

# *Nachiketanjali*

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# Nachiketa Vidya

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## Cover Story

### ASHADI EKADASI



*Ashadi Ekadasi is more of a religious procession festival and is celebrated during the months of June-July (Aashaadh Shukla paksha). People consider the two eleventh days, "Ekadasi", of every month to be of special importance. But the eleventh day (bright) of Ashadh is known as the great Ekadasi or Maha Ekadasi. This Maha Ekadasi is also known as Shayani Ekadasi, because on this day Vishnu falls asleep to wake up four months later on Prabodhini Ekadasi in the Kartik month. This period is known as Chaturmas and coincides with the rainy season.*

*Ashadi Ekadasi is the day of fast and on this day people go walking in huge processions to Pandharpur singing the Abhangas (chanting hymns) of Saint Tukaram and Saint Gyaneshwar to see their God Vitthal. The yatra starts in Allandi and ends on Guru Poornima day at Pandharpur.*

*The feast of Ashadi Ekadasi is celebrated with great solemnity at Pandharpur. Hundreds of thousands go in procession from different parts of Maharashtra, some carrying palanquins with the images of the great saints of Maharashtra. Gyaneshwar's image is carried from Alandi, Tukaram's from Dehu, Eknath's from Paithan, Nivruttinath's from Tryambakeshwar, Muktabai's from Edlabad, and Sopan's from Sasvad.*

*Ashadi Ekadasi is celebrated on July 4th in 2017.*

Festivals of India

### PLEASE NOTE

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## ANTARCHAKSHU - The Inner Eye

I am beautiful... I am the best... I am strong ... I am positive... These are some of the common assumptions we make of ourselves, isn't it? Have we ever paused for a while to contemplate on who this 'I' is which we often use to address ourselves? If we think we are so and so with the name given by our parents, is that name you? If so, then who were you at the time of birth or even before you were born for that matter? Who were you before you were baptized with your name on the 11<sup>th</sup> day or 21<sup>st</sup> day after your birth? Do you think you were just a nameless body until the 11<sup>th</sup> day? Aren't these questions to be seriously contemplated upon and find out the answers? Or do you feel it is a waste of time and brush them aside? But please remember, if not today we will be compelled to find out answers for these questions at some point of time... if not in this birth, maybe some time later in some other birth; but it is mandatory.

We are definitely someone else beyond this body. In his Nirvana Shatakam, Sri Adi Shankaracharya has clearly stated:

*Neither am I the Mind nor Intelligence or Ego*

*Neither am I the organs of hearing, nor that of tasting, smelling or seeing*

*Neither am I the sky, nor the Earth, neither the Fire nor the Air*

*I am the Ever Pure Blissful Consciousness*

*I am Shiva, I am Shiva, The Ever Blissful Consciousness*

This stands as authentic proof that we are beyond body, mind and intellect. Then how can we be Shiva? Isn't Shiva the Supreme Consciousness? True He is, but we are also part of the same Supreme Consciousness. Shiva is not a mere form. He has created this entire universe. Then are we not a part of this universe? We are for sure! We are not born outside this world. We are in the world...an entity... very much a part of this world.

A disciple once asks his Guru "Guruji, does my body have a soul?" The Guru immediately replies. "You yourself are the soul. You just have a body." This is the awareness we always need. This insight acts like fuel to function with this body. We can blossom in life, in the light of awareness. Once the light of awareness starts spreading around, not only we, but the entire universe gets benefited. The reason: the light of knowledge cannot be restricted. Once we are filled up with this light it surges out like a torrent from our physical being, extending into the vast space. And other living beings bask in its glory. Having got a taste of it, they aspire for more. Eventually many will be lead from the external to the inner world.

Spiritual insights make us realise that there is something more precious than what the eye beholds. As is said, in Vivekachudamani, 'We can see the world through our eyes but what sees the Eye? It is the Mind and how do we perceive the mind? It is through the Soul. This is the *Antarchakshu* or the Inner eye. Sri Krishna told Arjuna that God's form cannot be perceived through the external eye. We can see Him only through our *Antarchakshu*.



We encounter the real I as we delve deeper and it is then that we understand the true meaning of what Sri Adishankara has stated.

A true Guru works on his disciple by initially bringing him out of the external world and then makes him dive into the inner realms. He makes him realize his Self by opening the Inner eye... the *Antarchakshu*. The ensuing joy is to be experienced. It can't be worded.

So don't you think it is worth giving it a try, not later but now at this very moment?

**- Subhadra K.**



*I* do not know where to start this special journey. Though it appears as if a small one, it is equally an epic journey that cannot be encompassed even when one is pulsating with humaneness. I came to know her through Vasu Ma, Founder & Managing Trustee of Nachiketa Tapovan. One day, Ma said to me, "Do you know Swamiji, a lady who has her own colleges is coming and rendering her services to our Nachiketa Vidya." What surprised me more is that even though having her own establishments that need more attention & physical presence, this lady comes and renders her services to the noble cause without fail.

In fact, she is already into many charitable activities supporting needy children. She runs many colleges in twin-cities and has been a pillar of support and strength for the needy children for the past 20 years or so. Every year this number is growing, and so far, she has rendered her motherly support to more than 1000 children. And let me tell you, I'm not talking about college students who are pursuing higher education in her institutions. She is truly a mother for many, looking into all the aspects of life of children around. There are hundreds of youth studying in her college but this gesture was not known to many since she always felt to keep everything in secret. I think, as usual... selflessness doesn't need to be

vocal! It was just a casual talk when I came to know about her love and compassion for needy children. The best part is that she doesn't look at caste, creed, religion or gender, so what else can one seek ...!

Who says Indian women are losing their very essence... The real essence of womanhood is not in giving birth to children but it lies in mother's very selfless act... in her loving and compassion heart. She doesn't bother about herself. She always thinks about others. That's the reason, for me, mother is an epitome of every good that we come across. It is mothers, who have kept dreams of children alive, the nation alive. Even if we lose something, we lose nothing, but if we lose a single mother, we lose everything.

Sridevi Amma doesn't just feel for others, she also makes sure that at the right time, right action is taken for the welfare of society. Though, she is busy in serving her own colleges, I never see her busy when it comes to Nachiketa vidya or any other charity for that matter. She is always there with Nachiketa vidya serving in her capacity. The story doesn't end there. She has completed her LLM and is now preparing for MBA. And dear readers, would you like to know how old she is? She is just 18 years with 40 years of wonderful experience. I mean 58, the time when one should at least relax and contemplate on one's journey but here is a lady who always keeps herself in motion. Hats off to such souls who are here working ceaselessly for the welfare of society.



One can simply be a mother without being a mother. For me anybody who works selflessly is a mother. Hence, she is a true mother first. Many children from Nachiketa vidya have joined her college and are receiving the best education. Her colleges are the best colleges from twin-cities and the subtle part of it is that it has the same motherly flavor throughout. It hasn't lost its aroma or even charm and credit goes to Sridevi Amma and her esteemed team.

I thank from the bottom of my heart, all mothers for showering their unconditional love on mankind. I once again would like to take this opportunity to convey my heartfelt thanks to all mothers for making me feel always great.

Sridevi Amma, you rock! Age has nothing to do with you. Passion for studies is seen through your very act. It is not just starting some educational institutions or teaching needy ones or supporting others, it is also pursuing higher studies that separates you from others. It doesn't make you an ambitious person. On the other hand, it reflects your inquisitiveness and shows how one is a learner throughout the journey of life.

Dear Ones! If one is sincere and open to life and has tremendous zeal to move, and above all has passion to work, one will never stop. For me, journey indicates motion, motion indicates journey...

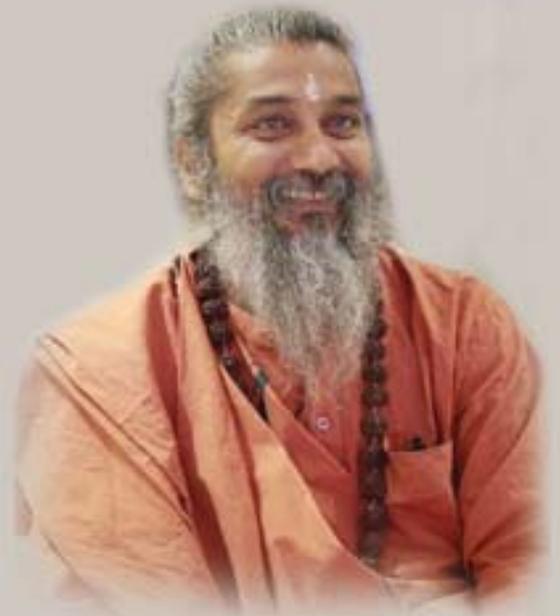
Thank you dear Sridevi Amma! For your support and concern! Not many would walk the talk. You deserve more than just being applauded and I truly mean it. Thank you once again to all mothers!

**S. Sridevi**

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*- Swami Nachiketananda Puri*



When wisdom comes into the picture, Spiritual journey becomes smooth. What you gain with effort is knowledge; what comes to you effortlessly is wisdom. That indicates you are advancing in your spiritual journey.

*- Swami Nachiketananda Puri*



# NITYA KARMAS

- 1. Sandhya upasana:** It is a way of gaining knowledge and experiencing wisdom within. *Sandhya* is not evening, it is the time between day and night. In *Sandhya vidhi*, one pays gratitude to Sun God and Ma Gayatri.
- 2. Japa:** *Japa* is the constant repetition of God's name. *Japa* means that which puts an end to the cycle of birth and death. In *Nitya Karmas*, *Japa* is a part of *Sandhya vidhi*.
- 3. Deva puja:** *Puja* is the highest form of worship. Our sages have given us a systematic way of *Puja vidhi* which enhances one's intelligence and opens the doors of the heart. This shall be discussed in coming issues in detail.
- 4. Bali vaishwa deva Yagnam:** Before consuming our regular meal, it is necessary to pay gratitude for the giver of food. With money, we purchase grains harvested by the farmer with his hard work. But without God's intervention nothing grows. Before we fill

our belly it is necessary to pay our gratitude to God and feed other small creatures. In this *yagna*, after paying gratitude to God, from the meal you get, three small parts need to be taken out- first one for our ancestors, second for our Guru & *Rishis* and the third for *Devas* and all creatures. After your meal is completed, these three parts are offered to birds.

