

SEVA TIMES

THE ART OF LIVING INTERNATIONAL CENTER, BENGALURU



Looking Towards a
Brave New World

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In Times of Lockdown,
“Annadhata Sukhi Bhava”

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MAY 2020

The Art of Living Continues to ‘Stand with Humanity’ in Lockdown

As India continued to be under lockdown through the whole month of April due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the worst hit were the daily wage earners and farmers whose households are run on wages earned every day. On March 22, 2020, The Art of Living along with its sister concern, International Association for Human Values (IAHV), launched a nation-wide initiative ‘Stand with Humanity’ to reach out to the weaker sections of society, especially the daily wage earners. The project has so far supplied relief material including ration and essential items worth more than 25 crores across India.

Andhra Pradesh



A 10-member Art of Living team in Nandikoktur, Kurnool District, led by Linganna Goud, has been distributing 140 meals per day since March 29, 2020, to fruit and vegetable sellers, beggars, migrant workers, and homeless people. Every day, 5 team members cook food by 7.30 a.m. and by 9 a.m. the other members of the team, with the help of the Police and local authorities, distribute the food packets.



Narayanarajupeta (N.R. Peta), a remote, difficult to access village in Visakhapatnam.

Assam

Diphu Ashram in the North East has reached out to 1427 people, mostly farm laborers. Almost 400 families came to the ashram seeking help and they were provided with 3.65 tons of rice. In Dibrugarh tiffin packages are being delivered to the local police staff every morning at 10.a.m. Bibha Baruah, The Art of Living faculty, with the help of local women has made 2000 masks for distribution. Nearly 2000 ration kits have been distributed in Guwahati, Badarpur, and Duliajan.



Bihar

Cooked meals are being provided to around 75 families in Sri Krishna Puri, Hartali More, Boring Road Chouraha, High Court Road, and Income Tax Golamber in Patna. 1000 ration kits were distributed in Buxar. 300 food packets and 3500 face masks were distributed among the needy in Muzzafarpur. Fruits were distributed amongst police officials at Samastipur on April 6.

Chhattisgarh

Ration kits have been supplied to nearly 350 families in Raipur, Ambikapur, and Bilaspur. The team in Ambikapur has distributed 5000 masks among milkmen, vegetable vendors, sanitary workers, and others in essential services. They are also planning to provide another 3000 masks soon.



Darjeeling



Ration kits were distributed to 52 families in Pokhriabong area by The Art of Living Darjeeling Chapter.

Delhi

In Delhi, volunteers have set up kitchens to feed daily wage earners on a daily basis. More than 2.5 lakh food packets have been distributed in Anand Vihar, Sarita Vihar, Mehrauli, Alipur, and several other surrounding areas. Food packets have also been distributed to about 10,000 police personnel. About 10,000 families of migrant workers in North, West, and East Delhi are also being fed. Ramkali, a resident in one of the slums says, “Some people had come from Sri Sri Ravi Shankar’s organization. They have given a lot of relief material to the people in this slum... All of us are very happy. They have come not just once, but again and again. Whenever we call them for any kind of support, they come and help us out. They have provided rations and other basic necessities like pulses, rice, flour, soaps, etc. all of a good quality.”



Goa

On April 16, 2020, volunteers of Margao Center donated around 400 kg rice and 50 kgms dal to Prabhu Desai, Collector, South Goa, for distribution to the needy. More than 40 families were provided with 2 kgs rice packets and biscuits in Dongri-Mandur village. Around 450 people were provided with cooked meals at Panaji Bus Stand and Deltin office, Panaji. Rice was also distributed in remote villages in Ponda. Grains and pulses were distributed in and around Pausa on April 14 and 15.



Meditation session was conducted for the homeless, stranded persons at the shelter home located at Narayan Zantye College of Commerce, Bicholim, on April 20 by Siddhi Prabhu, The Art of Living faculty, upon a request made by Pravinjay Pandit, Mamlatdar of Bicholim Taluka.

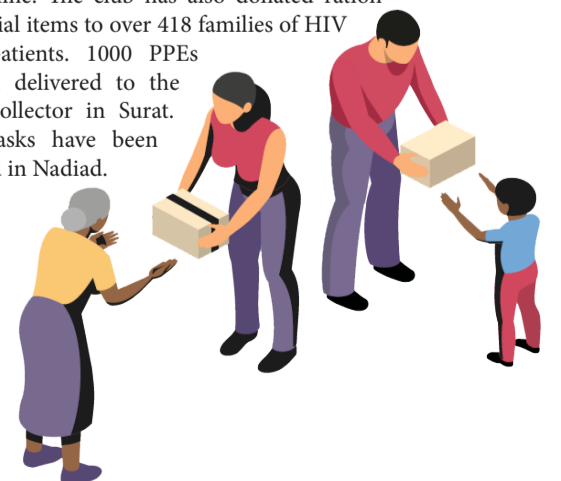
Volunteers of Porvorim centre distributed 300 masks to laborers, domestic help, and milk delivery boys on April 24 and 25. To express their gratitude volunteers served snacks and fruit juices to police personnel manning the various check posts in Porvorim.

Gujarat



Volunteers in Gujarat with the help of the Municipal Corporation have reached out to more than one lakh people in Vapi, Surendra Nagar, and Rajkot, distributing over 60 tons of ration. This has greatly helped migrant laborers who work in industries in these areas. On April 11, 2020, members of The Art of Living Women’s Club in Surat handed over 1000 re-useable full face shields to C. R.

Patil, MP, to be distributed to health care professionals working in the front line. The club has also donated ration and essential items to over 418 families of HIV positive patients. 1000 PPEs have been delivered to the District Collector in Surat. 25,000 masks have been distributed in Nadiad.



