



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

## Sevalaya's News Letter

APRIL - 2004

Dear Friends,

A winner is one who does not win battles but hearts. When you have won a war, you do receive hatred from few but when you win the hearts of people, you are on top of the world. And for the last 2 weeks, India and Pakistan have been on top of the world.

Even though some country had to win this explosive Cricket tournament, that had a million records in each match it doled out, the winner was peace. This tournament really changed the way we look at Pakistan. Many have come to realize that there is not much of a difference between us. Pakistan is not a terrorist camp but a nation as beautiful and rich like ours and its people are as passionate towards cricket as we are. The power and passion found in India is found in Pakistan too.

This tournament has been a big milestone not only in cricket but also in the political relationship between India and Pakistan. What Pervez Musharraf and Atal Behari Vajpayee had not been able to achieve has been achieved in these games. For the past few weeks, you must have noticed that there have not been any attacks in the border. By the agreements that were signed between India and Pakistan for the past several decades, attempts were made to stop the attacks in the border. But the heart of the common man still had hatred towards the other country. That is the major difference between games and battles. Now, no Indian would be scared to take a bus to Lahore. No Pakistani would mind

paying a visit to the Red fort. This statement may sound funny but it is very true India and Pakistan have come together by a ...cricket match!

Reports that visitors from India for watching the cricket matches were treated as "mehmaans", (guests) are heartening. No, not just by the Pakistani Government but by the common man, the rickshaw puller who refused to take wages from Indians, the restaurants which served food and did not accept payments as the Indians were there as guests. All these seemingly small gestures will amount to a large change. Who would have expected the relationship between India and Pakistan to see such a turn around?

The goodwill created by the Friendship Tournament between India and Pakistan, gives rise to new hopes about the future. The light at the end of the tunnel seems reachable. Peace and friendship among India & Pakistan is no longer an impossible proposition but an achievable reality. If the common man in India and common man in Pakistan develop an attitude of friendship and goodwill towards each other, the designs of the politicians and religious hardliners whipping up the passion of the people to serve their the interests can easily be defeated.

Let us take this feeling of goodwill forward.  
Let Peace prevail!

Thanks & Regards  
**Murali**

Sevalaya accepts contribution through Citibank Cards.

## Study Circle Meetings

Date : 27/3/04  
Speaker: V. Chitra  
Book : The resting Cyclone (The life of Nelson Mandela)  
Author : C. R. Ravindran  
Venue : Service Centre

Date : 26/3/04  
Speaker: S.Mariammal  
Book : Unbelievable Wonders  
Author : P.C.Ganesan  
Venue : Admin office

Date : 20/3/04  
Speaker: N. Ravichandran  
Book : Good Behaviour is better than the greatest wealth  
Author : Tamil Vannan  
Venue : Service Centre

Date : 19/3/04  
Speaker: Mr. C. Saravana Murthy  
Book : Bhagwan Sri Ramakrishna's Elevating thoughts  
Author : Renuka Devi  
Venue : Admn. Office

Date : 5/3/04  
Speaker: S. Saravana Babu  
Book : Message of Swami Vivekananda  
Venue : Admn. Office

## Following the footsteps of Rama

Sevalaya celebrated Rama Navami on 29/3/04 (Monday). Pulavar. R. Jagadeesanar M.A., B.Ed., from Thiruninravur delivered a lecture on Sri Rama to the children and senior citizens.

## The Uratha Sinthanai meeting

The Managing Trustee Mr. V. Muralidharan was invited as chief guest to a meeting organized by Uratha Sinthanai on 28/3/04. He released a book and addressed the gathering.

## Women's Day

Our Hony. Correspondent, Mrs. Bhuvanewari Muralidharan was the chief guest for the annual day celebrations and for the Women's Day celebrations of the Sagambari Women's Group on 21/3/04. The participants showed a keen interest in Sevalaya and its activities and have assured monetary and moral support.

## A Trip Into The Medical Magic of Nature

On 20/3/04, Mr. Mohan, Mr. Sarathy and T.S.Thanigaivasan had visited the Mooligai farms in Thirukazhukundram.

Students of class XI Vocational group (Agriculture) along with T.S.Thanigaivasan had visited the herbal plant exhibition at the Egmore Government Museum on 22/3/04. This trip was organized by the Department of Botany. Dr. R. B. Ramamoorthy lectured on uses of herbal plants and products in our human life. The children saw about a 100 herbal plants in the exhibition. Mr. T. S. Thanigaivasan had mentioned that the trip was "very useful to me and also to our students".

## Vipassana Meditation

A Vipassana Meditation session had taken place on 28/3/04. This programme was for the students of classes VI to VIII.