- 5. Atithi satkar:** Serve guests whole heartedly, do not hesitate to give food and shelter. Use common sense but not crooked mind and intellect. It is not known in which form God comes and gives *darshan*.

*Nitya Karmas* bring not only clarity in life but also happiness, health, prosperity, intelligence and spiritual upliftment. *Nitya karmas* is the process for evolution.

- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri

# A Soul Again!

*Here's* a little something I wrote. Just came in like a feather floating in the wind and got stuck in my mind...

(While taking a long...long shower)

It was like the golden-yellow particles of light that are my existence, that make my body real, came to surface.

And as the metallic blue drops of water splattered and washed the cold down my head, my eyelids, my nose, my lips, my chin, my body and splashed in tiny ripples on the floor...

Sometimes trickling down to the base of my feet and becoming one with the thin pool of water below...

Slowly, with the oozing strain of the last drop of blood finding its way out of a bullet wound,

As the dying soldier lay arched on the rock, crying out loud for the love of his life, the light of his soul, the sun of his stars...

So did those golden-yellow particles leave the boundaries of my body, break open these mortal chains and fly away, glide away into the horizon flapping their magnificent wings...

And for a second there was the screaming fear of a gaping chasm in the centre of my chest, the blackness of a bottomless gorge waiting to swallow up an ocean whole...

But then parted the clouds and gave way to piercing rays of the sun, coming in riding like the cavalry, the hooves of a thousand horses coming in to save you in the last second of a battle you are about to lose, willing to lose, giving up and close your eyes one last time.

And my eyes opened. I woke up. I looked around me. Drenched in a rain made just for me, I turned around to let it soak every inch of my body, every iota of my physicality.



Then burst forth the lush greens of a hundred forests, with motherly greens and sweet smelling grass, yellow red flowers and brown mud from the evening lawns of your childhood home.

Suddenly there was sunshine again. There was laughter again. There was the singing of little girls and yelling of little boys again.

There burst forth the hearts of birds with their chirpy chirping, there grazed the deer, there hopped the rabbits.

As a world died and was reborn within me, all in the millionth of a second, like the explosion of time defying time itself;

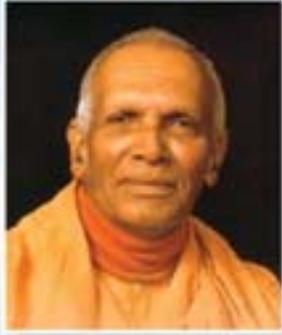
I was reborn.

I AM reborn.

I am Alive.

And whole again!

*- Avinash Agarwal*



## Sri Ramakrishna as Guru

(Excerpted from Talk given on the occasion of Guru Purnima at the Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, on 26 July 1991 by Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj)

The Guru-power was manifested to its highest degree in Sri Ramakrishna. The Yoga-Sutras say: *Sah pitrvesam api guruh, kalena anavacchedat*, 'God is the Guru of all ancient gurus, because He is not subject to time'. To Sri Ramakrishna the word 'guru' applied in its fullest sense. Although he never had the consciousness of being a guru, whatever he said and did was what a guru does to disciples – namely, to awaken them spiritually and also to free them — *yasmat bandha-vimoksanam*.

Sri Ramakrishna's life can be divided into two parts — the first, as a *sadhaka*, an experimenter in the field of religion, and second, as a guru, a teacher of humanity. As a *sadhaka* he was concerned with his search for God and had no time or mood to deal with people, to talk to them, and mix with them. For about twelve years he was so absorbed in God and in experimenting with various religions that he kept himself away from the company of others. He practised the various spiritual paths in the Hindu religion, which can be broadly classified into two — *jnana marga* and *bhakti marga*. He went through all the paths within the *bhakti marga*; this included, later on, Christianity and Islam as well. Then he practised the *jnana marga*, the path of *advaita*. God is

worshipped as *saguna*, as a person with qualities, in the *bhakti marga*, and as *nirguna*, impersonal, without attributes, in the *jnana marga*. These two paths are not contradictory, he was to say later on; the same God is both *saguna* and *nirguna*. When Sri Ramakrishna completed the *jnana marga sadhana*, he attained *nirvikalpa samadhi*, taking his mind beyond the world of relativity. He remained in that state for six months, forgetful of his body and oblivious of the passing of days and nights. In that absorbed state, a wandering *sadhu* who was staying at Dakshineswar temple at that time used to feed Sri Ramakrishna. Sometimes, the *sadhu* had to feed him forcibly to keep his body alive, because the *sadhu* realized that Sri Ramakrishna's body was so precious that it should somehow be preserved for the good of humanity.

After remaining six months in that transcendental state, Sri Ramakrishna heard the Divine Mother speaking to him: *tui bhavamukhe thak*, 'You remain in the state of *bhavamukha*, the threshold of relative consciousness.' After this, he became completely transformed, and it is this transformed, divinely human Ramakrishna that appeals to you, to me, and to millions of people all over the world, as the guru of all. This message from the Divine

Mother brought about a revolutionary change in Sri Ramakrishna's personality. Till then he did not relish human company, but now he sought it. He wanted to talk to people. This intensely human element made his charming personality all the more charming. He felt a keen desire to scatter among the people the great truths he had gathered during the twelve years of his *sadhana*.

But Sri Ramakrishna could never bear worldly talk. The people around him, mostly priests and other temple staff, were all worldly. He would climb up to the roof of the building nearby and, looking towards Calcutta, would cry out: 'Where are you all? Please come! I cannot live without you.' The Divine Mother had assured him that there were spiritual seekers waiting. His various *sadhanas* were over by 1872. This yearning to commune with humanity arose in him soon after.

Now a wonderful thing happened. People started coming from Calcutta to Dakshineswar, hearing that a great spiritual personality was living there. All types of people — pious, literate, illiterate, atheists, men, and women — started coming. Among them were a few spiritual leaders like Keshab Chandra Sen and other prominent members of the Brahmo Samaj. There came to him the orthodox and the unorthodox, the traditional and the modern, scholars and orators, and also simple housewives. They were immensely impressed by seeing him and talking and listening to him. Keshab Sen and some others wrote in their papers about Sri Ramakrishna. That made the trek of the people and seekers grow into a procession from Calcutta to Dakshineswar, a procession which is continuing even today and includes all of us!

Among those who went to him at that time were a few young men like Naren and others, mostly students, in the age group of 14-20 years, and older householder devotees. To everyone he gave according to his or her capacity to assimilate spiritual ideas. The older people could not grasp new ideas about spirituality. So to them he gave the traditional ideas, but in a purer form. Usually they could come only on holidays. He talked to them, and one of them, named Mahendra Nath Gupta or M., recorded his talks, which today we get as the great book, The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. The younger ones came to him on holidays

and also on weekdays. Sometimes they stayed with him overnight. To them he gave something new or an understanding of the old in a new, dynamic form meant for this *yuga*. It is that type of teaching which we find Swami Vivekananda proclaiming later to humanity in the East and the West. The Gospel contains these teachings only in a seed-form, in hints and suggestions, especially when Sri Ramakrishna addressed Naren, later Vivekananda.

Before Sri Ramakrishna's passing in 1886, he gave these teachings to Naren and other young disciples whom he formed into a monastic *sangha*. The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna is an extraordinary book of spirituality. In it you get pure *Sanatana Dharma* in its universal form. You do not find in it any dogmas or doctrines, but something that can awaken humanity spiritually. In fact, Sri Ramakrishna would pray to the Divine Mother thus: 'Mother, let not my mouth expound any doctrine.'

There are several chapters in the Gospel titled 'Advice to Householders.' We Indians, especially our householders, during the past few centuries, had lost faith in ourselves. Everyone was possessed by the meek attitude: 'We are, after all, *samsarins*, worldly people; what can we do?' Sri Ramakrishna came to remove this negative attitude. 'You are in *samsara*, but you should not allow *samsarikata*, worldliness, to enter into you'...

Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother lived as householders of a unique type. Our householders in India have to realize that they can grow spiritually, develop a sense of social responsibility, and grow in spiritual awareness and human concern, beyond the little genetic group called *grhastha* or householder. That is the growth from the unripe-I to the ripe-I. They must grow into citizens of the nation, citizens of the world. That is the sign of spiritual growth, *atma-vikasa*. They must cultivate *vidya maya*, and rise above *avidya maya*. 'I and mine' is *maya*, 'thou and thine' is *daya*, says Sri Ramakrishna...

'Taking refuge at the lotus feet of Mother Sarada Devi and Jagadguru Sri Ramakrishna, I salute them again and again.'



