



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 1 **Sevalaya's News Letter-November 2006** Serve 8 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

Birthday celebrations have become more and more elaborate and of course, more and more expensive. Pizza parties, games to be organized, sports activities, magic shows, puppet shows, whatever you want on your kids birthdays, there are event managers now available in India who will organize everything for you, for a fee. There has to be expensive gifts and return gifts (party bags), just to show how rich you are! New clothes have to be purchased not just for the birthday boy or the girl, but most probably for the entire family. Some restaurants and hotels have special birthday arrangements and there are options to have garden or pool parties! In India, as people grow older, they used to stop birthday celebrations at some point in time, but the current generation is not doing that any more. The adult birthday parties now go on into the early hours of the morning, with alcohol flowing freely. For all this, one needs money to spend on oneself. The large middle class population of India, which may not have so much money like the affluent class, will have their credit cards or banks offering them personal loans!

On the other hand, for many of the kids in Sevalaya, as we don't know the parentage, and also the fact when they were exactly born, we have to guess and fill-up a date of birth for school records. The birth day or birth day celebrations can't be on a very expensive scale for Sevalaya kids. They get satisfied by distributing candy to other children in the school, when the birthdays are announced during the morning school prayer.

To bridge this gap, we have birthday sponsorship schemes, by which donors can come and

celebrate their birthdays at Sevalaya, by sponsoring either the whole day food or just one meal on that day. Many people come and celebrate their birthdays at Sevalaya campus, sponsor food, bring cakes and chocolates etc., and distribute to the children. Some of them even organize interesting games for the children and give away prizes to the winners.

More than celebrating birthdays at Sevalaya, can we make a birth day party a fund raiser for Sevalaya? The idea came from one of Sevalaya's long term supporters in London, Mrs. Anna Panchanathan, who passed the idea to other Sevalaya supporters in the UK. Shankar and Akila at Liverpool picked up the idea and informed their friends, Dr.Hariprakash & Dr.Santhi, who were organizing the celebration of their son Rajeev's 18th birthday. The birthday boy was informed about the activities of Sevalaya and the need to support such activities. The boy readily agreed and said that instead of friends and relatives giving him birthday gifts, they can write cheques in the name of Sevalaya and the contribution can be handed over to Sevalaya.

So the party took place, without any gifts or return-gifts and the money was collected in the name of Sevalaya. Thus approximately 400 pounds was collected (nearly 34,000 Indian rupees), which is enough for four full days food expenses for all the inmates of Sevalaya or for the initial academic year expenses, like uniforms, books, note books etc., for 34 children! Can there be a better birth day gift?

Thanks & Regards
Murali

Gandhi Jayanthi-Prize Distribution



Events

The youth of today are the pillars of tomorrow's society. To create a better society, it is essential that the youth grow up with good values. Knowledge of the glorious past of our country and the great men who traversed this nation is absolutely essential to build a better future. With this in mind Sevalaya has taken efforts, to spread awareness among the students of today, the lives and works of the Trinities of Sevalaya – Mahatma Gandhiji, Mahakavi Bharathiyar and Swami Vivekananda. As a first step , a State level examination on Mahatma Gandhiji's life based on his autobiography - "My Experiments with Truth" was conducted for all the schools in the state of Tamilnadu for classes from VI to XII. Schools were classified into 2 categories – State Board Schools and Matriculation & CBSE Schools. Exams were conducted for 3 categories – for classes VI to VIII, IX & X, and XI & XII. Prizes were awarded to the top 3 rank holders in each category at the State level during the Gandhi Jayanthi Celebrations at Sevalaya on 07/10/2006. Mr. G.Ram Mohan , Retd, Commissioner for Railway safety was our Honourable Chief Guest. A noted philatelist and a Gandhian Scholar, Mr. Ram Mohan gave an insight into the world of Philately through a Slide Show. Of particular interest was the projection of various



Diwali Function



Gandhi Jayanthi at Marina Beach

stamps and first day covers issued by various countries on Mahatma Gandhiji. The State Level first rank holders of the examination are as below:

Tamil Medium

<u>Level</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>
6 to 8	S.Keerthna	G.H.School, Pulikuthi, Theni Dt.
9 to 10	M.Abinaya	St.Therasa Girls Hr. Sec. School, Nagai Dt.
11to12	P.Divya	Jayagopal Gorodia, Thambaram, Chennai Dt.

English Medium

<u>Level</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>
6 to 8	M.Gowri Sinnu	SPM Oxford mat.Hr.Sec School,Kaalanchipatti, Dindugal Dt.
9 to 10	A.Nafeesa	Vidhya Mandhir Mat.School, Vellore.
11to12	N.Uthra	Bannariyamman Mat. Hr.Sec.School, Erode.

The festival season arrived with a big bang! Yes, The Diwali Celebrations! All the children were taken to a Mega cracker show at the DG Vaishnava College Grounds on 19/10/2006. The show was organised by Lions Club of Greenways. The fireworks were absolutely splendid and the children enjoyed themselves thoroughly. Diwali celebrations



Diwali celebration at Campus



at Sevalaya commenced on 20/10/2006. Ln. D. Thulasingham, President, Federation of Tamil Nadu Rice Mill Owner and Paddy Rice Dealers Association, Redhills, Chennai inaugurated the Celebrations. New clothes were distributed to the residents of the children's Home and the senior citizen's Home.

