



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

NOVEMBER - 2005

Dear Friends,

Borders between any two countries, if it is not a natural border, is at best only an imaginary line. But human imagination is very powerful. It takes a much more powerful earthquake to shake this up. The recent earthquake in Pakistan, Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) and India along the border has just done that. Natural calamities have no borders and they treat all countries in the same manner, be it Tsunami or earthquake or floods!

There were reports in the press that the Indian army men crossed the borders, not to take over the land, but to help the Pakistani army to reconstruct their bunkers! This was denied the next day by both sides but the clarification mentioned that Indian army men only supplied tools for reconstruction, but they didn't cross the border. Even that is a very positive development. For nearly fifty years now, we have been only exchanging bullets across the border. Army men from both sides, waiting all their life, on the line of control, just awaiting orders to shoot each other, have taken a step now to help each other.

Government of India announced relief materials and they were immediately shipped. Pakistan acknowledged this and their President thanked India. Also telephone connections were given across the border for people to talk to relatives and friends in PoK. Pakistan has said that they will allow free movement of people across the border so that they can even meet their loved ones. Hopefully this will bring both the governments closer to have a more meaningful dialogue when they meet next time for peace talks.

Some of the big Indian Corporates, like Infosys, while announcing donation for relief and rehabilitation work, have done so for both India and Pakistan. The mood in the press also reflects the general mood of the common public who want to sincerely extend a helping hand.

More than 50,000 people have lost their lives and many more have lost their homes and belongings. The news that a school building collapsed and all children were buried alive is very disturbing. It was something similar to the fire accident that happened in Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu. Also some hospitals have crumbled and hence the injured had nowhere to go.

Added to this there was heavy rain and snowfall, when people were forced to stay outside! The pain Tsunami created nearly a year ago is still fresh in our minds. Now, we have one more natural calamity.

We have no way to control nature. We can at least avoid man made calamities. If all the money both India and Pakistan are spending on defense expenses is diverted for education, just imagine the kind of growth both countries can achieve. If the concentration is on development and growth, peace and love will follow. With the power of love, we can overcome the pain of earthquake and Tsunami.

Along with seismic energy, this earthquake has released some positive energy also.

Thanks & Regards
Murali

Gandhi Jayanthi at Marina Beach



Events at the service centre

On 01/10/2005 Gandhi Jayanthi was celebrated at Sevalaya. Mr.V.Sridharan, Revenue Inspector and Mr.M. Appadurai, Village Administrative Officer, Thiruvallur District were the chief Guests.

Doctors from Arignar Anna Siddha Medical College conducted a free Siddha camp at Sevalaya on 09/10/2005. Nearly 300 people who included the residents of Sevalaya and villagers from nearby villages were the beneficiaries. Free medicines were also distributed to them. The camp was organised by Kilpauk Sai Seva Samithi.

Smt. Savithri Nagarajan rendered a one-hour Carnatic music concert, all Mahakavi Bharatiar's songs, on the occasion of Navarathri Celebrations on 09/10/2005.

On 12/10/2005 Saraswathi Pooja was celebrated at the campus. Mr S.Panneerselvam, Tasildar of Thiruvallur was the chief guest.



**Saraswathi Pooja - Thasildhar
Mr. S.Paneer selvam**

Gandhi Jayanthi Function - VAO - Mr. M.Appadurai



On 22/10/2005, members from Sangati Learning Group visited Sevalaya and interacted with the children and staff. On that evening members of the Swami Haridoss Giri Bhajan Group visited Sevalaya and presented a Bhajan Programme.

On 26/10/2005, as part of school science club activity, Mr.Palaniswami spoke to the children about Ozone layer depletion.

Deepavali Celebrations were held at the campus on the evening of 31/10/2005. Mr. Thulasingam, President, Federation of Rice Mill Owners Association and Paddy Rice Dealers was the chief guest and inaugurated the celebrations.

Participation in External Programmes

On 02/10/2005, on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanthi celebrations a group of children from Sevalaya participated in the inter religious prayer meet near Gandhi Statue at Marina Beach, Chennai and sang Bhajan songs.

On 6/10/2005 Sevalaya Junior Boys Team participated in the District Level Volleyball competition and secured II Place.



Sidha Medical camp



On 11/10/2005 students of Sevalaya participated in the Ayudha Pooja celebrations in India Japan Lighting Company Ltd and presented a cultural programme.

As in the past years, this year also our children participated in the Ayudha Pooja Celebrations of Pattabhiram Anna Nagar Auto Drivers Association who provided a forum for the children to display their talents in dancing. This program was held on 22/10/2005.

On 23/10/2005, Sri Venkatesa Bhaktha Samajam, Perambur honoured Sevalaya's Managing Trustee, V.Muralidharan, on the occasion of their 30th year of padayatra to Thirumala Thirupati.

