



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 2 **Sevalaya's News Letter - January 2008** Serve 10 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

The most important person in the education system is the teacher. In Sevalaya's school which has a strength of 1000 students, I talk to the children and ask them what they want to become in their lives. Most of the times I get an answer that they want to become an engineer or doctor. Some children say that they want to join the army and some others say that they will become police. I have noted that in the past 19 years of my Sevalaya experience, out of 1000 children, no one has ever said that they want to become a teacher! As students, they don't have a direct exposure to what an engineer does or what a doctor does, but they are in full contact with teaching profession, day in and day out and yet no one wants to become a teacher! I have also seen in classroom that teachers advise students to study well and become an engineer or doctor. I have not seen a teacher who is bold enough to tell his students "you must come up in life like me". Where is the self esteem?

If none of the students express that they want to become a teacher, it also means that whoever has become a teacher, wanted to become someone else, but unfortunately landed up as a teacher! A teacher needs to be not only an expert in his subject, but also a person of self confidence and self esteem, only then the 'future of the nation can be shaped in its classrooms'.

What is the problem with teaching profession? Today, IT companies in India need lot of manpower. And there are many engineering colleges, many engineering seats and at least in Tamilnadu, many seats go vacant in engineering colleges. It means that most of

the candidates, who complete 12th standard, just rush for engineering seats and some of them who doesn't make that race, end up as teachers. The reason for this race is very obvious, the IT jobs give a very good pay package, but the teaching profession can't match that. Is it possible to hike the teachers' salaries to match the IT salaries? I don't think we will be able to do that, as in IT companies we produce software, which is sold all over the world and the profitability is very high, so salaries can be high, but in class room we only produce the 'future of this nation', which has no sales value, so there is no profitability! Can we look at a model in between? Is there a possible solution? Is there a way to give better pay to good teachers?

In Sevalaya we have a system of fixing the annual goals for the organization and measuring the performance of each staff, both teaching and non-teaching, on a monthly basis. At the end of the year the 'ranks' of all staff members are available and also the financial data is known to all staff. Hence we have a discussion and each staff decide their own increment, based on performance and financial data. This ensures that the better performing staff members get better increment. This process helps staff to clearly understand what their goals are for the year, what it takes to achieve those goals and they start pushing themselves from day one to achieve the targets they have taken up.

Performance based pay can be one solution to get and retain good teachers.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



Bharathiar Day Celebrations

Events

70 members of Deepam Trust and the Trustees, office bearers and volunteers visited Sevalaya on 01/12/2007. They organised a grand delicious lunch to all the residents of Sevalaya as well as for all the children are studying in 9th to 12th standard, in Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School.

Bharathiar Day was celebrated west of Chennai on 08/12/2007. Prof. A.Kadar Basha, M.A, M.B.A., Principal, The New College, Chennai, was the Chief Guest for the celebrations. The Vice-Principal and professors from the New College also participated. Prizes were distributed to the top 3 rankers in different categories in the State Level Open Book on Bharathiyar poems conducted by Sevalaya in which 4392 students from 82 schools participated. The children of Sevalaya presented a skit on the life of Mahakavi Bharathiyar interspersed with dance for appropriate Bharathiyar songs.

The one topic that is being debated and talked all over the world today is environmental



Prize Distribution of State Level Bharathiar Examination

degradation, its causes, remedies etc. With a view to creating awareness about global warming and its serious consequences among rural school students, Sevalaya organized a presentation by Dr. M.B.Nirmal (Founder, Exnora International) on 15/12/2007. The lively lecture cum slide show had the audience comprising of students and staff of Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School and other Schools in the surrounding areas, engrossed and captivated. The pictures of melting icecaps and shrinking glaciers left a deep impact on the impressionable minds. Slides of methods to be adopted to reduce green house gas emissions were informative and interesting. The presentation left an indelible impact on the young minds about the necessity of taking steps to preserve the environment in their neighbourhood and practicing as far as possible methods to reduce global warming. Copies of the CD of the presentation, were distributed to 20 schools.

Brightly lit crib and well decorated Christmas trees heralded the Christmas Celebrations on 22/12/2007 at Sevalaya. Mr. Daniel



Stall at "Season of Love"



X-MAS Celebrations

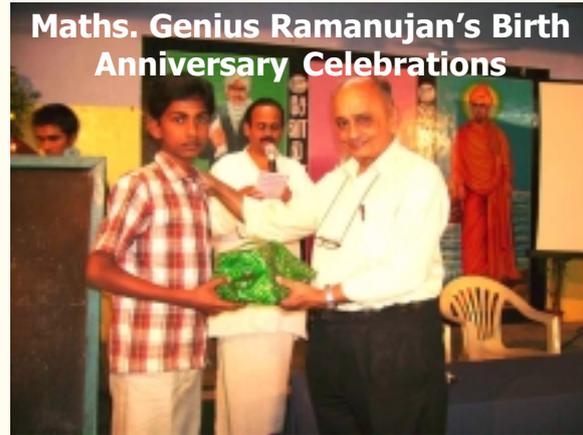


Vedamuthu, Tennis Coach was the chief guest for the occasion. Speaking about the birth and message of Christ he said that one word could sum up the entire preaching of Christ – Love. The arrival of Santa Claus created an air of joy and merriment as he merrily danced his way through the crowd of delighted young children. The Christmas cake was cut and distributed.

