

SEVA TIMES

THE ART OF LIVING INTERNATIONAL CENTER, BENGALURU



Natural Farming is the Way Forward

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NOVEMBER 2020

SEVA SNIPPETS

Athi Rudra Maha Yagna for Universal Peace



The Athi Rudra Maha Yagna was performed at The Art of Living International Center, Bengaluru, in the presence of Gurudev, between October 8-26, simultaneously with Navratri celebrations. The yagna was conducted for the purpose of 'Loka Kalyana' enhancing the welfare of all beings, universal peace, and prosperity.

Athi Rudra Maha Yagna is one of the highest and most powerful forms of worshipping Lord Shiva. The chanting of Sri Rudram leads to peace both within the individual and in the entire creation.

The Athi Rudra Maha Yagna included recitations of Sri Rudraprashnam for 14,641 times and Chamakaprashnam 1331 times, along with 144 Rudra Yagnas. 65 Vaidic Pundits well versed in vaidic rituals conducted the Sri Rudra Parayan 18 times a day for the first 15 days from October 8-22. This was followed by Sri Rudra Homa performed for the next four days, from 23-26, by 33 pundits in 3 Homa Kundas constructed for the purpose.

Geospatial World Award for Gurudev



Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has been awarded the Geospatial World Award for Social Impact in recognition of his concerted attempts at the preservation of natural resources and relentless efforts towards empowering local communities through The Art of Living Foundation. The Geospatial World Awards are an internationally-acclaimed premium awards recognizing individuals and organizations behind remarkable innovations and ideas in the global geospatial industry. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, for the first time, Geospatial World Awards took place virtually this year on October 6, 2020. Gurudev gave the credit for this award to the dedicated volunteers of The Art of Living.

The Art of Living Intervention Brings Promises of A Better Tomorrow for Stone Quarry Workers

By Seva Times Correspondent

Bhilwara, Rajasthan: The Karmayog Department under The Art of Living Trust has launched a project to intervene in select stone quarry areas of Bhilwara district of Rajasthan for a duration of six months. Project activities are ongoing in the villages Heminiwas, Deonagar, Kasya, Baniyon ka Talab, Morgarwasa, Bahadur ji ka Khera and Kerkhera under the Bijoliya Block of Bhilwara district. The population in stone quarry areas is widely known to be vulnerable to lung diseases. The Art of Living, after assessing the ground realities through a thorough Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), including tools like resource map, inflow and outflow analysis of income and expenditure in the village with leaky bucket diagram, problem identification and pair wise ranking, seasonal calendar and village timeline, proposes to begin the intervention through Yoga, breathing exercises, Sudarshan Kriya and meditation along with several other measures included in the Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) module.

On a prior visit to the target areas by Rajasthan APEX body member Rajkumar Singh Shekhawat and his team, he had found several ways in which the organization could work to make lives better for the residents of these villages. During his visit to the village school, he mentioned witnessing how the children sat on the bare floor to attend their classes and several other similar instances of the community



lacking the basic amenities. Thus, with the intention to bring holistic development to these villages, this project was conceived.

Project activities were initiated from the Kherkhera village in the beginning of October, keeping in mind the social distancing regulations and other precautions as necessary in the current health crisis. The Karmayog team reached out to the village Sarpanch and other members of the community and mobilized them to conduct the

PRA through several tools. The team conducted extensive village survey by also interacting one on one with the individuals and familiarizing themselves with the local people and conditions and establishing a relationship with them.

Heminiwas was the next village to be taken up for PRA exercise. Given how important it is to map the resources and the challenges of the community, PRA exercises were continued in the other villages too. Upon completion of

the mapping exercise, the project will head on with the intervention tools, conducting the YLTP workshops for eligible members of these villages and thereafter identify local community leaders to take the onus of driving the development initiatives. De-addiction awareness campaigns, medical camps, menstrual health and hygiene training, skill training, tree plantation are few other activities that are in toe for the upcoming months.

Counseling for Life Term Inmates before They Step Out of Prison

By Ram Asheesh

Ranchi, Jharkhand: At a Jharkhand State Imprisonment Revision Council Meeting held on August 15, 2020, it was decided to cut short the sentences of 79 detainees on account of their good conduct. The State Government entrusted The Art of Living with the responsibility of counseling these prisoners and preparing them for the world outside after years of imprisonment. Counseling was carried out via video conferencing. The Art of Living faculty not only counseled the inmates but also gave them the assurance that they would be available for them if they need help in the future.