Haryana

Ration kits were distributed to over 600 families in Rewari, Kurukshetra, Faridabad, and Karnal.



Himachal Pradesh



Ration kits have been distributed to over 360 needy families in Solan, Shimla, Mandi, Nahan, and Kulu-Manali.



Jammu and Kashmir



Volunteers have reached out to 5000 families of daily wagers, beggars, drivers, sadhus, and physically disabled in Preet Nagar, Nanak Nagar, Channi Rama, Narwal, Gandhi Nagar, Channi Himmat, Digiana, Dashmesh Nagar labour clusters. Essential items were distributed to more than 600 daily wage earners and widows in Srinagar and Pulwama.

Jharkhand



In Burmu, Ormanjhi Panchayat, The Art of Living team has been distributing 10 kg of rice to card holders since April 4, 2020. Ration kits have been distributed to over 1350 families in Dhanbad, Jhumrah, Hajaribagh, and Katras.



Karnataka



In Bangalore, The Art of Living has reached out to over 5000 migrant workers with ration sufficient to feed them and their families for about 10 days and also supplied them with sanitizers. Without this help coming their way, they would have been left with no option other than to leave the city and make their way back home, increasing the risk of carrying the pandemic into the rural areas. 5500 hand sanitizers were handed over to the district administration for distribution. Critical material for COVID-19 preparedness were donated to Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital, Bengaluru. More than 325 ration kits were distributed to needy artists and technicians of the Kannada Film Industry on April 15, 2020.



Two tons of rice and five quintals of dal have been distributed among 1000 families in Kalaburagi.

Santosh Hippargi, Assistant Labor Commissioner, applauded The Art of Living and IAHV for donating cooked meals and food grains to the Labor Department which then distributed it to the needy migrant laborers and daily wage workers across Bangalore through its Hunger Helpline and Dasoha.

Kerala



Volunteers in Kasargod district of Kerala have provided 12 tons of ration to 3000 migrant families. Besides this 5000 factory workers are provided with cooked meals daily.



Madhya Pradesh



In Madhya Pradesh, 5000 families of laborers in Indore and other districts are being provided with cooked meals. Volunteers in Indore are preparing food for about 3000 laborers every day which is being distributed with the help of Indore Municipal Corporation. 2000 kg of vegetables like cauliflower, tomato, and brinjal have been distributed in Chhindwara.



Maharashtra



In Maharashtra, volunteers of The Art of Living with the help of the local authorities have so far reached out to about 2 lakh families of migrant workers and provided them with 500 tons of ration and other essential items. Lunch and dinner is being provided daily to over 2000 daily wagers in Diva, Dongri and Dharavi areas of Mumbai. Another 4800 families who are totally stranded not having ration cards, are being provided with cooked meals every day. Expressing his gratefulness for the help he is receiving, a young man from Dharavi, Mumbai, who irons clothes for a living says, "In the current situation, we had no food at home. I have four children. Due to the graciousness of Gurudev, I now have the support to feed my children."

On April 14 when hundreds of migrant workers gathered at the Bandra West railway station in Mumbai, volunteers distributed 2000 ration kits within just 30 minutes. They also created awareness among the migrant laborers, counseling them and persuading them not to rush back to their hometowns. Volunteers are also helping authorities to enforce the lockdown by vigilantly keeping a watch and reporting anyone breaking the lockdown rules.



At the request of Mumbai Municipal Corporation, volunteers distributed 1200 kits in Sion-Koliwada area which has been cordoned off after 10 positive COVID-19 cases were found.

9000 cloth masks have been donated to Thane Municipal Corporation for distribution in quarantined areas. 300 infrared thermometers and 7 swab booths have been donated to Pune Municipal Corporation.

Meghalaya

1.5 tons of ration was distributed to over 200 families in Shillong and one more ton was distributed to 250 laborers in Garo Hills.

Odisha



Sri Sri University is distributing relief in Cuttack city and adjacent village. 40 tons of rice, 30 tons Dal, 40,000 soaps, 1,50,000 biscuit packets have been received from IAHV and The Art of Living International Center, Bengaluru, for the relief operations which are being conducted with the help of Cuttack District Administration. 5000 N95 masks and PPE have been handed over to the Odisha Government. The Art of Living's Skill Development Center in Kalahandi made around 6000 face masks which were handed over to the district administration for distribution. Volunteers sanitized a village at Sankuda panchayat, Lachhipur village, Ganjam, Odisha.

Punjab



Ration sufficient for 10 days has been supplied to over 30,000 families in Faridkot, Barnala, and Mukhtasar and 18 other districts in Punjab. 50 tons of relief material have been sent to the District Administration. In Barnala, 1000 masks were distributed along with ration kits. 250 N95 Masks and 5 PPE Kits were donated by a family to the Civil Surgeon Barnala. The team in Barnala also arranged for 2000 liter of

sodium hypochlorite to sanitize the city.

Rajasthan



With the help of the District Chiefs, relief material has been distributed in 22 districts of Rajasthan. Volunteers have been preparing food at home for distribution, each volunteer cooking for about 200-300

people. Over 70 tons of cooked food and food packets have been distributed. Ration kits, face masks, and hand sanitizers have been distributed to hundreds of families.



Sikkim

The Art of Living, Sikkim Chapter, has contributed an amount of Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh only) towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund of the Government of Sikkim, to support the State Government in its efforts to fight Covid-19 pandemic.

T.N. Bhutia, The Art of Living Apex Member, handed over the cheque to the Secretary to the Chief Minister in Tashiling, Gangtok.

Tamil Nadu



The first consignment of relief material which was dispatched from The Art of Living International Center, Bengaluru, to Tamil Nadu was handed over to the officials at Central Greater Chennai Corporation at Kilpauk, Chennai. The 23 ton shipment contained 1500 kits of groceries with each kit providing a family's ration for 10 days.