Two Lions Clubs from Chennai arranged for mega Cracker Show On 29/10/2005 and 30/10/2005 for the Orphanages on the eve of Deepavali. All the children of Sevalaya went for the cracker show. The colourful and magnificent event brought cheer to the children. It was a very memorable experience for them.

On 31/10/2005 6 students of Sevalaya



participated in the Deepavali Celebrations of NABARD(National Bank for Rural Development) and presented a small skit stressing the importance of religious Harmony.

Study Circle Meetings

Mr. A.A.Kingston shared his views about the book " Views of Tamils on Swami Vivekananda", a book penned by Mr. Pe. Su. Mani on 01/10/2005. "Thoughts and Happenings" by Mr. Suki Sivam was taken up for review by Ms. S. Mariyammal on 08/10/2005. Ms. R.Vijaya spoke about the book "Rabindranath Tagore" by Mr. M. V. Venkataraman on 15/10/2005. Mr. T.Nagaraj chose a compilation of Bharathiyar's Essays for discussion on 22/10/2005. Ms. S.Sundari's choice for review was a compilation of Swami Vivekananda's views on Indian Women on 29/10/2005.

Students Book Review meetings were also conducted on every Saturday evening.

Temple Visits & Tours

Boys of Sevalaya hostel went to the Pillaiyar Temple at Kasuva Village on 07/10/2005.

Girls went to the temple on 14/10/2005.



On Practising Truth

None of us have any doubt as to the value of truth as a moral principle. But almost every one of us has a reservation about its applicability in practical life. The basic question is of defining truth. What appears as truth to me may not appear so to another. How to act in such circumstances? "What is Truth?" is a profound question Pontius Pilate asked Jesus of Nazareth but did not wait for an answer before proceeding with the trial. The question still eludes an answer. The next problem with this inconvenient concept of truth is that it would be difficult to survive with it in this world of cunning and treachery where from Auto driver to Atomic scientist, everyone is corrupt and dishonest. One more problem: by speaking truth, we become unpleasant company. Last but not least, there are situations when by telling the truth we are harming, or by telling a lie doing good, to somebody. How does it match with our concept of being truthful always?

What has Gandhi, the apostle of truth, to say about this all? For him, the Absolute truth is an ideal to be realized. Truth according to each one's perception is the relative truth, and everyone has to act as per what his conscience dictates as truth. He did not make any compromise in adherence to truth either at the macro or micro level. "It is not enough that one ordinarily does not resort to untruth. One ought to know that no deception may be practised even for the good of the country." Seen in this light, we can understand some of his decisions and views notwithstanding the consternation among his immediate followers and several others questioning his political wisdom. In day-to-day affairs, he decried mouthing untruth for the sake of seeming politeness. "If we continue to say things out of politeness, we become a nation of hypocrites."

We are distressed about the dishonesty and untruth abounding in this world. Instead of wringing our hands in helpless despair, let us do something about it. Only thing is that, we have

to start with ourselves first. Let us not conceal a few sources of income in our tax returns; justifying that after all tax money is misused by corrupt and inefficient politicians and bureaucrats. Let us be honest in our travelling and medical bills without saying, 'everybody does it.' Gandhi did not start practising truth after he became Mahatma. It was vice versa. He firmly believes that what is possible for him is possible for everyone else.

Now there is the ticklish question of what to do in a situation when we are required to tell a lie for the good of another person? No one can draw a code of conduct for such contingencies. If we are earnest in our resolve to be truthful, God, Truth or Inner Voice will guide us. An episode in the life of Mahakavi Bharathiyar was narrated by Sage T.G.Narayanaswami, a practical vedantist and a relative of Bharathiyar.

Ponnu Velayudham, a close friend of Bharathiyar was in deathbed. His son who was to arrive at Pondicherry was voyaging by a ship, and news was to hand that the ship sunk and the son died. P.V. was miserable and to put him at rest, his relatives arranged a fake telegram informing that the ship that sunk was a different one. P.V. was not convinced and said decidedly that he would believe it only if Bharathiyar confirmed it. It would have been an ethical dilemma for you and me but not for Bharathiyar. He prayed to Parasakthi. With his stately gait, he marched to the bedside of P.V. and thundered, "Oh, Ponnu Velayudham! It is a fact that the ship your son travelled sunk. But your son has survived. He will be coming soon. **I am not saying this. Parasakthi says this.**"

Miracle of miracles! The son was alive and kicking and came home within a few days.

There is a moral law governing the universe. Our great men have told that if one practises truth continuously for a long time, what he says becomes the truth.

Let us protect truth. Truth will protect us!

FOR FREE CIRCULATION :

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