

# SEVA TIMES

THE ART OF LIVING INTERNATIONAL CENTER, BENGALURU



Water Conservation Awareness Campaign by Yuvacharyas in Jharkhand

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APRIL 2021

## SEVA SNIPPETS

Gurudev Addresses Participants of International Yog Festival



"Peace is our very nature, and yoga leads you to inner peace," was the message given by Gurudev on March 2, 2021, as he addressed participants of the International Yog Festival organized by Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN) and Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB) at Ganga Resort, Muni Ki Reti (Rishikesh), Uttarakhand, from March 1-7, 2021. Participants learnt the secrets of chasing away laziness through yogic practices from Gurudev and had a blissful meditation session led by him.

Prison SMART Programs for Women Inmates in Bihar



The Art of Living in association with the Department of Home (Prison), Government of Bihar, will be conducting Prison SMART programs for women serving term in Bihar jails. The project was launched on International Women's Day on March 8, 2021, at Patna Beur Jail. Prison SMART is a specially designed program that transforms the lives of people working in or incarcerated within the criminal justice system. The inmates learn skills that help reduce stress and heal trauma. They also receive practical knowledge on how to handle negative emotions in order to live to one's highest potential and contribute to society in a positive way. Meera Sinha, The Art of Living faculty, stated that this project was made possible due to the efforts of Mithilesh Mishra, IG- Prisons, Home Department, Bihar.

Two New Classrooms Added to Sri Sri Gyan Mandir in Barwatoli



Sri Sri Gyan Mandir in Barwatoli, Jharkhand, which is a free school run by The Art of Living, now has two additional classrooms. The new classrooms were constructed with the help of CSR funding from CONCOR India. Hon'ble Minister of Tribal Affairs, Arjun Munda, inaugurated the new classrooms. The minister was welcomed with a colorful folk dance performed by the school children.

## Wellness Cannot Be Attained on Bare Bodies: Clothes and Shoes Distributed to Community Members in Bijolya

By Seva Times Team

The ongoing project 'The Art of Living Intervention for Stone Quarry Workers' in Bhilwada district of Rajasthan was initiated with the objective of enabling the people working and living in close proximity of stone quarries to be benefitted by The Art of Living's health and wellness enhancing processes and modules. However, at the very initiation of the project, it was observed that the people of the region were struggling on several other parameters and not just health. Apathy in terms of infrastructure and basic amenities was widespread in the seven villages in Bijoliya block that had been selected for the project. Among the first observations made by the project team on the field was that not all the villages had schools and that several children travelled from their village to another to attend school. In most cases they walked to their school without proper footwear. Too many of the children did not have warm clothes to face the arriving winter. Not just the children, the adult community members, especially those working in the stone quarries under schemes like MGNREGA, went about their day, walking to the quarry and back



home, and walking over cut stones completely barefoot.

The team realized that such conditions would be an impediment in the implementation of the project. No health and wellness could be achieved unless basic minimum things like shoes and clothes were made available to the community members. Hence a widespread distribution of clothes and shoes for school children in the area was undertaken along with distribution of shoes for adult community members too.

About 442 pants, 456 T-shirts for children and 1529 blankets had been distributed by the middle of February.

Unbeknownst to the project team, this unplanned additional activity came as a boon to another crucial implementation challenge. According to The Art of Living's development philosophy, social development initiatives stand a chance to be successful and sustainable only when the local community is enabled to not just participate but drive and share

the onus of the initiative. This community, however, owing to previous experience of exploitation by outsiders, was very skeptical about The Art of Living's motives. And hence, weren't too keen to cooperate during the early days of the project. Making available basic utilities like blankets, clothes and shoes, helped the project team in breaking the ice and slowly win over the community's trust. Where there is a will, you find a way.

## Volunteers for Better Surat Making Waves in Gujarat

**Surat, Gujarat:** The Art of Living team in Surat has formed a group called "Volunteers for Better Surat." Within a few months of its inception, Volunteers for Better Surat has attracted a lot of attention in the media because of their selfless service and their tremendous achievements.

Some accomplishments of the Volunteers for Better Surat team:

- Adopted Piprol, a village in Dharampur that has no facilities other than basic primary education.
- Planted 4000 mango trees in farmers' fields and another 400 trees in their courtyards.
- Organized free medical camps where more than 400 people have undergone medical checkup and received free medicines.
- Installed street lights and LED

lights in all the homes in three villages.