Over 100,000 meals were served to daily wage workers in Coimbatore from April 1-14.

Telangana



In Telangana, with the help of GHMC and the police force, more than 4000 families, especially those of migrant workers, have been

provided with over 60 tons of ration and also products for sanitization. Overall, volunteers have distributed ration to over 25,000 people and served 25,000 cooked meals in Hyderabad, Chegunta, Kapra, Secunderabad, Bowenpally, Ameerpet, Nizampet, Patancheru, and surrounding areas. Volunteers also worked hand in hand with the local authorities in sanitizing the city area in Adilabad.

Tripura



Ration kits were distributed to more than 100 families in Dighalia and Gandhigram on April 2 and to another 4 families in Khopilong on April 5. On April 16, food was distributed to more than 180 people At Madhya Champamura, West

Champamura, and Khayerpur.

Uttar Pradesh

Volunteers in Lucknow, Kanpur, and Agra in Uttar Pradesh have supplied basic necessities to about 10,000 daily wagers and served them cooked meals for 15 days. 5000 migrant families have been provided with a 10-day supply of ration. 300 ration kits in Varanasi, 300 kits in Sant Kabir Nagar, and 170 kits in Prayagraj were handed over to the District Magistrate Shivani Singh for distribution. In Moradabad, yoga sessions were organized for migrant workers in four shelter homes.



Uttarakhand



With the help of the police force in Dehradun, ration kits were provided to around 400 families in Jakhan, Kalindi Enclave, Rajeev Colony and Kanwali Road. A total of 1,15,000 kits have been distributed in Uttarakhand – 20,000 in Dehradun and 95,000 in Rishikesh.

West Bengal



Over 2500 families have been provided with ration kits in various districts of West Bengal. Over 30,00,000 meals have been served in various districts. 5000 biscuit packets were distributed in Siliguri.



From The Vishwaguru – Sage Advice For A Corona-stricken World

By Padma Koty

Locked-in by the Lockdown, but not logged-out. That's Gurudev Sri Ravi Shankar for you. Founder of The Art of Living that arches, rainbow-like, over 156 countries, Gurudev confesses that he is busier today than ever before, managing his world-wide commitments on the Net.

Apart from this, he now also interacts daily through seminars on social media with a really diverse spectrum of interest-groups. In these days of the Corona epidemic, many eagerly seek his counsel and direction and want him to allay their fears and uncertainty. As a master of both meditation and mediation, they feel Gurudev can give them holistic solutions for the re-inventing and re-strategizing that these chaotic times demand from them as responsible leaders of business, industry and every field of endeavor. And, naturally, they are incredulously delighted to be able to speak directly to him and gain his undivided attention, courtesy Corona! He also conducts twice-daily, online, ever-new meditations that are joined in by millions of stressed people as well as a legion of de-stressed devotees across the planet.

Gurudev will be turning 64 this May 13. It will be a sober occasion, so his world-wide family, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, will be marking it as usual with different types of (permissible) seva, and with an array of special Yoga, Pranayama and meditation programs, all online, of course. Already The Art of Living teachers worldwide have been offering these well-attended programs.

Social distancing has, in a strange way, sent the sense of distance packing. His web-seminars and online interactions have allowed the attendees more space, closeness, and a perceptible sense of leisureliness that allow them to access his unassuming experience and practical wisdom.

In his social media interactions with business forums, industrialists, health workers, musicians, actors and directors, environmentalists, educationists, doctors, physicians and health workers, sportspersons and youth, he often has to repeat some aspects almost daily. But his responses to their queries are frank, nuanced and relevant to their particular situation, be it an individual, a business organization, or a professional body.

He does not hold back from plain talking. Speaking to

hotel industry captains, he tells them that the Corona epidemic is nothing short of World War III, and it will likely take more than a year for their business to restart. He suggests they use the downturn to take rest, renew themselves and refurbish their hotels. He gives tips on health and immunity, discusses ragas and body chakras with musicians, and tells a bereaved father that meditation and Sudarshan Kriya can help him heal. He counsels eminent sportspersons to take victory and loss with equanimity, and expresses that this upheaval will make youth become aware of the importance of compassion and the value of human life. "It will compel them to think beyond consumerism. They are learning there is a lot more to life than just going out," he avers.

One demographic he is deeply concerned about and to which he reverts time and again is the migrant worker. He advises treating them with compassion, cautioning that if this category of workers becomes unwilling to stay in cities, then industry and business will be badly affected. No section is let off the hook. He tells employees to "care for the tree that gives them fruit. When employees develop a concept of being a partner in the growth of the company, it will be a game-changer."

Taking care of mental health, he says, should be a post-Corona priority. Meditating as a group and then having a meal together will create a sense of harmony. He advocates learning new skills, and also invoking valor to deal with the unfamiliar situations everyone finds themselves in. And, with characteristic forthrightness, he cautions that no one is safe on the planet if any group meddles with Nature and plays with viruses.

The logged-in participants, high-achievers themselves, are obviously in plain awe of his contributions to the world; principally, of his astounding peace initiatives in Colombia and other places. And so they are humbled and grateful to have this charismatic, ever-busy, highly sought-after humanitarian and peace ambassador give them his time, his sage counsel and benign attention at a time when the world around them has taken on surreal dimensions.

Sleeping, as always, for just three hours a day, Gurudev serenely forges ahead, teaching, activating, inspiring and calming the world in such unprecedented times. That is what Vishwagurus, Gurus for the whole world, do. Or, rather, for 156 countries in it!

