

Nachiketanjali

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Guru Dakshinamurthy



Sri Ramakrishna



Yoga Lingam

GURUPURNIMA - 2017 at Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal



Mataji performs Paduka puja



Swamiji talks on the true meaning of Guru

Vidya Mandir children pose with Swamiji
after planting saplings



Nachiketa Vidya Mandir children

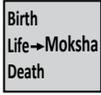


A skit on Sravana kumar



Children dressed up as Sri Ramakrishna,
Adi Shankaracharya & Vedavyasa

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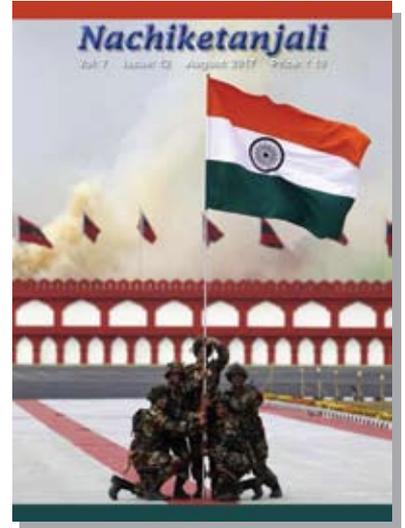
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C O V E R S T O R Y



India, as a nation woke up to see its first spark of freedom at the dawn of 15th August, 1947. Celebrating independence and remembering the numerous martyred souls, this day embarks upon every Indian, a feeling of pride to be born in a country like India.

With the swearing of words at the Viceral Lodge, now called Rashtrapathi Bhawan, the celebration of Independence Day began on 15th August 1947. In central hall, the new government was sworn and for the very first time, the tricolor flag of independent India was proudly hoisted on the flag mast of the Council House. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India hoisted the Tricolour flag, marking the end of the British colonial rule and beginning of a new journey!

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What is freedom?

There is a very thin line of separation between freedom and *moksha* (liberation). Every one of us wants to be a free bird. Children initially cling to their parents for support in all ways but when they approach their teens they want to become free birds. The support they initially enjoyed now becomes shackles for them or so they feel. They want to have their say in all regards and by all means. Grownups who are working seek freedom in their work arena. They wish to have a free hand and do not like to be ruled by their bosses. Elderly people like to lead a hassle-free life though it might seem a distant dream. They are mostly dependent on their children who take over the reins of the household.

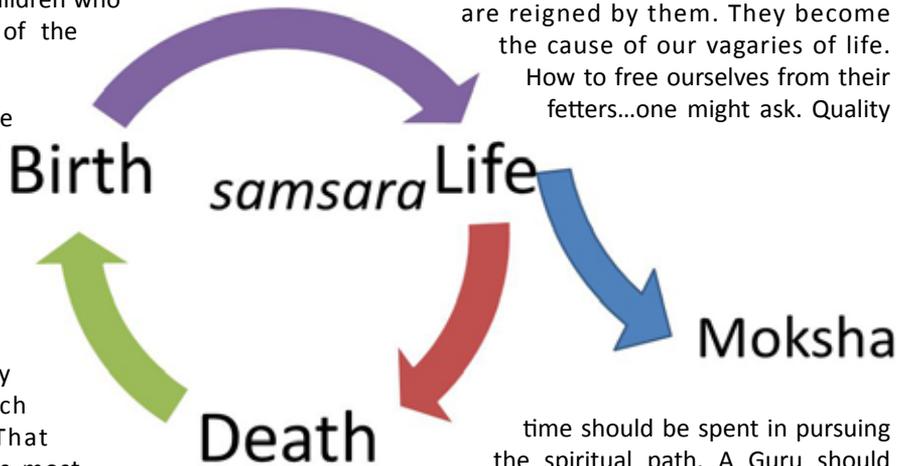
But is this the true freedom that one should crave for? It is very difficult to get a human birth. It is a precious reward given to us to understand the reality of who we really are. We should march in that direction. That is our path. But it is most unfortunate that we forget our goal and get side-tracked by the most superfluous and trivial worldly matters. We binge in worldly pleasures and only at the fag end of life do we realize our follies, but by then it proves to be too late. A precious life is wasted. We go back to gyrate in the cycle of birth and death and what is the ensuing birth no one knows.

Our sages have explored and tread the spiritual path. They have shown the same path to mankind through scriptures, discourses, various *sadhanas* and valuable guidance. We only need to follow their path and reap the benefits. But it is human nature to procrastinate. Youngsters brush it aside feeling it is not their cup of tea and elders are stuck in the

whirlpool of *samsara*. In old age when one gets freed from family burdens and responsibilities, the body becomes fragile and prone to diseases. Neither does one have the physical vigor or mental forte to walk the destined path.

So let us not waste a lifetime. First let us be clear about the word FREEDOM. What is true freedom? Is it freeing ourselves in the worldly sense where we are influenced by our egos or freeing ourselves from the whirlpool of birth and death? What do you think is the right connotation?

Desires hunt us as long as we live. We are reigned by them. They become the cause of our vagaries of life. How to free ourselves from their fetters...one might ask. Quality



time should be spent in pursuing the spiritual path. A Guru should be approached and we are blessed if we get a true Guru who can lead us on our spiritual journey. A Guru gives us various *sadhanas* which help in staying on our path and eventually lead us to our goal. When our goal is clear and our concentration is one-pointed, it becomes easier to achieve the goal of liberation. It is not freedom in the worldly sense but freedom from birth and death. Liberation from worldly life!

- Subhadra K.

Use, Misuse & Abuse...!

God has created every possible act, situation and responses for one to evolve into a divine being. But exactly at the right time, we either use the act or situation for our selfish motive or misuse it to manipulate or completely abuse the whole act or situation and then regret it. It is the abuse of anything that leads to chaos, be it the act or situation. A simple act of accepting mistakes also may bring the plausible change. But one needs to accept it from the bottom of the heart. Just externally saying sorry will not have any great impact. It is that reaction from the bottom of the heart that has a long lasting impact on both the ends.

Look at all our sense organs. What are they meant for? Are they not meant to withdraw within and to know the world within that is more profound?... People do think, they can withdraw at their own will at any given time but we hardly come across such people. Most of them either misuse or abuse every act or manipulate the situation.

Whether it is the mundane world or social world, political life or nonpolitical life, religious world or spiritual world, there is always a scope for use, misuse & abuse of anything. There are people who try to justify their very abusive act by giving some weird references but the same people become more judgmental when someone else is found guilty of a similar act.

Hence one should be more careful while performing any act or stepping into any situation. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't be spontaneous. It is just a matter of allowing an outburst of our simplicity, and rest everything becomes flawless. It is only when we misuse or abuse that we tend to lose our simplicity and thereby losing everything that supports the real foundation of life. In fact, we do not need a great knowledge of anything to perform well in the world. It is our selflessness that brings clarity of life.



Dear Seekers of Divinity! Everything is possible. Anything is possible. We can do it. We can manage it. We can transform it. And believe me, we can infuse it without injecting it. We can do anything and everything. We can...!!! But for that to happen, we should drop our selfishness and lower desires. If that happens, we will never misuse or abuse anything. Even if it is a worldly act, it becomes the purest act. Otherwise we wouldn't have encountered souls like Paramhansa Ramakrishna, Ramana Maharshi or Swami Vivekananda. They have exhibited what selflessness is. They have demonstrated what universality is. They have led by their own examples.

Divine Mother has created situations and has given us the freedom to choose and react. It is now up to us to use, misuse or abuse anything that we feel like. The kind of freedom that we have is immeasurable. It is infinity within infinity. That means, we have the same potential that we come across when we look at the creation and the Creator. We have truly everything that we need to have. It is better if we understand it and act selflessly to feel the divinity within. Please do not abuse or even misuse anything. Remember, it is that abusive act or misuse that demands more and not the simple act. I wish you good luck! It is better to act now than never but wisely, selflessly!

- Swami Nachiketananda Puri

GURU PURNIMA-2017

at Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal

Gurupurnima was celebrated at Nachiketa Tapovan in Kodgal village, on 9th July 2017. Swami Shivananda Puri (Mataji,) performed *Abhishekam* to Guru Dakshinamurthy and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Maa Yogashakthi Peetham.

Children of Nachiketa Vidya Mandir, performed a wonderful skit on Sravana Kumar, sang *bhajans*, chanted *slokas* and recited quotes on Gurus and their preaching.

Swami Nachiketananda Puri delivered his Gurupurnima message in which he expounded on the real meaning of the *bhajan* '*Manasa bhajare Guru charanam*' and enlightened the audience on the qualities of a true Guru and how his message should be put into action instead of just worshipping his feet or his image. Mataji in her talk threw more light on *Guru tattva*. She said only a great *sadhaka* or a highly evolved soul can be as

simple as Swamiji. It is not possible for everyone. Following the Guru's mission and taking forward his teachings is the true meaning of '*Manasa bhajare Guru charanam*'.

Later *Paduka puja* was performed followed by *Arati* to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. *Prasad* was served to everyone. Children were enthusiastic in doing Tree plantation. Swamiji led them to the garden where they planted new saplings. They were reluctant to go home and wanted to spend more time in the presence of Swamiji and Mataji. Such was the electrifying atmosphere created by the Gurus.