- Gifted school bags, lunch boxes, and water bottles to children in four schools. Also distributed sweets, clothes, and footwear on Gurudev's Birthday.
- Arranged lunch for around 1200 people on Makara Sankranti. Distributed traditional sweets like Phirki and Til ke Laddoo and also distributed kites among the children. In addition, they distributed 1200 woolen shawls and honored the village head.
- Celebrated Maha Shivaratri with the villagers. Homa was performed for the benefit of the whole village. A blood donation camp was organized in which 70 units of blood was collected.



- As many as 20 country liquor bhattis have been shut down and the youth are now engaged in other productive activities.

Most of the villagers in the three villages where the team is active have done The Art of Living course and gather regularly for satsang. The team has resolved to see that the unemployed youth in these villages find jobs and that the women of the village are also profitably engaged in cottage

industries. Membership to Volunteers for Better Surat is open to all, including Non Art of Living members. VBS already has more than 180 members including Neelesh Karot, Dharmesh Sutaria, Hitesh Jasani, Chirag Pokia, Bharat Kalathia, Dhanji Nasit, Shailesh Golakia, Jigar Nivadia, Gopal Desai, and Deepak Rabadia.

(with inputs from Rammik Sheliya)

## Imparting Skills, Boosting Morale—the Srijan Prison Program

By Padma Koty

“Stone walls do not a prison make/Nor iron bars a cage,” go the famous lines written by Richard Lovelace, and The Art of Living’s Srijan Program has ensured just that. The Srijan (Social Rehabilitation of Inmates in Jail and Aiding the Needy) Program of Sri Sri Rural Development Program (SSRDP) was started in Nov 2018 with its first center in Jammu’s Kot Bhalwal Jail. From here, it spread to over 14 jails across India, offering different types of employability training.

Designed as a holistic rehabilitative intervention that organizes skills workshops, with NSDC (National Skills Development Corporation) as the monitoring partner, Srijan helps prison inmates to not just economically rehabilitate themselves, but also establish a livelihood for themselves on release.

The game-changer, however, is the way Gurudev’s compassionate vision for this particular demography is taken to the next level by organizing The Art of Living’s flagship Happiness Program for all inmates to help them develop their personalities, manage emotions and overcome negativity. This has been vital for boosting morale.

The hand-holding extends to post-release support. The graduates of the workshops are to be provided with a dedicated phone number to remain in touch with the Srijan faculty. Further, Art of Living teams will guide and support them.

Inmates are now assured of financial agency as their new skills, recognized by the Central Government, will boost their morale as well as their employability both within the jail and on release. Jail authorities too have extended their support and want the curriculum expanded.

It is estimated that by 2025, 25% of the world’s labor force would be Indian. SSRDP’s Srijan is a mission that ensures that prison inmates too form a part of this statistic, contributing to the nation’s productivity and economic growth. Srijan next plans to map its impact on the families of the inmates, as a bonus would be inmates’ acceptance from and integration into both the mainstream as well as their families!

(With inputs from SSRDP)

## Water Conservation Awareness Campaign by Yuvacharyas in Jharkhand



Women taking an oath to conserve water

Yuvacharyas in Jharkhand celebrated World Water Day on March 22, 2021, by conducting awareness campaigns about water conservation in every village of 134 panchayats in 7 districts of Jharkhand. While emphasizing the necessity and utilities of water, the campaigns also drew attention to the diminishing quantity of potable water. People were warned that given the increase in population and increased consumption of water, the

threat of a water crisis looms large in the not too distant future. For days leading up to World Water Day 2021, Yuvacharyas went from door to door in the villages educating people on water conservation and rain water harvesting methods including construction of earthen dams, digging water pits for storage, reusing water, and planting trees to increase groundwater levels.



Guided by Yuvacharyas, villagers construct a simple check dam in a stream bed

## DOWN THE SEVA LANE

### WHERE?

Thane and Pune

### BY WHOM?

- Sri Sri Ravishankar Vidya Mandir Trust ( SSRVM)
- Capgemini Technology Services India Ltd., Mumbai

### WHY?

It is the age of social media and internet. With the increased importance of technology, being digitally literate is a crucial skill in today’s times. However a large section of society, including youth, has absolutely no knowledge about computers. As more and more people gain access to technology, they will learn and discover many new things that will provide them with employment opportunities and help them grow in their personal and professional lives. Today digital literacy has emerged as a valuable tool for lifelong learning.