# Vivekanjali

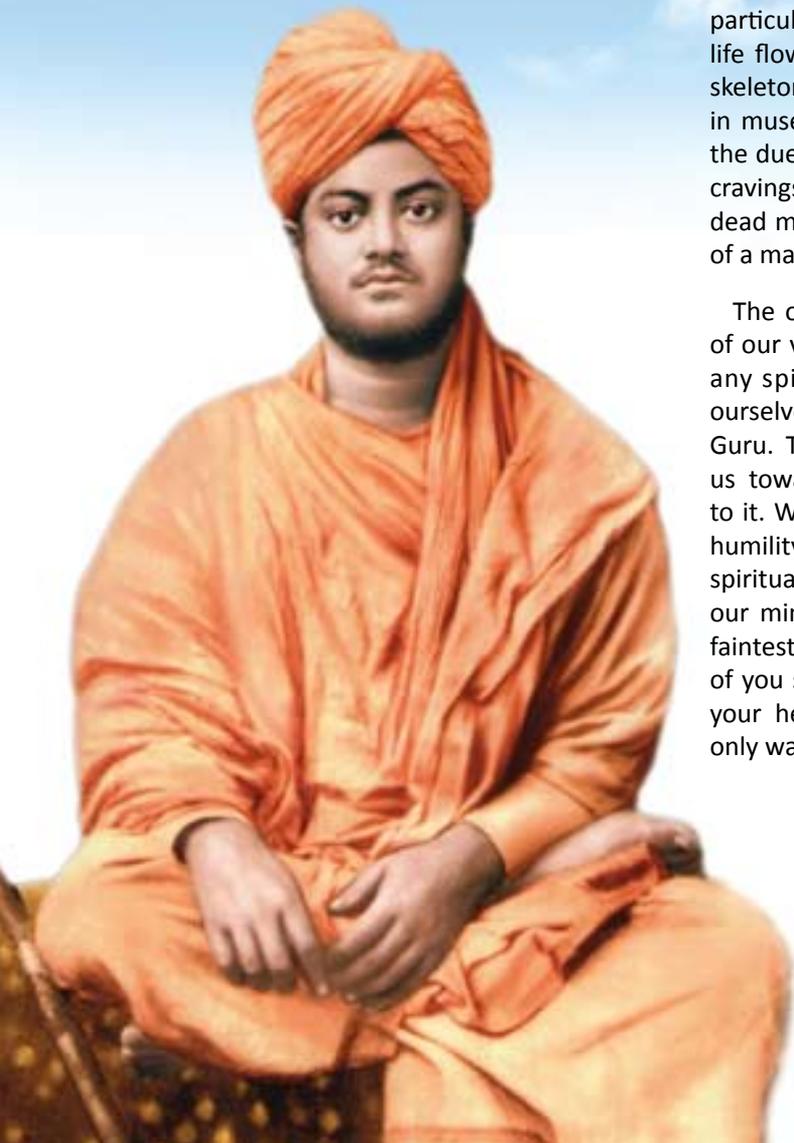
*A* real Guru is one who is born from time to time as a repository of spiritual force which he transmits to future generations through successive links of Guru and *Shishya* (disciple). The current of this spirit-force changes its

course from time to time, just as a mighty stream of water opens up a new channel and leaves the old one for good. Thus it is seen that old sects of religion grow lifeless in the course of time, and new sects arise with the fire of life in them. Men who are truly wise commit themselves to the mercy of that particular sect through which the current of life flows. Old forms of religion are like the skeletons of once mighty animals, preserved in museums. They should be regarded with the due honour. They cannot satisfy the true cravings of the soul for the Highest, just as a dead mango-tree cannot satisfy the cravings of a man for luscious mangoes.

The one thing necessary is to be stripped of our vanities — the sense that we possess any spiritual wisdom — and to surrender ourselves completely to the guidance of our Guru. The Guru only knows what will lead us towards perfection. We are quite blind to it. We do not know anything. This sort of humility will open the door of our heart for spiritual truths. Truth will never come into our minds so long as there will remain the faintest shadow of *Ahamkâra* (egotism). All of you should try to root out this devil from your heart. Complete self-surrender is the only way to spiritual illumination.

- Swami Vivekananda

From Complete Works, Notes from Lectures and Discourses



# Blossom

*I*t's winter time in Europe. I walked through a beautiful forest. The trees were bare and shivering in the cold wind and snow. The lakes and ponds all frozen!

Waiting...waiting for the warmth of the summer sun to thaw and melt the ice. The leaves and branches and barks & roots of the trees are waiting...waiting for the warmth.

On the flight back home, I looked at people sleeping. Some looked so still, that it was a little unnerving, especially when, in those people sleeping, two of them were my parents.

I realised that at one level, we're nothing more than flesh and bones, bound to this body by our breath. One day the breath will stop. And **that's it**, we 'are' nothing more than flesh and bones, in that moment.

But at another level we're so much more than 'just' flesh and bones. We're capable of so much. So much magic, so much love, so many scientific developments, so much music and art, so much culture and spirituality and above all the most fundamental & profound of all things... we're capable of enlightenment, of going beyond these compulsive cycles of our mind and emotions, and becoming free from this cycle of life and death.

And yet, in the same breath, we're capable of creating so much unnecessary strife, hate, anger, jealousy and such ugliness and crassness in our lives and in the lives of those around us...so much so, that a large percentage of people feel/find that ending their lives is an easier option, than going through this unnecessary crassness; that people lose their will to live any more.

So ironic, painful & unnecessary!

Then what is it that differentiates the two?

The answer is simple, it's our choices. Our choices every day, as to whether we will choose to be happy or miserable, whether we will do things which are 'for' life or against life. Whether we want

to constantly blame others for our unhappy state of mind / being or we choose to take responsibility of our lives and our happiness.

Most of us are seeking happiness in others, we're seeking happiness outside of us, we're using people around us as 'keys' to unlock the door of our hearts/love...when in truth, happiness lies 'within' and not 'without'.

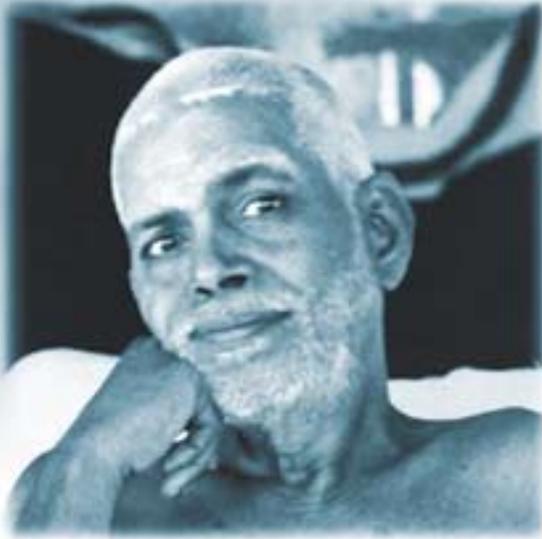
We're struggling with keys, when there 'are no locks, no doors...' , we are constantly in a state of 'if this, then that', if this happens, I'll be happy, if she loves me back the same way, I'll be happy, if he does what I want him to do, I'll be happy. But in truth, the 'other', can and never will be the way we want them to be. The 'other' can only be, the way he/she knows best in that moment.

And if we truly become aware of this **experientially**, all struggles will end in that very moment. And we will be '**free**'. A freedom that can only be experienced... a lightness, which is our true nature. And 'only we', can either deny or gift ourselves, this freedom and lightness. No one else can either take it away from us or offer it to us. We have to make this '**offering**' to ourselves and value our lives.

Shambho

- *Gautam Vir*





## Who am I?

Every living being longs to be happy, untainted by sorrow; and everyone has the greatest love for himself, which is solely due to the fact that happiness is his real nature. Hence, in order to realise that inherent and untainted happiness, which indeed he daily experiences when the mind is subdued in deep sleep, it is essential that he should know himself. For obtaining such knowledge the enquiry, 'Who am I?' in quest of the Self is the best means.

**'Who Am I?'** I am pure Awareness. This Awareness is by its very nature Being-Consciousness-Bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*).

If the mind, which is the instrument of knowledge and is the basis of all activity, subsides, the perception of the world as an objective reality ceases. Unless the illusory perception of the serpent in the rope ceases, the rope on which the illusion is formed is not perceived as such. (This analogy is based on a traditional story of a man who sees a rope at twilight and mistaking it for a serpent is afraid without cause.) Similarly, unless the illusory nature of the perception of the world as an

objective reality ceases, the vision of the true nature of the Self, on which the illusion is formed, is not obtained.

The mind is a wondrous power residing in the Self. It causes all thoughts to arise. Apart from thoughts, there is no such thing as mind. Therefore, thought is the nature of mind. Apart from thoughts, there is no independent entity called the world. In deep sleep there are no thoughts, and there is no world. In the states of waking and dream, there are thoughts, and there is a world also.

Just as the spider emits the thread (of the web) out of itself and again withdraws it into itself, likewise the mind projects the world out of itself and again resolves it into itself. When the mind leaves the Self, the world appears. Therefore, when the world appears, the Self does not appear; and when the Self appears (shines) the world does not appear.

When one persistently inquires into the nature of the mind, the mind will subside leaving the Self (as residue). The mind always exists only by depending on something gross (physical body); it cannot exist independently. It is the mind that is called the subtle body or the soul.

That which rises as 'I' in the body is the mind. If one inquires as to where in the body the thought 'I' rises first, one would discover that it rises in the Heart. That is the place of the mind's origin. Even if one thinks constantly 'I', 'I', one will be led to that place. Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the 'I' thought is the first. It is only after the rise of the "I-thought" that other thoughts occur.

The thought 'who am I?' will destroy all other thoughts, and like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre, it will itself be burnt up in the end. Then, there will be Self-realization. When other thoughts arise, one should not pursue them but should diligently inquire: 'To whom do they occur?' It does not matter how many thoughts

arise. As each thought arises, one should inquire with alertness, "To whom has this thought arisen?" The answer that would emerge would be "to me". Thereupon if one inquires "Who am I?" the mind will go back to its source; and the thought that arose will subside.

With repeated practice in this manner, the mind will develop the power to stay in its source. When the mind that is subtle goes out through the brain and the sense organs, the gross names and forms appear; when it stays in the heart, the names and forms disappear. Not letting the mind go out, but retaining it in the Heart is what is called "inwardness". Letting the mind go out of the Heart is known as "externalisation". Thus, when the mind stays in the Heart, the 'I' which is the source of all thoughts will go, and the Self which ever exists will shine.

Other than inquiry, there are no adequate means to make the mind permanently subside. If the mind is controlled through other means, it will appear to be controlled, but will rise again. Through regulation of breath, the mind will become calm; but it will remain calm only as long as the breath remains controlled. When the breath is no longer regulated, the mind will become active and start wandering.

Like the practice of breath-control, meditation on the forms of God, repetition of *mantras*, and restriction on diet, are temporary aids for stilling the mind. Through practice of meditation on the forms of God and through repetition of *mantras*, the mind attains one-pointedness. For such a focused mind self-inquiry will become easy. By observing diet-restriction, the quality of mind improves, which helps self-inquiry.

However sinful a person may be, if he would zealously carry on meditation on the Self, he would most assuredly get reformed.

The mind should not be allowed to wander towards worldly objects and what concerns other people.

However bad other people may be, one should bear no hatred for them.

All, that one gives to others, one gives to one's self. If this truth is understood who will not give to others?

When one's self arises, all arises; when one's self becomes calm all becomes calm.