In the evening, there was a *bhajan* session, followed by *havan* and a night-long guided *sadhana*. The highly prevalent energies of Gurupurnima were experienced by all *sadhakas*.



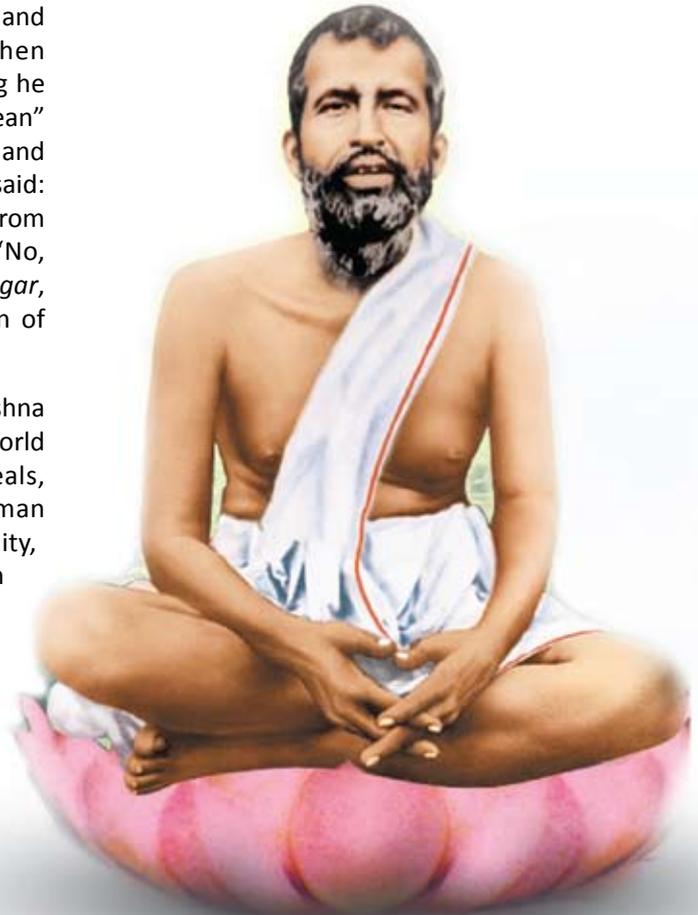


Amritadhara

Sri Ramakrishna's teachings contain illustrative parables and stories which can teach us many lessons. Though he had only an elementary education, he could discuss philosophical and spiritual ideas with scholars and astound them. One day he went to meet one of the greatest pundits of Calcutta at that time, **Sri Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar**. This meeting, and the 4-hour dialogue, is recorded in the **Gospel**. It is simply marvelous. It describes how a great scholar got some lessons from this semi-literate person. Sri Ramakrishna was very humorous. Generally, religious people are not humorous and joyous, but Sri Krishna and Sri Ramakrishna were exceptions. So when Ramakrishna met Vidyasagar, the first thing he said was, 'I am glad I have come to the "ocean" today. Till now, I have been only to tanks and lakes.' Vidyasagar was also humorous. He said: 'Then you are free to take some salt water from the ocean.' Sri Ramakrishna countered, 'No, no, why salt water'? You are not *avidyasagar*, ocean of ignorance, but *vidyasagar*, ocean of knowledge!

In the course of the dialogue, Sri Ramakrishna remarked that all the holy books in the world are *ucchista*, meaning, left-over after-meals, since they have been uttered by the human mouth. Only Brahman, the ultimate Reality, is not *ucchista*, because no one has been able to expound Brahman by mouth. Vidyasagar was deeply impressed by this statement and said, 'Please repeat it once again, sir; it is beautiful.' Vedanta speaks of Brahman as being beyond speech and thought. You cannot express its nature through mind or mouth.

Sri Ramakrishna conveyed to his listeners on another occasion a beautiful teaching which will help all of us in our day-to-day life, helping us to grow spiritually. I referred to it cursorily earlier — the little-I in all of us and how to handle it. Every human child develops the sense of 'I' at the age of about 2½ years. Nothing else in this world — the sun, stars, planets, or animals — has this sense of 'I'. Only humans have it. And that is a source of tremendous power to all human beings. It is through this that the human being dominates the whole of nature. How to handle



this 'I' which appears in all of us as a central truth? It is a profound subject of interest in the whole world. The baby gets the feeling of 'I', and when it starts saying 'I want this, I will do this,' it has started on the long, truly human journey to *atma-jnana*. We want to know **what is the nature of that unique datum and that unique journey**. It is not anything magical or mystifying; it is the science of human growth beyond its physical and intellectual dimensions.

The 'I' that appears in the baby is only an initial datum. It has to develop and expand in a big way. That is the great spiritual education of the child. The first education — and truly speaking, **all** education — is spiritual. The spiritual education of the child is to strengthen that 'I', that is, to strengthen its sense of individuality. Whenever the child wants to do something, the mother and others around encourage it, so that the child can understand its own worth as an individual and learn to stand on its own feet. Unfortunately, all over India today, this is the first as well as the last education of the child, and the result is an individual who is petty-minded, egotistic and unable to live and work with others. That is why we are in trouble. Sri Ramakrishna called this *kaca ami*, the unripe-I. This has only one capacity, namely, colliding with other 'I's'. **Bertrand Russell** says that this human being is like a billiard ball, and billiard balls know only how to collide with each other. Sri Ramakrishna says that this unripe-I must develop into a ripe-I. That makes the individual grow into a person, making for happy relations with other people, for it is a very necessary spiritual education for peaceful and happy inter-human relations. If unripe-I stands for *vyaktitva*, individuality, ripe-I stands for *vikasita vyaktitva*, personality. Late Sir Julian Huxley, a British biologist, defines 'personality' thus: 'Persons are individuals who transcend their mere organic individuality in conscious (social) participation.'

It is through *seva-bhava*, says Sri Ramakrishna, that this spiritual growth, the second stage in *atma-jnana*, takes place. Hence service

becomes a training ground in the context of inter-human relations for the development of *atma-jnana*. 'I am here to serve you, to help you, with whatever surplus energy of body and mind I possess' — this attitude becomes natural when the unripe-I develops into the ripe-I. The proud and arrogant 'I' becomes the servant-I, the devotee-I — *dasa ami*, *bhakta ami*, as Sri Ramakrishna puts it. Sri Ramakrishna lays great stress on this subject. When the unripe-I expands into the ripe-I you expand spiritually, the Divine in you finds greater manifestation, and since the same Divine is in all beings, you become capable of entering into other people, and allowing others to enter into you, instead of colliding like billiard balls, as happens at the unripe-I level.

Consider a family where both wife and husband have unripe egos or strong individualities. There will be no peace in the house. If both have ripe egos, theirs will be a happy and fulfilled life. This applies everywhere. Today, in India, a little more of this ripe-I will make for better family and social life and better politics. Like this, there are beautiful teachings in the **Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna**, in the **Holy Mother's conversations**, and in Vivekananda—literature, all of which are directly relevant to the health and well-being of our day-to-day life, individual and collective.

One great teaching of the Upanishads, the Gita, and Srimad Bhagavatam, which Sri Ramakrishna emphasized, is: **'God is in every being and service of beings is the worship of God.'** He experienced the presence of the Divine in all, be they householders or young devotees, atheists or criminals. He would say: 'I see Narayana in all of you.' So he taught: **Service of humanity is worship of God. Every jiva is Siva**; service of the jiva is the worship of Siva. Vivekananda developed this into the universal philosophy and spirituality of service.

- *Swami Ranganathananda*



The Mind Filter

*H*ave you ever noticed that when you are looking for something, or if something is on your mind, you seem to find it everywhere and in everything you do? For example, the other day I was going to write an entrance exam, and I needed to get an extra copy of my hall ticket. I needed a Xerox shop. So any sign on the road that had an 'X' in it would catch my eye. Anywhere there was a 'printout' or 'cyber cafe' written I would turn to look again.

Now you must be thinking that it's obvious. When I'm looking for something I will only see stuff like it. But my question is why do we limit it only to materialistic things.

When we look at people, many of us tend to see only the bad and not the good. When we meet a person for the first time, we tend to remember all of their flaws, but how many times do we remember the good in them. This is what I call the mind filter. The mind itself is not tuned to search or filter out any material. It is the way we think, that makes it tune itself to our way of thinking. And as we live in a world which is far from perfect, a majority of us have a mind tuned to look for negative occurrences rather than positive ones.

Our very own Swami Nachiketanaanda, once gave a small example of this. He took a white board and asked the gathering what it was. Everyone answered that it was a white board. He marked a dot on it in black. Everyone said it was a black dot. He made the dot larger and larger, and all along people kept calling it a black dot and a black circle. After he was done, and almost the whole board was black, save for a few spaces of white, he enquired once again what it was. Everyone called it a black board. Now he told everyone what they had missed. When he drew the dot first, no one noticed the white space around it. They only looked at the dot and when asked to describe the board, they described the entire board only with respect to the dot. This went on, and even when there was some white space in the board, people still only noticed the black. This is our mind filter.