These prisoners had been behind bars for a long time and many had lost touch with their family and society. There was a lot of apprehension in their minds on how they would be accepted, both by their families and society as a whole, after their release. Another concern was how they would earn their living. The counseling sessions were very helpful in putting their mind at rest. During the sessions, when questioned about their future plans, some expressed interest in finding jobs while others were interested in agriculture. Each one of

them was advised according to his skills and interests. They were also informed about the various government schemes available to them such as old age pension, ration card for those living below poverty line, Ayushman Bharat Yojana, Indira Awas Yojana, etc. All 79 inmates applied for the schemes according to their eligibility and have started receiving benefits. Whenever they face any difficulty in availing the scheme benefits, they contact The Art of Living team who then intervene with the concerned department on their behalf.

P.N. Singh, State Coordinator for The Art of Living Prison SMART Program, explains that Gurudev has set in motion a worldwide movement for the establishment of a violence-free society. He recalls Gurudev's words, "Behind every culprit there is a victim crying for help. If you heal the victim, the culprit in them disappears" and states, "Our team is doing its best to heal their wounds. We are constantly in touch with them and attending to their needs. With the help of the District Legal Authority, State Legal Authority, and The Art of Living volunteers in their



vicinity, the team stays up to date on their current status."

The Art of Living in association with the Jharkhand Prison Department has been conducting the Prison SMART program in all the jails of Jharkhand

since 2010, bringing a positive change to the inmates. The administration has renewed its agreement with The Art of Living for conducting this program in their jails for another 3 years. Since the onset of COVID-19, these programs are being conducted online.

Why Rituals? Gurudev Explains Succinctly

By Padma Koty

We are now well into the festival season. The nine glittering nights of Navaratri beckoned us into beautiful, time-honored practices and observances like worship of the Mother Divine, Poojas and Yagyas, chanting, silence, fasting - and feasting - and meditation. Not even the fact that all celebrations have been strictly online could deter us much from enjoying the festivities and spreading joy through the rituals, beautiful Satsangs, wisdom and traditional delicacies.

Rituals are an important aspect of every festival and with Yagyas and Homas being performed, the spiritual aspirants have the opportunity to calm the buzzing mind and the restless body and experience rest, renewal and rejuvenation. Yagyas are always performed in a group to not only uplift the spirit but to also enliven the environment. Behind the elaborate sacred rituals of the Yagyas is a deep science that prescribes specific techniques that purify the subtle level of consciousness, create positive vibrations, and remove negativity.

Gurudev says, "A little bit of ritual focuses the mind, creates an atmosphere. No celebration can occur without rituals. A human being cannot live without rituals, whether it is secular or religious or spiritual. Rituals become part of everyone's life." Citing the significant example of marriage, he explains that it is not just exchanging rings or tying the mangalsutra round someone's neck, it is the time-sanctified rituals followed in the marriage ceremony that give marriage its sanctity and through their impact somewhere in the subconscious mind of the couple, puts them on the path to commitment.

Gurudev adds that performing rituals alone are not that effective. "Veda mantras are effective when people are awake from within." During Rudra Pooja, milk and water are poured over the crystal to the accompaniment of chants, or sacred herbs are offered into the fire to specific chants. All the five elements are honored using, in addition, fruits, rice,

incense, herbs, and flowers to the accompaniment of chants. This creates positive vibrations, but more so when the attendees are meditating.

In ancient cultures, the elders ensured that every ritual had significance, was subtle and influenced the environment in some way. "They had this connection between the microcosm and the macrocosm."

Gurudev says three things come together to constitute a Yagya along with its meticulously-specified rituals: *Deva Puja*, *Sangatikarana* (performing the Yagya as a group, as no Yagya is done alone), and *Dana* (giving, sharing or gifting).

