

ANAHITA

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The Scientific and Spiritual Aspects of a Havan

Significance of Dakshina

Be(a)ware of Procrastination



MaitriBodh

www.maitribodh.org

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Friend,

Prayers are the means by which we communicate with God. Since ancient times Havans have been the means by which prayers have reached the Almighty through a sacred fire. In this issue we bring you the spiritual and scientific significance along with the various benefits of performing a 'Havan'. As we prepare ourselves for the auspicious Chaitra Navratri from 18th March, our mitrs and maitreyis share their insights about Havan through various articles.

Under Dadaleela, read a poem that comes straight from the heart of a prison inmate of Tihar prison in Delhi - a real life story of Transformation through Divine Intervention, the journey of a maitreyi transcending the barrier of religion and conditioning to truly experience Havan. Understand the relevance of serving the Guru under the story section. Also, get to know the correct way to Fast and its benefits under the wellness section, have a sneak peek into a teenager's Psychological Development, enjoy the irony and humour from our new section - Divine Play and read a story on Positivity and Team work and the way out to stop Procrastination under Young Impressions. The article on Dakshina (Offering) gives an insight that is less known. **Read Dadashreeji's message on how to practice affirmations and tune one's being to flow with them naturally.**

In this month, on the auspicious occasion of 'Chaitra Navratri' our mitrs will be performing **Havans at 'ShanktiKshetra Premgiri Ashram' from 18th March to 25th March 2018**. Make the most of the opportunity as **Purification (Bodh 2)** goes regional; taking place in Kotagiri (Tamil Nadu) and Delhi this month. Details of the same are shared in the issue under the section Upcoming Events. The seekers also joyfully await **Heal the Soul (Bodh 4)** which is to be conducted in the month of April in two batches.

May we bring more Love, more Grace and establish the Divine in our heart. Let's spread Love!

**Love & Gratitude,
The Editorial Team**





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Send us your articles, stories, poems, spiritual questions to anahita@maitribodh.org



Q. You requested us to say 'I am Love' repeatedly to experience spiritual transformation and our true nature. Is it just a thought or an affirmation to influence your mind and create a false mental experience of the same? Sometimes, we don't feel connected to these affirmations but still mechanically murmur them. Why should we do it? Please guide us.

Dadashreeji:

Dear Friends,

Look within! What stops you from the practice of affirming these statements? What is bothering you within? It is not like a random citizen of the country all of a sudden claiming to be the president of the country and proclaiming that only his rule would be followed in the country. Merely repeating the line, 'I am President, I am President' is not going to make him one. These repetitions will do nothing but fool your mind. It is an insane, impractical and unreal thought.

And now, let us go a step ahead to understand what the affirmation is. Is it just a thought or is it more? As we understood, a mere thought can be unreal; but an affirmation is about the real you. An affirmation is more profound than a thought. The affirmation comprises of your true nature and inner reality. Simply put, it's about your better self. The affirmation pushes you towards reality. When your being gets tuned with the affirmation, you naturally flow with it with no more judgements or mental blocks.

Although the affirmation is a mental exercise, it acts as a constant dose of the truth to your mind. So, the affirmations will help you to get closer to the reality from which your mind has been disconnected. It makes your mind more positive and receptive towards the truth. When we say, "This is the best day of your life!" your mundane mind may quickly jump to note unhappy moments of the day. Then you say that it wasn't the best day of your life. But slowly as you keep practicing it, you realise that you start identifying with only the positive moments of the day. You find positivity in unhappy moments of life as well. You become more optimistic and positive towards life. Today, may not be your best day but these affirmations will make everyday the best day for you. Spiritually, this is how it should be.

An affirmation is more effective when you write it, again and again. To make it more effective than writing, visualise affirmations. Visualisation adds life into these affirmations. You can practice any ways that are comfortable for you. All would give results when done regularly with dedication.

