



SEVA TIMES



THE ART OF LIVING INTERNATIONAL CENTER, BENGALURU

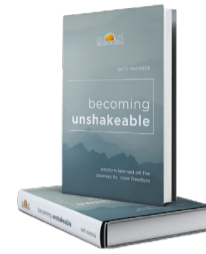


Jayang Dehi, Yasho Dehi:
Invoking the Feminine

pg. 2

A Guide to Becoming
Unshakeable

pg. 5



OCTOBER 2020

Lakhs Participate in 21-Day Meditation Challenge



Starting from September 1st Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar guided lakhs of people from across the globe into meditation every day for 21 days. The meditations were streamed live on YouTube, every day at 7:30 PM IST. The 21-day meditation challenge was for everyone – beginners as well as seasoned meditators. Under the guidance of Gurudev, people the world over discovered how effortless and rewarding meditation could be.

"This was my very first time doing meditation, saying it very honestly. I have never tried meditating anytime before, and truly, I totally regret it that, why didn't I find this before? I felt very nice and calm after doing meditation. I did it and didn't even open my eyes even once between the meditation. It is the most peaceful thing in the entire world. I am going to continue this challenge ahead." - Mayuri Bhosale

"I've been meditating twice a day for over 50 years and this was as refreshing and profound as the first day of creation. Every moment, with the blessing of Guruji, I am a beginner." - F. LaMotte

Dabur Fruit Juice for Villagers in Jharkhand



Impressed by the selfless service being rendered by volunteers of The Art of Living in Jharkhand during these COVID-19 times, Dabur India Limited sought their collaboration to distribute their Real Fruit Juice in the rural areas in Jharkhand. Under the mentorship of Sonaram Mahto along with the Mukhiya and Gram Panchayat coordinators, within the span of one week, 40,000 packets of fruit juice was distributed to thousands of needy rural people in 13 panchayats of Ormanjhi Block.

Protection for NEET Aspirants



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Vidya Mandir in Borivali was one of the centers for NEET Exam 2020. Over 300 NEET aspirants were allotted this center. As they arrived at the center on September 13, 2020, braving the pandemic, they were given protective equipment, masks, sanitizers, shields, etc which were sponsored by The Art of Living's sister concern, International Association for Human Values.

Karmayog Swavalamban Yojana: Creating a Self-Sufficient Rural India Through Micro Entrepreneurship

By Seva Times Correspondent

Bangalore, September 2020: The Karmayog Swavalamban Yojana (KSY) was launched by the Karmayog Department of The Art of Living Trust in the interest of its Yuvacharyas and teachers towards the making of a sustainable and self-dependent rural India. KSY is primarily aimed at creating income generation and micro entrepreneurship opportunities for the rural and semi-urban youth of India, at a time when too many of them have been hit by unemployment or pay cuts. Consequently it also provides a much needed boost to the presently ailing economy of the country and channelling the attention towards promoting Indian products in the local, especially rural, markets.

On a broader perspective, KSY aims to reconnect people with the sustainable Indian ways of life by reorienting with Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's 5H model, wherein the 5Hs stand for Health, Hygiene, Human Values, Harmony in Diversity, and Habitat.

Pertaining to this, September was celebrated as the Health Month where focus was drawn to Ayurveda and its benefits in building immunity. The micro entrepreneurs trained by Karmayog under their Micro Entrepreneurship Training Program (METP) worked together with Sri Sri Tattva Pvt Ltd to make ayurvedic immunity boosting range of medicines available to every corner of India for rural people to be able to stay stronger against the novel Corona virus.

Shylaja, a micro entrepreneur from

Kollam, Kerala who worked during this pandemic with help from her two daughters who are at home until their college reopens says, "I am so happy and blessed to be able to provide people with essential items and medicines during this lockdown. Of course, our own family income too has benefitted immensely from this." Shylaja has also become a mentor for six other youth and is helping them to learn the ropes of micro entrepreneurship. Khagen Mali, who has now started working as a micro entrepreneur from Rangia, Assam, was struggling with his business of manufacturing dusters for school and college black boards. Mali says, "My business has been hit during the lockdown with schools closed and less customers needing my products. After doing YLTP in 2017 I had thankfully undertaken the Micro Entrepreneurship Training Program (METP). Being a Micro Entrepreneur now helps me earn almost Rs 20,000 more than my regular income. It was because of this I could sustain my family during the pandemic." Amol Patil from Kolhapur, Maharashtra almost doubled his income after he switched over to micro entrepreneurship from his previous job as a clerk. He is now mentoring 3 other youth around his area.

Syam Penikkal, South Zone Coordinator for METP informed that a significant population of youth who would opt to move out of India to Dubai and other countries of the middle-east for work are now stranded in India without a stable source of income because of the pandemic. METP has come to them as a respite.

"Felt happy to be able to provide essential items to people during the lockdown. Family income has also increased"

Shylaja,
Micro-entrepreneur, Kollam, Kerala



"Have been able to sustain my family during the pandemic because of Karmayog's micro-entrepreneurship opportunity"

Khagen Mali,
Micro-entrepreneur, Rangia, Assam



"I was a clerk but today I am a micro-entrepreneur with double my previous income"

Amol B Patil,
Micro-entrepreneur, Kolhapur, Maharashtra



"Many youth who would move out to the Middle-East countries for work, could not do so due to the pandemic. METP has given them an income option."