In my first example, I used the mind filter only to find something. There was no negative or positive aspect of that. But in our daily life, the mind filter works of its own accord. If we don't keep it under control, it can consume us and turn us into negative and pessimistic people. But if we do, our lives can be positive and hopeful.

Your mind is a powerful thing. When you filter it with positive thoughts, your life will start to change.

- Buddha



Have you ever wondered why we love our family and friends? It's not that they are pure or flawless people. They are not white boards. Everyone has a few black dots. But we still love them because we tune our mind only to see the white space around their black spots. Similarly we must tune our mind to look only for the white space in everybody around us. Especially the working class. Our watchmen and maids for example. Many a time we doubt them and think that they are dishonest. In the process we end up treating them with contempt and spreading negative vibrations which only make them bitter. Instead, if we treat them with some faith and respect, they themselves would have a positive vibe and do good things.

Every single one of us has black spots, but at the same time we have the ability to ignore them, and I daresay, even wipe them out. So let's tune our minds, first to ignore the black spots in others and try to see only the white; and second, to try our best to wipe out our own black spots.

Not black and white,

But grey is the colour of mankind.

To see only the white in the grey,

All we need to do is tune our mind!

N. Rohan C. Govind
Class 12,
GT Aloha Vidya Mandir, Chennai



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Let us be at peace, perfect peace, with ourselves, and give up our whole body and mind and everything as an eternal sacrifice unto the Lord. Instead of the sacrifice of pouring oblations into the fire, perform this one great sacrifice day and night - the sacrifice of your little self. "In search of wealth in this world, Thou art the only wealth I have found; I sacrifice myself unto Thee. In search of someone to be loved, Thou art the only one beloved I have found; I sacrifice myself unto Thee". Let us repeat this day and

night, and say: "Nothing for me; no matter whether the thing is good, bad, or indifferent; I do not care for it; I sacrifice all unto Thee". Day and night let us renounce our seeming self until it becomes a habit with us to do so, until it gets into the blood, the nerves, and the brain, and the whole body is every moment obedient to this idea of self-renunciation. Go then into the midst of the battlefield, with the roaring cannon and the din of war, and you will find yourself to be free and at peace.

- Swami Vivekananda



WINDS OF CHANGE

*Change your thoughts
and you change your world.*

Norman Vincent Peale



*I*t was a particularly bad day for me. I was in the worst frame of mind, unable to focus on the task at hand. I felt as if there was no light at the end of the tunnel. Then, suddenly, inspiration knocked at my door.

It was a letter from the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India thanking us for voluntarily giving up the subsidy on cooking gas cylinders. The wonderfully written letter explained how the citizens' gesture was helping millions of others. It then exhorted us to participate in other programs of the Government. The letter served multiple purposes:

- It acknowledged the gesture of the citizen and explained the impact of that little act
- It explained why the particular call (to give up the subsidy) to the citizens was given
- It elaborated on similar schemes of the government in which citizens can easily take part and personally benefit from
- It encouraged the recipient to interact with the Government through any of the available means of communication

I was very happy. A number of thoughts flooded my mind. For instance, why did anyone did not think of asking the citizens to voluntarily give up the subsidy before? How wonderful of the person who conceived this idea of sending personalized letters to the citizens! How humbling it is that a small gesture is of some use to the needy!

Just the other day, the Minister for External Affairs had warmly received a citizen who was forced into marriage by a Pakistani man. The

Minister effectively answered the call of her duty, as always. The woman related her tribulations and said she was surprised that a simple citizen was so well cared for by the Government. When she thanked the Government for its efforts, the Minister said she just performed her duty and appreciated every single person involved in the process.

I think that we are living during one of the most interesting times in the history of our young nation. The citizen is being seen and heard by the powers that be. The country is being accorded respect and importance at international fora. The leaders are working hard for the betterment of the people. Many times, help is just a 'tweet' away. The Indian Space Research Organization sets a new record every other day. New institutions are being established and the existing ones are being rejuvenated.

A word of caution may still be needed. While economic growth may easily manifest itself, systemic change needs time and careful nurturing. It is we the citizens who should be proactive and do our bit for the country. Simple things like following traffic rules, adhering to rules of organization (for example, standing in a queue irrespective of one's perceived 'status'), truly declaring one's income and remitting taxes on time and being aware of one's duties to the nation can go a long way in making our society a better place to live in. As once read somewhere, "If you respect your soldiers, be the citizen worth fighting for."

– **Neetika Gogula**

An advocate and has passion
for writing on social issues

Varalakshmi Vratam



Varalakshmi is one of the forms of Mahalakshmi who is the consort of Lord Vishnu. Varalakshmi incarnated from the milky ocean known as *Kshirsagar*. It is said that she fulfills all the wishes of her devotees. Hence this form of Goddess is known as *Vara* and *Lakshmi* i.e. Goddess *Lakshmi* who bestows boons.

Varalakshmi Vrat is celebrated on the second Friday or the Friday before full moon (*purnima*) of the auspicious month of *Sraavan* (July/August). The Vrat is mainly observed by married women in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Maharashtra. It is believed that worshipping Varalakshmi on this day is equivalent to worshipping *Ashtalakshmi* – the eight Goddesses of Wealth (*Sri*), Earth (*Bhu*), Learning (*Saraswathi*), Love (*Priti*), Fame (*Kirti*), Peace (*Shanathi*), Pleasure (*Tushti*), and Strength (*Pushti*). Each one of these forces is called a *Lakshmi* and all the eight forces are called the *Ashta Lakshmis*.

As the legend goes, this Vrat was pronounced by none other than Lord Shiva to His consort *Parvathi* to perform for seeking prosperity and happiness. Thus it came to be emulated by married women who sought boons (*vara*) for the health, wealth and knowledge for the entire family.

It is important that *Varalakshmi Vrat* is performed at a fixed *Lagna*. It is believed that doing so would bring more prosperity. There are four puja timings in a day when fixed *Lagna* prevails. Any suitable time can be chosen for *Varalakshmi Vratam*. However the evening time which overlaps with *Pradosh* is considered to be the most appropriate to worship Goddess *Lakshmi*.

The *Puja* steps in *Varalakshmi Puja Vidhi* are similar to *Mahalakshmi Puja* during *Diwali*. However it includes *Puja* steps and *Mantra* for *Thorabhandhanam* and *Vaayana dhaanam*. The sacred thread which is tied during *Varalakshmi Puja* is known as *Thorabhandhanam* and offering of flowers, fruits and *thambulam* to married women is known as *Vaayana dhaanam*.

Puja Vidhi includes all sixteen steps called *Shodasopachara Puja* to worship Goddess *Varalakshmi*.

1. *Dhyanam* (meditate),
2. *Avahanam* (invocation),
3. *Aasanam* (offering a seat),
4. *Paadyam* (washing of feet),
5. *Arghyam* (washing of hands),
6. *Aachamanam* (offering water to drink),
7. *Snanam* (offering *panchamrutas* and holy water for bath),
8. *Vastram* (offering new clothes),
9. *Abharanam* (offering jewels),
10. *Gandham* (anointing with sandal paste followed by offering *Soubhagya dravyas* like *haldi*, *kumkum*, *sindhoor* and *kajal*),
11. *Pushparchana* (offering flowers),
12. *Dhoopam* (fragrant incense),
13. *Deepam* (lighting ghee lamps),
14. *Naivedyam* (offering of specially prepared food, fruits and sweets),
15. *Tambulam* (Betel leaves and betel nuts),
16. *Neerajanam* (*Aarti*).





After *Shodasa puja*, *Pradakshina namaskaram* (circumambulation) is offered and the *puja* ends with *Mantrapushpam* in which a devotee offers handful of flowers and *Akshatas* at Goddess Varalakshmi's feet with utmost dedication and devotion. *Puja* is based on *Mantras* (hymns) and is focused on concentrating on sounds.

In the end, the story of Varalakshmi *Vratam*, which was narrated by Lord Shiva to His consort Parvathi is read to know the significance of the *puja*. Goddess Varalakshmi's blessings are sought and *prasadam* partaken by all assembled devotees.



Interested writers can send articles based on spirituality or addressing social issues to nachiketanjali1@gmail.com

Word limit is 300 words for one column, 500 words for full page and 1000 words for 2 pages. The best articles would be published in the forthcoming issues of
Nachiketanjali



One of our weaknesses in India is that we hear a teaching but don't know how to apply it intelligently. In this connection, Sri Ramakrishna's parable of the Elephant Narayana and Mahut Narayana is helpful to us.

A guru was living in an *ashrama* with his disciple. He had taught them that Narayana (God) is present in all beings. One day, the disciples went out to secure fuel and other things for the *ashrama*. Just then a mad elephant was passing on the road with the Mahut on its back shouting: 'Clear the way; a mad elephant is coming!' Hearing this warning, all the disciples except one moved away to safety. That one disciple stood facing the elephant, chanting hymns to Narayana, disregarding the Mahut's constant warning to move away. The elephant, unfortunately, did not know this high Vedanta! It took hold of the youth, threw him aside and went on its way.

