



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

JULY - 2005

Dear Friends,

Recently there was a news that some school authorities were suspended because they asked the students to clean the toilets. This incident has happened just before the district collector's visit to that school. We are not sure if the students were asked to clean the toilets just because there was a collector's visit or this was a regular practice in that school. We are also not sure who else does this activity on a regular basis. So we will not be able to make any comment on this matter.

Cleaning the school premises, including the toilets, is part of education, according to Mahatma Gandhi's Basic education. Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the Guru of Swami Vivekananda, cleaned the toilets of poor and the so-called low caste people, to get rid of his ego. According to Mahakavi Bharathi, using the broomstick is in itself a 'Sastra'. (Santhi Theru perrukkum sastiram karpom). He is inviting people to come and learn the sastra of cleaning the streets!

In Sevalaya, children clean entire school building and also the hostel building. At times, they help in cleaning the old age home also. But the difference here is, it is not just the children who do all this work. The entire Sevalaya community is involved in all sorts of physical work. All the staff members, including the headmaster join this work force. On many occasions, during my stay there on weekends, I have also worked in the agriculture fields and some times I have also cleaned the toilets. In fact the entire village community is involved in such physical labour in Sevalaya. As we don't charge any fee, we

tell the parents that they should spare one hour every week to come and do physical work at Sevalaya. Many of them happily come and do whatever work allocated to them, working in the kitchen or cleaning the hostel or watering the plants, etc.

What are we teaching the children? Toilets have to be anyway cleaned. If we don't do it ourselves, we have to appoint someone to do that work. So children will learn that we are superior and the people appointed to clean the toilets are inferior and may be they belong to the 'lowest caste'! Children will also learn that they need to always aim for white collared jobs only.

Fortunately for the children growing up in environments like Sevalaya, they learn that all are equal as they see everyone doing all types of physical labour. They know the skills of keeping a household clean. They also learn cooking. When cleaning the old age home, they learn to help others and also learn to respect elders. Some of them know how to milk the cows and also how to give bath to cows. Many of them know how to prepare vermi compost and how to convert waste into good natural manure. They also learn that there is no separate low caste, which is condemned to clean toilets all the time. They also learn that there is nothing bad about doing physical labour.

Such learning will not come through reading any books. JUST DO IT.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



Cancer Screening Camp



Tailoring Course - Inauguration

Study Circle Meetings

Every Saturday, the Study Circle meeting was conducted at Sevalaya Service Centre in which the staff shared their opinions about the books recently read by them. V. Muralidharan spoke on Biography of Swami Vivekananda on 4th June 2005. The book Nelson Mandela by T.Pandian was reviewed by Mr. G.Chittibabu on 18th June 2005. Mr. R.Vijayaraghavan spoke about a book in Tamil on 100 famous Personalities in History at the administrative office on 24th June 2005.

In the Students Study Circle meeting, S.Radhika spoke about a book in Tamil on Vandukalin Kathaikal - Stories for children, written by Ms.Vijaya Vincent, on 4th June 2005. The biography of Sister Subbulakshmi by Ms.Monika Felton was reviewed by U.Radha on 11th June 2005. The book Thomas Alva Edison by Mr.Kalinga Perumal was reviewed by P.Srinivasan on 25th June 2005.

School Clubs

The English Club, The Tamil Club and the Social Studies Club had their first meeting for

the academic year on 23rd June 2005. In the English Club the students were divided in to 4 groups – Shelly, Byron, Wordsworth and Keats. An oratorical competition was held among the groups. The children also attempted to solve some crossword puzzles. In the Tamil club it was decided to focus on practicing to read Tamil with proper pronunciation and write Tamil without any spelling or grammatical errors. The Social Studies Club had a guest speaker. Ms. Navamani, Teacher, Dasar's High School, Thiruninravur spoke to the members about lives of Mahatma Gandhiji, Abraham Lincoln and Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam. The Science Club also had a guest speaker Mr. Muruganantham, Teacher, Government Higher Secondary School, Velliyur who spoke to the members about General concepts of Science.

Temple Visits

The Hostel boys were taken on visit to the Vinayaka Temple at Ramanathapuram village on 04/06/2005. Hostel Students went to the Temple Kumbabiseham Festival on 11/06/2005, at Kasuva.



NSS Camp - Anna University



Temple Visit



V.Gomathi
420 / 500



S.Bhaskar
411 / 500



B.Sathish
408 / 500

Training & Development

A two day session on Vedic Mathematics was conducted by Ms. Ranjani Parthasarathy of Anna University on 17th & 18th June 2005 for the Students of classes 8th & 9th.

Honoured

The school toppers in X Std Ms. V.Gomathi & XII Std Master. R.Vinodh Kumar were awarded medals, certificates and prize books at the hands of Mr. T.V. Venkataraman IAS (Retd) at a function organized by Bharat Vikas Parishad on 26th June 2005. Recognition of

their achievement by such an elite group enthralled them and served as a morale booster.

