

# SEVA TIMES

THE ART OF LIVING INTERNATIONAL CENTER, BENGALURU



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Path to Social  
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Sri Sri Vidya Mandir in  
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AUGUST 2020

## SEVA SNIPPETS

### GOAL - Digital Empowerment for Rural Youth



The Art of Living has entered into a partnership with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, and Facebook for GOAL - Going Online as Leaders, a mentoring initiative that will connect tribal youth with industry experts. The program aims to enable scheduled tribe youth in remote areas use digital platforms for sharing their aspirations, dreams and talent with their mentors. There will be one mentor for two mentees. "This program intends to upskill and empower 5,000 tribal youths to harness the full potential of digital platforms and tools to learn new ways of doing business, explore and connect with domestic and international markets," said Arjun Munda, Union Tribal Affairs Minister, in a statement.

The selected mentees will remain engaged in the program for nine months or 36 weeks comprising of 28 weeks of mentorship followed by eight weeks of internship. The program will focus on three core areas - digital literacy, life skills and leadership and entrepreneurship, and on sectors such as agriculture, art and culture, handicrafts and textiles, health and nutrition, among others.

### Yoga and Pranayam for SRPF Officers



Around 1,000 men and officers of SRPF across Maharashtra participated in The Art of Living's Online Breath and Meditation Workshops. According to an officer in SRPF, they are getting very good results from yoga, pranayam, meditation, and counseling services provided by The Art of Living. It has created positivity in the force across Maharashtra and the feedback has been very encouraging.

### Online Workshops for Over 26,000 Frontline Workers

4500 Teachers of The Art of Living in Maharashtra conducted Online Breath & Meditation Workshops free of cost for over 26,000 frontline workers including police officials and healthcare workers to help boost their immune system. This initiative received the full support of Rajesh Tope, Minister of Health, Government of Maharashtra.

## Elyments - India's First Homegrown Social Media Super App Launched

By Thoheja Gurukar

**Bengaluru, Karnataka:** On the occasion of Guru Purnima on July 5, 2020, Elyments – the first homegrown social media super app was launched at an online event in the presence of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Hon. Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu. The app which has been created by the joint efforts of over 1000 IT professionals who are volunteers of The Art of Living is a major step towards making India self-reliant. Launching the app, the Vice President said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a call for Atmanirbhar Bharat...It is a mission to galvanize the force of growth across the country, in various sectors of the country...Innovation is a watchword for the 21st century."

The online event to launch the app was attended by several dignitaries including actor-MP Hema Malini; former Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu; former Chief Election Commissioner SY Quraishi; Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express Group; Ashok P Hinduja, Chairman, Hinduja Group of Companies (India); Ramoji Rao, Head Ramoji Group; and filmmakers Anand L Rai and Madhur Bhandarkar.

The launch came just days after the government banned 59 Chinese apps. This 'Super' app combines the features of many mobile applications into a single platform and offers tools for social networking, instant messaging, and video chats as well as voice calls.

The app did face problems initially with hackers from China and Pakistan trying to disrupt it from the very first day of launch. "Almost immediately after launch, there was a phenomenal amount of malicious traffic. In fact, within 4 hours of launch, there was a coordinated attack with the intention of forcibly bringing down our systems. This ended up severely hampering the user experience and failed (One Time Programmable Code) OTPs," said Elyments in a statement. The hardworking team of cyber experts soon got the app running smoothly again and in two days' time people were chatting, calling, and posting using the app.

Elyments can be downloaded from the Google Play Store and Apple's App Store. The app has been well received with more than a million downloads and an average rating of 4.4 stars by its users.



Honorable Vice President of India, Shri Venkaiah Naidu launching the Elyments app

### Some salient features of Elyments:

- Allows users "to connect globally and shop locally"
- Data of users is stored in India and will never be shared with a third party without user's consent
- Free audio-video calls and a private chat connection
- Meticulously designed in-app camera
- Social media content feed
- Available in eight Indian languages
- Secure payments via Elyments Pay
- Curated commerce platform for Indian brands

## Zara Muskuraiye The Art of Living Radio is Here

**Bengaluru, Karnataka:** On July 5, 2020, on the occasion of Guru Purnima, The Art of Living launched its very own internet radio channel which will be streamed 24/7 exclusively on The Art of Living app. This radio feature is available absolutely free, so one just needs to download the app and click on the radio feature to access it.

The radio programming is beautifully streamed with a mix of numerous elements, blended with a brilliant collection of evergreen bhajans, sung by various artists. Needless to say, the sound of The Art of Living Radio, aligns perfectly with the brand, along with programming content which is enriching and inspiring, intending to spread peace and wisdom to listeners across the globe.