So Sweet – A Corona Seva Story Of Sweet Limes

By Padma Koty

Does hearing the word "Corona" make you run for cover, for a safe corner of your Netflixed home where you have quarantined yourself? But here's the deeply inspirational story of a Corona Warrior who carried the battle into "enemy territory" and gave over his entire two-ton harvest of sweet lime – known as mausambi – to Corona patients, workers and Corona Yoddhas fighting at the epidemic's battlefield.

Ganesh Pawar, a young farmer, donated his entire crop of sweet lime, worth almost 1 lakh, in Aurangabad and the surrounding areas. Concerned deeply on reading of the daily deaths due to Corona, and the heightened importance of immunity when there is no known vaccine, Ganesh and his team decided to distribute this fruit, loaded with immunity-boosting Vitamin C, to the patients in hospitals and to daily wage workers. He was assisted by The Art of Living faculty Akshay Damkondwar, Akshay Aggarwal, and Prabhanjan Mahatole. They distributed 500 kgs. of the fruit at the Ghati Hospital, 500 kgs. to daily wage workers, three hundred dozen at a hospital in Kanchanwadi and a hundred and fifty dozen in the Jawahar Colony area and to the local police as well.

After his father was hospitalized for six months and the family had spent ten lakhs on the treatment, Ganesh had to leave his high-paying job as a Mechanical Engineer and return to his village to look after his father, whose immunity had been impaired by a

vitamin deficiency disease. That was when he took a decision to invest in chemical-free farming and bring about a revolution in agriculture.

Today he grows 25 varieties of vegetables and a few varieties of fruits on his 30-acre farm. He has formed a popular group with 20 farmers in the village of Adgaon which produces organic vegetables and fruits on 40-45 acres of land. Ganesh has plans to send this produce to metros and later export fruit to Europe.

Being a large-hearted person, Ganesh shares not just the fruit from his farm, but also the credit for the fruits of his success. He credits his Art of Living Teacher Akshay Aggarwal with mentoring him, helping him establish markets and guiding him in registering a company called "Kisan Fresh" to assist in selling directly to consumers. Ganesh also credits The Art of Living Organic Farming workshop where he learned to use enzymes and natural fertilizers like Jeevamrut and Ghanajeevamrut. Says Akshay, "The Art of Living is helping youth all over India to take up farming as a revenue-generation model." This has helped young farmers like Ganesh to make their own fertilizers and pesticides, reducing overheads on these farming inputs, while the produce, being organic, fetches premium rates.

In a world where every section of society has been severely affected by the Corona epidemic, Ganesh has shown that the way forward is not by caring alone, but by sharing- with those who most need what you have to share.

The Art of Living Distributes Ration to Sex Workers in Sonagachi

Sex workers, like other daily wage earners, are human too and like any of us feel hunger and thirst. Volunteers of Udaan, a project of The Art of Living floated for the welfare of sex workers in Sonagachi, have reached out to the community with essentials amid COVID-19 pandemic.

Sonagachi, West Bengal's largest and busiest red-light area, is home to 8000 sex workers who hail from various parts of India. The COVID-19 pandemic has left them in the lurch. There are rents to be paid, children to be looked after, but in these times there is no guarantee that they will begin to earn any time soon.

Volunteers have so far reached out to 200 sex workers and plan to reach out to another 300 very soon. They have provided them with ration kits each containing

4 kg rice, 2 kg potato, 2 kg wheat flour, 500 gm lentils and 500 gm oil. Apart from distributing essential items, volunteers are also making them aware of precautions to be taken in these times of the pandemic like social distancing, proper washing of hands, wearing masks, etc. Project Udaan will continue to help them until they are able to get back on their feet.



Learning from the EXPERTS

Looking Towards a Brave New World



Biprashish Roy

Biprashish Roy is a senior Executive Search professional and is currently positioned as a Principal at Pedersen & Partners based in Mumbai. He has extensive work experience in the Executive Recruitment industry; wherein he gained diverse industry exposure for over more than 20 years across Engineering, Chemicals, Telecom, Energy, Infrastructure, Logistics, Consumer, Pharma and Life Science sectors. He specialises in Leadership Level Searches across functions and verticals and is a trusted advisor to organisations in building their Leadership Team. An avid singer and blogger, he has also been a faculty with The Art of Living for more than 17 years.

Dr Hampi Chakrabarti in conversation with Biprashish Roy, Principal at Pederson & Partners

■ Post the COVID-19 lockdown, do we have a reason to fear for the job sector?

It is a reality; let's face it. This is a scenario which is unprecedented. In the past, there have been partial breakdowns or lockdowns across cities and states, but never ever a global lockdown – the magnitude of this scenario is simply mindboggling. One of the biggest fallout of this situation is the uncertainty that we do not know what is going to happen – how long will this last! There are some obvious knee-jerk reactions, which has led to large number of job losses across various sectors, while others are devising a well thought through plan keeping in mind a long economic downturn ahead – in both cases however, job losses and significant pay cuts are imminent. People will have to bear with a reality that incomes are going to get marginalised.

■ What kind of changes do you see coming up in the job sector in the next couple of years?

One of the biggest changes that we are already seeing is the shift to the 'work from home' environment. Right now, because it is a compulsion people are doing it, but over a period of time they will get accustomed to this change and will also be reaping benefits of it. Hence the trends point out to the fact that WFH will become more of a reality ahead. It will save an organisation a lot of their costs on infrastructure, usage of electricity, office supplies, inventories etc. Reduced travel will lead to less pollution, traffic congestion and pressures of commuting, while at the same time, with a slightly better planning people may become more productive and hence useful. This again will lead to people becoming more tech savvy and start using digital platforms, Internet, Artificial Intelligence, robotics etc., aligning with the changing world. Connectivity, efficiency, speed and quick turnaround etc will become the buzz words in the job world. This will also lead to more jobs for women – they can utilise the new norm of WFH to the hilt and become more employable. Job rotation in shifts will be more, people will be more e-connected and organisations will emerge with a flatter structure.