Syam Penikkal,
METP Coordinator, South Zone



More than 45000 units of Ayurvedic immunity boosting medicines have reached people during the month of September itself. Along with that 4300 people benefitted from online sessions on the do's and don'ts of strengthening the body's immunity. All with the dynamic efforts of the MEs.

Volunteers Rush to the Help of Flood Victims in Bhandara and Jajpur

By Ram Asheesh

Bhandara, Maharashtra: Following heavy rains in the last week of August and first week of September and with discharge of water from dams in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, many areas in Bhandara district got flooded leaving many homeless. On September 4, 2020, a team of volunteers from The Art of Living led by Kavita Devgirkar arrived at Kacchi Basti, Ganeshpur, to help the flood victims tide over the emergent situation. They distributed over 150 food packets and other essential items like clothes, bed sheets, soap, detergent, and biscuits.

Jajpur, Odisha: Incessant rains and overflowing rivers inundated many villages in Jajpur District, Arangabad village being one of the worst hit. A team of volunteers from The Art of Living went to this village on September 6 to offer assistance to the flood victims. Plastic tarpaulin sheets and ration kits were distributed.

Flood waters cut off many areas in Jajpur leaving them totally isolated with no contact with the rest of the world. Using boats made from the bark of banana trees, volunteers reached



these areas and distributed ration kits and other relief material. The team led by Biswajit Jena distributed relief material including food and other

essential items to over 300 families. Plastic tarpaulin sheets were given to 20 families whose homes had collapsed

in the flood. The ration kits that were distributed contained items like poha, biscuits, sugar, candles, mosquito coils, matches, and milk powder.

Learning from the EXPERTS

Jayang Dehi, Yasho Dehi: Invoking the Feminine

Dr Hampi Chakrabarti

The one Absolute is realized as both the Purusha and the Prakriti, the manifest and the un-manifest, the male and the female – each arm of the existence has a different gift to offer. Navratri is a celebration of this feminine energy. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, in The Art of Living has created a platform to not just expound the virtues of this feminine energy but also opened doors for women to own their highest potential and lead others towards it. Nine of these exceptional women, who have walked this path, share their experiences.



Mala Sundareshan

Director, Children and Teens Department

I played cricket for India and also received the Eklavya Award. But then there comes a time in every sportsperson's life when they may not be playing as well as before. On that day, I have seen majority of them go through some form of depression or loneliness. For me when that time came, thanks to the teachings of Gurudev that are taught here at The Art of Living, I was in a position to understand life from a bigger perspective. I could smile and move on to the next phase of life. I have been coaching the Karnataka side for more than 7 years now. In a team there are different skill sets and thought processes. I have been able to transform teams into winning combinations because of the confidence and wisdom I have gained at The Art of Living. I never knew my own potential as a leader. Now, as the Director of Children and Teens Department, in the last 7-8 years, my team and I, we have been able to take it to an astounding growth and reach so many children because of the confidence instilled in us that we are part of the bigger game plan.

Mamattha Kailkhura

Senior Ashram Resident

When Gurudev started The Art of Living movement in 1981, the spiritual space was different. It was crowded by sects who treated women as harbingers of sins. Gurudev's pioneering efforts to regenerate spirituality in its purest form has opened up new doors for women. In those days it was rare to see women occupying *Vyas Peeth* or the seat of knowledge. Gurudev took the revolutionary step of creating women teachers. They travelled far and wide to impart the highest knowledge to the masses. Within the organization, Gurudev has entrusted women with responsible positions at all levels. My first leadership role came in 2004 when I set up the media office and acted as Gurudev's Press Secretary. In the 20 years of being on this path, my experience has been that Gurudev's only interest has been our growth as a seeker. Gender has never been an obstacle. Gurudev has taught and also given us the direct experience, that our first identity is that we are part of the universal spirit. Then comes gender, religion, race, and other identities. This truth reflects in his day to day dealings with people. So, it's not surprising that women have always been part of the core leadership in our organizations.



Neelam Kochar

Head, The Art of Living Bureau of Communication

When I look back, all I see is transformation in and around me – it's like acquiring wings. With Gurudev's and the organization's confidence vested in my potential, I have been able to do stuff that I never thought was possible for me. Over the years my whole outlook towards life has changed. Most importantly I have learnt the fine art of balancing the various aspects of life. I am no longer governed by raw emotions, rather I have learnt to use them as a strength. Through the spiritual learnings available here, every day I see women like me lead various projects with efficiency, sometimes even without any formal training of that job! I had never thought women could do *Upanayan*, chant the Gayatri Mantra or fearlessly work for peace in conflict areas. In all these years I got the opportunity to work and acquire the experience of different fields. When I worked for organizing the *Paigam-e-Mohabbat* event along with my husband, I witnessed first-hand how this organization paved an impeccable platform for women who had faced the brunt of violence first hand to come out and speak against it. For me The Art of Living is a movement!