Our Hony. Correspondent, **Mrs. Bhuvanewari Muralidharan** was the chief guest for the annual day celebrations and for the Women's Day celebrations of the Sagambari Women's Group

### **SEVALAYA SHANKARA**

Sri Sankara Senior Sec. School, Adyar made a contribution of 70 blankets and 200 notebooks to Sevalaya on 22/3/04. Students and staff from the school had visited Sevalaya administrative office on that day as a part of their Interact Club programmes.

### **Special Archana for tenth students**

A special archana was performed on 29/3/04 in the Pakkam temples for all tenth standard students of our school who are to appear for the public exams in April '04. Mr. Pakkam Narashiman arranged this event.

### **Leadership meeting**

A meeting of Sevalaya's unit leaders was held on 07/03/2004. The next financial year's revenue budget was prepared and

discussed by the unit leaders. This was done keeping in mind that Sevalaya wants to become self sufficient by the year 2010. Various suggestions and ideas were presented by all the unit heads and the group decided to produce many items for Sevalaya's use. In keeping in line with Gandhian ideas, the year 2004-2005 expense and revenue budgets were totally prepared by the unit leaders in consultation with their staff members. This includes the allocation for salaries also, thus the staff took a decision on their pay increase, themselves.

### **Speaking the national language**

Two of our students, P.Srinivasan of 9<sup>th</sup> Std and K.Chitra of 7<sup>th</sup> Std, cleared the Hindi Madyama exam held by Hindi prachar sabha. Mr.Purushothaman of Pakkam village is conducting hindi classes to our children. We take this opportunity to thank him for his efforts.

## READING HABIT IN THE YOUNG

A new building is coming up in our Sevalaya campus at Kasuva village, which is to accommodate a free reading room and library. The facility will be for the use of both the inmates of our campus and the residents of the adjacent villages. One of our main objectives in building a full-fledged library is to inculcate a strong reading habit in the children in our care -- the students in our school and the residents in our foster home. Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Mahakavi Subramania Bharati, the three great preceptors who are our guiding lights at Sevalaya, all had strong reading habits with voracious appetites for books.

Swami Vivekananda developed a love for books even as a young lad in his early teens. Naren, as he was then called, had read many of the standard works of English and Bengali literature as a mere schoolboy. He had a special interest in the study of the history of his motherland, and read the standard works on the subject by authors such as Marshman and Elphinstone. When he went to the University he chose Logic and Philosophy as his electives for the B.A. course and read the works of all the great Western philosophers. By that time he had developed one extra-ordinary ability. He could grasp the entire substance of a book by just reading the first and last lines of some paragraphs here and there, and then some additional sentences in-between!

After he came under the influence of the Master Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swamiji started reading books on Vedanta. On the demise of the Master in 1886, Swamiji took **sannyasa** and started serious reading of the Vedas and the Upanishads. He continued such studies till the end of his life. During his long stays in U.S.A. and Europe during the 1890s, he would often send for printed versions of the Upanishads in original Sanskrit, from India, and read them both for his own reading pleasure and for preparing material for his lectures to his Western disciples. Such reading gave him a deep understanding of

Vedanta, which he shared with the entire world. It was as a student in England that Mahatma Gandhi picked up the reading habit. He started first reading the newspapers, something he had not done earlier in India. Then, under the influence of some Theosophist friends, he read a few books of religion -- an English translation of the Bhagavat Gita, one on the life of Buddha and a book on Theosophy. A Christian friend got him a copy of the Bible, which he read with interest. Thus it was that Gandhiji, appropriately enough, started his lifelong love for books by first reading the scriptures of different religions.

Over his lifetime the Mahatma did an astounding amount of reading and writing. During the long periods of his imprisonment he spent much of the time reading. Many of the books he read deeply influenced his thinking. Two oft-quoted examples in this context are John Ruskin's 'Unto This Last' and Leo Tolstoy's 'Kingdom Of God Is Within You'. The first shaped his economic thought, and the second his belief in the universality of the truth contained in all religions. But the books that most influenced him were the Bhagavat Gita, which he referred to as his 'dictionary', and Ramayana of Tulasidas, which he described as 'the greatest book of all devotional literature'.

Subramania Bharati was himself a creative writer. A great poet in Tamil, he was a lover of fine literature, and loved reading the classical Tamil poetry of Kambar and Thiruvalluvar. He was an avid admirer of the English poet P.B.Shelley and described himself as 'Shelley-dasan'. Bharati also did a lot of general reading. His writings reflect his appreciation of the great thinkers of the earlier era, such as Voltaire, Carlyle, Ruskin, Emerson and Thoreau. A constant seeker after knowledge, he wrote:

Ye, foolish folk, who roam about  
In search of myriad fancied gods,  
Have you not heard the myriad scriptures  
**Declare knowledge alone is God?**

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