



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

APRIL - 2005

Dear Friends,

One lakh (around 2000 US dollars) is a lot of money in India. That too, for a poor family, who has lost their home and belongings in the recent Tsunami, this is a huge amount. But one such family in Tamil Nadu, wanted to return this money they got from government!

As reported in Ananda Vikatan (a popular Tamil weekly), this family from Nagapattinam, were having their usual day on 26th December. Suddenly the father saw a big wave coming in their direction. The father and mother were inside the house. They rushed out. Their son was on the beach. As the water approached with full speed, there was no time for them to save each other, each one had to run for their life. The water entered their house and swept away whatever were the meager belongings of a poor household. The house was also destroyed. When the water receded, the father and mother realized that their son was missing. They searched for him for many days and finally they had to give up. He could not be found; even his body was not traceable. They resigned to the fact that the son would have died in the killer wave. When the government officials came to record the number of deaths in each area, their son was also counted as dead. As a compensation from government, this family received Rs one lakh as cash award.

After many days, someone known to them came to the village to inform the family that their son was wandering in Velankanni bus stand. They took the next available bus and rushed to Velankanni. There they saw their son, in a mentally disturbed state. His body

was shivering and he was in a very pathetic condition. After few hours, the son was able to talk to his parents and explain to them that he was swept away by a big wave and somehow, he was thrown over a coconut tree. He caught on to the tree and survived. When the waters receded, he was not in a state to understand where he was, walked his way to Velankanni. There a lady gave him some food and also place to stay. He stayed with her and wandered in the bus stand.

After they got their son back, this family does not want to keep the money they got from government. When they approached the local authorities, they were told to keep the money. Anyway they have lost their belongings and house. So it should be okay to take this money. But the family refused to keep the money and have approached the Tamil weekly, Ananda Vikatan to help them return the money to government.

We keep hearing stories about how people cheat to get money. False declarations to government authorities about the number of people dead or injured, false insurance claims, hiked up estimation of the property lost etc. There is lot of talk about how much donations poured in for Tsunami victims and the ways in which it is getting distributed. Many 'new born' NGOs, suddenly in action to collect money for Tsunami victims, going on a door to door collection drive etc! We are all fed-up.

This family from Nagapattinam is a ray of hope.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



Study Circle Meetings

Date : 04/03/2005
 Book : Bharathiyar's Poems (Tamil)
 Author : Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiyar
 Speaker : Mr. T.Nagarajan
 Venue : Administrative Office

Date : 26/03/2005
 Book : Manimegalai (Tamil epic)
 Author : Seeththalai Sathanar
 Speaker : Mr. M.Saravanan
 Venue : Service Centre

Date : 05/03/2005
 Book : Easy, Quite easy (Tamil)
 Author : Mr. N.C.Sridharan
 Speaker : Mr. R.Vijayaraghavan
 Venue : Service Centre

Students Study Circle at Service Centre

Date : 05/03/2005
 Book : Thomas Alva Edison(Tamil)
 Author : T.S.Kaliaperumal
 Speaker : R.Bharathidasan

Date : 12/03/2005
 Book : Collection of Zen Stories
 Author : Mr. Puviarasu
 Speaker : Mr. T.R.Sarathy
 Venue : Service Centre

Date : 12/03/2005
 Book : Character Building (Tamil)
 Author : Malayaman
 Speaker : S.Karan

Date : 19/03/2005
 Book : Mother Teresa
 Author : Navin Chowla
 Speaker : P.Selvam
 Venue : Service Centre

Date : 19/03/2005
 Book : Children Knowledge Bank (Tamil)
 Author : Sunitha Guptha
 Speaker : R.Luggesh





Date : 26/02/2005
 Book : Achievements of Sportsmen
 from Tamil Nadu in the
 World Sports Forum
 Author : T.Ganesan
 Speaker : P.Manikandan

Events at Sevalaya

13/03/2005: A mega Medical Camp was conducted by the Sai Samithis of Chennai Metro West at Sevalaya Campus.

A team of 30 doctors of various specialties like eye, dental, skin, neuro, ortho and general physicians screened nearly 700 people – residents of the Children's Home and Old Age Home of Sevalaya and people from the nearby villages.

Veterinary Doctors were also part of the team and they checked up the cows/ calves and buffaloes at Vinobhaji Goshala of Sevalaya.