Nirali Desai

Senior Ashram Resident

I was an introvert person; it was almost impossible for me to go and teach people but then Gurudev chose me to be a teacher of The Art of Living. And I effortlessly became the instrument to reach out to people and make a difference. That is where I understood that a bigger power works through you, and that empowered me. Thereafter, I was given responsibility of a YLTP coordinator. By providing all these opportunities, Gurudev subtly made me realize what I was capable of. In a way you are never really aware of your full potential. One responsibility after the other, Gurudev helped my potential to unfold and made me to realize that I could do it! Every time I have been given a different project, a new skill has blossomed in me, which I was never aware that I had. And I have always been handed such tasks which I did not know how to do! Along the way I learnt and gained so much confidence – like I can do this, I can do this too! Gurudev's grace has made my life blossom.



Rugmani Prabhakar

Head, Sustainable Development, The Art of Living

The Art of Living has broken all stereotypes and gender roles and helped women push boundaries in every sphere of life. Overcoming fears, intrinsic biases and empowering themselves with various skill-sets including vocation-based skill-sets, the women of The Art of Living have been able to raise the social and economic status of their families and open new frontiers especially for their girl children. The women of The Art of Living have demonstrated that to succeed in a man's world you don't necessarily need to behave like a man. Instead they bring intrinsic sensitivities and intuitive capabilities into their service initiatives and work-place making them valuable contributors to the whole. Many of our women have become leaders in their domains. They succeed because they work hard and they work smart. They are sustainable models in themselves, because they have a 360-degree perspective that combines human and environmental sensitivities with economic bottom-lines.



Sangita Gujrati

Director, Gnana Kshetras (Temple of Knowledge Department)

As Gurudev teaches that spirituality is beyond gender; both Shiv and Shakti energies are necessary for the existence to be. For me it has been an inexpressible experience how Gurudev, through our daily lives, slowly one step at a time has made us experience deeper knowledge, has taken us closer to the understanding of what existence, life, and living are and what is its purpose. He has let us come to the question of 'who am I', by ourselves without even realizing the effort. This I feel is true empowerment. Every person, every situation, be it positive or negative, he makes us realize it to be a learning experience. Because, unless there is a situation, how will you know what are your strengths and where are the gaps in you that you need to fill. This empowerment is not superficial; it is a deep, life transforming experience. You are able to deal to with situations without getting caught in it. The Art of Living provides that platform where you work towards empowering others and in the process, you also get empowered.



Sejal Thakkar

Senior Faculty, The Art of Living

I have been teaching courses for the last 25 years and it has never been so that a responsibility has not been entrusted to me because of my gender. Gurudev never lets that angle to even come to your mind. I have travelled far and wide to places like Russia, Mongolia and even naxalism affected regions and transformed lives there. If you are willing and committed to learn, practice, progress and share the knowledge, you get equal opportunity here. There are so many female teachers in this organization. Many of them come from very humble backgrounds who probably did not have many other options. This is where they have found a greater meaning of life. Even my mother-in-law, a senior citizen who in all her life had never ventured outside the family responsibilities, became a teacher here and then fearlessly travelled to unknown places and found her way. She has taught courses in so many prisons too! The confidence she got from The Art of Living helped her break all barriers.



Shabari Chaudhuri

National Executive Board member, Karmayog Department

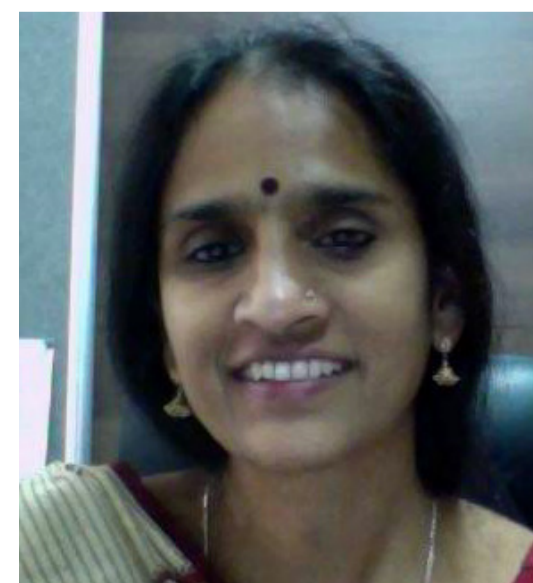
When I used to conduct YLTP courses for the girls in villages, I closely witnessed their lives. When our female yuvacharyas get married, I have seen them raising their families in such a different way. I have seen how domestic conflicts never become an issue in their homes. This is such a big inspiration for me. The small nuggets of wisdom that they learn at The Art of Living, 'responsibility is equal to power' 'not taking responsibility is equal to complaining' are ingrained so well, that they are able to implement them in their home and make life beautiful for the entire family. This spiritual wisdom taught here is creating a silent revolution in rural India by enabling efficient, peaceful and loving families and communities. Even the girls who did not marry, it is not easy to live as an unmarried woman in rural India. Them too I see leading their life so respectfully and efficiently. The tribal women in the remote villages of east and north-east India, where I have conducted our courses – I have seen them work harder than men in both their fields and at home. I see those women driving change and development with the strength of this spiritual wisdom. I feel so grateful to be part of this empowering journey.



