. In such places, it is difficult to take care of even one's own self yet he was serving 5 posts at such unpredictable climate. No doubt, one has to be physically healthy and mentally strong but if one has to serve in such death-defying conditions; it is something called passion and passion alone that pushes one beyond human comprehension and nothing else. With due respect to all and their commitment towards nation, I personally feel that I do not have any right to say anything about civilians since everyone is serving in their own way but when it comes to our men in green who have been serving our country, I felt, I need to be more pragmatic than mere vocal expressions.

They are the men in green who are sacrificing their lives for the cause. We do not have any right to say that they work for money. Honestly speaking, who doesn't work for money? Everyone works for it. But we shouldn't label our men in green that way and demoralize them. We do not have any right to question their integrity nor have any right to hurl our own frustration at them. No doubt, they are working for money to support their own families but more than that it is that passion, love for their country that is deep rooted



in them than just money. I believe, no one would sacrifice life for money for sure, whereas one needs to have something else for that...isn't it?

I salute our army men for their sacrifice. I salute their commitment. I salute their passion. I salute their love. Everyone is serving but one should know that it is all about serving that stands above all and not serving for our personal gain. Shouting slogans against our own country or pelting stones at our own people cannot be the freedom of expression, sometimes it is silence that can be the best expression of freedom. Therefore, next time when we want to serve, we shouldn't have any agenda of any kind in the mind since I believe, where there is an agenda, selflessness takes a back seat for sure.

Each one has a story to share, narrate or present. A beggar has a story to share and so it is with our army men, not just the so called civilians and politicians. Once, when Vikas was travelling from one post to another, there was a small bridge where only one person at a time could cross. If someone is coming from the other side, one must go back. On either side, the cliff was 1km to 2 km deep. If one falls down, there is hardly any chance to recover the body, forget about the person's life. Vikas was just half way through and suddenly he fell down. Luckily the side he fell had a hard rocky surface. He hit his head against the rocky surface. He almost lost consciousness and gave up on life.



He thought his time is up. He was completely exhausted and was gasping for breath. He was unable to even move his body. He felt as if his breathing has slowed down completely. Eyes fixed into space, slowly he was coming out from the body.

But soldiers who were around him didn't give up. Even though they saw the least possibility of life, they tried everything they could... They knew what it means to be a doctor at such altitude but more than that for them he was their colleague and a wonderful human being. The soldiers who were with him started calling him... "Captain! You can do it. Just get up and try one step. We are very close to our next post. Soldiers are waiting for you. We need you. Please get up." Whatever may be the reason, whether it was their calling or tears in their eyes or Vikas's will power and love for his country, once for all, Vikas gathered all his inner strength, and opened his eyes. He felt he would rather lose his nose or ear or toes but he must save other soldiers, he must serve our country first. With the help of other soldiers, Vikas gets up. He knew very well that he is not a mere doctor come to serve; he is also an army man who needs to be self-equipped with inner courage to serve his Motherland. He managed to reach the post and immediately after recovering, he started serving our men in green.

I feel if this doesn't appeal to one, then what else can? Dear readers, this is just an attempt to get back to you with reality and nothing else. I do not want to jump to any conclusions or anything for that matter but wanted people to know what kind of life, one experiences at such altitude.

The impression I had about Vikas as a kid who used to demand everything is totally different from the kid who became a doctor and a Captain in the army and transformed into a wonderful human being. Hats off to all our men in green, who serve our Nation! I am sure, like any other human being, Vikas, the Doctor... The Captain... an Army man is on his way to transform!

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri



Karma

After attaining human birth, many do not realize the importance of it. It is only the Karma which makes you to be born again and again. Many of us are not aware that our own Karma or action brings misery and happiness in the life. Karma phala, the fruit of action is not denied to any creature in the world. One takes birth in a rich family, the other in the family of poor; one is beautiful, the other ugly or physically handicapped etc. It is all because of our own actions. So it is the most important aspect in one's life to understand the science of action. Karma Mimansa Sutras is a system that discusses the sacred ceremonies and the rewards resulting from their performances. Holding the Veda to be uncreated, it lays special stress on the propositions that articulate, sounds are eternal, and on the consequent doctrine that the connection of a word with its sense is not to convention, but is by nature inherent in the world itself. Various Vedic Mantras explain man's responsible duties and actions.

- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri



Master's intimate relationship with disciples

One day, Sri Ramakrishna was seated on the small couch in his room with Adhar, Manomohan, Rākhāl, M., Harish, and other devotees. It was about two o' clock in the afternoon. The Master was describing to them the exalted state of Sri Chaitanya.

"You are my very own, my relative; otherwise, why should you come here so frequently? While listening to the *kirtan*, I had a vision of Rākhāl in the midst of Sri Krishna's companions in Vrindāvan. Narendra belongs to a very high level. Hirananda too; how childlike his nature is! What sweet disposition he has! I want to see him too.

"Once I saw the companions of Chaitanya, not in a trance but with these very eyes. Formerly I was in such an exalted state of mind that I could see all these things with my naked eyes; but now I see them in *samādhi*. I saw the companions of Chaitanya with these naked eyes. I think I saw you there and Balarām too. You must have noticed that when I see certain people I jump up with a start. Do you know why? A man feels that way when he sees his own people after a long time.

"I used to pray to the Mother, crying: 'Mother, if I do not find the devotees I'll surely die. Please bring them to me immediately.' In those days whatever desire arose in my mind would come to pass. I planted a *tulsi*-grove in the Panchavati in order to practise *japa* and meditation. I wanted very much to fence it around with bamboo sticks. Soon afterwards a bundle of bamboo sticks and some string were carried by the flood-tide of the Ganges right in front of the Panchavati. A temple servant noticed them and joyfully told me.

"In that state of divine exaltation I could no longer perform the formal worship. 'Mother,' I said, 'who will look after me? I haven't the power to take care of myself. I want to listen only to talk about Thee. I want to feed Thy devotees. I want to give a little help to those whom I chance to meet.



How will all that be possible, Mother? Give me a rich man to stand by me.' That is why Mathur Babu did so much to serve me.

"I said further, 'Certainly I shall not have any children, Mother. But it is my desire that a boy with sincere love for God should always remain with me. Give me such a boy.' That is the reason Rākhāl came here. Those whom I think of as my own are part and parcel of me."

The Master started again for the Panchavati accompanied by M. No one else was with them. Sri Ramakrishna with a smile narrated to him various incidents of the past years of his life.

MASTER: "You see, one day I saw a strange figure covering the whole space from the Kāli temple to the Panchavati. Do you believe this?"

M. remained silent with wonder. He plucked one or two leaves from a branch in the Panchavati and put them in his pocket.

MASTER: "See there- that branch has been broken. I used to sit under it."

M: "I took a young twig from that tree - I have it at home."

MASTER (with a smile): "Why?"

M: "I feel happy when I look at it. After all this is over, this place will be considered very holy."

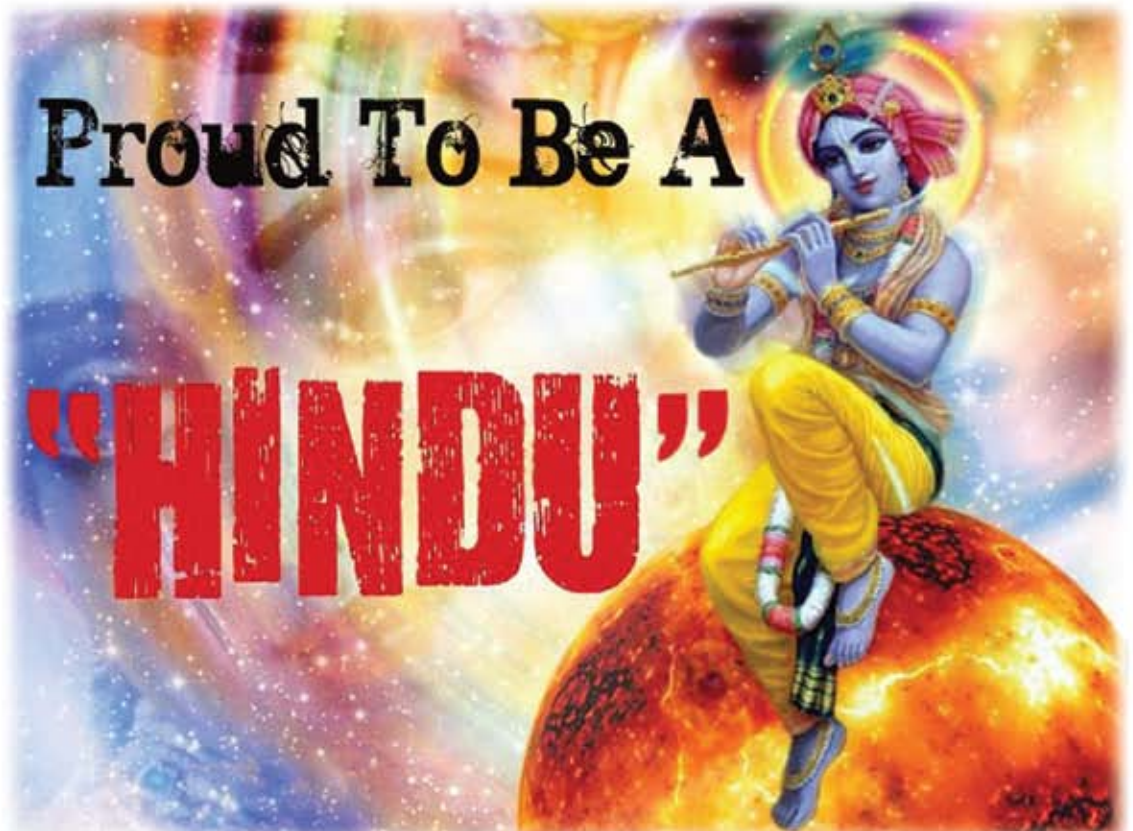
Source: The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna
By Swami Nikhilananda