Yagya means honoring the many different types of divine energies in the subtle world and the gross. This is Deva Puja. Each deva represents a particular quality or energy, a particular benefit, though they are all part of one divine. Each deva is connected to different mantras, herbs, and substances. So too each planet is connected with a particular grain. Gurudev elucidates: Saturn is connected with sesame seed and Mars with chickpea. The devas are also connected with different colors, and with particular animals and birds. The presence and the energies of animals like cows, elephants and horses, where possible, is also a part of the Yagya.

Gurudev states that the reason rituals are pervasive is they bring a bit of flavor in life. Even political systems that have dispensed with rituals have still retained some, like the 21-gun salute for special occasions. A person who is centered in *vairagya*, dispassion, does not require rituals. But for others, he recommends a bit of ritual.

Lastly, Gurudev assures us: "You are unimaginably dear to the divine. This is the message of all the rituals and pujas of Navaratri." Deeply consoling words for the thousands who have watched this year's Navaratri online!

Project Bharat – Unrestricted in These Restricting Times

By Indrani Sarkar

As we continue to grapple with the loss of normalcy in our daily lives, there is also a growing sense of hope among people to stabilize and resurrect from a state of despair and despondency. After all, when disasters generate challenges, they also present opportunities to embark on a fresh beginning and envision a better tomorrow. Project Bharat was started with an aim to build a skilled workforce of pratinidhis from every village of India who would help to accelerate the sustainable growth of these villages and the nation as a whole. With several thousand pratinidhis joining the initiative, it did get off to a brilliant start until the pandemic happened and restricted the on ground movement. Even then, pratinidhis have continued to engage in collective action in a spirit of volunteerism and expressed their resolve to be a part of a positive change. They are motivated by the unwavering spirit of seva yodhas, YLTP teachers, volunteers and stakeholders who are relentlessly working to keep the momentum of Project Bharat alive in this lockdown period.

With technology taking precedence, pratinidhis are now being created online throughout the country. They are overcoming the challenges posed by inefficient internet connectivity and no access of smart phones and computers to still continue development work in the remotest areas. Ujjwal Mahato, a YLTP teacher who is also a government school teacher from Purulia district, West Bengal, is one who has engaged in an exemplary way, engaging with pratinidhis through technology in the remote interiors of Purulia and creating a roadmap for transformation. He says, "The interior of Purulia experiences considerable Naxalite - Maoist insurgency and attracts vulnerable youths to carry out many undercover operations. Contrarily, Project Bharat is offering a robust, healthy platform to these youth to become pratinidhis and engage in constructive activities

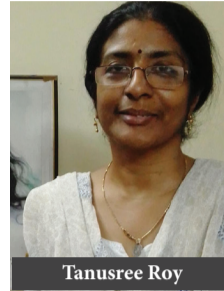
to bring out their potential and make a difference to their villages." Pratinidhis are now being made aware through Project Bharat to become self-reliant or atma nirbhar and create self-sufficient villages.

Ujjwal mentions, "One of the best ways we thought we could empower our villages during this lockdown is by way of inspiring and helping women to get connected with Project Bharat." They figured out that if nothing else, they could conduct the menstrual health and hygiene awareness through The Art of Living's Project Pavitra module on video conferencing platforms. They mobilized adolescent girls and women through technology from the remote villages of Baligara, Masina, Rangamati to Damodarpur, and many others, where conditions are extreme and there is limited access to modern technology. The women too responded and left no stone unturned to sit together and undergo training on mobile phones.

Says a Project Bharat volunteer, "It is touching and heart-warming to see such efforts make a difference to people's lives. The girls huddled together, struggled with their mobile phones and yet participated in the online training. They even invited women from neighboring villages who do not have mobile phones." Now these women too are motivated enough to pursue the mission to develop their village and acquire the means, to do so." While the initiative is a blessing for the womenfolk, what is more commendable is the never-say-die spirit and the dream of seeing a new India in the days to come. From capacity building to spiritual awakening, a whole lot of activities are being implemented online in these sensitive areas. The message is loud and clear - whether we have to deal with violence, the Covid-19 crisis, or basic health issues, Project Bharat is determined to open new doors for the villages of India.

Learning from the EXPERTS

Natural Farming is the Way Forward



Tanusree Roy

Inspired by the humanitarian work of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Tanusree Roy after completing M Phil in Computer from West Bengal, came to The Art of Living one and a half decades ago to render her services as a volunteer. She is currently engaged with the Sri Sri Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology in facilitating Natural Farming training across India and takes keen interest in women empowerment and has worked towards motivating women farmers. She has also touched many lives as a teacher of The Art of Living.