Vasanti Iyer

Vice President, Sri Sri Tattva Panchkarma

Gurudev has always spoken about Ashtalakshmi. If you see our Vishalakshi Mantap at the top it is adorned with a picture of Ashtalakshmi. He says that women are born empowered. In fact, most of the qualities are already existing in women. There is no question of external empowerment that needs to be given to women. It is just a matter of providing that environment where her qualities will manifest. In The Art of Living we have that conducive environment, bereft of any gender bias for creativity to blossom. Therefore, here one can come up with ideas, pursue them and see that it fructifies. Of course, the objective here is the benefit of all and not just self-interest. You see, women are heading several projects and prominent departments of this organization and leading administrative work. Here the percentage of women driving the initiatives is very high. Women inherently come with the qualities of action and dynamism and at the same time there is much more stability in her which is again coupled with other natural qualities like compassion and being amiable. The knowledge that Gurudev imparts further strengthens these qualities.





1: Shaila Putri

The first aspect of Durga is Shailaputri. Shailaputri means that which is extraordinary, which is rising up to reach the heights. When the mud reaches up to reach the sky it is called Shaila – in the peak. Born out of the peak experience. That is Shailaputri. A peak of any experience that is Mother Divine. It is an aspect of energy. That aspect is Durga. Shaila means peak. Born out of the peak. Born means – an aspect that embodies the height, the peak of energy.

2: Brahmacharini

The second is Brahmacharini. Brahma means infinity. That which moves in the infinity. You will say if it is infinity, what is the point of moving? It is everywhere. Where will it move? Yes and no. Even though something is all over, yet it can move also. It is dynamic. If you think everything is everywhere, infinity – it is static. But a movement in the infinity is a reality of the subtle. The subtle is not static. We see the space as static. Space is not static. There is enormous movement in the space. Like the ocean does not go anywhere but the waves in the ocean are moving in itself. Even in the middle of the ocean, waves are still there. But you will say for wave to come up, there should be empty space. There is space where there is no ocean, that's why wave can happen. This is the nearest example we can give. The movement in infinity is one meaning. Another is the virgin aspect of energy. The energy is virgin. Like the Sun rays today – though it is old, yet it is fresh and new. The newness is depicted in the second form of Durga.

3: Chandraghanta

The third is Chandraghanta. Chandra means Moon or that which is related to the mind, that which charms the mind, the embodiment of beauty. Wherever anything appears beautiful to you, it is because of the Mother Divine's energy there. If the energy is not there, nothing is beautiful. However beautiful body and face one may have, if there is no life in it, you don't call it beautiful. You don't say, "This is a beautiful corpse." The dead body you don't see beauty in it, because there is no energy. So it is the energy which brings the beauty in kids, which brings the beauty in animals, which radiates beauty in human beings. So that is Chandraghanta.

4: Kushmanda

Kushmanda is the fourth name. Kushmanda means a ball of energy, *prana*. Pumpkin is also called Kushmanda because pumpkin in the vegetable which has maximum energy. – *prana* in it. That is why pumpkin is also called Kushmanda. People are a little bit confused on why the Goddess is called a pumpkin. You tell any lady you are a pumpkin and you will get beaten. Be ready for that before you call someone a pumpkin. Vegetables also have *prana* – energy in it. In some of the villages in this country, in some states, when you find a pumpkin, you give it to Brahmins or the intellectuals. Usually people say, "Oh pumpkin! Give it to them, it is their food." Normally people don't eat pumpkin because it has too much energy so it for those people who do a lot of brain work. Of course that is a wrong thing to say. Everybody needs a brain! So pumpkin is called so because it is full of *prana* - ball of *prana*. Whenever you experience a ball of energy or *prana* – know that this is one aspect of Durga, the Mother Divine.

5: Skandamaata

Skandamaata – She is the mother, the motherly energy. She is like your own mother. She is the mother of all the six systems of knowledge. You know the six schools of knowledge? Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Vedanta, Uttara Mimansa. These are the six darshanas and Shadanga –there are six *angas* – or limbs or the body of knowledge. In that Jyotishya comes, music

is part of it, then you have many other disciplines, the meters, phonetics, 64 different disciplines of art and science, and knowledge. Skandamaata is the mother of all this wisdom.

6: Katyayini

Katyayini is that which is born out of the seer aspect of consciousness. Katyayan means seer. When you become a witness you say I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not this... and you go deep in and you become the seer of everything, and from the seer aspect of the consciousness energy comes up. And that energy, that consciousness which has the intuitive ability – that aspect is Katyayini. Seeing beyond the senses, knowing beyond the logic, that energy is Katyayini.

7: Kaalaratri

Kaalaratri is the deep, dark matter, dark energy that houses infinite universes, that brings solace to every soul. If you feel happy, comfortable, it is the blessing of the *ratri*. The simple translation of *ratri* is night. Why night is also called *ratri*? Because night brings solace to all the animals, all the living beings. It brings solace, you feel comfort. Whatever you do in the day, at night when you sleep, you gain the inner peace and comfort. Kaalaratri is that aspect of Mother Divine which is beyond the universe yet brings solace to every heart and soul.

8: Maha Gauri

Maha Gauri is one that is so beautiful, that gives momentum, and ultimate freedom in life – one that brings you ultimate liberation. Gauri means that which gives you knowledge, that which makes you move in life, and that which liberates you also.



Maha Gauri is the eighth aspect of Mother Divine.

