



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 2 **Sevalaya's News Letter - December 2007** Serve 9 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

Recently I happened to see screen shots on an international television channel, which showed Sinhaleese and Tamil boys playing cricket in the streets of Colombo. The area looked like a very poor area – the houses shown were very small huts and the children were wearing dirty and torn dresses. But their faces were full of smiles, the happiness and enjoyment they were getting by playing on the streets was a great sight to watch. They didn't care for what is going on in their country, they should have been born after the conflicts started, should have been growing up getting daily news about the killings, bombings, air strikes etc., but they remain unaffected, full of friendship and love!

When interviewed, the boys said that they go to the same school and they help each other in lessons and home work and very happy to have each others company. When asked about the problem in the north, they said that they are not part of it and they don't accept what is going on. They may have fights only when one boy argues about his run out during the game, but will never fight because they speak different languages!

Children in any culture have their own reasons to have small fights, but none of them will fight over the language, sex, caste, religion, nationality etc. We all start our lives with no prejudice, but when do we loose that? We enter the school with no prejudice, but by the time we have completed our education we have developed our own many likes and dislikes. Some of us take it very seriously and start fighting, in whatever

way we can.

History is full of violence and hatred. The king who killed maximum fellow humans will be described as great warrior. There is very little in our history books where children can learn peace and non-violence. Added to this, the type of education and content of history books are different in different countries. Even in our own country we see that people want to change and re-write history whenever the government changes.

In films also the Hero is one who can beat up everyone on the screen, except the heroine. Children see violence and hatred getting acceptance around them, in the history books, story books, films, etc. So as they go through the so called education process, may be they get the idea that it is okay to develop prejudice, it is okay to hate others even though that particular individual is not at fault.

The Tamilnadu Government has banned corporal punishment and we see in the news that teachers are getting punished even if they scold children. No doubt this is in the right direction, but some thought should go in to how to rewrite history books so that violence and hatred are not glorified and non-violence and love get the pride of place in history. Today the Nobel peace prize committee feels that they were wrong in not giving the award to Mahatma Gandhi. If history books can talk more about such people, we will pass the right message to the children.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



Deepavali Celebrations at Sevalaya Campus by the members of Rajasthani Association, Tamilnadu

Events

The festive mood set in at Sevalaya on 04/11/2007 when Mr. N. Sugal Chand Jain, President of Rajasthani Association, Tamilnadu, Mr. B.D.Mangal, Chairman, Community Based Projects, Rajasthani Association, Tamilnadu, other office bearers and members of the Association organised Deepavali Celebrations at Sevalaya Campus. Mr. Mohana Sundaram, District Revenue Officer, Thiruvallur was the chief Guest. Mr. Arumugam, Member of Legislative Assembly from Salem also participated in the function. The Association presented bed sheets to the residents of Sevalaya's Old Age Home and a kit containing sweets, chocolates, biscuits and pen to the residents of Sevalaya's Childrens' Home. The association also sponsored special meals for the residents of Sevalaya.

The celebrations of Deepavali, the festival of lights, commenced in full swing on Deepavali eve on 07/11/2007. Lion. D.Thulasingham was the special guest for the occasion. Lion G.Vadivelan also participated in the celebrations. New clothes and sweets were distributed to 1000 children. Commencing with lighting a 10000 walah cracker, celebrations went on till late night with flower pots and ground charkas lighting up the grounds of Sevalaya, and the rockets and other similar fireworks lighting up the sky accompanied by the sounds of bursting crackers.

Swamiji of Satyam Yoga Trust and the members of the Trust visited Sevalaya on 11/11/2007 and interacted with the elders at the Old Age Home and the children.

Children's Day was celebrated on 17/11/2007. Ms. C.Vijayalakshmi, Chief Educational Officer, Thiruvallur was the Chief Guest. District Elementary Educational Officer Mr. K.P.Srinivasan and Assistant Elementary Educational Officer Mr. S.Dhanasekar also participated in the celebrations. The chief guest distributed prizes to the winners of various competitions held on the occasion of Children's Day.

Members of the "Pasam Train Friends Association"



Children's Day Celebrations

visited Sevalaya along with their families on 18/11/2007. They conducted games and other competitions for the children. Prizes were distributed to the winners.

