



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

DECEMBER- 2005

Dear Friends,

The thanks-giving weekend shopping scenes shown on American TVs set one to think about the mindless consumerism we are caught in. People of the richest country in the world, pushing one another, dashing against each other, throwing people on the ground and walking over them, waiting outside the closed stores from 3 AM in biting cold, all to save few dollars while buying the TV and the fridge they want! This is on top of the billions of dollars spent via on-line shopping on the 'Cyber Monday'!

We see such scenes during New Year shopping in India too. I am sure this 'shopping craze' is an international phenomenon. Most of these people who are buying such things, will already own these gadgets, may be just the previous version of it. We always want the latest and want to dump the old one as soon as the next model arrives. There is also the peer pressure that the neighbor owns something better than us and therefore we have to get something better ourselves. This sentiment is well used in one of Indian TV advertisement, stating that the product is the 'neighbor's envy'.

There were groups in America protesting against such shopping spree and demonstrating in front of big stores, warning people about spending the money that they are still to earn, by way of spending through credit cards. They also advised people to buy only the items, which are really essential for them, and not to buy based on eye-catching advertisements. I am sure that such groups will be a minority in any country.

Each one should spend some quite time with themselves to identify what personal things they really want, what they have in excess, what they still need and what they can dispose off. If such an inventory is taken and action based on it, most of our households will automatically get twice the space.

Also on the same TV, same day, we saw the children of Africa, with swollen stomachs and running nose and with bleak eyes. Their mothers have a sorrow look, not knowing where to find food for these children. The volunteers working in this area appeal to the world through the TV program asking for aid to be sent to this poor country, in terms of food and in terms of medicine. They also say that if aid does not reach in time, millions of children are going to die. There is war, there is famine and also there is mismanagement of aid sent. With the result millions of children are just waiting to die and their mothers watching them die, without having any other option.

Simple living and high thinking might have been forgotten by many of us. In the words of Mahatama Gandhi, 'Nature has created enough for everybody's need, but not for their greed'. Let us re-evaluate our needs and see where we can really reduce. This 'slimming down' is long over due. Once all of us do this, I am sure there will be no poverty or famine in this world.

If we own anything extra, its rightful place is somewhere else.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



Ramzan

Events at the Campus

Ramzan was celebrated on 05/11/2005 at the service centre. Captain Anees Ahmed, Professor, Department of Physics, and Prof. S.Thameem Sheriff, Department of Commerce, The New College, Chennai were the chief Guests. Captain Anees highly appreciated Sevalaya celebrating the major festivals of all religions. "Two of the most important duties of a Muslim are fasting during the month of Ramzan and Undertaking Haj Pilgrimage. But above all Islam insisted that helping the poor and the needy is the foremost duty of any man" said Captain Anees Ahmed in his speech. Prof. Thameem spoke about the significance of Ramzan.

Mr. Mathimaran and his friends from Ambattur conducted a two day training on Pranic Healing for the students of IX to XII Stds on 12/11/2005 and 13/11/2005.



Pranic Healing Training for Students

Children's Day (Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's Birthday) on 14/11/2005 saw the teachers entertaining the students with a variety entertainment Programme. The Headmaster Mr. G.Chittibabu spoke to the students about Nehruji.

On 20/11/2005, Paasam Train Friends Association spent a whole day at Sevalaya. They conducted sports events for the children in the morning. In the afternoon session Quiz contest was held for the students. The students presented a cultural Programme.

On 27/11/2005, one day Vipassana Meditation camp was conducted for the children.

Study Circle Meetings:.

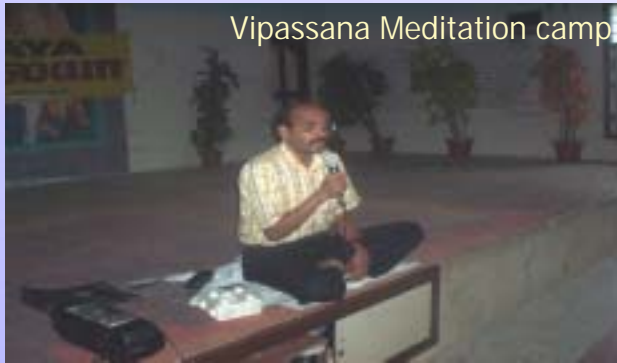
"Wisdom for the Millenium" by Mr. Ravishankar was the book discussed by Ms. Annapoorna on 05/11/2005. How to Increase the Power of the Subconscious Mind (Tamil) – a book by 'Success'



Children's Day



Children's Day



Vipassana Meditation camp

Jayachandran was reviewed by Mr. M.Vijayakumar on 12/11/2005. Ms. B.Nirmala shared her thoughts on the book Oh! Life, Relax Please! By Swami Sugabhodananda on 19/11/2005. Swami Bhajanananda's book "Why Good Character?" (Tamil) was Ms. M. Valarmathi's choice for discussion on 26/11/2005.