NSS Camps

NSS Unit IV of Anna University camped for 10 days from 18/6/2005 to 28/6/2005 Sevalaya. They interacted with the senior citizens of Sevalaya, conducted various competitions for the children, helped in campus cleaning and went around the surrounding villages educating the people about health and hygiene and importance of education.

Hat Trick By Sevalaya!

For the third time in a row the X Std. Students of Sevalaya have secured **100%** results in the Board Examinations! We are really proud of their achievement. A detailed list of the marks secured by our students are given below:

<i>Students Name</i>	<i>Tamil</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Maths</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Social science</i>	<i>Total Marks</i>
1. V.Banu	66	40	49	45	52	252
2. E.Chitra	70	47	59	69	60	305
3. S.Gayathri	65	47	61	57	60	290
4. V.Gomathi	85	71	100	85	79	420
5. D.Gowthami	81	75	73	73	73	375
6. R.Janani	65	69	65	54	77	311
7. R.Jaya	63	43	50	55	53	274
8. G.Jothi	68	58	71	87	64	348
9. K.Rekha	63	54	57	62	63	299
10. M.Synthiya	57	55	70	58	60	310
11. S.Sathya	76	52	80	85	68	371
12. R.Surya	66	38	50	53	47	254
13. S.Vanitha	74	46	77	69	61	327
14. M.Arun Kumar	62	46	71	73	56	308
15. S.Bhaskar	79	72	96	92	72	411
16. R.Dharani	72	59	73	61	55	320
17. B.Jeevanantham	81	73	89	88	70	401
18. E.Karthick	62	61	63	64	71	321
19. R.Prabu	61	50	64	59	64	298
20. B.Sathish	79	82	83	84	80	408
21. B.Silambarasan	70	55	60	80	74	339
22. P.Srinivasan	78	72	84	86	77	397
23. M.Velmurugan	56	53	62	70	57	298

Gandhiji on Fasts

Mahatma Gandhi considered himself as the author of the modern science of Satyagraha in whose armoury fasting is a potent weapon. A genuine Fast cleanses the body, mind and the spirit. There is no room for selfishness, anger, and lack of faith or impatience in a pure Fast. There must be a living faith in God that He will grant the necessary strength. If there is the slightest impurity he will have no hesitation to renounce it. There are certain rules governing Satyagraha Fasting. It can be against a person who is in love or sympathy with you, and it must be for the purpose of reforming him and not to extract concessions. A son may fast against the father for curing him of a vice but not to get from him an inheritance.

Fasting cannot be for selfish purposes or for personal gains. It should be only for the good of others. The fasting person should be ready to undergo suffering and pecuniary loss. A person should not fast for recovering money lent. If such things were permitted there would be no end to scoundrels blackmailing people by resorting to this means. Some may in fact succeed, but it is not triumph of Satyagraha but of Duragraha.

Fasting is to be undertaken by him who is associated with the person against whom he fasts. The latter has to be directly connected with the purpose for which the Fast is undertaken. Fasting should be undertaken as a last resort when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed. "Majority of the Fasts do not come under the category of Satyagraha fasts and are "Hunger-Strikes" undertaken without previous preparation and adequate thought. If the process is repeated too often hunger strikes may lose what little efficacy they may possess and become objects of ridicule" said Gandhiji. (How prophetic!)

Gandhiji in his lifetime has undertaken Fasts on nearly 28 occasions and the longest one was of a

duration of 23 days and there were two Fasts of 22 days' duration each. Most of these were for purification of self and others, atonement, for the benefit of communal unity and for reforming people whom he loved and who loved him.

On 15th August 1947 when Nehru was making his "Tryst with Destiny" speech and Lord Mountbatten was showering praise on this One-Man Army, Gandhiji was in "an abandoned, dilapidated building squatting in the midst of dirt and squalor open on all sides to whoever came-with friendly mind or carrying murder in a black heart." Nehru and Patel had agreed to Partition. Gandhiji accepted it philosophically. But he was human enough to wear the rue, to fast; to pray and take to spinning while the nation widely celebrated the Independence Day.

The last Fast of Gandhiji was between 13th and 17th January 1948, a few months after he completed 78! It is worth recollecting what he said on the eve of his fast. "I yearn for heart to heart friendship between the Hindus and Sikhs, and the Muslims. To day it is non-existent. This is situation which no patriot worthy of the name can contemplate with equanimity." He also declared, "I shall fast and die unless you show me a change of heart." Change of heart was there indeed. There was an earnestly signed declaration by top leaders of communities for amity to be established in Delhi and elsewhere. All community peace processions were marching in step in Delhi. After ensuring that the declaration was genuine even from the hard-core, he broke his fast. In his speech he said, that from then on it should be the endeavor of all should be to see that peoples of Pakistan and India remained as friends." The spirit behind my Fast must be preserved." he said. He sipped the fruit juice offered to him on January 19, 1948, and his life was saved—only to fall a prey to an assassin's bullet within a few days.

Hey Ram!

FOR FREE CIRCULATION :

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

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