On 23/11/2007, 70 staff members led by Mr. Sriram Vaideeswaran from Standard Chartered Bank visited Sevalaya Campus, fanned out to different units and engaged themselves in physical labour. The services rendered by them included painting of the Black boards in all the class rooms of Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School, cleaning of the entire campus, planting of about 50 saplings. The residents were awe struck by the highly sophisticated I.T. professionals engaging themselves in hard physical labour. The group also entertained the children and senior citizens of the Homes by conducting games and cultural events.

On the same day, a team of 10 members from the international group, AXA, U.K. visited the campus and interacted with the staff, children and the senior citizens. This group has adopted Sevalaya as their Social Partners in India. They have also sponsored the education of 60 Kindergarten children throughout their studies.

The residents of Sevalaya were treated to a sumptuous lunch by the friends from Standard Chartered Bank. The AXA group delighted the residents with a good number of gifts.

19 students participated in the second round of quiz competition conducted by Mr. Raveendra from AXA Group.

150 members of Deepam Trust and the Trustees, office bearers and volunteers visited Sevalaya on 25/11/2007. They had arranged for a Light Music Programme, a Magic Show and a Mimicry programme for the children. They organised a grand delicious lunch to all the residents of Sevalaya as well as for all the village children studying in Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School.

External Events

Rajasthan Cosmo Club Foundation, Nungambakkam donated clothes to the children of Sevalaya at a function organised on 01/11/2007. 30 students and 2 staff had participated in the function.

30 children participated in the Cracker Show organised by Inner wheel Club at MGR Janaki Arts & Science College on 02/11/2007. Crackers were given as gifts to the children.

A Mega Crackers Show was organised by Lions Club International – Dist 324 A1 at DRBCC Vaishnava College on 03/11/2007 to celebrate Diwali. All the children of Sevalaya participated. Each of them were presented with a packet of crackers and chocolates.

7 students participated in drawing competition conducted by St.Claret Matric. School, Thiruninravur on 10/11/2007.

On 12/11/2007, 3 students participated in drawing competition conducted by "Pasumai Padai", Thiruvallur Education District at Kengusamy Naidu Matric. School, Tiruttani.

On 13/11/2007 2 students participated in quiz competition conducted by Chief Educational Officer, Thiruvallur at DRBCC Hr. Sec. School, Thiruvallur. R.Kavitha, X standard got 3rd prize in the quiz competition.

100 students, 3 staff and 20 elders from the Old Age Home visited the Science Exhibition at SBOA School, Mogappair on 14/11/2007.

"Kottu Murasu" – the art troupe of Sevalaya presented a cultural programme on 17/11/2007 at Dharma Raja Koil Street, Thiruninravur. Mr. T.J.Vishwanathan, President and Mr. T.V.Ravi, Vice-President from Thiruninravur Town Panchayat were the chief guests. Mrs. Sudha Srinivasan (Councillor, 6th Ward), Mrs. Komala Valli Babu (Councillor, 7th Ward), Mrs. Sujatha Nanda Kumar (Councillor, 8th Ward) and Mr. J.Anbazhagan (Councillor, 9th Ward) also participated in the programme.

In the Media...

A series of articles on "Leadership " by Sevalaya Muralidharan commenced in Kalki Weekly Magazine from the issue dated 11/11/2007.

Medical Camps

A free Dental Camp was conducted by Porur Ramachandra Hospital Doctors on 12/11/2007 for High School and Higher Secondary students. 556 students were benefited by this camp.

School Club Activities

The School English Club met on 17/11/2007 and

played word building games which tested their vocabulary. The students were explained about Rain Water Harvesting at the club meeting on 21/11/2007. In the Social Science Club meeting on 22/11/2007 the book on Mughal History of India "Vanthargal; Vindrargal" (They Came: They Conquered) written by Madan was reviewed by Mr. P.Narayanamoorthi.

The Pasumai Padai group cleaned the school campus on 02/11/2007 & 22/11/2007.

Sports

The Boys Senior Hand ball Team were the runners up in the Divisional Level (Thiruvallur & Kancheepuram Districts) Tournament at Jaya Matric School, Thiruninravur on 14/11/2007. Sevalaya boys also Participated in Divisional Level (Thiruvallur & Kancheepuram Districts) Table Tennis tournament at Mogappair, Chennai on 14/11/2007.

On 16/11/2007, 7 students participated in Divisional Level (Thiruvallur & Kancheepuram Districts) athletic competitions at Poonamallee, Chennai. 3 students have been selected for sports camp conducted by Thiruvallur District Sports Authority.

The Girls Throw ball team were the runners up in Divisional Level (Thiruvallur & Kancheepuram Districts) tournament at Kancheepuram on 17/11/2007.