A religion to be proud of

Recently, I heard a wonderful song questioning our practices and urging us to trust in ourselves and to work hard. I liked it very much and later on searched for it on the internet. It is always interesting to read what people have to say on such creative expressions, so I read a few comments on the song. To my dismay, many blamed Hinduism and ancient Indian culture as the source of superstitions. I do not wish to initiate any scholarly debate on the same, as I am no expert. I do not wish to present a comparative study of religions of the world, as that is beyond my present level of comprehension. Nevertheless, I would like to present why I love my culture and religion. Again, this article is not the result of any sociological enquiry, but a simple list of observations.

Firstly, though I am a Hindu, yet, I am not one! It means I am not made conscious of my identity by my religion. I am free to engage in whatever pursuit

I wish to, free to adopt a belief system I think to be appropriate and completely free to be an atheist, a theist or an agnostic. Wonderful diversity! I am free to participate in events of other religions and happily relish the delicacies prepared on festivals of the other religions. Openness is my religion's forte. Secondly, there are numerous Gods to worship and hearteningly to befriend, everyone being equal in stature and power (thereby showing that God is one). Therefore, a child could have Ganesha as his friend, a mystic could concentrate on Shiva, a mother could love her child as little Krishna and a woman can dedicatedly pray to the Mother Goddess. Isn't it amazing? Thirdly, there is a storehouse of knowledge and creativity in the holy books which are again numerous. There is a lot to read and one life would probably not be enough to completely read this vast ocean of literature. If not for anything, we could salute the



imagination of our sages. As one of my teachers pointed out in a class, Wright Brothers thought of a plane only in the early twentieth century, but our Ramayana was much ahead ('Pushpaka Viman'). Fourthly, the religion with its numerous temples and practices has nurtured whole towns and cities which have developed as temple towns. Numerous people live out of their incomes from these places. On a visit to Tirupati, a cab owner remarked, "We are eternally thankful to the Lord for choosing Tirumala. I am able to earn my livelihood by taking His name." Fifthly, our age-old practices promote togetherness and a spirit of sharing. What else are festivals, but an occasion to get together, thank God for giving us a chance to celebrate and create happy memories! Isn't it simply overwhelming that the food prepared by a devotee for her God reaches many people as *prasadam*, many a time filling their stomach? The list can be endless. My religion does not teach me anything negative about other religions. It teaches me to focus on my acts, my *karma*, and see it in conjunction with the society.

Nevertheless, it is saddening that some of us choose to stick by words of a dogma and fail to appreciate its essence. Many a time, we also follow irrational practices without application of the mind. For me, God is a compassionate spirit residing in all of us. This spirit is understanding, loving, tender yet strong and guiding us to the right path. And the wonderful thing about my religion – Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita shows the multiple paths available, explains each of them and leaves it upon us to make a choice. We are free to choose our path. We are nudged to realize ourselves, to reign in our thoughts and then add value to our world. We are encouraged to be rational, thinking individuals by none other than God! Sadly, while we are happy to read self-help books which do nothing but elucidate upon the principles of our holy books, any direct reference to similar suggestions is branded as 'saffron' or 'anti-secular' by the so-called liberals.

- Neetika Gogula

An advocate and has passion for writing on social issues.

REAL LEARNING

Learning a lesson does not mean simply getting it by heart and repeating it as a parrot. We must understand the principle behind it and put it into practice – this is real learning.

If we are taught not to speak lies, it is not enough to not lie, but truth must be spoken. If we are taught not to envy others, it is not enough not to envy, but we must strive to better the lives of others and we must love all. If we are taught to worship our parents and teachers, we must endeavour to make them happy by our words and deeds.

Once, the Pandavas were taught by their teacher not to become angry, as anger is a pernicious enemy. Next day, when the teacher asked them if they had learnt the lesson, all except Dharmaraj recited, what they were taught.

But Dharmaraj repeated day after day that he was yet to learn the lesson. One day, the teacher, who grew wild at Dharmaraj's answer, beat him mercilessly. Dharmaraj, without even a sigh, submitted himself to the punishment and bore the pain.

Then it struck the teacher what Dharmaraj meant by saying that he has not learnt the lesson as he had not yet conquered his emotions completely. The teacher repented for getting angry. He hugged Dharmaraj affectionately and said, "My Son, you have taught me an unforgettable lesson today. It is I, who is yet to learn the lesson. You are worthy of your name."

**"Self-suffering is
the truest test of sincerity."**

– Mahatma Gandhi

- K.V. Ramakrishna Sastry



Swami Vivekananda's prayer to Ma Kali at Dakshineswar (A true story from Swami Vivekananda's life)

Vivekananda's prayer to Kali at Dakshineswar (1884) is the event in which Narendranath Datta (the pre-monastic name of Vivekananda), following the suggestion of Sri Ramakrishna, went to the Kali temple of Dakshineswar with the intention to pray for financial welfare, but ultimately prayed for pure knowledge, devotion and renunciation. This event has been a subject of scholarly studies and is considered as a significant event in the life of Swami Vivekananda, who initially revolted against idol-worship but now accepted and prayed before an idol of Kali. According to B. R. Kishore, "this incident added a new dimension to Narendra's devotion and knowledge".

Narendra Nath became acquainted with the 19th-century mystic saint Sri Ramakrishna in 1881, and used to go to Dakshineswar frequently to meet Sri Ramakrishna. In this difficult phase, his visit to Dakshineswar increased and he found solace in Sri Ramakrishna.

In the initial meeting with Sri Ramakrishna, Narendra Nath had resisted to accept or worship Kali the Goddess whom Sri Ramakrishna used to worship.

Sri Ramakrishna asked him— "Why do you come here, if you do not accept Kali, my Mother?" Narendra Nath replied "simply because I come to see you? I come to you because I love you."

One day Narendra Nath requested Sri Ramakrishna to pray to Goddess Kali, the Divine Mother, for some financial welfare, which was the immediate need of his family. Sri Ramakrishna listened to his request and told him that day was a Tuesday, an "auspicious day", asked him to go to the temple in the evening and pray it himself. Sri Ramakrishna also told Narendra Nath about the Mother Goddess: She is Knowledge Absolute, the Inscrutable Power of Brahman and by Her mere will She has given birth to this world. Everything is in Her power to give." Narendra Nath then

believed the words of his master and decided to approach Mother Kali and pray to Her to rescue him of his financial problems.

FIRST ATTEMPT TO PRAY FOR FINANCIAL WELFARE:--

Following the suggestion, at 9 o'clock in the evening, Narendra Nath prepared himself to go to the temple. As he entered the temple and looked at the image of Kali, he was overawed with a great feeling of devotion and love. He went to the



temple of Kali and stood in front of the idol, bowed to Goddess Kali in an “ecstasy of joy” and started repeating Her name. Standing before the Divine Mother he felt She was “living and conscious, full of divine love and beauty”. He prayed to the Goddess for divine knowledge and devotion, and for Her eternal Divine visions but forgot to pray for financial welfare for which he had come.

SECOND ATTEMPT TO PRAY FOR FINANCIAL WELFARE:

When Narendra Nath came to Sri Ramakrishna, who was sitting outside the temple, Sri Ramakrishna asked him, “Did you pray for your family wants?”. Narendra Nath was puzzled and confessed that he had forgotten to do so. Upon knowing this, Sri Ramakrishna asked him to go to the temple and pray for the second time.

In accordance with Sri Ramakrishna’s suggestion, Narendra Nath went to the Kali temple once again. Like the last time, he stood before the idol of Goddess Kali, bowed to her and started praying. He prayed— “Give me discrimination and divine knowledge. Grant me Mother your unhindered vision”, but, once again he forgot to pray for his family wants. Then Sri Ramakrishna admonished him saying “how thoughtless! Couldn’t you restrain yourself enough to say those few words?”

THIRD ATTEMPT TO PRAY FOR FINANCIAL WELFARE:

Narendra Nath came back to Sri Ramakrishna, who once again asked him if he had prayed for financial support that time. Once again, Narendra Nath answered in negative and confessed that he had forgotten. Sri Ramakrishna asked him to attempt for the third time to pray for his family’s immediate need.