The flip side or fall out of this could be more stress, lower margins of business, lost in the maze of constant change, e-connect leading to moving away from the human touch, etc.

■ Is it advisable for people to switch jobs now, or will new jobs be available for people who will lose their jobs?

First of all, people should look at it a little differently and not panic. From what I gather, for most of the organisations, not hiring, rather survival is on top of their agenda for at least the next six months to one year. Therefore, creating new jobs or hiring is something that will be on the back burner. For example, if they normally hire 100 employees in a year, now they will hire about 10 maybe, that too on need basis. My advice is that this may not be the best time to change jobs. If you try to do that, it might be more challenging than remaining in the same place that you are currently working in. Stay with your current job, even if there are heavy pay cuts announced – you need to survive this period with minimum damage possible. If you have lost a job because of the current scenario, then of course you will have to look at your options, which obviously is going to be challenging. It will then depend a lot on which sector you belong to and what kind of work you do.

■ Can people look into entrepreneurship and micro entrepreneurship right now?

Entrepreneurs in my opinion are people who are fighters and people who are optimistic and also resilient. However, for them to start something new now, they will need funds; it will depend on how deep their pockets are. What I foresee is that entrepreneurs will come, but they will come in very select domains. They will need a very clear strategy and manageable funds, and plan for the expenditure and revenue source which can sustain them for a long period of time. For that if they need to step back and plan again, they should do so. They need to become very agile and tight in terms of their spending and avoid flaunting, which was a possibility sometime back, today it is not. Austerity measures will be key to growth and sustaining.

■ What can the world learn right now from The Art of Living's HR model based on the spirit of seva?

A lot. The Art of Living gives a very different and at the same time very dynamic dimension to the world. Seva is something you do voluntarily to give back to any individual, a community, or the world at large, expecting at least no commercial returns. Mostly when people come to do seva, they don't even know what that particular job will be. They come prepared to be available for any task at hand, and take on the challenge of the unknown. Which means they are more adaptable, nimble, and more on the learning curve. This helps them in learning new trades and become a more competent individual. When the world is stressed with uncertainty, they know how to go deeper inside and strengthen themselves, physically and mentally through meditation and the daily practices, and spiritually more connected to the divine. With this combination, they are stronger as individuals and more professional who are able to work in a chaotic environment and yet work for cosmic peace. Their ability in inventing new tools and means of reaching out, solving crises makes them better leaders and entrepreneurs. They are creating a platform for more entrepreneurs who with a calm state of mind will be able to come out with newer ways of employment, rethink business feasibility measures and make one more employable. Post this pandemic when an organisation starts hiring, they will be looking at this set of people who are better equipped to handle pressure. Also, in the spirit of seva you move from the demands which are wanted to the needs which are imminent, making you happy within the means that are available and appreciate what the world and nature is providing. Thus, we will be able to serve the world better.

■ What are the job sectors most affected in this global Covid-19 situation and how can The Art of Living help there?

The sectors worst affected in this scenario are travel, tourism, hospitality, services, auto and auto components, infrastructure projects and capital goods – along with the above is the supply chain and Logistics sector. These sectors have a large section of contract labour and daily wage employees, who are probably at the bottom of the pyramid in earnings, but are a very crucial cog in the whole set up. The Art of Living, especially YLTP, can mobilise these people, through their various proprietary training and development programs, which will make these people more employable and grounded in knowledge. This will make them more productive and hence they will be in demand in times to come.

■ What is the one thing we should focus on right now?

While we should be able to dream for a beautiful future ahead, we should also be able to be firmly planted in reality. If people don't exist, the economy is of no use. But if we exist and survive this pandemic today, we can bring back the economy to its normal level by working harder. Therefore, we need to strengthen ourselves, acquire new skills, polish our knowledge, spend time reflecting and fostering the belief that 'we can' – self-belief is going to be the key to emerge successful ahead. Like everything else, this time will also pass by. But once it passes by, you should be better prepared to take on this world, you should be better professionals and ambassadors of humanity. That is what we should focus on.

"Like everything has come and gone, this will also pass by. But once it passes by, you should be better prepared to take on this world"

In Times of Lockdown, “Annadhata Sukhi Bhava”

By Padma Koty

Even in normal times, the kitchen at The Art of Living International Center at Bengaluru is a beehive of activity for the greater part of the day. From early in the morning to late at night, activities are aplenty. Groceries are either received and inventoried or brought out of storage, vegetables are received, or sorted, washed and chopped, food is cooked in huge vessels and stirred by heavy ladles that many of us would be unable to lift, and, of course, there are hundreds of diners at mealtimes. Not to forget the effort to swab and clean everything till it sparkles.

But, since the lockdown was announced in the last week of March, there is a lot more going on here. The Art of Living Kitchen's latest mission is to supply cooked food, twice a day, to the hundreds of stranded persons of all backgrounds around the Ashram.

On the 22nd of March, Gurudev Sri Si Ravi Shankar had reviewed the lockdown situation and announced that The Art of Living would supply food to the thousands of stranded migrant workers across India. Gurudev rightly credited the timely action of scores of our volunteers in Mumbai with arresting the movement of migrant workers by supplying food to them.

In the Bengaluru Ashram too, this initiative was taken up with complete dedication. Saurabh Pandey, who heads the Kitchen Department, shares that the request to his Department to start preparing cooked food for the lockdown-affected persons came from the Ashram Secretariat and the initiative was begun from 31st March, 2020.

Since lunch as well as dinner has to be prepared for 27,100 people, the cooking process for breakfast begins at 7.30 a.m., and for dinner, at 12.30 p.m. Similarly, the packing of the food for distribution is completed by 10.45 a.m. and 5 p.m. respectively, with 150 sevaks assisting in the time-bound work. The packed food is then picked up by Government vehicles and taken for distribution to the laborers, nearby villages and so on. Before all this, the sevaks first prepare breakfast and lunch for the regular diners at the Ashram.

