



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 3 **Sevalaya's News Letter - January 2009** Serve 10 Price-Re.1

## Dear Friends,

Wish you all a very Happy New year. As in the past 20 years, Sevalaya has grown from strength to strength this year too. This year saw the visibility of the organization grow with more recognitions and awards, almost every other month. All the services of Sevalaya continue with same vigor and there are plans to expand our activities during 2009.

One major activity that we will be starting in the New Year is to take the message of Swami Vivekananda, Mahakavi Bharathi and Mahatma Gandhi to more people across Tamil Nadu. We already have a national award winning school moral education course on these three leaders. Our children have been getting the benefit of this for more than a decade now. We also conduct open book exams to all schools in Tamil Nadu during the birth days of the three legends and distribute prizes to the state level winners. We also conduct many competitions on September 11<sup>th</sup>, the day on which Gandhiji announced Satyagraha as his weapon, Bharathiar left this world and Swami Vivekananda addressed the parliament of religions at Chicago, in USA. The day is celebrated as 'BGV' day in Sevalaya every year.

School and college students and the members of the public get very many chances to learn about these three great men. What about people who have committed some mistakes, or seen as people who have committed mistakes in the eyes of the law and have unfortunately gone behind bars? When they come out, may be after many years, will they have the mental strength to face the world? Gandhiji's "Ahimsa", Bharathiar's "fearlessness" and Vivekananda's "Self confidence" are more required for prison inmates than anyone else. Prison is not a place for punishment; it is a place to teach good things in life so that when people come out, they are more qualified to face the world, than what they were when they

went in.

Sevalaya approached Mr.R.Nataraj, IPS, Director General of Police, (Prisons) with this idea and he was very happy and immediately gave his permission to start this course. We have planned a 30 week module, 10 weeks on Gandhiji, 10 weeks on Bharathiar and 10 weeks on Swami Vivekananda. We were expecting permission just for the Chennai prison, but the DGP was kind enough to grant us permission for all jails in Tamil Nadu, in one go! So 30 weeks in each prison, and to cover all prisons in Tamilnadu, it is going to be one of our long term projects! As one of our committee members commented "for once we will literally have captive audience!".

Along with me and other management committee members of Sevalaya, Mr. G.Chittibabu, Head Master, Mr. A.A.Kingston, Ms. N.Annapoorna, AHMs, and teachers Mr. G.Palanisamy, and Ms. B.Nirmala will also act as faculty for this program.

Thanks & Regards  
**Murali**



Mr. V.Muralidharan receiving the K.V.S.Sarath Babu Memorial Wisdom International Award at the hands of Mr. R.Nataraj IPS, DGP (Prisons)



### Awards

Mr. V.Muralidharan, Founder & Managing Trustee of Sevalaya received the K.V.S.Sarath Babu Memorial Wisdom International Award for Life Time Excellence and the title of "Seva Ratna" awarded by Wisdom International Monthly Magazine at the hands of Mr. R.Nataraj IPS, Deputy General of Police (Prisons) Tamilnadu on 13/12/2008.

### Events

The 126<sup>th</sup> Birth Centenary of Mahakavi Bharathiyar, one of the guiding stars of Sevalaya was celebrated on 13/12/2008. Ms. Vasanthi Stanley, Hon'ble Member of Parliament was the Chief Guest on the occasion. She distributed prizes to the state level rank holders in the Open Book Examination on the Life and works of Mahakavi Bharathiyar organized by Sevalaya for schools all over Tamilnadu. Mr. V.R.Rajan Secretary General TAFVA, Mr. N.K.Perumal (RDO), Mr. M. Jeevananthan (Help Foundation), Dr. S.Kadhiresan (COODU), Dr. P.Narayanan (GRAMIUM) Trust, Dr. P.Manoharan (Madurai Non Formal Education Centre), Mr. A.G.Jopseph (Excel Foundation), Mr. Nadasabapathy (CREED) were the other distinguished guests who participated in the function.

On 22/12/2008, Students and Staff of Nazareth College, Avadi, visited Sevalaya campus to celebrate the X-MAS function with the residents of Sevalaya.

The Annual Sports Day was celebrated on



24/12/2008. Mr. R.Nataraj IPS, Director General of Police (Prisons) Tamilnadu, was the Chief Guest. He distributed prizes to the winners of the various sports events conducted by Sevalaya for the children, senior citizens, staff and villagers. Commending the service of Sevalaya for the underprivileged, he exhorted the students to make best use of the opportunity provided by Sevalaya. On this occasion the DGP also gave his assent for the 30 weeks course on Life of Mahatma Gandhi, Mahakavi Bharathiyar and Swami Vivekananda proposed by Sevalaya and granted permission for the course to be conducted in all the jails in Tamilnadu. Mr.Baskaran, DSP Uthukottai, Mr. Srinivasan, Asst. Commissioner, Pattabhiram, Mr. Sivakumar, Probationary Officer, Thiruvallur District, Mr. Madheswaran, Inspector, Thiruninravur, Mr. Sathyan, Inspector, Pattabhiram and Mr. Gunasekaran, Inspector, Vengal participated in the function.

Rev. FR. A.Maria Arul, Parish Priest, Good Shepherd Church and Correspondent, St.Claret Mat. School, Thiruninravur was the chief guest at Sevalaya's Christmas celebration on 27/12/2008. The Rev. Father spoke about the relevance of Christ's message which has a special significance in the troubled times we live in now. Christ had spread the message of love and had lived an exemplary life forgiving and praying for those who had tortured him. He praised Sevalaya for exposing children to the tenets of different faiths which would surely create a healthy respect for all religions and towards



all people they come in contact with. Santa Claus brought cheer and joy as he danced merrily with the students and distributed Chocolates. The festival came to a joyous end with the distribution of cakes to One and All.