Hearing about the incident, the guru and his other disciples came to where he was, brought him back to consciousness, and the guru asked him why, when all others moved away from the path of the mad elephant, he alone stood there. The disciple replied, 'It is all your grace. You taught us that Narayana is in all beings; so I stood there worshipping the Elephant Narayana.' The guru said, 'What a fool you are! Narayana is certainly in the elephant, but is He not also in the Mahut? Why did you not listen to the words of the Mahut Narayana?' This is intelligent application of a teaching. Like this, there are many parables of significance in Sri Ramakrishna's teachings.

- Swami Ranganathananda

Innocence



My Guru says...

'Become like breeze, instead of a concrete ball...'

'Become a presence, instead of personality...'

What I've touched within myself, has created such a distance between me and what is on the outside. What I've achieved on the outside, that I don't carry it like a badge or a chip on my shoulder. More often than not, most often in fact, I don't even feel that I've achieved a lot.

Because it is not 'me' who has achieved this. I'm not capable of all this magic. It is simply grace that has functioned through me. I've only become a conduit.

The only credit that may be accorded to me, is that I've been receptive to this grace. That I've been open to it. I've seen it. Recognized it. I have bowed down in gratitude completely, to this grace, and held it as the highest aspect, in my life.

When I talk with people of my age, maybe even those younger or older than me, I realize that they've gotten too identified with their social status, their achievements, their struggles,

their pain, their hurt, their egos, their journey to success or misery, whichever they've chosen for themselves...So much so, that they're unable to see anything clearly, what they see is coloured by their opinions, biases, conclusions...And truth cannot be seen or touched or experienced by wearing coloured lenses. To be able to experience truth, one must get themselves 'out of the way'... only then, truth 'reveals' itself. Because truth is omnipresent. Only problem is that we're looking in the wrong direction. It is within. We're looking for it without.

We're unable to distinguish between what is real and what is illusionary...so identified we are to the roles / tags that we've carved out for ourselves and for those around us, that any deviation from our prefixed opinions and ideologies, and we're immediately 'at war', we're in a constant state of 'strife and struggle'. It is always a race. It is always us vs the others.

And in this state, the only way to feel good about ourselves and feel superior, is to show others down. We're constantly in fault finding mode. Rather than looking at what's right, we're constantly focusing on what isn't.

I was in Europe recently. Staying at the most luxurious hotels, meeting the business heads of our associates, achieving things that aren't so simple and straightforward...and I realised that I don't meet people depending on who they are in the 'outside / business' world, I meet people for 'who' they are. I don't talk to people or hold people depending on 'what they can do for me', I meet people and hold them in a way that I feel that my life is 'enriched' by this meeting with them.

The interaction is not transactional in nature. There is no thought of 'what is the material gain for me' from them; it is only a feeling, that if this is my last interaction with this 'being', then how would I want it to be.

There is no thought of 'what is in it for 'me'? What is the take back?'. There is no take back. There is nothing to gain, other than maybe a sublime experience, a cup of tea, a joyful exchange. A smile. A tear. This is what 'life in every breath' is about. Life in every moment. Life in every cup of tea. Life in every single exchange we have.

I realise that I may be 40 years old. I may be the CEO of a small company, but even when I talk very smartly or appropriately, even if I handle situations far bigger and complex than myself, it doesn't come from a place of ego. It comes from a place of knowing. It comes from a place of innocence.

Constantly aware of one of the biggest reality check, " this too shall pass", " who am I to make it happen"...I'm acutely aware of being a nobody. A speck of dust in the large scheme of things; That I don't really count for anything.

But this awareness doesn't mean that we can't make a positive difference in the lives of those we meet and touch. It doesn't mean that we can't change the world for the better. It doesn't mean that we can't leave this world a better place than when we inherited it.

On the contrary, the chances that 'we're actually able to achieve things far bigger than ourselves, are much more, because as breeze and a presence, we have a far deeper ability to touch lives than by being a concrete ball and a personality.

- *Gautam Vir*

NACHIKETA TAPOVAN Kodgal



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Practice in the Gita

Lord Sri Krishna, the teacher of the Gita lays greater emphasis on practice than on theory. What are the basic laws of spiritual practice? What are the difficulties and obstacles which the aspirant has to face and overcome in religious life? What are the problems and perplexities that arise during the period of *Sadhana*? Complete understanding of these details is necessary for the seeker. The Gita enlightens us on various matters in the course of its teaching and the seeker is not left in doubt about any problem vital to his spiritual progress.

Let us deal with being fearless in this issue.

Be Fearless:

The first and foremost obstacle to spiritual progress is fear, doubt, timidity and weakness both of body and mind. "Can I ever hope to attain the goal? I have not the will-power to resist obstacles and temptations. Only the great *Rishis* and *Mahatmas* have been able to reach

the goal. I am after all a house-holder burdened with wife and children. How can I be free from cares and anxieties? How can I give up my attachment for my home and family? Spiritual life is highly impossible for one like me." We find many people talking in this strain when they think of God-realisation. The Gita commands them never to indulge in such-ruinous thoughts and feelings of despair and hopelessness.

(kshudram hridayadaurbalyam tyaktothishta parantapa)

"Oh, chastiser of the enemy, Arjuna; give up this wretched weakness. Arise, do your duty." Through Arjuna as the medium, the Supreme Lord exhorts all mankind again and again, "Be fearless."

"With courage, steadfastness and zeal; undaunted by failures or difficulties, do your duty with an equal mind." That is the first command of the Gita. It is foolish to imagine that only *Sannyasins* are competent to attain liberation. The Gita never says so. The *Sastras* do not say that liberation is the monopoly of men belonging to any particular race, religion, or position. From start to finish, the Gita declares that liberation is the birthright of all mankind. But the aspirant should not be deterred by obstacles and failures on the way. He should continue his spiritual practice with complete faith in God and his efforts would be crowned with success ultimately. As one overcomes one or two initial obstacles, his faith is redoubled and quicker progress becomes possible. The sincere seeker is never let down by the higher power, although to some there may be delay in the realization of the cherished objective. So the first command of the Gita is to free the mind from all defeatist thoughts and feelings, never to yield to suggestions of helplessness and despair, in short to be fearless in the face of the most overwhelming obstacles and difficulties and make steady progress with unswerving faith in God, *Guru* and one's own Self.

Source: Gita Makarandam
by Swami Vidyaprakashananda

India, my India

India, my India
Stay calm my country
I know you're hurting and bleeding
For your soldiers and warriors
For the protection of your borders
But India, my India
Eye for an eye does make the whole world blind
More bloodshed will make our rivers run red and dry
India, my India,
Reflect, my country
Isn't there any other way
To safeguard our borders without destroying the others?
Shall we too do what we condemn them for?
I understand your pain,
The inconsolable loss of men and peace of mind
But I ask you, will those lives and peace come back
By killing others?
Will our pride be restored by breaking those at our borders?
India, my India
Remember your virtues and high values
You are a country of great heritage and human perseverance
You won battles and war without violence once
You can do it again
Even better than before
Yes, I know some believe in killing, terrorizing, massacrings mercilessly
Listen, that is their beliefs and misplaced conceptions
But is that ours?
Aren't we emulating exactly what we oppose?
Random attacks and inhuman acts of carnage!
What is the difference between us?
Why fight then? We are them, they are us.
India, my India
Recall the words of the Poet Rumi,
'A battle is death's dance macabre'
Put down your swords, take up your lofty thoughts
Fight, of course you must
But fight with something stronger and sturdier



than weapons
Fight with your sense of justice and fairness
Fight with the strength of your character and deep rooted philosophies
Fight with your knowledge of mortality and frailty of man
Fight the fight exclusively your way
Don't borrow the same ways and means from your brothers across
India, my India,
Remember your worth
You don't have to prove it to others who won't know it anyway
India, my India,
Stay safe my beautiful country
Love is what you do best, not hatred or hurting.
Believe in the power of love not in your dagger
Hit back, sure, but by channelizing your anger
Rise up my country
Arise, awake one of our men once said many years back
Be better than the fascist, absolutist
Be wiser than the weaker, the wicked
Be kinder than the misguided, the conflicted
India, my India,
Remember you were always above the pettiness of cruel leaders
You are a land of saints and sages who fought greater clashes
You don't always have to win your wars with violence
India, my India,
Be yourself
Don't let them win by becoming them
Achieve your victory by being just You.
Tolerant, compassionate, loving, peaceful you, at all costs. Even the human one!!!

- *Mallika Sastry Chandrasekhar*

Satsangas

On 4th March and 2nd April 2017, *Satsangas* were conducted by Mataji at Ashoknagar, Hyderabad.



Meditation and Stress Management Program

On 22nd March 2017 'Meditation and Stress Management' program was held for Police Personnel of Jadcherla and Mahaboobnagar District at Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal. The program was organized with the coordination of Jadcherla and Mahboobnagar Police personnel.



Satsang at Nagole

On 2nd April 2017, *Satsang* & Meditation workshop was conducted at Nagole 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.



Pranaprathista at Chandradana village

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



Satsang 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.

Workshop for Sevavratīs

On 7th April and 18th June 2017, Mataji conducted one day workshops for *Sevavratīs*.