Narendra Nath went to Kali temple for the third time. He tried to pray for what he was suggested, but started feeling ashamed of himself for attempting to pray for worldly and material things. So he returned to Sri Ramakrishna without praying for any kind of financial welfare.

Sri Ramakrishna was pleased to learn his disciple’s spiritual inclination and did a forecast that Narendra’s family would never face lack of essentials of living like food and clothes.

Finally Narendra Nath in his own words said: “I Had To Accept Her At Last!” It was the end of his six years of ‘hate of Kali! And all Her ways!’

Following this eventful revelation of Goddess Kali, he would say,

“ I cannot but believe that there is somewhere a great Power that thinks of Herself as feminine called Kali and Mother.”

After he becoming an ardent devotee of Goddess Kali, Vivekananda would say that Kali was the “Divine Mother of the Universe” who is “embodied in Herself, creation and destruction, love and terror, life and death.”

In later years when Swami Vivekananda went to the west to preach and teach Vedanta, in his letters to sister Nivedita he would say that Mother was protecting him and giving him emotional support. He even said that “Kali worship is my special fad” and also clarified that he never preached Kali worship to any one, as this worship was his secret.

According to Vivekananda’s biographer B. R. Kishore,

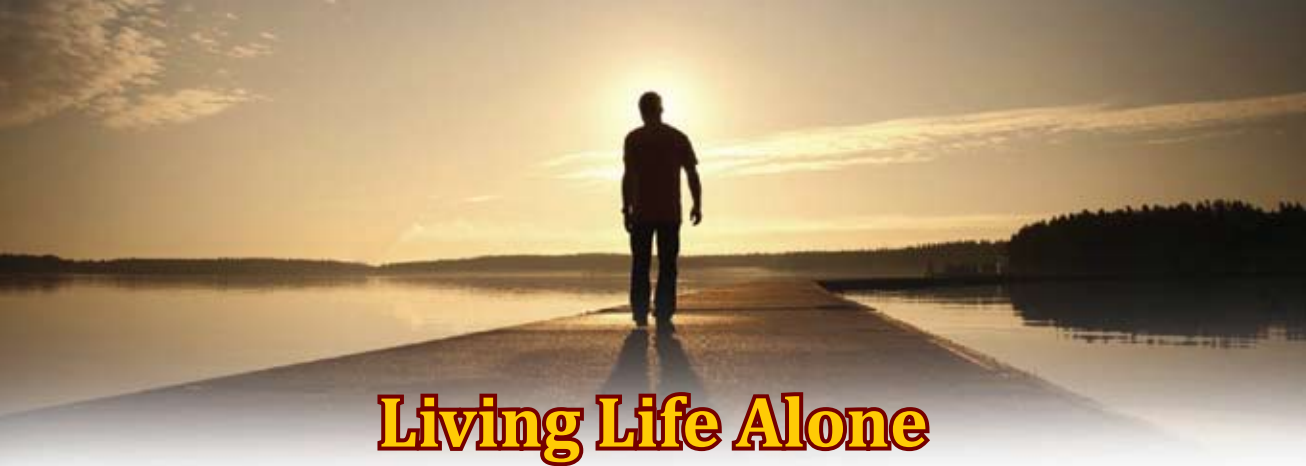
“This incident added a new dimension to Narendra’s devotion and knowledge. Till now he had been against image-worship. He had refused to accept the Divine Mother. But now he had become an ardent devotee of the Mother.”

Elizabeth U Harding, in her book “Kali: The Black Goddess of Dakshineswar” also felt, this was a “turning point” in Narendra’s life.

Amiya P. Sen has written, this incident “deepened” Narendra’s “spiritual quest” and after this incident he started frequently meditating at Panchavati, a lonely place in Dakshineswar.

Swami Nikhilananda has said, Narendra had two options, he could pray for either a happy worldly life or spiritual progress and independence.

Source- Swami Vivekananda: Our Eternal Spirit



Living Life Alone

When do you call yourself mature enough? The immediate reply would be when you are aged or had seen worst times of your life. Think again. Is it enough to cross the aforesaid situations to call oneself matured? Let us examine one by one. If age is the only factor then mountains and trees should be treated as more mature than us. If worst times in one's life make one mature then poorest of the poor would be the most matured.

Even I was of the same notion until I started living alone, away from my home town, family and friends with whom I spent my most memorable days. Right from day one of relocation, every day is a learning day for me. It was like I was exploring myself to know what I am up to. Every day taught me that my maturity is always below the reality. I was doing the things myself which I have never done before. It taught me how much dependent I was on my family and friends. To be honest, I started valuing them more than before. As long as we are in comfort zone you will never know what opportunities life provide us to know ourselves. The decision was a tough one for me. Particularly during holidays when I started spending my time alone. I used to become very nostalgic and to some extent home sick as well. As it is said, time is the best panacea. The thoughts that dominated my mind that I left a comfy life in my initial days slowly started fading away, as I started spending my time in reading, thinking, *Sadhana*, visiting various places and meeting different people; particularly, the daily chores that I started doing myself.

The things that used to be taken care of by others, I started doing on my own. It helped me realize how much my people used to take care of me. Staying alone has immensely benefitted me

to give a thought to be more disciplined, more composed. I learnt looking at the circumstances in a different perspective. I started learning to live alone irrespective of the circumstances around me in a confident manner. Loss of my mobile phone in my early days that robbed my peace of mind for few days taught a lesson that a simple gadget cannot control you. Sudden loss of touch with people who meant so much to me taught how to be detached. Self-cooking taught a lesson that it takes a lot of skill to make delicious food. The disciplined life I was procrastinating has become a reality now. Great improvement in health has taught me a lesson about how important it is to be healthy.

Spending life alone gives us great scope to learn and understand one self. These days of my life are the most memorable days that I will cherish in my remaining life time just for one reason; that it helped me know my capabilities, my limitations and my character to some extent. I am not recommending that everyone should lead a life alone. My only suggestion is don't let the opportunity go if you come across such a situation. You will never know what life has kept for us secretly to surprise us. Don't let it remain a secret forever. Just grab it. It will test you initially. It will try to prove you wrong. It will challenge you. It will make you upside down but finally it will teach you the lesson of living alone but not make you lonely. You will finally spend time with your life qualitatively. You will make friendship with your own life. Finally you will meet a person you never met before and it is your own Self. Go and Embrace. Life is calling!

M. Koti Rajasekhar

Letters of Appreciation



Dear Editor,

The articles, viz., Bhisma, Shri Ram-Quiz, Pada Gaya Kshetra, Don't overthink, Shiva Tattva and Bhakta Shabari, are all written in such a fashion that they have a lasting impression on the minds of the reader. I compliment you for the selection of the articles and publishing them for our benefit and enlightenment. We look forward to more such beautiful articles in future issues too.

The article, "Death, chance and change," has indeed topped the above list. The way in which the philosophy of life, the steps to be taken to survive and the ultimate win, is laudable.

Thus, the articles in the magazine marshalled well month after month and all concerned deserve high appreciation.

Apart from philosophy, the stories from the epics, it is all the more necessary that a little bit of humorous article should also find a place in your esteemed magazine. For example, I read a short story, "Workaholics," in one of your issues and apart from humour, there is a message in it. When the article was forwarded to other countries, the children there at read it and came back that such articles should be sent to them, which make them happy and posted of the morals in life.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

A. RAGHAVENDRA RAO

P.S. I am one of the subscribers of your magazine and read all the articles with avowed interest.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are regular subscribers to your prestigious spiritual magazine:- NACHIKETANJALI. Each magazine has new treasures, thought provoking to enable all of us to make our world a better place. We also organize CCA competitions on the basis of your articles, they are all well collected and preserved. We support you in this glorious & holy task...

Sai ram,

Thanking you very much

Yours faithfully,

S. S. RAJA
PRINCIPAL, KVI SVN, VSKP

NACHIKETA TAPOVAN

Plot No. 70, Phase I, Kavuri Hills,

Jubilee Hills,

Hyderabad. 500 033.

FROM HOOKED TO UNHOOKED



“Let go of anger. Let go of pride. When you are bound by nothing, You go beyond sorrow.”
Gautam Buddha

The journey from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, from bondage to liberation, this is the true journey...it is this inward journey, the journey from being ‘hooked to unhooked’, the true journey...

We’re ‘hooked’ to just about everything... from our smart phones to our overly prejudiced opinions, from our branded clothing to our false sense of ego, from our outward social image to our compulsive thought patterns. We are a slave to just about everything.

But perhaps the biggest pit fall in our lives, is our over inflated ego. Most of the strife, struggles, rape, abuse, wars & crimes are committed in the process of fulfilling this false sense ego.

Our anger is a direct outcome of this ego. Very easy to provoke. Very easy to hurt. Very easy to flare up. Because almost anything can ‘hurt’ this ego.

We are not fulfilled from within. There is this sense of incompleteness. Emptiness...and in the process of trying to achieve this completeness, there is an overindulgence in almost everything that’s on the ‘outside’. This ‘pursuit’ of happiness, or pursuit of achieving this fulfillment ‘without rather than within’ has already lead us to the brink of destruction of our Mother Earth and very lives/ world, as we know it.

