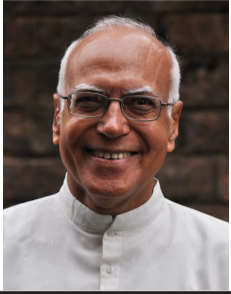


# SEVA TIMES

THE ART OF LIVING INTERNATIONAL CENTER, BENGALURU



**A Visionary Educator Transforming the Tribal Landscape**

pg. 2

**Transgender Women Celebrate Savitri Vrata at Puri Ashram**

pg. 3



JULY 2020

#iStandWithHumanity

## Food for Migrant Workers



International Association For Human Values (IAHV) in association with BNY Mellon, as a part of their CSR initiative, distributed 1,30,000 cooked meals to migrant laborers in containment zones and those leaving Pune to go back to their hometowns. Distribution was done with the help of Pune City Police.

## Ration for the Disabled



IAHV joined hands with Wipro to distribute ration kits to 160 families of people with disabilities who have been rendered jobless due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequential lockdown. The areas covered were Kalyan, Navi Mumbai, and western suburbs of Mumbai.

## Equipment for Healthcare Workers



IAHV handed over 50 Immunity Kits, 250 bottles of sanitizer, 2000 3-ply masks, 100 N95 masks, and 50 PPE kits to Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, Union Cabinet Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India, for further distribution.

## Ration Distribution Across 11 States



Spoton Logistics Pvt Ltd, an express logistics company, engaged IAHV to provide 3850 Kgs of ration to daily wage workers in over 13 cities across 11 states.

## Kits for Fisherman Colony

350 families in the fisherman colony of Bandipora district, Kashmir received ration. Families of more than 2200 daily wage workers and migrants have been supplied with ration kits in Srinagar, Pulwama and Bandipora districts.

## 6th International Day of Yoga - Going Online to Streamline Health

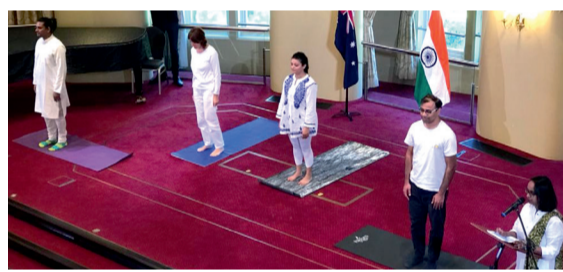
By Seva Times Correspondent

**Bengaluru, June 2020:** The Art of Living ushered in the 6th International Day of Yoga (IDY) with millions of participants joining more than 20,000 Sri Sri Yoga (SSY) teachers, virtually from 156 countries in celebration of yoga, and to perform the Common Yoga Protocol. This was followed by a global call to join Yoga for Humanity with the IDY Common Yoga Protocol and World Meditation for Peace and Harmony led by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. The event was live on June 21, 2020, on YouTube and other social media handles of Gurudev and The Art of Living.

A global Sri Sri Yoga Utsav was organized between June 18-21 wherein online yoga workshops were conducted by SSY teachers for more than 1 lakh participants. The participants also performed 54 rounds of Surya Namaskar, for which they were trained during the workshop.

In a world that is currently in the middle of a global health crisis that has also significantly amplified the challenge of mental health and wellbeing, yoga has become the chosen path for many. Yoga is the antidote to a host of lifestyle disorders that have their roots in stress, fatigue, sedentary or otherwise unfavorable lifestyle choices. Gurudev emphasizes, "The blossoming of the complete human potential is yoga. Stopping misery before it arrives is yoga". He adds, "Yoga is the wave uniting with its depth. It takes us to our source of happiness, the greatest wealth of humankind. The purpose of wealth is to bring happiness and comfort and yoga brings total comfort."