Dr Hampi Chakrabarti in conversation with Ms Tanusree Roy.

■ Tell us about the work challenges that you have overcome in the last one and half decades of working with The Art of Living?

My work in the organization began with me requiring to step in as a computer teacher for few rural women who only understood Kannada! This Bengali girl had to take up the challenge of overcoming the language barrier, by mutual understanding – I learnt Kannada from them, while I taught them the basics of operating a computer with a lot of patience and belongingness. We travelled to local villages to promote computer education and I witnessed the actual challenges in Indian village life. People were restless and living hand to mouth. Education was a luxury to them; they did not want to hear anything. But we did not leave. We worked with them, arranging games for children, teaching meditation, organizing satsang and to make them feel relaxed, calm and confident. Later I became a part of SSIAS Trust, where imparting Natural Farming training to rural farmers is one of the main activities. Earlier farmers were inclined to reaping short term benefits; to make them understand the importance of natural farming was a great challenge. To spread the awareness of Sri Sri Natural Farming to all villages requires many agriculture teachers who can develop model farm following our technique. To maintain a stable supply chain system also needs involvement of sincere and dedicated people. We continue to face manpower challenges. Yet we are still relentlessly making a way forward through proper coordination, cooperation and massive awareness campaigns.

“Urban people could not get fresh produces during lockdown. This made them see the importance of growing vegetables in a natural way at home, in places like their balcony”

■ You have risen to the occasion and adapted to several roles over the years. How important is flexibility and adaptability in the workplace?

From the very beginning I felt a lot of love and belongingness here and when you come from the space of belongingness, whatever the role, you give your 100%. When one becomes flexible towards adopting any work and then works hard at it, one can learn a lot. I believed this is the best place to learn from different streams. I learnt a lot from the working style of other working places like Govt offices too when I went there for our accounts work. But whenever in such offices, I found people delaying our work; I wasn't flexible there. I applied *yukti*, convinced them, and could complete the work. Through all this Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's teachings have guided my path. Flexibility and adaptability in the right path gives good results.

■ How has the SSIAS trust adapted to the challenges thrown by the pandemic?

SSIAS Trust works to promote Sri Sri Natural Farming techniques for all levels of farmers. One thing is very important here, i.e., in this pandemic when everything closed down, then too our farmers were engaged in agricultural activities. They were not worried about their health, but they have remained healthy. As they were not using chemical fertilizers and pesticides they did not need to go to the market or other affected areas. This pandemic made the people staying at home also realize the importance of chemical free vegetables and fruits and so our farmers got orders. Demand was more, as compared to supply. Due to transportation problem during early days of Covid-19, they could not sell their products and did suffer a loss. But slowly they recovered. With Natural Farming technique, once they apply jivamrut in their field, the crops stand less chance of damage, even from pests. So in that sense farmers remain safer. Urban people could not get fresh produces during lockdown; whatever they got were from the cold storages. This made them see the importance of growing vegetables in a natural way at home, in places like their balcony and many urban people enrolled to learn Sri Sri home gardening from us.

■ What are the unique qualities that make SSIAS agriculture training stand out?

Sri Sri Natural farming training is a unique combination of maintaining healthy life and mental peace. It is a compact package developed for all kinds of people, even from different professions. It can be easily learnt and adopted by farmers and other too. By reducing the use of chemicals it improves the health of the soil, water and air. Practicing Agnihotra gives better results in purifying the environment. Both quality and resilience of the produce improves giving a disease free life, healthy mind and good income. Natural farming can tolerate any climatic extremities and can be practiced in any place. The concept of climate resilient agriculture is inherent in this technique. By using natural farming techniques and maintaining watersheds, farmers can reduce losses. Also, through this technique farmers can develop their own seed bank of desi seeds, making them less dependent on the market. With all of this SSIAS has been able to reduce farmer suicide cases, even in draught hit areas.

■ What are the current opportunities available with SSIAS? And how can people avail them?