Saurabh shares that procuring such large quantities of provisions and vegetables has not been a challenge as the supply chain of essential services has been well-maintained. The daily consumption of rice that is cooked for distribution is 3.5 tons. On alternate days, 20,000 rotis are also prepared and sent. Vegetables are sourced from the Ashram's Agriculture



Department, and several of the groceries from Sri Sri Tattva. He avers, “The entire Kitchen Team works with a cooperative spirit and a Yes-mind.” So managing resources like time, finances, infrastructure and sevaks for the sudden increase in responsibilities and in output has never been a challenge. And then, he adds, there is divine grace without which nothing is possible.

The people receiving the food are very happy. Devamma, a daily wagger says, “Guruji has been providing us with delicious meals. He has come to our help. We are really grateful.”

The entire team involved in all this work finds it gratifying that in this extended lockdown period, when thousands are facing challenging circumstances, they are working to reach fresh, hygienic cooked food to them who would otherwise have no access to food. And, for these Annadatas, ending their shift at midnight is a taken-for-granted part of the day's work!

COVID Warriors

Manisha Mehta, Mumbai

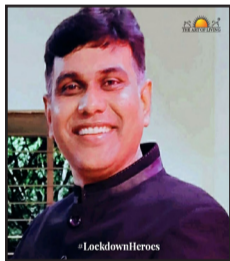
“Worried and anxious faces looked at me through half-closed doors and windows as I trotted along the narrow lanes of Shimlanagar, a South Mumbai slum. Two cases of COVID-19 were recently detected there. The slum of 1,500 families was just about to get completely locked down.. Along with five BMC (Bombay Municipal Corporation) workers, I went there to distribute ration kits. Many slum dwellers shouted words of gratitude through the eerie street silence. I wanted to tell them that everything was going to be fine. But there was hardly any time. All we could do was drop the kits at their doors. My family was, naturally, angry for going into an infected area. But I told them that somebody had to go. This was necessary.” Manisha with the help of BMC workers has distributed 950 ration kits in slums of South Mumbai



Prabhanjan, Aurangabad

“Health workers at the local government hospital were on strike. A doctor called me to check if we (The Art of Living) could help since we had worked on a service initiative with them in the past. The situation was grim: there were corona-infected patients in the hospital and there were not enough masks and sanitizers. Shops were closed and health workers needed N95 masks for their safety. I got in touch with a volunteer who supplies pharmaceutical equipment. He arranged for 100 masks and the Aurangabad chapter of The Art of Living provided 25 liters of sanitizer to the hospital. Farmers associated with Sri Sri Natural Farming in Aurangabad provided 2 tons of sweet limes for the patients and those quarantined at the hospital.

Likewise, everyone from the community has been helping in their unique way. I am in the business of pressure pumps. Among other things, we build disinfectant units for industries. China has been using such units to battle the pandemic. After a bit of research, I found an economical way of making them - cutting costs by 80%. We've donated five sanitizing tunnels for vehicles and 12 for pedestrians in Aurangabad, Ahmednagar, and Jalna. Considering the nature of this pandemic, they will be useful even after the lockdown is over.”



Gaurav Verma and his team, Delhi

“Three days after the lockdown was announced, thousands of migrant workers thronged Delhi's Anand Vihar bus terminus in panic. However, everything was closed including the bus services. We hurried to the bus terminus in masks and distributed snacks and masks to the workers. We knew the bus stop could become a hotbed of infection with so many people coming together. So, distributing masks was critical.

We assured them that they will be provided with food and ration during the lockdown. Some of them paid heed to our requests to stay, while others ventured back to their hometowns on foot.

Since then, we have been serving cooked food to migrant workers and others in need in Central Delhi, North Delhi, and East Delhi. Community leaders have approached us for help on Twitter and we have been prompt in reaching supplies to them.”

During the lockdown, the Delhi team of volunteers has distributed ration kits to more than 2.13 lakh migrant laborers, slum dwellers, and villagers in and around Delhi-NCR. The team has been serving 7,000 to 10,000 people with cooked food daily during the lockdown period



Reshma, Dharavi, Mumbai

“50 positive cases,” my father said as I was about to go out into those very streets. With gloves and masks in my left hand and a packet of ration kits and food parcels in another, I assured him, “I'll be safe, papa.” My father looked tensed. With a smile, I said with more confidence, “Nothing will happen.” Outside, I distributed gloves and masks to other volunteers who were ready to reach out to people in need.

During our time working in and around Dharavi, we came across factory workers with no stoves at home, cancer patients living under the bridge, and domestic helpers with no savings. We've distributed cooked food and ration kits to them. On many occasions, we've been stopped by the police for being out on the streets. They have always let us pass after we tell them why we were there. Once, somebody took us to a home of a handicapped elderly who was surviving on plain rice and salt. When we went there with the ration kit, he said with tears in his eyes, “God has come to help me.” The cases in Dharavi have increased - 200 and counting. We are staying put at home. However, we continue to reach people who need help. I have kept myself just a call away.” Reshma's team of volunteers has distributed 800 packets of ration and has distributed 2,000 parcels of cooked food every day for 2 weeks in and around Dharavi before cases in the slum settlement rose.



How to Get Over Bad Habits?