To the extent we behave with humility, to that extent good will result.

If the mind becomes still, one may live anywhere.

What exists in truth is the Self alone. The world, the individual soul, and God are appearances in it like silver in mother-of-pearl. These three appear at the same time, and disappear at the same time. The Self is that where there is absolutely no "I" thought. That is called "Silence". The Self itself is the world; the Self itself is "I"; the Self itself is God; all is Siva, the Self.

He who gives himself up to the Self that is God is the most excellent devotee. Giving oneself up to God, means constantly remembering the Self. Whatever burdens are thrown on God, He bears them all. Since the supreme power of God makes all things move, why should we, without submitting ourselves to it, constantly worry ourselves with thoughts as to what should be done and how, and what should not be done and how not? We know that the train carries all loads, so after getting on it why should we carry our small luggage on our head to our discomfort, instead of putting it down in the train and feeling at ease?

Source: Words of Grace  
by Sri Ramana Maharshi



*F*eeling a deep sense of contentment of 7 years of my efforts of academic research would be finding its fruits soon as I am in the final stages of writing my PhD Thesis observing, reviewing, editing and analysing my draft notes and data, facts and figures.

My area of specialisation of research is an exciting field, Pharmacognasy, which involves working with medicinal properties of plants, traditional healing methods, extraction protocols, purification process and investigation of novel photochemical compounds. Interestingly, I discover some important aspects of life unfold and that leaves me driven to share the insights and perspectives in general with you all.

As I unravel the medicinal mysteries of a rich mine of phytochemicals, can one explore the precious treasures of potential hidden within each one of us? So often, we find no time to unearth our unique inner talents, passions, skills and abilities to discover and understand ourselves better and in a right way steer in the direction of our goals with joy and satisfaction.

As I observe the chromatography graph pattern of upward and downward curves, I surprisingly reflect on the ups and downs of my life. I pay

close attention to my mind. I incidentally recall my experiences of shadows of my negative emotions and clear pattern of positive ways I have dealt with it. I am not going to touch upon my negative experiences, as for us humans, life throws challenges to all and it is true that these negative experiences are bound to happen. Various negative emotions creep into our mind from subconscious or unconscious everyday in different situations. Don't worry! What one needs to do is to accept the reality and embrace the negatives and learn to deal with it in a practical and positive manner by finding thoughtful solutions to the problems.

#### **Reflections :**

In the context of scientific research, it has lot of reference to life too. Research stands symbolic to life's experiences. **Observe, review, edit, analyse and experience!**

One can compare the distillation process of extraction in plants to distilled and concentrated faith deep within us. One should carry faith as a concentrated emotion, embrace self belief and boldly have the wisdom and trust to follow our inner guidance in life. Now the question arises, how do we seek inner guidance? What do all great thinkers and philosophers who have tasted inner happiness, guidance and wisdom teach us? Deep self-introspection, reflection and contemplation of your SELF.

Just as Science gives rationalistic solutions to a problem, a spiritual approach gives balance and clarity in life amidst the everyday chaos. Let us approach in a simple way. Take a little while to ponder over our life, fifteen minutes a day for self introspection and contemplation in a quiet place. Our important responsibility is to develop relationship with our own selves from our busy lives which we quite often fail to. Try to practice watching your own thoughts and emotions in "witness attitude". Try to move slowly to your own deep quiet silent inner heart sanctuary from the crowded busy state of thoughts in mind. Initially, you may feel uneasy or quite impossible doing this but

with time and practice you would get the grasp of this awareness technique and in measures one can feel the difference. How? You start to focus and choose right thoughts and slowly heaviness and burden of heavy emotions leaves you. As you intensely practice this “Thoughtful awareness and intelligence” exercise, mind’s will, positive energy and strength is enhanced as a result of more channelized thoughts and ultimately results in productive action. Find your own ways to heal negative emotions. For example, for me, writing, art, music, simply reading and reflecting on great works of writers and thinkers, and productive social work is therapeutic and releases negative emotions and fills me with positive energy. Doubts change to clarity, sadness turns to joy, jealousy turns to inspiration, and pain turns to strength, arrogance changes to humility, judgemental mind shifts to conditional love. All these beautiful shifts in emotions can be experienced. Once you heal negative emotions, life becomes beautiful and joyful.

### **Experience responsibility and Freedom**

You have the freedom to choose your clothes, food, friends, career etc. Why not choose thoughts that will enhance you and make you shine? This Choice of thoughts should become the part of your life too. When Science affirms, our DNA’s can be reprogrammed over a period of time, why not try to change our conditioned pre-defined thoughts and beliefs? As we take responsibility for our lives and allow to untie and loosen our emotional knots with awareness, intellect intact in a space in our heart and mind domain opens and expands for good. In this space, emerges creative thinking and different perspectives to approach a problem in a calm and peaceful state of mind.

Don’t we not enjoy different flavours in food? In the same way, let us all enjoy different experiences in life and understand life in different angles. We need to understand that every experience teaches us to grow and refine ourselves and expand in our spirits and strength.

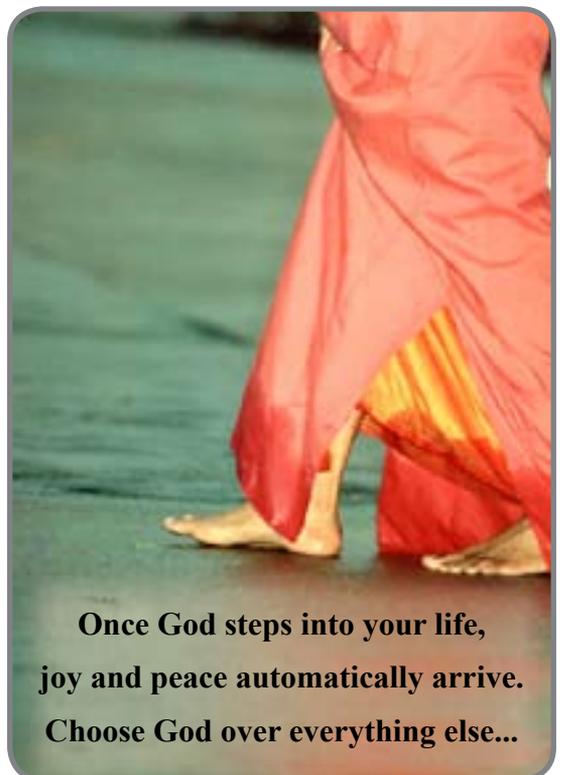
So should we sulk about it and dampen our spirits? It is not worth it. Can light enter if there is no darkness? Let us remember Leonard Cohen’s words of wisdom, “There is a crack in everything, that’s how light gets in.” Pain could turn into a powerful enhancer, once we remember our inner strengths and experiences we have sailed through in our sea of life, that would urge us to transcend the limitation of the problem in hand and with proper perspectives in place would manifest in right solutions and actions.

My friends, this is called experiencing life. May we explore and experience the adventurous inner journey and enjoy the inner gifts of happiness, wisdom and strength? Let us all reflect on this!

Happy exploring!!

**- Srikala Ganapathy**

Ph D Research Scholar,  
Research and Development centre,  
Bharathiar University, Coimbatore



**Once God steps into your life,  
joy and peace automatically arrive.  
Choose God over everything else...**



## Jnanayoga in the Gita

The *Jiva*, having forgotten his real nature, is bound by the body and the world; and when he comes to know his real nature, he is free from the bondage of matter. Such contemplation on one's own real nature is what elders speak of as *Jnana*. Those who aspire for supreme peace and freedom should acquire Knowledge of their true Self. The Lord glorifies *Jnana* in many ways-

1. *Jnana Tapasya* - Many have become pure by *Jnana tapasya*.
2. *Jnana Yajna* - This sacrifice is greater than others performed with material riches.

3. *Jnana Nauka* - The Ocean of *samsara* could safely be crossed by the ship of knowledge.
4. *Jnana Agni* - The fire of knowledge burns the wilderness of *Karma*.
5. *Jnana Kadga* - Doubt caused by ignorance should be struck down by the sword of knowledge.

In the fifth chapter, the Lord compares *Jnana* to the all-illuminating Sun. Again in the tenth chapter *Jnana* is compared to a light. In the fourth chapter the Lord says, "Oh, Ye men

deluded by ignorance! Become pure by the penance of *Jnana*; perform *Jnana yajna* and get the reward of liberation; cross the ocean of *Samsara* with the help of the ship of knowledge. Kindle the fire of *Jnana* and burn up the wilderness of worldly actions; strike down all doubts with the sword of knowledge; dispel the darkness of ignorance with the Sun of *Jnana*; Light the lamp of knowledge which sheds soft and divine light all around." Thus the Lord exhorts mankind to seek for knowledge.

What is *Jnana*? The material universe is a combination of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. The Self and the non-self, the body and the knower of the body, the seer and the seen, are all intermingled and appear as one to the ignorant man. To separate them, as the mythical swan separates water and milk, is *Jnana*. When good and bad are intermingled, we try to separate them, hold the good, and reject the bad. The outer rind of the plantain is peeled off and the juicy part is eaten. When grain is mixed up with small pebbles, the housewife separates the grain with great care before food is prepared. So it is that the physical body which is an intermingling of the Self and the non-self, should be carefully examined, the non-self, separated, and the true Self held fast by the seeker. This is *Jnana*.

Lord of the universe is not far from us, but is directly present in the hearts of all, pure and uncontaminated, as the universal witness. He is nearest to us and He is shining through the mind. And so we are filled with confidence that we could attain Him with some effort. The experience of *Atman* is the fruit of *Jnana*. Therefore intellectual enquiry supported by will-power enables man to rise to the highest peak of spirituality and then by an understanding of his true Self, man is transformed into God.