The IDY Common Yoga Protocol, led

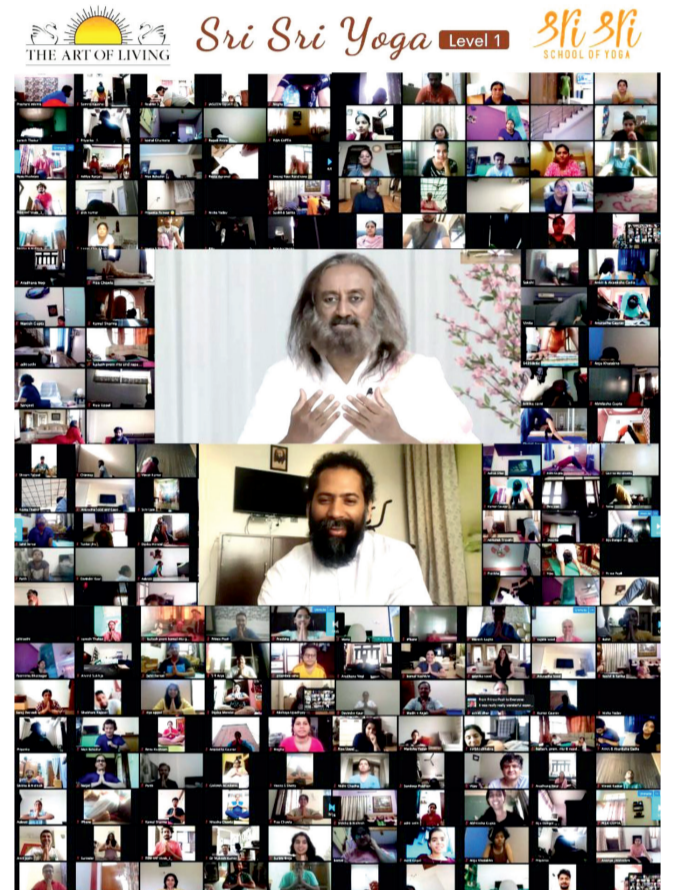


from The Art of Living International Centre was also conducted through digital video conferencing platforms for many schools, colleges, health departments, resident associations, police personnel, defense forces, and prisons among other places.

Leading up to IDY, The Art of Living also hosted special live interactions/webinars with yoga experts on topics ranging from Research in Yoga, Need for Yoga & Spirituality in Today's World, and sessions on Bhakti Yoga, Karma

Yoga, Yogic Diet, etc., throughout the day. A timely discussion on the topic of Yoga and Mental Health: A Scientific Perspective was also initiated which saw participation from eminent people like Dr. Satbir S. Khalsa, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Dr. Shirley Telles, Director, Patanjali Research Foundation; Dr. H. R. Nagendra, Chancellor, SVyasa; Dr. B. N Gangadhar, Director, NIMHANS; Dr. Anand Balyogi, Director of the Centre for Yoga Therapy Education and

Research (CYTER); and Dr. Ranjeet S Bhogal, Head, Research, Kaivalyadham. The Sri Sri School of Yoga, Europe, too had organized a webinar to showcase yoga solutions for mental health that was led by Gurudev and a 17 bench panel including H.E. Ms. Gaitri Issar Kumar, Ambassador of India to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union; Prof. Fahri Saarcioglu, Department of Biosciences, University of Oslo; and many other prominent speakers.



## Punjab Farmers Reap in Good Profits with Sona Moti

By Ram Asheesh

**Jalalabad, Punjab:** For the last two years, 160 farmers of Jalalabad, Fazilika, Amohar, Muktsar, Bhatinda, Jalandar, Hoshiyarpur, Khanna, Nabha and Patiala have been cultivating Sona Moti – a unique 2000 year old variety of wheat that is rich in folic acid, minerals, fat, and protein, and has a low glycemic index. These farmers who use natural farming techniques have had a good harvest this year of an average of 6 to 6.5 quintals of Sona Moti wheat per acre. One farmer reports a yield as high as 9.5 quintals per acre. Sri Sri Tattva has purchased 50-60 tons of wheat directly from the farmers, ensuring that they receive a higher price for their produce. All farmers received full payment within 15 days. Needless to say, the farmers are very excited and now have very little doubt regarding the profitability of



natural farming.

The Art of Living has been awakening farmers to the advantages of natural farming for a number of years now. Many farmers in Punjab have

vowed to make the soil in Punjab chemical free and have been doing natural farming for the last four years. In the initial years of natural farming, the yield is a little low as it takes time for the soil to recover from the damage done by chemical farming. Sharing his experience, Amit Cambod says that he adopted natural farming three years ago. In the second year he planted Sona Moti and got a yield of 4.5 quintals per acre. This year, he had a yield of 7.5 quintal per acre. This has given a big boost to his confidence.



## Coping with Uncertainties: Building Community Resilience

By Karuna Malhotra

**Ranchi, Jharkhand:** Under the integrated natural resources management project being implemented in 50 villages of Ormanjhi and Burmu Blocks of Ranchi, Jharkhand, supported by Welthungerhilfe *Shramdaan* activities are being organized and dry ration is being distributed to help the community cope with the challenges presented by Covid-19.

Jal Sakhis (water champions) and women farmers who are part of IAHV's Jal and Jaivik Samuhs (IAHV Water and Natural Farming Village Councils) are being trained in the basics of nursery techniques. The training covered key activities involved in nursery establishment, regular upkeep, and maintenance. These included preparation of soil as well as compost; collection, treatment, and sowing of seeds, irrigation, maintenance of saplings; and planting times.

In addition to livelihood enhancement of local communities, the saplings from the nursery can even be used by the locals for reforestation activities around their villages. Women from Korabar village, Burmu took part in the training delivered by IAHV's cluster coordinator Gajmati Singh. The women were trained to grow saplings of fruit bearing trees using indigenous seeds.

For more information, please email karuna.malhotra@in.iahv.org

## How to Handle Suicidal Thoughts?

*"It is only through the body that you can dispel the agony and get rid of misery. Instead you destroy the very instrument by which you can get rid of agony."*  
Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

The suicide of a young and popular former TV actor and popular Bollywood star, Sushant Singh Rajput, on June 14, 2020, left the whole country in shock. While the reason behind him taking this extreme step is not clearly known, early reports allege that the actor had been suffering from depression for the past few months.

