



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 2 **Sevalaya's News Letter - July 2007** Serve 4 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

Promoting religious harmony has been one of the main activities of Sevalaya for the past 19 years. Sevalaya School celebrates all functions from all religions, year after year. Christmas, Ramzan, Deepavali, Bhudha poornima, Gurunanak Jeyanthi, Mahaveer Jeyanthi etc., are celebrated with equal enthusiasm in the school campus. Religious heads and scholars take part in such functions and explain about each religion to the children. Also Sevalaya library has books from all religions and children and staff are encouraged to read all books.

Sevalaya has book review meetings every Saturday afternoon for its staff members. Last year, complete works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vivekananda and Bharathi were chosen as books for review and each staff member reviewed one volume every week. This is part of our on going training to the staff, that they read good books every week and come and discuss the highlights with all, week after week. That way all the staff read at least one book, but come to know of 52 books in a year.

This academic year three books have been selected for this purpose. As we are not qualified to do a review of these books, we call these meetings as book discussion. These books are Bible, Quran and Bhagavad Gita. Each staff will pick up couple of chapters each week from a book and discuss the contents. If Quran is taken up this week, next week it will be Bible and the following week Gita will be taken up. Thus 52 weeks of this academic year is split as 18 weeks for each book. Also each staff member will have to pick up a book from a religion to which he or she does not belong to.

Children from classes 6th to 12th will also participate in this discussion. The discussions will happen on all Saturdays, from 2 to 3 pm, at Sevalaya's Kasuva village campus. This is done with an aim to make people understand each others religion very well so that any misunderstanding can be avoided.

Already three weeks have passed and I discussed the first two chapters of Quran, followed by our headmaster Chittibabu picking up a chapter from Bible and then our hostel In-charge, Kingston talking about Bhagavad Gita. Chittibabu admitted that he is reading Bible for the first time and Kingston mentioned that all along he has been thinking that Gita is a separate book and only now understood that it is a part of Mahabharatha! Such information about one's religion will look very basic, but many do not know even basic information about others religions. This effort by Sevalaya will iron out such lack of information, in the minds of Sevalaya children, staff, trustees and others who attend these meetings. Many issues and misunderstanding start only because of lack of understanding of basic information. Also it was nice to observe that when each speaker is talking about one holy book, he is able to compare what is said in the holy book of his own religion and the conclusion was that there is no real difference in any philosophy.

Sevalaya welcomes all members of the public to join in this unique event, held to promote religious harmony.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



Inaugural function for the Academic year 2007-2008

Events

Inaugural function for the Academic year 2007-2008 was held on 04/06/2007. Mr. T.Mohanakumar, District Educational Officer of Thiruvallur District was the chief Guest. Mr. Sriram, GM, Smile Foundation, Chennai was our special guest. Uniforms, text books, notebooks and other educational items worth Rs 10,00,000/ were distributed for the 1000 students of the School.

The Humour Club of Ambattur Right Choice conducted a Programme "Shades of Humour" at Sevalaya on 10/06/2007. Mr. S.Kugan, President of the Humour Club was the Chief Guest. Noted film artiste Kathadi Ramamoorthy was the special guest. 100 members from the Humour Club of Ambattur Right Choice participated.

A one day Training Programme for Teachers on "Being an Effective Teacher" was conducted by Mr. Muthiah Ramanathan, Director, Mind Dynamics Centre on 16/06/2007. The workshop focussed on how to bring out the best in each student and ways to discipline students without resorting to corporal punishment or any other form of humiliation.



Film Artiste Kathadi Ramamoorthy in "Shades of Humour" Programme



Club Mahindra Holidays' Medical Camp

70 teachers from 9 schools in Thiruvallur District participated in the programme.

Nava Bharath Students Welfare Association conducted a preliminary round of quiz programme on 24/06/2007. 2 children were selected to participate in the inter orphanage Quiz Programme to be conducted by the association in October 2007.

Medical Camps

Club Mahindra Holidays, as a part of their CSR activity organized a free medical camp at Sevalaya on 23/06/2007. Doctors from Apollo Hospitals, Chennai conducted health check ups for the residents of Childrens' Home and Old Age Home.

Staff Book Discussion

V.Muralidharan discussed Introduction chapters of Quran and Chapters I & II at the meeting on 09/06/2007. G.Chittibabu took up St. Luke's Gospel from The Bible for discussion on 16/06/2007. A.A.Kingston shared about what he read in the Introductory chapter and Chapter XIV of Bhagavad Gita on 23/06/2007 while Annapurna discussed III & IV Chapters of Quran on 30/06/2007.



"Being an Effective Teacher" - Training Programme for Teachers



Mr. Uppili Srinivasan from UAE as a Volunteer at Sevalaya

Students Book Review

A.Ramkumar reviewed the book "Stories of Revolutionaries of the World" (Tamil) authored by Jegatha on 02/06/2007. Sankaran's "Stories of Freedom Struggle"(Tamil) was reviewed by R.Kavitha on 09/06/2007.