The Natural Farming training is available for not just the farmers but for kids and urban people too, making everyone enthusiastic, creative and occupied with the beauty of nature. We have so far only been able to conduct training for 0.00001% of the population of this country. There is a huge demand for agri teachers to make our country a safe place. We have started Agriculture and Horticulture projects in different states. We plan to reach out to every village through training, handholding, supervising, monitoring, coordinating smoothly in the supply chain and marketing of items. All this will require a huge manpower. We, as a Regional Council, certify the farmer's field and product through Participatory Guarantee System (PGS). Processing of agri produce needs the involvement of new entrepreneurs. People can take this opportunity to become self-dependent or interdependent, and they can make a revolution in better earning. SSIAS also has a training program in collaboration with IGNOU. Youngsters can avail this opportunity to train themselves and maintain a parallel profession in agriculture alongside their main profession. SSIAS has a group of experts from different areas of agriculture for people to learn from. There is an ocean of opportunities here.

'Har Medh Par Ped' Campaign in Deoni Taluka

Latur, Maharashtra: The International Association for Human Value (IAHV) in association with Volkswagen has undertaken a tree plantation drive under the 'Har Medh Par Ped' campaign in the villages of Ambanagar, Wadmurambi, Indral, and Lasona in Deoni taluka. 'Har Medh Par Ped' is a sub-mission under the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) to plant trees on farmers' land alongside agricultural crops to help farmers get an additional income at regular intervals.



The project was inaugurated by Suresh Gholve, Tehsildar of Devani taluka, at Indral village. Present on the occasion were Nagesh Jivane, social and former construction chairman of Zilla Parishad; Mahadev Gomare, project director; villagers and volunteers of The Art of Living. The goal is to plant at least 5000 fruit-bearing, bamboo, and other native trees that grow well in the climatic conditions of this region. This year, especially, the focus is on planting bamboo trees that are needed both for agriculture and construction work and promise the farmer an assured income. Mahadev Gomare, project director, is guiding farmers in selecting the right kind of trees to be planted in their land.

Reducing Trauma Among Rural Youth in Nepal

Nepal: The Art of living Karmayog volunteers and faculty organized an online Advanced Meditation Program from September 24-26, 2020, focused on enabling people from the rural communities to experience deep silence and restfulness. 250 participants joined in from across Nepal.

This included around 100 participants who had experienced trauma at a very young age, who joined from Maiti Nepal. They reported feeling relaxed, with a renewed vigor to work for the society.

50 Farmers From 20 Punjab Villages Pledge Not to Burn Stubble

Jalalabad, Punjab: Every year around October, post the rice harvest season, stubble burning by farmers in Punjab causes a major environmental hazard in neighboring cities namely Delhi, Noida, and Ghaziabad. In spite of stubble burning being banned by the Punjab Government, most small scale farmers resort to setting fire to crop stubble as they find this to be the fastest way to clear their land and prepare it for sowing the next crop.

around Jalalabad have taken an oath not to set fire to their paddy straw after harvesting rice.

The farmers took their pledge at a simple ceremony at a village in Jalalabad on October 5, 2020. Addressing the farmers present, Amit Kamboj, a farmer who stopped burning stubble a few years ago, shared how mulching the crop waste has improved the quality of soil on his land. Devansh Bhaskar, The Art of Living faculty, then spoke to the farmers about health hazards caused by the smoke from stubble burning especially in these times of COVID-19. The team is hopeful that the step taken by these 50 farmers will inspire other farmers in the surrounding villages to follow suit.

The Art of Living team in Jalalabad has been working hard to convince farmers not to resort to this method to get rid of their crop waste even though it seems to be the simplest thing to do. Their efforts have borne fruit and as many as 50 farmers, both big and small, from 20 villages

Dhanteras and Diwali

At this time of the year people around the world are getting ready to celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights. One of the biggest festivals of the East.

"Dhanteras" – Dhanteras means the day of wealth.

It means feeling a sense of abundance, and whatever is needed will come! Remember all the blessings you have received in life and feel grateful for it. The tradition is to put all the wealth you have earned in front of you and feel the abundance. When you feel lack, the lack grows but when you put your attention on abundance, then the abundance grows. In the Arthashastra, Chanakya says, "*Dharmasya Moolam Arthah,*" which means, "prosperity is the root of righteousness."