“One of the greatest mathematicians of the 20th Century Srinivasa Ramanujan was born in the Tamil Month of ‘Margazhi’ in the Hindu Calendar Year ‘Sarvajith’. Hence it is very apt that, 120 years later, on his Birth day 22nd December 2007 Sevalaya is celebrating his Birth Anniversary” remarked the Chief Guest Mr. N.Balasubramaniam, Advisor, Mathematics Inter Disciplinary Research, Chennai. Speaking on the occasion, he gave a brief sketch of the development of the intricate Science of Mathematics from simple numerals and Ramanujan’s gift of looking at numbers from a totally different outlook. He told the children about some of the simple discoveries of Ramanujan and motivated the children to keep thinking about numbers from different angles. . Prizes were awarded to the winners of the Inter school Mathematics competition held by Sevalaya a few weeks earlier to commemorate the occasion

External Events

Mr. A.A.Kingston participated in a one day workshop on Strengthening Institutional Care in Tsunami affected areas, organised by Tamil Nadu Tsunami Resource Centre in association with Dept. of Social Defence and Dept. of Social Welfare at Chennai on 07/12/2007. Sevalaya students presented a cultural programme at the All India Gandhian Workers



Meet at Thakkar Baba Vidyalaya on 08/12/2007.

On 19/12/2007, Mr. A.A.Kingston participated in a one day consultation, supported by UNICEF on Establishing collaboration and partnerships with Corporates and NGOs for improved service delivery in Child Care Institutions and for Child Development, arranged by Department of Social Defence at Chennai.

Tamil Mayam organized a 8 days festival titled “Season of Love” celebrating the true Christmas Sprit of love. Sevalaya put up a stall at this venue wherein craft items made at Sevalaya were displayed, from 21/12/2007 to 27/12/2007.

Tour

The staff members went on a four days Tour to Thiruvannamalai from 27/12/2007 to 30/12/2007.

Study Circle

Mr. P.Selvam discussed VIII Chapter of Bhagavad Gita on 08/12/2007. On 15/12/2007, Mr. J.Murali Krishnan chose 18th and 19th Chapters of the Holy Quran for discussion.

Training Programmes

01/12/2007: “Today’s Education” - a one Day Training for teachers was conducted by Educationist Dr. S.S.Rajagopalan on 01/12/2007 in which 50 teachers participated.

Visit to Places of Worship

On 21/12/2007 the hostel boys & girls went to Ramanathapuram Vinayaga Temple. The Hostel Boys & Girls went to Shiva Temple, Pakkam on 20/12/2007 & 24/12/2007.

Ahimsa (re-)defined

Occasions do arise when we are in a moral dilemma as to what is the right thing to do. "To kill or not to kill" in a given circumstance is one such dilemma.

Reports are aplenty about rabid dogs mauling and mangling children. Some institutions have summarily shot down stray dogs. This has evoked strong protests from animal welfare activists. Does Gandhiji, an apostle of non violence, have anything to say on this subject? Yes. He has. He wrote in 1928, "To kill these dogs, does, in my opinion, amount to himsa, but I believe it to be inevitable if we are to escape greater himsa. Every dog should be owned and a collar attached to it. I should suggest a dog licence. Every stray dog should be caught by the police and immediately handed to the mahajan, if they have adequate provision for the maintenance of these dogs. Failing such provision, all stray dogs should be shot. This in my opinion is the most humanitarian method of dealing with the dog nuisance which every body feels, but nobody cares or dares to tackle. But such indifference itself is himsa and a votary of ahimsa cannot afford to neglect or shirk questions, be they ever so trifling, if these demand a solution in terms of ahimsa..."

There are other circumstances where killing is ahimsa and non-killing is himsa.

A calf in Gandhiji's ashram, having been maimed, lay in agony and whatever treatment and nursing possible was given to the calf. The surgeon whose advice was sought in the matter declared the case to be past help and past hope. The suffering of the animal was so great that it could not even turn its side without excruciating pain. After discussions with ashram inmates, Gandhiji "with all humility but with the clearest of conviction", got in his presence a doctor kindly to administer the calf a quietus by means of a poison injection. The whole thing was over in two minutes.

Would Gandhiji have applied to human beings the

same treatment? Would he apply it in his own case? Gandhiji replied this in the affirmative "As with one, so with all." "In practice we do not cut short the sufferings of our ailing dear ones by death. Because, as a rule, we have always means at our disposal and they have the capacity to think and decide for themselves. But supposing that in the case of an ailing friend, I am unable to render any aid whatever and recovery is out of question and the patient is lying in an unconscious state in the throes of agony, then I would not see any himsa in putting an end to his suffering by death."

Other circumstances are there too where non killing would spell himsa. Gandhiji puts forth: "suppose, for instance, that I find my daughter, whose wish at the moment, I have no means of ascertaining, is threatened with violation, and there is no way by which I can save her, then it would be the purest form of ahimsa on my part to put an end to her life and to surrender myself to the fury of the incensed ruffian."

As between cowardice and violence, Gandhiji's clear preference was violence. His son once asked him what he should have done when Gandhiji was assaulted almost fatally in 1908. Whether he should have run away and seen the father killed, or should have through physical violence, which he could, and wanted to, use? Gandhiji replied that it was his duty to defend even using violence.

Gandhiji further says, "The trouble with our votaries of ahimsa is that they have made of ahimsa a blind fetish and put the greatest obstacle in the way of the spread of true ahimsa."

He finally sums up: "To cause pain or wish ill or take the life of any living being out of anger, or a selfish intent, is himsa. On the other hand, after a calm and clear judgement, to kill or cause pain to a living being from a pure and selfless intent may be the purest form of ahimsa."

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