

|| Jai Sri Gurudev ||



# प्रज्ञान PRAJNANA



Nagamangala Taluk, Mandya District, Karnataka

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**Special :**  
Story from Ruskin  
Bond



Preparing a flower sanjhi

*Children's Special*

**Sree Kshetra Adichunchanagiri**





# प्रज्ञान PRAJNANA

Sree Kshetra Adichunchanagiri

Nagamangala Taluk, Mandya District, Karnataka

**Founder**  
**Padmabushana**  
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All all views carried in the magazine  
are those of the respective authors

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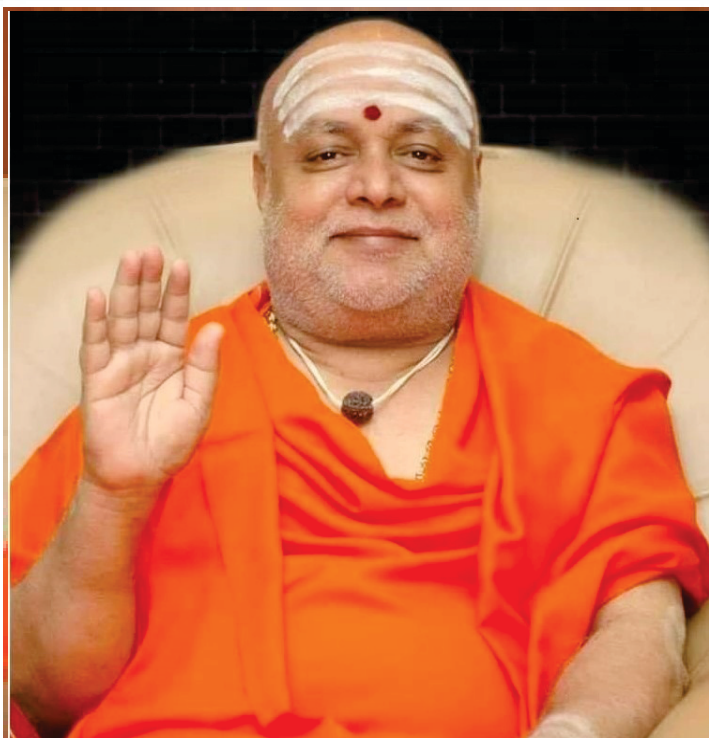
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# BENEDICTION

Sri Sri Dr. Nirmalanandanatha Maha Swamiji



It gives me great happiness to communicate to you all through Prajnan a magazine just for you. I want you all to read it carefully, learn from it, enjoy it and also contribute to it.

Pujya Gururaj enjoyed communicating with children. And in turn, children enjoyed communicating with him. In continuation of this tradition, this magazine is being brought out.

Some of you would have met Gururaj. All of you would have heard of him from your parents, teachers or relatives. He was a great man. A rare personality who was actually nothing short of an incarnation, an avathara purusha.

When he took over as the 71st pontiff of Adichunchanagiri Kshetra, you know there was nothing but rocks and boulders here. This was in 1974.

You must have heard the story of Ahalya in the Ramayana. She was under a curse, which had transformed her into stone. With Sri Rama's touch, when he visited her hermitage, her curse was broken and she regained life. The story of the Kshetra is similar. Sri Kshetra was lying dormant and hidden within all the rocks and boulders on this hillock waiting for Gururaj. With his arrival everything got transformed and life sprung up with new vigour and enthusiasm all around Karnataka, not just in Sri Kshetra. He removed darkness just as the rays of the sun do.

Poojya Gururaj worked relentlessly for the betterment of society. He travelled every part of the state, understood the problems of people and tried to resolve them. He believed that, service to humankind is service to god. He established branch Maths in every district and appointed a monks there. All his disciples are working towards making his dreams a reality. Poojya Gururaj was very proud of the services rendered by the Branch Maths.

Poojya Gururaj placed a lot of emphasis on education. He established many educational institutions all over Karnataka and some even outside the state. Many of them are located in very remote rural areas. Even though he was a Guru of a Dharmapeetha, he did not construct temples in the beginning. He established educational institutions. He dreamt of providing education to at least 10,000 people in his lifetime. But, by 2013, the educational institutions of Sri Math were offering education to around 110,000 students.



You too are part of Guruji's dreams. So study well.

It has been 9 years since his physical body has left us, on the 13th of January, 2013. He was born on the 18th of January 1945. Even today it is his energy that fills the entire environment. I am proud to be the disciple of such a great Guruji. I render my pranams at the lotus feet of Pujya Guruji to bless us forever.

The best way to pay your respects to his memory is to work hard and make the institution, your parents and the Math proud of your achievements. This month I will give you one shloka...try to recite it every morning as you get up:

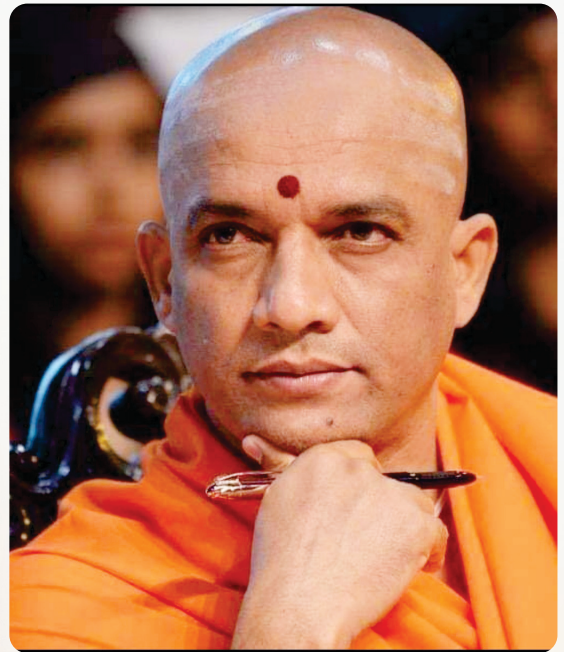
Karagre vasati Lakshmi,

karamadhye Saraswati

Karamoole sthitha Gowri

Prabhate Karadarshanam.

I wish you all the best.



**Blessings**  
**Sri Sri Nirmalanandanatha Swamiji**



## Hello Friends!

Greetings! So much to greet you for : Sankranthi and Republic day!

With this inaugural issue, we bring to you some very special features and some special regular features. We are very grateful to Pujya Nirmalanandanatha swamiji for his heartfelt message. And to Guru Balagangadharanatha swamiji for his continued presence in our hearts.

You must have all heard of Ruskin Bond. I am sure some of you have read some story of his in your English reader too. He has been kind enough to give us a story just for you all. His story is about safeguarding the environment. Do you all have environment clubs in your school? Do tell us about your activities, if you do. If you are interested in nature, do not forget to read Nature's Secret, a regular feature that brings to you some amazing facts about plants.

If you feel strongly about something, there are two places where you can share your views with us. The Opinions page is one. And the Round Table, another. Do read both these pages carefully and respond to them. We also bring you a first person account from a young student like you, who is also learning a traditional art form...the art of Sanjhi. If you are also learning some such art/craft. Do let us know.

Some people inspire us. Like Vivekananda. A glimpse into his life is given here. Do read more about him. Also a recent achiever, Mamta Yadav, who says hard work and determination are the key to success.

In addition we have lots of quiz and fun...enjoy!

As I wave goodbye, here is a question: What loses a head in the morning and gets it back at night? Look for the answer in the pages within.

