



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

## Sevaiyaya's News Letter

September - 2004

Dear Friends,

Recently I got an opportunity to visit some of the temples in both south and western parts of India. There are many rich temples and many poor temples. Some of the temples have gold and silver glittering everywhere. The marble floors and colourful walls and towers are no doubt very attractive to the eyes. I also heard some of the devotees talk about the golden chariot and diamond ornaments of the Gods and Goddesses. In the middle of all this, Lord Muruga was standing, in his 'palaniandi' dress! There are many new temples, which have become popular due to various reasons. It is said that you can judge one by the company he or she keeps. Similarly, we can 'judge' the God, based on the VIP devotees he is able to attract!

I also happen to visit some of the poorer temples. When the priest told me that two 'alwars' have visited that temple many centuries ago, it appeared as if I was the next visitor after those 'alwars'! Such was the condition of the temple. There were no funds even for basic things in such temples. There are old stone carvings in many temples, which indicate the kings who constructed these temples, also donated vast property to these temples, so that maintenance is not a problem. Today even God many not know who is enjoying these properties.

Why do we have rich Gods and poor Gods? Some of the village temples are always closed, as there is no priest to attend and also there are no visitors! So we also have 'orphan' Gods! Some of the village temples see hectic activity during the annual festival. The villagers behave

in such a way that they have to spend all the money the temple has, in those two or three days. Why don't they save some money from the festival collections and use it for regular maintenance during the course of the year?

I don't understand why all the money available from public for contribution to temples should go for selected few temples only. On the other hand, when many of the old temples don't get enough money for maintenance, why should people construct more and more new temples? I have seen in villages, that there is a collection drive when they decide to construct a new temple, but just after the temple is constructed, no one bothers about that temple!

My understanding is temples should take us closer to spirituality and away from material desires. Most of the current day famous temples will not be able to serve this purpose, at least for people like me. If some of us decide to contribute to smaller unknown, but old temples (which are large in number), rather than to the famous few temples, we may be able to solve the inequality among Gods! Also the glitter of too much gold and silver will fade away, and there may be a possibility to real spiritual thinking, when people visit temples.

Lord Muruga wanted only one mango, not a golden 'langot'.

Thanks & Regards  
Murali



### Study Circle Meetings

Date : 07/08/2004  
 Book : Education for the Future  
 Author : Mr. Na. Arthanari  
 Speaker : A.Annamalai  
 Venue : Service Centre

Date : 21/08/2004  
 Book : Silappathikaram  
 Author : Ilangovadigal  
 Speaker : B.Nirmala  
 Venue : Service Centre

Date : 27/08/2004  
 Book : Dr.S.Radhakrishnan, the  
 Philosopher  
 Author : Mr.T.M.Soundararajan  
 Speaker : S.Saravana Babu  
 Venue : Administrative Office

### School Club Meetings

The English Club meeting was held on 04/08/2004. Students at first enacted common jokes in English. The initial hesitation gave way to enthusiasm and the students acted without any inhibition. The groups then played a word game. The confidence level of the students rose high and these activities are expected to improve their conversational skills in English.

On 08/08/2004 Ms. Thara, a volunteer, spoke to the members of the Science Club about Electronics and Daily Life.

### Leadership Training

On 08/08/2004 Ms. Lakshmi Murali of Tata Consultancy Services addressed the unit leaders of Sevalaya and spoke to them on the concepts of performance



development, Continuous improvement and constant evaluation of things happening all over the world and making suitable alterations. There was a slide show on award winners in USA for excellence in their respective fields. She ended the presentation with a quote of Gandhiji on performing actions without worrying about results. The whole session was very interesting and inspiring.

### Spreading the message of our Mentors...

On 03/08/2004 Ms. S. Kavitha spoke to the students of Govt. Middle School, Magaral about Swami Vivekananda.

On 04/08/2004 T. Nagaraj spoke to the students of Middle school at Thamaraiykkam on "Bharathiyar and Children."

On 06/08/2004 Mr. T. Nagaraj spoke to the students of Higher Secondary School at Pandeswaram on "Bharathiyar and Society."

### External Training attended by our staff...

Mr. R. Vijayaraghavan attended the one-day workshop for teachers organized by Bharathiyar Evening School at Thiruvanniyur. Prof. Panneer Selvam of Nandanam Men's Arts College provided training on the eight techniques of teaching slow learners and children with learning difficulties.

Mr. T.R.Sarathy attended a meeting organized by the Tamilnadu Public Education Committee on 28/08/2004. They discussed about "Uniform Education For All"

### Science Exhibition

The annual 3 day Science Exhibition was conducted from 11/08/2004 to 13/08/2004. Mr. Sethu Kumanan, Correspondent of Sethu Bhaskara Higher secondary School at Ambattur, inaugurated the exhibition on





11/08/2004. The unique feature of this year exhibition is that an opportunity was given to the nearby Government Schools to participate and put up their stalls. Govt Higher Secondary School Thiruniravur and Govt Higher Secondary School Velliyur participated in the exhibition. The children had made models of the basic scientific principles they are learning at school and explained the concepts with confidence and enthusiasm. The high light of the exhibition was a puppet - show "Save the Earth" conceived and done by the students themselves on the various factors polluting air and water and a fervent appeal by Mother Earth to save her, creating awareness among the rural people. Mr. Chindai.K.Jayaraman, Principal and Correspondent of Angel Matriculation Higher Secondary School, was the Chief Guest for the valedictory function on 13/08/2004. Many schools in Thiruvallur District and public from the nearby villages visited the exhibition, the quality of which was at par with similar Exhibitions organized by their counterparts in city schools.