The upheaval caused by the pandemic, the lockdown and the subsequent effect on the economy, is expected to have a massive impact on the mental health of Indians in the months and years to come. The WHO fact sheet on depression from January 2020 states that more than 264 million people worldwide have been affected by depression and close to 800,000 people commit suicide every year.

### Here's what Gurudev has to say on suicide:

Suicide is the most foolish thing a person can ever do! It is like someone is shivering in the cold and goes out and removes all their clothes. What do you call them? Foolish! You are already so cold. You are feeling cold in a heated auditorium and you go out into the open and say, 'I am cold, I am cold, I am cold', and remove your jacket, your t-shirt, your inner garments and everything and throw them out. Will the cold become any less? No!

People who commit suicide find themselves in a bigger soup. 'Oh my God, this restlessness, these desires which created such intense agony inside me have not gone. My body has gone but the agony has remained.' It is only through the body that you can dispel the agony and get rid of misery. Instead you destroy the very instrument by which you can get rid of agony.

Only spiritual solace can take you out of despair and misery. External pomp and show, wealth, admiration and adulation are not helpful in dealing with inner discontent. You can bid goodbye to misery by connecting with an altogether different dimension, that I would say is solidified silence, a bolt of bliss and a glimpse of eternity, which is in you as you. You simply have to tap into it.

There is little use in having a machine which you cannot operate without a manual. Spiritual knowledge is like the manual for life. Just like to drive a car, we have to learn how to operate the steering wheel, the clutch, the brake and so on, to move towards stability of the mind, we must know the basic principles about our life force energy. This is the whole science of pranayama. When our prana or life force keeps fluctuating, our mind also goes up and down through the roller coaster of emotions.

One cannot handle the mind from the level of the mind. It is for this reason that although counseling or psychiatry seems to help in the beginning, it is not able to provide a complete cure in the longer term. Just forcing positive thoughts on oneself is not enough and more often than not leads to a relapse. Medication like anti-depressants also seem to help only in the beginning and eventually make the person dependent on them rather than free him/her from the tendency.

This is where knowing the secret of breath can really transform lives. Breathing techniques like Sudarshan Kriya stabilize our life force and consequently the mind. The inner dimension unveiled by the practice of meditation deeply enriches us and its impact slowly spills over to all aspects of life. As prana rises in the body, one starts to feel a transformation as direct experience and not as a forced mental exercise. One starts becoming happier, creative and more in command of their mind and emotions.

Another thing that can be really helpful in coming out of depression is developing an attitude of service. Thinking 'what can I do for society', getting involved in a bigger cause shifts the whole focus of life and can take one out of the rut of 'what about me'. Societies where values of service, sacrifice and community participation are ingrained do not have these issues of depression and suicides. The Sikh community is a great example of this.

Life is a combination of happiness and pain. Pain is inevitable but suffering is optional. Having a broad perspective on life gives you the strength to move forward through painful times. Know that you are very much needed in this world. With all its infinite possibilities, this life is a gift for it can become a fountain of joy and happiness not just for oneself but for many others as well.

## Saving Our Bees is Vital for Food Production

By Padma Koty

The average person makes a swift connection between bees and their product, honey - which is a sweet and nutritious food valued across cultures since centuries.

What is less known is that bees, along with other pollinator-species like birds, butterflies, bats, ants, flies, moths and wasps, are essential for pollination, and therefore important for food production and food security. Bees gather both pollen and nectar for food, and some of the pollen they gather is transferred onto other flowers and plants, enabling or enhancing yield, seed production and fruit set (the turning of flowers into fruit).

There are estimated to be more than 20,000 bee species across the planet, of which the honey bee is stated to be the largest in numbers. This, it has been said makes it "the world's most important pollinator of food crops." The honey bee is, additionally, one of the few "social" bees as it dwells in colonies that we know as honeycombs. Apart from honey, bees provide high-quality health foods like royal jelly, and pollen, and products like beeswax, propolis and bee venom used in healthcare, among other fields.

Promoting this significance of bees to farming, The Art of Living is imparting training and guidance in practical bee-keeping in its natural farming courses conducted by the Sri Sri Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology Trust (SSIAT). It also provides interested farmers necessary equipment and material required for bee-keeping and helps them to market the honey they produce.

It is significant that in some countries, the pollination service of bees has captured center stage with regard to commercial crops like watermelon, almond, grapes, cucumbers, cotton, and so on,

that require, or benefit from insect pollinators. Some estimates say that a third of the world's food production depends on bees.

Increasing visibility for these less known essential services that bees provide will help stakeholders in agriculture, food production and the lay public to better appreciate the importance of bees to food safety and food security.

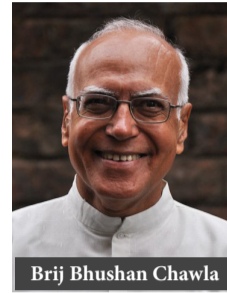
In particular, cultivators of fruits and flowers too can be trained in bee-keeping so they can use their acreage to make pure, specialty honey which is much in demand in the market. This can give some additional income. If cultivators are uncertain about the outcome of such a project, they can start small with a pilot plot and then replicate.