Bye bye...see you in March,

**Sudhamahi Regunathan**  
([sudhamahiregunathan@gmail.com](mailto:sudhamahiregunathan@gmail.com))

Prajnana comes from the root jna...which means to know. Prajna is knowledge, wisdom and prajnana is one who is prudent, wise,intelligent and discriminative. Such are the dreams our revered Guruji Sri Sri Nirmalanandanatha swamiji has for all the readers. With Prajnana comes his blessings for a discriminative mind, a wise outlook and a high order of intelligence



# She Grabbed Success: Mamta Yadav

Mamta Yadav is a 24 year old girl from the village of Basai. Her father, Ashok Yadav, works in a private company and her mother is a home maker. Mamta wrote the civil services examination and secured **fifth rank, all India for the year 2021**. She had written it once, the previous year, and secured 556th rank. Hardworking and diligent Mamta Yadav made it to almost the top of the list in one year.

We all want success. How to get it? The problem is most of us want to get it quick. Is there a short cut? Is there an alternative to hard work? Is there a secret?

Mamta Yadav says there is not. What makes her achievement something to applaud is that she worked very hard for over three years. Mamta Yadav was focussed and determined. She must have faced many odds as she does not come from a family which already has members serving in the civil services, but she did not let anything deter her. She chose her path and walked it with grit. Listen to her story:

**Question:** Congratulations on your spectacular achievement!

**Mamta:** Thank you very much for your kind wishes. It is something I had been pursuing for almost 3 years, so it does feel like a dream come true. But at the same time I do have hopes and dreams for the future and would like to achieve that also.



Mamta's mother Saroj said that she did not expect that her daughter would go so far. Her father gave the credit of his daughter's success to Mamta's mother. The special thing is that she is the first girl in her village who studied and achieved success in UPSC and went so far in the field of education

<https://www.dnaindia.com/education/report-meet-mamta-yadav-who-became-first-ias-officer-from-her-village-by-securing-air-5-in-upsc-2021-2913198>

**Question:** What made you decide to write the Civil Services examination?

**Mamta:** I decided to write the civil services examination when I was in college. I decided to do it because of the diversity of opportunities this job has to offer. This was my second attempt at the examination. In my first attempt, I was allotted Indian Railway Personnel Service. The pursuit of achieving the dream is what kept me going and motivated me to work hard for it.

When I got into the Indian Railways Personnel Service, my parents were happy. But, I felt I had the strength to write the examination once more. And I wanted the Indian Administrative Service. My parents told me to do whatever gave me happiness. I decided I would make one more attempt.

**Question:** How was your interview?

**Mamta:** My interview went well. I don't think UPSC board attempts to frighten the candidates, instead they try to make us comfortable. The questions were mostly related to Delhi (because this is where I grew up), my graduation subject and current affairs. They ask you questions based on your application. I would say they were manageable.







**Question:** *What was your optional subject? Did you take the same subject both times?*

**Mamta:** My optional subject was Physics. I chose it because i had done my under graduation in Physics. Yes, it was same for both the attempts.

**Question:** *Tell us about your family, your schooling etc.*

**Mamta:** I have spent most of my life in Delhi itself. I have an elder brother who is an Excise Inspector. My father works in a private company and my mother is a homemaker. I did my schooling from Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan. I think the foundation and conceptual clarity that I got from school is something that has helped me throughout in my studies. I did my college from Hindu College, University of Delhi. I feel it was the exposure I got from college which directed me towards the civil services.

**Question:** *What was your routine during your preparation?*

**Mamta:** I used to study for about 10 hours on average throughout the preparation time. I usually divided it into 3-4 slots of study hours with suitable breaks.

Regularity is the key. I never broke my routine, except when I took planned breaks.

I think planning is very important. A planned break is fine, but one should not give oneself a break just because a friend dropped in or an aunt invited. One should stick to one's schedule. Short breaks are advisable...ten minutes after an hour's work, not more.

I don't think there is anything to learn by rote here. The exam is very dynamic.

The exam cycle can take up many crucial years of one's life. I feel that it is very important to ask oneself hard questions at every stage of the exam. After giving 1.5-2 years to studies, if it does not work one should already have a plan b in place.

**Question:** *Do you play games? Do you read? Do you have any other hobbies?*

**Mamta:** Not a lot into sports, but yes, I do like to read novels. My favourite author is Khaled Hosseini and Amitav Ghosh. Another hobby is painting.

My advice to all would be work really really hard to achieve their goals.

**Question:** *If you had not taken the civil services examination, what would you rather have done?*

**Mamta:** I think I would have gone for Higher Education. I did not pursue it because I had a lot of doubts and confusion because many of my seniors had gone abroad for higher education. My teachers also shared their experiences with me. I was not sure if I was totally committed to physics or wanted something more diverse.

**Question:** *What would you like to tell youngsters who would look at you as an example?*

**Mamta:** My advice to all would be work really really hard to achieve their goals. We live in a competitive country and competitive times where complacency can often cost one a lot. Another thing I would say is planning. Planning well can be a key factor. Whenever you begin to do something ask yourself questions about why how and when you want to do what you have set out to. Do you really want to do it? How much of your energy do you want to give it? And ponder wisely over them, then move forward. Inculcate discipline in your daily routines. Have good intentions and faith in yourself.

I would like wish all the best to all in whatever their endeavours in life are.



*For the inaugural issue, we have a story from Ruskin Bond, one of India's favourite writers for children.*

# The Last Truck Ride

A horn blared shattering the silence of the mountains, and a truck came round the bend in the road. A herd of goats scattered to left and right.

The goat-herds cursed as a cloud of dust enveloped them, and then the truck had left them behind and was rattling along the stony paved hill road.

At the wheel of the truck, stroking his gray moustache, sat Pritam Singh, a turbaned Sikh. It was his own truck. He did not allow anyone else to drive it. Everyday he made two trips to the limestone quarries carrying truckloads of limestone back to the depot at the bottom of the hill. He was paid by the trip, and he was always anxious to get in two trips every day.

Sitting beside him was Nathu, his cleaner boy.

Nathu was a sturdy boy with a round cheerful face. It was difficult to guess his age. He might have been twelve or he might have been fifteen- he did not know himself, since no one in his village had troubled to record his birthday- but the hard life he led probably made him look older than his years. He belonged to the hills, but his village was far away, on the next range.

Last year the potato crop had failed. As a result there was no money for salt, sugar, soap and flour- and Nathu's parents and small brothers and sisters could not live entirely on the onions and artichokes which were about the only crops that had survived the drought. There had been no rain that summer. So Nathu waved good bye to his people and came down to the town in the valley to look for work. Someone directed him to the limestone depot. He was too young to work at the quarries, breaking stones and loading them on the trucks, but Pritam Singh, one of the older drivers, was looking for someone to clean and look after his truck. Nathu looked like a bright, strong boy and he was taken on...at ten rupees a day.

That was six months ago and now Nathu was an experienced hand at looking after trucks, riding in them and even sleeping in them. He got on well with Pritam Singh, the grizzled fifty-year-old Sikh who had well-to-do sons in Punjab but whose sturdy independence kept him on the road in his battered old truck.

Pritam Singh pressed hard on his horn. Now there was no one on the road...no animals, no humans... but Pritam was fond of his horn and liked blowing it. It was music to his ears.

"One more year on this road," said Pritam, "then I will sell my truck and retire."

"Who will buy this truck?" said Nathu. "It will retire before you do."