The early morning yoga and meditation is followed by the morning show, called "Happy Mornings", where RJ Shagun brings you motivational stories, topical discussions, to expert opinions from 7am to 11am, Monday to Saturday. This is followed by the mid-morning show called "Dear Life", where RJ Sunitaa shares relationship mantras, stories behind bhajans, unlocks your inner beauty and fills you up with inspiration, from 11am to 2pm, Monday to Saturday. And then there is RJ Srishti, who will take you on a fun ride on her show called "Evening Ride", where



whatever is making you frown, she will surely turn it upside down, from 4pm to 6pm, Monday to Saturday.

Apart from these, there is regular News everyday, to keep everyone updated about everything that is happening in The Art of Living world from festivals to social projects to our programs, to special events, to schedule of Gurudev's commentary on ancient wisdom and much more.

And Sunday is special, with EXCLUSIVE shows like, "A Day with Sri Sri" by Abhishek from 9am to 10am; "Kahaani" by Nakul from 12pm to 2pm; and "Happiness on Wheels" by Anuj Vashishta from 5pm to 6pm.

Tune into The Art of Living Radio and stay connected with a whole new world of enthusiasm and positivity!

## An Online Beginning for Phase-2 of Action Research Project in 134 GPs of Jharkhand

By Vimala Yadav

The second phase of the ongoing Action Research Project (ARP) in 134 Gram Panchayats (GPs) of Jharkhand for 100+ Clusters Development with the Government of Jharkhand and National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) took off to an online start. The Art of Living's rural teachers and volunteers who are the selected staff for this project had received the first round of training at the NIRD&PR campus at Hyderabad in July-Aug 2019 for the first phase of the ARP. They were further trained by the State at Ranchi on state-specific issues. On completion of these training programs, the project staff started working in the assigned clusters. A refresher training was also conducted in January at Ranchi for 5 days in order to refresh them about the areas where they had some doubts or lack of clarity. In the very few months available for the execution and implementation of ARP (shortened by Assembly Election and COVID-19 pandemic), there were some successes undoubtedly, but also higher expectation from the ARP staff and the GPs.

When it was time for the second phase to commence, the social distancing regulations put in place to combat the global pandemic caused

by COVID-19 rendered it impossible to conduct the training physically. This made way for a new innovation in the training methodology, wherein it was conducted online via video conference platforms between June 22-24, 2020, and was attended by all participants from their homes in rural areas of Jharkhand. The training was conducted by CPRDP&SSD, NIRD&PR, Hyderabad to guide the 50 Project Staff deployed by Vyakti Vikas Kendra India (VVKI) and fill the gaps in understanding of several subjects like how the resources available to GPs can be leveraged for stabilizing the rural economy, particularly after COVID-19, how to utilize the opportunities of e-Gram Swaraj Portal of the MoPR for Panchayat strengthening and GPDP, how to utilize the opportunities of the Learning Management System developed by the NIRD&PR for widespread dissemination of knowledge, and several other topics. The project staff were immensely benefited by the guidance provided by the senior officials of CPRDP&SSD, NIRD&PR, Dr. C. Kathiresan, Associate Professor & Head, Dr. A.K.Bhanja, Associate Professor, Shri Dilip Kumar Pal, Project Team Leader, ARP for 100+ CDP and Smt. Richa Chaudhary, State Consultant, PRI Division, RD&PR Dept. Govt. of Jharkhand.



## Putting Back the “Social” Into Social Media – The Art Of Living Way

By Padma Koty

Social media has become such a large part of daily life, especially during the Covid-19 crisis, that loss of Net connectivity for even a few minutes is sufficient to make us feel restless, deprived, maybe even disoriented!

Leaving aside Facebook and Instagram, the social media revolution – upheaval, one may call it - on Twitter alone has been tweeting truth to power, putting an end to many decades of main stream media's (MSM) monopoly on what constitutes the truth that the public should be made to consume. As new information flows have radically altered socio-political discourse, vested interests and their “gate-keepers” have been inarguably sidelined. Today, twitterati are finding a new power in their hands to alter the entrenched patterns of public discourse, lobbying, activism and community engagement on all matters under the sun.

But the old guard will not easily yield its entitlements to the new-wave social media users, so the SM Mahabharatha goes on. In this context, the launch of The Art of Living's multi-media super app, Elyments, is an exciting and much-needed beginning.

The recent announcement by the Government banning 59 Chinese apps, took the nation by surprise, and by storm as well. In particular, much criticism, dismay and calls for Governmental intervention had been directed at the Chinese app Tik Tok and its egregious content which was daily taking sharers and viewers to new lows.