Ramzan was celebrated at Sevalaya on 29/10/2006. Dr. K.V.S.Habeeb Mohammed, President, Islamic Foundation Trust was the Chief Guest. Insisting that Service to mankind is Service to God, Dr. Habeeb Mohammed said that according to Islam Man was born to perform 3 duties – Duty to God, Duty to fellow men and Duty to oneself. The aim of all this is to promote self control and discipline and service to humanity based on Universal Love. The fasting during the Ramzan Month aims to promote these basic essential qualities in Man he mentioned.

External Events where we participated...

Our children participated in the competitions held by "Makkal" TV on 01/10/2006 and U.Radha of 10th std. won a prize in the oratorical competition. The programme was telecast on 02/10/2006, on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanthi.

4 students from sevalaya participated in the Carnatic



Music Appreciation Programme held at Raga Sudha Hall in Luz, Chennai on 07/10/2006.

As in the past years, our children were the special guests for the Aayutha Pooja celebration, organised by Anna Nagar Auto Association, Pattabiram on 22/10/2006. Our children were provided a festive lunch. The dinner was also sponsored by the Association on that day. Our children also received gifts of note books, clothes, rice, snacks, etc.

In the Media...

V.Muralidharan, Managing Trustee was the guest on JAK TV's Live phone – in Programme where he spoke about the activities of Sevalaya and answered viewer's calls.

Study Circle

"Key to Health" by Mahatma Gandhiji was Ms. Vijaya's choice for discussion during the study circle meet on 07/10/2006. Ms. V.Chitra shared her thoughts on Swami Vivekananda's Gnana Deepam – Part V on 14/10/2006.

Students Study circle

E.Karthick of XII Std spoke about the book "In the path of Swami Vivekananda" authored by Mr. Subramaniam.



BHARATHIYAR AND BHAGAVAD GITA

(Gist of a talk by Swami Omkarananda, Acharya of Pudukkottai Sri Bhuvaneshwari Avadhutha Vidyapeetam and Vedapuri Adiguru Shri Prajna Dakshinamoorthy Vidyapeetam, Theni, India, at Sevalaya Campus on 11th Sep. 2006)

Mahakavi Bharathiyar has rendered all the 18 chapters of Bhagavad Gita into Tamil Prose and has also given an exposition on this celestial song. Besides this, reference to Gita and its central message abound in his works. One may cite the example of "Chatrapathi Sivaji" . In this poem, Emperor Sivaji, in his exhortation to his warriors, recalls the words of Lord Krishna, "Conquer effeminacy; Forget not , peerless Province of Fame, your greatness Arise. Again in "Krishnarjuna Dharshan" he quotes the Lords' words,

"Oh! Come! Take your bow!
Oh! Come! Take your bow in your hands, and
this crowd of puny folk,
Pulverise in to specks of dust!"

Apparently, though these verses are a call to violence, the spirit of the message is that one should do one's duty – the task on hand- the call of the hour- without giving into dejection or despondency.

The central message of the Gita can then be captured in a nutshell thus:-

"Give up despondency:
Do thy duty:
You'll realise God"

Bharathiyar was very clear about his Duty:-

"We build the lofty rhyme; our country we serve,
we idle not even a second"

The question is how to shake off lethargy? How to get rid of despondency? The answer is simple: Read Bharathiyar's poems! Particularly the one hailing the Youth of the New Bharath

"I bid you welcome, you lusturous eyes!
I bid you welcome, you stout hearted
I bid you welcome, you of honeyed words!
I bid you welcome, you of strong shoulders!
I bid you welcome, you of lucid mind!
I bid you welcome, who frown at meanness

I bid you welcome, who pity the lonely,
I bid you welcome, whose gait is bull-like!

Bharathiyar has a wish-list to God. This list does not contain mean and mundane things. Look at what he asks:-

Basically he wants all his past sins to vanish like mist before the rising sun for it is in a sinless mind there can be clear, lucid intellect. Strength of Will, a stout and sturdy heart goes with clear intellect. When one has clarity in thinking, and has a strong will, he is able to think good and do good" In his poems, "Enniya Mudithal Vendum" , Bharathiyar outlines in logical steps tracking his ultimate goal to the basics. Now look at the poem:-

"Thoughts and aims must come to pass;
And the mind shall think only good
A stout and sturdy heart I seek
And a clear lucid intellect
All the sins I have done
Like mist before the rising sun
Should by thy Grace dissolved be,
Mother I stand before Thee"

Another poem of Bharathiyar has a similar import. (Arivilae Thelivu)

"Clarity of intellect, firmness of heart,
An inwardly coursing flood of Love,
Unique lordship over the senses,
Longing quest all the time after the, way
Of Thy grace and establishment
In Karma Yoga, May Thou grant me these,
O, Supreme Ens that is without
Any mark or Guna, but, indeed is all!

Recite these two poems daily; Success in life is assured for you! These are the Prayers to which I initiate you today !

(The translation of the poems quoted by Swamiji in Tamil are taken from "Bharathi Padalkal" edited by Mr. T.N.Ramachandran and published by Tamil University, Thanjavur)

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