Satsang at Gulmohar Park Colony

On 27th May 2017, Mataji's *Satsang* was held at Gulmohar Park Colony. This was organised by Nachiketa Seva Vahini, Greater Hyderabad Unit and led by its President, Sri Sundar Raj and State Executive Member Sri PVSr Narasimha Rao.

Motivating youth

Two hours program for motivating youth was held on 4th June 2017 at Nachiketa Tapovan from 5-00 to 7-00 pm.



Manovignanam Level-1

Manovignanam workshop was held from 9-11 June 2017 at Nachiketa Tapovan, Kodgal, which was a blend of young and old. Mataji was instrumental in shaping the minds of the participants. With divine grace and their own efforts, seekers of divinity were able to connect few missing dots of life.

Saraswathi Homam

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



Swami Shivananda Puri's Programs - 2017



HEDAVDE MAHALAXMI TEMPLE in Mumbai

Param Puja Guruvarya Dadasaheb Hate Om Shree Maha Laxmi Mata Mandir Trust owns Hedavde Mahalaxmi Temple. The temple, situated in Hedavde village near Vasai, forms an important part of a famous Shakti Peetha. The Shakti Peetha to which this temple belongs is the one where Goddess Sati's ankle fell during the fierce *Tandava* by Lord Shiva while He was on His way to Kailash.

This temple has an elaborate story behind it, which states that it was built somewhere in the 19th century. One night, a Goddess appeared in the dream of P.P. Dadasaheb Hate, who was a local goldsmith and farmer. The Goddess commanded him to take Her idol out of the ground and construct a temple. Following the

dream, the man excavated the exact site and found a statue of Goddess Laxmi that was covered in mud and *sindur*. A temple was built at the spot, which gained immense recognition over the years. Babasaheb Hate started the daily custom of *Maha Prasad* here.

Several rites and rituals take place at Hedavde Mahalaxmi Temple on a daily basis. It is flocked by a large number of devotees during various festivals including Guru Purnima, *Ghata Stapana*, *Hom Havan*, Dusshera, Tripurari Purnima and Shree Gurudatta Jayanti. *Pratavarshik Yatra* – the annual procession of the temple – takes place in the month of May.

Source: Hedavde Temple History

Subscribers have to give their correct postal address along with pincode at the time of subscribing and also inform if there is any change of address. All queries can be mailed to nachiketanjali@gmail.com

The Way Home

*H*ark ye, my friends. Silence, O my comrades! I hear the call of the Flute. I see the assembly of the saints. How He smiles as I approach Him, accompanied and guided by the Teacher. The cries of the world below do not attract me. The music of the distance enralls my soul. I go, I go...to the been to Vraja, - to Barasana and to Mathura, - and she has witnessed once again the dramas that were enacted centuries ago. She has waited at Dwaraka and enjoyed the company of her Lord Giridhara. Now the night is drawing to a close. The dawn of her new life is slowly making its appearance. This dawn will sweep away the last remnants of the darkness of ignorance and usher in the sun of realization in all its glory. Mira must speed up. She has to perform her last rites. She has to clasp her little Image that so often heard her supplications. She must draw near her old devotees that had wept with her as she sat reciting the tales of separation to them. They had given her hopes and soothed her in her woes of separation.

She assembles all her companions and begins her evening prayers; and, though now quite an aged lady, yet Mira dances before her Lord like a child. Today she is all attention to everybody and replies to every query. She sings as many songs as the devotees want. She is prepared to meet the Lord. All the dear devotees sit in rapt attention.

Today Mira appears so glorious. Sometimes they see Mira, at other times the Lord appearing in Mira, a unique phenomenon. They rub their eyes just to make sure they are not dreaming and watch closely their holy mother. They kiss her feet as she stands insensible to all that is passing round her. She sings the songs that have come down to us, and will ever arouse thrills in the body of the devotee and point to the fair haven – the realization of man's desire, the meaning of life.

Hours pass like this. Mira is in ecstasy. All around is suddenly lit up with a halo. The Lord appears – the little Image opens and cheerfully Mira enters



it, meets her Lord and her human form forever disappears from before the eyes of the devotees. The Mira who gave the message of *Bhakti* forever disappears.

Her message is simple. "None by reason of birth, poverty, age or sex will be debarred from His divine presence. The way is but one, - that of *Bhakti*. The portals will open when the Teacher will bless the devotee with his company and teach him the mysteries of the *Sabda*. Once He is reached, there is no further or future separation possible. Sooner or later everyone is to meet his Lord. Time is a great factor and can be shortened by the intensity of one's affection for the Lord. Burn in the fire of separation from the Lord. But this is to come through practice of no yogic exercises not through mere learning. It is a gift and a boon from the Lord Himself." In fact, when once the Lord manifests Himself to the devotee, the Call becomes irresistible and the urge can no longer be held up, the devotee cannot contain himself. He proclaims with the mystic:-

"I go with a perpetual heartache. None can see God or Goddess and live."

The Story of Mira Bai - Gita Press, Gorakhpur

Learning to say
'NO'
when you usually say
'YES'



The following article has come out from my heart as I have become a target, far too many times saying 'YES' when all I wanted to say was a big 'NO'.

The urge to say 'YES', to please everyone around can be overwhelming. It is not just a matter of being a 'nice person'. It can be rooted in your desire to maintain your self-image. It may even be the result of situations in which you feel, you will gain from constantly saying 'YES', but the truth in life is that knowing, when to say 'NO'. We should learn to set our priorities and therefore know when it is okay to say 'YES'. By understanding the proper time to say 'YES', you will quickly learn how to tell, when it is not okay and you must say 'NO'.

i) You say YES because... that is what you were taught.

One of the most common reasons you say 'YES' when you should say 'NO' is the result of early childhood, cultural conditioning which taught you, that answering people's requests with a 'NO' is not being polite.

ii) You say YES because...you want to be liked by all.

This is a big one- everyone wants to be liked. You meet people and you immediately strive to make a good first impression because you want to be liked. It is more important to take into consideration what is good for you rather than worrying about what other people think about you.

iii) You say YES because...you do not want to challenge authority.

How many times has your boss asked you to stay late to finish a project or take work home over the weekend? You say YES even when you know, by doing so; it will conflict with your plans. This is because of your desire to retain your employment.

iv) You say YES because...you feel you have to say YES.

This is when you say YES, not because you want to do something but because you feel obliged to comply.

v) You say 'YES' because...you do not have the courage to say 'NO'.

Not being assertive is one of the reasons, why people let that 'YES' come out of their mouths when their insides are yelling 'Say NO'.

Mastering, the word 'NO' will help you reduce your stress level and will allow you more free time so, that you can enjoy your life. You will certainly like the person you have become, better than the person you used to be.

The art of leadership is saying 'NO', not 'YES'. It is very easy to say 'YES'

Always you are the number one priority in your life. LEARN TO SAY 'NO' when the situation asks for it.

- Mrudula

The Message of VIVEKACHUDAMANI

Vivekino viraktasya samadi-gunasalinah;

Mumksoreva hi brahmo-jijnasa-yogyata mata - 17

The man who discriminates between the Real and the unreal, whose mind is turned away from the unreal, who possesses calmness and the allied virtues, and who is longing for liberation, is alone considered qualified to inquire into Brahman.

If the previous verse emphasized clarity of mind, in the present verse, the stress is on purity. What other qualities should an aspirant possess to begin his enquiry into Brahman (*brahmo-jijnasa-yogyata*)? He should be endowed with *viveka*, the faculty of discriminating between the Real and the unreal. This faculty of discrimination is primary. All of us have it, but in most cases it remains dormant, because we usually follow the dictates of our impulses. When we begin to use this faculty, it works as the first check to our impulsive life, and, as a result, other virtues follow.

Then, the aspirant should be dispassionate. He should be one whose mind is turned away from the unreal (*virakta*). Through discrimination, we develop dispassion (*viraga*). Our mind then begins to beat retreat from sensory indulgences seeing them as transient and unreal, and also seeing in them only misery and bondage. This quality signifies a measure of detachment from sensory life. As long as our lives are immersed in sensory pleasures, the higher search for our infinite dimensions cannot begin. An important precondition to commence this great search is a sense of detachment from the sensory world. We detach ourselves from the transient lower pleasures for the higher and lasting joy. It is just like a baby forsaking its interest in toys for the higher joys of a grown up social life. It begins to release its life from the narrow circle of toys when it discovers a life of a wider social circle and possibilities. The baby thereby does not feel the pain of giving up its allegiance to toys. It is a spontaneous joyous outgrowth from a lower to a higher state.



Similarly, when we slowly start searching for our higher dimension, mind becomes naturally withdrawn from the lower things, bringing about a spontaneous and joyous renunciation. When we think of higher things, attachment to the lower things drops off automatically. This is the type of positive renunciation taught in Vedanta. It makes us give up the fleeting joys of the world by showing us the Source of all joys.