Compiled by Indrani Sarkar

### WHAT?

Development of Digital Literacy Centre that delivers 20 hours of hands on training on computer basics such as knowledge of hardware, input/output devices, web, email, bank application, and software applications including paint, MS Word, Excel, Power Point.

### WHEN?

August 2019 onwards

### OUR IMPACT:

2000+ Beneficiaries impacted in the age group of 16-80 years

## The Art of Living Matrimony

Creating meaningful connections leading to fulfilling marriages



“Marriage is a commitment to share and serve together” – Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

The Art of Living Matrimony is a platform that brings people with similar life values together. To date, hundreds of couples have tied the knot through this platform and the numbers are increasing every day. The Art of Living Matrimony believes in safety and trust and hence the platform provides 100% mobile verified profiles. Keeping in mind the needs of today’s youngsters, the platform is built to give members complete control through easy-to-use interfaces and features that can help them identify, filter and contact potential life partners. Besides the online platform, The Art of Living Matrimony organizes matrimony workshops at multiple locations across India from time to time. The main purpose of The Art of Living Matrimonial is to build a better, more peaceful world by enabling happy families with a commitment to share and serve together.

### Success Story

“I had been searching for a life partner for a long time. I met many girls through other websites, but they weren’t on the spiritual path and failed to understand me and my lifestyle! After that I got to know about the Matrimony website of The Art of Living, where I felt I could find a spiritual soulmate. There I registered for free. I first completely examined the website (there was no app back then when I registered, otherwise it would have made things a lot easier). Then I started liking and short-listing profiles and took membership. This helped me a lot in my search. And then, at last, I found her! That was the most exciting moment! I spoke to my parents, the horoscope matching was also done and marriage was fixed i.e. on 26th February 2020. With the blessings of God and Guruji the marriage was a completely joyful affair! The family members and dear ones on both sides made the day more memorable. I thank Art of Living Matrimony for finding me a perfect match.”



Ashok Basutkar & Priyanka Khaire  
Wedding Date: February 26, 2020

## Jal Sakhis to Create a Water Secure Ranchi

**Ranchi, Jharkhand:** The Art of Living's sister concern, International Association for Human Values (IAHV), in partnership with WHH, has initiated Jal Jagriti Abhiyan (Water Awareness Campaign) to create a water-secure Ranchi. It is a movement led entirely by women. These women water warriors are known as Jal Sakhis (Friends of Water). Many areas of Ranchi, Jharkhand, are facing acute water crisis. According to government records, there has been 35% less rain in the last one year. Groundwater levels are dropping. A woman from one of the villages stated that even after digging a Borewell down to a depth of 1000 feet, there is no water to be found. Jal Sakhis are highly motivated women who sensitize the villagers to their own problems. They also act as the mediators between the villagers and local government bodies. They bring the villagers together as one community and encourage them to join the initiative to save water. The Jal Sakhis are motivating other women from the villages to become Jal Sakhis and are creating water councils comprising of village women known as Jal Jaivik Kheti Samooh.



The Art of Living and IAHV are supporting women farmers in Ranchi to learn and adopt sustainable agricultural practices. They are training them in water conservation and natural farming techniques. The farmers are also taught how to construct check dams across a waterway to counteract erosion by reducing the velocity of the flowing water. Trench cum bund is another effective measure they are being taught for water conservation in sloping areas. This initiative has increased women's participation in decision making – particularly in water, soil, and livelihood related issues in the region. IAHV's next target is to create a 4-year project covering 50 villages and reach out to 10,000 farmers directly and over 200,000 people indirectly.

### Testimonials:

- "Becoming a Jal Sakhi has been an empowering process for me." -  
*Lalita Devi, a Jal Sakhi from village Ichadag.*
- "I can now prepare my own healthy and organic fertilizers." -  
*Sushila Devi, a Jal Sakhi from village Kurum.*
- "These harvesting and water storing techniques have made me water independent." -  
*Kunti Misra, a Jal Sakhi from village Jidu.*

## Trauma Relief for Victims of Uttarakhand Glacier Burst



**Garhwal, Uttarakhand:** The devastation caused by the glacier burst in Tapovan area of Chamoli District has left the people of the region in a highly traumatized state with many of them having lost their homes and loved ones. Volunteers of The Art of Living have been organizing free trauma relief camps in Raini village, one of the worst hit areas, to help the villagers recover from their mental trauma. People from several nearby villages also participated in the workshops.