“Don’t be cheeky, boy. She is only twenty years old...there is still a few years left in her!” And as though to prove it, he blew his horn again. Its strident sound echoed and re-echoed down the mountain gorge. A pair of wild fowl, disturbed by the noise, flew out of the bushes and glided across the road in front of the truck.

Pritam Singh’s thoughts went to his dinner.

“Haven’t had a good meal for days,” he grumbled.

“Havent had a good meal for weeks,” said Nathu, although he looked quite well-fed.

“Tomorrow I will give you dinner,” said Pritam, “ Tandoori chicken and pilau rice.”

“I’ll believe it when I see it,” said Nathu.

Pritam Singh sounded his horn again before slowing down. The road had become narrow and precipitous and trotting ahead of them was a train of mules.

As the horn blared, one mule ran forward, one ran backwards. One went uphill, one went downhill. Soon there were mules all over the place.

“You can never tell with mules,” said Pritam after he had left them behind.

The hills were bare and dry. Much of the forest had long since disappeared. Just a few scraggy old oaks still grew on the steep hillside. This particular range was rich in limestone, and the hills were scarred by quarrying.

“Are your hills as bare as these?” asked Pritam.

“No, they have not started blasting there as yet,”said Nathu. “We still have a few trees. And there is a walnut tree in front of our house, which gives us two baskets of walnuts every year.”

“And do you have water?”

“There is a stream at the bottom of the hill. But for the fields we have to depend on the rainfall. And there was no rain last year.”

“It will rain soon,”said Pritam. “I can smell rain. It is coming from the north.”

“It will settle the dust.”

The dust was everywhere. The truck was full of it. The leaves of the shrubs and few trees were thick with it. Nathu could feel the dust near his eyelids and on his lips.

As they approached the quarries, the dust increased...but it was a different kind of dust now, whiter, stinging the eys, irritating the nostrils...limestone dust, hanging in the air.

The blasting was in progress.



Pritam Singh brought the truck to a halt.

“Let’s wait a bit,” he said.

They sat in silence, staring through the windscreen at the scarred cliffs about a hundred yards down the road. There were no signs of life around then.

Suddenly the hillside blossomed outwards, followed by a sharp crack of explosives. Earth and rock hurtled down the hillside.

Nathu watched in awe as shrubs and small trees were flung into the air. It always frightened him...not so much the sight of rocks bursting asunder, but the trees flung aside and destroyed. He thought of his own trees at home- the walnut, the pines- and wondered if one day they would suffer the same fate, and whether the mountains would all become a desert like this particular range. No trees, no grass, no water...only the choking dust of the limestone quarries.

Pritam Singh pressed hard on his horn again, to let the people at the site know he was coming. Soon they were parked outside a small shed, where the contractor and the overseer were sipping cups of tea. A short distance away some labourers were hammering at chunks of rock, breaking them up into manageable blocks. A pile of stones stood ready for loading, while the rock that had been blasted lay scattered about the hillside.

“Come and have a cup of tea,” called out the contractor.

“Get on with the loading,” said Pritam. “I can’t hang about all afternoon. There is another trip to make and it gets dark early these days.”

But, he sat on a bench and ordered two cups of tea from the stall-owner. The overseer strolled over to the group of labourers and told them to start loading. Nathu let down the grid at the back of the truck. Nathu stood back while the men loaded the truck with limestone rocks. He was glad that he was chubby- thin people seemed to feel the cold much more- like the contractor, a skinny fellow who was shivering in his expensive overcoat.

To keep himself warm Nathu began helping the labourers with the loading.

“Don’t expect to be paid for that,” said the contractor, for whom every extra paisa spent was a paisa off his profits

“Don’t worry,” said Nathu, “I don’t work for contractors. I work for Pritam Singh.”

“That’s right!” called out Pritam. “And mind what you say to Nathu... he’s nobody’s servant.”

It took them almost an hour to fill the truck with stones. The contractor was not happy till there was no space left for a single stone. Then four of the six labourers climbed on the pile of stones. They would ride back to the depot on the truck. The contractor, the overseer and others would follow by jeep.



“Let’s go,” said Pritam getting behind the steering wheel. “I want to be back here and then back home by eight o’clock. I am going to a marriage party tonight!”

Nathu jumped in beside him, banging his door shut. It never closed properly unless it was slammed really hard. But it opened at a touch. Pritam always joked that his truck was held together with the selotape.

He was in good spirits. He started his engine, blew his horn and burst into a song as the truck started out on the return journey.

The labourers were singing too as the truck swung round the sharp bends of the winding mountain road. Nathu was feeling quite dizzy. The door beside him rattled on its hinges.

“Not so fast,” he said.

“Oh,” said Pritam, “since when did you become nervous about fast driving?”

“Since today,” said Nathu.

‘And what’s wrong with today?’

“I don’t know. It is just that kind of day, I suppose.”

“You are getting old,” said Pritam. “That’s your trouble.”

“Just wait till you get to be my age,” said Nathu.

“No more cheek,” said Pritam and stepped on the accelerator and drove faster.

As the truck swung round a bend, Nathu looked out of his window. All he saw was the sky above and the valley below. They were very near the edge. But it was always like that on this narrow road.

After a few more hairpin bends, the roads started descending steeply to the valley.

“I’ll just test the brakes,” said Pritam and jammed down on them so suddenly that one of the labourers almost fell off at the back. They called out in protest.

“Hang on!” shouted Pritam, “You are nearly home!”

“Don’t try any shortcuts,” said Nathu

Just then a stray mule appeared in the middle of the road. Pritam swung the steering wheel over to his right; but the road turned left, and the truck went over the edge.

As it tipped over, hanging for a few seconds on the edge of the cliff, the labourers leapt from the back of the truck.

The truck pitched forward, and as it struck a rock outcrop, the door near Nathu burst open. He was thrown out.



Then the truck hurtled forward, bouncing over the rocks, turning over on its side, and rolling over twice before coming to rest against the trunk of a scraggy old oak tree. Had it missed the tree, the truck would have plunged a few hundred feet down to the bottom of the gorge.

Two labourers sat on the hillside, stunned and badly shaken. The other two had picked themselves up and were running back to the quarry for help.

Nathu had landed in a bed of nettles. He was smarting all over, but he wasn't really hurt.

His first impulse was to get up and run back with the labourers. Then he realized that Pritam was still in the truck. If he wasn't dead, he would certainly be badly injured.

Nathu skidded down the steep slope calling out, "Pritam, Pritam, are you alright?"

Then he saw Pritam's arm and half his body jutting out of the open door of the truck. It was a strange position to be in, half in and half out. When Nathu came nearer, he saw Pritam was jammed in the driver's seat, held there by the steering wheel which was pressed hard against his chest. Nathu thought he was dead. But as he was about to turn away and clamber back up the hill, he saw Pritam open one blackened swollen eye. It look straight at Nathu.

"Are you alive?" whispered Nathu, terrified.

"What do you think?" muttered Pritam

He closed his eye again.

When the contractor and his men arrived it took them almost an hour to get Pritam out of the wreckage of his truck, and another hour to get him to the hospital in the town. He had a broken collarbone, a dislocated shoulder, and several fractured ribs. But the doctor said he was repairable...which was more than could be said for his truck.

"The truck's finished," said Pritam, when Nathu came to see him a few days later. "Now I will go home and live with my sons. But you can get work on another truck."

"No," said Nathu, "I am going home too."

"And what will you do there?"

"I'll work on the land. It is better to grow things on the land than blast things out of it."

They were silent for some time.