The aspirant should thus be discriminative and dispassionate. Then he should possess calmness and the allied virtues (*samadi-gunasalinah*). These virtues are six: *Sama, dama, uparati, titiksa, sraddha*, and *samadhana*. These together are called six treasures (*sat-sampatti*). These will be explained one by one in later verses. The aspirant should have at least a minimum measure of these virtues. And, finally, he should be one who longs for liberation (*mumksu*). Such a person alone can take the needed steps in spiritual striving. These four virtues – discrimination, dispassion, the six treasures, and the urge for liberation – together constitute the four-fold spiritual discipline (*sadhana-catustaya*). This four-fold spiritual discipline is indispensable on the path to realization of Brahman.

- Swami Ranganathananda

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Books Distribution



On 29th June 2017, Notebooks were distributed to our Nachiketa Vidya Mandir children by the kind hearted donors of Cognizant Company.

Jham Saheb Digvijay Singh

When Hitler invaded Poland and started World War II, 500 Polish women and 200 children were put in a ship to save them from Germans. The ship was left in the sea by the Polish Army and Captain was told to take them to any country where they can get shelter. The last message from their countrymen was “If we are alive or survive, then we will meet again”.

The ship, filled with five hundred refugee Polish women and two hundred children were refused entry by many European Ports, Seychelles, Aden etc. The ship continued to sail and somehow reached the harbor port of Iran. Yes, so far away. There also they did not get any permission. Finally, the ship wandering in the sea reached India and came to then Bombay. The British Governor also refused the ship to port.

When Maharaja of Jamnagar, “Jham Saheb Digvijay Singh” came to know about this ship, he became truly concerned. He allowed the ship to port in his kingdom at a port near Jamnagar. He not only gave shelter to five hundred women but also gave their children free education in Balachadi, in an Army School.

These refugees stayed in Jamnagar for nine years till World War II lasted. They were well taken care of. Jam Saheb regularly visited them and was fondly called *Bapu* by them.

Later these refugees returned to their own country. One of the children of these refugees later became the Prime Minister of Poland. Even today, the descendants of those refugees come to Jamnagar every year and remember their ancestors.

In Poland, the name of many roads in the capital of Warsaw is named after Maharaja Jam Saheb. There are many schemes in Poland on his name. Every year, Poland newspapers print articles about Maharaja Jam Saheb Digvijay Singh.

From the ancient times, the message of India *Vasudaiva kutumbakam* (whole world is a family) and its tolerance has been well known in the world.

Few people today raise doubt, put question marks on India’s tolerance. India was and will remain an Indian Culture – Rich, brave, tolerant, compassionate and genuine humanitarian - plus prolife, pro good values and great respect.

This was an illustrious page from history hardly known to many today even in India.





Satyendranath Bose

*A*n Indian Physicist, who succeeded where giants of science like Einstein and Plank failed, whose four-page thesis revolutionised the field of 'quantum physics' and had led to an avalanche of developments, whose holy shadow on the campus of Calcutta University made it a centre of advanced learning with international recognition, whose name remains immortal because of the particle 'BOSON' which he had discovered. Satyendranath Bose was born on January 1, 1894. He was the classmate of Meghnadh Saha, another towering personality of international reputation in Physics. Bose stood first and Saha stood second in B.Sc (Hons) mathematics of Calcutta university. The same ranks were maintained by them in M.Sc examination in 1915. The record set up by Bose has not been surpassed since then. Bose, from his school days, showed extraordinary merit in mathematics which stood him in good stead to formulate later Bose-Einstein statistics.

Both Bose and Saha were rewarded by the then Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University, Asutosh Mukherjee by appointing them as lecturers to run postgraduate classes in Physics and applied Mathematics. Both put forth all their efforts to develop the newly created university college of Science into a centre of advanced learning of international standards. Both started an intense study of the literature and publications in German journals. They translated Einstein's publications in German journals from German into English and had them published by the Calcutta University.

In 1921, Bose settled as Reader in Physics in Dhaka University. Here, while teaching, he experienced great difficulty in deriving Plank's law of radiation. He discussed with Saha about the law. He heard that Einstein also felt the same difficulty. Spending a few sleepless nights, he could solve it from a different angle. He sent his four-page paper to the philosophical magazine which rejected it. Then he sent it to Einstein in Berlin. Einstein was very much touched when Bose introduced himself as his 'most obedient student'. Einstein went through the paper, translated into German and got it published in the most prestigious German journal *Zeitschrift fur Physik*. This was a land mark in the history of modern physics and he became the strongest pillar supporting the vast edifice of physics.

In 1945, he left Dhaka and joined as professor in Calcutta University. He became the nucleus of scientific activities. The university was attracting students from far and wide. After serving for a brief period as Vice Chancellor of Tagore's Viswabharati at Santiniketan, he returned to Calcutta as National professor and he continued there till his death in February, 1974. His death caused a void that could not be filled till today. Bose was a comet that visited the earth once and never reappeared again.

- K.V.Ramakrishna Sastry

When a sadhaka follows and practices his respective path, his sadhana and austerity fetch him true knowledge and wisdom. And when the coat of ignorance is removed then the seed of Bhakti sprouts. As you intensify your sadhana, the love and devotion towards God multiplies.

- Paramahansa Swami Shivananda Puri

FEEDBACK

Dear Editor,

The article, 'Guruji Pranams' in the July issue is so beautifully written. It is so very true of our Guru Bhakthi. We look forward for more such articles in your esteemed magazine in future also.

Saraswathi

Dear Editorial Team,

All articles in Nachiketanjali are very nice. Dr. Dadi and Sridevi amma articles are very inspiring.

Vijaya Rajagopal

Dear Editorial Team,

Namasthe! I am writing this mail to express my sincere thanks for publishing my article Inner Science. In fact, I loved reading all the articles. Inner eye by Subhadra ji was thought provoking and inspiring. Qualification of the aspirant, Nithya Karmas and all other write-ups were wonderful. Nuggets of quotes here and there is enlightening to read. On the whole, it was a wonderful uplifting experience, reading Nachiketanjali!!

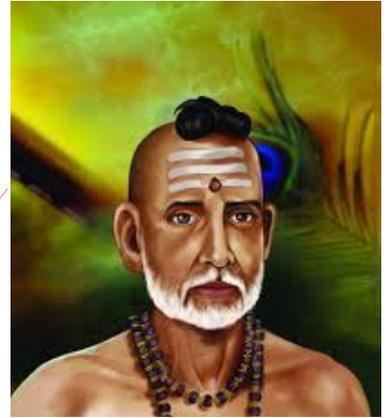
Thanks once again for the opportunity to express my thoughts with you, in writing!!

Kind regards

Srikala



Poonthaanam the great Krishna Bhakta



Once there lived an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna by name Poonthaanam.

He worshipped Guruvayoorappan (Lord Krishna) with all his heart and soul.

People loved him for his beautiful Bhagavatam discourses.

There is a temple in North Kerala called Kottiyoor. The significant deity in the temple is Lord Siva. The temple was kept open only for a few days during a year.

There were no human activities in that place for the rest of the year.

Once Poonthaanam reached the Kottiyoor temple and had a bath in the holy river.

He worshiped the compassionate Lord Siva, felt happy, and stayed there for a few days.

He recited Bhagavatam every day in front of the deity and several hundreds of people listened to his sweet discourse on the wonderful pastime in the 10th Canto 60th of Srimad Bhagavatam named "Lord Krishna Teases Queen Rukmini."

The Lord decides to play with His beloved wife Queen Rukmini and wanted to listen to her.

He playfully asks her why she wanted to marry the Lord when She had better choices like King Sisupala, Salva, Jarasandha, etc.

Hearing this Queen Rukmini faints and Lord consoles her.

This is the gist of the chapter.

Poonthaanam finished reading this part of the chapter and kept the bookmark at the end of the chapter so that he can continue reciting from the next chapter.

Next day, to his surprise, he found the bookmark at beginning of the same chapter.

So Poonthaanam read the same part for the second time.

This was repeated for the rest of the days.

It was the last day to close the temple for the year.

Poonthaanam finished the discourse and was returning from the temple with the other devotees, but somehow left the Bhagavatam in the temple itself.

Having walked some distance suddenly he remembered that he forgot to bring the Bhagavatam with him.

He hurried back; crossed the river and reached the entrance to the temple, which was closed. He was all alone.

He could hear somebody reciting the same part of the chapter from Bhagavatam inside the temple.

As he looked through the keyhole he saw Lord Siva himself reading from Poonthaanam's Bhagavatam.

Mother Parvati and His other Bhoothaganas were listening.

Their eyes were filled with tears out of devotion.

Poonthaanam stood there motionless and heard the whole recitation.

At the end, Lord Siva asked Parvati devi, "Did you like the Bhagavatam recitation"?

Parvathi replied, "Yes, it was nice, but was not as good as Poonthaanam's".

Lord Siva replied, "Yes. That is true. I also like to hear Bhagavatam from Poonthaanam. That is why I placed the bookmark again and again at the beginning of the same topic every day."

Hearing this Poonthaanam who stood outside was shaken up and uttered the holy name of Krishna loudly.

When he watched again, Lord Siva and Mother Parvati had disappeared from his sight.

Moral of the story:

This pastime clearly explains how all the living entities including the demigods love this great literature.