"Women who inspired self confidence" a book in Tamil authored by Balanamputhi was M.Ranjani's choice for discussion on 16/06/2007 while Dinakaran shared what he read in the book on Tamil Poetess Avvaiyar by Poovai Amudhan. Swami Sugabodhananda's "Oh! Mind Relax Please" (Tamil) was discussed by K.Anjali on 30/06/2007.

Training Programmes

9 staff members from Sevalaya participated in the free computer Training Course conducted by Microsoft- Sutherland Technologies. It is a 3 day programme commencing every Monday and Thursday. 5 staff members attended the Programme from 21/06/2007 to 23/06/2007 and 4 staff members attended the programme from 28/06/2007 to 30/06/2007.



Volunteers from TCS CSR at Sevalaya



Ms. Ramya Chockalingam from USA as a Volunteer at Sevalaya

Visits to Places of Worship

Hostel boys went to Vinayagar temple at Ramanathapuram Village on 01/06, 15/06 and 22/06/2007. Hostel girls went to to Vinayagar temple at Ramanathapuram Village on 08/06/2007. Hostel girls went to the RC Church at Thiruninravur on 29/06/2007.

Volunteers at Sevalaya

Mr. Uppili Srinivasan from United Arab Emirates volunteered his services at Sevalaya. He Handled Computer classes for students of 6th Std. to 11th Std.

Ms. Ramya Chockalingam from United States of America volunteered her services at Sevalaya. She was involved in teaching primary classes through Play way method.

A group of Volunteers from TCS CSR have agreed to visit Sevalaya every Saturday and handle Maths., English and Computer Science classes for 9th to 12th std. They have been coming to the campus for 2 weeks now. Ms. Manjula of TCS Maitree is co-ordinating this programme. There was also a visit by TCS Corporate Maitree group.



Quiz Programme-Prize Distribution

I CAN DO IT

(I must do it; I will do it.)

Most of us, on occasions, feel depressed about the sorrow, disease, affliction, poverty, ignorance etc. around us and feel strongly that we should do something about it. But the next moment, our own limitations, real and imagined, weigh us down.

An excerpt from an enlightening conversation a disciple had with Swami Vivekananda, may inspire at least a quite a few of us and spur us in to action...

Swamiji is not interested in lecturing in India as he did in the West. In India, he feels that the ground has to be prepared first. First of all, we must remove the evils of hunger, poverty, and constant anxiety for bare existence from those to whom we want to preach religion. The Disciple asks him the question, "What should we do to remove the evil?"

Swamiji says, "First, some young men full of the spirit of renunciation are needed-those who will be ready to sacrifice their lives for others, instead of devoting themselves to their own happiness...go from door to door and make the people realize their pitiable condition by means of facts and reasoning, and instruct them in the ways and means of their welfare, and at the same time explain to them as clearly as possible in very simple and easy language, the higher truths of religion. The masses in our country are like the sleeping Leviathan. Even the one or two percent of the masses in our country who receive university education... do not succeed in their endeavours of doing good to the country. With the burden of a family on their back, they do not find time to do anything great or do anything high!

Disciple: *Is there no way out? How will India rise again?*

Swami: Certainly, there is! You all set your shoulders to the wheel! What is there in thinking my samsara, my samsara? Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting idle won't do anymore. Make them understand their real condition and say, "O Ye brothers, arise! Awake! How much longer would you remain asleep?" Go and advise them how to improve their condition Instruct them in simple words, about the necessities of life,

and in trade, commerce, agriculture etc.

Disciple: *But, where is the strength in us? I should have felt blessed myself if I had a hundredth part of your powers, Swami!*

Swamiji: How foolish? Power and things like that will come by themselves. Put yourself to the work, and you will feel some tremendous power coming to you that you will feel it hard to bear. Even the least work done for others awakens the power within; even thinking the least good of others gradually instills into the heart the strength of a lion.

Disciple: *What will become of those, then, who depend on me?*

Swamiji: If you are ready to sacrifice your life for others, God will certainly provide some means for them. Have you not read in the Gita, the words of Sri Krishna, "Never does a doer of good, my beloved, come to grief"?

At your very threshold Narayana himself, in the form of a poor beggar, is dying of starvation! Instead of giving him anything would you only satisfy the appetites of your wife and children with delicacies? Why, that is beastly!

Disciple: *To work for others requires a good deal of money at times, and where shall I get it?*

Swamiji: Why not do as much as lies within your power? Even if you cannot give to others for want of money, surely, you can at least breathe in to their ears some good words or impart some good instruction, can't you?

Disciple: *yes, sir, I can do it.*

Swamiji: But saying "I can" won't do. Show me through action what you can do... Get up! and put your shoulder to the wheel-how long is this life for? As you have come in to this life leave some mark behind. Otherwise, where is the difference between you and stones? They too, come in to existence, decay, and die.

Shall we ponder for a while?

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