Day 9: Siddhidhatri

The ninth aspect is Siddhdhaatri. It brings perfection in life. Siddhi – gives miracles. The same Mother Divine's blessings brings many miracles in life. What we think is impossible, Siddhdhaatri makes it possible. Seeing out of the box, thinking out of the box, going beyond the reasonable, logical mind, and seeing something much farther and wider – beyond time and space. That is Siddhdhaatri. Siddhdhaatri is the one who gives the fruit of your effort. You make effort, you don't get the fruit – that is not in your hands. It is in the hands of the Mother Divine. Only by that Mother Divine's, that energy's blessing, things fructify.

Navaratri over the Years

By Padma Koti

In the grand, inexorable march of Maha Kaala – Time – change is the only constant, and the Corona pandemic is contributing to it by bringing in new normals at every turn!

No surprise, then, that at the Bengaluru International Centre of The Art of Living, Navaratri 2020, like Ganesha Chaturthi and Janmashtami before it, is being celebrated online.

In her beautifully evocative biography "Gurudev : On the Plateau of the Peak," of her brother Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Bhanumathi Narasimhan shares with her readers about Navaratri celebrations at the Ashram. As she strings her cherished memories together, as on a garland, a magical, highly relatable word-picture evolves, and the evolution and the expansion of the nine-day festival - and the changes that took place over the years- comes alive through her narrative.

Beginning from her childhood, she recounts how she would accompany her brother to see the displays of Navaratri dolls in their neighbors' homes, returning home with an assortment of *sundal*, a traditional prasad. In her growing years, the melodious Lalitha Sahasranama was chanted on all the nine days. A major transition in Navaratri celebrations came about when Gurudev decided to include the Chandi Yagya to benefit everyone. Meditative chants became a part of the festivities with Gurudev entering into a deep silence.

Elsewhere, in an interview, Bhanu Ma recalls that for more than 25 years, Navaratri has been an integral part of the Ashram culture and used to always have the same grandeur; the difference was just one of scale. With the passing years the festival has gained a multitude of dimensions owing to the increasing numbers of attendees, she explains. What has not changed over the decades, however, is the meticulous observance of the timeless yagyas and pujas performed at the Ashram, starting with the Rudra puja and culminating with Rishi Homa on the final day.

Through the years, Vishalakshi Amma - Gurudev and Bhanu Ma's mother -used to oversee the festivities, but from the year 1999 that was to change, steering Bhanu Ma's experience of Navaratri to a new level. In the weeks before she passed away, on November 9, 1999, Vishalakshi Amma, not only made Bhanu Ma and her husband, Anna, sit with her and Pitaji to take the Puja sankalpas, but also began to keep her at her side, as if wordlessly passing on the mantle to her daughter.

Festivals are joyous occasions, but for millions across cultures and continents, they are tinged with nostalgia and yearning for their dear departed. "I miss Amma," Bhanu Ma says, poignantly. Without the towering presence of her dear mother, she now had to step in and helm the festivities.

That Navaratri, she observed to herself that she suddenly felt mature: "I felt

like my mother. Whatever I had seen before, I now perceived with a mature pair of eyes," she shares. As she looked around at the attendees, she began to think about their comfort and needs. Noting the sense of togetherness and that "everyone wore a joyous smile with a palpable longing for the divine" was perhaps like a moment of epiphany.

Over the years, she observes, there have been quantum jumps in the scale of the pujas, the number of august pujaris from other temples, the number of attendees, and the logistics of accommodation, catering (Gurudev himself decides the mouth-watering menus), transportation, and other arrangements - all made without knowing the number of people who will actually turn up!

Coming to "the present moment", having for years experienced the magic and etherealness of Navatri, devotees have to now take in stride the fact that Navaratri 2020 is taking on a new avatar - for the first time it is going online, enabling you to watch the homas and Gurudev close up and make that inward journey without external distractions. Bhanu Ma has exquisitely expressed how our inner space is always a vast space - *Chidambaram* - and the true essence of these pujas is that they make one go inward and discover this vast inner space in the presence of the Master. So, in the online Navaratri 2020, let us truly celebrate by going inward. *Chidambaram* awaits us!

Project Bharat: The Vision for India's Rural Revolution

By Indrani Sarkar

Despite numerous challenges, a new post-pandemic India is taking root and it will be interesting to see how the country determines its place in the future world order. With a potential of 600 million youth, India is on the threshold of a vital transition and a rural revolution can drive sustainable recovery, once the crisis recedes.

Project Bharat by The Art of Living is a significant move in this direction to bring transformation across seven lakh villages of India. Launched by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in 2018 Project Bharat is focused on raising a strong workforce of 35 lakh 'pratinidhis' or representatives from the rural belt that will engage in socio-economic-environmental development and contribute to India's economy. And as a consequence create a wave of *sattva* in the nation and re-establish dharma

And who is a pratinidhi? Any individual who has the zeal and commitment to stand up for his/her village and join hands with The Art of Living to uplift their community and implement development.

To reach the goal of 35 lakh pratinidhis, Project Bharat emphasises on selecting five skilled and committed representatives from every village, though the number can vary in the range of 5-10, depending upon the population of a particular village.

Once pratinidhis are appointed, they are trained to become community leaders and encouraged to assess the needs of their village depending on which

different initiatives are conducted such as skill training, youth leadership and women empowerment programs, de-addiction workshops, cleanliness drives, tree plantations, promoting swadeshi products, natural farming and agricultural practices, ancient wisdom and culture, holistic health and well-being through yoga, meditation and many more social projects including water conservation and rejuvenating rivers - all of which are crucial for sustainable transformation and a healthy, harmonious society.