The work that a man does after he attains *Jnana* is absolutely pure and uncontaminated by desire or attachment, because he now knows the reality and is firmly fixed in the *Atman* and observes the phenomenal universe as a witness or spectator looking at a wonderfully moving picture. In that state, he knows he is not the

doer. The body and mind are engaged in their own characteristic activities. The realized man is not caught in their meshes. He remains steadfast in the universal self, absorbed in the contemplation of his true Self. The *Jnani* may engage himself in work for the good of mankind; but he performs it unattached and is equally indifferent to its success or failure. This is the difference between the *Jnani* and the *Ajnani*, in the performance of work. The *Ajnani* (ignorant man) identifies himself with the body and mind and does every work with a strong desire to enjoy the fruits thereof. So he is bound to the wheel of *Karma*, and goes through the endless cycle of birth and death. The *Jnani* on the other hand knows directly that he is not the body and mind. He knows that he is verily the Supreme *Sacchidananda*, the imperishable *Atman*. He is free and remains free in the midst of high and noble work. This is the secret of work and the secret is revealed to man only by *Jnana*.

After attaining *Jnana*, some seek for stillness and meditative silence in solitude and others remain in the world and continue their work. The difference is due to the natural predisposition acquired in past births. But there is no difference between the two.

King Janaka, King Ikshwaku, Sankaracharya, Vivekananda and others have done wonderful work for the benefit of mankind. But the supreme knowledge of Self, which they possessed, held them free from bondage to *Karma*. Therefore, either for complete renunciation or for full-scale action in the world, Knowledge is the first and foremost condition. Lord Krishna declares triumphantly, "There is nothing in the universe equal to *Jnana* in purity and perfection."

And also in the seventh chapter, the Lord mentions four types of devotees – the distressed man, the man who wants to know the Truth, the needy man and the *Jnani*. "All these devotees are great but among them the *Jnani* is Myself."

Source: Gita Makarandam  
by Swami Vidyaprakashananda

"Yoga is the heritage of yesterday, the science of today and the culture of tomorrow."



Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Totapuri

Divine Mother and Brahman are one

"Desire is poverty. Desire is the greatest impurity of the mind. Desire is the motive force for action. Desire in the mind is the real impurity. Even a spark of desire is a very great evil."



Swami Sivananda



Swami Vivekananda



Sri Ramakrishna

The goal of human life is God realisation



Sarada Devi

As you smell the fragrance of a flower by handing it or the smell of sandalwood by rubbing it against a stone, so you obtain spiritual awakening by constantly thinking of God.



Shyama Charan Lahiri

Settlement in the advaita (non-duality) state removes the difference between God and the devotee. The state in which the knower, known, knowledge become one that only is the state of science. This is the true devotion or true knowledge.



Ramana Maharshi

"Mind is consciousness which has put on limitations. You are originally unlimited and perfect. Later you take on limitations and become the mind."



Babaji

Man is an expression of God and God is the reality of man!

# Spiritual Blossoms

Do not confuse understanding with a larger vocabulary, sacred writings are beneficial in stimulating desire for inward realization, if one stanza at a time is slowly assimilated. Continual intellectual study results in vanity and the false satisfaction of an undigested knowledge.

"Possession of material riches, without inner peace, is like dying of thirst while bathing in a lake."



Paramahansa Yogananda



Sri Aurobindo

What comes from outside, one mistakes it as coming from inside. So many thoughts etc. move about outside in the universal - these manifest inside you. All these you must push away as foreign to you and the inside must be made peaceful, calm and quiet; then it will start descending from above.



Sri Yukteswar Giri



*We* have discussed this topic umpteen number of times, but every other day something really depressing keeps happening in relation to demand for dowry. I was sad and equally angry to read a newspaper report about a woman, married to a man for about seven years and blessed with two children, who committed suicide because of demands for dowry from her husband and in-laws. The baffling fact in the instance was that while the woman earned close to a lakh per month, her husband earned a little more than a quarter of that amount and kept harassing his wife for her bank account details and particulars of her expenditure. A number of questions came to my mind – did the woman kill herself or was she murdered; why did she take the extreme step; how could she leave her children to the care of a man who harassed her; what about the future of the children? A few may be answered after investigation by legal authorities.

No words are enough to condemn the dowry system. Voluntary or involuntary, it introduces an element of commerce into human relationships. This practice often enriches one party at the cost of another. Marriage, which should be a step towards a better life, ends up throttling one

party. The list of demands never ends. Many a time, non-satisfaction leads to violence against women. My heart goes out to the many women who silently suffered, killed themselves or were burnt, just for a few rupees.

It is hoped that education imbibes at least an iota of wisdom in people. However, it is dispiriting to note that even the educated are participants in this system, some actively, some involuntarily, some under pressure and some by being merely indifferent.

In the above case, while the woman's choice to kill herself might have been driven by multiple factors, that she took the irreversible decision despite earning more than enough to fend for herself and her children reflects rather poorly on our society and our institutions. Did she approach anyone with the problem she was facing? Did she consider seeking legal help? If yes, was help easily available? If no, why did she not do so? Was she worried about the way the society would perceive her? Was she concerned for her children?

In my opinion, women should not play second fiddle to anyone. The humility and grace with which most women conduct themselves should also be seasoned with practicality. They should be aware of, and accept, the fact that they are equal beings in society. Self-respect should never be sacrificed for anything. They should value themselves. Violence in any form should never be accepted or encouraged. Women should have the courage to stand up for themselves and their children. Thankfully these days, many do! But the majority still suffers. The 'New India' should have confident women. It should have no place for dowry. This is possible only with education and the women becoming independent.

Where there is a demand for dowry, in such instances it is better to be assertive and step back from the commerce. Dowry may just be the tip of the iceberg.

– **Neetika Gogula**  
An advocate and has passion  
for writing on social issues



# Being Happy



*How* often have you thought:

If only I had that car...

then I would be satisfied

If only I could find someone truly to love me...

then I would be happy

If only I wasn't under so much financial stress...

then I would be content

If only..., If only..., all the "If only's" in the world... even if they all come true still cannot guarantee your happiness.

How is it that some people sit in the sun looking like sour apples and the others whistle in the rain?

How is it that there are people who as soon as they open their eyes, see something wrong, and others discover spontaneous joy in little things.

Here is the secret- Attitudes are more important than facts. We need to replace our negative attitudes with positive ones. Unsurpassed, positive attitudes will transform your life... any life, into a happy fuller life. Happiness is a set of attitudes, you too can discover them, learn them and live them. Decide not to go on in your life surrendering to sorrow and tears.

**NEVER FIX THE BLAME, TRY TO FIX THE PROBLEM**

What is a cross? It is a minus '-' turned into a '+' it is impossible to be happy without strong self-respect, understand yourself, be able to laugh at yourself, be able to forgive yourself, understand nature's laws. Always think positively about yourself and your condition. Mental discipline in this area may not be easy but the rewards are great. Always speak well of yourself and consistently visualise your life working as you want it. You will be creating new happiness patterns. To be happy we need to concentrate on happy thoughts.

Here are some suggestions for things that you can do to boost the way you feel about yourself-

- Accept compliments - Always say thank you or words to that effect.
- Give compliments - Fastest way to feel good about ourselves is to recognize the beauty in others.
- Always speak well of yourself.
- Praise yourself - When you do something right, give yourself a pat on the back. Acknowledge your value.
- Get around good people.
- Let people know how you expect to be treated.
- Read books which give you ideas and inspiration.
- Treat your body well.

When you understand yourself, you can go to the attic of your mind and dust off your dreams. You spring clean your hopes and see them in their beauty. As you bring your faith and positive attitudes to bear on your good self, you will find your energies and thoughts run into a constructive channel. The very circumstances you long for will set out to meet you. You can save yourself from hours of misery if you examine the cause that triggered it and steamily throw it into the waste paper basket in your room. You can turn the dark cloud over and find a silver lining in it.

Happiness is something you are going to have by bringing new ways to think about life and things. Happiness is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do.

**- Mrudula**

# AM I AN ATHEIST?

It has become a regular ritual for me to hear people calling me an atheist. Am I really one is the question that I always put to myself. The answer is always no. But why do people keep asking me the same question again and again. When I started thinking about this, startling facts were revealed to me through different instances. I do not visit temples as a place to offer garlands, or to perform some special pooja. I simply sit before the idol and start looking at it without any thought or concept. For me it is a personification of *Chaitanya*. I just try to commune with God through a single point of focus (generally termed as meditation). I do not even utter a single word, or chant *Mantras* or *Slokas* praising the Lord. Whenever I sit before the Lord I get the feeling that I belong to Him.

He knows what I want to convey to him or communicate. He knows what I deserve. He knows what my life is all about. He knows my future. He knows what I will be. He knows when I would breathe my last. When He knows everything about me and I realize I am His creation, I am a Master's piece. What remains for me to pray, seek or chant? I read somewhere that if you pray to God seeking something then you are not praying for His grace but for the material object you are desiring for. It is quite astonishing to note that we are really praying to the Lord for His grace. Are we not making him part of our business by offering a share of our material success? God is not a commodity meant for sale or you make a deal with. He is

not there to convince and prove His presence through fulfilling our petty worldly desires by way of showing miracles.

He is not there to prove a point. He is all pervading. He is omnipresent. Why do I pray to Him seeking something? All I want is His boundless grace for which He never demands to wear vermilion or conduct a ritual or to wear religious symbols on the body or to go on fast for a whole day or sometimes days together. This fasting will only make me think about my hunger and not the Almighty. After all I am His child. To have His *darshan*, do I need to go to the temple; don't I see Him everywhere and inside me? Just His grace will sanctify a sinner. His grace will turn an ignorant into an enlightened. His grace that controls the whole universe, doesn't it control my life? Is it not His grace that makes me see His existence in the people around me, in the work I do, in the thoughts I think. He is the driving force. He is the life of my life. When I made Him my life does it necessitate me to prove people that I am a staunch believer of God in the way they want me to express my faith to gain recognition as a theist? Let the people think I am an atheist. I am not out here to prove them correct. As I experience His existence in my every breath I know I am not an atheist, but a theist in an atheistic way.

**Thank  
God  
I'm not an  
Atheist**

- M. Koti Rajasekhar

# Who is Bound by whom?

*A* nice story of Adi Shankaracharya teaching his students how to empty and free their mind:

“Adi Shankara was walking through the market place with his disciples.

They saw a man dragging a cow by a rope.

Shankara told the man to wait and asked his disciples to surround them.

“I am going to teach you something” and continued...