Bee-keeping courses can also include bee protection and bee-stewardship in their curriculum to disseminate the importance of bees in yield-improvement and in preservation of biodiversity. If we educate more stakeholders on how to protect and steward the health and numbers of the many species of bees, the resulting benefits in higher yield and food security can help not just the cultivators, but the whole world.

"Bees are a sign of well-functioning ecosystems," so it is important that concerned citizens too contribute effectively by planting "pollinator patches" in their home gardens, community parks, balconies and terraces. This will make up for loss of foraging habitat. Bees and butterflies too need biodiversity in their foraging activities. Planting wild flowers and indigenous flower and fruit trees, wherever one may be living, can turn the immediate environment pollinator-friendly. Bees need our support to continue to support us.

## Learning from the EXPERTS

### A Visionary Educator Transforming the Tribal Landscape



Brij Bhushan Chawla

Sh. Brij Bhushan Chawla, an octogenarian, dedicated his life to the development of Indian Tribal people after taking voluntary retirement at the age of forty-seven. He has been a volunteer with The Art of Living for more than thirty years and had initiated the Tribal Welfare Project, more than two decades ago. Since then he has been at the helm of starting and running 20 schools for tribal children from remote villages of Jharkhand. These schools are currently providing free education to 3700+ students from across 100+ villages. He is also simultaneously contributing to a project to provide free education to the children of sex workers in Kolkata.

Dr Hampi Chakrabarti in conversation with Sh. Brij Bhushan Chawla

#### How did the journey of the tribal schools in Jharkhand begin?

It was December 1993 when I had my first encounter with a tribal community in a village called Bhadua in Ghatsila Block of Jharkhand. I kept visiting other villages to learn more about their life. It was during one such visit that a young tribal boy asked me, "amake ki dibi", meaning 'what will you give me'. That struck me as a bolt. I realised that more than charity, what they need is a sense of pride and confidence in their own ability towards living an honourable life, away from the mercy of the government and some NGOs. The opportunity came in 1999, when in a chance conversation with Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the subject of tribal literacy came up for discussion. Because of my familiarity with the subject I was given the responsibility to coordinate the project. Three volunteers pooled in 15,000 rupees and we started a small school in a government-built community hall in village Chhatradanga inhabited by a primitive tribe. The beginning was made with 50 children from nearby villages and one local youth, as teacher. The following year we had 5 schools with about 300 children. Two decades later we now have learnt a lot and are slowly but surely moving towards our goal to bring awareness and empowerment among the tribal people.

*"I realised that more than charity, what they need is a sense of pride and confidence in their own ability towards living an honourable life"*

#### To start the initiative what kind of challenges did you have to face in the early days?

One big challenge in the initial days was to convince the villagers of the necessity of education. They were sceptical because of their experiences with urban people who had fooled them many a times and usurped their lands without proper compensation. An Act was promulgated to safeguard the Tribal Land from such unscrupulous people. They suspected us and were not willing to give their land even to build schools. But the commitment of the volunteers saw us through. Then the task of finding teachers who would be closer to the children's ethos proved to be another challenge. What added to it was that we had no reference of any similar initiative being executed in the nearby villages or even in the whole state (then Bihar). After two-three years it became apparent that we have to innovate to overcome the challenges associated with the project.

Eventually they did realize that we wish their children well and gradually started accepting us. The fact that in the first 3 years we had five schools in different locations convinced us that we can work with them for their betterment. The golden rule, that we adopted, was never to interfere with their customs, culture and faith. 'Child is the focal point of development' was our mantra.

#### What were the biggest bottlenecks in running the schools?

Notwithstanding the physical factors like location of school, its surroundings etc. the main issue, which we faced was the lack of properly trained teachers. What the government has achieved (mostly in figures) may please the planners but the ground reality is much different. Many government reports have outlined the pathetic state of attendance and achievement in schools in tribal and remote rural areas. One of the biggest reasons is that the teacher fails to motivate the children and parents with his/her limited vision. Local youth were not educated or skilled enough to become effective teachers. On the other hand, to convince qualified candidates from urban areas to take up teaching jobs in these remote areas was difficult. Further, it could be difficult for outsiders to connect to the values, ethos and culture of the tribals. In this light it was realized that the best solution would be to create a robust training program that would train local youth to become competent teachers. They would also be able to respect the culture and the ethos with greater sensitivity. Teaching the tribal children requires additional set of skills as compared to teaching in urban areas. Tribal children are not exposed to the outer world like the urban children who have high degree of awareness due to the propagation of television and other mediums. Also, most of the tribal children do not know any other language apart from their native tribal language and thus it is difficult to teach them in English, Hindi or even the local language. Thus, innovative teaching techniques had to be devised.