The network of pratinidhis is gradually expanding across villages of India. Pratinidhis are also happy that they have got an opportunity to leverage upon the resources of a platform like The Art of Living, one of the world's largest volunteer based NGOs, to improve their own lives as well as contribute to society. Unique identity cards are also being issued to all pratinidhis.

This grassroots revolution has already begun and Project Bharat is hopeful of bringing change through collective action and spiritual awakening. Gurudev says, "Yog and Udyog must go hand in hand. We need to establish both spiritual and skill centres in every village, to create an atmosphere of peace, prosperity, happiness and harmony in society. This will drive the change for growth and drive India to the top. Let us first dream and then we will make it into a reality."

India was the most prosperous country in the world. The time has come again to put our head and heart into our motherland and bring back the golden days of India.

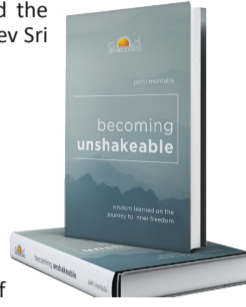
A Guide to Becoming Unshakeable



Becoming Unshakeable: Wisdom Learned on the Journey to Inner Freedom – Book release by Patti Montella

Life has a way of coming at us fast, and when it does, we're usually left searching for answers. That's where Patti found herself early in life after the death of a beloved friend and the unraveling of her marriage—seeking the universal truths of life.

Becoming Unshakeable is an accounting of some of the twists, turns, and hurdles Patti encountered on her journey, along with the astounding spiritual revelations that unveiled themselves along the way. There were many times when her faith on the path was shaken to the core. What she now knows in hindsight is that those were the precise moments that awakened her to the part of herself that is unshakable. For more than 25 years, Patti has learned the profound wisdom shared in her book, directly from Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.



Accolades for the book:

- * Amazon bestseller across five categories, including health & spirituality
- * Indie Book Award - finalist 2020 under the self-help category

About the author

Patti Montella has been a pioneer, risk-taker, and leader her entire life. She built a thriving corporate career on the cutting-edge of travel technology before leaving it all behind to dedicate her life to uplifting society. Through her work in key leadership roles with The Art of Living and the International Association for Human Values, Patti has become an internationally recognized happiness expert and a powerful agent of change.

Karmayog Transforming Lives in Nepal

By Seema Rathi

The Art of Living's Karmayog has begun a renewed venture in Nepal with its flagship Youth Leadership Training Program. A new organisation structure has been put in place with Rural Coordinators being appointed across 7 provinces. Over the years, graduates of the YLTP program have been undertaking significant volunteering work. Sri Sri Bal Sanskar Kendras are being run in several parts of Nepal with initiative from YLTP teachers and volunteers, along with activities like cleanliness drives, natural farming awareness and practice. On the occasion of the recent International Youth Day in Nepal, a grand online celebration was organised. The occasion was graced by Anushka Shrestha, Miss World-Nepal, Entrepreneur and former national Squash player, Nirvana Chaudhary and Paras Khadka, former Captain of the Nepalese Cricket Team,

who encouraged the youth towards working for development.

Participants of the ongoing Online YLTP reported feeling a transformation in their lives after the course. Anish Dahal from Bhairahwa shared that after a brutal accident he had been senseless for more than 8 hours and thereafter had lost his memory. Life had taken a hard turn for him. But after doing the YLTP course he began feeling a difference in himself within a week. Leela Bhandari, who is a member of Nepal Taekwondo said that the teachings of YLTP gave her the confidence to overcome all fears and also brought a sense of calm and patience inside her. A trekking guide from Lazimpath, who is parallelly also a MSc student shared that during his treks, which takes him to many villages, he faced many problems there. Now after doing the YLTP he has a clearer idea of his responsibilities towards the society.

Seva Highlights

Annadata Sukhi Bhava – Project 'Ek Mutti Muskan'

Rewari, Haryana:

On September 6, The Art of Living family in Rewari, Haryana, served a simple meal of freshly cooked rice and lentils to families of laborers and other needy people living adjacent to Shanti Lok. This service was rendered as a part of their unique project, 'Ek Mutti Muskan' (A Fistful of Smiles) Brahm Prakash Bhardwaj, The Art of Living faculty, stated that all the volunteers who are part of this project put away a fistful of rice and lentils every day before cooking their meals. From time to time, all the lentils and rice put away by the volunteers is collected, cooked, and served to needy people. They have been doing this for over 18 months now.



was announced, requests for the Lakshmitaru plants came from various districts including Vadodara, Dahod, Gandhinagar, Kalol, Ahmedabad, Nadiad, Anand, Surat, and Panchmahal, and with the help of Yuvacharyas they were able to fulfill all requests. Alongside the tree plantation, volunteers also conducted several awareness campaigns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bagbahara Volunteers Plant Trees and Install Tree Guards



Bagbahara, Chhattisgarh: On September 6, 2020, as part of the 'Clean Harihar Environment Protection Campaign', The Art of Living family in Bagbahara planted 17 trees on Mandi Marg and also installed iron and bamboo tree guards to protect them. Under this campaign, in the last 5 years, more than 450 trees have been planted along with tree guards. These trees have been planted in sports grounds, railway premises, alongside ponds, Muktidham, Mandi Marg, and Ma Chandi Darshan Marg. Rendering such services to society is a weekly activity of The Art of Living family in Bagbahara.

cleanliness drive has also been started. Nav Chetana Camps are being conducted. Mohit stated that the youth of the village are looking forward to participate in the Youth Leadership Training Program after completion of Nav Chetana Shivir. "We have taken on the responsibility of making our village into an ideal village following the guidelines given by Gurudev. Some tasks have been completed successfully and still others are in progress," he added.

Blood Donation Camp in West Bengal



Howrah, West Bengal: The Art of Living team in West Bengal had organized a Voluntary Blood Donation Camp at the Sri Sri Gyan Mandir in Jagannathpur, Hooghly, on September 5, 2020. 45 volunteers donated blood at the camp. The Art of Living faculty, Utpal Ghosai, and his team gifted each of the donors with a sapling and a book by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Around the same time, on September 4, another blood donation camp was organized by The Art of Living faculty, Mahendra Pradhan, and his team in Haldia, Medinapur. 42 volunteers donated blood at this camp.

Sri Sri Gyan Mandir in Diaton Receives a Makeover



As schools continue to remain closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the teaching and non-teaching staff of Sri Sri Gyan Mandir in Diaton, Odisha, took this opportunity to give the school building a makeover. They cleaned, washed, and painted. When students finally return to school they will find clean and bright classrooms waiting for them.

Over 5000 Lakshmitaru Saplings Planted in Gujarat



Gujarat, Vadodara: More than 5000 Lakshmitaru saplings were planted in various locations across Gujarat as part of the 10-day Mega Lakshmitaru Tree Transplantation Campaign launched by The Art of Living team in Gujarat on September 5, 2020. Behind the success of this campaign lies the concentrated effort of 22 Yuvacharyas from different districts of Gujarat who took on the responsibility of delivering the saplings to various locations.

Partha Joshi, The Art of Living faculty, stated that the Gujarat team has been working for the last several years to promote the plantation of Lakshmitaru as this plant has many medicinal properties. Keeping in mind the current situation, the entire planning for the project was done by Yuvacharyas in meetings conducted online. Montubhai stated that once the project

Tulsi Plants Distributed in Hansi



Hansi, Haryana: On the occasion of Dwadashi on September 14, 2020, The Art of Living team in Hansi, led by Sandeep Goyal, The Art of Living faculty, distributed Tulsi plants. Over 100 plants were distributed free along with organic manure. The activity was carried out following all the norms of hygiene and social distancing.

Trees Planted under Model Village Project

Punjab, Ludhiana: The Art of Living team in Jagraon led by Mohit Aggarwal, The Art of Living faculty, launched the 'Adarsh Gaon Abhiyan' in Bodalwala village, Jagraon, on August 15, 2020. To begin with, 100 trees were planted at various sites in the village and tree guards installed around the saplings for protection. A

Gurudev: “Social Security Should Be Given By Society And Not The Government.”

Discourse on Ganapati Atharvashirsha



On August 30, 2020, Gurudev gave an enriching discourse on the Ganapati Atharvashirsha, during which the attendees soaked in the mesmerizing slokas. In a deeply significant statement, Gurudev said that the mantra itself is the devata.

By Padma Koty

In September 2020, Gurudev hosted online interactions with noted environmentalists and forest officials, mental health experts, parliamentarians from Western Australia, youth, and directors and actors from the Tamil film industry. As ever, his sanguinity, and the inspirational and positive note he struck in his discussions, guided his listeners – many of them holding offices of high responsibility - and gave them an impetus to work resiliently and positively for the post-Covid future. He also conducted the “21-Day Meditation Challenge” from 1-21 September 2020, which had tens of thousands of attendees joining in from around the world, and culminated on the International Peace Day.

Before presenting Gurudev's September engagements, a brief roundup of his online meetings with influencers in the last week of August 2020:

On August 23, in a discussion with well-known Tamil film director Bhagyaraj, under a series titled Sintanaigal Simplified, Gurudev said, “In life everything has its place. We should have prayer as well as self-effort, and use our heart as well as our intellect.”

On August 24, he led an interactive session with faculty and students of Chandigarh University in which the second edition of Drug-free Campus Campaign was launched. Gurudev told the students, “Drugs rob you of your youthfulness, valor and creativity. Meditation makes it easier to come out of addictions.”

In The Power of Youth as Change Makers on August 30, Gurudev had a lively chat with four effervescent

youngsters, each a powerhouse in their own right: Anushka Sen, Tabay Atkins, Davi Campolongo and Rishabh Jain. He commended the younger generation as the hope for a brighter and beautiful world.

On August 25, Mental Health and Well-Being in the Digital Era was the theme of an online discussion in which dignitaries from Australia: Hon. Ted Baillieu, ex-Premier of Victoria; Dr. G.K. Harinath; Mittu Gopalan and Paliamentarians Yaz Mubarakai and Janine Freeman interacted with Gurudev. The epidemic has caused fear, uncertainty, and anguish, he said, so we have to educate people to maintain robust health and prevent mental illness from creeping into our lives. Importantly, he said we have to bring this education to people's doorstep.

In August, there were online celebrations with Gurudev for the ever-popular festival of Ganesha Chaturthi and the resplendent Onam Festival of Kerala. Gurudev highlighted how, even after millennia, people reminisce about those virtuous days full of abundance and celebrate Onam.

Gurudev's September 2020 online discussions:



On September 1, 2020, Gurudev interacted with eminent personalities in the IUCN webinar “Bonn Challenge and Forest Landscape Restoration”

Participating in the discussion were Erik Solheim, former Executive-Director and Under Secretary General of United Nations; Dr Vivek Saxena, Country Representative, IUCN India; Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Dir. General, National Mission for Clean Ganga; Siddhanta Das, ex Director General of Forests and Special Secretary, GOI; Manjunath Lakshmikanthan, Regional Manager, ITC Ltd; Dr. Savita, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Wildlife; and Sanjai Mohan, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests. Gurudev cautioned: “It is high time all the nations and communities come together to curb pollution and find sustainable lifestyle changes.”



Prajakta Koli

In a lively interaction with Prajakta Koli in Key to a Calmer Mind, Gurudev said, “In life you should have a dream, but not get stuck in it. He said we should plan, but have not just one plan, but Plans A, B and C, in case A does not work.” You should not shy away from taking the advice of someone who has a better vision than you, he added.



GM Rao, Chairman, GMR Group

On September 5, Gurudev hosted a dialogue “Reshaping Business - the Role of Spirituality” with Mike Perlis, ex-President and CEO of Forbes Media; Tony Pritzker of Pritzker Group; Binod Chaudhary and GM Rao, Chairman, GMR group. Gurudev opined that Dharma is not doing to others what you don't want others to do to you. Dharma is also that which can help sustainable growth, which happens when we don't cross the line of ethics. Many do not see the long term effects of Adharma, he observed.



Dr. Ramanan Laxminarayan, Dir. CDDEP

September 10, observed as World Suicide Prevention Day, saw Gurudev in conversation with distinguished and dedicated mental health experts and scientists like Dr. Ramanan Laxminarayan, Dir. CDDEP; Dr. Rakesh Chadda, Professor and Head, NDDTC; Dr. Akshya Vasudev; Prof Ronnie Newman; Dr. Sangeetha Mahajan and Lori Hassal – MSW, RSW, with Dr. Sudhir Khandelwal moderating. The theme of the online discussion was Nurturing the Gift of Life. Gurudev said, ‘Life is very precious. Let us all join hands and create awareness among people who have the slightest tendency to take their life away.’ People should socially share their feelings. In a deeply thought-provoking observation, he said that social security should be given by society and not the Government.

The same day the UNEP and URI had organized “Faith 4 Earth Dialogues” in which Gurudev led an insightful discussion with well-known faith leaders on how faith is essential to reconnect with nature for a sustainable development of the planet. The respected panelists were Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev; H.H. Radhanath Swami; Sister B.K.Shivani; H.H. Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche; Dr. Rajwant Singh; Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai; Haji Syed Salman Chisty; Rev. K. Reuben Mark; and Joyce Msuya, Dy. ED, UNEP.

Gurudev said faith leaders have a responsibility to take care of the mental health of people. Planting trees is a faith in Hinduism, he said, advocating that everyone should plant five trees in their lifetime.



Lakshmy Ramakrishnan

In the ongoing Sinthanaigal Simplified a motivational heart-to-heart conversation talk show telecast every Sunday at 11 a.m. on Colors Tamil, Gurudev engages in candid conversations with Tamil personalities from different walks of life. He had an animated discussion with Lakshmy Ramakrishnan, director, centered on life, films and relationships. With Actor Sarathkumar, Gurudev spoke about the need for places of worship and about positive vibrations. Discussing with the Business Head of Colors Tamil, Anup Chandrasekharan, Gurudev advised that we should have trust in a higher power, which will protect us and help us. Yoga, Pranayama, meditation, spirituality will give us the psychological strength to overcome any situation in life, he added. With director Gautham Menon, Gurudev said one should not fear criticism. In a thought-provoking chat with Actor Andrea Jeremiah, he talked about his interest in playing the Veena.

SEVA TIMES

Published by:
The Art of Living Trust

Concept:
Debjyoti Mohanty

Editorial Team:
Thoheja Gurukar
Dr. Hampi Chakrabarti
Ram Asheesh

Design layout:
Suresh, Nila Creations

Contact:
+91 9035945982,
+91 7004144397

Email:
editor.sevatimes@yltp.artofliving.org,
sevatimes@yltp.artofliving.org

Website:
<https://www.artofliving.org/in-en/projects/seva-times>

PROJECT BHARAT
THE ART OF LIVING
29 STATES, 544, 544 DISTRICTS, 7 LAKH VILLAGES/WARDS, 35 LAKH PRATINIDHIS
Benefits of Pratidinhi:
• Opportunity to be part of the largest international NGO
• Platform to share and contribute towards the society
• Strong framework for holistic Sustainable Development
HELP DESK: pratinidhi@artofliving.org
Contact | 080-61125607



All of the knowledge series by Gurudev, guided meditations, books, music by your favorite artists available on

THE ART OF LIVING
YOUR HAPPINESS APP
artofliving.org/app