But all these things are for other people. For ‘you’ people who’re reading this article to find some answers. It’s not for ‘me’. Not for the one who already knows. No wonder my name is Gautam. You all only need to start realising ‘who/ how’ I am. And start addressing me as Gautama - The Buddha.

Or so I thought...

And then my washer woman, a simple decent, dignified & uneducated woman, showed me a mirror and showed me how petty, shallow

and egoistic I could be. Caught up with almost everything. Above all, to my false sense of ego. Hooked!

I was sitting for my *Kriya* when she was placing the ironed clothes in one of the rooms and the door banged loudly because of the wind. This happened ‘despite’ *ME* telling her that the door would bang if she didn’t latch the door stopper properly. You get the picture, don’t you? You know what I am saying, don’t you?!! ‘I’ had *already* told this illiterate woman that the door ‘*would*’ bang loudly. But you know how these people are, don’t you? No sense. No brains whatsoever. And so I had all the right to shout at her and tell her ‘*exactly*’ what I felt about her. I told her that she was brainless. That she couldn’t take simple instructions. And she doesn’t deserve to work for someone like me.

After having done this great deed of showing her, her place, I sat down peacefully for my *Kriya*. And it was so beautiful and blissful after my *kriya* that I simply forgot about this unfortunate incident.

Two days later, I came to know that my outburst had led to its share of ‘drama’. The washer woman was inconsolable. She called her husband immediately after I’d left for work and told him what had happened and so her husband asked her to stop working in a household where she was not treated appropriately. My poor old & tired mother had to intervene and calm her down and explain that ‘Gautam takes such good care of everyone and there must be a reason why he got so angry.’ She calmed down and continued to work.

But how could I let this pass?!!! In ‘*my*’ house, first ‘*they*’ make a mistake. Then they complain about ‘*me*’. And ‘*my*’ mother had to calm her down. I was furious. I was livid. I was raving mad. The moment I saw her, I let out a series of abuses and expletives. And of course, I felt a lot better after that.

But this was not the end. This lowly woman had the audacity to continue working ‘*without*’ apologising to me. Not just that, she refused to greet me or bow down to me when she saw me.

The last straw was when she started ‘turning her back towards me, every time we happened to cross each other’. This was getting a bit too much.

For months we didn’t talk or acknowledge each other’s presence. The very sound of her voice or her anklet as she walked through our main door was enough to send me into fits of rage.

Many months after this incident, I was doing my *kriya* one morning and abusing her in my mind, when I realized how shallow and petty I was being. Is this what I meant by being on the spiritual path? To abuse a simple woman *while* doing my *kriya* and that too months after a petty incident like this...

I was appalled with myself. Ashamed of myself for my pettiness.

That day, I resolved to accept her as one of my teachers. Someone who had showed me a mirror and taught me a simple lesson. I resolved to bow down to her silently within myself every time we crossed each other. This continued for a few weeks. I started feeling a sense of lightness within. I was grateful to my guru for showing me the way. I was grateful to this simple pure woman to have taught me an invaluable lesson unknowingly.

A few weeks later, I took the initiative & wished her one morning. The way her face glowed in joy and gratitude made me realize something. This woman was not greeting me, not because she was being egoistic, she was not greeting me because she didn’t know if she ‘could do it’ and if it would be acceptable. They don’t set the tone to a relationship, because they consider themselves ‘lesser’ than us, they wait for us to ‘set the tone’. I realized how ‘small’ I was. And how ‘large hearted’ she was. Who am I to show someone their place? Who am I to judge someone? Who am I to ‘rate’ someone? I am a nobody. I am nothing. Just a *speck* of dust. Here today...Gone tomorrow.

A few weeks ago, I had a showdown with my mother-in-law...I was livid again. I was furious again. I was raving mad. Again... It’s one thing to forgive your washer woman, to accept her as your teacher. But you can’t do that with your ‘mother-in-law’, that would be a bit much!!!

Ha!! Ha!! Ha!!!

So the drama continues.

- **Gautam Vir**

P.S. Here, a Mother in law is used to highlight a kind of bias that we all have towards a kind of people & situations.

Dental Camp

4th March 2017 - A Dental camp was conducted by Ms. Vishwadhika Reddy, Ms. Srija Rairao and Ms. Sohini Kasu for classes VI - IX children. It was a great eye opener for our kids on oral hygiene.



Warangal trip

17th March 2017 - A wonderful treat by Sridevi amma to class VII students. She took them to Warangal and our children got to see many beautiful temples, Bhuvanagiri Fort, 1000 pillar temple etc.



Meditation and Stress Management Program

On 22nd March 2017 'Meditation and Stress Management' program was held for Police Personnel of Jadcherla and Mahaboobnagar District at Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram, Kodgal. The program was organized with the coordination of Jadcherla and Mahaboobnagar Police personnel. Coincidentally it was also the Birthday of their Superintendent, Smt. Rema Rajeshwari I.P.S, who was also the Chief-Guest of the event.



Mataji and Smt. P. Vasundhara (Founder Trustee), were invited on to the dais. Smt. Rema Rajeshwari expressed her happiness to see the active participation of her 'Boys'. She expressed her views on the reasons for stress in today's society and why it is essential to get rid of it. Though her boys were physically fit, due to excessive workload they are going through a lot of stress and

Sri Gangadhar, C.I of Jadcherla, played a major role in organizing the event. More than 150 Police personnel participated in the program which was mainly envisioned for relief of stress through Meditation and Yoga. Swamiji and Mataji gave a warm welcome to the participants and the program started from 9:30 am. Mataji gave an introductory talk about stress relief and meditation before starting the actual program. This helped in making the participants understand what the program was all about and the extent of their involvement required for the program. It was great to watch their enthusiastic participation and learning the techniques taught by Mataji with all sincerity.

Chief-Guest Smt. Rema Rajeshwari I.P.S, arrived towards the end of the program and was cordially welcomed by Swamiji, Volunteers, Senior Police officers and Children of Nachiketa Vidya Mandir. The final part of the session was on and she was highly impressed to see her 'BOYS' participate with great enthusiasm. Nachiketa children performed their local *Lambada* dance and Smt. Rema Rajeshwari was humbleness personified as she sat on the floor and watched their program. She preferred the floor rather than a chair which she felt would obstruct the vision of those sitting behind. A great gesture of humbleness from a senior police officer, which set a great example to everyone present!

After the cultural program, the Chief-Guest along with Sri Bhaskar, DSP of Mahabubnagar and Sri Srinivasa Reddy, DSP of Narayanapet, Swamiji,

she felt as part of their 'Mana Kutumbam Mana Arogyam' program, her 'Boys' should attend this workshop and learn techniques for stress-relief. She encouraged all participants to make use of the stress-relief techniques taught by Mataji, on a daily basis and get benefited. She thanked Swamiji and Mataji profusely for their efforts in training the police personnel. She invited the feedback of the participants and relate, how they got benefited through this program. A few came forward and said this program had a great impact on them and even in a single session they could experience immense positive results. They thanked Mataji for her guidance and her simple way of training them and promised to practice in their daily lives all the techniques they had just learnt. They also offered a birthday gift to their S.P Smt. Rema Rajeshwari by pledging to lead a life filled with ethics and values. The Chief-Guest thanked Sri Gangadhar for his sincere efforts in organizing this event.

It was lunch time and every one was led to the dining hall. Smt. Rema Rajeshwari was felicitated by her senior assistant-officers and she celebrated her Birthday by cutting a cake amidst her 'Boys', Swamiji, Mataji, Nachiketa children, Teachers, Volunteers and Residential Staff of Nachiketa Ashram. After lunch the Chief-Guest interacted with Swamiji and Mataji and regretted that she didn't know earlier, about all the good work done at Nachiketa Tapovan. She assured they would see her and her personnel more often in the Ashram thenceforth. She departed soon after, but left behind her foot prints of humility and sincerity.



Science Competition

26th March 2017 - Nachiketa Tapovan children bagged 1st prize in 'Quiz competition' and 3rd prize in 'Just a minute competition', a confluence event (Science and Social studies Fest) arranged by TFI, where 25 schools had participated.



Only Because of YOU...

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

Donations towards operation costs

Vidya Daanam (Education)	₹ 7000/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")	

Overseas Donations- Details

(Exclusively for Foreign currency only)

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

Buddha



The Eightfold Path

1. Right View

Right view simply means to see and to understand things as they really are, not as you 'wish' them to be.

2. Right Intention

Right intention can be described best as commitment to ethical behavior for the good of the whole.

3. Right Speech

Buddha explains right speech as follows:
1. to abstain from false speech; not to tell deliberate lies and not to speak deceitfully;
2. to abstain from slanderous speech and not to speak maliciously against others;
3. to abstain from harsh words that offend or hurt others; and 4. to abstain from the idle chatter that lacks purpose or depth.

4. Right Action

1. To abstain from harming sentient beings, especially to abstain from taking life (including suicide) and doing harm intentionally or unconsciously, including eating the flesh of other beings; 2. to abstain from taking what is not given, which includes stealing, fraud, deceitfulness, and dishonesty; and 3. to abstain from sexual misconduct.