Before you start practicing, an essential criteria is to comprehend the affirmations well. Ask questions till it is absolutely clear in your mind! When ready, practice them twice a day or more, keeping your Divine in the mind. Sanskrit Mantras are also affirmations, vibrating at a higher frequency in tune with Nature and The Divine. Regularly chanting these mantras, will provide corresponding changes in your life.

So, please know that Love is your true nature and the 'I am Love' affirmation is one of the ways to remind you of the reality at all the times. It is still okay, even if you don't feel it at that moment. Accept the fact that you don't feel love within! Now, let your mind remind itself of the truth!

Keep saying again and again, I am Love, I am Love....I am Love...!

**Love and Blessings,
- Dadashreeji!**



What is mind? Isn't this one of the most important queries that a sadhak asks? To put it simply the mind is a collection of thoughts.

Mind has many definitions but at the basic level, comprises thoughts in one form or the other. We perceive through our senses. When these actions and reactions are backed by experiences of life situations, they become memory. If the experience has been strong, we tend to remember it for long. Now, ego is that part of our mind that takes ownership of thoughts, actions and reactions. Anything that affects our 'ego' (especially adversely) strongly is often remembered for life.

We are a product of our thoughts, experiences and memories. These are predominantly influenced by the surrounding environment. During our childhood we are influenced by our close family members, teachers, friends and thereafter by our peers and so on. The experiences during this journey further influence our thoughts, beliefs and concepts. In time we become an individual with set ideas and set beliefs. These ideas and beliefs define us. Life is all about changes and we need to evolve with time otherwise the same ideas and beliefs will become rigid. And if these rigid ideas and beliefs do not change in time they would start limiting us and prove detrimental for our inner growth. This is what Dadashreeji terms as the "Trapped Mind".

Why should we be aware of the trapped mind? A trapped mind is a biased mind. It blinds us from the truth. It is like viewing the world through coloured glasses. What is worse is that it is made up only of the colours that you like. The trapped mind is accustomed to think with those rigid ideas and beliefs all the time. This can prove to be a major hindrance in our growth. Love is the core of our nature. The trapped mind also becomes the single biggest deterrent to experience that Love. To experience this Love one has to be open to change and willing to make positive amends in one's thoughts and actions. That's why Dadashreeji says "Beware of this trapped mind"! Hence, let's be aware of our thoughts and the trapped mind.

His Words

“

Be aware of this
trapped mind!

- Dadashreeji ”





Chaitra Navratri Havans

At 'ShanktiKshetra Premgiri Ashram'
from 18th March to 25th March 2018

On the auspicious occasion of 'Chaitra Navratri' our mitrs will be performing Havans at 'ShanktiKshetra Premgiri Ashram' from 18th March to 25th March 2018.

Seekers can choose to perform **individual havan (exclusively for one family)**

OR

Samuhik havans (for three families) at the ashram.

Come be a part of the Navratri Celebrations at ShantiKshetra Premgiri Ashram!

For any queries or to request for a Havan
pls call on 9320234596 / 9833809122





Dadaleela

..... Devotees' Experiences

Saraswati Havan

When the exam season is round the corner, many parents are naturally anxious about the performance of their children, especially where the Board exams are concerned. Both parents and children are stressed during this time and I as a mother was no exception. My daughter and her friends were appearing for their Board Exams and we as mothers were looking for ways to help and support them deal with the challenges of coping with the pressure and yet excelling.

The solution came to us in the form of a suggestion to perform a Saraswati Havan (fire ritual for the Goddess of Learning) for the children. We organized the Havan at our home and invited all the children along with their parents to be a part of this ancient fire ritual.

During the Havan, we prayed that all our children be able to perform at their highest potential and any internal blocks that may prevent them from giving their best, be removed. We also prayed that the children are

full of health and vitality and are able to put in their best efforts. The children were made to understand that there is no substitute for hard work; that prayers were meant to aid the process of being able to put in the hard work without internal blockages getting in the way. They understood that the prayers were not for getting 'good results' as what is in our hands is the effort – the results being left to the Divine. As the fire in the Havan kund blazed strong, we all experienced inner peace and calm in our hearts through Dadashreeji's Grace.