“Tell me who is bound to whom? Is the cow bound to this man or the man is bound to the cow?”

The disciples said without hesitation “Of course the cow is bound to the man! The man is the master. He is holding the rope. The cow has to follow him wherever he goes. The man is the master and the cow is the slave.”

“Now watch this”, said Shankara and took a pair of scissors and cut the rope.

The cow ran away from the master and the man ran after his cow. “Look, what is happening”, said Shankara.

“Do you see who the Master is? The cow is not at all interested in this man. The cow in fact, is trying to escape from this man.

This is the case with our MIND.

Like the cow, all the non-sense that we carry inside is not interested in us. WE ARE INTERESTED IN IT, we are keeping it together somehow or the other. We are going crazy trying to keep it all together under our control.

The moment we lose interest in all the garbage filled in our head, and the moment we understand the futility of it, it will start to disappear. Like the cow, it will escape and disappear.”

Feeling Free and Relaxed is a Choice!!!



# Amazing Women of India

## Doctor Dadi – Dr. Bhakti Yadav

The list of Padma Awardees this year was adorned with the names of many hitherto unsung achievers. One of them is Dr. Bhakti Yadav, fondly addressed as 'Doctor Dadi'. Here are a few quick facts about Doctor Dadi –

- ❖ She was born in 1926 in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ She is the first female (MBBS) doctor from Indore, Madhya Pradesh; she obtained her degree from the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College, Indore.
- ❖ She is a gynecologist, who has been treating her patients for free in Indore since 1948.
- ❖ At the beginning of her career, she refused a job in a Government hospital and joined a maternity home for the wives of poor cloth mill workers.
- ❖ Now 91 years old, she has facilitated delivery of thousands of babies absolutely free of cost for the poor.
- ❖ She has been conferred the Padma Shri this year by the Government of India.
- ❖ She is revered as a mother by many women who benefitted from her services.

Though her simple clinic is situated in Indore, patients come to her from all over Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. She



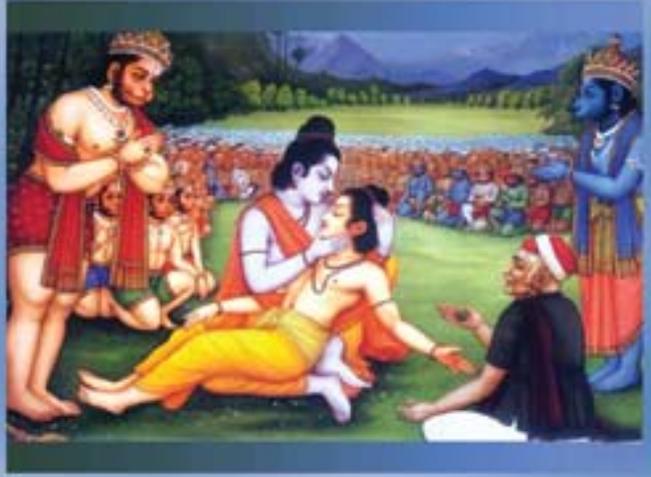
enthusiastically says, “A smile on one’s face should always be there.” Expressing the desire to serve till her very end, she says medical profession is the only profession where one can serve selflessly. She adds that it is a pity that today’s doctors lack the commitment to service and that they do not have the human connect with their patients. Expressing satisfaction at her long career, she fondly recounts the respect and love she has got from her patients.

In an interview after the announcement of the Padma Awards, someone asked her, “Hasn’t the Padma Shri come late to you?” She simply smiled and said, “The award came when it had to. But I have always received a lot of affection from my patients and other people. My patients revere me like God. I am not saying this out of arrogance. What will I do with arrogance at this age? I did what I should have done.” With her tongue in her cheek, she adds, “Now if someone asks my age, I will tell them not to ask me about my salary!”

Her age is just a number for her. She has always maintained a great distance from commercialization. Our humble salute to this extraordinary woman, rendering selfless service to the needy!



## Shri Ram - Quiz



1. Who are the daughters of Mena and Himavantha?
2. What is the greatness of Sarama (wife of Vibhishana)?
3. What did Angada (as a messenger of SriRama) do to the *rakshasas* who tried to catch and behold him?
4. Who approached SriRama and Lakshmana when they fainted with the attack of "Nagasthra"?
5. After the death of Akshakumara, whom did Ravana send to fight with Hanuman?
6. How was Dundubhi?
7. How far is Panchavati from sage Agasthya ashram?
8. Who performed the last rites of king Dasaratha?
9. In which form did Lord Vishnu come and take the 'amruthakalasa' after 'ksheerasagara madhana'?
10. How was "Shivadhanussu" (bow of Lord Shiva) brought to the royal hall?

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

### ANSWERS:

1. Gangadevi and Umadevi
2. She can move in the sky with a speed more than Garuthmantha and *Vayu* (Wind God) and can also move in the guise of her choice
3. Angada caught hold of the *rakshasas* under his arms and flew up into the sky and threw them from there, which resulted in their death
4. Garuthmantha son of Vinatha
5. Ravana sent his son Indrajeet
6. Dundubhi's body was very huge like Kaliasa Shikara, having the strength of hundred elephants and he was also blessed with many boons from *Devatas*
7. Two *Vojanas*
8. Bharatha
9. In the form of "Mohini"
10. Five thousand robust men brought on an eight wheeler cart trolling with great difficulty, into the royal hall.

# Tukaram and blanket!

Once, Sant Tukaram, a great devotee of the Lord, was doing *Hari katha*.

The hall was jam packed with the devotees..

The *Katha* was going on and with closed eyes, Sant Tukaram, who was a pure devotee of Lord Vitthaldev, was narrating the pastimes of the Lord and singing till it became very late in the night.

Slowly the devotees started getting up to go home, some started sleeping there only and again getting up and going home..

It was only at mid night that Sant Tukaram opened his eyes and saw that everyone has gone home except one devotee who is sitting in front of him in rapt attention hearing *Hari katha*.

So he said, “you are such a nice devotee of the Lord. You have so much devotion in your heart that although everyone has left, you are sitting here and relishing *Hari katha*.”

And he replied, “Maharaj please do not have such misunderstanding. I am really not attached to *Hari katha*. The fact I am so long sitting and hearing is that the blanket, on which you are sitting and doing *Hari katha*, belongs to me and to take that, I am waiting here!”

Moral of the story:

It is very difficult to hear *Krsna katha* for long. Only a pure hearted soul can relish *Hari katha* constantly.

But hearing is the very important aspect of purification and helps in achieving the highest goal of life. As Prahlad Maharaj says, *sravanam kirtanam vishno smaranam*; hearing of *krsna-lila* is the boat by which the ultimate goal of life can be achieved.

Parikshit Maharaj asks very humbly (SB 10.12.42)

*tad bruhi me maha-yogin/param kautuhalam guro  
nunam etad dharer eva / maya bhavati nanyatha*



“O greatest Yogi! My spiritual master! Kindly describe why this happened. I am very much curious to know about it. I think that it was nothing but another illusion due to Krsna.”

The pious activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are very confidential. It is not ordinarily possible to hear such activities unless one is very, very fortunate.

Parikshit Maharaj was hearing Srimad Bhagavatam in rapt attention for so many days, without having even one-drop of water or a single grain of food.

For neophytes, it is very difficult to wholeheartedly relish the *Hari katha*.

Sometimes during the *katha* we become sleepy, we feel bored, constantly look at our watch and think when the lecture is going to end, think about *prasadam* and so on.

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare  
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.*

Source: Bhagavatam-Katha

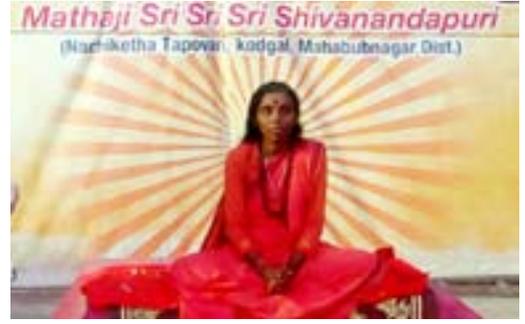
# Satsang

at Gulmohar Park Colony

*Satsang* was held at Gulmohar Park Colony consisting of about 500 independent houses near Hyderabad University, on Saturday 27-05-2017 which was organised by Nachiketa Seva Vahini, Greater Hyderabad Unit led by its President Sri Sundar Raj and State Executive Member Sri PVS Narasimha Rao.

Mataji, Swami Shivananda Puri was received at the entrance of the colony with great devotion and love by the *Sevakas* and the members of the colony along with traditional *Shehnayi*, '*Pada Puja*' and *Aarathi*. Mataji was taken in a procession from there to the Dias with showers of flowers and great reverence.

Around 200 men and women attended the *Satsang*. *Satsang* started with '*Deeparadhana*' and *bhajan*. After the *bhajan*, Mataji gave her discourse which spell bounded the audience. Mataji explained the need and necessity of controlling one's mind to attain both internal and external peace for the all round development of an individual. For this Mataji suggested a way called '*Nachiketa Chaitanya*



*Kriya*' propounded by Poojya Swamiji for the benefit of mankind. This is an appropriate remedy to overcome the present day stressful living conditions and also to overcome different ailments like 'Asthma, Headaches, Sleeplessness, Diabetes, Hypertension etc. Apart from physical ailments it also helps in keeping the mind tranquil. By giving instructions, Mataji made everyone practice this Nachiketa Chaitanya Kriya which had been well received by the audience. Mataji stressed on the importance of consistently practicing the Nachiketa Chaitanya Kriya in their daily routine to derive the benefits of it and lead a happy and peaceful life. In the end Mataji blessed every one by giving *Prasad*. Many of the people impressed by the *Satsang* have expressed their desire to visit Ashram for further spiritual guidance.

- *Muralidhar*





# Blaise Pascal

## (1623-1662)

When Frederick the Great, asked the renowned mathematician Johann Heinrich Lambert, which science he was most proficient in, he replied curtly 'All'. To the emperor's next question, how he attained that mastery, he said 'Like the celebrated Pascal, by my own self'. Such was the genius of Blaise Pascal and his many sided scholarship. He was a Thinker, Mathematician, Scientist, Theologian and Philosopher. (The derived SI unit of pressure is equal to one Newton per square metre).