However, the good and great news is that, once the lockdown began in March 2020, The Art of Living has been one of the first organizations to swiftly take off from the blocks and use SM for a range of online outreach-activities: food-distribution, a counseling platform operated by The Art of Living faculty, hundreds of programs world-wide, teaching Sudarshan Kriya, Yoga, Living Well, Spine Care, Ayurvedic Cooking, Permaculture courses, children's courses, and so on. It was apparent that online healing, and its many therapeutic offshoots and avatars reached thousands at an extremely critical time. Additionally, millions across the globe received great relief through Gurudev's live guided meditations.

Over and above all this were the dozens of very invigorating online interactions in which, from March onwards, Gurudev hosted, counseled and calmed the concerns of a kaleidoscopic range of distinguished influencers, stakeholders, individuals and managements who had thousands of lives and livelihoods depending on them for a way out of the terrible dilemmas now facing every section of society.

It was the The Art of Living's dedicated, live-wire SM teams, guided by Gurudev's holistic vision and outlook that had enabled this very positive and innovative use of SM and contributed in bringing to life the “social” potential inherent in social media.

Alongside, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, deeply concerned about the security of data, and its implications at all levels, had formulated the idea of an India-based, multi-media super app which would ensure data security, with the database remaining within the country. Speaking recently during an online interview, Gurudev had stressed that data security is very important for the freedom of any nation as it impacts the political and social fiber of the country. And thus The Art of Living super app, Elyments, was launched on the auspicious day of Guru Purnima by Shri Venkaiah Naidu, Hon. Vice President of India, in Gurudev's presence.

This game-changing super app will also protect the privacy of its users, while keeping ownership of the platform within India. Elyments will also restore the right to freedom of expression, denied to some categories of SM users by biased major multinational SM platforms, and therefore level the tweeting field for those who find themselves banned, shadow-banned or “warned” for even the most innocuous tweets.

Elyments, with voice calls, FB, Twitter, instant messaging, and so on, available in 8 languages, will make SM accessible to millions more of our countrymen, while expanding exponentially the organization's social outreach initiatives. Regional-language students affected by the lockdown can also stay connected for e-learning.

However, the launch was not without its educative downside. Battle lines were drawn on the very first day with malicious groups from at least two neighboring countries coordinating to crash the servers!

Apart from this re-positioning and re-imagining of the way, The Art of Living has thus far offered its bouquet of world-wide outreach services, Gurudev for the first time gave several completely-online discourses. Starting with his widely-welcomed discourse on Narada Bhakti Sutra, and his talks on the 4th and the 7th Chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, he gave a first-ever discourse on “Murugan Rahasiyam.”

The Art of Living has shown the world that where there is Internet, SM, a can-do confidence, and a hands-on Master-cum-CEO, there is always a way to beat social-distancing and reach out to the world, around the world.

## These Girls from a Tribal Village Will Soon Be Solar Technicians

By Vandita Kothari



Dipika(19), Nikita (21), and Rita (21) are from the tribal village of Bhembadi, Maharashtra. With an average daily electricity supply of three hours, electricity is scarce here and so are the opportunities among the youth. The girls, like most in the village, spent their time farming and in household chores. However, life's rhythm changed when they decided to attend a soft skills training program at The Art of Living Bengaluru Ashram.

Helped by their local Art of Living teacher, the trio arrived at the ashram in February 2020. The training program was organized in association with Bosch India. As their three-month training came to an end, the Covid-19 lockdown was announced. Despite being away from their families, the girls did not panic. As part of the Ashram volunteer team, they started preparing ration kits for daily wagers stranded in the city. The picture in this post is from their volunteering time at the Ashram kitchen.

When they returned back home, all three of them decided to enrol in an online solar skill training course given by the Sri Sri Kaushal Vikas Kendra at the Bangalore Ashram. “The training is an opportunity to improve our family's financial condition,” says Nikita. Once fully trained, the girls can be instrumental in harnessing solar energy in their village. More power to them!

## Learning from the EXPERTS

### Projecting the Path to Social Development



Mahesh Rajput

*Mahesh Rajput has 24 years of experience in project execution across India and abroad. He has worked with Reliance and Shell Petroleum among other multinational companies and successfully executed projects worth billions of dollars. Inspired by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's work, he was instrumental in starting The Art of Living chapter in Brunei, Darussalam. In 2018, with the yearning to give back to humanity, he took voluntary retirement from his corporate career and shifted to the Bangalore Ashram as a full time volunteer. Since then he has worked with Sumeru Realty where he set up a new Contracts Division and also with Sri Sri Publication Trust, where he managed the launch and support of the new The Art of Living Mobile app. A doting father to two daughters, he is currently serving as the Chief Operating Officer of Social Projects Department, VVKI.*