5. Right Livelihood

Buddha teaches four specific activities that harm other beings and that one should avoid for this reason: 1. dealing in weapons; 2. dealing in living beings (including slave trade and prostitution as well as raising animals for slaughter); 3. working in meat production and butchery; and 4. selling intoxicants and poisons, such as alcohol and drugs.

6. Right Effort

1. to prevent the arising of unwholesome states; 2. to abandon unwholesome states that have already arisen; 3. to arouse wholesome states that have not yet arisen; and 4. to maintain and perfect wholesome states already arisen.

7. Right Mindfulness

1. Contemplation of the body; 2. contemplation of feeling (repulsive, attractive, or neutral); 3. contemplation of the state of mind; and 4. contemplation of the phenomena.

8. Right Concentration

Right concentration is the practice of meditation.

As the lotus
rises on it's stalk
unsoiled by the
mud and water,
so the wise one
speaks of peace
and is unstained
by the opinions
of the world.

- Buddha



Sri Rama Navami

On 5th April, Sri Rama Navami was celebrated at Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal. The stage was set for the celestial marriage. Mataji had decorated the Moola Virat and Utsav Vigrahas with her usual zeal and divine touch. Villagers and Vidya Mandir children participated in the celebration with devotional fervor. After Arathi, prasadam was devoutly taken by everyone along with the blessings of the celestial couple, Sri Rama and Goddess Sita.



Shri Ram - Quiz



1. What is the height and weight of Kumbhakarna?
2. How did *Vanaras* react after Hanuman came back from Lanka after seeing Sita?
3. How did Indra get the name "Sathamukha"?
4. What is the curse given to king Dasaratha by the father of Sravanakumar?
5. With whom did Bharatha enter into sage Bharadwaja *ashram*?
6. Sent by Ravana, who came as a messenger to king Sugreeva?
7. In which form did Suka, Sarana (spies of Ravana) enter the *Vanara* troops to estimate the strength of *Vanaras*?
8. With whose grace did Maindha and Dwividha consume *amrutha* (nectar)?
9. Intolerable Ravana, overcome with the grief of the death of his son, Indrajeet, decided to kill Sita. At this moment who stopped Ravana from doing that?
10. When Hanuman set ablaze the whole city of Lanka, why did he leave the house of Vibhishana?

By Dr. Kalluri Venkateshwar Rao, MA Ph.D

Translated by Manjula

ANSWERS:

1. 100 *baaruvu* in weight and 600 *baaruvu* in height.
(*baaruvu* is an ancient measure system to measure solids)
(1 *baaruvu* = 20 maunds
1 maund = 40 seers
1 seer = 2.057 pounds (approximately 2 pounds and one ounce) (www.indiacurry.com)
2. All the *Vanaras* jumping with joy offered fruits and with great devotion they welcomed Hanuman.
3. By performing hundred *yagnas* he got the name Satamukha.
4. "You will die of grief due to the separation of your sons".
5. Along with sage Vasistha, Bharatha entered the sage Bharadwaja *ashram*.
6. In the form of a parrot "Suka" came as a messenger of Ravana to Sugreeva.
7. In the form of monkeys, Suka and Sarana entered the *Vanara* troops.
8. With the grace of Lord Brahma.
9. "Suprvasa" minister of Ravana stopped him from killing Sita.
10. As Vibhishana stood for *dharma* and spoke on its behalf, being thankful to him, Hanuman left Vibhishana's house from putting it on fire.



My Brother... My Hero

I was six and He was eleven...

"Hey look at that yummy Cadbury chocolate" said my brother pointing at the clay..."

I only wished it was true rather than blaming my brother.

I was a little girl who knew nothing but to believe him.

I was seven and He was Thirteen...

Those were the days where my parents were planning to join him in a hostel.

I was only wishing him to stay at home.

I was an innocent sister who knew nothing but to love him.

I was nine and He was fifteen...

I was the witness for every mischief he had done.

I was a clever girl who knew nothing but to be the witness.

I was ten and he was sixteen...

That was the worst phase of my brother. I saw him crying...I saw him being scolded...He has been rumoured about his studies...He was complained about all the activities...

And finally he was sent to my Uncle's house for his further studies.

I saw him leaving home...I only wished for a right chance to disprove everything I witnessed. I want him to answer every person who scolded. I was only waiting for a chance.

I was fourteen and he was twenty...

Well, my brother has grown a little...

He showed a considerable result in his MBBS...

But,

I only wanted more and my wait was extended.

I was sixteen and he was twenty one...

"Dad! My presentation is printed in a journal" said my brother after returning from a gynaecology conference.

I was a young sister who only aspired more

I was eighteen and he was twenty-four...

He is graduated ! He is a Doctor!

I only gave time some more time...

Now he is twenty five!!

My brother is a "CAPTAIN"!

He is Capt.Vikas who returned from the toughest Siachen posting.

I am proud of him...I may be young but always waited for this day.

I never blamed him, I only saw people blaming. I never scolded him, I only saw people scolding. I only saw people discouraging him. I only saw people spreading rumours.

He had given a perfect reply for people who discouraged him.

Now, "Courage" is what I can see in him.

Dear brother, this quote would be apt for you...

"At first they ask why you are doing it. Later they ask how you did it"?

Be thankful for the hard times, for they have made YOU!

- Your loving Sister (Chutky)

- Harathi Reddy

Receiving and Giving

*G*iving is an action word... you are doing something to change someone's life.

Receiving is a passive word... inaction.

When you give, you feel in charge, you are becoming more.

And when you receive, you feel vulnerable, you are becoming less.

Or that's what I thought

That's what I believed

That's what I grew up believing.

Today, I walked with my friend, Gautam, who is doing the *Shivanga Sadhana*, and one part of that *Sadhana* involves that he beg for money from at least 21 people and receive that money with eyes closed, not seeing how much they have given. Today he was begging at his own factory, from his own people, who he calls his family.

I walked two steps behind him, watching him, and watching the people's expressions. For his part, it was every identity of his stripped down, and all vulnerability exposed. He walked around, barefoot, shirt open, eyes closed, extending his palms out to everyone, whispering a prayer for each and every one, for the ones who gave him alms, and for those who did not.

On the people's side, it was a whole range of expressions from reverence to incredulousness, from joy to complete indifference. Some gave haltingly, unsurely and some gave even a few coins openly, gladly touching his feet in return. I experienced the beauty of giving and also of receiving quite completely. Receiving with complete humility, vulnerability and giving with utmost reverence. One employee, opened his wallet, searched and found a single hundred rupee note, which he smiled and gladly put it in Gautam's palms. I know that these hundred rupees was not spare money for him.

Gautam didn't see his expression nor his money, he had his eyes closed, praying for him. I had a hard time, controlling my tears looking at how incredibly sublime this simple exchange was.

Then I remembered a recent conversation I had with the same friend, about how relations can never be/ should never be transactional. Here we are talking about giving and receiving money and it is as transactional as it can get, isn't it?? Yet, this same act of giving and receiving has the power to become something more, to break barriers simply in "how" we do and experience it.

Neither giving nor receiving can change any part of us, cannot change fundamentally who we are, cannot make us any lesser or any greater than what/who we are.

The minute we learn to accept this, that we are enough, both giving and receiving will become seamless. Giving can never be about quenching a thirst within us. It can never be because of an obligation or a duty.

In which case, no matter how much we give, it will never be enough.

Each time we give, joyfully, gladly, without a reason, we receive far more than what we give, and each time we receive, joyfully, gladly, openly, we give back to that person, a lot more than what he has given to you.

How wrong I was, not to be able to understand that these two are integral parts of each other... you can never give fully unless you learn to receive fully.

So here I am, offering my gratitude to this incredible friend of mine, and telling him that what I have received is something quite priceless.

- Shilpa



Bhaktiyoga in the Gita

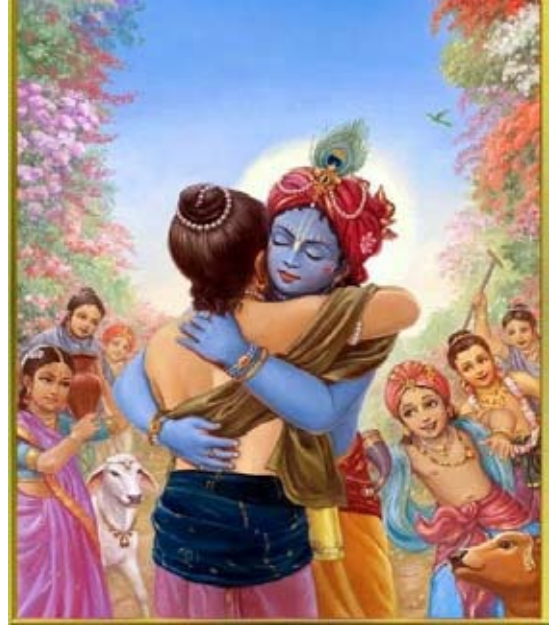
Though different theories of religious practice are taught in the Gita, it is one continuous stream of enquiry into the divine. It is *yoga*. The practical application of religious theory to life is *yoga*. *Yoga* is the union of the individual-self with the universal. As human nature is diversified by different qualities, it was necessary for the Gita to chalk out different paths for different types of persons.