"Do you know something," said Pritam finally. "But for that tree, the truck would have ended up at the bottom of the hill and I wouldn't be here, all bandaged and talking to you. It was the tree that saved me. Remember that my boy."

"I remember," said Nathu.



*Bhim Bhalla who studies in class 7 in Kunskapsskolan school and is 12 years old feels:*

# Fairy Tales Are Bad

A children's story about magical and imaginary beings and lands. This is the main definition though the true and also the second official definition is 'A fabricated story, especially one intended to deceive'. They sure aren't true but they don't give any good morals, maybe sometimes good advice is given but the stories themselves can teach bad lessons.

## Bad Lessons

Fairy Tales in their stories, teach some bad lessons. I will be noting some important ones.

First, they show stepparents and step siblings as horrible people. That isn't true. There are many stepparents and step siblings that are good people. There was once a case in real life where a girl almost murdered her stepmother as she thought she was evil.

Secondly, the protagonist Puss in Boots is a liar and a cheater and because he is the protagonist he is put in the good light to be children's idol.

One of the worst lessons in my view is how it portrays women in a bad way as they are either princesses who are in no way contributing to society or they are poor and hardworking and ill treated who land up marrying rich people and/or princes to live happily ever after. Noone gets a job.

Another bad example is that when people are very poor and have nothing to eat they abandon their children in the forest, to fend for themselves. (Hansel and Gretel)

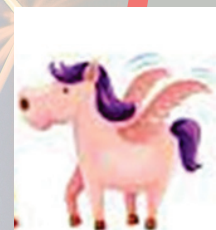
An untrue lesson that Fairy tales teach children is that everything ends happily. This is not true in real life. There are many bad things that have happened in real life that have not gotten a happy ending. Bad things happening in the stories shown as good things.

There are many bad things happening in fairy tales portrayed as good things.

First of all, In many of these fairy tales a man kisses a woman without permission (Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, etc). In the stories this ends up being good for that man but in real life, this is a crime. He can go to jail.

The Pied Piper drowned children. He drowned children because he wouldn't get his money. That is horrifying and he isn't even the antagonist of the story he is the main protagonist. That is really messed up.

In the Princess and the Frog, the princess literally kisses a frog. First of all, that is obviously disgusting. Secondly, as much as I hate frogs, that is animal cruelty and is a punishable offence in some countries.







In Jack and the Beanstalk. The protagonist Jack, breaks and enters into some one's house and steals from there. When the rightful owner of the stolen goods came after Jack, Jack kills him!

In the end I believe that most fairy tales are a bad example to children and children should be discouraged from reading/ watching/ listening to fairy tales so that they don't experience these horrible stories.

### Response from a Grandmother: Prema Raghavan

I could not agree more with you Bhim. Every language has a word expressing good in the sense of 'having the right or desirable qualities' and bad in the sense of having 'undesirable' ones.

The Cinderella fairy tale has condemned our ideas of a stepmother. It is rather difficult to play the role of a step mother. If you do something good, people may assume you are pretending. If you try to correct the child's mistake, people may assume you are mistreating them. Growing up under the care of step parents can be a challenging life experience. It can affect a child's emotional development and sense of security. But to fill the shoes of a biological parent is never easy.

I was fortunate enough to come across three such mothers who believed in the karma theory - You reap what you sow - as it attaches great responsibility to an individual's actions. According to the Law of Karma, merits are acquired when we lead our lives righteously while we accumulate sins when we indulge in unrighteous acts.

One of my cousins got married to Narmada who was raised by her stepmother after the early demise of her mother. When she was about to leave for her in-laws home, the bride and step mother hugged each other and cried for a long time. Narmada later told us that while children's stories reinforce these negative stereotypes of a stepmother,

she was more greatly influenced by the reality of their relationship. It made her feel like shouting from the rooftops, "Please remove from your mind that step mothers are bad. There are many noble step-mother's like mine."

My sister-in-law Lakshmi's mother was the second wife to her father and she had two older step brothers. The family is so harmonious

Arvind was a young man working aboard who got married and had two children - a girl and a boy. His wife died in a sudden accident. The trauma was overwhelming and he shifted back with his children to India to be with his parents. At the same time, a good family friend's daughter Anupama had recently become a widow. The two families decided that this is a good opportunity to bring solace to both families. Anupama played her role as a stepmother with love and grace. It reflected her name - which means incomparable and excellent.

Bhim, let me tell you, I searched unsuccessfully for a children's book depicting stepfamilies in a positive way. I wanted to erase the indelible image of the "wicked" stepmother from the Cinderella story. My hope is that those who read it will cultivate a positive attitude about step mothers. And I know of many stepmothers who can be more accurately described as fairy mothers.





# To whom does the water belong?

Long long ago, deep in the forest of nagaland, there flowed a happy river. She laughed and gurgled all the time. It so happened that a part of her became a little narrow and the waters flowing in her was slightly reduced. Then the animals and birds got scared. “What if the water finishes?” they wondered. That is how a fight between the birds and animals started. Each of them said that the water of the river belonged to them and that the other could not drink from it.



“The water belongs to us. We flew here and discovered her before any animal did,” said the birds.

“The water belongs to us,” said the animals. “We have been drinking of it from ages.”

Gradually the fight intensified and reached a stage when none of them could drink water from the river. Their throats were getting parched as the sun was very hot and it was very humid inside the dense forest. Even though they were suffering they would not let the other drink water. More animals and birds joined the fight.

Long long ago, deep in the forest of nagaland, there flowed a happy river. She laughed and gurgled all the time. It so happened that a part of her became a little narrow and the waters flowing in her was slightly reduced. Then the animals and birds got scared. “What if the water finishes?” they wondered. That is how a fight between the birds and animals started. Each of them said that the water of the river belonged to them and that the other could not drink from it.

As the fight went on for days, the continuous cheering and booing had made the animals and birds even more thirsty. The only one who was not thirsty was Kanghar, the bat. He told the animals he was one since he had four legs. He told the birds he was one because he could fly. It took some days for the animals and the birds to realize that they were being fooled by the bat. They all ran after him, but Kanghar the bat, hid in a very dark corner and they could not find him. That is why, even today, the bat hides in the darkest place and comes out only at night to catch its prey. Then the bat said he would deliver the judgment as to who the waters belonged to. He cleared his throats and as the animals and birds sat to listen he said, “The waters belong to me as I am a mammal and can fly. You all have to take permission from me.”

The animals and birds were both angry. They shooed the bat out of the forest.





# ROUND TABLE

*Online school or Offline? Which do you prefer?*

Neeraja Raghavan speaks with parents, teachers and students to find out

What a year and a half this has been! Especially for schools, teachers, parents and children! Wouldn't you agree? Along came the pandemic, and schooling suddenly turned online. Schools rushed into what seemed to be the only way out. Now we are slowly returning to offline schooling. Which is better? Teachers of Sri Kumaran Children's Home, Bangalore, say, "Our nursery children have learnt few of the concepts better than during offline classes, as most of them are visual learners."

Most parents feel their children will hone their social skills, learn from their peers and have experiential learning in an offline mode. They feel children will be less dependent on the parent. However, some pros for online teaching are:

**Srilika Chatterjee**, says: "Learning continued in ONLINE schooling, there was no discontinuation in my child's learning process."

**Mrs Bhavana Jain** feels that in an online mode, her child was able to connect with her peers on a virtual platform. "It created a visual impact on my child. It gave her the opportunity to learn to access resources from the Internet."

**Mrs Shrilekha Gururaj** says: "Online classes gave my daughter access to various resources which she was not aware of before. As a parent, I became more involved in her day-to-day classroom activity."