200 volunteers from the Sai Samithis participated in the camp and ensured smooth conduct of the camp nearly 20 people were identified for cataract operation and free surgery was performed for them in the city in the following week.

17/03/2005 & 18/03/2005: A team of Reiki healers from Mumbai visited Sevalaya and conducted 2 day camp at Children's Home, Old Age Home and School.



School Club Activities

22/03/2005: Teacher in-charge of the various clubs of our school presented a report of the year activities, highlighting the benefits.

Temple Visits

04, 19 & 25/03/2005: The Hostel Students were taken on visits to the Vinayaka temple at Ramanathapuram village.

External Programmes...

20/03/2005: 20 students from our Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School appeared for the X Std Talent examinations conducted by Easy Maruthi Institute at Perambur.

Time to Relax...

27/03/2005: After 3 months of hectic preparations for the Board Examinations, students of XII Std heaved a sigh of relief when the Examinations were finally over on 24/03/2005. They were taken on a one day trip to the Chennai City where they visited Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya (Foudation stone for this institution was laid by Mahatma Gandhiji in the year 1946), and Vivekananda House (an impressive building on the Marina Beach front where Swami Vivekananda stayed for a few days on his return from Chicago.) After spending an hour in the beach they returned home a happy lot.

Communal Unity

Swami Vivekananda, in his address at the Parliament of religions at Chicago, told a little story.

A frog lived in a well. It had lived there for a long time, having been born and brought up there. One day, another frog that lived in the sea came and fell into the well.

"Where are you from?" the frog in the well asked. "I am from the sea."

"The sea? How big is that? Is it as big as my well?" and he took a leap from one side of the well to the other.

"My friend," said the frog of the sea, "How do you compare the sea with your little well?" Then the frog took another leap and asked "Is your sea so big?"

"What nonsense you speak to compare the sea to your well?" the frog from the sea scorned.

"Well, then," said the frog in the well, "nothing can be bigger than my well; there can be nothing bigger than this; this fellow is a liar." So he turned him out.

Swami concluded that the Hindus, the Christians and the Mohammedans sat in their own well and thought that it was the whole world.

Mahakavi Bharathiyar sings:

Billions are the religions of this earth;
Buddhism, Jainism, Parseism, the way of
Them that hail the feet of the sacred Christ,
The sanatana Hinduism, Islam,
Judaism, Taoism of the renowned Chinese,
The religion of Confucius: Many,
Many are these, the religions to us known;
All these have at their core one message
only" (Translated by T.N.R.)

Then, he soars to higher realms of Advaitic
Philosophy of "Thou art God"

Mahatma Gandhi has his own convictions on
God and religion. For him, truth is God.
There is no religion higher than truth and

righteousness. Religion is to morality what
water is to the seed. He believes in the
fundamental truth of all great religions of the
world. "I believe that they are all God-given
and I believe that they were necessary for
the people to whom the religions were
revealed. And I believe that if we could all of
us read the Scriptures of different Faiths from
the stand point of the followers of those
Faiths, we should find that at the bottom
they were all one and were all helpful to one
another" "All prayer in whatever language or
of whatever religion it was, was prayer
addressed to one and the same God and
taught man-kind that all belonged to one
family and should bear love to one another."

If all of us are Gods, or aspects, or creations
of the same God; and ethics, love,
righteousness and truth are the quintessence
of all religions, why then there should be
demolition of Faiths, spreading of Hatred and
shedding of blood in the name of God and
religion? Is it not a folly?

But, the question is what could be done about
it? Gandhiji is firmly of the view that
Governmental interference or Parliamentary
enactments can be of no avail. In the
Constructive Programme of actions he
chalked out for people to follow to bring about
the 'India of his dream' he suggests a few
simple, easy to practise activities that
common men like you and I can take up.
Cultivate personal friendship with persons
belonging to faiths other than your own.
Have the same regard for other Faiths as
you have for your own. Read the scriptures
of other Faiths from the standpoint of those
belonging to that Faith.

Instead of wailing over the evils of the
Universe, and cursing the darkness around,
let us light the little candle Gandhiji has handed
over to us.

Any takers?

FOR FREE CIRCULATION :

Send your comments to: Sevalaya, #3, First Link Street, Karpagam Gardens, Adyar, Chennai-600 020.

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