*Dr Hampi Chakrabarti in conversation with Sh. Mahesh Rajput, Chief Operating Officer, Social Projects Department, Vyakti Vikas Kendra India.*

■ **Any particular strategy that you are working on for scaling up of The Art of Living's Social Projects initiatives?**

Yes. In fact, we are working on two strategies. First is to replicate the existing projects from one state to another. Like the Gram Panchayat projects that we have done in Jharkhand and Odisha, we can replicate them in other states. In the second strategy, from the existing body of work of around 135 accomplished projects, we have identified about 17-18 target verticals to further scale up. Based on the project type and category, they can be either small scale taken up by individuals or large scale to be taken up in partnership with Government bodies or Corporates. Most importantly, going forward, our state APEX members are going to take a larger role in initiating the projects by reaching out to people in their contacts and to the references provided by central team. In the central office, along with helping them with additional leads, our primary role we will be generating the vertical specific project concept notes and proposals which will be ready to use by all APEX members, teachers or volunteers who want to go ahead to pitch social projects.

■ **What are the focus areas under consideration?**

To name just a few, we work towards creating model Gram Panchayats through our YLTP initiative. Our objective is to empower them to become more aware of how the panchayat can function better and to better utilize the funds allocated to them. We have projects to address the water crisis, like drilling borewells, desilting wells, etc. With Govt. and corporate support, we also work towards rejuvenation of rivers and other water bodies. We also conduct Natural Farming training. In our programs we commonly take up de-addiction and sanitation drives. We also have projects supporting the education of tribal and urban slum children and several other projects.

■ **How has the project initiatives been impacted by COVID-19? What measures are being taken to bring the work in sync with the new regulations for the pandemic**

The Covid-19 situation has definitely impacted the fieldwork. All activities on the field have been held up since the lockdown regulations came into place. Going forward, in the areas where risk has reduced considerably we want to go ahead with caution. We are taking all the necessary precautions as per the guidelines, like maintaining social distance and wearing a mask and gloves. We are also ensuring that personal hygiene is maintained before our volunteers go out to complete a work and then also after they come back. Along with this, we also realised that a lot of the activities, specifically the training-based ones, can be done online. So, we have begun online training in places where we would have hired a physical hall to conduct the same. Also, this forced pause in field activities gave us a lot of time to do our homework in a lot of avenues like renewing our focus on new project areas, identifying potential donors and reaching out to them, strategizing on team building, resource mapping and creating new communication documents.

■ **What kind of a team are you looking forward to nurturing, on the field and in the central office, for Social Projects to deliver at its optimum?**

With current developments the primary focus of VVKI has shifted from courses to social projects execution. In line with that we will be requiring a lot of resources in the coming time. Particularly, once after the social distancing regulations are lifted and we resume our work on the field, there will be a lot of requirements of people interested to work for social development projects. The skill sets important in the central office will be good communication skills and multitasking abilities since each person would be required to manage around 3-4 projects and coordinate with field teams. Experience in project execution would be very valuable. As far as the team composition in the field is concerned, I will leave it to the field coordinators and their recommendations will be valued. I look forward to working with people in the team who are motivated volunteers and good at delivery. Those who are willing to give their 100%, are ready to learn and improve their skill sets, will be welcome in the team.

■ **In what ways can The Art of Living volunteers and teachers on the field contribute to efficiently execute social development projects?**

I look at it from two aspects. First, there is the possibility of many small projects that can be taken up by the teachers and volunteers. For these, the funding need not come from a government body or corporate. These projects can be funded by local community groups or even individual donors who want to contribute to a cause. Second, it often happens that people begin a project without taking all parameters into consideration like, availability of adequate funds for the entire duration of the project, proper costing, dedicated team and efficient documentation of work, creating a roadblock in the smooth implementation of the project. Hence, it is advisable that people on the field who are undertaking projects independently, which is actually very good, should see the end-to-end picture. The central team can help them in drafting plans and proposals and in making a proper budget and covering other parameters. Since not everyone on the field is equipped with the knowledge and resources, thus, it would be prudent for the people interested in executing projects to consult the central team beforehand.

## COVID Warrior: Ramkumar Lama

Ramkumar Lama, The Art of Living faculty, is a 48-year-old individual dedicated to social welfare and community outreach. With the lockdown in place due to the pandemic, Lama was concerned about the people who lived in the hilly, remote villages in Alipurduar District that are inaccessible by road. Lama gathered a team of 40 volunteers of The Art of Living and they set out on foot, trudging along deadly slopes, each of them carrying supplies of 15-20 kgs on their back, to reach out with food, medicines, and even money, to over 1,070 families in 28 villages in Alipurduar district of West Bengal. Lama says, “Gurudev says that it is the daily wage earners and poor people who are the hardest hit by the lockdown and we had to do everything we could to support them. I feel it's our responsibility to help them. I got plenty of help from Ajad Bhujel from the Youth Leadership Training Program wing of The Art of Living.”





