



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

OCTOBER - 2002

Dear Friends,

Recently I had a chance to visit 'Raj Ghat' – the samadhi (square) of Mahatma Gandhiji. A signboard outside the samadhi set me thinking. It read 'Please leave your foot wear outside – at your own risk'. Inside, a man who risked his life and died for the cause of Hindu – Muslim unity, is in his eternal sleep, and outside, we have to take risk and leave our footwear! May be level of risk you can take decides your level of maturity. I could see few people there, who were not willing to take that risk also and walking inside the samadhi, carrying the footwear in their hands.

The current events in the birth State of Mahatma Gandhi worries us a lot. The communal tension, the killing of innocent people, the hatred the incidents have generated shows that we have forgotten the teachings of Mahatma Gandhiji. We need to recall the statement of the father of the nation 'an eye for an eye will make the whole world blind'. Instead of talking eye for an eye, let us talk about eye donations. Instead of blood for blood, let us talk about blood donations. In fact some section of the media carried the news that many, irrespective of caste and religion came forward to donate blood for the victims of the temple massacre. We need more of such positive action. Only by positive action, we will be able to counter terrorism.

Sevalaya, in the past fourteen years, is engaged in positive action, in its own small way. As you enter Sevalaya, you will find the

sign board requesting you to shed all prejudices you may have based on caste, creed, colour, sex, religion, nationality etc., before entering our campus. The children are taught the good things from all religions. Holy books from all the religions find place in Sevalaya's 'Swami Vivekananda Library'. Major festivals of all the religions are celebrated with equal enthusiasm. After 1993, the sixth of December is observed as 'religious harmony day' and speakers from all the religions are invited to speak from the same platform. The daily prayer in Sevalaya is an inter-religious prayer.

When we admit children, senior citizens and staff in our institution, we don't ask them anything about their religion or caste. Such columns are not found in our application form. (In India most of the application forms carry these columns) .We are not sure how long we will be able to continue this, as sometimes, this may look like we are violating some government procedures.

These are some of the positive actions, which Sevalaya has been taking right from inception. We believe that by such action, we will be able to create a small community, which is able to respect all religions equally.

Lasting answer for terrorism lies only in positive action, not in hatred, not in violence, not in taking revenge. If we are blind to this, we will go for eye for an eye, and become blind once again.

Thanks & Regards
Murali

V.O.C'S LIFE- A GLIMPSE

The Swadeshi Movement, the ship floating venture, the coral mill strike and such other landmarks made Chidambaram the leading figure in the South Indian Freedom Movement. The trade- through –sea between Thoothukudi, southern port town in India, and Columbo was very flourishing and the British Indian Steam Navigation Company had the monopoly of this trade. In October 1906, a native Shipping Company was started by a few businessmen in Thoothukudi, under the leadership of Chidambaram and was named The Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company. Observing a new threat to the monopoly of the British, the Assistant Magistrate of Thoothukudi, Waller, came to the rescue of the English Company and gave a lot of trouble to the native company. The capital for the native Company , a sum of Rs 10 lakhs was raised by the issue of 40000 shares of Rs 25 each. Individuals belonging to the Asian continent were eligible to become shareholders.

V.O.Chidambaram was sentenced to 40 years of exile and transportation for life on two counts; twenty years for seditious speech and twenty years for "abetting" Siva in his fiery lectures- the sentences to run one after one another. Siva was transported for 10 years for "seditious speech". The whole nation was shocked on hearing this. That was the time when Tilak and Aurobindo were also sent to prison. Bahrathi wrote in "India" of 8th January 1910 under "New Pilgrim Centres of Bharatham" that the jails had become the new holy places and pilgrim centres because of these people.

V.O.C. was asked to spin jute yarn by hand rotating machine by which his palms got blisters with burning sensation and occasionally blood oozed out of his palms. He was made to drag the country oil expeller (sekku) round and round in the open air to crush seeds for oil instead of bullocks or any other draught animal. And the jailors even flogged Chidambaram when he was found to be 'slow' in his work! Without any demur he did all that for the sake of the Motherland.

Courtesy: Newscribe, Chennai

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- "Sakthi Myndan" S.G.Rajan's training Programmes were conducted on 01/09, 08/09, 15/09 and 22/09/2002. The training covering various aspects of self-development like communication, inter personal skills, goal setting, and achievement motivation, with stimulating exercises, games and visual-aids was found interesting and useful by our staff members. We are sure that the staff motivation and quality of performance will improve through such periodic inputs.
- Mr. A.Ganesh Kumar, our teacher was deputed for a special Training Programme on Mathematics Teaching at Children Garden School, Chennai on 21/09/2002.
- Mr. T.Nagaraj our teacher was deputed to participate in a special drawing workshop conducted by " Chutti Vikatan" – a popular Tamil Children's Magazine On 28/09/2002.

CHEER THEM!

- On 02/09/2002 our children participated in the drawing competition conducted by Vivekananda Vidyalaya Kala Ashram, Sivan Voil Village near our service centre.
- Our boys sub-junior team won the third place in the 4 X 100 Mtrs relay race at the Athletic Sports Meet at Tiruvallur District conducted at Poonamalle on 04/09/2002.