**Mrs Gayathri Yawagal** says: "My focus was always on the class. I wanted to know how my child was coping in the virtual classroom: was he attentive? Responsive? Or was his camera on? Which, otherwise, would not have been possible for me to know."

**Mrs Amitha V Goklaney** says: "As a parent, I got an idea as to what is taught in class, since Vidyashilp Academy follows a 'no-textbook approach' in phase 1. I became involved in my son's learning process, thanks to the virtual mode."

Read what some students have to say. Whom do you agree with? Or do you have something different to say? Write in at [roundtable@gmail.com](mailto:roundtable@gmail.com)



# Views of STUDENTS

Sl No.	Name	Grade/Age	ONLINE classes	OFFLINE classes
1	Amogh Gautham	V/10 years Sri Kumaran Public School, Bangalore	<p><b>In ONLINE school, I MISS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the "pocket full of kisses" <i>Amma</i> used to give me before I boarded the bus.</li> <li>the sugarcane juice <i>Thatha</i> used to buy for me and we secretly drank without telling <i>Ajji</i>, on those special days of the week.</li> <li>a sense of accomplishment and joy after completing an exam and later enjoyed watching "Harry Potter". Now It feels the same whether we had an exam or not.</li> <li>Summer vacation and holidays - which we would wait for. Now all the days are the same and it's boring.</li> </ul> <p><i>Amma...</i> Please opt for offline classes.</p>	<p><b>In OFFLINE School, I LOVE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to meet our friends, talk to them and enjoy the bus ride to school.</li> <li>to say "thank you" to my driver and helpers while getting in and out of the bus.</li> <li>to sit next to Samvith and chit-chat. We do talk on Zoom at times, but it's never the same.</li> <li>the games period. Our school has a big playground and fresh air to breathe.</li> <li>the smell of food in the canteen, when I am hungry and rush to eat my lunch.</li> </ul>
2	Abhay Pradhan	VI Sikkim		We could learn well offline and we could discuss and learn from our friends after a long gap
3	Karan Chettri	Bardang School	I liked online classes because teachers shared videos which were very useful. We could replay them and understand better.	
4	Satisha Chettri		During online classes, the teachers cooperated. Homework was submitted on time.	In the offline classes concepts were clearer and were revisited.
5	Sonongmit Lepcha	VI		I like offline classes because I could do project work. Because of poor connectivity online, our classes were not good.
6	Leeryam	VI		I understand better offline, there is more clarity.
7	Isha	III KV Kochi	The best thing about online classes is that during Corona, we can speak to our friends. Online is better because in offline, we have to obey Covid protocols.	We can ask our doubts clearly to our teachers. Online, we cannot hear clearly.
8	Nava	VIII Dawn International School Kochi	It is easier to access and submit homework assignments.	In offline classes, it is easier to interact with teachers. It is also less troublesome because you don't have to ask the teacher to repeat anything. You don't have network issues.



9	Jeeva	I	In online classes, my teacher shows me a lot of videos and songs for Maths and English	In offline classes, my teacher will not show videos - instead, she will give it as homework.
10.	Abhishek	Grade 7, Delhi Public School, Hyderabad	I learnt to use different apps - Padlet, Google classroom. It was easier (than in my actual classroom) to ask the teacher a question, because I was always scared that my classmates would laugh at me.	I can speak to my friends in between classes.
11.	Nandika	Grade 9, Johnson Grammar School, Hyderabad	I loved that I could Google the answers that the teacher asked, watch interesting YouTube videos if the teacher was too boring, and eat, when I was hungry, without waiting for the break.	I like to share food with my friends, games and activities and also, participate in the Assembly performances
12.	Nikhil	Grade 7, Hyderabad Public School, Hyderabad	I liked <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the videos that were shown</li> <li>the way we were clearing a doubt with the teacher immediately</li> <li>that we were using less paper</li> </ul>	I love <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the bus ride to school</li> <li>eating lunch together</li> <li>the craft classes - they are more fun.</li> </ul>
13	Tamil medium school student in Chennai	Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Vidyalaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School	ONLINE CLASSES are very helpful for learning during the pandemic situation but DIRECT CLASSES are the best because there will be a close relationship with teachers and always, interactive classes will be there. But apart from fun, joy, in this pandemic situation, online classes helped the students gain knowledge and stay in touch with studies.	During online classes, as a student, I can't understand the lessons clearly, because sometimes, I face connectivity issues or teachers face Network issues. So this is a big problem. And during online classes there will be no fun with friends. I missed the joyful talks with my teachers.





However, they were still thirsty. One day a deer and a hen happened to meet and both of them lamented over the ongoing fight. “Let us get the two sides to come to an agreement,” they decided. “If the idea is not acceptable to the members of our respective groups, they will kill us, but we are anyway dying of thirst,” said the deer and the hen agreed.

Surprise of surprises, both the animals and birds were willing to arrive at some kind of agreement. They all met by the river the next morning, but they had forgotten that they needed a judge to help them come to an agreement. A beautiful colourful bird called Zaimuk fluttered her eyelids and said she could be the judge. No one had any objection. Zaimuk declared that since birds moved faster than animals, the pond belonged to the birds.

There was such an uproar and with great difficulty the deer calmed the gathering and called for a more unbiased judge. A little sparrow spoke meekly, asking if she could say something. Everyone encouraged her to speak. “If an animal is thirsty the water belongs to the animal, if a bird is thirsty the water belongs to the bird. Water belongs to the one who is thirsty.”



All the birds and animals shouted with joy. That was right. They all praised the sparrow and thanked her. Anything is used best when it serves the one who needs it most.

**Illustration by Gond artist:** Dinesh and Reshma Shyam

Story retold by **Sudhamahi Regunathan**

Folktale of **Nagaland**



# Beauty as Ritual – My Experience with the Art of Sanjhi

*Shri Ram Goswami is a fourteen year old practitioner of the artform of Sanjhi, who comes from a family which has been practising the art for generations. He is also accessing formal education, being home schooled by his mother*

Born into a family of Goswamis of Shri Radharaman, I have virtually grown up with the art of sanjhi. My father, Acharya Shri Shashank Goswami Ji Maharaj, is one of the leading sanjhi artists of the present, and he as well as my uncles learnt the art in our family tradition as handed down over generations. Our family elders were not only renowned scholars but accomplished artists as well.

It was only natural that I was curious about my father's art practice. As a child, I gradually started learning the art of sanjhi by watching and participating. At one level my grandfather, parents and uncles were practising the art. At another, they were all actively involved in the preservation and revival of the endangered arts of Vraja, for which purpose they had jointly established Vraja Kala Sanskriti Sansthana in 2004. So naturally, I was always being encouraged to learn.



My father demonstrating sanjhi on water. I am watching

My father practices the art of sanjhi at the temple of Shri Radharaman. He also conducts workshops, exhibitions and cultural events all over India and abroad. I have always been part of their cultural tours.

My father would provide some instructions and then give me different tasks, their level of difficulty increasing as I progressed in learning. The workshops he conducted in various places were thereby an excellent opportunity to develop my knowledge and skills, as I would follow his instructions while assisting him.

As of today, I have learnt to prepare different types of sanjhi. Flower sanjhis are created in countless shapes, some depicting definite forms such as a temple, a lotus flower, a butterfly and many more, while others are created as abstract designs. My father taught me to outline different designs using my own ideas; filling them with flower petals is the easier part of the exercise. A prominent aspect in workshops on sanjhi art is the creation of sanjhi designs from dry colors upon water. I prepare sanjhis from dry colors using stencils either on water or on the ground; however, I would still hesitate to remove the stencil myself after filling the colors – the most delicate aspect of the preparation, as one wrong move can destroy the entire effort.