Words of Wisdom



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Our life is governed mostly by our subconscious mind and habit is something that is ingrained in our subconscious mind. Not all habits are wrong. For example, brushing your teeth every day – this is a habit. If you don't brush your teeth, you don't feel comfortable and it should be that way. Right? Taking bath is a habit. You take shower every day and if you don't take a shower, you don't feel good. Similarly, people having coffee. If they don't have coffee, they get a headache. Whether coffee is good or not is up to an individual and their doctors. Certain habits give you pain which are not good for you or your body or your mind or your spirit. Like for example, people who are addicted to alcohol or cigarette for example. Knowing well that smoking is injurious to health, they still do it, why? Habit promises joy but does not really deliver it to you. If you ask people who are smoking, “Are you really ecstatic smoking?” They say “No.” Usually they say no. But they can't leave it. If they leave it, it is painful. So, this habit does not give you any great joy and you know it is not good for you, for your health, but you can't leave it. Now what do you do in this condition? How to get over this habit? This is a big question. The whole world is grappling with this problem. Why?

I would say there are three ways to tackle your habits.

1. If you promise to someone who you love very much. Suppose you promise your daughter or your wife or your mother – someone very dear to you and you promise them, “No, I will not touch this. I will not smoke.” I will tell you, you will follow through that.
2. The second way is fear. When your doctor says, “One more puff, that's it. Your lungs are going to be irreparable, your lungs will collapse. You cannot touch even one single cigarette.” Then, out of fear, you can get over that habit.
3. Third is greed. Suppose someone tells you, “if you don't smoke for one whole month, I am going to give you a million rupees.” Then you will make sure it is not just 30 days, it is 32 days – counting should not go wrong! So the greed in you, the greed to get that money, something higher than that, will help you to let go of those habits.

So, three things. Love, fear, and greed. Don't promise yourself to do it forever. First off all, you can't leave your habit. That makes you miserable. On top of it, inability to keep the promise makes you even more miserable. So, for that I would give you one advice. If the habit is so deep in you, if you feel you cannot get over it, I would tell you, take a limited period of time – 10 days or one month – I will not indulge in this habit. This is easier for you – one step at a time. I tell you, you will be successful.

Same with people addicted to alcohol. It has ruined many families. You're drinking alcohol so much, your liver is getting damaged, your health is badly affected and your relationships are affected and then you end up in rehab and then you get better, then you come back, and you latch on to it again. In all this, when you feel guilty about your habit, you start justifying it. I remember one gentleman said, “Alcohol has become my blood.” So if he cannot drink, he would rather die! So one should not defend or justify one's habit knowing it is no good; and no need to feel guilty about it either. So it is a fine line – not to feel guilty because whatever you feel guilty about, you find yourself getting into that spiral, going down and down and down and it leads you into depression.

In all these situations I would say, Pranayama and meditation will definitely help. Along with this, taking a vow or promising someone very dear to you, that you will abstain from it for a period of time, will definitely get you over this habit. You'll find yourself fully enthusiastic and you will talk to other people how you can master your own habits. That is freedom. Otherwise we are bound by our own habits which will make us miserable day in and day out.

So, let's do it. Let us meditate, let us do breathing, let us do Kriya, and let us promise to our near ones - never mind if you break it, start again from that time. Don't give up. I tell you, you will be successful. Many have found solace. They have been successful in getting over their habits, rather getting mastery over their habits.

Gurudev in April 2020

Upcoming event
Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
Live on
Zayka Ka Tadka!
2nd April, 7:15 PM IST
Special Q&A for mothers, followed by meditation.

Asha Bhosle and Zana Bhosle
in conversation with
Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
3rd April 7:30 PM IST

FICCI IN CONVERSATION
WITH GURUDEV
SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR
4th April, 7:00 pm IST

Sri Sri In Conversation
with Physicians and
Healthcare Workers
of America
Sun, April 5th 2020
8:45AM PST | 11:45AM EST
9.15 PM IST

PHDCCI in conversation
with Gurudev
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
Tuesday, April 7th 2020
@7PM IST

HOW TO UTILIZE THIS
LOCKDOWN PERIOD...
LEARN TO MANAGE
STRESS AND EMOTIONS
Live Interaction with
Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
YOUTH SPECIAL ON YIN FB PAGE
8TH APRIL 2020
7:10 PM

We are together in this; and together we shall come out of this. With this message Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar reached out to people from various walks of life through online platforms. He addressed queries ranging from solutions for the present crisis on humanity, spirituality, life, relationships, uncertainty of the future and a lot more. The interactions were followed by meditations guided by Gurudev, which was joined by more than a million people daily.

Business Leaders:
Gurudev addressed the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 7th April, FICCI on 4th April, Anant Goenka, Executive Director, Indian Express Group on 11th April, Ceramic industry Leaders on 27th, YPO members on 12th, leading Start-up Entrepreneurs on 13th moderated by Alok Kejriwal, The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India on 16th, Nancy Mackay, CEO, Mackay CEO Forums, Canada and Institute of Company Secretaries of India. Gurudev emphasised that the industries have to take this up as an opportunity to revise strategy and that the thinking has to be very dynamic and productive because the post-pandemic world will not be the same. Answering the dilemma of many business leaders regarding how to minimise the effect of job loss and pay cuts, Gurudev said that charity cannot happen from an empty bowl; employers and employees will have to come together to share the loss. Employers should ask employees how much pay cut they would like to incur voluntarily. Some cut is inevitable at this time. Gurudev, however re-emphasised that this phase will pass and that this crisis is not unsurmountable.

Health Care workers of America:
Gurudev, in a conversation hosted by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin president, Dr. Suresh Reddy, thanked the health care workers for their services to the world in this crucial hour. Answering their questions on how to maintain positivity, Gurudev said that there are three things — one is that we have accept the situation only then we will not grumble about it. Second, we have to continue doing whatever is in our capacity and find more ways to do it, and third is to have faith that there is a bigger power. He also added that the American dollar bills have "We trust in God," written on them, now is the time when it should be written in people's hearts too.