BOOK REVIEW MEETS

16/09/2002 : Mr. T.Nagaraj on
I AM OKAY : YOU ARE OKAY
By THOMAS. A.Harris, M.D

28/09/2002 : Ms. S.Kavitha on
"ARIVIYAL ATHISAYAM"
(WONDERS OF SCIENCE)
BY – MR.SOLAIAPPAN

HEALTH CARE

Apart from the usual visit of Dr. Susila Sambamurthy, Paediatrician, Dr. Mahalakshmi visited our centre on 12/09/2002 and conducted a thorough dental check up for our children. Cases requiring treatment were identified. The children are receiving treatment at the Doctor's clinic at Chennai.

GALA DAY FOR GRAND MAS

Monday Charity Club- an organisation wedded to elder-care running Vishranthi Old Age Home for women celebrated their silver Jubilee on 21/09/2002. 12 grandmas from our Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Old Age Home participated in the day long fun and frolic events. They were given nice memorable gifts! They were all toothless smiles when they returned home!

AS WE SOW SO WE REAP

Our inmates are all exuberant this September:

The paddy crops they planted have yielded results and there was a good harvest!

Yes, we are slowly and steadily progressing towards our goal of self-sufficiency!

"The age of nations is past.

The task before us,

If we would not perish

Is to put off our ancient prejudices

And build the earth"

- Teilhard De Chardin

There is only one nation,

The nation of humanity;

There is only one religion;

Religion of love;

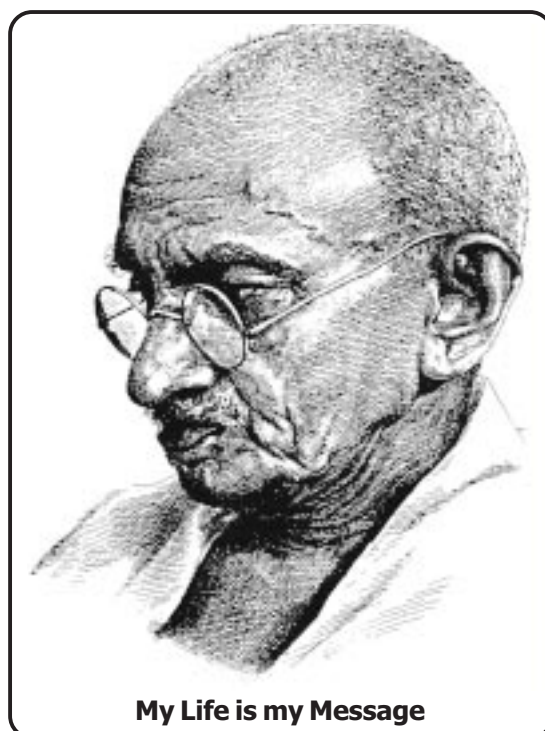
There is only one language,

Language of Heart

There is only one God ,

And He is Omnipresent

Sri Sathya Sai Baba



My Life is my Message

INDIAN NATIONALISM

The term 'Indian Nationalism' means love and devotion to our sacred Motherland of India, and pride in her culture and traditions. It is a sentiment that we endeavour to foster through our various activities at Sevalaya. The children under our care at the home run by us, and at the Mahakavi Bharathi High School, are specially taught about the glory of our Motherland. In this activity we get our inspiration and guidance from the writings of Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Mahakavi Subrahmanya Bharathi.

All the three great preceptors were born at a time in history when our nation was in a state of miserable slavery under foreign rule. The entire Indian society was suffering from a sense of defeat and despondency. The once proud and prosperous peasants in our villages had been devastated by repeated wars and famines, and crushed under economic burdens of unemployment and high taxes. The new intelligentsia of English-educated Indians were indifferent to the ancient wisdom of our land, and looking to the West for progressive ideas.

Swami Vivekananda, the eldest among our three preceptors, was born in the peak of that era in the year 1863. Very early in his life when he was still in high school, Swamiji started studying the writings of Western thinkers, and soon became a keen student of Western philosophers like Hume, Bentham, Spencer, Kant and Schopenhauer. The ideas of atheism and agnosticism, and the view that God is unknown and unknowable to the human mind, as expounded by these thinkers, appealed to him. Fortunately he soon came under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The Great Master opened the mind of the young man to the wisdom of the ancient rishis of our land. " *If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the Punya Bhumi*" wrote Swami Vivekananda soon after, " *the land where humanity has attained its highest*

towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality— it is India". Swamiji's words came as a tonic to the depressed and demoralized Indians, and the spirit of Indian Nationalism was again roused.

Swamiji made two predictions about India. "*India will be free within the next fifty years under unforeseeable circumstances*", he said prophetically in 1897; and the prophesy has, of course, come true. His other prediction was that India would one day rise to great heights of prosperity and power, and that *Advaita* philosophy of our *Vedanta* would one day be the religion of all thinking humanity. This prediction will also, no doubt, come true one day.

The man who made the first of Swamiji Vivekananda's predictions come true, and inspired his countrymen to win freedom by the use of truth and non-violence as weapons, got his own inspiration from Swamiji. "*I have gone through his (Swami Vivekananda's) works thoroughly*" wrote Mahatma Gandhi, "*and after having gone through them, the love I had for my country became thousand-fold*". Such is the power of Swamiji's writings!

A great poet who put Swamiji's sentiments of Indian Nationalism in hauntingly beautiful songs was Mahakavi Subrahmanya Bharathi.

"The greatest nation on earth is our Bharata"

sang the Mahakavi in words that recall Swamiji's sentiments on the 'Punya Bhumi'

" In spiritual knowledge, in beauty, in character and in charity

In song, in lyric and in divine music of nectar-like quality

The greatest nation on earth is our Bharata"

Such indeed is our land we love and revere.

For Free Circulation :

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