Srimad Bhagavatam (verse 12.13.18) says:

*srīmad bhagavatam purānam amlam yad
vaiṣṇavaānaam priyam*

*yasmin paaramahamsyam ekam amlam
jñānam param geeyate*

*tatra jñāna viraaga bhakti sahitam
naiṣkarmyam aaviṣkrtam*

*tac chrnvan supathan vicaarana paro bhaktyaa
vimucyen narah*

"Srimad Bhagavatam is the spotless *Purana*. It is most dear to the Vaishnavas because it describes the pure and supreme knowledge of the *Paramahamsas*. This Bhagavatam reveals the means for becoming free from all material work, together with the processes of transcendental knowledge, renunciation and devotion. Anyone who seriously tries to understand Srimad Bhagavatam, who properly hears and chants it with devotion, becomes completely liberated."

The word *Paaramahamsyam* indicates that even completely liberated souls are eager to hear and narrate Srimad Bhagavatam.

*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna,
Hare Hare*

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

Poonthaanam's devotion reached the heights of Bhakti and according to legend; Poonthaanam left this world in his body in 1640. When he announced his departure for heaven, he invited anyone who wanted to join him, which all the villagers declined. Ultimately, only a maid who had been nursing his ailing wife joined him on his heavenly journey.

Source: Bhagavatham - Katha



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Women of India in the Freedom Struggle

The women of India actively participated in the Indian struggle for freedom from the oppressive British Rule. This Independence Day, we respectfully remember the countless women who fearlessly joined the movement. We stand on the land 'nourished' by their sacrifices; we owe our present to them. Here are a few prominent women participants –

Bhima Bai Holkar – She was the daughter of the Maharaja of Indore. She fought against the British Colonel Malcolm and defeated him in guerilla warfare.

Rani Chennamma – When the British tried to annex her kingdom after her husband's death, she led the famous Kittur uprising, and succeeded in the initial phases of the struggle.

Rani Lakshmi Bai – She is perhaps the best-known woman-warrior, who continues to inspire millions even today. Described by the English Maj. Gen. Hugh Rose as the 'man among the mutineers', she refused to surrender Jhansi to the British and fought valiantly in the First War of Indian Independence and in the end, sacrificed her life for her motherland.

Begum Hazrat Mahal – After her husband Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Awadh was wrongfully ousted from his kingdom by the British, the Begum assumed the reins of administration on behalf of her minor son, and actively participated in the First War of Indian Independence in 1857.

Kasturba Gandhi – She was one of Gandhiji's greatest supporters, right from the days of struggle in South Africa. She actively participated in the Quit India movement and was imprisoned. She passed away while in jail in Poona.

The Women from the Nehru Family – **Swarup Rani Nehru**, Jawaharlal Nehru's mother, joined the freedom movement despite being old and weak. Kamala Nehru and Smt. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Jawaharlal Nehru's wife and sister respectively, too participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement. Mrs. Pandit was India's representative at the first meeting of the United Nations (UN), where

she stoutly stood for the interests of India. She became the first woman President of the UN General Assembly.

Sarojini Naidu – Famous as the Nightingale of India, her strong role in the Civil Disobedience Movement is etched in the annals of history. She was imprisoned for 21 months during the Quit India Movement.

Aruna Asaf Ali – She was a prominent member of the underground cadre which was built to evade arrest during the Quit India Movement. She edited 'Inquilab', a monthly magazine of the Indian National Congress.

Pritilata Wadedar and Kalpana Dutta – Inspired by the revolutionary leader Surya Sen, they joined the Chittagong Armoury Raids in Bengal. They had succeeded in looting the British armoury at Chittagong and had even established a parallel government there for a short period of time.

Rani Gaidinliu – She led the movement of the Naga nationalists to oust the British from Manipur. She was arrested in 1932 at the age of 16 and was released only after independence.

Sucheta Kripalani – A socialist at heart and an ardent follower of Jayaprakash Narayan, she joined the Quit India Movement with vigour. She was the member of the Constituent Assembly and also sang Vandemataram in the Assembly for the first time after independence.

Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur – She was a founder member of the All India Women's Conference, which was created in 1927 to spread awareness among, and to demand equal rights for women. She participated in the Salt Satyagraha in 1930 and the Quit India Movement. She went on to become the first Health Minister of independent India.

Hansa Jivraj Mehra – She organized picketing of shops selling foreign cloth and liquor. As India's delegate at the UN Human Rights Commission in 1948, she was instrumental in getting the language of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights changed from 'all men are created equal' to 'all human beings are created equal'.

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay – On January 26, 1930, when many Indians were taking the pledge to fight for ‘Poorna Swaraj’, she clung to the Tricolour, unmindful of the lathi blows that were being rained on her. She had also exhorted Gandhiji to encourage women to actively participate in the freedom struggle.

Usha Mehta – As an eight-year old, she participated in the demonstrations against the Simon Commission in 1927. She was deeply influenced by Gandhiji’s philosophy. During the Quit India Movement of 1947, she began the Secret Congress Radio along with her associates. This radio was operational only for a few months, during which it disseminated news and speeches by leaders at a time when they were banned by the British. After her arrest, she refused to give any details to the British despite being placed in solitary confinement and being offered many inducements.

Bina Das – A revolutionary from Bengal, she attempted to assassinate the Governor of Bengal while taking her degree at the University Convocation. She fired at him from close range, but the bullet hit a notebook in the Governor’s pocket. She was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for nine years. After her early release, she participated in the Quit India Movement and was incarcerated again.

Durgawati Devi – She was ‘Durga Bhabhi’ for the revolutionaries. She was the wife of Bhagwati Charan Vohra, a member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. She facilitated the escape of Bhagat Singh and Rajguru after the Saunders murder. She lost her husband when he was testing a bomb manufactured to free Bhagat Singh from prison. This did not bog her down and she left her minor son in the care of her relatives to be able to fully

participate in the freedom movement. In order to avenge the hanging of Bhagat Singh and his comrades, she unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate Lord Hailey, an ex-Governor of Punjab who was an enemy of the revolutionaries. She was imprisoned for three years. After her release, she led a completely anonymous life and opened a school for poor children in Lucknow.



Bhima Bai Holkar



Rani Chennamma



Rani Lakshmi Bai



Begum Hazrat Mahal



Kasturba Gandhi



Swarup Rani Nehru



Sarojini Naidu



Aruna Asaf Ali



Pritilata Wadedar



Rani Gaidinliu



Sucheta Kripalani



Amrit Kaur



Hansa Jivraj



Kamaladevi



Usha Mehta



Bina Das



Durgawati Devi

Shri Ram - Quiz



1. Who was leading the *Vanara* troops in the forefront?
2. What was the height of SriRama as described by Hanuman, to Sita?
3. Whose divine origin was Sugreeva?
4. On the banks of which river is Panchavati situated?
5. SriRama is known for six best qualities (virtues). What are those?
6. Which is the place where "Sagara Chakravarthy" performed *yagna*?
7. What are the rivers that came across by messengers (sent by sage Vasistha to bring back Bharata and Shatrughna from their maternal uncle's house) while proceeding to Kekaya kingdom?
8. Who is the creator (architect) of "*Vaishnava Dhanussu* and *Shiva Dhanussu*"?
9. Whose dynasty does "Trishanku" belong to?
10. Who is the person that attacked the city of Mithila?

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

ANSWERS:

1. Neela
2. Ninety-six inches
3. Sun God
4. On the banks of river Godavari
5. 1. Non-violence
2. Compassion for beings
3. Highly knowledgeable
4. Good behaviour
5. Control over senses
6. Control over mind (Indriya nigramam, manonigramam)
6. "Aryavartna" a place between Vindhya mountain and Himavada mountain
7. Rivers Malini, Saradananda, Ganga, Ikshumathi and Vipasa
8. Vishwakarma
9. Ikshvaku
10. "Sudhanva" (Ruler of Sankasayapuram attacked the city of Mithila urging the bow of Shiva and bride Sita should be given to him and he was put to death by King Janaka)



Ucchipillayar Temple

The very thought of Trichy or Tiruchi brings before our eyes, the Rockfort, the Uchi Pillayar temple, River Cauvery, Sri Rangam and everything pleasing the soul. All tourists including foreigners are enjoying this soulful pleasantness. All Saivite saints, Gnanasambandar, Appar, Manickavachagar, Thayumana Swamigal had sung the glory of this sacred land. The construction of the hill is a marvel of architecture. There are two carved caves on the hill, the upper one a treasure of epigraphic details and the lower with 104 divine verses in Andhadhi style. Andhadhi poetry is one in which the succeeding verses begin with the last word of the previous poem.

A visit to Trichy is not complete without going to Ucchipillayar Temple. This is a hill-cave temple with Dravidian architecture. One can have a full pleasant view of the Tiruchi city from the 275 feet tall hill top. There are 417 steps to reach the hill temple. The 1000 pillared *mandap* in the temple is very beautiful where weddings are celebrated. The hill fort was built during the rule of Mahendra Pallava-Gunaparan during the sixth century according to epigraphic evidences. The Thayumanavar temple at the foot of the hill is one of the celebrated Shiva temples of the state praised in Thevaram hymns.