For an oil lamp to burn, the wick has to be partially immersed in the oil. If the wick is completely drowned in oil, it cannot bring light. Life is like the wick of the lamp, you have to be in the world and yet remain untouched by it. If you are drowned in the materialism of the world, you cannot bring joy and knowledge in your life. By being in the world, yet not drowning in the worldly aspect of it, we can be the light of joy and knowledge.

Diwali is the commemoration of the light of wisdom in our lives.

Lamps are lit on this day not just to decorate homes, but also to communicate this profound truth of life. Light the lamp of wisdom and love in every heart and bring a radiant smile on every face. Diwali is also called Deepavali, which literally means rows of lights. Life has many facets and stages to it and it is important that you throw light on each one of them, for life to be fully expressed. The rows of lights remind you that every aspect of life needs your attention and the light of knowledge.

Every human being has some good qualities. And every lamp that you light is symbolic of this. Some people have forbearance, some have love, strength, generosity, while others have the ability to unite people. The latent values in you are like a lamp. Don't be satisfied with lighting just one lamp; light a thousand! You need to light many lights to dispel the darkness of ignorance. By lighting the lamp of wisdom in yourself and acquiring knowledge, you awaken all

Words of Wisdom



facets of your being. When they are lit and awakened, it is Diwali.

Diwali means to be in the present

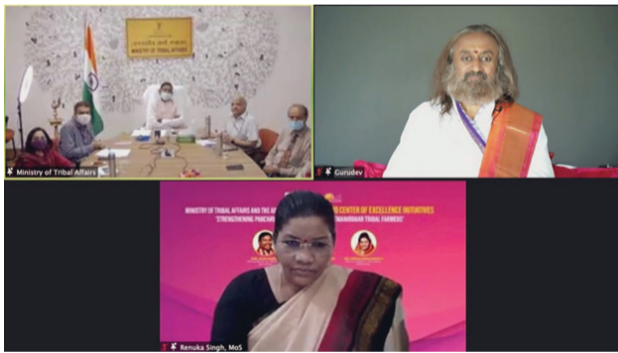
So, drop the regrets of the past and the worries of the future and live in the moment. It is a time to forget the bickering and negativities that have happened through the year. It is a time when you throw light on the wisdom you have gained and welcome a new beginning. Celebration is the nature of the spirit. The ancient sages brought sacredness in every celebration, so that you don't lose the focus in the hustle-bustle of the activity. Observing rituals and religious practices (called Puja) is simply showing one's gratitude to the divine. This brings depth to the celebration.

For the one who does not have spiritual knowledge, Diwali comes only once a year, but for the wise, Diwali is every moment and every day.

SEVA SNIPPETS

The Art of Living Launches Two 'Centre of Excellence' Initiatives with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs

On October 27, 2020, The Ministry of Tribal Affairs and The Art of Living jointly launched two 'Center of Excellence' (CoE) initiatives for 'Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions' and 'Atmanirbhar Tribal Farmers' in the presence of Shri Arjun Munda, Cabinet Minister for Tribal Affairs, GOI; Smt Renuka Singh Saruka, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs, GOI and Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. Under these respective CoEs, the organization will work to create social change through Tribal Youth Leadership Training Programs, create awareness on various Tribal Acts and Rules and Govt. programs/schemes as well as train and motivate farmers to adopt *Go-Aadharith* Natural Farming practices and promote commercial production of Chemical-Free Natural concept among several other activities.



Maharashtra Government Felicitates IAHV Volunteers



The Maharashtra government recently recognized the efforts of thousands of volunteers of the International Association for Human Values (IAHV), sister concern of The Art of Living, for their outstanding relief work during the current pandemic. Ramesh Raman, CEO and Board Member of IAHV, received the award on behalf of IAHV from the home minister, Anil Deshmukh.

The Art of Living Bags Best Corporate Program Brand Award

The Art Of Living Corporate Programs was awarded the "Best Corporate Program Brand of the Year (MSMEs)" at the MSME Innovation and Start Up Summit 2nd Edition held on October 7, 2020. The event was held in the presence of the Hon. Minister of State for MSMEs, Sri Pratap Chandra Sarangi and the award was accepted by the CEO, Nurni Krishnan, on behalf of the organization. This award is a testament to the commitment of the volunteers and the vision of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.