I am happy to report that in the days that followed, all the children were able to give their best during the exams in good health and with calm minds. Dadashreeji blessed each one of them with scores well above 90%. One of them also scored extremely well in her SAT exams and is now studying in Philadelphia in the US. As a mother I am filled with gratitude and love for this opportunity to be blessed so, by the Divine.

- Maitreyi Sebanti





Transcending Religion into Spirituality

Fire is the symbol of the religion I was brought up in. Being a curious child I used to ask a lot of questions. When I asked why fire was the center of everything we did in our religion I was told by my father that because no impurities can sustain themselves in fire and therefore it signifies the religion to be as pure as fire. I was content with that explanation at that time and let it be. Honestly however, I never was able to connect with any rituals.

I was introduced to Dadashreeji (founder of the MaitriBodh Parivaar) in 2013 when I attended Bodh 1. I was assured that it is a spiritual organisation and nothing religious at all. I just melted in the presence of Dadashreeji and immediately connected to Him at first smile. It felt as if we knew each other very well.

Due to my limited understanding and ignorance in the initial years of association with the MaitriBodh Parivaar, I started feeling deeply confused as to how a spiritual organization could have a temple and conduct havans (practices that I associated with religion at that time)? My respect towards

Dadashreeji kept me associated with the Parivaar, though I decided I would ignore all these 'Hindu practices'. Somewhere inside me I could not bridge this massive misunderstanding and prayed to Dadashreeji (whom I was internally connected to) to resolve it for me.

Before Navratri (2016), I read messages about seva that was required at the ashram for that period and ignored them, but then thoughts began to appear repetitively asking me to offer seva at the Ashram. I soon started to experience a pain in the knee and decided that the only recourse to make this pain subside was to go and take part in seva at the Ashram. Immediately after that resolution, the knee pain started to subside quickly. I was nervous about spending time at the Ashram doing seva and being outside my comfort zone.

I informed the coordinator about my decision. I was requested to take temple service by the coordinator and accepted it, explaining that I would require assistance/guidance while doing the seva as I had no knowledge about



the same. She assured me that she would help me personally along with the temple priest.

I was briefed about the duties I was supposed to perform. The next day, early morning, my duties began with cleaning the temple. Then in the afternoon, I was asked to participate in the havan. I was hesitant about participating but finally decided to keep my inhibitions aside and do what was requested. To my surprise I was asked to maintain the fire during the havan. I was pleased as I got to do something I have only seen male priests do all my life. So I sat for the havan - a first in my lifetime. I was explained in three very simple words that the havan was an 'Act of Love'.

Then as the days went by I learnt in detail what a havan and the various processes involved signified.

Starting with the setup of the havan then inviting all the different Gods and Goddesses, to offering of the prayer on behalf of the person or family we were conducting this havan for and the different beautiful chants and then to finally the purna-ahuti which is the offering of one's best quality so it shall be strengthened as the Agni (God of Fire) bestows it back upon you a thousand times over. Suddenly, I found myself enjoying the havans.

It then occurred to me that fire plays a significant role in all religions and cultures but it just takes different forms and manifests itself

in different expressions. If it's a candle in Christianity, it is burning of incense in Buddhism. I soon realised that fire truly supersedes all religions and cultures and it's been there from the beginning of time itself. Our solar system revolves around a big ball of fire and so it's only natural that humanity gravitates toward the almighty fire.

As the days went by I also realized what a privilege it was to be able to do seva in the temple as I started really enjoying and understanding the importance of this expression of love for our Divine Mother. How MaaMahakali was not just an idol in the temple but the living embodiment of Her consciousness. Above all I was left with a feeling of communion with Her and realization that within me lived a part of Her consciousness. How the temple is truly an energy center for humanity and not just a building made of bricks and cement.

Deep realization dawned upon me that it's the limitations of the human mind that always classify and label things on the basis of religions. It is my experience now and therefore my understanding that MaaMahakali belongs to all. She is the energy that created the creation, is all around us encompassing humanity with Her Love and compassion. She is here to Love us all.