#### External Events

Mrs. Bhuvaneshwari Muralidharan, Hony. Correspondent of Sevalaya was the Chief Guest on the occasion of Bharathi Day Celebrations organized by Yuva Shakthi at Institute of Printing Technology, Taramani on 11/12/2008. She distributed prizes to the winners of the various competitions held by Yuva Shakthi for the students of the institute.

On 18/12/2008, the residents of the Old Age Home were taken to the Bharatha Natyam Program presented by Ms. Bhavya Balasubramanian at Naradha Gana Shaba in Chennai.

In a meeting held on 20/12/2008, it was decided to form a new organization "NGO Guardian" to protect the NGOs against attack by vested interests. Our Managing Trustee Mr. V.Muralidharan was elected the president of this organization.

35 senior citizens and 2 staff members from Sevalaya Old Age Home participated in the Season of Love programme held at Santhome on 28/12/2008. The Grandpas and Grandmas enjoyed the Dance and Western music programmes presented by school students. Many games were also conducted for the senior citizens. On the whole, it was a very enjoyable evening for the elders.



Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiar Hr. Sec. School participated in the 3 day State level Science Exhibition at Kumbakonam from 29/12/2008 to 31/12/2008.

#### Medical Camps

Jaya Indian Medical Pharmaceutical Private Limited conducted a free siddha medical camp on 23/11/08 at Sevalaya on the occasion of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Birthday as Narayana Seva. Nearly 300 persons from various villages in and around Kasuva were given treatment and free medicines.

#### NSS Activities

The NSS wing of Sevalaya undertook the cleaning of the Old Age Home campus on 03/12/2008.

#### Staff Book Review

On 06/12/2008, Mr. M.T. Anandan spoke on "Avoid Fear" (Tamil) written by Mr. Sugi Sivam. On 13/12/2008, Mr. C.Adhimuthu discussed Bharathiyar's New Athichoodi. On 20/12/2008, Mr. A.E.Gopi spoke on "Long Live Bharathi" (Tamil) written by Sekkizhar Adipodi T.N. Ramachandran.

#### Students Study Circle

"Efforts will bring Success" (Tamil) written by Mr. Ramachandran was reviewed by B.Asha in the study circle meet on 13/12/2008.

#### Visit to Places of Worship

On 05/12/2008, the hostel boys went to Anjaneya Temple and Siva Temple at Pakkam. The hostel girls were taken to Vinayaga Temple at Ramanathapuram on 05/12/2008. On 12 & 26/12/2008, the hostel boys went to Vinayaga Temple at Ramanathapuram.



## Yes; but..!

Good thoughts are gifts of God. Good thoughts result into good action. But not all good thoughts. Like the Biblical seeds, some fall by the way side on unfertile soil. Some are not watered and nurtured. Only a few grow and blossom as fragrant flowers or yield sweet fruits.

I happened to overhear a conversation between a mentor and his protégé. Let us call them 'M' and 'P'. P had a feeling of guilt over some things he has been doing in the past, and he expressed to M his earnest desire to start a new life. M was giving him various suggestions. But for each suggestion P's response was, "yes, But..." For every solution, he was providing a problem. I did not stay long to know whether M continued with his efforts or simply gave up in desperation.

Swami Vivekananda faced a similar situation. What did he do? Let's hear an incident narrated by Swami Shuddhananda.

Once, a young man met Swamiji. He told swamiji, "I went to many a sect and denomination, but I could not find the truth yet". Swami endearingly told him, "Well, my child, once I was also in the disconsolate state of mind as you are. Why should you be anxious on this score? Tell me what they advised you to do and what you have done all along." The young man replied, "Sir, a preacher made me understand in a beautiful way the value of image worship. Obeying him, I began to worship with the proper ceremonials for a time. But that did not give me Peace. At that time one gentleman told me, "Try to make your mind void, and if you can succeed in that attempt, you will get peace." I also spent some time in following that advice. But to no purpose. Sir, even now I sit in a closed room, and meditate as long as I can. Yet Peace is far, far away from me. How am I to get Peace?"

Swamiji continued to speak to him in endearing terms." My boy, if you have any respect for my words, the first thing I will advise you to do

is to throw open all the doors and windows of your room. In your quarter there are lots of poor people sunk in degradation and misery. You will have to go to them and serve them with all your zeal and enthusiasm. arrange to distribute medicines to those who are sick, and nurse them with all care, supply food to him who is starving, teach with as much as lies in you the ignorant; and if you begin to serve brethren in this wise, I tell you my child, you will surely get Peace and consolation."

The youth said, "Sir, weak as I am, if I alone go to serve the poor, and thereby break the regularity of my life, by keeping awake late at nights, I might fall ill, and what shall become of me?"

All along Swamiji was talking with the youth very lovingly, sympathizing with his mental troubles; but the last words of the youth vexed him, and so Swamiji next talked to him in another strain: "Look here, while volunteering to do service to your brethren, you set a higher price on your own life. I can now understand well-so also those who are present here-that you are not that sort of man who would exert so much in the service of the sick as to affect your own health and convenience." There was no more talk with that youth...

None can help another unless he has his own will.



**Ms. Bhuvaneshwari, Hon'y. Correspondent of Sevalaya was the Chief Guest on the occasion of Bharathi Day Celebrations**

Published by: [Bhuvaneshwari Muralidharan](#) and owned by / on behalf of [Sevalaya](#) and published from  
F2, Jains Eden Park, 4 - Judge Jambulingam Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004  
and printed by: [S.Kannappan @ Gem Offsets](#), 24 (Old no.-20), Swami Achari St., Royapettah, Chennai - 600 014.  
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