In 1626, when Pascal was just three years old, his father who was himself a skilled mathematician returned to Paris where he devoted all his time to teaching his son. He thought that Pascal should be proficient in Greek and Latin before he took to the study of any subject, so all the other books were hidden out of his sight. But genius never submits to be confined within limits. With charcoal he used to draw figures upon the pavement and deduce theorems. In this way he arrived at the theorem that the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles. The father was so astonished at the sublimity and force of his genius as to weep for joy. His treatise on conics at the age of sixteen won for him laurels from distinguished

mathematicians. Renes Descartes refused to believe that it was written by Pascal, a young lad, because according to him nothing equal to it in strength has been produced since the time of Archimedes.

Blaise made commendable progress in all science. He invented the syringe, the hydraulic press, the first calculating machine- the forerunner of the present day computer, the hydraulic jack, air and hydraulic brakes etc- all before he was nineteen. This constant affliction to studies involving mental and physical fatigue at such a tender age greatly impaired his health and resulted in a serious, permanent indisposition. He was advised to seek diversions from study. He now lived in a deliberately frivolous manner.

He turned a gambler but his ingenious mind was not at rest. His interest in gambling brought forth an invaluable tool in the field of mathematics- the theory of probability – the development of which was attributed to his interest in calculating the odds involved in various gambling games he played during that period.

Being kept awake one night due to excruciating pain, some thoughts undesignedly came into his head concerning the roulette or the cycloid, one idea followed another; the result was stupendous. He created beauty in geometry and the cycloid came to be known as Helen of Geometry.

In 1654, he experienced a religious awakening that altered his blushful life. He entered Jansenist monastery and diverted his energies towards God for he knew that his end was fast approaching. While he was being tossed between almost an insane interest to unravel the mysteries of nature and the intense crushing pain due to the malignant growth in his stomach that spread to his brain, his magnum opus- Penesees- saw the light of the world. This is a collection of his ideas and thoughts – a set of deeply personal meditations in somewhat fragmented form of human suffering and faith in God. Pascal's 'Wager' expressed the conviction that belief in God is rational; if God does not exist one stands to lose nothing by believing in Him; while if he does exist, one stands to lose everything by not believing.

Profligates submerged in all types of aberrations suddenly undergo spectacular reversions. Pascal became totally religious. He used to wear a belt with slender round pointed projections tightly around his waist in self-torture to constantly remind him of the evanescent nature of sensuous pleasures whenever his mind was going astray. He lived a complete mystic.

Eminent scientists like Galileo, Newton, Desecrates held the doctrine of the finitude of the human mind and its consequent inability to conceive the infinite. Pascal ridicules this by saying that this argument is as fallacious as saying that one who drives fat oxen should himself be fat. Blaise was only 39 when he died.

- *K. V. Ramakrishna Sastry*

## NACHIKETA TAPOVAN Kodgal



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May 8, 14	Smt. Priyamvada Reddy (In the memory of Smt. Sarala)
May 19, 30	Smt. N.R. Sudarsan (In the memory of N. Veerabhadra Reddy) Smt. Nalini (Birthday: Dr. V. Sreedevi)
May 21	Smt. Sharada (In the memory of Smt. Kamala Kumari)
May 28	Smt. Krishna Kumari & Sri Venkateswara Rao (Marriage Anniversary)



Celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, festivals, or special occasions with children of Ashram by contributing ₹5000

We need Annadanam every month!

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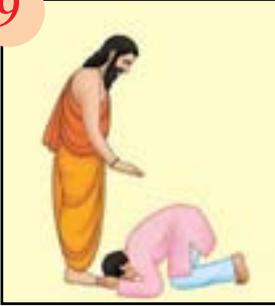
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Website: www.nachiketatapovan.org

# Festivals & Events of JULY 2017

9



**Guru Purnima**

27



**Nag Panchami**

30



**Tulsidas Jayanti**



**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 114 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

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**(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**

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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

# The Qualifications of a SPIRITUAL ASPIRANT



***Medhavi puruso vidvan-uhapoha-vicaksanah;  
Adhikari-atmavidyayam-ukta-laksana-laksitah -16***

*A*n intelligent and learned man skilled in arguing in favour of the scriptures and in refuting counter-argument against them – one who has got the above characteristics is a fit recipient of the knowledge of the *Atman*.

The qualities of a fit spiritual candidate are enumerated in this and the following verse. He must be intelligent (*Medhavi*). A dull-headed person unable to comprehend subtle truths is unfit for spiritual enquiry. The mind has to be assimilative and subtle. It should have the capacity to retain ideas. He must be a learned man with some basic knowledge of scriptures (*vidvan*), and should be skilled in arguing in favour of scriptures and in refuting counter-arguments against them (*uhapoha-vicaksanah*). He must be able to argue pro and con on a particular issue. He must be able to stand a test of people trying to unsettle his conviction gained from scriptures and the Guru. No external onslaught of contrary ideas should be able to upset him. It is a capacity to defend one's conviction about the truth from all sides and remain unshaken. Without this, one's mind will

be easily deceived and confused by what others say. Such people, constantly confused, always subject to a type of confusion-ism, shaken by the slightest attack, are unfit for the path of Vedantic self-enquiry. All the three virtues mentioned in this verse connote a certain quality of the aspirant's mind, viz. sharpness and clarity. The path of Self-realisation primarily demands a heroic spirit, courage, and a strong conviction in the truth as stated by the Upanishads and the Guru. Nobody should be able to dupe us on this path. Duping is possible only when we are gullible, getting carried away by every Tom, Dick and Harry's statements. We have to be intelligent and strong in our convictions. Vedantic path of knowledge (*Jnana-marga*) is a tough path, and therefore this emphasis on a clear and sharp mind.

**The Message of Vivekachudamani  
Swami Ranganathananda**

# Guruji... Pranams!

Guru Purnima is fast approaching. What can I give you as *dakshina*, my Master? I can't give you priceless gifts and I know that is not what you seek. You always ask us to surrender our egos but my ego is not yet purified. Then how can I offer it to you? I am really helpless and baffled for not finding anything to offer to you. You have showered your love and grace on me in spite of all my follies. But today I am stranded with no gifts to offer.

*Jnana* is the synonym of your name. The *Mantra* you have given me is like nectar. The more I chant, the more sweet and vibrant it becomes. As I chant I can feel drops of nectar flowing through the layers of my tongue, trickling down my throat right into my heart. There, it fills up the space to the brim. I am afraid that it might overflow and go beyond my reach. Anyway why not let it flow! I'll allow it to flow and touch all the parched hearts that have never had a taste of this divine nectar.

Guruji, I have some questions to ask and requests to make. I know you won't mind.

I have heard people say it takes a *tapa* to realize the *Mantra*. But when Rukmini could place a *tulasi* leaf and equal the Balance, where her beloved Sri Krishna is weighed, can't the leaf of my *Bhakti* serve the purpose as well? I love God... Anyway who can be so stone-hearted and refrain from loving God? And how does it matter to Him... His love is selfless and whether we love Him or not He always showers His love on us. I am sure of that.

Guruji, if not for you, would we have been fortunate to listen to the holy epics Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishads or the Vedas? If not for you, would ignorant people like me understand the gist of Bhagavad Gita? If not for you, Guruji, would our hearts have melted on listening to the pranks of Sri Krishna, the love of Mother Yashoda,

the Dharma of Lord Sri Rama and the woes of Mother Sita? We wouldn't have learnt about our dear Hanuman. When we listen to tales as to how he chanted Rama's name with a heart drenched with devotion, there will not be a single eye which is not wet.

When stones and squirrels too could benefit with Sri Rama's touch what about me Guruji? Is He going to desert me? Won't you ask Him to shower His blessings on me? I have surrendered to you. Now it is your responsibility to give me a glimpse of my beloved Sri Rama. It is you who has to quench my spiritual thirst.

Guruji, you always ask us to go beyond form, experience God in our hearts and know that we are God. But I am happy hanging on to your feet and shedding tears of joy. I don't want liberation for then how can I see you? I do not want anyone but you and through you see the divine form. For this birth that is enough. Didn't Hanuman too desire for the same when Sri Rama asked him to come

with Him at the end of *Ramavata*? He wanted to stay back on earth and glorify this universe with *Ramanama*.

Let me be like Hanuman. Guruji, please don't try to liberate me. Let me serve you till the end and remain at your feet. This is my sincere request.

*Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu Gurur Devo Maheshwaraha*

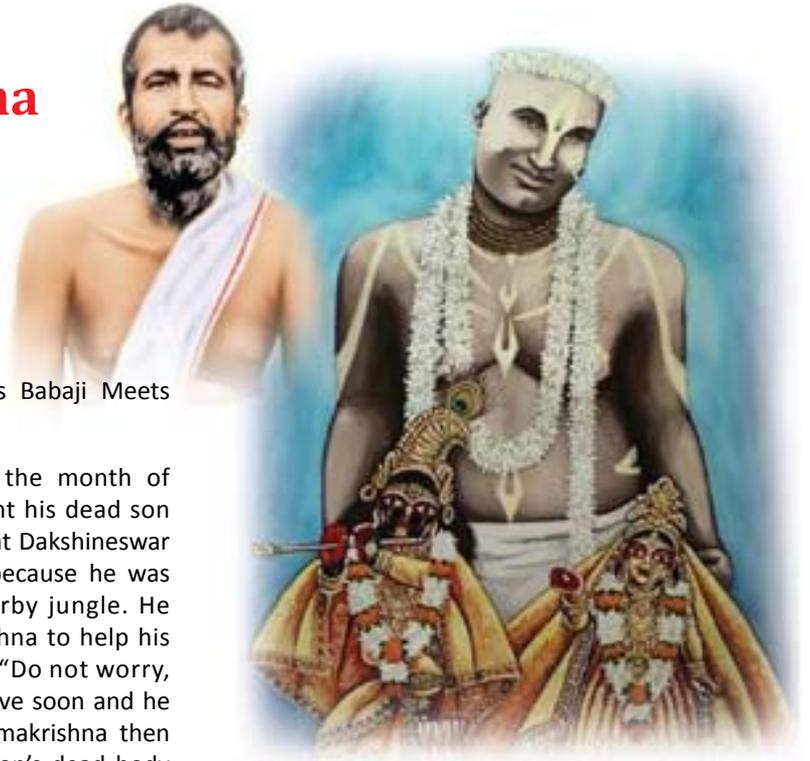
*Gurur Sakshat Parabrahma Tasmai Sri Gurave Namaha!*

On the occasion of Guru Purnima, please grant me my wish Guruji!