Seva Highlights

A Fruit-Bearing Tree for Every Home in Nawagarh

Ranchi, Jharkhand: On September 21, 2020, The Art of Living team in Angara, Ranchi, distributed 150 fruit-bearing trees to villagers in Nawagarh, a village in Nawagarh GP, Angara. The team was led by Prawin Kumar, National Executive Board Member, YLTP. Volunteers are working towards making Nawagarh a model village and one of the objectives under this project is to plant at least one fruit-bearing tree in each and every house in the village. Distribution of the saplings was carried out in the presence of Rekha Devi, GP In-Charge, Nawagarh. Motivated by Sonaram Mahato, The Art of Living faculty, and Yuvacharya Dilip Kumar Mirdha, all the villagers present resolved that to save trees would be their utmost duty. It is hoped that with proper care of the saplings, each and every home in the village would be able to harvest mangoes in about 4-5 years.



PPE Kits and Masks Donated in Sant Kabir Nagar



Sant Kabir Nagar, Uttar Pradesh: On October 19, The Art of Living's Women's Wing in Sant Kabir Nagar, Sanjeevani, handed over 120 PPE kits and 2000 masks to Divya Mittal, District Collector, for the protection of frontline workers battling COVID-19. Brajesh Singh, SP, was also present on the occasion.

Volunteers Extend Help to Repair School's Damaged Floors



Ludhiana, Punjab: The Government Primary School near Durga Mata Mandir in Jalgaon, which caters to the educational needs of children from surrounding slums, was in dire need of funds to fix the badly damaged floors of their school building. They approached Dilpreet Rajpal, The Art of Living faculty, for help. Manpreet Singh and other volunteers came forward to help and on October 20, 2020, the team handed over the funds to the Principal of the school. Construction of the school floor is now in progress.

Glimpses of Navaratri 2020



“Students Must First Focus On Their Career,” Recommends Gurudev

By Padma Koty

Mental health was the theme for several of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's online engagements in the month of October 2020, with 10th October being designated World Mental Health Day. He has given this message several times in the recent months that whenever we see someone who seems depressed, we should not just pass them by, but reach out to them and see if our support can help them come out of that depression. He engaged with actors, mental health experts, eminent judges and advocates, students of IIT Guwahati and with Radio Jockey Salil Acharya in his interactions. Speaking to distinguished judges and advocates, Gurudev reminisced interestingly on how it was through two eminent Justices that The Art of Living came into existence as an organization.



Guru Gowrappan and Rathi Murthy in deep meditation with Gurudev

On 1st October 2020, Gurudev exchanged views with Guru Gowrappan, CEO, Verizon Media and Rathi Murthy, CTO. To the query on how we can be our best self at work, Gurudev said our best self is always inside us or with us. When we are stressed, the skill that is wanting to manifest goes to sleep. He recommended a look at one's diet to increase energy levels. On maintaining calmness in times of stress he said, “When we practice meditation, it is very natural to exuberate that peace around us.”

On 3 Oct, IIT Guwahati hosted an event, ‘Discover Your True Potential’ in which Gurudev said “when young people get a good opportunity to blossom, they do well.” Advising on how to be satisfied with one's choice, he said that having chosen, we should stay put with our choice and improve our skills. He said the world is facing crises of job loss, difficulties in conducting business, and so on, and meditation, Pranayama, and emphasizing positive news can help. On relationships, he stated that they take up a lot of our time and occupy our mind, so students must first focus on a career and then think of entering a relationship. And when there is a break up, then one should not lose heart, because there will be “1.5 billion people to choose from.”

He also urged youth to observe people around them and give support to co-students who might seem to need courage and strength to come out of an ongoing low energy phase. On why we should go for what is good for us, he advised that prevention is a sign of intelligence. When one understands a thing is good and joyful for us, like Yoga and meditation, then our approach to doing them joyfully and with a sense of wonder is what turns things around. We should package knowledge according to age-groups so that it is interesting and engaging. Wisdom is only that which is practical, is useful in daily life, which uplifts our spirit, elevates our energy and makes us happy. Wisdom is that which infuses us with tremendous confidence. Otherwise it is not wisdom.