#### What is unique about the curriculum that is followed in these tribal schools?

We go by the motto of Enable, Educate and Empower. We specifically look into linking the curriculum with the local needs which would make tribal children more sensitive to local contexts and sustain them in their respective environments instead of forcing them to move out in search of another life. We also develop course material for pre-school, classes I and II in the local language and state language, with the view of helping the child to overcome the initial difficulty in adjusting with school atmosphere. Guided on these lines, our curriculum includes,

- Learning based on the NCERT academic curricula and syllabi on standard subjects.
- Arts and music to nurture creativity, imagination and expression of ideas.
- Outdoor sports and games to tone up physical fitness, build team spirit and have fun.
- Vocational skill training to impart life skills such as tailoring and craft making.
- Environmental conservation to raise eco-consciousness and promote organic farming.
- Meditation and yoga to attain inner calmness and enhance spiritual awareness.
- Daily cleaning of school premises by all students as a morning routine to inculcate a sense of community responsibility and belongingness.
- Morning prayer and patriotic songs to show gratitude and give blessings.
- Self-organization for the preparation and consumption of midday meals by the students, where the older ones take care of the younger ones.
- Community-based educational initiatives such as promoting good hygiene practices, eco-friendly habits, etc. to villagers.

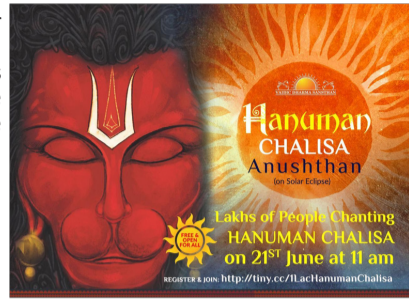
#### What according to you have been the biggest milestones so far?

Biggest milestone is that we have been able to raise awareness in these regions. Today parents here prioritise education and every child is admitted to the school. A holistic approach to education has enabled this generation to understand their role in the world better, enabling significant opposition to practices like child marriages and easy conversion to criminal activities. Apart from that we have established two high schools and one middle school with efforts of the volunteers. We have one Teacher Training Centre, Computer lab in high school and middle school and Digital Class Room in every school. There are solar panels erected in every school. And our schools have almost a 50:50 ratio of boys and girls.

## SEVA SNIPPETS

## Over 12 Lakh People Chant Hanuman Chalisa During Eclipse

Over 12 lakh people from all over the world came together to chant the Hanuman Chalisa 11 times at 11 a.m. on June 21, 2020, during the solar eclipse. The chanting was followed by a guided meditation by Gurudev. As per the scriptures, any spiritual practices done during an eclipse yield 10 times more results than usual.



## Research on Effects of Ayurveda Immunomodulators on COVID-19 Patients

Bangalore Medical College & Research Institute will be conducting an open label, interventional and comparative study on the effect of immunity boosting herbal formulations by Sri Sri Tattva on 50 asymptomatic and mildly symptomatic COVID-19 confirmed patients. This trial is registered with CTRI as "A Clinical Study to Evaluate the Role of Herbal Immunomodulators as Add on Treatment in Asymptomatic and Mildly Symptomatic COVID-19 Confirmed Cases." The trial will be conducted at Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute, Dr. Jayanti, Director cum Dean, BMCRI, being the Principal Investigator.

## Transgender Women Celebrate Savitri Vrata at Puri Ashram

**Puri, Odisha:** On May 22, 2020, The Art of Living team in Puri, Odisha, led by Sanghamitra Mohanty, invited a group of 30 transgender women to the ashram in Puri to celebrate the first ever "inclusive" Savitri Vrata Puja. Savitri Vrata is an annual festival celebrated in Odisha and Nepal. On this day women pray for the long life of their husband.



To make the days of lockdown easier for them, volunteers along with health workers and policemen, gifted the transgender women with ration kits, cosmetics, and masks. They were also introduced to meditation and satsang.

Priya, leader of the clan, opened her heart out while expressing her feelings. She said, "We faced hardship while arranging food for our daughters and hardly had money to celebrate the festival this year. But we were so happy when The Art of Living invited us to celebrate with them. It seemed like a miracle. Never have we ever experienced something like this before. Such kindness and

acceptance is extremely heart-warming. We are genuinely thankful to everyone from the bottom of our hearts."

"It's unfair that women, regardless of how they were born, are subject to a less respectful place in society. I believe in Gurudev's vision of 'Sangachadwam' and 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. Every human being is like our family, and the onus is on us to restore the belief to promote world peace and non-violence." – said Sanghamitra Mohanty with utmost determination and strong will.

## The Guru and His Ways

## Do I need a Guru?

Gurudev: Do you need an answer? If you need an answer that means you need someone to give you the answer, and that anyone who gives you the answer automatically becomes a Guru. Guru means the one who gives the answer. The English word guide comes from the original Sanskrit word guru. You need a guide for everything, for learning guitar, music, or any field you take. Similarly, Guru is the one who can guide you into meditation, wisdom, and knowledge.

## What is the meaning of a Guru?

Gurudev: The word 'guide' comes from the Sanskrit word 'Guru'. Guru means the one who removes ignorance and teaches you knowledge. A Guru teaches you how to live by example and not just by books.