I did participate in the preparation of sanjhi designs on a variety of occasions and on various different themes. Between 2016 and 2018, I had the opportunity to assist my father on several occasions preparing sanjhi designs for festive celebrations organized by the Embassy of India at Berlin, Germany, including a large sanjhi arrangement honoring Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the occasion of Ekta Diwas which, in 2016, corresponded with the day of the Diwali festival.

Sanjhi is a traditional form of ground painting that evolved from Lord Krishna's homeland Vraja. It flourished in the temples of Vrindaban, Mathura, Gokul, in fact in that entire region. Originally Sanjhi, or Sanjhi Devi, is worshiped as a goddess, a personification of Sandhya or evening twilight time – the name 'Sanjhi' is a vernacular derivation from the Sanskrit 'sandhya'. The ritual of Sanjhi worship would be performed by the young girls of Vraja, who prepare images of the goddess made from cowdung and decorated with stones and flowers. This ritual is followed to the present day during the dark fortnight of the autumn month of Ashvin.





*Octagonal sanjhi design prepared under my father's supervision*

The practice of preparing ritual designs for Sanjhi worship was taken up by Vaishnava temples around the 15th/16th centuries, and here, the rustic designs were developed into an elaborate and delicate form of visual art that takes the divine play of Lord Krishna and Radha for its theme.

Temple sanjhis are of various types, but the principal form is an octagonal design about four feet in diameter, prepared from natural dry colors upon an earthen platform. The central part of the sanjhi, called the hauda or 'heart' of the design, displays a depiction of Lord Krishna's lila, surrounded by artfully interlocked decorative patterns expanding towards the eight directions. Further types of sanjhi are prepared from dry colors on and beneath water. Flower sanjhis too enjoy much popularity in the temple sanjhi tradition.

So far I had not yet the opportunity to participate in the preparation of a large octagonal sanjhi as we create them in the temples at the time of the Sanjhi festival. It takes much time and effort to prepare such designs; starting at dawn, at least four to five artists would work throughout the day in order to complete the design by the time the temple opens for evening worship. During workshops and presentations at cultural events, time is usually limited to at most two to three hours, and small sanjhis on water are most suitable to be demonstrated on such occasions.

There are numerous aspects of the art that I am yet to practice in more detail – mixing colors, cutting stencils, designing the sophisticated outlines for octagonal sanjhis and many more, all of which I am eager to learn from my father.

Learning and practicing the art of sanjhi outside its original environment as part of dissemination projects has had one advantage: it has shown me how to adapt to situations and improvise when the original materials required for sanjhi preparation are not readily available. Although my father always carries the basic materials such as dry colors, stencils and others with him when he presents the art abroad, at times it is not possible to bring everything from India. For some designs, the preparation of a single flower sanjhi design of large size for example, would require at least four to five kilograms of flower petals!



*Preparing a flower sanjhi*

I think sanjhi is beautiful and inspiring form of art too precious to be forgotten. Scriptures say that sanjhi was created for the first time by Lord Krishna himself to appease his beloved Radha. In our temples, we celebrate sanjhi as a tribute to the divine couple and their eternal love.



# Flowers Change Colour

Gita Mathur



Illustration by Mayukha Suraj, Class XI, SNMHSS, Purakkad, Alappuzha, Kerala

Tall Coconut trees gently swaying in the wind, the garden full of flowers, cool breeze and soft fragrance all around makes the “Five Find Outers” feel refreshed and thrilled. Sridhar, Manjunath, Mohan, Lila and Tara are five friends who enjoy observing and finding out about plants, animals, and natural phenomenon and hence they call themselves “Five Find Outers”.

Tara who is the chirpiest of the lot has been discussing her observations with Rao aunty, a scientist, who is a neighbour and full of enthusiasm to talk about scientific basis of nature to the inquisitive Five Find Outers.

Tara noted that a bush near her house had flowers of many colours magenta, orange, yellow and maroon in small bunches. She noted that a bunch, which had five yellow flowers one day had five orange flowers the next day and at the same time more yellow flowers had opened. The bunches were present in pairs on the bush. She got excited and started observing the flower bunches every day.

Big flowers can easily be located by pollinators so are present solitary like rose and lily, but smaller flowers are present in bunches called inflorescences like in lantana and candytuft. Together they are visible to pollinators.

She went to Rao aunty and asked about the changing colours of flowers. Rao aunty told her that the bush, she has been observing is called Lantana. It has leaves in pairs on each node. Associated with each leaf is an inflorescence which is a bunch of flowers, hence the inflorescences are also in pairs. Most of the small flowers in nature form bunches to become visible to pollinators. Buds of Lantana are pink, and they open into yellow flowers. These attract pollinator insects, generally butterflies and small flying insects called thrips, which transfer pollen from one yellow flower to another. This process of pollen transfer is called pollination. The pollen have male nucleus, which joins the female nucleus in the ovule to form seed.



Interestingly, insects see yellow colour but not red colour. Red appears black to insects. Freshly opened yellow flowers are receptive for pollination, after that they change to orange and gradually undergoing change in colour to shades of magenta and maroon. So, the insects do not waste their energy in visiting already pollinated flowers. The nectar which the insects get as a reward for visit is also in yellow fresh flowers only. What an interesting phenomenon in nature.



### **Epithets for some great Indians:**

1. Who was known as the ‘Nightingale of India’?

2. Who is called the ‘Mahatma’?

3. Who was called ‘the missile man’?

4. Who was called ‘chacha’?

5. Who was called ‘Lokmanya’?

6. Who was called ‘Sardar’?

7. Who was called ‘Gurudev’?

8. Who was called ‘Maulana’?

9. Who was called ‘Loknayak’?

10. Who was called ‘Netaji’?



# Vivekananda: A peep into his life

Everyone looked at him strangely. Well, not just strangely, but with a little bit of contempt also. He was shivering, wearing just a plain ochre robe, no woollens. It was cold in Chicago at that time of the year (September of 1893). He had come all the way from India because he wanted to attend the World Parliament of Religions. He had not known it would be so biting cold. He had not known that he had to register and have some recommendations for only then would he be allowed to enter the Parliament, let alone speak. His name was Narendranath Datta. He had just changed his name to Vivekananda before coming to the US.

So he wandered around, awe struck by the riches that the United States had to offer, but cold and hungry. He boarded a train to Boston for he found out the Parliament had another two weeks to open. In the train, a lady was watching him for some time before she came up to him and struck a conversation.

“Do not worry,” she said as she was very impressed by this man, “please come home with me.” She introduced him to Professor J.H.Wright, who was a professor at Harvard and who after meeting young Vivekananda was so impressed that he felt he should represent Hinduism in the World Parliament of Religions.

Prof. Wright registered and sent recommendations so that Vivekananda could attend the event. As he returned to Chicago, his train was delayed. When he finally did reach Chicago he emptied his pockets but could not find that slip of paper on which the address of the committee was written.