## Sri Sri Vidya Mandir in Jharkhand Takes Education to the Students' Doorstep

By Ram Asheesh

**East Singhbhum, Jharkhand:** The education sector is facing unprecedented challenges due to the pandemic and school, by necessity, has become a digital space. Online education has its own drawbacks as not all children have access to internet devices and sitting glued to the laptop or worse still, mobile phones, is proving to be detrimental to the health of children.

Sri Sri Vidya Mandir is a school run by The Art of Living in Kashida, Ghatshila Block, Jharkhand. Nearly 40% of their students were unable to attend online classes due to non availability of internet devices or due to network issues. To address this issue the school came up with a unique solution. If the children could not come to school due to the lockdown, the school would go them! So a 'School on Wheels' was launched on June 17, 2020, to take education right up to the doorstep of students.

According to Tilottama Singh, Headmistress of Sri Sri Vidya Mandir, teachers go in the mobile school and reach out to their students with education material and assignments. They go door to door instructing the students on what and how to study and also guide the parents to teach their children. The children are given assignments which the teachers check on subsequent visits. During the interaction with students and parents, all necessary precautions like maintaining social distance, wearing masks, and hand sanitization are strictly maintained. Currently, the School on Wheels is only catering to students from LKG to class V. Online classes are being conducted for children in higher classes.

Ashok Ghosh, an administrator in the school, explained, "There are half a dozen teachers who are assisting in this project. We have taken this as a challenge. School on Wheels is very helpful in continuing education for young children. The biggest advantage is that they do not have to stay glued to the mobile."



## Ashram Boys Skill up in Lockdown



By Arie Bax

**Bengaluru, Karnataka:** With regular school classes suspended and the scheduled extracurricular activities too on hold, the boys from Ved Vignyan Maha Vidya Peeth school, who reside inside The Art of Living International Centre found out new ways of learning important skills for life and also to make best use of the time at hand. With guidance from their instructors the boys engaged in several activities like permaculture farming, upgrading their play area to a football ground, creating sitting area at the ground, organising cleanliness drives in nearby area, enzyme making, civil work and crest shed for water tap, as well as making water conservation canals to distribute water to farms. The younger ones learnt to ride the bicycle. They also organised indoor and outdoor carom, kabaddi, cricket and football tournaments. The boys also got together to create a reading club for themselves.

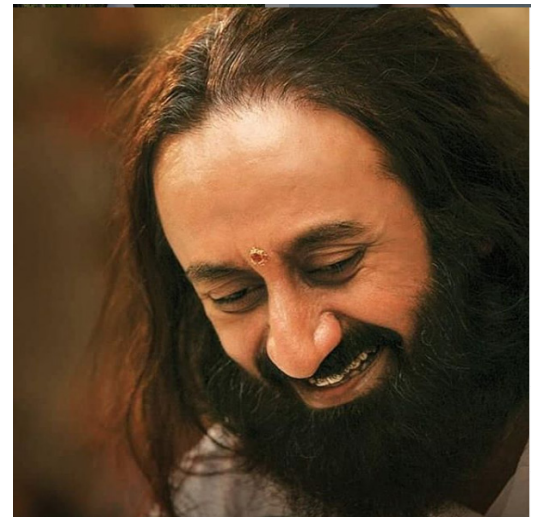
## Three Phases a Seeker Passes Through

Guru Purnima is a very significant day for the seeker. As a seeker you review your journey - how far you have walked, where all you have gone, what all you have experienced in life, how many hurdles you have faced, and how many hurdles you have crossed. What is your journey? Where is it moving ahead? It is a review of one's journey and then rededication – the day to review, rededicate, and then rejoice in gratitude. These are the three things that Guru Purnima brings to you. The celebration is for rededication and rejoicing in gratitude.

Every seeker – sadhak – has three phases or three modes or moods he goes through. The first mode is called *Pashu Bhava* or the Basic Instinct. The sadhak wants to satisfy his basic instinct, his needs. He wants to get rid of his misery – so one becomes a sadhak. A sadhak is seeking to be free, to get liberated. Liberated from what? From misery, liberated from lack, right? Lack and misery is what one wants to be free from. One wants to experience abundance. This you know - when there is someone to take care of you, when there is the Power, the Divine, which is taking care of you, this faith is *Pashu Bhav* or the basic *bhav* or mode.