## Is being greedy for the Guru good?

Gurudev: Well, you can be greedy to do seva, and to get higher knowledge. No need to be jealous of others near the Guru. Guru keeps all kinds of people around him or her. He keeps some people closest so that they don't cause problems to others. Some are very thick skinned, and some are sensitive. Ashrams are like a zoo. It is not homogenous type of people. In our ashram also, there is a whole zoo. At the entrance, there are monkeys, then there are a whole lot of squirrels, snakes, and mongoose. At the back there are geese, swans, and plenty of birds. There are around a 100 varieties of birds and 200 varieties of butterflies. There are deer, horses, rabbits, turtles, cows; there is an elephant, and if there are some animals missing, there are people who behave like them. They pounce like lions and tigers. We have a miniature zoo here. But it's very interesting and everyone is happy. That is the thing.

## How should a disciple be with the Guru so that he can understand the Guru completely and receive the knowledge from the Guru?

Gurudev: By being natural (sahajta). You should be with a guru the same way as you are with your close ones; i.e. with naturalness.

## Ramji's guru was Vashishtha and Krishna's guru was Sandipani, who is your Guru?

Gurudev: Sandipani and all the Gurus are still there in the omnipresent guru-tattva. Adi Shankaracharya is among the lineage of Gurus. In my childhood and youth I had the satsang of many great saints. Maharishi Mahesh

## Words of Wisdom

## Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



Yogi was there, Shankaracharya, and some very learned and renowned saints; Swami Sharan Aanandji. My childhood was spent with all elderly people.

## Is taking 'Guru Diksha' compulsory before choosing a Guru?

Gurudev: You

don't have to choose a Guru. The Guru Tattva is present in every good thing you learn in life, and wherever you learn it from. Mother is your first Guru. As you grow older, there will be teachers who provide you education. Similarly, in each phase of life, the presence of a Guru will be there. The Guru Tattva is always present. So whenever our mind feels that something would help us grow in life, it means that the Guru Tattva is present.

## It is said that the path of Yoga should be followed under the guidance of a Guru. Is it possible to learn like Ekalavya, who was not initiated by Dronacharya, but accepted Dronacharya as his Guru?

Gurudev: Yes, you can. Once you have learnt something from the Guru, then the picture of the Guru is enough.

## How can I understand that the Guru is not a physical presence, but a Tattva?

Just relax and meditate. When you meditate more, you will realize that the Guru is a Tattva, the Guru is a light that is ever glowing and eternal. The Guru is not the (physical) body. The Guru is the Divine light that resides within the body; the Guru is love. Whatever you have received from your Guru, you must share it with others. In life, each one of us becomes a Guru for someone or the other. What does being a Guru mean? A Guru desires nothing from you except your well-being and progress on the path. That is the Guru Tattva. You will surely have to play the role of a Guru in someone's life.

## Seva Highlights

## Homeopathic Immunity Booster Medications for Front Line Workers

**Nawanshahar, Punjab:** On May 22, 2020, The Art of Living family in Nawanshahar, Punjab, with the help of the municipal council authorities, distributed homeopathic immunity booster medications to over 150 employees of the city municipal council who are working in the front line to combat COVID-19. Homeopathic medical doctors, Dr. Tejinder Pal Singh and Dr. Mandeep Kaur, stated that it is of utmost importance to strengthen the immune system of the body in order to prevent being infected by the COVID-19 virus. Dr. Mandeep Kaur also addressed the front line workers and gave them valuable information that would help them prevent infection by the corona virus. Lalit Mohan Pathak, former president of the municipal council, praised the relief work being done by The Art of Living. Face masks, pocket size sanitizers, fruits, etc. were also distributed among all the employees.

## COVID-19 Awareness for Slum Children

**Nawanshahar, Punjab:** On May 13, 2020, The Art of Living family in Nawanshahar conducted a COVID-19 awareness campaign for children from nearby slums. These children have no access to television or internet like their well-to-do counterparts and are uninformed about the pandemic. Volunteers distributed food items like juices, biscuits chips, as well as soaps, sanitizers, and masks. The children were taught about washing hands, social distancing, and wearing masks, all of which have now become a way of life.



## 'Adopt a Tree Project 2020' Launched in Balod

**Balod, Chhattisgarh:** Like the previous year, 'Adopt a Tree Project 2020' was launched by The Art of Living team in Balod this year as well. In its first phase, on June 5, World Environment Day, 126 saplings of fruit-bearing and shade-giving trees were planted by the Green Commandos associated with this project. These plants were given free of cost to all. Planting was done by all volunteers at their homes, religious and educational places, and other public places. 300 plants were planted by the institution last year, out of which 250 plants are alive and thriving. This year, volunteers have decided to plant 1000 saplings with each of them shouldering different responsibilities related to the project.

## Dispelling Darkness in Nalbari



On the occasion of Gurudev's birthday on May 13, 2020, the YLTP team in Nalbari, Assam, led by Amarendra Kalita, distributed solar lamps to six families in a village in Nalbari. This village had no electricity for almost 14 hours every day. Lockdown had made the situation worse. Tears of gratitude rolled down their cheeks as the villagers received the lamps to light up their homes. Children were dancing and women of the houses were happy too because they finally had light after a long wait of 6 years. Distribution was done with the permission of Bharat Chaudhary, Deputy Commissioner, and a local MLA.