Incidentally, the legendary Gaura Devi, who played a key role in the Chipko Movement, one of India's first major environmental movements, hailed from this very village. Her son and daughter-in-law also participated in the trauma relief camp. Sharing his experience, Gaura Devi's son said that the breathing techniques taught at the camp had given him tremendous relief.

On March 11, 2021, International Association for Human Values (IAHV), a sister concern of The Art of Living, distributed solar lamps (also chargeable through a hand pedal in addition to solar energy) to over 100 families in the villages affected by the calamity.

## 6 Wise Ways to Deal with Anger

If your anger is a tool and it is in your control, then anger is good. But if anger controls you then you are in trouble, and the cause is also gone. There is nothing wrong in using anger as a weapon, but if it is cutting your own peace of mind, then you should use wisdom to safeguard yourself.

### Tips to Manage Anger:

Here is some perspective on how to skillfully free your mind from the clutches of anger, and experience a balanced state of mind.

#### #1 Give room for imperfection

The main cause of anger is that you want perfection. You get angry over imperfections, but the world does have levels of perfection. Give a little space for imperfection. When you give some space for imperfection, patience in you increases. At home we keep a garbage can, isn't it? You cannot say, 'I won't keep a garbage can at home'. Then there would be garbage all over the place. Anger is that garbage all over the house. When you give space for imperfection, you will put all the garbage in a can and let it be. Then you will see how you can manage your anger. So exercise patience towards imperfections. It takes time for imperfection to become perfection. How can you give that time? When you give space for it. Then compassion arises and anger disappears.

#### #2 Balance between expressing and suppressing your anger

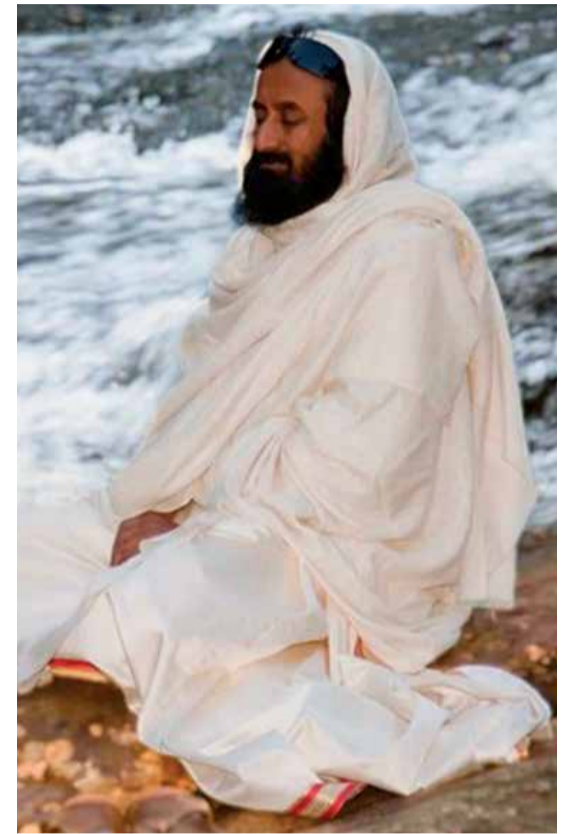
You can't express anger all the time, you will cause so much damage to yourself and others around you. And you can't suppress it all the time, sometimes you need to express it otherwise you will explode. So, you have to strike that right balance between expressing and suppressing your anger. Wisdom is knowing when to express it and when to suppress it.

#### #3 Don't get angry with yourself for getting angry

It will take quite some time for you to get to that level where anger does not even touch you. It will keep coming in different shades and intensities. When anger comes up, don't start blaming yourself. One thing that can be very detrimental is you blaming yourself. Keep moving ahead. If you get angry, never mind, just let it come and go. Instead of looking at the cause of anger, look at the effect it is producing in your body and keep relaxing your body.

#### #4 Keep good company (Sangha)

Whatever you cannot do alone, you can do it with the support of a good company. Company has many benefits and a few drawbacks too, as it can also take up a lot of your energy. The positive effect is that Sangha gives you that much-needed support to move forward. Whenever your mind



goes topsy-turvy, or if your emotions are going up and down, at such times the Sangha will carry you forward. It will help you move through the situations.