Women Leaders against domestic violence:
A session titled 'Humanity Against Intimate Terrorism — Domestic Violence Must End' on 17th April was attended by Smriti Irani, Union Cabinet Minister for Textiles and Women & Child Development, Katherine Clark, Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus from America, Argentinian activist Fabiana Tunes, Professor Angele Atta from Ghana, Bhanumathi Narasimhan, Director, Women & Child Welfare Projects, Art of Living, Romila Sen, Trustee of IAHV and moderated by Kavita Vinod Khanna to discuss solutions towards domestic violence. Honorable Minister Smriti Irani highlighted the measures taken to address cases of violence in every district of India during the days of lockdown.

Music and Film Fraternity:
Gurudev had extensive interactions with members of the Music and Film fraternity across India wherein he was joined by Asha Bhosle, along with her granddaughter and singer Zana Bhosle, Shankar Mahadevan, Veena maestro Rajhesh Vaidhya, Kala Ramnath, Bharatnatyam dancer Shobhana, Drums Shivamani and Runaa Shivamani wherein Gurudev emphasised that music and meditation have a very deep connection; sound stretched is music, mind stretched is meditation and movement stretched is dance and love stretched is service. He also spoke to Kannada actors Srujan Lokesh and Dr. Shiva Rajkumar, Bollywood actors

Bhumi Pednekar, Lara Dutta, Kunal Kapoor and Hema Malini who was accompanied by daughter and actor Esha Deol. Gurudev spoke extensively on relationships in these times with director and producer Karan Johar. He also answered questions from Brazilian actor Juliana Paes.

Public Intellectuals:
Gurudev was joined by Ismael Cala, Cuban Journalist and author on 15th April in an online conversation where Gurudev answered queries on the impact of the global pandemic on people's minds, the environment and the uncertainty regarding livelihoods of people. Gurudev reiterated that every crisis is also an opportunity for growth and that he believed the world will come out of this more prosperous. He also cautioned that the energy, if it not channelised in some creative pursuit or in doing something productive like learning new things, will manifest as restlessness, leading to unhappiness. Thus stating that meditation is very important. People can take up writing poetry or a novel. Gurudev also interacted with Suhel Seth, one of India's leading marketing professionals and Indira Jaising a prominent jurist of the country. He brought to light that the youth of this country is very bright and will fight for equality of every section of society and also said that the sense of belongingness is deep entrenched in this country for anyone to be able to break it. Gurudev discussed environmental issues at length with renowned environmental activist, Vandana Shiva and said that for better solutions to the environment issues, people should study and implement the works done by Shiva.

Educationists:
Gurudev conducted a session on higher education post Corona on 23rd April which was attended by prominent academicians. Gurudev discussed that under the current circumstances the fear in students and parents to come on campus to study would be apparent, at least for a year, making online courses the preferred medium of study. This however, will not be very congenial for subjects like practical sciences requiring lab experience. He called for a new model that needs to emerge to balance the situation keeping all the requirements.

Chefs:
Along with throwing open the #LetMenCook challenge on Social Media wherein women were asked to let men take on the chef's hat for a day while they stay back and rest, Gurudev in conversation with the platform Zayka Ka Tadka on 2nd April, said that cooking is an art and it is necessary for everyone to learn. In this lockdown when the entire family is together, every member should share the responsibility of cooking. It is not necessary that the woman only cooks. Women should, in this time, make the children and husband learn to cook. He also answered question from Italian chef, Bela Gil on 19th April.

Sports:
In a conversation with cricketer Yuvaraj Singh on 22nd April, Gurudev explained the chatter in the mind metaphorically as the commentary during Cricket matches. He said that the players when they are playing as such have nothing to do with what the commentators have to say. Similarly, in our mind too some commentary keeps on going but we players are removed from that. But several times people don't pay attention to the player and get stuck in the commentary. The joy lies in watching the player, in seeking that inner person and not the commentator mind.

KALA RAMNATH
IN CONVERSATION WITH
GURUDEV
SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR
Followed by
Global Meditation
FRIDAY
APRIL 24th
2020
7:00 PM IST

Shankar Mahadevan in
conversation with
Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
14th April 6:40 PM IST

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
Humanity Against Intimate Terrorism
Domestic Violence Must End
A Dialogue with Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
Join us LIVE on April 17th, 2020
INDIA: 10:00 - 7:30 PM | ARGENTINA: 10:00 - 10:00 AM
WASHINGTON DC: 9:00 - 10:00 AM | GHANA: 1:00 - 2:00 PM

Sri Sri University hosts
HIGHER EDUCATION
POST CORONA
In association with GURUDEV SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR
23rd APRIL 2020, 11:30 AM

THE RHYTHM OF LIFE
SHOBHANA
IN CONVERSATION WITH
GURUDEV
SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR
Followed by
Global Meditation
SUNDAY
APRIL 26th
2020
11:30 AM IST
#WORLDMEEDITATES

CERAMIC INDUSTRY LEADERS IN CONVERSATION WITH
GURUDEV SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR
Followed by Global Meditation
MONDAY APRIL 27 TH 2020 11:30 AM IST

THE RHYTHM OF LIFE
DRUMS SHIVAMANI
& RUNAA SHIVAMANI
GURUDEV
SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR
Followed by
Global Meditation
MONDAY
APRIL 27th
2020
7:00 PM IST
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Company Secretaries of India
सर्वप्रथम कर्मयोगी सचिव संस्थान
All Members are invited to join the live Webinar
"BALANCING THE MIND,
BODY & SOUL"
by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
29th April, 2020
10:30 AM to 1:00 PM

HEART
to
HEART
KARAN JOHAR
IN CONVERSATION WITH
GURUDEV
SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR
Followed by
Global Meditation
WEDNESDAY
APRIL 29th
2020
5:00PM IST

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