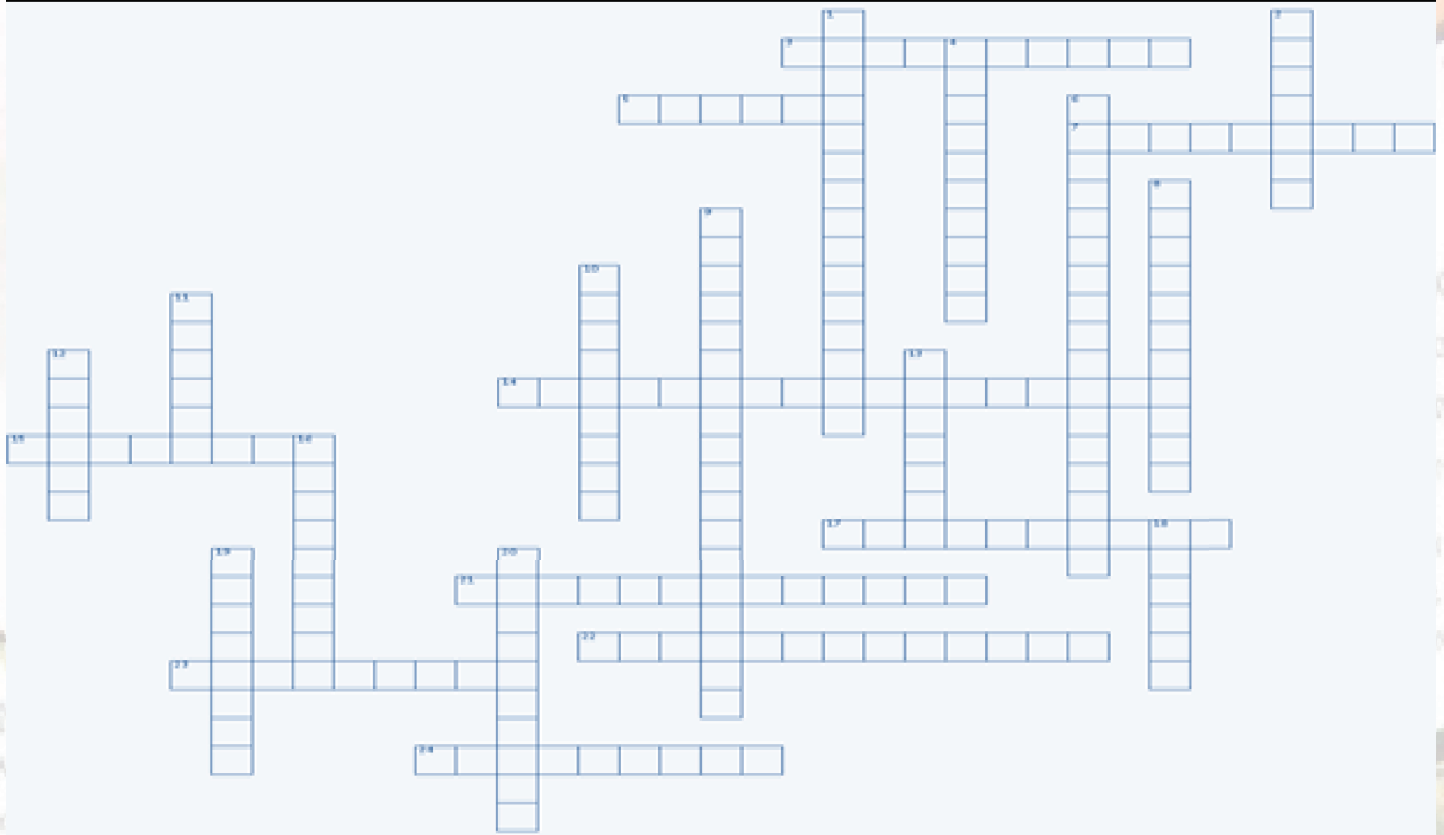
If this happens in India, one does not need an address, one can ask people. In the US few people ask and even fewer respond to a brown skinned man (in those days). He found a big empty box in the corner of the station and slept the night there. In the morning, he thought he would, like a true sanyasi or ascetic, go from house to house asking for alms. People were shocked to see a brown man ring their doorbell and asking for food. Some shooed him away, some were rude to him...in short he did not get any food. He sat down, desolate, by the street. It so happened he sat just opposite the venue of the meeting!. Someone saw him and wondered if he was a delegate and took him in. That someone was called Mrs G.W.Hale. She later became his ardent devotee.

When Vivekananda went in and addressed the World Parliament of Religions, he gave such a speech that even today, 128 years later, we still talk of it. He introduced the West to the main tenets of the Hindu way of life. Even today that remains one of the best introductions.

Vivekananda was born on the 12th of January 1863. He died on the 4th of July 1902.



# CROSS WORD



## ACROSS

3. What was Gandhiji's father's name?
5. What was Gandhiji's son's name?
7. Where is the Sabarmati Ashram?
14. Name of the college Gandhiji attended
15. What was Gandhiji's first name
17. Where was Gandhiji shot? (2)
21. Who killed Gandhiji? (31)
22. Who led the Salt Satyagraha with Gandhiji? (2)
23. What was his mother's name
24. Gandhiji's birthplace

## DOWN

1. What are the first three words of Gandhiji's favourite bhajan (3)
2. on the 31st of which month was Gandhiji shot?
4. In which station in South Africa was Gandhiji thrown out of the first class compartment of the train
6. What is Gandhiji popularly known as in India?
8. What was Gandhiji's tool to fight the British?
9. Who called Gandhiji Mahatma? (2)
10. What was the civil disobedience movement where the British were asked to leave India called? (2)