Student's Study Circle:

"Women Achievers" (Tamil) a book by Sivaranjan was reviewed by D.Gowthami on 05/11/2005. R.Janani selected Dr. A.P.J.Abdul Kalam's Biography "Wings of Fire" (Tamil) for discussion on 12/11/2005. On 19/11/2005, B.Silambarasan spoke to the students about the various interpretations of Thirukkural.

Sports events:

Our students participated in the District Level Athletic Meet .



Paasam Train Friends Association Day at Sevalaya

In the event for Girls held at TI Higher secondary school, Ambattur on 17/11/2005 M.Bharathi secured 4th Place in shot put.

The events for Boys was held at Arignar Anna Govt Higher Secondary School at Poonamalle on 18/11/2005 .

The team consisting of R.Luggesh, S.Kumar, K.Satheesh, S.Santhakumar secured III place in 4X100 mts Relay race. S.Santhakumar finished III in the 4X100 Mts running race.

Temple Visits:

Boys went to the temple at Ramanathapuram on 11/11/2005. The hostel girls went to the temple on 18/11/2005.



Deepavali day in OAH



Deepavali day in Hostel

Freedom from fear

Ms.Cholera was proceeding with lightning speed. A saint stopped her on the way and inquired of her where she was heading towards so urgently. She said that there was a religious mela scheduled to take place next day and she had to take her toll of life. The saint advised her that it was wrong to kill people and pleaded with her to desist from the act. Ms.Cholera's reply was that it was her swadharma to kill people. She added that after all the soul never dies and it was the body alone that perishes. After persuasion by the saint, she ultimately agreed to limit the number she would kill to one thousand. The next day, when the saint received report that over a million died in the mela, he was angry and waylaid the lady on her way back and demanded an explanation. Ms.Cholera coolly replied that she took only one thousand lives. The rest—died out of FEAR.

A story more or less on these lines occurs in one of the writings of Mahakavi Bharathiyar.

Yes. Fear Kills! The question is how to face frightening situations.

We have to respond to situations, not react. Step aside, think for a while and then act. That is responding. A classic instance is from the life of Gandhiji. He was pushed out of the train in Maritzburg railway station in South Africa in biting cold. He began to think of his duty. Should he fight for his rights or go back to India, or should he go about his business and return to India after his business was over? He decided to try to root out the disease of colour prejudice and suffer hardship in the process—instead of running away. The Mahatma was born right at that moment.

Flight or fight. That is the question, Mahatma decided to fight. Here is one from the life of Swami Vivekananda, When Swami was wandering in the North as an itinerant monk, he was surrounded by a troop of large monkeys. They were not allowing him to pass that way.

They howled and shrieked and clutched at his feet as he strode.

As they pressed closer, he began to run, but the faster he ran, the faster came the monkeys, and they began to bite at him. When it seemed impossible for him to escape, he heard an old sannyasi calling out to him. "Face the brutes." The words brought him to senses. He turned and boldly faced the irate monkeys. As soon as he did that, they fell back and fled. Swami learnt a lesson of his lifetime from that incident. "That is a lesson for all life—face the terrible; face it boldly...we have to fight fear and troubles and ignorance if we expect them to flee before us."

Aung San Su Kyi is a petite and mild mannered lady—but with an iron will. She has earned international acclaim as Burma's Gandhi, She is still fighting to free her country from the clutches of a military junta, spending most of her life time in jail. This happened in her life. She and her supporters were marching with supporters when a squad of soldiers blocked their way. The soldiers were agitated and jumpy. They pointed their rifles at the campaigners and the commanding officer seemed about to give the order to fire. Su Kyi told her supporters to stay away, and as they did this, she walked past them, right toward the officer. Facing him as placidly as she was looking at a portrait, she held her gaze for a long minute. At the last moment, the officer ordered his soldiers to hold their fire; and she became Burma's national heroine!

Nobel Committee awarded her Peace Prize for 1991. Her sons from England had to go to Stockholm to accept the prize, as she was not allowed to go. However, she published an article on that occasion. It was entitled "Freedom from Fear." She writes:

"It is not power that corrupts, but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it."

FOR FREE CIRCULATION :

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

Phone : 24468202 / 24468205 E.mail : sevalaya@vsnl.com visit at: www.sevalaya.org