#### #5 Accept people as they are

One of the principles of The Art of Living is: Accept people and situations as they are. Accepting and creating room for others itself makes your personality much wider. If you don't have that expanded consciousness then you become very rigid in your outlook. People who irritate you, in some way or the other can bring about the best in you. They can bring out the talents and skills in you. See, when everyone around you is wonderful you don't need any skill to handle a situation. It will only happen when there are people who you think are unreasonable. So, take it as an exercise as much as possible. The moment deep acceptance starts coming from within, you will suddenly find the other person also changes. It is strange but true. When we change, they also change.

#### #6 Practice meditation

Meditation will definitely provide you that much-needed strength to overcome anger. Practice more pranayama and go deeper into meditation. You will feel the serenity and the change in you after meditation. Meditation brings a transformation in you. Remember, any meditation that you do never goes waste.



## Time to Put Up Bird Baths Once again

Molela, Rajasthan: Hanging earthen birdbaths on trees at the onset of summer every year has become a tradition among the followers of The Art of Living in Molela, Rajasthan. It is a tradition they have been following faithfully for the last 8 years. Not only do they put up these birdbaths, they also see to it that it never runs dry. Some followers put up birdbaths to mark special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries. This year, Alok celebrated his birthday on March 21 by putting up 31 birdbaths.

## Free Medical Camp in Sri Sri Vidya Mandir, Kashida

Ghatshila, Jharkhand: The Art of Living team in Ghatshila had organized a free medical camp on March 21, 2021, in the premises of Sri Sri Vidya Mandir, Kashida. Over 150 people underwent free medical checkup conducted by a team of doctors from Jamshedpur. In view of the pandemic, all precautionary measures were taken including strict hygiene and social distancing. Satyaveer Rajak, Sub-Divisional Officer of Ghatshila, arrived at the camp with bouquets for the doctors to show his appreciation of their selfless service.



## The Art of Living Trainers Awarded for Creating Awareness on Menstrual Health and Hygiene



**Ranchi, Jharkhand:** Under Project Pavitra being implemented by The Art of Living's Vyakti Vikas Kendra India Trust, 1190 adolescent girls from 18 Panchayats of Ormanjhi Block were trained in menstrual health and hygiene, within the course of 36 days. The 3rd phase of Project Pavitra came to a completion in Tundahuli Panchayat on 23rd February 2021. In all the three phases a total of 16190 adolescent girls have been benefitted through the free trainings. For these trainings, the trainers of The Art of Living traveled up to 120kms daily and even visited remote villages in the forest areas. The Project Pavitra trainings were

organized in consultation with the Ranchi district administration. The administration praised the efforts of the team highlighting how judiciously the trainers worked towards imparting the training amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. In this project, Anukriti Kumari, Sangeeta Jha, Monika Kumari, Vinita Bhagat, Neha Jha, Kavita and Munni Devi took the lead as trainers. Anganwadi Sevikas of all the 18 panchayats too contributed significantly towards the smooth implementation of the trainings. All trainers were awarded certificates by the Ranchi District Commissioner on the occasion of International Women's Day.

## Opportunity for Us to Create A New World Order: Gurudev in March 2021

In March 2021, as vaccines made way into our lives, The Art of Living seva activities also took baby steps in moving outside the online shell. Yet, given the surge in COVID-19 cases, strict adherence to Government rules were observed.

**March 1:** Gurudev inaugurated the new building of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Vidya Mandir school in Bengaluru east along with the Hon. Minister of Forest, Sh. Aravind Limbavali.

**March 3:** Gurudev addressed more than 5000 people from 43 European countries who had participated in the Online Breath and Meditation Workshop.



**March 11:** MahaShivratri was celebrated at The Art of Living International centre. Gurudev tweeted on the occasion stating, "In the lap of the night, all beings sleep and find freedom from fear & sorrow, although for a short time. The wise awaken to the Shiva Principle, and are liberated forever."

**March 20:** In the 'Heart to Heart With Gurudev: Season 2' series of conversations, when asked by Actress and Director, Divya Khosla Kumar,



regarding what is the spiritual purpose of our lives, Gurudev explained that everybody has been given a role – someone might be a carpenter, someone a doctor; in whichever profession you are, your role is to be happy and spread happiness. When you do that, you feel the purpose of your life has been fulfilled.