## World Blood Donor Day 2020

**Sant Kabir Nagar, Uttar Pradesh:** With lockdown regulations in place, blood banks across the country are facing an acute shortage of blood. Eager to help in any way they can, volunteers of The Art of Living in Sant Kabir Nagar lined up outside a mobile blood bank on May 28, 2020, to donate blood. During this time, following social distancing, 19 units of blood were deposited in the blood bank. On the occasion of World Blood Donor Day on June 14, 2020, Raveesh Gupta, District Magistrate of Sant Kabir Nagar, in the presence of several local MLAs and Superintendents of Police, honored the local faculty of The Art of Living for the services rendered by them.



**Nawanshahar, Punjab:** A blood donation campaign was also organized by The Art of Living volunteers in Nawanshahar, Punjab, from May 10 to May 15 at the BDC building, 30 volunteers donated blood.



**Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand:** At a blood donation camp organized on May 14, 2020, in Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, The Art of Living volunteers and volunteers from other organizations as well as personnel from the Base Hospital donated blood. 50 units of blood were collected in two phases.

**Batala, Punjab:** Volunteers from The Art of Living and Arogya Bharati jointly organized a blood donation camp in Batala, Punjab, on the occasion of World Blood Donor Day on June 14, 2020. This 10th annual blood donation camp was held at Dhaliwal Nursing Home, Samadh Road. Several people turned up to donate blood despite it being a weekend lockdown.

**Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh:** At a Mega Blood Donation Camp organized jointly by 11 organizations including The Art of Living, at the Eye Clinic in the District Hospital of Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh, 165 people came forward in the midst of the panic created by the COVID-19 pandemic to donate blood.

## 50 PPE Kits and Other Safety Equipment Gifted to Civil Hospital

The Art of Living family in Barnala, Punjab, has gifted 50 PPE kits, sanitizers, 3-ply face masks, hand gloves, and hand-free sanitizers to the Civil Hospital in Barnala to be used in the fight against COVID-19. 2000 liters of sodium hypochlorite and necessary equipment were also handed over to the municipal corporation for disinfecting surfaces.



# Like Our Soldiers, Leaders Must Have a Sense of Sacrifice – Gurudev

## The Path of Divine Love



After a gap of 25 years, Gurudev gave an online discourse on the Narada Bhakti Sutras, in Hindi in the morning and in English in the evening, from June 1-15, 2020. Tens of thousands of enthusiastic listeners logged in from across the world to soak in Gurudev's words of wisdom.

Ever since the Corona crisis took centre-stage across the planet, Gurudev has, through his prolific online discussions, been pragmatically emphasizing that the world has to prioritize mental health and has emphasized the role of meditation in averting the panic and depression likely to set in in people. His web dialogues in June 2020 seemed to crystallize around this vital theme as, like a lighthouse, he continued to illuminate the way to eminent and accomplished stakeholders and influencers from around the world.

### Business, Industry, Institutions, Thought Leaders:

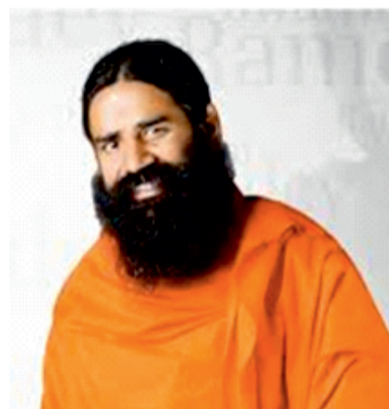
In a talk "Pandemic Crisis Management" with esteemed participants from Nepal, Gurudev said the crisis is an opportunity for more growth and development, and a chance for human values like generosity and compassion to take a front seat. Commending Nepal's youth as hard-working, he said they should be provided good infrastructure and opportunities. Hosting Members of the Confederation of All India Traders, he likened traders to the backbone of the country, and called on them to invoke josh (zeal) in themselves and stay healthy through spiritual practices like prayer, meditation, and mantra-jap.

He told members of the Travel Agents Association of India that India being known as a spiritual destination, travel, tourism and the hotel industry would surely recover, provided they take steps to alleviate the fear and anxiety of the travelling public, and improve infrastructure and cleanliness. Scheduling more direct flights would help utilize the potential of spiritual tourism. Hotels would do well to introduce healthy cuisine to attract clientele. Negative media coverage of our nation would harm tourism potential, he cautioned.

He shared with attendees of another discussion that even a few leaders can suffice to create change in these uncertain times by combining experience, out-of-the-box thinking,

initiative, and team-building. Leaders should put the nation first. Political leaders must have a small percent of the sense of sacrifice shown by our soldiers who give their lives for their country. He defined a leader as one who creates leaders who in turn create more leaders. He advocated that leaders should be humane and spiritual, have clarity and a broad mindset, and be in a space of giving.

In "Atmanirbhar MSMEs" Gurudev opined that as industries were coming out of China, India has a fertile opportunity. More than giving sops, we should help workers to stand on their feet and impart livelihood skills and spiritual practices which will bring commitment and integrity in workers who might have become indolent during lockdown, he suggested.



### Swami Ramdev

On 15th June Gurudev hosted Yogrishi Swami Ramdev in the keenly-anticipated, high-octane event "Yog Milan." Thousands logged in from across the world to watch the two titans of yoga, ayurveda and spirituality exchange their perspectives. Gurudev called on youth to share their feelings with their loved ones, instead of denying depression. Pranayama restores life force energy and alleviates depression. Looking for a Guru and practicing Yoga and pranayama would be beneficial, he said.

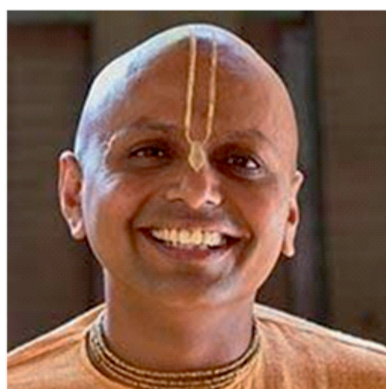
### Spirituality, Humanism, and the Pandemic:



### Andy Kuznetzoff

In "Bridging Spirituality with Action," Gurudev affirmed that the epidemic has seen the enormous support of good people everywhere on the planet standing together with all of humanity. "Spiritual energy is here for all of us to actively contribute to society," he said, adding that gun culture not only kills young people but also traumatizes millions of young minds. Interacting with Andy Kuznetzoff, journalist and media host, he said post-Covid, mental health will be the biggest issue. We have to learn to de-stress and invoke confidence and realize that the happiness of giving is a mature joy.

Hosting "New World Thinking," Gurudev said that new normals would come up after the lockdown, and we need to address mental health issues with positive messaging, lifestyle changes, yoga and meditation. Responding to Ness Wadia, eminent industrialist, Gurudev said, "Only if we look beyond our judgements of love we can be open to the unconditional love that we are and recognize Divinity in all its 'dresses.'" Referring to the success of the TLEX Program while hosting "Leading in the New Normal", he observed, "Delays in projects are due to lack of coordination and cooperation." Any "ism" is a failure if humanism is not included, he stated.



### Gaur Gopal Das

In his one-on-one with the popular motivational speaker and lifestyle coach, Gaur Gopal Das, Gurudev said, "What comes beyond your efforts is Grace."

### Musicians, Actors, Artists:

Chatting with eminent musicians Padmashri Sri Puran Chand Wadali and Lakhwinder Wadali, Gurudev said, "When you are content and have no

desire or worry in the mind, you have achieved Jeevanmukti." He shared with Pandit Bhajan Sopori and his son Abhay Rustum that Kashmir was famous for Kashmir Shaivism and that he had been taking workshops on Shiva Sutras and Vigyan Bhairav all over the world. Talking to Ananya Birla, song-writer, he said the downtime could be used to plan what to do post-Covid.



### Puran Chand Wadali and Lakhwinder Wadali

For both performer and listener, he said, it is very important to sit still and allow the music to settle deep into one's mind: only then can we experience that "the mind is so big and vast."

Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhat, eminent Mohan Veena exponent, expressed deep gratitude to Gurudev for showcasing thousands of Indian classical artistes at a time in spectacular single-stage events.

### Education, Youth, Sports, and Life Skills

Young actors and TV anchors chatted with Gurudev who advised them to always examine whether what they were doing was practical and balanced. Talking with young Marathi stage artistes, he advised them to give technology-enabled online presentations in the context of fear of public gatherings.

Hosting educationists from USA, Mexico and Brazil, Gurudev iterated the need to safeguard mental health. Youth undergo tremendous pressure and alternate between aggression and depression. Suicides are taking place due to unattended mental issues. In "Ranveer Show", Gurudev said youth today are taking to spirituality, environment issues, and social causes at a younger age than youth in earlier generations. "Only the intelligent seek spirituality and the youth are intelligent."

He expressed to sports icon, PV Sindhu, that if every middle class family could adopt even one or two daily wagers, who live hand-to-mouth, the latter would gain confidence.

### HEALTH:

On World Osteopathy Day, Gurudev told osteopaths, "Healing happens because of the life-force within us which is enhanced by spirituality. If you work well with the spine, you can get rid of a lot of negativity." Osteopathy has its roots in ancient knowledge about the spine. Even the Puranas have several

stories that mention the spine, he informed. Addressing members from the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Gurudev appreciated the 24x7 vibrancy with which they had ensured self-sufficiency in pharmaceuticals. He mentioned The Art of Living's online personal counseling seva conducted by its faculty. We need to keep giving the public positive messages, remind people that Corona is curable, advise them to improve immunity, stay cheerful, do meditation and pranayama and observe social distancing.



### Claudia Lopez Hernandez

Speaking to Claudia Lopez Hernandez, Mayor of Bogota, Colombia, he advised that a positive mindset is important as fear and anxiety can suddenly reduce our immunity. Conferring with panel from Irish Times, Gurudev said that, as behavioral factors stemming from indoor-confinement and sudden changes impact health and wellness, de-stressing programs, yoga and twice-daily meditations are vital.

By Padma Koty

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