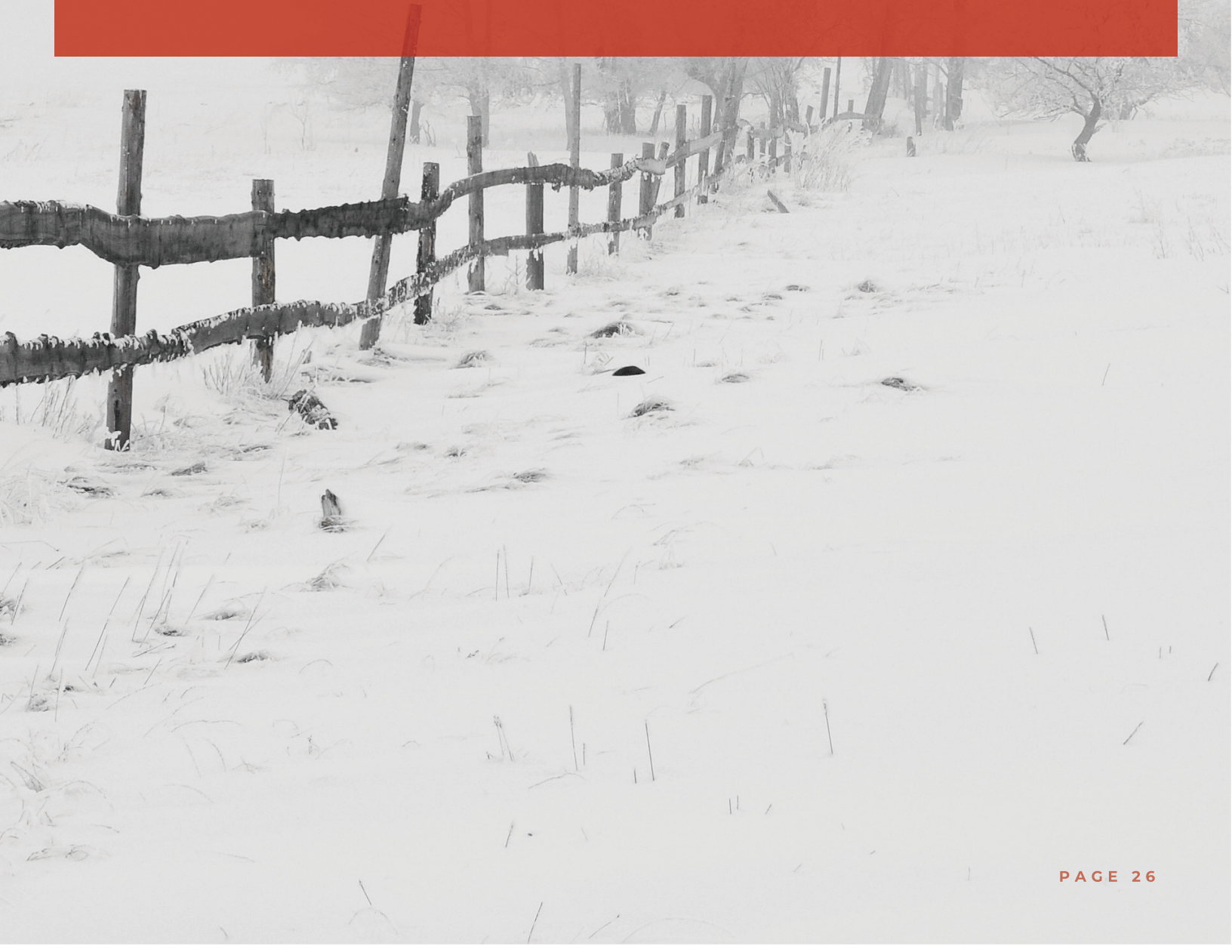
## DOWN

11. Gandhiji went to which city to become a barrister?
12. : The date of Gandhiji's birthday
13. : Which month of the year was Gandhiji born
16. : At which place was Gandhiji arrested for the first time in India for sedition?
18. : What was the word used for self rule
19. : Gandhiji's wife's name
20. : What is the other name for the salt march or salt satyagraha (2)



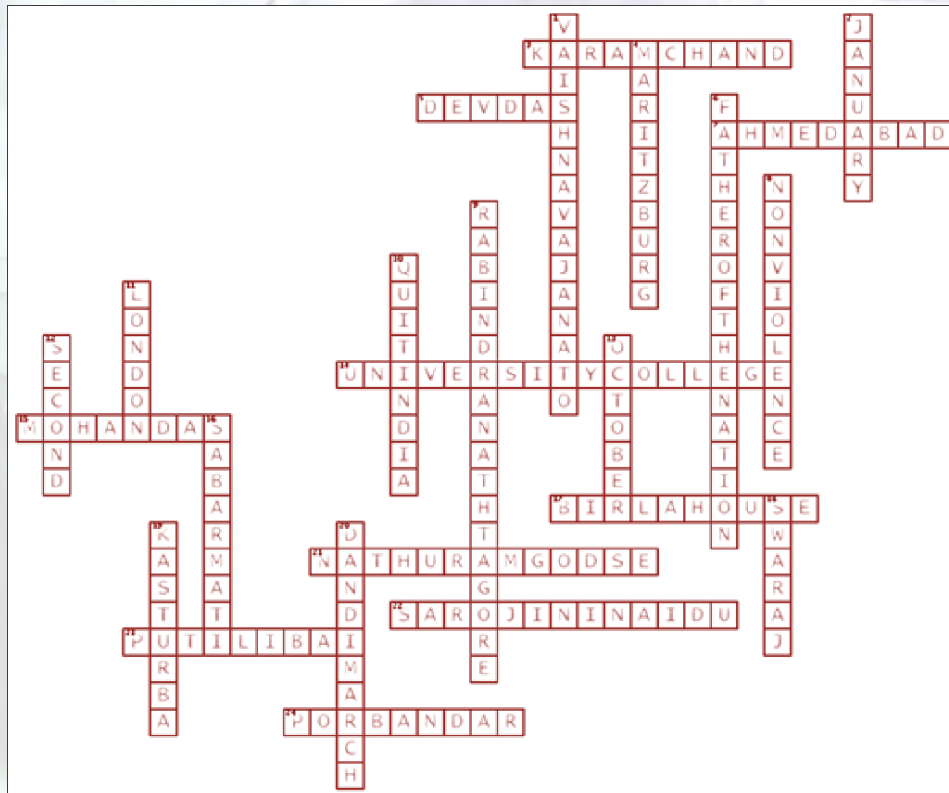
## *Riddles:*

- 1. What starts with an 'e' and ends with an 'e' but has only one letter?*
- 2. A vegetarian placed an order for idli, sambar, vade, fish curry, koorma and paratha. Which dish did he leave uneaten?*
- 3. What is that you want to share when you have it, but lose it if you do share it?*
- 4. If you lay me horizontal I am everything. If you cut me in half I am nothing. What am I?*
- 5. What is bigger than an elephant but has no weight?*





## Answers



## Epithets Answers

Sarojini Naidu

# Mahatma Gandhi

Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalaam

## Chacha Jawaharlal Nehru

## Lokmanya Gangadhar Tilak

## Sardar Vallabhai Patel

Gurudev Rabindra nath Tagore

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan

## Netaji Subash Chandra Bose

## Riddles Answers:

## Envelope

## Fish curry

Secret

Number 8

## The elephant's shadow

**What loses a head in the morning and gets it back at night?**

**Answer:** pillow





# Sree Kshetra Adichunchanagiri



Sri Kshetra Adichunchanagiri has a history of 2000 years of its existence. It is the holy land engulfed with the divine resonance and vibration. Ancient Vedic culture was founded here on spirituality, where Nature is valued and worshipped. It was Yagnas and prayers that inspired cosmic peace here.

Sri Kshetra is blessed by Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva performed penance at Sri Kshetra, during which he devoured two demons, Chuncha and Kancha, who were pestering elements of the area for a very long time. At the end of his austerity, Lord Shiva entrusted a Siddhayogi, establishing a 'Natha tradition' and guided him to disseminate the righteousness in the society.

Lord Shiva also assured to reside at Sri Kshetra Adichunchanagiri, in the form of Panchalingas viz. Lord Gangadhareshwaraswamy, Chandramouleshwaraswamy, Malleshwaraswamy, Siddeshwaraswamy and Someshwaraswamy; of which Lord Gangadhareshwaraswamy is known as the 'Presiding Deity'. Thus, Sri Kshetra came to be known as "Panchalinga Kshetra".

Lord Kalabhyraveswaraswamy, the manifestation of Lord Shiva, is the 'Protecting Deity' of Sri Kshetra. He extends his grace to all and bestows divine experience and liberation. Goddess Parvathi resides here in the form of Stambambike.

Sri Math serves free food to more than twenty thousand people every day. This feeding programme has earned the Math another name – "Annadani Math". 'Bindu Sarovara' is formed naturally at the middle hill of Sri Kshetra. It is believed that this holy place is formed by the holy water, discharged by the Jata of Lord Gangadhareshwara, who is stationed a few hundred feet high above this lake. Dedicated devotees take a holy dip to dispel their ignorance and accumulated sins.

Sri Kshetra is surrounded by a beautiful forest, which appears to radiate an aura of abiding serenity, spiritual solitude and peace. This area is popularly known as 'Mayura Vana', where enchanting peacocks live freely.

Millions look to this ancient Monastery, for both spiritual and mundane guidance. Apart from preaching spirituality, Sri Kshetra is set out to uplift the rural community through education and healthcare programmes – the two most pressing needs of the society.