Jaimini's *Karma* theory, Narada's *Bhakti* cult, Patanjali's *Rajayoga* and Vyasa's *Jnana* doctrine, all these are well propounded in the Gita. It is something like a large scale general stores, where all things necessary for life are available... Purification is attained by *Karma Yoga*; illumination by *Bhakti* and *Dhyana*; union by *Jnana yoga*. Brick, mortar and wood are needed to build a house; dough, ghee and heat are needed to prepare bread. Likewise *Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Jnana* are needed for liberation. A three-legged stool cannot stand if one of the legs is cut off. If any ingredient of the three *yogas* is missing, then it cannot be complete and perfect. So, great men achieved perfection by harmonizing different creeds and doctrines of spiritual practice. Of course, according to the predisposition of each individual, he chooses a perfect *yoga* as the main path, but others are found implicit in it. The chief purpose of all *yogas* is nothing but the elimination of the Ego.

Love of God is *Bhakti* and when that love glows into ecstasy, the devotee says 'Thou art my sole refuge; I know not else'. He puts himself solely in the hands of God and acts as his servant.

Arjuna appealed to the Lord – "*sadhimam tvam prapannam*"

Please teach me who have taken refuge in you. But the Gita is not satisfied with ordinary *Bhakti*. It eagerly waits for ripening of ordinary *Bhakti* into *Ananyabhakti*. It is to be noted that the word *Ananya* is used several times in the Gita. It means that the mind as a whole is to be offered to the Lord, no other thought intruding or no other feeling mingling with that of divine love. "The devotee



who possesses this supreme love undefiled by any worldly taint is most dear to me. Him I save from the ocean of death and *Samsara*" – says Lord Krishna with deep compassion. If the mind is distracted by worldly thoughts and deviates from its divine object, it should be brought back and fixed on God, by slow and continuous practice. The aim should not be given up, for, there is only one thing in the universe that is real, imperishable and eternal and that is the Supreme Self. All other things are ephemeral and transitory. To run after them in the hope of enjoying life is to court sorrow, disaster and death. Peace and happiness could never be obtained from them at any time.

Without the grace of God and Guru, man cannot cross the ocean of *Samsara*... Discrimination between Self and non-self which directly leads to *Atma Jnana* cannot come to man without God's grace. Deep devotion to God should first fill the heart of the devotee before he could rise above the temptations of worldly life.

Bhaktya jnanam prajayate – "Out of *Bhakti*, arises *Jnana*" – The *Sastras* say so, and the experience of great men is also the same. The flower of *Bhakti* should blossom first, and from it takes shape the fruit of *Jnana*. In the *Bhakti Yoga* of the Gita, the Lord declares that: Pleased with the love of the devotee, He bestows on Him the fruit of *Jnana*, the power to know the Truth by rejecting what is not real. From this we understand what importance is attached to *Bhakti Yoga*.

The Teacher of the Gita emphasizes *Para-Bhakti* (supreme devotion) and is not satisfied with elementary devotion. To worship with flowers and fruits is ordinary *Bhakti*. To worship the Lord with those objects created by the Lord Himself is after all insignificant. The Lord is mightily pleased when man worships him with the flowers of divine virtue (*daivi sampat*) cultivated carefully in the garden plot of his own mind. This is the supreme worship, supreme *Bhakti*. Therefore Lord Krishna, when He explains *Bhakti*, refers to divine qualities like love, compassion, friendship etc.

It should however be noted that ordinary forms of worship are not decried or precluded in the Gita. Indeed, ordinary external worship will lead to *Para – Bhakti* by gradual process. But the aspirant should not stop with external worship as an end in itself. He should cultivate constantly and persistently the divine qualities mentioned by the Lord, so that *Bhakti yoga* may become complete and perfect.

Of all the *Yogas*, *Bhakti Yoga* is the easiest, because it is congenial to human nature. Hard discipline is not prescribed for this path. It is enough that man should develop unconditional love towards his chosen deity. So *Bhakti* is mentioned in every chapter of the Gita. Even in the fourteenth chapter where Supreme *Jnana* is taught, the last *sloka* dwells on *Bhakti*.

In the *Akshara Para Brahma Yoga*, it is declared that the Supreme *Purusha* is attained only by single-minded devotion to God.

Source: Gita Makarandam



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THE DRIVING FORCE WITHIN

I feel honored to share my heartfelt musings and rumblings with my worthy readers. Whatever I am penning down through this creative forum will find its echoes in the heart of my bosom friends, ones who are endowed, with lyrical symphonies. Certainly they will resonate to give chorus to my inner voice, which will awaken their driving force within.

Change is the law of nature. Everything in this universe, seen or unseen is gradually changing constantly. Physics explains this in terms of force, pressure, and vacuum. Chemistry through reactions, trying to attain nobility... Biology through sustenance, homeostasis, metabolism and evolution... Mathematics explains in terms of equating. All faculties are subjected to change as per the vectorial directions prescribed by Nature. All are incessantly and ceaselessly undergoing change/moving in this mundane world.

Our body is solely under the control of our mind. Our body responds, reacts and behaves as directed by mind. Mind which is seated in Brain is woven by thoughts. Thoughts are like the waves on a beach, unending and untiring. In fact, this powerful mind is the driving force; biologically through our nerves and psychologically through our habits and perceptions.

Only the man is enamored with distinctive and unique faculty of thinking and can influence the whole world with his thoughts and actions. He is the sole legislative and executive of his thoughts, words and deeds. He is empowered

by the power of discretion. Can there be any other virtue in the whole universe other than being blessed with the birth of human life? Can we afford to forfeit the real bliss of life by paying a deaf ear to our sweet and sonorous symphonies of life, which comes only by living at bay with all kinds of good thoughts? Human beings are gifted with a treasure – the mind. Each individual is a spark of the divine. We need to quench the thirst of our soul by feeding it with good thoughts and cure the ailment of mind called boredom. Human beings are gifted with mind which is a power house of thoughts.

Thoughts in the mind always surge like the waves and are called “*Vikalpas*”. A perfect blend of all good thoughts shapes into a “strong will”. The “*Sankalpa*” strong will power results from thoughts focused on a goal which makes us directional. Divine radiance in us, is eclipsed and clouded by murky and mean thoughts.

Strong desire, *Sankalpa*, which arises in our mind, too makes us directional; creating the force to achieve it. The force is directly proportional to the purity of our mind and one-pointedness. It is rightly said that, richness doesn't come by amassing wealth but in having nil desires/few wants, which is one-pointedness. The indicator of richness is zero desire. Often we come across people with a glow on their face. This celestial radiance dances on their faces not from their cosmetics, they are fully attached to cosmic world and they are intuitive by virtue of life. They can understand the succinct philosophy of life. *Sankalpa* is hence our first driving force within.

Discontent is another great driving force in all of us which may grip us at times. It is said, nothing is useless in this world.

“Not a Pebble on the sea swept shore is out of place;

Not a Star in the deep blue yonder is out of place;

But we are not content, perhaps our discontent, too, is not out of place.”

Whenever we are gripped by discontent, we tend to give up, our spirits lower and we sink. But this is a great driving force that is building up within, during which time, we need to hold and on holding, we become focused.

Confusion, where conflicting thought waves surge also leads to a unique driving force. This is especially common among teenagers. Their hearing faculty is very active and feeds on all conflicting statements that are spoken around. Teenagers are prone to conflicting thoughts which rise and fall like the ebb & flow of a tide. This internal bickering churns and emits positive energy. Mind becomes a battlefield. Here confrontation and confusion is truly an opportunity to prove your mettle. The consciousness speaks aloud but remains inaudible. But this confusion too can gain momentum by focusing on our faculties and if handled tactfully, can assume the role of a unique driving force.

Fear, is a strong four letter force that alerts our thoughts and make them flow unidirectional. Fear is a hurricane of thoughts, if left uncontrolled, can transform into a negative force gripping our mind. Fear can be overcome by strong faith in ourselves and in realizing the myth behind the fear. Once we come under the grip of fear, we become low spirited. Fear engulfs our mind like a cyclone, and blows away our happiness. It is a fact that a paralytic patient, out of fear, stood and ran for life when the hospital was under fire. Such is the force of fear. Let us use this as a positive energy, fix a goal and work incessantly. Fear can be overcome by complete surrender to the Divine force.

Those who are not preoccupied with work, having sternal deluge, come under Sigmund Freud effect. Any iota of self-interest, infatuation and strong desire unfulfilled, can lead to total confusion, distraction and depression. Such force too can become strong positive energy when it is selfless and aesthetic. Here we should learn to respect and appreciate the opposite sex.

The present/younger generation – the teenagers are prone to the above mentioned driving forces. If these driving forces are left unbridled, uncared and unattended they become disappointed, derailed and finally dejected. Disastrous consequences can be greatly averted if these driving forces are channelized in the right direction. They need to translate all this into positive energy. This can be used for improvement/betterment.

It is rightly said in Vedas, ‘Mind is responsible for our bondage or liberation’. Mind leads us to failure or success. Our positive thoughts must become our driving force. The state of our mind is the driving force. Moral strength is the need of the hour. Morality and adherence to values will enable us to use our mind judiciously. If we perform the given job from the core of our heart, not expecting any returns as it is professed in the doctrine of *Karma yoga*, we will truly enjoy a strong positive driving force within. In fact we shape our destiny ourselves.

Diversion, no hate principle, contemplation, introspection, prayer, faith in oneself is the powerful weapon to be used in times of crisis - “Turmoil of the Mind”. Just as shadows disappear with the coming of light, similarly all disturbances in our mind disappear, once “Divine force within” is attained.

Our perceptions and preconceived notions affect our thought process. We focus on our weaknesses and arrive at conclusions even before any endeavor or commencement. If we ask our children to walk on a wooden plank four feet wide kept on the ground, they walk easily. If the same plank is kept at a height, they fear to

walk because he develops preconceived notion in mind that he will surely fall. He is now focusing on falling, whereas earlier he focused on walking which he did with ease. Perceptions and Focus are interlinked. In fact Focus of our mind rests, on our perceptions. Perceptions are formed by our healthy background, family background, societal background and superstitions prevailing around us.

Our mind and thought process are subtle, they derive inputs from the gross world around us. The ingredients are taken through our sense organs. Thought waves that are created, start flowing in similar directions (which form habits). *Pranayama*- Breath regulation/control is the only direct link to our thoughts. Our thought process can be easily controlled by *Pranayama* – regulation of Breath. Let us not talk about normal breathing which is essential for existence. It's time to ponder over the "slow & regulated breathing" which helps us to lead a quality life. Let us pause, assess, then try to restart & reinvent our breathing process because the speed of breathing is related to the flow of thoughts. During marching if a wrong step is taken, we need to pause, to set right. Similarly we need to pause our thoughts by withdrawal, reinvent and restart on the correct note.

"U" turn of our thoughts is possible, when we become conscious of our breathing making it slow and focusing on it. There is direct link between the speeds of Breath to the flow of thoughts in us. Our thoughts decide our energy, our aura. Thoughts are the vibrant energy of our soul. By itself, it is cool, white and unsullied. They are tainted by inputs through our sense organs. Our inner voice is always pure, whispers in silence and reveals us many things. Any situation can be overcome by living with it, and accepting it. Let us not amplify the burden of our thoughts by running away. In fact there is no escape.

Consequent upon facing problems and inviting problems we become more fearless day by day. This happens because we start focusing on our strength. This leads to sharpening of

our brain and everything appears bright to us (Placebo effect). Let us foster positive Driving force in us through strong belief in endless hope with a strong mind. We comfortably rely on an unknown pilot/driver/captain in our travel, similarly let us have faith and trust in GOD, in our life journey. People of yesteryears felt the spirit in woods, tongues in trees and sermons in rocks and found good in everything. They enjoyed the finer spirit of knowledge, that is why Swami Vivekananda says,

"Education is the manifestation of perfection already existing in man". Let us also strive as said "Arise, Awake & stop not till the goal is reached."

Swami Sathya Sai Baba says "Real Education is Self Discovery and to develop Inner Vision". Let us all lead peaceful lives and make this world a better place to live in.

— **S. Sreenivasa Raja**

Principal, KV 1 SVN, Visakhapatnam

Thank you Donors!

We are extremely thankful to



Sri Purushottam Das Murarka

for his kind donation of ₹1 lakh towards
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Name of the Donor	Amount
Sri P.K. Reddy	₹1,50,000/-
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BUDDHA AND THE LITTLE GIRL

Once upon a time, Gautam Buddha visits a town. The entire town gathers and is waiting to listen to him, but he goes on waiting. He keeps looking backwards at the road, expecting a little 13 year old girl to come. He happened to meet her on the road and she had told him – “Wait for me. I am going to give this food to my father at the farm, but I will be back in time. Don’t forget, wait for me!”

Finally, the elders of the town said to Gautam Buddha – “For whom are you waiting? Everybody important is present; you can start your discourse.” Buddha replied – “But the person for whom I have come so far is not present yet and I have to wait.”

Finally the girl arrives and exclaims – “I am a little late, but you kept your promise! I knew you would keep your promise because I have been waiting for you since my first memory as a child, when I first became aware... I think I was four years old when I first heard your name. Your name was enough to ring a bell in my heart. And since then for ten long years...I have been waiting!!!”

Buddha responded – “You have not been waiting in vain. You are the person who has attracted me to this village.”

At the end of his discourse, that little girl was the only one who goes to him and says: “Initiate me. I have waited enough, and now I want to be with you.” Buddha replied “You have to be with me because your town is so far out! I cannot keep coming again and again. The road is long, and I am getting old!”



In that entire town not a single person came up to him to be initiated into meditation, other than that little girl.

At night as they were getting ready to sleep, Buddha’s chief disciple Ananda, asked Buddha “Master, before you go to sleep I want to ask you one question. Do you feel a certain pull towards a certain space... just like a magnetic pull?”

Buddha replied, “You are right Ananda. That is how I decide my journeys. When I feel someone is thirsty...so thirsty that without me, there is no other way for them... I have to move in that direction.”

Master moves towards the disciple and the disciple also moves towards the master. Sooner or later they are bound to meet. The meeting is not of the body, the meeting is not of the mind. The meeting is of the very soul!

It is like when you bring two lamps close to each other; the lamps remain separate but their flames become one.

Source: The Wisdom Awakened

NACHIKETA TAPOVAN

Kodgal



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General Health Camp

On 19th March 2017, Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal, organized a 'Free General Health Camp' and 'HIV Awareness Camp' with the help of Saathii NGO. We thank Dr. Chendrayudu, Dr. Siva Ramulu, Dr. Ananya, Dr. Sharanya, Mr. Anthony, Sri Venkateswarlu and Smt. Gayathri for their wonderful health services.



The Message of Vivekachudamani

We are responsible for our destiny. If we are fit, we can wade through the most unfavourable circumstances, else, even favourable conditions will fail to take us far.

- Swami Ranganathananda

Adhikārinamāsāste phalasiddhirvisesatah;

Upāyā desakālādyāh santyasmin-sahakārinah — 14

Success depends essentially on a qualified aspirant. Time, place, and other means are but auxiliaries in this regard.

This is a great verse. Every student in India must be re-educated in the meaning of this verse. It says that success depends essentially on a qualified aspirant (*Adhikārinamāsāste phalasiddhirvisesatah*); time, place, and other means are but auxiliaries in this regard (*Upāyā desakālādyāh santyasmin-sahakārinah*). A candidate's success in spiritual life (or in any other venture) primarily depends upon himself. Time, place, and circumstances are all secondary.

Primarily, the question is: "Am I fit? Have I the desire for Self-knowledge?" This is the most important factor. If we wish to have a particular tree, we have to take the respective seed, sow it, and supply water and manure. If the seed is a living seed, it will assimilate the external supplies and grow into a tree. If the seed were a dead one, all our supplies of water and other ingredients would go in vain. Similarly, here the stress is on the seeker. Does he have a living mind, a living soul? If yes, the auxiliaries will add to his growth and success. Otherwise the external helping factors will prove futile. He must be fully living for a particular cause. External help and circumstances are secondary. If he is capable, truly devoted to a cause, then everything will be all right. Time, place, and other auxiliaries will then prove to be fruitful. It is the candidate who is the primary factor. This is the greatest emphasis seen in this book.



Amazing women of India

The story of the Lijjat Sisterhood



Radha, the young business undergraduate, sat down to watch a television programme with her maverick grandfather. The jingle of 'khurram khurram' sung by the Bunny in the *papad* (crispy bread) advertisement caught her attention. She had tasted the *papad* just yesterday and noted the name of the organization – 'Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat *Papad*'. Her grandfather then related the story of the organization to her –

Grandpa, do you know about Lijjat *papad*? I heard it is a very old organization.

Yes, Radha. It was started by seven sisters on March 15, 1959 with just four packets of *papads* in Girgaum, Mumbai. They wanted to supplement their family income and did this with the help of the skill they had – cooking – on the terrace of their homes. Within a few months, they grew to 200 and they had their first export order for *papads* at the end of their first year. They are now spread throughout the country – the proud Lijjat sisterhood. Not just *papads*, they make many products like wheat flour, *khakra* and even detergents. But *papad* is the most famous product.

Sisterhood or a business? I am confused.

It is both. Every woman involved in the activities of Lijjat is a member of the sisterhood. They equally own Lijjat irrespective of their seniority or any other position. They are equal partners in the profits and losses of Lijjat. It is an all-women enterprise. Men can only be employed; they cannot become members (owners) of Lijjat.

How did the name 'Lijjat' come about?

The name 'Lijjat' which means 'tasty' in Gujarati, was selected after a contest with a prize money of Rs. 5 was conducted through the local media about seven years after the sisters first started work.

Can you tell me a little more about their business?

As I said, it is more of a cooperative activity. Every woman can become a member by taking a pledge to be bound by principles of Sarvodaya – self-reliance, co-ownership and faith in the dignity of labour. A group kneads the dough, which is then given to the members every morning after being weighed. They take it back home and bring back the rolled *papads* next morning. They are then paid their wages, according to their productivity. Their strict no-credit policy means they do not seek credit from suppliers, nor do they extend any to distributors. Since their accounts are maintained on a daily basis, they are transparent.

Given that they are present nationwide, how do they maintain the quality? I tasted the *papad* at my hostel and one yesterday at home. They were exactly the same.

That is their USP! In order to maintain uniformity and quality, raw materials are sent to all the branches from the central office. Women take a quality pledge and demarcate a neat and clean area of their homes for rolling the *papads*. They are trained to make the perfect *papads*, but if anyone is found wanting, they are given a different task like packing. Rigorous quality testing means an entire lot which is not up to





the mark may simply be destroyed! But, you see, since all the members partake the profits and losses equally, they are driven to be efficient.

Are they professionally managed?

It depends on the meaning you give to the word 'professional'. I would say yes, they are professionally managed. They are headed by an elected 21-member managing committee which takes all the major business decisions. See the democracy at work – a woman who joins as just a roller of *papads* can become the President of the organization. The everyday functions are decentralized and the local branches are free to take their own decisions.

But, Grandpa, with so much advancement in the corporate world, they must be just another company.

Radha, before you come to such a conclusion, note these points – the women started with Rs. 80 that they borrowed and their first year sales were worth Rs. 6196. Now the women are handling a business of over 300 crores. These more than 42,000 (mostly illiterate) women prepare about 1.9 crore kilos of *papad* every year in their 62 branches across 17 Indian States. The Udyog has been awarded by the Economic Times as the 'businessperson' of the year in 2002 amidst standing ovation from corporate honchos. Women who were afraid to even pick up a phone are now handling such a huge business, which has several divisions and manufacturing units. And see their social impact

– women are encouraged to become literate through their *Akshardeep* (lamp of learning) programme, they supplement their family incomes and gain confidence with financial independence. The Udyog is also a prominent donor for social causes.

Radha was humbled. She understood the collective power of women and the strength of their resolve. These are the women trained in the school of life!

Spoken English Workshop

18th March 2018 - Spoken English workshop was conducted for our teachers by Mrs. Swethambari. The teachers really liked it and were enthusiastic for having more of such kind.



24th March 2017 - Nachiketa Vidya Mandir children from 3rd and 4th Grades, visited KidiHou, a skill based science lab.



The other 'I'

*I*t is said that a life without a friend is like death without a witness. A good friend plays an important role in one's life. The names of Damon and Pythias have become synonymous with friendship.

Dr. Samuel Johnson glorified friendship in the following verse:

"Friendship, peculiar boon of Heaven

The noble minds' delight and pride

To men and angels only given

To all the lower and denied"

The great mathematician Pythagoras defined a friend mathematically as "One who is the other I -such as 220 and 284". It means that unless one identifies with the other, the two cannot be friends indeed! The peculiarity of these numbers is that the sum of the divisors of one number is equal to the other number. Such numbers are called Amicable numbers. $(1+2+4+5+10+11+20+22+44+55+110 = \text{sum of the divisors of } 220 = 284 \text{ and } 1+2+4+71+142 = \text{sum of the divisors of } 284 = 220)$.

Euler, another great mathematician listed out 60 pairs of such numbers but lost sight of one set 1184 and 1210. A young lad of sixteen, Paganini scooped out this pair. This rarity of good friends among the mass of men, like the amicable numbers in the whole myriad of numbers, was attributed to the fact that God confined reason to the narrow cells of the brain whereas He left for the emotions and passions the whole body to range in.

The other pairs of amicable numbers are (2620, 2924), (5020, 5564), (6232, 6368)... (6363584, 9437056)... etc.



The answer to the same question by a physicist would be "Friends should be like the spectral lines D_1, D_2 ". Sodium vapour lamp gives its characteristic spectrum consisting of two yellow lines – the D_1, D_2 lines. These two lines have wavelengths 5890 and 5896Å. They are so close that none can see them as separate, unless one uses a high resolving power telescope. They are indistinguishable. One is the true replica of the other, or the mirror image of the other possessing all the characteristics of the original one.

In the domain of Chemistry, two elements – Sodium and Chlorine – are dangerous. Sodium has 11 electrons $(2+8+1)$ orbiting round its nucleus and Chlorine has 17 electrons $(2+8+7)$ orbiting round its nucleus. Sodium has 1 electron in the third orbit while Chlorine has 7 electrons in its third orbit. Sodium is poisonous, very reactive, and never calm and Chlorine is most pungent, fusing and fatal to life, both are devils. However when they get together, Sodium offers one electron to Chlorine. Now both acquire an octet structure – 8 electrons in each of the outer orbits, and become sober. They become ions and the bond between them is very strong. They merge together and continue to be good friends giving a helping hand to all. The bad in them is totally abhorred. The two are identified as one – Sodium Chloride or Salt (a white substance present in sea water commonly

eaten with food or added to preserve it). But beware - hypertension is a killer hence reduce using salt.

When nitrogen and oxygen join together nitrous oxide (N_2O) is formed. It is a colourless gas used as a mild anaesthetic in dentistry, etc. We call it laughing gas. When these friends smile their problems reconcile; when these friends laugh their problems are off! How then all humanity will be a haven!

Limited knowledge- a conscientious mathematics professor evaluated the answer scripts of his students after the examination. The student's marks ranged from 13 to 99 marks but not 100. He took pains to calculate the percentages in all cases up to the sixth place after the decimal. He found them to be 13.131313, 14.141414, 15.151515,71.717171.. when he found such beautiful symmetry in every case, he thought it futile to calculate any further and simply marked the percentages on the remaining scripts which had 72 marks and above.

The professor was returning the answer scripts to the students with an explanation of what had happened. When the student was named whom he had awarded 99.999999, he remorsefully said, 'though I find no fault in your script, yet your percentage falls short of 100. I have no explanation, but I want to know the reason from you'. The boy coolly replied, 'I call that the limit, which I have reached but which you have missed'.

Have you fifty friends? It is not enough.

Have you one enemy?- It is too much.

Italian proverb.

- K.V. Rama Krishna Sastry

Letter of Appreciation

Dear Mam/ Sir,

Greetings! I am Srikala from Chennai. I by chance came to know about your magazine when I was reading some spiritual articles online. I am glad to know that you are publishing magazine covering various positive inspiring aspects. Nice to connect with you.

Professionally I had been a teacher, currently I am pursuing PhD in Pharmacology and writing thesis.

God and spirituality fascinates and inspires me and as a spiritual seeker, I write some articles on psychology, spirituality and few are published in papers and magazines. I would be very happy to share one of my recent personal experiences with the readers of your magazine on: 'Surrender to God as a sign of strength' if I am allowed to. I thought it could inspire the readers.

May I please share? Also I wish to subscribe for your magazine,

Kindly reply how to proceed regarding these.

Awaiting your kind reply

Thanks and regards

Srikala Ganapathy

Festivals & Events of MAY 2017



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Last date for Registration 4th May, 2017

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*Registration forms are available at
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- 170 children from LKG - Grade 5
- With the accrued annual interest, one child's education will be supported annually without touching the principal itself
- At present, we only have 10 corpus sponsorships. Help us reach all of our 170 children
- Donors receive annual report card
- We express our thanks to Corpus Donors by permanently inscribing their names on the recognition board

Insight

Education is one of the most essential and immediate need of the hour in this district. Even after 69 years of independence, education is an unfulfilled dream of rural Indian children. Hence, Nachiketa Tapovan is set to adopt various educational projects to bring smiles in the lives of many children who are deprived of education.

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

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A/c No. : 62082979281
A/c Name : Nachiketa Tapovan
Bank : State Bank of Hyderabad
Branch : Badepally (20193)
IFSC Code : SBHY0020193
Please send transfer details & address to
Swamiji 99 08 23 45 45
nachiketananda@gmail.com

Overseas Donations- Details

(Exclusively for Foreign Currency only)

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

(Note: IFSC code contains the number "zero" not letter "O")

Nachiketa Tapovan, Nachiketa Adhyatmapuri, Survey No. 229 to 233, Kodgal (V), Jadcherla (M),
Mahaboobnagar Dist. Ashram: 800 888 28 28 SMS to Swamiji: 99 08 23 45 45

Email: nachiketananda@gmail.com admin@nachiketatapovan.org Website: www.nachiketatapovan.org

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

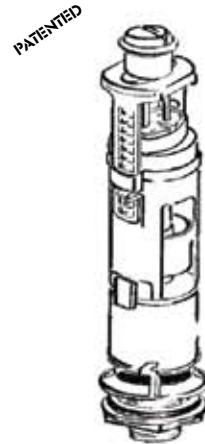
By the year 2025, 2.8 billion people, one third of the world's population will experience water scarcity. About 25 to 30% of the population in Gujarat, Rajasthan, the Gangetic Plains, West Bengal and the North Eastern Areas will have practically no water.

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.



*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!**

Save  water



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