**Satakoti Pranams from your Disciple**



# Sri Ramakrishna & Bodo Babaji



*Sri* Radharaman Charan das Babaji Meets  
Thakur Sri Ramakrishna:

“Once during the middle of the month of *Vaisakh* in 1883 a farmer brought his dead son to Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa at Dakshineswar Kali Temple. His son was dead because he was bitten by a king cobra in a nearby jungle. He was praying to Thakur Ramakrishna to help his son. Ramakrishna assured him, “Do not worry, wait a little bit. Someone will arrive soon and he will revive your son.” Thakur Ramakrishna then ordered the farmer to keep his son’s dead body outside the door of the temple, and to cover it with new cloth and to place a full bowl of milk and a banana next to the body. Within a short while Sri Radharaman Charan Das Babaji (Bodo Babaji) came with a large procession of *Vaisnavas* doing *Nam Sankirtan* (loud public singing of God’s name). They were completely absorbed in chanting “*Nitai Gaura Radhey Shyam Hare Krishna Hare Ram*”.

Bodo Babaji was wearing a Punjabi *kurta* (shirt) made of fine silk with buttons made of gold, stylish shoes, and had a walking stick in hand. Bodo Babaji had a peculiar appearance but he was completely absorbed in *kirtan* and was totally unaware of his surroundings. Thakur Ramakrishna jumped up and garlanded him with a flower *mala* from Ma Kali and gave him a hug. Both went mad and exhibited *asta-sattvika-vikara* (ecstatic moods) and fell unconscious.

After sometime when they regained external consciousness Thakur Ramakrishna told Bodo Babaji, “He has kept me here at Dakshineswar, has He kept you at Nadiya”? (District of Bengal, famous as the birth place of Sri Chaitanya) as if he knew Bodo Babaji for a long time. Thakur Ramakrishna then told Bodo Babaji, “For the reason He has sent

you here, please finish that job”. In reply Bodo Babaji said, “You can also do that, why you are asking me?” After a little quarrel over this issue ended Bodo Babaji started *kirtan* (loud chanting). Everyone went mad. They started laughing and dancing with divine pleasure. The gold buttons flew off the body of Bodo Babaji along with his silk *kurta* and *dhoti* (cloth covering the lower half). Only his *dor-kaupin* (loin cloth) remained.

Suddenly a large king cobra appeared from the jungle and kissed the feet of the dead body of the farmer’s son and drank the milk with the banana. After that the snake made his exit towards the west, back into the jungle. The farmer’s son opened his eyes. The *kirtan* went wild in ecstasy. Thakur Ramakrishna started laughing and clapping his hands like a child and shouted “*Jai Ma Dayamayi!*” (Victory to the merciful Divine Mother)!”

Sri Radharaman Charan Das Babaji (Bodo Babaji) was a prominent saint of the Bengal *Vaishnava* sect of Sri Chaitanya Dev. This story is a great example of simpler times when Saints and *Sadhus* honoured each other regardless of silly sectarianism and institutional politics.

- *Charit Manjusha*

# Nag Panchami

*N*ag panchami is celebrated all over the country on the fifth day of the waxing moon fortnight in the month of **Shravan**. This festival falls on the 27th July this year. This is the time of the year when snakes usually come out of their waterlogged homes and look for shelter in and around the area. Man – snake encounters happen tremendously during this season. Some kill the snakes, while some worship them and let them go.

Man has been worshiping snakes from time immemorial. In India there is evidence of snake worship from before the Vedic period. Studies prove that even before the Indus Valley civilization was established, there lived a clan called the NAGAS, among who the worship of snakes was very popular.

The *Puranas*, which were written later, mention some of the snake deities incorporated from the Naga culture. Ananta, Vasuki, Shesha, Padma, Kanwal, Karkotak, Kalia, Aswatar, Takshak, Sankhpal, Dhritarashtra and Pingala are some of the snake deities mentioned in the *Puranas*. Some historians also believe that these were names of Naga Kings and not really names of snake deities.

Snakes, especially the cobra, strike a chord of awe in man. Ever since humans have confronted snakes, they have been charmed by these creatures. Hence, various stories and myths developed about them, which are popular even today.

On the day of Nagapanchami, live snakes are worshiped outside Naga temples and sometimes outside our homes, when charmers bring snakes to residential areas. People believe that they will be safe from snakes and snake bites if they bathe the snakes with milk, apply *haldi - kumkum* on their heads and feed them with rice, eggs and milk.



**What we really don't know is how the snakes reach these snake charmer baskets and finally give us the opportunity to pay obeisance to the Snake God.**

Early in the rainy season, the snake catchers go out and catch the snakes. They brutally break the fangs and sometimes even cut off the venom sac which is inside the cobra's mouth. To be more careful they stitch up the lips of the snakes, thus making sure that when we approach the snake to touch and pray, we are not bitten at all.

The wounds in the mouth and on the lips develop infection over a period of time. The cobras are unable to do anything because of the excruciating pain and discomfort. They cannot obviously eat, as they cannot open their mouths. They can only drink water, as and when they are given a drink.

The cobras require the venom apparatus (the venom sac and the fangs) to help them eat their food. When they bite their prey, venom flows out of the venom sac, through the fangs into the body of the victim. The enzymes in the venom help to disintegrate all the organs in the victim's body, making it easy for the cobra to swallow and digest the prey.

They live in these little baskets till the festival day, by which time the snake charmer makes enough money from the offerings given to him by devout people. After the festival the snake charmer knows the snake will die soon so he invariably neglects the snake. Most often, he won't even give it water to drink leaving it to finally die a miserable death.

It is indeed sad that, we human's treat another living creature so badly. Attaining salvation after participating in such acts is surely impossible. If every one of us takes a conscious step towards eradicating this inhuman practice we will help save the lives of plenty of snakes.

To begin with, all we need to do is to stop entertaining snake charmers. They will soon stop buying snakes from snake catchers, who will soon stop catching and deforming snakes. Another step that every one of us can take is to spread awareness about the ill treatment meted out to snakes, which in turn will help maintain the biological balance in Nature.

- *Aparna Menon*

## Saraswathi Homam



On 5<sup>th</sup> June 2017, on the occasion of commencement of the new academic year for Vidya Mandir students, Saraswathi Homam was performed by Swami Shivananda Puri.

## Only Because of YOU...

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Vidya Daanam (Education)	₹ 7000/year/child
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Alpa Aharam (Snacks)	₹ 1200/day
Vastra Daanam (Uniforms)	₹ 900/2 pairs
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Medicines (For needy people)	₹ 5000/month
Festival at Ma Yogashakti Peetham	₹ 20000

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A/c Name	: Nachiketa Tapovan
A/c No	: 30953215793
IFSC Code	: SBIN0012655
SWIFT Code	: SBININBB214

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#### For further details please contact:

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

# Invitation

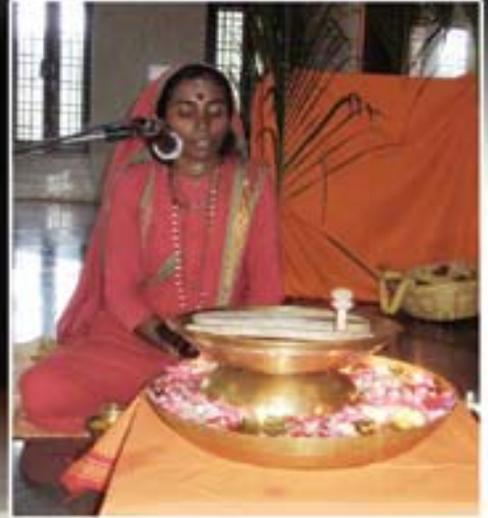
We cordially invite you to  
attend our celebrations

## GURUPOORNIMA

9<sup>th</sup> July 2017

### Venue:

Nachiketa Tapovan,  
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Jadcherla.



## Thank you Donors!

### Sponsor a Child Education - Corpus Fund

Name of the Donor	Amount
<b>Ghanshyam Das Sultania Charitable Trust</b> (For Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal)	₹1 lakh
<b>Smt. CH. Himabindu</b> (in the memory of Sri C. Krishna Murthy) (For Nachiketa Tapovan, Hyderabad)	₹1 lakh

### Building Construction - Corpus Fund Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal

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<b>Sri P.K. Reddy</b>	₹1,50,000/-
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<b>Well wisher</b>	₹50,000

# OUR PHILANTHROPIC PARTNER



Nachiketa Tapovan received 2nd installment of ₹20 Lakh donation from Aurobindo Pharma Foundation for 5 classrooms construction at Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal village, Mahaboobnagar Dist.



Thank you Aurobindo & Team for your magnanimous donation of total ₹40 Lakh and also for walking an extra mile to support the underprivileged ones. We owe a deep sense of gratitude to you for your great contribution to the underprivileged society.

**nachiketa vidya**

*...educate empower enlighten*



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***Your presence will connect the missing dots of life for sure!***

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❖ **Teachers (All Subjects)**

❖ **Front Office Bearer**

❖ **Gurukula Caretaker (Woman)**

❖ **Security Personnel (Family)**

❖ **Sevavraties (Volunteers)**

✓ **We provide food, accommodation and basic amenities**

✓ **Salary/Honorarium and Nachiketa Fellowship Award**

Please do visit to know more about us...

Gentle reminder: Not to consider Tapovan as an orphanage or old age home

## **Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal**

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Kodgal Centre: 0800 888 28 28; Hyderabad Centre: 09849168937 SMS to Swamiji: 099 08 23 45 45

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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.



PATENTED



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

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

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

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

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

*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