Any undertaking whether domestic, religious or professional, started after praying Lord Uchi Ganapathy is sure to go progressively, profitably and happily. Devotees perform *abhishek* to Lord Vinayaka with milk and offer garlands made of a grass called *Arugampul*.

Temple History:

When Lord Sri Rama returned to Ayodhya after rescuing Mother Sita from the captivity of Ravana, Sri Sugriva, Sri Hanuman and Sri Vibishana

accompanied the Lord to participate in the coronation function of the Lord. While returning back with the gift of Sri Ranganatha idol from Sri Rama, Vibishana came south. Seeing the beauty of River Cauvery and the scenic environment, he wanted to relax for a while. He wanted to take a bath in River Cauvery. However, he is perplexed as the deity, once kept on land cannot be removed. It has to remain in that place forever. As a solution, Vibhishana tries to find someone to hold the deity while he was taking a bath. Lord Vinayaka was there in the guise of a little boy. Vibhishana asked the boy to take care of the gift idol of Lord Ranganatha. After waiting for Vibhishana, the boy placed the idol on the ground and hid Himself in the hill.



When Vibhishana came out of the river, he was shocked to see the boy missing. He applied all his energy to move the idol but failed. On seeing the boy hiding, Vibhishana chases him in anger. The boy starts running and climbs over a rock near the banks of River Cauvery. Vibhishana finally reaches him and hits him on the forehead. One can see a pit on the forehead of the idol even today.

The little boy then reveals himself to be Vinayaka. Vibhishana immediately apologizes and the Lord blesses him. He tells him how the idol was destined to remain in Srirangam and sends him off to Lanka.

The place in which the Ranganatha deity was kept, was later covered by deep forests due to disuse and after a long time, it was discovered when a Chola king chasing a parrot found the deity accidentally. He then established the Ranganthaswamy temple. Meanwhile, the Pallavas built the Vinayaka temple which is named Ucchipillayar Temple.

Thus Lord Ranganatha, bound to Sri Lanka, cut short His journey and chose Sri Rangam as His abode.

Thus, Lord Vinayaka along with Lord Ranganatha nearby is ruling us gracefully.

Source: Ucchipillayar Temple History

Blind following the Scriptures!

Many years ago in a flourishing town, there lived four *brahmins* who had become great friends.

They were all extremely naive by nature.

One day, desiring to gain knowledge, they decided to join an *ashrama* of a learned guru.

For twelve years they studied under him, and finally they took their leave, intent on seeking their fortune.

After they had been travelling for some time, they reached a fork in the road.

“Which way shall we go?” they asked.

As they stood wandering, a funeral procession came by, heading for the cremation grounds.

At the head of the procession walked a number of *brahmins* and prominent citizens from the nearby town.

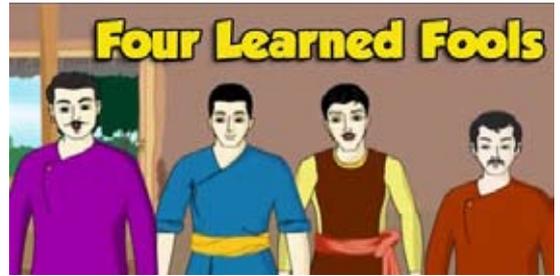
One of the *brahmins* consulted his scriptures. “It says here that whatever path is taken by great men [*mahajanas*] is the right path to follow”.

The *brahmins* then began to follow the procession. When they reached the cremation grounds they stopped and looked around.

Near them they saw a donkey, and one of the *brahmins* said, “The scriptures state that whoever stands by your side in sickness, calamity, famine, war, or at the cremation grounds is a true friend.”

All nodding in agreement, the *brahmins* then embraced the donkey as a friend. One of them even washed his hooves.

They then saw a camel coming quickly toward them. “Righteousness marches rapidly,” said one of the *brahmins*. “This I have read in



scripture. Surely then this camel is righteousness incarnate”.

Another of the *brahmins* then opened his scripture and said, “Here it is written that a wise man should lead his friend to righteousness.”

With that, the four *brahmins* then dragged the donkey toward the camel and tied them together. When the donkey’s master saw this, he ran after the *brahmins* with a stick and they fled away.

Soon the four *brahmins* came to a river. A branch of a *Tulasi* tree was floating by and one of the *brahmins* said, “I have read that the *Tulasi* tree can take one across the ocean of material existence. Surely then it will carry us over this river”.

He jumped into the water and grabbed the branch but, being unable to swim, began to drown.

One of his friends exclaimed, “This is a calamity indeed. But the scripture says that when total destruction looms, a wise man will sacrifice half of what he has to save the rest, for complete loss is unbearable. Let’s cut him in half!”

He then took up a sharp sword and cut his drowning friend in two.

With that, he and the other *brahmins* were arrested and taken away by officers of the law.

(Instructive story from the Pancatantra)

Moral of the story:

This story describes the danger of following the scriptural injunctions literally and without proper guidance.

This is the reason the importance of studying scriptures under a bonafide spiritual master is strongly recommended.

For a person who follows (and serves) his spiritual master with implicit faith, all the knowledge and meanings of the complex scriptural instructions are imparted automatically.

Our Scriptures are highly common sensical.

In other words, they are meant for practical application. But many times, we, due to lack of maturity tend to take the statements in the scriptures superficially and finally complain that the scriptural statements are just imaginary.

It is much better to possess common sense even without scriptural knowledge than rot learning all the scriptures and not using them practically according to time, place and circumstances...

Source: Bhagavatham-Katha

Some interesting facts

- ❖ A squirrel has three stripes on its back. These marks are three fingers of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three stripes protect it from any harm.
- ❖ Do you know why hens look up to the sky soon after sipping a few drops of water? The hen looks up to express its gratitude to God for giving them all those drops of water.
- ❖ Camels, in deserts under scorching temperatures, move hither and wither. The camel carries the sturdy merchant, bulky merchandise and a sac made of leather. The camels are very fond of thorny shrubs. The more they eat, the more the thorns enter into mouth and more they bleed. What is the service done to the camel?
- ❖ A particular bird (pious and named –*Moksha*) never lands on the earth since its inhabitants of our planet are mischievous and troublesome. They believe that all the people on the earth are sinners. So the birds always move round and round in the atmosphere. While flying in the sky, the bird gives birth and the egg falls down freely and vertically. Due to friction between the atmosphere and the egg it increases and at the optimum temperature, the egg gets hatched and the shell breaks and the young chicken flutters its wings quickly and tries to fly and soon it goes to the mother bird and embraces it. That's how God saves!

- K. V. Ramakrishna Shastry





Invitation



We cordially invite you to attend our celebrations



RAKSHA BANDHAN

7th August 2017

Nachiketa Tapovan, Kavuri Hills, Hyderabad.
&
Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram,
Kodgal Village, Jadcherla.



INDEPENDENCE DAY

15th August 2017 at 9am

Nachiketa Tapovan, Kavuri Hills, Hyderabad.
&
Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram,
Kodgal Village, Jadcherla.

KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI

14th August 2017 at 3pm

Nachiketa Tapovan, Kavuri Hills, Hyderabad.
&
Nachiketa Tapovan Ashram,
Kodgal Village, Jadcherla.



On 1st July 2017, Teachers and children of Chirec school interacted with our Nachiketa Vidya Mandir children.

Nachiketa Vidya

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

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- ✎ At present, we only have 11 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/-



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

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

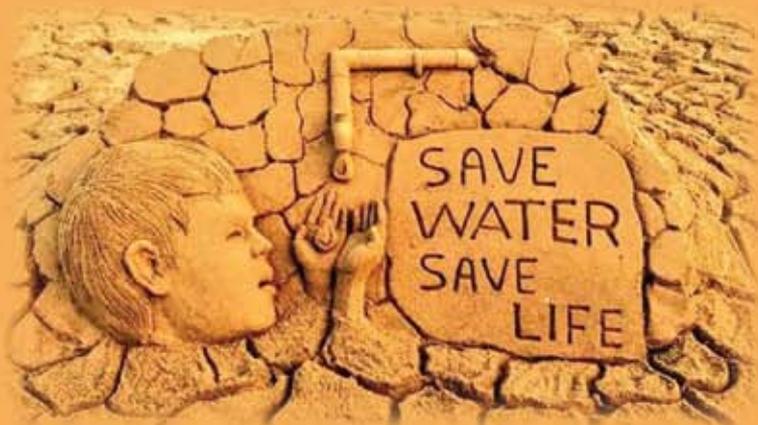
By the year 2025, 2.8 billion people, one third of the world's population will experience water scarcity. About 25 to 30% of the population in Gujarat, Rajasthan, the Gangetic Plains, West Bengal and the North Eastern Areas will have practically no water.

Consequently the water crisis will dwarf the oil crisis.

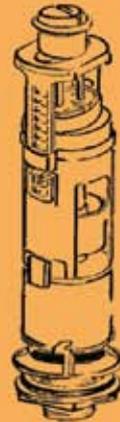
Ignore the crisis and be a part of the problem, evaluate your option and be a part of the solution. The choice is simple, so is our contribution, a **Dual Flush**.

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

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



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