- Maitreyi Kainaz





The Transformation

Tihar jail (prison) has seen an energy shift especially the men's jail ever since Dadashreeji's presence has become an integral part there. The inmates feel Dadashreeji's presence strongly and are constantly praying for His Divine's friendship seeking guidance in the right direction.

It is an amazing sight to see the bonding that is taking place despite the negativity surrounding the premises. This is a miracle that is only possible with Divine intervention and proof that prayers truly work in our lives. Mukesh, Mahesh, Ashok, these three inmates

chant Dadashreeji's Mantra every day and pray for other inmates also to receive the Grace and Love they are experiencing in their lives.

I would humbly request MaitriBodh Parivaar members all over the globe to pray for these inmates to receive Divine Grace and Guidance so as to get back on the right path and experience Love and peace within their hearts.

**Love and Gratitude,
At His Lotus Feet Always,
Dada's Maitreyi Sonee**



Below is a poem written by an inmate (Mukesh) in Tihar Jail (Prison) and shared by Maitreyi Sonee who has been conducting sessions in the prison.

मैं करता रहूँ गुणगान मुझे दो ऐसा वरदान।
तेरा नाम ही लेते लेते इस तन से निकले प्राण।
मैं करता रहूँ गुणगान मुझे दो ऐसा वरदान।
तेरी दया से मेरे भगवान, मैंने ये नरतन पाया।
तेरी सेवा में बाधाएँ डाले जग की मोह माया।
मैं फिर भी अर्ज करता हूँ हो सके तो देना ध्यान।
मैं करता रहूँ गुणगान मुझे दो ऐसा वरदान।
राधा मीरा नारी जैसे दुःख सहने की शक्ति दो।
विचलित न हो पथ से भगवन मुझे को ऐसी भक्ति दो।
मैं तेरी अर्ज करता हूँ हो सके तो देना ध्यान।
मेरे प्रियतम कृपा निधान।
मैं करता रहूँ गुणगान मुझे दो ऐसा वरदान।
ना जाने कब किस घड़ी तेरा बुलावा
आ जाए।
मेरे मन की इच्छा भगवन मन ही मन न रह जाए।
मैं तेरी अर्ज करता हूँ हो सके तो देना ध्यान।
मैं करता रहूँ गुणगान मुझे दो ऐसा वरदान।
दादाश्रीजी नमो नमः।

Meaning

Allow me to sing your praises Lord, Give me your Grace
Allow me to leave this body while Chanting Your Name
Allow me to sing your praises Lord, Give me your Grace
With Your Grace I have taken birth as a human body

The materialistic world and its pleasures create barriers in the path of Serving You
I pray and humbly request if possible please turn your gaze towards me and take care of me
Allow me to sing your praises Lord, Give me your Grace
Grant me the strength like Radha, Meera to tolerate and bear pain

Grant me the devotion that I never deviate from the path towards you
I pray and humbly request if possible please turn your gaze towards me and take care of me. O my Beloved
Compassionate Lord
Allow me to sing your praises Lord, give me your Grace
For who knows when You will call me back home

My desires and wishes might remain unfulfilled in my heart and mind
I pray and humbly request if possible please turn your gaze towards me and take care of me
Allow me to sing your praises Lord, Give me your Grace!

**Dadashreeji Namoh Namah,
Written by Mukesh**





The Scientific & Spiritual Aspects of a Havan

Mitr Sut elaborates on the spiritual and scientific significance of performing havans

Havan or Yajña literally means 'sacrifice, devotion, worship, offering'.

All of us must have heard, seen or been part of this sacred process, in front of a fire, accompanied with the chanting of mantras. To many, it may just be a ritualistic act conducted by Hindus, but this is a universal sacred process in liaison with nature and its laws, with profound benefits for both internal spiritual growth and material success.

A lot has been studied and written about Havans. Let us try and understand in detail the spiritual basis of yajña and also what scientific studies have discovered about it.

Havan is not just a physical act in front of the fire. Every aspect of the havan has a reason and

spiritual perspective. