

Nachiketanjali

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Cover Story



India is home to millions of rural people without access to clean water. Rural populations in poor and geographically isolated areas face particular challenges in terms of accessing clean water. And extreme weather events and climate change make such challenges more acute. Despite being one of the world's fastest growing economies, ensuring water security for its growing population is one of the main challenges facing the country.

Women are typically saddled with the burden of being water providers for their families. In rural India, women travel a few kilometers daily carrying up to fifteen litres of water in each trip. The pressure creates back, feet, and posture problems and robs them of the much needed time to earn an income or take care of their children.

Adolescent girls often miss out on school or college to fetch water for their families in rural India. Lack of access to drinking water in school affects the learning environment for both students and teachers.

Water is a necessity. There is no education over water. Immense care has to be taken to save every drop of water during the rainy season and preserve it for the hot months. It is the foremost duty of the Government to supply a water tap to every household and people should learn the value of water and not waste it.

Water is precious...so is life!

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HARNESS THE POWER OF FEAR

The brave ones will never give up until their goal is achieved. But what about those who always dwell in fear? Are there no prospects for them to succeed in their lives? They definitely have, but only when they decide to get rid of their fear. It is necessary to go to the root cause of the fear in order to get rid of it. For instance, we might see a rope in the darkness and think it is a snake. We develop a fear within, which we carry forever. Unless we understand the difference between the rope and the snake we can't get rid of this fear.

Some of us on reading or hearing some tragic news fear that the tragedy might befall us. We carry this thought day and night and our lives become miserable with this fear. More than a strong body, we need a strong mind to overcome our fears. The thoughts of 'I can't', 'It won't happen' will create negativity to which we tend to hang on. It is essential to get rid of all negative thoughts and instead entertain the more positive ones. This will help us in overcoming our fear.

One should never think that someone would come along to remove our fear. No one is going to arrive. The fear was created by ourselves and hence we are responsible to get rid of it on our own. Welcome new changes in your life.

Once, a boatman had a fear that his boat would sink and stayed put on the shore. He couldn't get rid of this fear and as a result his family suffered. They had to starve as the boatman couldn't earn any money for the food. One day he gained courage and untied his boat and went fishing. He was able to get a good catch which gave him confidence and slowly with this new gained confidence he could overcome his fear. This happened because he ventured out to face the difficulty with courage.

Courage is necessary to harness the power of fear and instead of waiting for circumstances to teach us, let us always live with the confidence that we are the architects of our own lives and whether we adopt fear or courage solely lies with us. If we aspire to climb a peak isn't it necessary to take those steps? Can we climb if we keep looking at the peak and fearing its height? Only when the attempt is made, success can be achieved.

If we observe a tree we understand that it stands tall and strong because it has built a strong foundation by developing strong roots. Similarly having a strong mind can help us in harnessing the power of fear. We can say that a courageous person is the wealthiest person.

- Subhadra K.

'Silent Training'

that can build up the character and beyond...!

*I*t's a story of two friends Jayant and Shailesh who grew up playing together, studying together, dancing together, laughing together and crying together yet they were poles apart. As we all know, urban life is more robotic than rural life. Even though one grows in a very heavenly atmosphere, one has to apply himself or herself and will have to go through the odds of life. But if one is prepared for the life, he will never run away from the situation for sure; no matter what kind of situation one is going through. So it is not just the environment that creates an impact or prepares a person for life, it is how one deals with the situation in life and perhaps it is one's upbringing that speaks for itself and also contributes enormously to life.

Shailesh's family was from lower middle class with an average lifestyle and though not having savings; somehow, they were able to manage their family affairs in a dignified manner. Shailesh's mother was extremely caring. She used to make sure that her child had no issue whatsoever. Right from waking up to going to bed, supplying hot water for bathing, getting ready his school bag and tiffin to bathing him and dropping him at school was done by his mother religiously. His uniform used to be neatly ironed every day. He had hardly anything to do except attending school and completing his homework. Beyond that he doesn't remember.



However, the story was different in Jayant's house. Neighbors used to think, the mother was very rude to her son. From waking up at wee hour till going to bed, Jayant had to spend time with his mother contributing everything that he could with his tiny little hands. He even had to collect fire wood. At a very young age he was made to roll *chapatis* and was asked to cook almost twice in a week. Jayant had hardly time to study but his illiterate mother used to make sure that, he is taking care of his homework. For outsiders it was as if, Jayant had no option but to work with his mother.

Time passed by, children grew and started going to college. Life was almost the same and both the friends were doing well. After a few years both the friends got married and were leading a happy life. Shailesh was living in an urban area and his friend Jayant in the same village. Mothers were still taking care of them as usual. Everything was going on smoothly. Life seemed to be normal but one day Shailesh receives a call from his wife that his mother passed away. He rushes to his house and is completely shattered. He breaks down. It was so painful for him to think that his mother is no more. Every time he remembers his mother, he breaks down. There was not even a single moment that he did not miss her physical presence. He immediately makes a call to his friend and asks him to come over to his house. His friend, without wasting a single moment tries to reach his house to console him and his family.

On seeing Jayant, Shailesh once again starts weeping and says, "Without my mother I feel my life is lifeless. I may get back to life but it won't be the same. I do not know how I would manage my family without my mother. Why God has done this to me? How caring she was! I feel as if someone has taken my soul out from me..."

Jayant spent all 10 days with his friend taking extreme care of him and his family. Whenever Shailesh remembered his mother or tried to talk to him, he gave a very patient hearing. Jayant

made sure that he is throughout with his friend but through silence. On the eleventh day, when Jayant wanted to take leave, Shailesh asks his friend about his job and life. Jayant replies that everything is fine. When he asks him about his mother, Jayant focuses himself at an empty space, then looks into his friend's eyes deeply and says, "My mother too has left her mortal body. Sorry I couldn't even tell you. She met with an accident and we had no time even to call our near and dear and needed to complete the last rites before the sunset. Anyway, I never felt any vacuum within, since she taught me great lessons of life. I always had an opportunity to work with her and learn everything that I could. Today whatever I am, it is all because of my mother. You know dear Shailesh, every time when I was asked to work; she was always there to teach me the best lessons of life. She used to tell me, never think that any work is small or big and make sure that you respect every work. I think, she has demonstrated what true dignity of labour is. I'm sure, every mother stands for that. Even on the hospital bed she was more vibrant than life itself. And perhaps because of her way of upbringing, I am today what I am. I never felt any vacuum or her absence in my life whereas I always feel her presence every moment... I can still feel her..."

She taught me how to live in every moment. I feel, if not for her, I would have lost myself somewhere for sure. She has shaped my life in such a way that I was never dependent. It is she who has taught me the great lesson of individuality.

I do not know how you look at yourself but for me it is clear... I can feel her every touch, every breath, throbbing heart and pulsating soul. She was, she is and she will be always there to inspire me even more. Please take care of yourself. You have children and wife and if you lose yourself, what would they look at? You must be everything for them without disturbing their own identities. Let them grow, help them out and make sure that your identity is not engulfing them but encouraging them to learn the lessons of life on their own."

Shailesh was speechless... unable to understand anything. He was lost somewhere. After listening to his friend, he says, "I'm sorry I was not aware of anything". Then after having an early dinner, Jayant asks his friend to drop him at the railway station so that he can go back to his house and resume his work. After dinner, they both go to the railway station. Jayant boards the train. Shailesh waits on the platform having a normal conversation. But when the train was about to leave, Shailesh suddenly remembers that, he didn't ask Jayant, when his mother had passed away. So now he asks, "Dear Jayant, sorry but I just wanted to know when your mother passed away." And just then the train started moving. Jayant replies "My dear friend, just 10 days before your mother passed away."

The train starts moving fast and so did Shailesh's thoughts. He just stands there, lost to time and by the time, he comes back to his senses, he finds there is no trace of the train or his friend... he looks at himself surrounded by people who are busy in their own world like himself, not knowing the world without. Thoughts were just rushing within his mind churning his whole being. He thinks, life without near and dear can still be very useful but life without true feelings is of no use for anyone whatsoever. It is that true feeling that creates a presence and not a robotic life... No doubt, I had the best time and support from my mother but Jayant had the best 'Silent Training' and true feeling from his mother. My mother was more concerned with my life, so she took extreme care of me and made me more dependent; whereas his mother was a task master who prepared her son for life. It took a long time for him to realise that, Jayant attended his mother's final rites and rituals leaving his own mother's final rites and rituals far behind...! What a soul... what a man... what a pal... what a person of commitment and character... and what a Silent Training by his mother...!

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri



Benefits of Puja vidhi

God does not get benefited or impressed by puja vidhi. It is only for our evolution that we perform puja vidhi. By doing puja regularly, one unconsciously acquires many attributes.

1. Asana siddhi: *Maintaining one posture for a period of time*

2. One-pointedness of mind: *Mind has a tendency to wander, puja helps in training mind steadily*

3. Purity of thoughts: *One develops positive thoughts and the sense of gratitude*

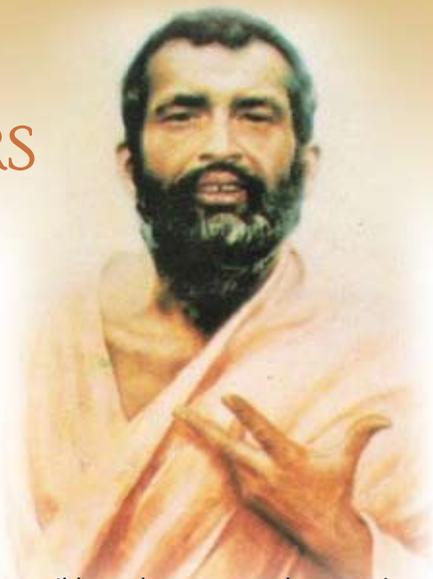
4. Tuning with the Divine: *From childhood we always try to learn about the world outside us than within us. Puja is one tool where we try to make an attempt to know our Self*

5. Discovering the relation between the Self and God: *The world where we reside is not a true world and all relations we have in the world are like reflections in the water. But puja is one great instrument that helps us discover the eternal relationship. Start doing Puja to discover your eternal relationship with the almighty*

- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri



Advice to HOUSEHOLDERS



Sri Ramakrishna was conversing with Kedar and some other devotees in his room in the temple garden. Kedar was a government official and had spent several years at Dacca, in East Bengal, where he had become a friend of Vijay Goswami. The two would spend a great part of their time together, talking about Sri Ramakrishna and his spiritual experiences. Kedar had once been a member of the Brahmo Samaj. He followed the path of *bhakti*. Spiritual talk always brought tears to his eyes.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon. Kedar was very happy that day, having arranged a religious festival for Sri Ramakrishna. A singer had been hired by Ram, and the whole day passed in joy.

The Master explained to the devotees the secret of communion with God.

MASTER: "With the realization of Satchidananda one goes into *samadhi*. Then duties drop away. Suppose I have been talking about the Ostad and he arrives. What need is there of talking about him then? How long does the bee buzz around? So long as it isn't sitting on a flower. But it will not do for the *sadhaka* to renounce duties. He should perform his duties, such as worship, *japa*, meditation, prayer, and pilgrimage.

"If you see someone engaged in reasoning even after he has realized God, you may liken him to a bee, which also buzzes a little even while sipping honey from a flower."

The Master was highly pleased with the Ostad's music. He said to the musician, "There is a special manifestation of God's power in a man who has any outstanding gift, such as proficiency in music."

MUSICIAN: "Sir, what is the way to realize God?"

MASTER: "*Bhakti* is the one essential thing to be sure. God exists in all beings. Who, then, is a devotee? He, whose mind dwells on God, but this

is not possible as long as one has egotism and vanity. The water of God's grace cannot collect on the high mound of egotism. It runs down. I am a mere machine.

(To Kedar and the other devotees) "God can be realized through all paths. All religions are true. The important thing is to reach the roof. You can reach it by stone stairs or by wooden stairs or by bamboo steps or by a rope. You can also climb up by a bamboo pole.

"You may say that there are many errors and superstitions in another religion. I should reply: Suppose there are. Every religion has errors. Everyone thinks that his watch alone gives the correct time. It is enough to have yearning for God. It is enough to love Him and feel attracted to Him. Don't you know that God is the Inner Guide? He sees the longing of our heart and the yearning of our soul. Suppose a man has several sons. The older boys address him distinctly as 'Baba' or 'Papa', but the babies can at best call him 'Ba' or 'Pa'. Now, will the father be angry with those who address him in this indistinct way? The father knows that they too are calling him, only they cannot pronounce his name well. All children are the same to the father. Likewise, the devotees call on God alone, though by different names. They call on one Person only. God is one, but His names are many."

Source: The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna
By Swami Nikhilananda



Mataji's speech

on Swami Ranganathananda's Birthday on 15th December 2016

Celebrating Swami Ranganathananda's birthday today should not be limited to this particular day but should be a continuous process of celebrating the values he taught every single day. His love for humanity emerged from his renunciation or *vairagya*.

One of the issues close to Swamiji's heart was keeping our mother earth clean. It pained him to see people littering the road. Mothers in our country have immense energy to manage home, work and other issues with great patience and I wondered how it is possible. This is only possible because of their love for their family.

My dear *Ammas* and *Nannas*, if you experience that love in everything, you will feel the same pain for mother earth. If you feel that love for mother earth you will never let anyone spoil mother earth. This true Vedanta we need to understand by experience.

Swamiji wanted us to develop and cultivate the consciousness that the God who is sitting in the temple is the same God who is embodied in Mother Earth. He said "I don't want ordinary citizens, I want enlightened citizens with that presence of love."

From where then this Yoga emerges? You can look at the sky through the window but Swamiji wanted us to come out and view the vast sky. The

same thing with love; you are now experiencing love within your home but the same love when extended, it becomes a huge universe.

How then will you cultivate that love? - By knowing yourself.

How do you know yourself? By *Sadhana* or *Abyasa*.

We Indians have preconceived notions about *vairagya*, that renunciation is only applicable to *sanyasis* and not *grihastas*. I want you to understand that *tyaga* is happening in you but you are not conscious about it. We don't feel our presence because we don't feel that *vairagya* in us.

Swamiji, could give his love to lakhs of people just because of that *vairagya*. *Vairagya* is a greatest treasure. You have different attachments of which you are not aware. If you start differentiating yourself then your *sadhana* becomes the greatest weapon. There is a beauty in being a mother to the world. And of course there is beauty being mother to one too, but that beauty will enhance in manifold when you will become mother to many. And that mother I have seen in Swami Ranganathanandaji. Truly, when you look into his eyes one can feel and see the ocean of love he could give to this world.

When you are conscious about yourself you can really feel the greatness in you and the same greatness you can feel in others. You can feel that love within you and extend that love to others.

Do not give up on *Sadhana*. The moment you tell your mind this is not possible then mind follows that instruction. So my dear *sadhakas*, enlightenment doesn't come just by realising God, it comes when you realise God within you. Only then you can see the God without.

When Bhagat Singh died, his mother was crying and when somebody consoled her she said that she was not crying for her son but was feeling bad that God has given her only one son. This kind of quality will come only when you are enlightened from within. My dear *sadhakas*, I want you to make changes in your inner software and be conscious of what we take in so that you will express yourself beautifully. I always give one simple example to everybody. I say if your own child scolds you, you will never feel bad. You may feel bad for a moment but next moment you will say it is my own child, but if any outsider scolds you, if he tells you something you will carry with you for a while. So this comes naturally. You will spontaneously forgive, forget and love everybody when you do *sadhana*. Without *sadhana*, service alone doesn't help. Without *sadhana* if you serve, you have a feeling of ego.

Swamiji's dream was utilising all our energies even if it is for one minute. Let me tell you one more subtle thing if you want your *sadhana* to be successful and if you want to progress in your *sadhana*, we need to clear few *samskaras*. For that you need to utilise your time to the best otherwise, you will never progress in *sadhana*. We need to evaluate ourselves.

My sincere request, please do *sadhana*. Ma Sarada says 'follow it blindly' because she knows very well as she has practised. Whether you like it or not hold *japamala* in your hand. Try to develop the practise of having a single thought

about somebody else other than your loved ones when you wake up in the morning and before going to bed.

Please practise and wisdom and knowledge will come. If you don't practise you need to refer books outside of you but if you practise you can refer the books within you.

Try to practise few things like not throwing garbage, being ecologically conscious etc. Also when you wake up early in the morning start with this prayer "*samudra vasane devi parvathasthana mandale Vishnu pathni namasthubyam padasparsham kshamaswame.*" You need to pay gratitude towards the mother earth and also pass this on to our children.

- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri

Eye and Dental Camp



On 13th April, Lions Club conducted a Dental Camp for pre-primary Nachiketa Tapovan Vidya Mandir children. Dr. Sita also conducted a counselling session for 8th & 9th graders on personal hygiene. An Eye Camp was also organized by 'Vision in Kids' with the help of our volunteer Arathi. We thank them for their generous services.

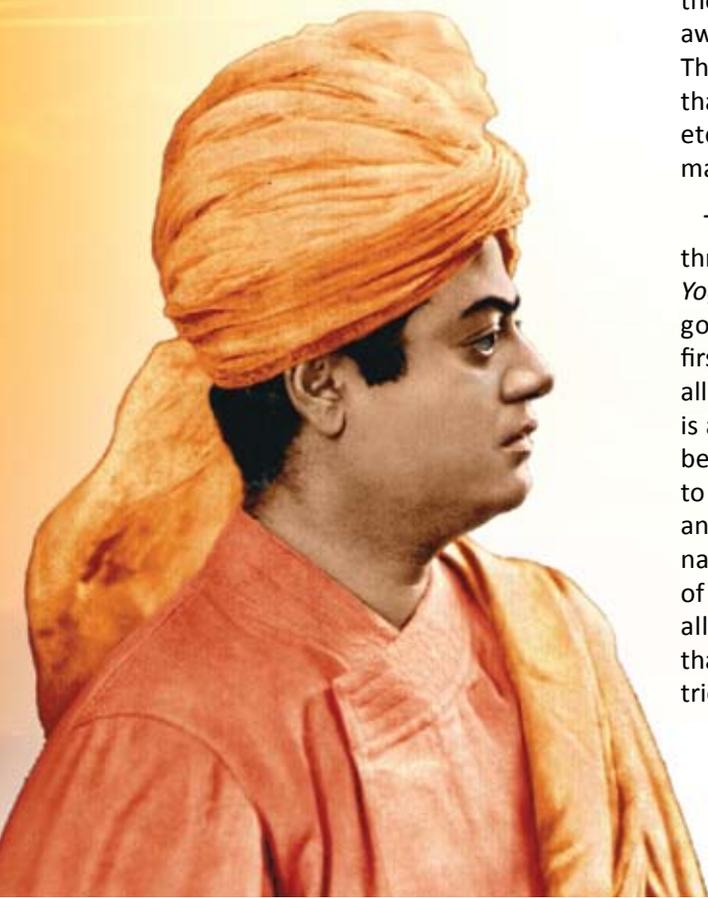


The preparatory renunciation

We have to speak of a preparation to the practice of *Para-Bhakti*. All such preparations are intended only for the purification of the soul. The repetition of names, the rituals, the forms, and the symbols, all these various things are for the purification of the soul. The greatest purifier among all such things, a purifier without which no one can enter the regions of this higher devotion (*Para-Bhakti*), is renunciation. This frightens many; yet, without it, there cannot be any spiritual growth. In all our *Yogas* this renunciation is necessary. This is the stepping-stone and the real centre and the real heart of all spiritual culture — renunciation. This is religion — renunciation.

When the human soul draws back from the things of the world and tries to go into deeper things; when man, the spirit which has here somehow become concretised and materialised, understands that he is thereby going to be destroyed and to be reduced almost into mere matter, and turns his face away from matter — then begins renunciation, then begins real spiritual growth. The *Karma-Yogi's* renunciation is in the shape of giving up all the fruits of his action; he is not attached to the results of his labour; he does not care for any reward here or hereafter. The *Râja-Yogi* knows that the whole of nature is intended for the soul to acquire experience, and that the result of all the experiences of the soul is for it to become aware of its eternal separateness from nature. The human soul has to understand and realise that it has been spirit, and not matter, through eternity, and that this conjunction of it with matter is and can be only for a time.

The *Raja-Yogi* learns the lesson of renunciation through his own experience of nature. The *Jnâna-Yogi* has the harshest of all renunciations to go through, as he has to realise from the very first that the whole of this solid-looking nature is all an illusion. He has to understand that all that is any kind of manifestation of power in nature belongs to the soul, and not to nature. He has to know from the very start that all knowledge and all experience are in the soul and not in nature; so he has at once and by the sheer force of rational conviction to tear himself away from all bondage to nature. He lets nature and all that belongs to her go; he lets them vanish and tries to stand alone!



Of all renunciations, the most natural, so to say, is that of the *Bhakti-Yogi*. Here there is no violence, nothing to give up, nothing to tear off, as it were, from ourselves, nothing from which we have violently to separate ourselves. The *Bhakta's* renunciation is easy, smooth flowing, and as natural as the things around us. We see the manifestation of this sort of renunciation, although more or less in the form of caricatures, every day around us. A man begins to love a woman; after a while he loves another and the first woman he lets go. She drops out of his mind smoothly, gently, without his feeling the want of her at all. A woman loves a man; she then begins to love another man, and the first one drops off from her mind quite naturally. A man loves his own city, then he begins to love his country, and the intense love for his little city drops off smoothly, naturally. Again, a man learns to love the whole world; his love for his country, his intense, fanatical patriotism drops off without hurting him, without any manifestation of violence.

An uncultured man loves the pleasures of the senses intensely; as he becomes cultured, he begins to love intellectual pleasures, and his sense-enjoyments become less and less. No man can enjoy a meal with the same gusto or pleasure as a dog or a wolf, but those pleasures which a man gets from intellectual experiences and achievements, the dog can never enjoy. At first, pleasure is in association with the lowest senses; but as soon as an animal reaches a higher plane of existence, the lower kind of pleasures becomes less intense.

In human society, the nearer the man is to the animal, the stronger is his pleasure in the senses; and the higher and the more cultured the man is, the greater is his pleasure in intellectual and such other finer pursuits. So when a man gets

even higher than the plane of the intellect, higher than that of mere thought, when he gets to the plane of spirituality and of divine inspiration, he finds there a state of bliss, compared with which all the pleasures of the senses, or even of the intellect, are as nothing. When the moon shines brightly, all the stars become dim; and when the sun shines, the moon herself becomes dim. The renunciation necessary for the attainment of *Bhakti* is not obtained by killing anything, but just comes in as naturally as in the presence of an increasingly stronger light; the less intense ones become dimmer and dimmer until they vanish away completely. So this love of the pleasures of the senses and of the intellect is all made dim and thrown aside and cast into the shade by the love of God Himself.

That love of God grows and assumes a form which is called *Para-Bhakti* or supreme devotion. Forms vanish, rituals fly away, books are superseded; images, temples, churches, religions and sects, countries and nationalities — all these little limitations and bondages fall off by their own nature from him who knows this love of God. Nothing remains to bind him or fetter his freedom. A ship, all of a sudden, comes near a magnetic rock, and its iron bolts and bars are all attracted and drawn out, and the planks get loosened and freely float on the water. Divine grace thus loosens the binding bolts and bars of the soul, and it becomes free. So in this renunciation auxiliary to devotion, there is no harshness, no dryness no struggle, nor repression nor suppression. The *Bhakta* has not to suppress any single one of his emotions, he only strives to intensify them and direct them to God.

Source: Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda
advaitaashrama.org

Ugly is the new beauty



“Hey! What are those white patches on your neck?” Is the first question everyone asks me when they meet me for the first time. Yes! I have white spots on my neck...I have Vitiligo.

The second question would be “Why don’t you try this treatment”?

I just stay calm until they complete.

Why should I consider my spots as an obstacle for anything? In fact, it is only favouring me.

Let me narrate one incident.

One day, I was waiting for the elevator in my hostel. All of a sudden, a dermatologist started staring at me and introduced herself and started explaining the new advanced treatments in Vitiligo. The conversation went on in a very friendly manner. Now, she became a good friend of mine... and I see her often.

What if I had no Vitiligo? The conversation wouldn’t have started at all. I would have been standing like every other girl.

It’s only due to my Vitiligo, a conversation is being started. It’s only due to my Vitiligo that makes me feel unique. It’s only due to my Vitiligo, people are noticing me. Why should I feel sad when so many good things are happening due to these white beautiful spots?

Coming to Vitiligo, it is one of the best diseases I have seen. I better not call it a disease, because it never actually caused any discomfort. It was never a disease. It might be an autoimmune disorder; I don’t care whatever the cause may be...I am happy with it.

Vitiligo never causes you discomfort; it is the people who make you feel uncomfortable.

Vitiligo never causes any suffering; it is the people who make it so.

Why should I hide my spots? It is part of my skin. Why does everyone want me to change... rather than accepting the way I am?

Imperfections are the best part of man. You might be so short, so what? Be happy that you are different. You might have a humpy nose? So what? Be happy that you have a designer nose. You might not have a perfect skin. So what? You are beautiful the way you are. It is not the skin that defines who you are...neither your nose nor your height. It is YOU who define yourself, just by accepting the way you are.

I am ok with anything what nature gives me. If the spots are healed...Fine, I will be happy... if they are the same...my happiness also remains the same. Whatever I am or I will be, I will always accept myself and remain happy.

“Imperfections are perfect, it is better to be absolutely ridiculous rather than being absolutely boring.”

- Harathi Reddy

STORY OF THE UMBRELLA AND FOOTWEAR



*A*s summer approaches, everyone would look for an umbrella and proper footwear to protect them from the scorching heat as they venture outdoors. But do you know the story of how the umbrella and footwear came into existence? Here we go.

There is an interesting story in the Mahabharata. After the Kurukshetra war, Bhishma was lying on the bed of arrows, waiting for the auspicious time of *Uttarayana* to leave his mortal body. As he rested there, the eldest of the Pandava brothers, Dharmaraja, visited him and Bhishma clarified his many doubts. He also told him the story of the umbrella and footwear.

“In the ancient times, there was a *Rishi* named Jamadagni. One day he was practicing archery along with his wife Renukadevi who stood beside him equipping him with the arrows. After a while Jamadagni realized the supply had stopped and when he looked back, he found his wife perspiring and taking shelter under a tree. He asked her the reason and Renukadevi said the scorching heat of the Sun was too much for her to bear. Jamadagni instantly got angry with the Sun for making his wife suffer. He tried to cover the Sun with a sheath of his arrows. Realising the danger, the Sun God, Surya appeared in front of Jamadagni in the garb of a Brahmin.

‘*O Rishi*, is it fair on your part to cover the Sun? Isn’t it because of the Sun that water evaporates and comes back as rain? Isn’t it because of him that all creation in this universe is surviving? Just imagine what will be the result of your action. There will be no rains and would result in destruction of all living beings. Do you want to destroy God’s creation?’ the Brahmin tried to pacify Jamadagni.

But *Rishi* Jamadagni was not convinced with this reasoning. He was still seething with anger. So the Sun God Surya manifested in his original form and said, ‘*O Rishi!* Please forgive me for the discomfort caused by me. But please don’t shut off my light and throw the world in darkness. I beg your pardon.’

Jamadagni’s heart melted when he saw the form of Surya in front of him. Surya’s humbleness cooled down his anger. Surya manifested umbrellas and two pairs of footwear and gifted them to *Rishi* Jamadagni and his wife Renukadevi and asked them to get protected from his heat. That is how the umbrella and footwear came into existence. To this day, we can see these two items donated by our elders, as part of their charity.

- A Puranic Story retold

Undefined – Friend

As I sat down to write this month's article the endeavor seems to be challenging. The thoughts came gushing without any break but it was hard for me to put it in an orderly manner to churn out something meaningful. The subject is so vast; it is hard to define in a convincing way. If I fail to interpret, it is not the problem of the topic but my limited perception. It is not a relation to speak about its responsibility. It is not a commitment to check for its upkeep. It is not a burden to get relieved at some point of time. It just happens accidentally but continues till the last breath.

There are no promises made here. No guarantees provided. No parrot talks. No give and take policy. Just it is an unconditional love between two souls; of togetherness even during times of hardships. It is the situation; where one can be one's own self; where no explanation is required. An understanding, where words fall short to express. Only acceptance is the known currency. Even Silence is a kind of communication. You are respected irrespective of your position. You are loved as a person not for what you hold or achieved. No preaching classes are taken for your failure. No demands are made for our success for they are part of our success. No integrity issues. No hidden secrets. It gets more and more transparent as the days roll by. Bond becomes stronger during testing times. Though in no way related and no obligation on their part, yet the bonding stays forever.

Whether you are in touch or not does not make any difference as you are always remembered. It is not maintained on other's point of view or opinion but on our own confidence and belief. It is for this relation people broke the rules.

Disciples disobey their Guru. Lord is oblivious of divinity in his presence. It is for this reason; even a common man challenges the authority. It is for this reason; a King makes his Subject a King. It is for this reason; wishes are fulfilled even before demand. Whatever is our stand he takes our stand. Whether we are right or wrong he will come to our support. He will be remembered first in success or failure. Where you work or live in any part of the world does not matter. Our family or relatives may disappoint but he will never. No complaints, only compliments. There may be unsung heroes or his sacrifices are not noted. But their contribution cannot be ignored or belittled. They are behind the success and inspiration to try all over again in failures.

Anecdotes about them, speaks a lot of their character and value. It is irreplaceable. No alternatives. The description about him is endless and unfathomable. He changes our world. He corrects us without denying our opinion. He makes you understand the reality seamlessly. He is an ever reliable source of strength. He shows us our path as a beacon light. There is no problem without solution if shared with him. The life would be different without him and appears in a new light in his presence. From Lord to lay man his presence is felt and acknowledged. He is a great person and is beyond definition. There may be people without spouse, without aim, without family, without property, without success but there is not a single person without him. Even for a seeker of God he is there. Whether one is a *Samsari* or *Sanyasi*, he is inevitable. But for his simplicity and accessibility we call him as 'FRIEND'. That is why it is rightly said about him "He comes in when the whole world goes out".

- M. Koti Rajasekhar





The struggle for equality

The day I met my friend, she wore a sullen look. I thought she might have had a particularly bad day at office, which is not so uncommon. After sometime, she opened up and said, "The Company that I applied to for a new job said they are looking for someone who is settled down on the family front, someone who is stable in that aspect. Since I am not married, I may not be considered." I was taken aback, for she is a capable individual who would have proven to be an asset to the Company. But it outraged me that on this day when equality is such a buzz-word, the Company had the 'temerity' to say something so appalling. While it is understandable that the Company invests so much in training its employees and hence wanted to be careful, would the same yardstick apply to men? My friend chipped in, "They did not reject my candidature. They may contact me if no one else is available. But do you think I should join such an organization which evidently has scant regard for women?"

As I was contemplating on the question, I remembered the incident when Mrs. Sudha Murty, the renowned teacher, author and philanthropist, wrote a post card to the great J.R.D.Tata protesting against a job notice by his Company which said 'women candidates need not apply'. Mr. Tata, the epitome of humility that he was, took notice and arranged for an interview of Ms. Sudha, where she was judged purely on merit. And she won the job! Do we have more of Sudha Murty amongst us and are there JRDs to listen?

Women have certainly come a long way. In contrast to Rassundari Devi, who had to keep her learning concealed, some of the best

educated people today are women. Women ably fly aircrafts, fight for the country, manage companies, excel in sports and do everything that was hitherto considered a male bastion. Nachiketa Tapovan stands today because of the strength, patience and compassion of the predominantly female workforce.

Yet, there is a lot that has to be done. There are ad campaigns urging men to 'share the load', yet all we see is a woman doing the dishes and washing the clothes. A recent newspaper report postulated that women who eat last inevitably end up eating less or lower quality food. A woman riding a scooty has to hear the sneers and jeers of the male riders and drivers. A woman walking on the road or waiting for a public transport has to 'bear' the male onlookers and some giggles which they inevitably give. Disregarded in homes, disrespected outside and discriminated against at workplaces, sometimes women cannot help but question their existence. Do they really enjoy equality?

I think the solution to the precarious situation being faced by women has to be provided by the women themselves. The issue of safety of women out of their homes can only be solved by more women coming out to work. Inside homes, while being conscious about their responsibilities, women need to be more assertive/vocal about their rights. Women need to be proactive partners in everything that concerns them and should take their own decisions. In this fight for equality, let's hope the goal is achieved someday!

- Neetika Gogula

An advocate and has passion for writing on social issues.

DeVasанизation

Shopping online has almost become a commonplace for most of us in the urban world. The sheer convenience, choice and reasonable pricing makes it rather attractive for the busy and shrewd urban consumer.

The other day I was browsing online to buy some equipment for our little veggie garden... so searched on Google and visited few e-commerce websites like Amazon and Flipkart etc. But could not make up my mind and quit the browser.

The next day morning, I opened the browser to check few news websites, lo and behold; the entire right side of the web page was flooded with advertisements of garden equipment. Then I visited Amazon and Flipkart to buy something else for my office, but I was constantly pounded with advertisements of garden equipment on every page and every corner literally tempting me to click it and buy it.

I am sure everyone who browses internet has experienced this intriguing phenomenon and most of the tech savvy millennial folks may

also know that this is caused due to internet cookies. A cookie (also called web cookie, Internet cookie, browser cookie) is a small piece of data sent from a website and stored on the user's computer by the user's web browser (without his consent) while the user is browsing. Cookies were designed to be a mechanism for websites to remember information (such as items added in the shopping cart in an online store) or to record the user's browsing activity (including clicking particular buttons, logging in, or recording which pages were visited in the past) in order to use this information to allure you with similar content the next time you visit the internet/website.

So literally whatever you browse is recorded as cookies in your own browsing device and has the potential to come back to tempt you and influence your online behavior and decisions. Isn't that how *Vasanas / Samskaras* work on us? In fact I feel Internet Cookie mechanism is not only a perfect analogy for *Vasana/Samskara* but it is a perfect manifestation of the same.



Just like cookies are small pieces of data stored on the user's computer by the user's web browser while the user is browsing, in the same way *Vasanas* are the impressions stored away deep in our subconscious by our own mind while we are performing our actions and interacting with various objects, emotions and thoughts in our daily lives.

The repeated, prolonged browsing of any website content, good or bad, will result in storing/enhancing of cookies that track and compile long-term records of individuals' browsing histories and later come back to influence his/her browsing behavior by presenting webpages with content/advertisement that prompt you to browse/buy the same website content/products again and again.

In the same way the repeated performance of an act, good or bad, leaves a *Vasana* in the subconscious mind that creates a tendency that prompts the person to perform that act again when the circumstances are favorable for such an act. In other words, performing the same act repeatedly leads to entrenched habit, entrenched habit leads to deep rooted impressions in sub-conscious mind, deep rooted impressions manifest as strong desires within your nature, which in turn lead to performing the same act again and again. It is indeed a vicious circle and can become extremely difficult, if not impossible to subdue these *Vasanas*.

It's like asking you to keep a chewing gum in your mouth for the whole day and not chew even once while you are deeply engaged in your daily activities. I am pretty sure you would end up chewing many times without your knowledge. Try it out! I call it the *ChewVasana* test! As long as the chewing gum is in your mouth, it becomes your sub-conscious nature to chew... sooner or later..

When you further delve deep into the *Vasana* concept of *Advaita vedanta* and contemplate, you feel it's like a mystical ocean, wherein the

deeper you go under, the greater the pressure... pressure to subdue these *Vasanas* ... until you reach the bottom of it where you realize the deepest *Vedantic* truth that all effects within and without are caused by *Vasanas* themselves. It is practically impossible to completely eradicate *Vasanas*, for *Vasanas* are the very cause of our re/birth and existence... Hence the only way out of this vicious circle is to cultivate good positive *samskaras/vasanas* and avoid/ignore bad negative ones.

Whatsapp can serve as a good analogy. Over a period of time we get added to many Whatsapp groups. All of them are created by friends, family members, colleagues, associations, social circles etc. Some of the groups are useful and share positive info/content. But there are many that are lacking purpose and share negative content. You would like to exit these negative groups but it may be a difficult decision to exit the group as you may hurt the feelings of group members or even if you exit, admin adds you back without your consent (it's possible and has happened to me). In such cases where you may not be able to exit the group for whatever reason, you can simply mute the group thereby ignoring all notifications and alerts from that specific group.

In the same way you may not be able to completely exit the bad *Samskaras/Vasanas* but you can certainly mute it, ignore it and get busy cultivating and spreading good positive *Samskaras/Vasanas*.

It's like the fate of the old notes (black money) after demonetization on Nov 8th 2016. They may still exist but are void. In the same way you can choose today to be the day of *DeVasanzation* ... after which all your bad *Vasanas* may exist within but are muted and void without. At the same time it's really critical to re-monetize quickly with new fresh notes (white money). In the same way it is imperative to *Re-Vasanzate* quickly with good positive *Samskaras/Vasanas*.

Let the *DeVasanzation* begin!

- *Ajith Nallari*

Some Mysterious facts about Puri Jagannath

The flag atop the temple flaps in the opposite direction of the breeze

No birds fly above the Jagannath temple in Puri

Irrespective of the place you are in Puri, it appears like the Sudarshana Chakra on top of the temple is always facing you

The main dome of the temple does not cast its shadow in any part of the time

Usually in coastal areas during the day-time, the breeze blows from the sea towards the land and during evening hours it blows from the land towards the sea. But in the case of Puri it is the reverse

Every year the procession comes to stop by itself at a place ahead of the Gundicha temple. This is a mystery

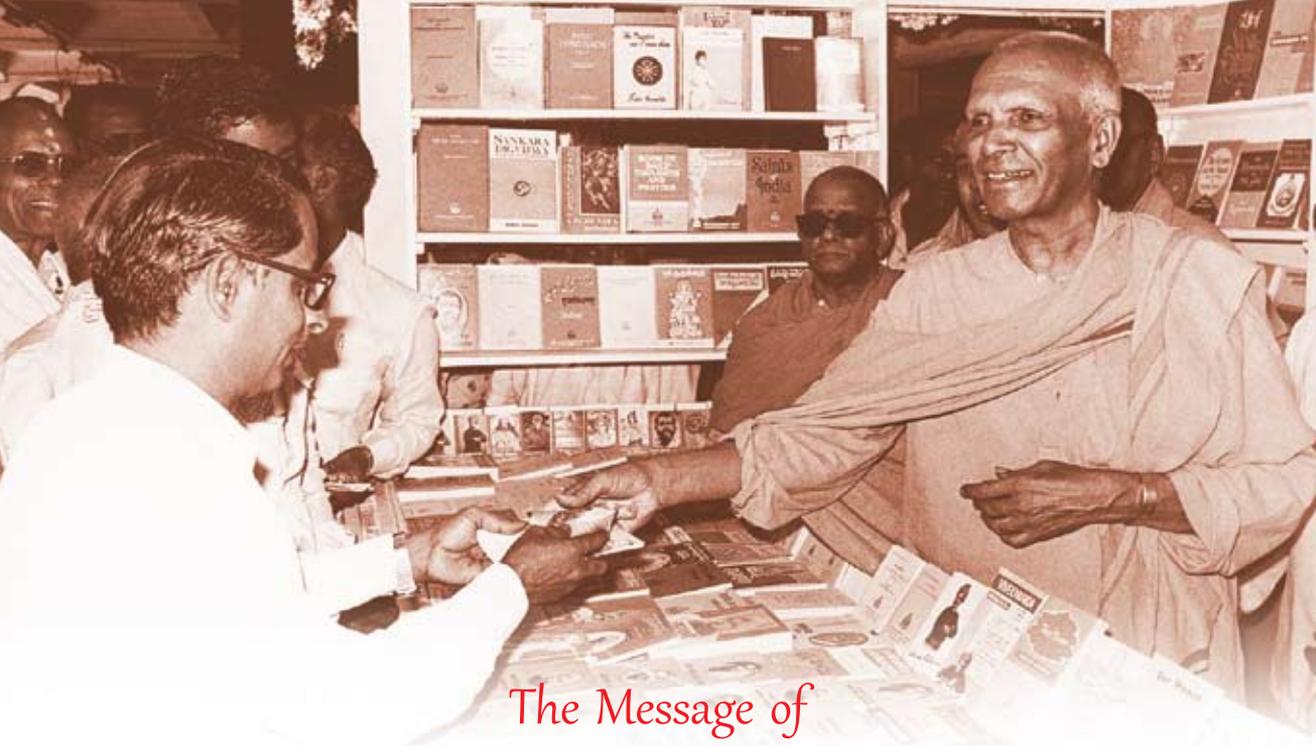
While entering the temple through Singh dwara, one cannot hear the sound of ocean. But when one exits, the sound can be heard clearly

The food for the Lord as Mahaprasadam does not go waste, irrespective of the number of devotees whether in small or large number. But the quantity of food cooked remains same every day

The Ratha yatra is performed with two sets of chariots (3 Plus 3), from temple to Gundhicha (Mausi Maa) temple, since it needs to cross the river flowing between Shrimandira and Gundicha temple. The first set is used to transport till the river, then deities cross the river in three wooden boats, then board to the other set of Chariots



Source: Jagannath Temple History



The Message of Vivekachudamani

Ato vicārah kartavyo jijñāsor-ātmavastunah ||

Samāsādyā dayāsindhum gurum brahmaivid-uttamam ||15||

Hence the seeker after the Reality of the *Atman* should take to reasoning, after approaching the Guru, who should be the best of the knowers of Brahman and an ocean of mercy.

The candidate, of whom Shankara spoke in the previous verse, must, therefore, first approach a competent spiritual teacher and learn from him about the *Atman*. Then he should verify for himself the teacher's statement through a process of clear reasoning. This process of sharp reasoning on the Guru's words about the ultimate nature of reality, which stands in contrast to his day-to-day experiences, results, gradually, in the removal of the weeds of his wrong notions and imaginations, which had grown on his mental ground since an unknown period. He must engage in such reasoning (*vicārah*) to understand his true nature in the depths of his being. Through such a process he releases himself, for the first time, from the hold of the psycho-organic system, which till then dominated his life pattern and actions. He then begins to see himself in a new light. A new conviction dawns on him, which is the result of an inner

illumination. The Guru shows the aspirant the way and the aspirant treads the path and gains the firsthand knowledge of the *Atman*. Hence, says this verse, the seeker of *Atman* should take to reasoning (*ato vicārah kartavyo jijñāsorātmavastunah*) after approaching the Guru, who should be the best of the knowers of Brahman and an ocean of mercy (*samāsādyā dayāsindhum gurum brahmaivid-uttamam*).

Vedanta, and so also Shankara, lays great stress on scripture and Guru. The Guru should be an ocean of compassion (*dayāsindhu*), and he should be the best among the knowers of Brahman (*brahmaivid-uttamam*). He must be a man who knows the truth. Then alone he can help the aspirant.

If the teacher is ignorant, how can he help the aspirant? Therefore we must take care to see that the Guru is capable of communicating knowledge and also that he is compassionate. Such an illumined Guru will never sell knowledge.

- *Swami Ranganathananda*



“Don’t depend on death to liberate you from your imperfections. You are exactly the same after death as you were before. Nothing changes; you only give up the body. If you are a thief or a liar or a cheater before death, you don’t become an angel merely by dying. If such were possible, then let us all go and jump in the ocean now and become angels at once! Whatever you have made of yourself thus far, so will you be hereafter. And when you reincarnate, you will bring that same nature with you. To change, you have to make the effort. This world is the place to do it.”

- Paramahansa Yogananda



King Vishwamitra got very angry on hearing this. "Maharishi, if you don't part with the cow on my request, I can take her away by force. You cannot do anything" he smiled wickedly. He soon ordered his soldiers to bring Nandini to him. When the soldiers tried to obey his command, Nandini was reluctant to move. The soldiers dragged her with all force. Nandini, in tears, came and stood before Maharishi Vasishtha.

"Maharishi, why are you sending me with these wicked people?" She asked, sadness written all over her face. The sage remained calm and did not reply Nandini.

Nandini understood that Maharishi was unwilling to give her away to these people. Viswamitra's men started pulling at her again with force.

This time Nandini never looked helpless. She did not weep either. She displayed her anger by raising her tail and nodding her head viciously, her sharp horns glistening in the sunlight.

Soon, thousands of strong soldiers appeared out of Nandini, holding weapons. They attacked the soldiers of Viswamitra and drove them away out of the forest in no time.

Viswamitra now realized out of shame that the power of penance was more powerful than his physical strength.

He left immediately to do penance.

- A. Sarala

NACHIKETA TAPOVAN Kodgal



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Amazing Women of India

Professor Shantha Sinha – The Teacher to Every Child



Professor Shantha Sinha, a simple, loving, caring and patient woman – that is the impression that everyone at Nachiketa Vidya Mandir got when she graced the Annual Day celebrations as the Chief Guest. Surely, our readers will be interested in knowing more about Prof. Sinha.

Introduction – Prof. Sinha was born in 1950 in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh. She is one of the founders of the MV Foundation, established in memory of her grandfather, who was an eminent educationalist. Prior to her retirement in early 2015, she was also Professor of Political Science at the University of Hyderabad. Prof. Sinha now supports research work at her Foundation.

Work – With a firm belief that no child should work and that every child should study, she advocated the cause of the ‘right to education’. Starting with the poor villages in Ranga Reddy district of the erstwhile State of Andhra Pradesh, she and her Foundation involved local volunteers in identifying children who are out of school and persuaded parents and the children’s employers to send them to school. The Foundation also organized transition camps

(‘bridge schools’) for children to prepare them for school. Improvement of conditions of public schools was also one of the focus areas.

Footprint – Her Foundation is active in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chattisgarh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Telangana, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. It also provides technical support to voluntary organizations in Africa and Central America through the ‘Stop Child Labour Campaign’ (please see www.mvfindia.in for further details).

Impact – Work spearheaded by her has resulted in lakhs of children being freed from labour and joining school. The concept of ‘bridge schools’, whereby using familiar songs, fun activities and newspapers, children who only know factories or other work places are introduced to the pleasure of reading and have their basic skills developed, has been pioneered by her. This helps children settle in with ease in the new learning environment. The Foundation’s work has also discouraged child marriage.

Positions of responsibility held – Apart from leading her Foundation’s work, she was also the first Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and held the office for two consecutive terms.

Awards and recognition – While the content smile of children remains her greatest award, she has been bestowed with the Padma Shri (by the Government of India) in 1998, Albert Shanker International Award (by the Education International) in 1999 and the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership (by the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation) in 2003.

Causes close to her heart – These include eradication of child labour, compulsory school education and emancipation of the status of the girl child.

- Neetika Gogula

Harvest
the
RAIN ...



Reap
the
GAIN!

*I*t is time for the monsoon. A group of farmers look up at the sky every morning, their eyes filled with hope. They try to study the clouds based on knowledge acquired out of experience. Every day they would let out sighs of disappointment. And then it happened!

The farmers smelt the fresh aroma of wet mud and came running out of their houses. They were happy to see the first shower wetting the parched lands giving out a delightful fragrance. Children who ran behind their fathers jumped in glee. Their joy-filled screams rent the air, bringing smiles on the faces of the farmers. Women folk came out with their pots to catch the rain water for their household needs. There was joy writ on their faces too. There were rains for the next 10 days and then it stopped. There was no further sign. The farmers and villagers realized their folly. They didn't attempt to save the rain water when it poured down. But now it was too late! They had to wait until the next monsoon.

One day a group of social activists came to their village to spread awareness on how the rain water could be saved for future needs. They

stayed for a few days and educated the villagers on how water could be conserved. They taught them traditional water harvesting techniques. Every villager took a pledge to implement what they were taught. All villagers came together. With the help of the social activists and volunteers, they adopted Rain harvesting techniques. More wells were dug, check dams constructed and pits dug to harvest rain water. They succeeded in conserving tonnes of water the following year. This led to recharged ground water levels and increased agricultural output. In a short span they could cultivate acres of land with the newly adopted techniques and reaped good harvest.

Today they are in a position to do *Jal dhaan* to needy people from other villages. All this happened because of their sincere efforts in conserving every drop of water. They became water heroes. Eventually the message was spread and more people from the neighbouring villages got inspired and followed their example.

- Nitya

Rajayoga in the Gita

The Sun's rays contain seven colours. When they are merged together, the rays appear white. In the rainbow we see the phenomena of the seven colours separately. Herbs and plants and flowers absorb those colours which they need and flourish in strength and beauty. If the Sun's rays are of only one colour, there could never be such a variety of colour and fragrance in nature. Similarly in the Gita, eighteen different *yogas* are presented, so that the aspirants might adopt any one congenial to their nature and attain liberation. Among the various paths revealed in the Gita, *Rajayoga* is one. It is also termed *Dhyanyoga* or *Atma Samyamayoga*. Patanjali expounded this wonderful science in all its details. *Rajayoga* has eight component parts and so it is also called *Ashtangayoga*. The component parts are in their order-

1.Yama 2.Niyama 3.Asana 4.Pranayama
5.Pratyahara 6.Dharana 7.Dhyana 8.Samadhi.
These eight parts are explained well in particular places in the Gita.

The place, the manner and the discipline which the aspirant should choose for the practice of *Rajayoga* are clearly stated in the sixth chapter of the Gita. The teacher of the Gita warns the aspirant to be careful in details relating to food, place and practice. The Gita refers to minute details and is not content with the exposition of general theory. Neglect of the smallest details might lead to disastrous consequences in *Rajayoga*. So, what food to take, how to sit for practice, where to concentrate and other such matters are clearly stated in the Gita. Following the details with meticulous care, the *Sadhaka* should get firm hold of this *yoga*.

What is *Yoga*? Patanjali, the scientific exponent of *Rajayoga*, defines the word as –

(*yogachittavrittinirodhah*)

“*Yoga* is restraining the modifications of the mind.” By the very force and momentum of impulses acquired through several births, the senses and the mind rush out and run after the objects of the external world. This out-going momentum should be restrained. Just as the tortoise withdraws all its limbs in its body, even so, the *Sadhaka* should withdraw and withhold the mind from attaching itself to any sense-objects like colour, sound, fragrance etc. and fix it in the *Atman*.

(*tada drashtuh svarupe vasthanam*)

When these sense-attractions are restrained by long practice of discrimination and dispassion, the mind of its own accord comes to a state of rest and settles in its own original source, the *Atman*. This is the very essence of *Rajayoga*. The teacher of the Gita puts it in a nutshell in the following words-

(*atmasamstham manah kritva nakimchidapi chintayet*)

“Fixing the mind in the *Atman*, nothing else should be thought of.” Here we find two aspects of the same position – one for getting the sense world, two, memory of the *Atman*. Forgetting the sense-world alone is not enough. People experience this in a state of deep sleep where there is no sense activity and hence no world. But sleep never leads to illumination. So the second aspect, namely the remembrance of the *Atman* is necessary. In the early stages, the mind cannot remain in a state free from thought modifications. So the *Sadhaka* has to satisfy the natural craving of the mind by providing it with healthy work like deep study, discrimination and devotion to God. By systematic and continuous practice, the mind becomes finer and finer, till it reaches a non-modified state when the *Atman* is perceived as it is. There is then no modification



or fragmentation of mind. It is all one. So the mind should be first lifted from lower to higher thoughts and from higher thoughts to a thought-free state. The thought-free state is called *Samadhi*.

It is not an easy achievement, because the mind is by nature unsteady and fitful. Arjuna says "Like the air, it is most difficult to control the mind." This is due to the mental predispositions acquired through an endless service of past births. So the mind should develop dispassion by constantly understanding the transitoriness and the worthlessness of worldly things. It is then turned inwards to look into the Self from which alone comes all the bliss which man by his ignorance was imagining as arising from external objects. If this practice is continued daily at a particular time, for a particular period, the mind comes under control gradually.

Lord Krishna says- "The mind should be held by practice and dispassion." Vedanta teaches the same truth. When attachments are given up, the mind is destroyed and when the mind is destroyed, there is direct perception of the Supreme Reality. This is the order of progress towards final liberation. When the material tendencies drop off, the mind ceases to exist and that very moment Supreme Realisation dawns on man. The *Rajayoga* has for its basic principle mind-control and towards this end, the Gita prescribes the practice of mind-control in various ways.

Source: Gita Makarandam
by Swami Vidyaprakashananda

Annual Day Celebrations at Nachiketa Tapovan

Nachiketa Tapovan celebrated its Annual Day on 15th April 2017 with lot of gaiety and pomp. The chief guest, Prof. Shanta Sinha, an advocate of child rights, honoured the auspicious occasion by her eminent presence.

The programme commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by the honourable Chief Guest and Vasundhara Amma. It was followed by the National Anthem.

One quick look inside the hall made my heart fill with joy. It echoed with the spirit of celebration as the students, parents, teachers and volunteers gathered to witness what is going on the stage. The decorations were picture perfect.

The objective of the Annual Day was to identify and nurture the inventive and creative talent among the students. The mood was full of fun, frolic, laughter and loads of happiness. When the children, teachers and volunteers of Nachiketa Tapovan meet, there is bound to be magic.

The programme started off with a welcome song by the tiny tots of Second Grade. They looked like fluttering butterflies in their white frocks. Skits like Bullying, Child labour and Ugly duckling exhibited a wide gamut of emotions. Plays like "Hard work pays" and "How a family should be" were poignantly portrayed. A small play on 'Organic Farming' by the children of fourth class convinced everyone to go organic in future. The most scintillating and a mesmerising performance by our senior class boys was *Yoga*. Their flexibility and the ease with which they performed on the stage left everyone gaping.



Chief Guest Prof. Shanta Sinha lights the lamp



Welcome from tiny tots



Cultural performances



Students of class five climbed on to the stage with placards showcasing and spreading the message of a sixteen point programme by Swami Vivekananda to all the students, stressing that the “The fountain of knowledge is in everyone of us”. They selected compilation from ‘Swami’s’ utterances with the fervent hope that they will throw light amidst the group of students gathered.

Girls of different classes performed dances. They were simply outstanding with their graceful movements. All were actually wondering if Lord Ganesha, Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna would turn up watching their dance.’ A folk dance depicting how our farmers play a vital role in providing us our everyday meals was brought forth in a most effective way.

A short presentation by our ex-tenth class students “A Nostalgic Journey” - the humble inception of the school to the present was screened. It was really heart touching and no one missed our Vasundhara Amma shedding a tear which she quickly wiped off with her saree pallu. The students presented her with a memento made by them which again turned her emotional.

The final part was the short and sweet speech by our Chief Guest who gave a few inspiring words of encouragement. She expressed she was greatly enthralled by the excellent performances of the participants and some of the performances brought tears to her eyes. She felt she was in a temple and in a hall where all minds were enjoying the peace permeating the atmosphere. She also wished that there were more such schools in India. She promised the students that the beautiful memories would stay with her forever. She gave away cash prizes for the best outstanding students sponsored by kind hearted souls.

The total one and a half hour programme was a stupendous success. Everybody enjoyed the conglomeration of programme with unwinking eyes and as it ended, everyone left the hall half-heartedly wishing it would go on for a couple of hours more.

- *Mrudula*



Children spread the message of Swami Vivekananda



Folk dance by senior students



A scintillating performance of yoga by our boys



Vasundhara Amma - A proud mother

Vibhishan's devotion for Lord Jagannath

King Vibhishan, the brother of Lankeshwar Ravan in Treta Yuga was a great devotee of Prabhu Sri Ramachandra.

After the killing of Ravan and the coronation of Vibhishan as King of Lanka, when Sri Rama was preparing to leave Lanka, tears came to the eyes of Vibhishan. He said to Ramachandra "Oh, Lord when I surrendered to you, you promised me all protection and assured me freedom from the bondage and sufferings of this material world by looking at your lotus feet daily. Now it will not at all be possible for me to have *darshan* of your lotus feet everyday".

Smilingly Sri Rama replied "Vibhishan, just worship and pray Lord Jagannath daily who resides very close to Mahodadhi (the great ocean) and you will see my presence in Him." From that day Vibhishan became a great devotee of Lord Jagannath.



To this day, Vibhishan comes every day to have *darshan* of Lord Jagannath.

One day after completion of worship to Sri Jagannath, Vibhishan requested the Lord to pay a visit to Lanka so that he would feel himself fortunate. Lord Jagannath assured Vibhishan that He would definitely do so.

One day the Lord decided to go to Lanka and on the way he met another dear devotee of His, Balaram Das. As soon as Balaram Das heard that the Lord was going to Lanka he prayed to the Lord to allow him to accompany Him.

Accepting his request, the Lord ordered Balaram to carry a narrow-necked golden water jug and asked him to follow Him. In Lanka Garh, Vibhishan welcomed Lord Jagannath with great joy and devotion along with Balaram Das and offered a beautiful garland of a rare species of



black jasmine flowers and a pearl necklace and worshipped the Lord to his heart's content.

After blessing Vibhishan, the Lord returned to Srikshestra after leaving Balaram Das at his *Matha*. Balaram Das was overwhelmed with his unexpected adventure and in the excitement, totally forgot to return the golden water jug to Lord Jagannath.

The next morning, when the golden jug was not found in the temple, it was reported to the king Prataprudra Dev and Balaram Das heard this news. He immediately went to the temple and returned the golden jug to the *Panda* who was on duty.

The king sternly reprimanded the blameless saint Balaram Das for this act of stealing. But Balaram Das narrated the incident of the previous night. Hearing the story the King rushed to the temple and could not believe his eyes when he saw the garland of rare black jasmine flowers and the pearl necklace offered by Vibhishan Maharaj.

Tears came to his eyes and embracing Balaram Das the King begged his forgiveness for blaming him.

The devotion of Balaram Das and Vibhishan is alive even today. On the day of Rath Yatra, at the time of *Pahandibije* Lord Jagannath pauses near the Garudastambha at Natamandir of the temple facing towards the south to accept the worship of Vibhishan Maharaj which is offered at this time.

Source: Sri Gauranga Ashram
(Excerpted from the Orissa Review)



An Appeal for Sponsor-a-Child Corpus Fund

For ₹ 1 Lakh

Your donation will last a lifetime, Turn around their future!

VIDYA MANDIR, HYDERABAD

A free Home School for underprivileged children

- Nachiketa Tapovan aims at imparting a value-based education along with Yoga, Arts & Crafts, Vocational Training, Music, Dance, Sanskrit and Computer classes as a part of the curriculum
- Education is received by 270 children at Vidya Mandir Hyderabad from levels 1 - 10
- Interest accruing from your donation is only used without touching the principal itself
- At present, we only have 113 corpus sponsorships. Help us reach all of our 270 children
- Donors receive annual report card
- We express our thanks to Corpus Donors by permanently inscribing their names on the recognition board at Nachiketa Tapovan

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

Donations within India- details:

A/c Name: Nachiketa Tapovan, Indian Overseas Bank,
A/c No. 157001000002400, Jubilee Hills Branch, Hyderabad.
IFSC code IOBA0001570

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, Hyderabad: 9849168937
admin@nachiketatapovan.org
Website: www.nachiketatapovan.org

WHEN LADY SLEEP ELUDES YOU

“O magic sleep, O comfortable bird,

That broodest over the troubled sea of mind

Till it is hushed and smooth”

- John Keats

Sleep is that state in which there is a suspension of the voluntary exercise of the body and mind periodically necessary for the health of a human being. But surprisingly, we are so much engrossed in this intriguing, fast and mundane world that we drive away sleep often and soon a condition is reached when this angelic bliss runs away from us. This state is beautifully described by Shakespeare –

“O sleep, O gentle sleep

Nature’s soft nurse, how I frightened thee

That now no moon wilt weight my eyelids down

And sleep my senses in forgetfulness”

When Lady Sleep deserts us, we begin to woo her with a number of sedatives, least realising their long-range deleterious effects on our body and mind.

The story of the sleeping pill started in 1903 when Joseph Von Mering found that Barbitol could put a dog to sleep. Barbitol is derived from certain compounds called barbiturates whose parent is barbituric acid. The acid is named because Adolph Von Bayer made it from the urea in urine and malonic acid in apples. It was discovered on the day of Saint Barbara. Its name is supposed to be derived from Barbara and urea.

Von Bayer’s teacher, Frederich August Kekule suddenly became famous because of a dream in sound sleep. One day he was dozing by the side of a fire place and saw in his dream chains of atoms in a whirl of dance. Suddenly, one of the snakes seized its own tail forming a swirling ring. This gave him the impetus to form the chemical structure of benzene. Benzene had been discovered by Michael Faraday on a day when he woke up after his afternoon nap.

Truth drug: These barbiturates are used in sedatives, or sleep inducing pills; pentobarbital claims to bring down anxiety and other disorders of a psychic origin. Seconal, which is secobarbital acts as a sedative. Luminal or phenobarbital is supposed to work as an anti-convulsion for epileptics and those suffering from brain damage. Thiopental is called the ‘truth drug’ because it can be used on psychiatric patients to recall traumatic experiences. It is also supposed to help ‘uncommunicative’ people to talk freely in company. But it does not prevent one from lying or suppressing the truth. So the truth drug is misnomer.

Scientists really deserve praise because they discover media to make us talkative and also to make us laugh hysterically. Humphrey Davy discovered laughing gas, nitrous oxide- a gas funnily referred to as ‘you cannot say No to N₂O’.

Large doses of a sedative induce sleep, but they are often misused and abused. Statistics show that these pills are sought mostly by middle class, middle aged people. They are often used to commit suicide though these cases are generally reported as an overdose of sleeping pills.

But sometimes sleeping pills may be the cause of suicide by accident. Mr. Jacob took two sedative pills. He felt groggy but not quite sleepy. He was unable to remember whether he had taken the sleeping pills or not. So when his wife gave him two more pills he swallowed them. He suffered from nausea, weakness, paralysis in quick succession and within two or three hours died.

Dangerous combinations: sometimes the effects of sleeping pills are more disastrous with those who have taken ethyl alcohol. If the safe dose is 100 mg and fatal dose is 1500mgm, a safe dose of

100 mg taken along with alcohol works put to be a dose 200 times the safe dose, or it exceeds the fatal dose by several times and Mr.X, who has taken both simultaneously falls dead. This is known as synergetic effect- the effect of two chemicals taken simultaneously. Synergetic effect is not merely limited to a combination of a sleeping pill and alcohol but to any two different tablets or capsules taken orally at the same time except under competent medical advice.

Sleeping pills are addictive. Their constant use results in the development of tolerance to them. As time passes one requires more and more pills for the same level of sleepiness. Finding that these pills are not of any more use, one surrenders to more powerful drugs, a part of the illegal drug scene. Their side effects are drowsiness, dizziness, headaches, and a wide range of other complications. When one attempts to withdraw from them, the consequences are more serious leading to delirium. It is said that withdrawal from these powerful drugs, especially barbiturates, is more likely to cause death than the withdrawal of the much talked of the heroin.

The other day when I was addressing school teachers at a seminar, I found to my gratification that they were lulled into sleep more easily than with any sleep pill.

One of the most tragic things I know about human nature is that all of us tend to put off living. We are all dreaming of some magical rose garden over the horizon instead of enjoying the roses that are blooming outside our windows today.

Dale Carnegie

We are not to play, to dream, to drift;

We have hard work to do, and loads to lift!

It's God's gift.

- K.V.Ramakrishna Sastry

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

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Donations can be made directly by cheque or DD in favor of "Nachiketa Tapovan". The donations in India are exempt under the U/s 80G of IT Act, 1961. PAN No. AAATN2406K

Donations can be also directed through bank account as below:

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

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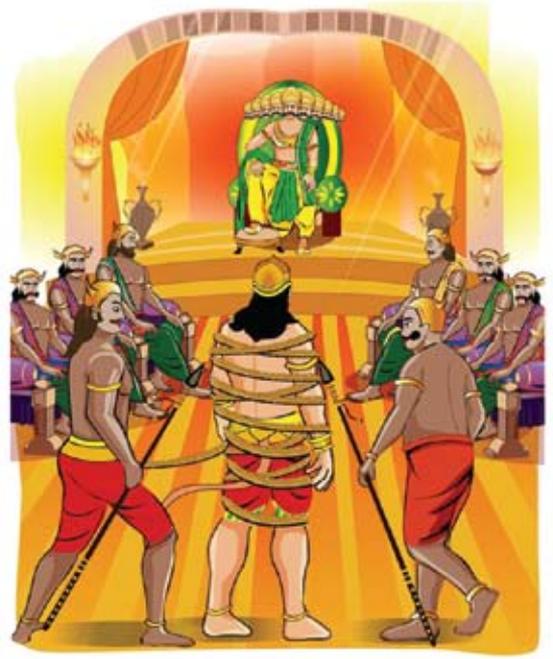
Bank Information

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

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

Sri Ram - Quiz



1. Chased by Vali, where did Mayavi go?
2. What are the 'vices' that were told by Sita to Sri Rama?
3. Whose son is "Balichakravarthi"?
4. How was Manthara looking like when she was brought by the guards to Shatrughna?
5. What is the speciality of 'kanchanamala' that was worn by Sugreeva?
6. Sarama (wife of Vibhishana) asked Sita to worship whom for the victory of Rama in the battle?
7. Who are the ministers of Ravana that Hanuman saw in the court of Ravana?
8. Sugreeva saw blood oozing out of the mouth of the cave (in the fight with Mayavi) and decided that his brother Vali was killed. What did he do then?
9. To disturb the penance of Sage Mandakini what did *Devatas* do?
10. When did Sumantra reach Ayodhya from Srungbheripuram?

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

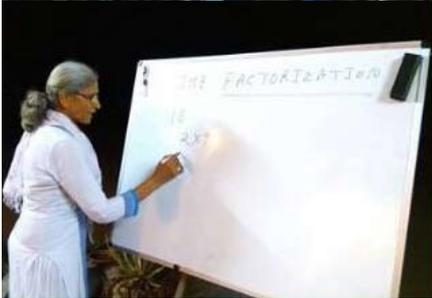
6. "Sun God"

1. Mayavi entered into a 'cave' that was covered by grass
2. Telling lies
3. Phandering
3. Hurting living beings for no reason
3. Son of "Virochana"
4. Wearing different types of golden jewelry she was looking like a she monkey tied with ropes.
5. Having hundred golden lotuses inscribed on it and is the abode of Goddess Lakshmi. Both humans and *Devatas* crave for possessing it.
6. "Sun God"

ANSWERS:

7. 1. Durdhara
2. Prahashta
3. Mahaparsva
4. Nikumba
8. With great grief and sorrow, Sugreeva sealed the entrance of the cave by rolling a big boulder (rock) and performed 'titarpanam' to Vali and returned back to Kishkindha
9. *Devatas* sent five *Apasras*, with lightning charm and beauty to disturb him
10. Starting from Srungbheripuram Sumantra reached Ayodhya on the third day evening

Residential Summer Camp



Nachiketa Vidya Mandir, Kodgal centre conducted Residential Summer Camp for 5th class children from 3rd - 30th April 2017, volunteered by Smt. Manjula, Sri Murthy and Smt. Indiramma.

Satsanga at Nagole



On 2nd April 2017, Satsanga & Meditation workshop at Nagole was conducted by Swami Shivananda Puri.

Lord Venkateswara's marriage at Pedda Aadirala

On 11th April 2017, even though it was an odd gathering, everyone present over there had experienced how important it is to get connected to divinity and how to realize their spiritual dreams by just practicing simple yet effective *sadhanas*. Mataji Swami Shivananda Puri yet again was at her best in connecting missing dots and making them realize their dreams come true...





PRANAPRATISHTHA at Chandradana village

On 28th April 2017, Akshaya Trithiya, under the expert guidance of Mataji Swami Shivananda Puri, *Pranapratishta* at Chandradana village went on very well. It was as if Ma Kamala Kali Herself was taking every measure to make it happen...



At the exact *Pranapratishta muhurat*, little drizzling and later blessings in the form of great showering was something to be cherished forever...!



Satsanga at Balanagar

On 30th April 2017, Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri held a Satsang at Government Girls High School, Balanagar, Mahabubnagar District. She highlighted in her talk, the significance of adopting spirituality in our daily lives. She advocated that changing life styles and food habits had a great impact on the diseases and diminishing life span. She advised a regular practice of Yoga and Pranayama would help us in leading a happy life.

Thank you Donors!

We are extremely thankful to



Smt. Surekha Pingle

for her kind donation of ₹2 lakh
Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal

M/s Arun Kapital Networks

for their kind donation of ₹50,000
towards Higher Education
Nachiketa Tapovan, Hyderabad



Corpus Fund - Higher Education

Nachiketa Tapovan, Hyderabad

Tatvaset IT Architects Pvt. Ltd.	₹64,602
Ajith Narayan Nallari	₹75,000
Srilaxmi Menta	₹6,000
Omprakash Tanguturi	₹3,750
Venkata Ramanaiah Avvari	₹648

Nachiketa Vidya

An Appeal for Sponsor-a-Child Corpus Fund

For ₹ 1 Lakh

Your donation will last a lifetime, Turn around their future!

NACHIKETA VIDYA MANDIR

Kodgal

A free Home School for Tribal and rural children

- Value-based education, Yoga, Arts & Crafts, Vocational Training, Music, Dance, Samskrit and Computer classes
- 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.

Vidyadaanam

an offering for School Education

Vidyadaanam (Education) One Year

One child ₹ 7000/-



❖ Donations can be made directly by cheque or DD in favor of "Nachiketa Tapovan" and also can be transferred through online.

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Please send transfer details & address to
Swamiji 99 08 23 45 45
nachiketananda@gmail.com

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A/c Name : Nachiketa Tapovan
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Branch & Code : Kavuri Hills-12655
IFSC Code : SBIN0012655
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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**.

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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

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*Superflo Dual Flush Valve
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