The second mode is *Veer Bhav*. *Veer Bhav* means the mood of valor. The first mode is the confidence that there is someone to take care of my needs. I am concerned about my needs, right? But if you know there is someone providing for you, then you are relaxed, you have comfort. You know, if you have a dog at home or people who have horse – the horse, the dog – all the animals they know their Master is there. The Master is going to provide for them. That confidence they have and there is certain loyalty. That loyalty and confidence is the first mode of a sadhak. The second mode of a sadhak is *Veer Bhav*. *Veer bhav* is invoking the valor within you. Life poses many challenges - many challenges where your hope is shattered, your faith is shattered, your dreams get shattered, and in these moments your confidence gets shattered. You start doubting your own abilities, you start doubting your own progress, you start doubting yourself a lot and you start doubting everybody else - that is only a reflection of the self-doubt. When you go through these turmoils, when they arise in you, then you have the *Veer Bhav*, the valor – I will go through this. I will come out of it successfully. I will achieve this come what may – that valor – invoking the valor – is the second mode for a seeker. First is confidence and faith. The second mode is conviction and valor to move on in the path. I will go through - come what may - the *Veer Bhav*.

## Words of Wisdom



And then the last one – the *Divya Bhav* where you feel total oneness with the Divinity. Sacrifice and dedication in *Veer Bhav* leads you to *Divya Bhav* - that is oneness with Divinity where you see everything as a game – the whole universe is just a play and display of consciousness and you are not shaken, not moved by anything whatsoever; nothing can take away the purity, serenity, and the love that you are. You know, sometimes one can say, "Oh I am all love but others are all bad." No. In *Divya Bhav* you see the role of everyone else also as Divine, not just yours as Divine but you find every single role, whatever it is, as Divine, as a game, as a play. That is *Divya Bhav*. Leading to that *bhav*, that mode, that mood - these are the three modes that a sadhak moves through in life as time progresses.

Today people all over the world have joined in Advance Meditation Programs and a lot more have done the first Basic Program throughout the world. They are all rejoicing. They have become good sadhaks – seekers. Each one of you is so precious to the world. You all have that spark of fire within you, spark of love which you will spread to everybody around you. You know, the planet needs it at this time - hope, dedication, and love. Yeah? Relax, repose, and be happy.

Excerpts from Gurudev's talk on  
Guru Purnima, July 5, 2020.

## SEVA SNIPPETS

### Certificate of Appreciation for Pune Art of Living Teachers

Sandeep Bishnoi, Police Commissioner, Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, has given a Certificate of Appreciation and trophy to The Art of Living for conducting their Online Breath and Meditation Workshop for 500 police officers for strengthening their immunity and making them stress free during these crucial times.

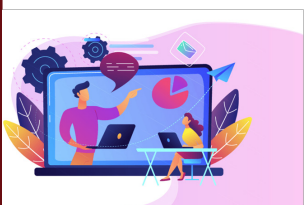


### TresVista Employees Help Feed the Needy

Employees of TresVista came forward to extend their support to the COVID-19 relief work and activities being carried out by IAHV. Their generous donations helped IAHV to distribute dry ration kits to over 100 needy families residing in Thane, Diva, and Shahad, in Maharashtra.



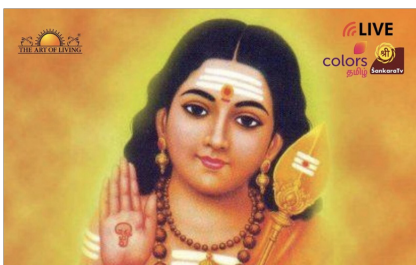
### Capgemini to Invest Rs. 50 Lakhs in Virtual Lessons



As part of their School Adoption Project, Capgemini will be investing Rs 50,00,000 in recording lessons for virtual classroom sessions. The project will be executed jointly by IAHV and SSRVM. Premises and studio equipments will be provided by the Thane Municipal Corporation. During the Phase I of the project, lessons will be recorded for Math, Science, Marathi, and English, Social Sciences, for classes VIII, IX and X. Jayatee Saha, Raj Katira, and Ankur Gupta worked towards materializing this project.

### Nearly 2 Crore People Join in the Mass Chanting of Kanda Sashti Kavacham

On the auspicious occasion of Aadi (Kanda) Sashti on 26 July, at 6 p.m. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar led millions of people in chanting Kanda Sashti Kavacham Parayanam - a powerful Tamil devotional chant that is believed to invoke valor, give mental strength, help calm down the human nervous system, reduce anxiety, and boost immunity. Millions of people from Singapore, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Middle East, Europe, United States and other nations with Tamil speaking populations across the world participated in the event making it one of the largest congregations ever to chant the Kanda Sashti Kavacham in such large numbers. The chanting which was streamed live from the Bengaluru Ashram was available on YouTube, Facebook, and several TV channels like Sri Sansara, Colors TV (Tamil), Shraddha MH ONE, Bhakti TV, and many other local channels.