#### **Independence day Celebrations**

On 15/08/2004 Independence Day was celebrated with much gaiety. As in the past years members of Y's Men Club of Anna Nagar West celebrated Independence Day at Sevalaya campus with the inmates. The National Flag was hoisted by Ysm. K.K.Janardhanan , Lt. Regional Secretary of Y's Men International. Ysm. Paul S. Rajan President of Y's Men Club of Anna Nagar West and Ms. Alice Paul, President, Y's Mennettes Club were among the Chief Guests. The children presented a colourful cultural Programme for ½ an hour.

#### **On a winning streak...**

Ms. Yamuna Rani and Ms. U.Radha participated in inter - Home Quiz competition conducted by Navabharatham Students Welfare Trust on 15/08/2004 and bagged the second prize.

Our students participated in an oratorical competition conducted on Shri.N.Krishnaswamy memorial day and Ms.Thenmozhi, won a consolation prize, on 25/08/2004. The topic was "Let us dedicate ourselves and create a new world".

#### **Temple Visits**

The children were taken to temple at Pakkam Village on 06/08/2004.



Mr. Srinivasan of Balaji Nagar, Thiruniravur, took 18 inmates of our Old Age Home to Mangadu Kamakshi Amman temple on 06/08/2004. They had a good dharshan of the Goddess.

#### **Training in the kitchen ...**

Our children tried their hands in the kitchen. They cooked the dinner on 08/08/2004 and it was indeed a good effort.

#### **A dream coming true**

Sevalaya's dream of constructing a four-floor school building is coming true now. We already have 3 floors in one wing and two in the other wing. Chennai Willingdon Corporate Foundation has kindly come forward to sponsor the construction of the remaining part of the school building. A formal prayer to start this construction was held on 27/08/2004.

#### **We dare to dream...**

It has been our dream to prepare our students to enter professional institutions like Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). We have taken a small but sure first step towards realizing it. Mr. Aneez Ahmed, Head of the Physics Department of New College, Chennai, visited our campus on 28/08/2004. He gave an introductory lecture to the students of Classes X and XII about preparation for Entrance Examination for IIT. He has agreed to conduct a preliminary test to assess the students, select the probable candidates for the Entrance Examination and conduct classes for them once a week. He has offered his services voluntarily. It is a great morale booster to us.

#### **NCC & NSS Camps...**

Members of the NCC cadets of New College, Chennai had a one-day camp on 28/08/2004. They cleaned up the Old Age Home Campus.

Members of NSS wing of Murugappa Polytechnic had a one-day camp on 28/08/2004. They presented various cultural programs and conducted various competitions for the children. Prizes were distributed to the winners.

#### **We participated...**

Managing Trustee Mr. V.Muralidharan and Trustee, Mr. K. Mohan were the Chief Guests for the Onam celebrations at the Soka Ikeda College of Arts and Science for women on 28/08/2004.

## THE CHENNAI CONNECTION.

The sprawling metropolis of Chennai has its origin 365 years ago. Francis Day, said to be the founder of Madras signed a grant in the year 1639, with the rulers of the region to hand over to the Britishers the village of Madrasipatnam for two years. A version says that Chennappa Naicker appointed by the Raja of Chandragiri signed this accord. Construction of St.George Fort started on March 1, 1640 and it took 14 years to complete the building. In 1680s and 1690s suburban villages of Egmore, Purasawalkam and Thondiarpet were acquired. The Britishers acquired Triplicane in 1672 for an annual rent of fifty Pagodas. This in brief, is the Tale of The City. This year is declared as the Heritage Year of Chennai. Let us see how our great leaders are connected with it.

The First Civil Disobedience Movement in India was conceived by Gandhiji during his stay at No.2, Cathedral Road, house owned by Mr.Kasthuri Ranga Iyengar and occupied by Rajaji. It was in this house that it flashed to him that people all over the country should suspend business, stay in-doors, fast and pray for a whole day to register their protest against the draconian Rowlatt Act.. The day fixed was April 6, 1919. That is the origin of Hartal. (Of which various versions are prevalent this day!). It was here during this sojourn, the famous meeting of Bharathiar with Gandhiji took place. The last visit of Gandhiji to this city was in 1946, when he laid the foundation Stone for Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya and addressed the Silver Jubilee function of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha.

The connection of Swami Vivekananda with this city is well known. He came into contact in Chennai with several young men who had

the best of modern education and were longing to serve the nation. Worthy of special mention among them is Alasingha Perumal. The very seed of a thought in Swami Vivekananda of visiting Chicago was first communicated to Alasingha and his friends only. The Madras friends collected money for this purpose from the people of the city. On his triumphant return from America, Swami was accorded a Hero's welcome at Madras. He stayed during this period at Castle Kernan, "a beautiful, splendid building on the Beach." The Building was later known as Ice House and is now re-christened Vivekanandar Illam.

Mr.G.Subramania Iyer made Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiar Sub-Editor of Swadesamitran a journal published from Madras. Here Bharathiyar honed his skills in prose writing and translation. He edited from Madras journals like India and Chakravarthini. Political cartoons in India for the first time appeared in "India," the journal edited by Bharathiyar. Bharathiyar resided in a small house at Veeraraghavan Street, Triplicane as a joint tenant. Later he shifted to the house in T.P.Koil Street, which now houses his memorial. It has been claimed by at-least one source that the first bon- fire of Videshi clothes were made at Chennai in the presence of Bipin Chandra Paul who visited Madras at the behest of Bharathiyar.

Any heritage tour organized around Chennai will not be complete without a visit to: Vivekananda Illam, Bharathiar Illam, Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya, Dakshina Bharath Hindi Prachar Sabha and at least a look at Hotel Chola (former # 2, Cathedral Road), which was sanctified by the feet of these great souls.

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