Staff Study Circle

Ms. L. Anusuya discussed VII Chapter of Bhagavad Gita on 17/11/2007. On 24/11/2007, 17th & 18th Chapters of The Holy Quran was discussed by Ms. S.Kavitha

Students Study Circle

On 10/11/2007 G.Jayanthi spoke about the book "Philosophers" (Tamil) written by Mr. Narayanamoorthi. The book "Achievers who overcame their physical disabilities" (Tamil) written by S.Shanmugam was taken up for discussion by P.Manikandan on 17/11/2007.

Training Programmes

Mr. A.A.Kingston and Mr. S.Gnanadikkraj participated in the 2 days training programme on "Bio gas" conducted by Natural Resources Development Programme- Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari on 30/11/2007 & 01/12/2007.

Visit to Places of Worship

On 02/11/2007 the boys went to Vinayagar Temple at Ramanathapuram, while the girls visited RC Church at Thiruninravur. The girls went to Vinayagar Temple at Ramanathapuram on 13/11/2007. On 23/11/2007 the boys went to Shiva Temple at Thamarapakkam.

Whither will we move?

Have you noticed that many of the major initiatives of Gandhiji had been inspired while he was on the move?

On a trip from Johannesburg to Durban Gandhiji happened to read a book by John Ruskin titled "Unto this Last". It made a deep impression on him. He found it impossible to lay it down, and finished the whole book during the 24 hours' travel. The book cast a "magic spell" on him. He decided to change his life in accordance with the ideals of the book. In his own words it caused an "instantaneous and practical transformation" in his life. Immediately on getting down from the train, he proceeded to organize his first experiment in community living at Phoenix where members would engage themselves in manual labour to make a living. More important than this is that the basic economic policy of Gandhiji, "Sarvodaya" was inspired by this book. It is not "welfare of the few" as it is now, or "the maximum benefit for maximum number". It is welfare of all- particularly of the poorest of the poor. Gandhiji rendered the book in Gujarati under the title "Sarvodaya". What he wrote as the last lines of the book is more relevant today than ever. "India was once a golden land, because Indians then had hearts of gold. The land is still the same but it is a desert because we are corrupt. It can become a land of gold again only if the base metal of our present national character is transmuted into gold."

In 1909 Gandhiji was in London. A few days' before Gandhiji's visit, a sensational thing happened there. An Indian, Madhanlal Dhinghra, shot dead one British official Sir Curzon Wylie. He was sentenced to death. Dhinghra's act had made a deep impression among many an Indian. Gandhiji was deeply concerned about the growing cult of violence and the support that such acts gained. During his return voyage to South Africa on board he wrote in Gujarati his famous 30000 word book "Hind Swaraj". He worked day and night over the manuscript, from November 13 to November 22 in 271 pages. About 50 pages he wrote in left hand as his right hand was exhausted. In this work he

emphasized the need for right means to achieve right ends. He was categorical that brute force can never bring about enduring success. Leo Tolstoy wrote that the question dealt with in the book-passive resistance- was of great importance, not only for India, but for the whole of humanity.

During his travel from Sevagram to Bardoli, during December 1941, Gandhiji wrote a booklet, "Constructive Programme -its meaning and place." In this document he enumerated 13 points of action for building up a new India. For him Purna Swaraj meant not merely passing of the ruler ship of India from the White sahibs to the Brown. It meant dignified living for the poorest of the poor. He set even greater store in his scheme of things for constructive programme than the Satyagraha. For him, "handling of civil disobedience without the constructive programme will be like a paralyzed hand attempting to lift a spoon." This programme included 13 points, like Communal unity, prohibition, removal of untouchability, Khadi and village industries, village sanitation, basic education etc., He did not merely list points of agenda, but specified simple ways in which these activities could be carried out even by a common man.

Quintessence of Gandhiji's ideas in these "documents" can be summed up as follows:-

- 1) Real development lies in the welfare of all, particularly the poorest of the poor and not in the welfare of a few to the detriment of many.
- 2) corruption has to be eliminated.
- 3) Violence and terrorism cannot solve any problem, but only aggravate situations to the extent of taking us to the point of no return.
- 4) We have to address ourselves seriously to constructive action for promoting communal unity, removing untouchability, implementing prohibition etc.

Who would suggest that these ideas of Gandhiji are irrelevant in today's context? They are not only relevant, but simply inevitable. Either we move towards Gandhiji and survive, or move away from him and perish.

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