## Seva Highlights

### One Lakh Lakshmitaru Saplings to be Planted in Bihar

**Patna, Bihar:** The Bihar chapter of The Art of Living, in collaboration with the Environment, Forest & Climate Change Department of Bihar, celebrated Guru Purnima as Environment Day. The main event of the day was the planting of Lakshmitaru saplings by Dipak Kumar Singh, Principal Secretary, Environment, Forest & Climate Change Department, Bihar, at the zoo in Patna. Lakshmitaru is a very useful and economically viable plant as each part of this plant is rich in medicinal properties. Meera Singh, the coordinator of this project, says that under the agreement with The Art of Living and the Government of Bihar, it is targeted to plant at least one lakh Lakshmitaru saplings in different districts of Bihar. Apart from the zoo, saplings were also planted in many parks, along roadsides, and prisons of the capital on the same day.



### Homeopathic Immunity Boosters for Tribal Families



**Amravati, Maharashtra:** The Art of Living family in Amravati district distributed Arsenicum Album 30 free of cost among tribal families in Bhendi, Pethmangruli, Ekalvihi, Gavhankund villages and Shraddha Shikshan Kendra in Warud tehsil. Distribution was done from July 10-17, 2020. Arsenicum album is a homeopathy medicine which is effective in increasing immunity. Earlier, on May 12, 2020, the team had distributed ration and other essential food items to needy families. They

have also conducted free Online Breath and Meditation workshops for over 500 frontline workers. The team is determined to distribute Arsenicum Album-30 to more than 25,000 people.

### 'Hariyalo Molela, Aapno Molela' Campaign Launched

**Molela, Rajasthan:** The Gram Panchayat in Molela launched 'Hariyalo Molela, Aapno Molela' on July 8, 2020, in an effort to make Molela greener. Volunteers of The Art of Living in Molela participated enthusiastically in the campaign by planting 101 trees. They also came up with several attention catching slogans to make the campaign a success. Under this campaign, an appeal has been made for each person residing in the village to plant a tree and increase the greenery in Molela. Several villagers came forward to plant trees and inspired others to join the campaign and play a significant role in improving the environment.





# Gurudev Assures Youth a Brilliant Future Awaits Them

By Padma Koty

July 2020 continued to see Gurudev address people through video conferences, providing solace, strength and the most visionary guidance. He provided eminently doable solutions to the world at large and to groups of stakeholders in particular. He dived deep into significant discussions with, among others, scientists, virologists, physicists, actors, dynamic youth, activists, Chess Masters, and journalists, on the way forward in this uncertainty-infused Corona crisis. Apart from these online engagements with people, other notable highlights in July included the Guru Purnima online celebrations, which included the launch of The Art of Living social-media app, Elyments, and a first-ever discourse 'Murugan Rahasiyam' in Tamil on Lord Murugan, also known as Subramanya and Skanda.

## In Conversation with Scientists and Industrialists

Interacting with eminent industrialists of JITO in 'Business, Science and Spirituality,' on June 30, 2020, Gurudev said they were stars raising the important issue of *ahimsa* (non-violence). On the issue of the benefits of vegetarian diet, Gurudev said it has to be explained to the public on the level of science and not as a religious issue. Though people have begun to be increasingly conscious of the benefits of vegetarianism, more awareness needs to be created.

In his dialogue 'Science and Spirituality' on July 6, 2020, with science experts and virologists, Gurudev aptly observed that in the orient, since ancient times, science and spirituality were never considered as opposing each other. Studying the manifest world, accompanied by the enquiry into "Who am I?" (exploring the subtle levels of being) has ensured

that the material sciences seamlessly blended with spirituality.

## A Dialogue on Dharma in Challenging Times

Engaging with activists and well-known public personalities like Dhaval Patel, editor Nupur Sharma, Ashutosh Muglikar, Shefali Vaidya, Tajinder Bagga and others, Gurudev said it is necessary that positive-minded people should not be laidback, but active and proactive. "Raise your voice against injustice," he advocated.