On 5th October, in ‘Mind Body Medicine’ Gurudev interacted with Prof. Akshay Anand, PGIMER; Vineet Joshi, President, Joshi Foundation; Rahul Tyagi, PGIMER; Vinay Khanna, Sr. Principal Scientist, CSIR ITR; Raghavendra Rao, Dir., CCRYN; and Ramesh, Cleaner, PGIMER.

On the occasion of World Mental Health Day, 10th October, 2020, in a webinar ‘Enhancing Mental Health, Empowering People,’ Dr. Farnaaz Sharief, MBE; Emilia Lahti, MSc, MAPP, Researcher; Dr. Toshiya Hoshino; Prof. Ronnie Newman; Dr. Abhimanyu Sud, MDCCFP; Kim Kayuri, Mental Care Expert; and Dr. Nand Kumar, Prof. of Psychiatry, were the panelists. Gurudev opined that it is important that all of us create awareness about mental health. Prevention is far better than cure so we need not wait for people to go into mental depression in order to give them a solution. Lifestyle changes, broadening one's vision, managing one's

mental health “before it is too late”, keeping a robust body, these are important. Mental hygiene can keep people from “slipping into the dark hole of depression,” he suggested. Covid 19 period has seen the increase of domestic violence and family disputes, he observed and also advised that we should create awareness among people to keep the spirit high and extend help to those around us who seem depressed.

In ‘Mental Health ki Charcha,’ Gurudev had an online interaction with well-known Radio Jockey Salil Acharya. Salil queried Gurudev about the material race that youth engage in at the cost of their mental health. Gurudev, however, had a different opinion about youth, and said, “Young people are not so consumerist in nature.” People of an earlier generation were materialistic, but youth today are more concerned about the environment, corruption, fossil fuel and so on. He added that impatience is caused by stress, and stress in turn leads to impatience, and meditation is the way to address both. Meditation, Yoga, and proper breathing makes our mind intuitive and maintains the enthusiasm within us. A restless person cannot be enthusiastic, he becomes frustrated, Gurudev said.



Salil Acharya

On 11th October, in ‘Program for Mental and Physical Well-Being’, Gurudev interacted with eminent Advocates and Judges. He recollected that when he was just 23-24 years of age, both Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer and Justice Bhagwati, though they came from a totally different belief spectrum, convinced Gurudev to form an organization. They became the Founder Trustees of The Art of Living. Though Gurudev was reluctant, they told Gurudev that his knowledge was precious and it was necessary to form a legal entity to disseminate this knowledge.

He said India has been fortunate enough to have spiritual leaders in every province. India at one time had one-third of the world's GDP, and that was the time when her moral and spiritual values were very high. These values can be enhanced in our society if we create a sense of belonging and see life from a bigger perspective. In this short span of life, we should see how much love we can give to others and embrace them as part of us

He told the participants about how the Prison Program in Argentina, Paraguay and other places had been very effective. This country needs more and more lawyers as there is lot of backlog, he said. The law fraternity uses its left-brain all day, and recommended them to listen to music for at least half an hour a day. This will make a big difference, and make them feel more energetic and more centered. God-fearing, he explained, is an occidental principle, but the “Indian formula is to be God-loving.”

Speaking at the valedictory session of ‘Yantra 2020, Yoga and Neurosciences: Traditions and Approaches’ held from 11th-15th October, Gurudev explained that the word neuro came from the Sanskrit word ‘nara’ (nervous system). He said that Nara means one who has the best-developed system and Narayana is one who has realized the spirit - who has joined with the inner core of consciousness and is connected to super consciousness deep within. From Nara to Narayana is the path of Yoga, he highlighted. The quest for truth is innate to every human being, he said.

In the ongoing ‘Sinhanaigal Simplified’ online series by Colors TV, Aishwarya Rajesh shared the several challenges she faced on her path to becoming an acclaimed actress. Gurudev spoke on how Mother Earth is striving to heal itself in this period of Covid 19. The conversation veered to anger management for which Gurudev advocated meditation to balance emotions. He also interacted with actress and playback singer Remya Nambeesan who sang a melodious song on Gurudev's request.



Aishwarya Rajesh

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