**March 21:** In an online conversation with entrepreneur and Hindi film producer Wardha Khan Nadiawala, when Nadiawala mentioned the long list of peace initiatives undertaken by Gurudev globally, Gurudev smilingly replied that all of that happens by itself. He said, "There is so much love in people that when you give just a little love, big things happen by themselves." He further added that he feels one with every place and everyone that he meets and hence he never felt that anyone is different from him.



**March 28:** In the conversation with noted actor Arjun Kapoor, Gurudev remarked that humanity has overcome several challenges before too, and that he is sure this time too we will overcome the pandemic. This however, as he said, is an opportunity for us to think afresh and create a new world order.



### Rashifal

by Vaidic Dharma Sansthan  
(Based on the Moon Sign)

**Aries:** Be generally careful the first 15 days of the month. Live in awareness. Donate navadhanya to temple. Chant Navagraha stotram daily. Follow the ethics. Be disciplined. The last two weeks things are going to improve. Your hard work will give results. Perform Surya Namaskar and meditation.

**Taurus:** The beginning of the month is good for you but guard your temper. Your temper will create problems for you. Three times daily meditation is compulsory. Observe silence as much as possible. Don't take hasty decision. Perform abhishekam to Goddess Durga.

**Gemini:** This whole month is very good for you. Just relax and enjoy your time. Everything seems to be

pleasant. From the middle of the month, you can think of giving attention to material prosperity. In the last week, pay attention to your health. Ashtama Shani is still going on; pray to lord Shani Bhagwan by chanting Shani Mantra.

**Cancer:** The first ten days is good, again the last week is also good. But in middle of the month think twice before taking any decision. Be in the grace of Guru by becoming involved in Guru seva. Without meditation, don't take any major decision of life. In the last week of April, with your courage, take major decision of life. Money and job is good.

**Leo:** All four weeks of the month are good. Compared to first week, improvement in material life is seen in the subsequent weeks. Still compulsory pranayama meditation is needed to get the grace of moon. Donate wheat and perform Surya Namaskar.

**Virgo:** From the second week onwards chant Guru Pooja mantra or any guru stotra and become involved in Guru seva to get grace. Gradual improvements are there in every aspect. Be careful while communicating. There are chances of misunderstanding. Better avoid

too much of talking.

**Libra:** First fifteen days of the month, be careful while driving or riding. Pray to Lord Kartikeya before stepping out of the house. Take care of your health, especially in mooladhara chakra. Excess of heat is seen throughout the body. Don't argue with anyone. The last two weeks chant Navagraha Stotram and donate navadhanyas to any temple. Ego clashes with life partner is seen. Perform Rudrabhishekam every Monday.

**Scorpio:** The first fifteen days of the month, planets in the transit are not greatly beneficial. But Lord Saturn is favorable. With hardwork, success is assured. Perform Guru Pooja every week. Getting involved in Guru seva is also good. Things seem to be better in the last two weeks.

**Sagittarius:** Though Saturn is not favorable, other planets are very good in transit. General care is very important in everything. Be sincere in your work. Truthfulness, hard work, and following ethics, makes your life more pleasant. If possible, feed poor people. Be good on your way. Chant Guru Mantra.

**Capricorn:** Gradual improvement

is seen. You will experience lots of relaxation. Good for spirituality. Worship Lord Saturn. Take care of children and mother's health. Express gratitude to Guru. Feed poor people on Saturdays. The first week and last week take care of your mind. Pranayama and meditation will help in a great way.

**Aquarius:** Being humble, being grateful is good. As Saturn is transiting over your moon sign, get involved in more seva projects. Feed poor people on Saturday. Spirituality is good. Focus more on your spiritual growth. Don't take any major decision of life. Take care of mother's health. Take care of your health. Perform Guru Pooja.

**Pisces:** Everything is fantastic. Material life needs attention. With little efforts you can bring lots of changes into your life. Chances of travelling to temples are seen. When everything seems good, then expressing gratitude to God will fetch you more good results.

\*by **Usha Kumari.R, M.A.** in Jyotish. Former Faculty in Indian Council of Astrology Science and Sri Sri Gurukul.  
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All of the knowledge series by Gurudev, guided meditations, books, music by your favorite artists available on

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