## 'Kuch Bhi Ho Sakta Hai' with Anupam Kher



In a conversation with noted actor Anupam Kher in 'Kuch bhi Ho Sakta Hai', Gurudev reminisced that, at the age of 22, he had given discourses on the Shiv Sutra. Among the highlights of the free-ranging interaction Gurudev said: anger is not bad if used sparingly and judiciously as a weapon; a silly question can pull out the best answer; when we do good work, we may make enemies, but we should forge ahead. When Kher asked how to overcome fear of death, not just our own, but of dear ones, Gurudev said that Ujjayi breath, Pranayama, and chanting "Om Namah Shivaya" would help to overcome this fear.

## Heart to Heart with Sonu Sood



In a "Heart to Heart" with actor Sonu Sood, who has been doing a lot of service during Covid-19 with his team, Gurudev said it is very imperative to limit children's interaction with the virtual world. When we sit alone, with ourselves, only then can we be creative, whether it is a scientist or an artist, but we should also be comfortable and at ease whether we are alone or in company. Diplomacy and skill are needed in society and without integrity and honesty we cannot blossom in life. This is the spiritual path – you feel no one is a stranger, he told a visibly-moved Sood.

## Reviving Trust in an Uncertain World with Barkha Dutt



In conversation with journalist Barkha Dutt on July 9, 2020, Gurudev said, "Every country should preserve its own data. Data security is important for the political and social fabric of any country and for its freedom." Conflict resolution is not easy; it is a lot of work, he shared.

## A Cosmic Conversation with Dr. Thomas Hertog



Exchanging invigorating notes with well-known cosmologist Dr. Thomas Hertog on July 8, 2020, Gurudev said

there is a lot of resonance between modern physics and ancient Vedic philosophy. He said the four elements, earth, water, fire and air do expand, but space is called *avikaar*, that is, it is changeless. He explained space is of three types: *bhootaakaash*, *chittaakash* and *chidaakash*. God is *chittakash*, who is present everywhere, everything is present in him. "*Chittakash* is static and holds all the dynamism between its bounds."

## Keeping the Spirits of Students High

"Utsaah" was an online interaction on July 19, 2020, with Directors of leading coaching institutes. Gurudev said, in addition to technical knowledge, imparting "*vyaktitv nirmaan*" (personality development), and human values is essential for youth. Teaching them to work in a team is crucial for their future careers.

He advised that youth should invoke the enthusiasm within themselves that they can take up the challenges posed by the current cataclysm and emerge victorious. He said *chinta* (worry) does not befit youth, *chintan* (thought, thoughtfulness) can become a gem in their hands. Importantly, Gurudev gave a nuanced explanation on how freedom and discipline transect and impact each other, and how important it is for parents to understand this. He also elaborated on how our children can be among the most brilliant in the world if we attend to their psychology and their nutrition. He defined parenting as an art, and assured youth they have a brilliant future and that they are a great strength for the nation.

Gurudev observed that the most important question in education is whether the students' personality has "become strong, stable and blossomed." Keeping this in mind, he informed, The Art of Living has developed 57 different programs. Our students should be taught about mind, memory, ego and so on, so that they know their own mind and emotions, and how to handle them. This, he said, is not taught either at home or at their educational institutes.

## Gurudev in Bengaluru Ashram for Guru Purnima after 17 Years

After 17 long years, Gurudev was at The Art of Living International Center in Bengaluru on the occasion of Guru Purnima on July 5, 2020. In his Guru Purnima address, he said the Guru removes darkness and brings wisdom. For a seeker it is the day to review one's progress, renew one's determination, and rejoice in gratitude.

## Launch of Elyments

Presiding over the online launch of "Elyments" - The Art of Living social media super app - on Guru Purnima,

Gurudev said it is absolutely essential to base technological development on humanity. In his widely-anticipated address during the launch of Elyments, Hon. Vice President of India Shri Venkaiah Naidu said that he was happy to note that thousands of mostly young professionals have created the Elyments App.

## In Conversation with Chess Grandmasters



In 'Master Stroke' on July 20, 2020, Gurudev had a lively interaction with Chess Grandmasters Padmini Rout, Vidit Gujrathi, Harikrishna Pentala, Harika Dronavalli, S.P. Sethuraman, and Surya Sekhar Ganguly. Gurudev asked them to reach out to young children who are now confined indoors without any sports or outdoor activities, and conduct online training and coaching classes for them and also to revive Chaturanga, an ancient Indian strategy game.

## A Discourse on Murugan Rahasiyam



For the first time Gurudev gave a discourse in Tamil on "Murugan Rahasiyam" from July 24-26, 2020, revealing secrets uttered by Lord Muruga on realizing one's true potential, being fearless, strengthening our sixth sense, letting our inner wisdom guide us, and experiencing the deeper truths of the mind. The Tamil webcast was simultaneously translated into Hindi, English, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Dutch, for the thousands of viewers who logged in from different parts of the globe.

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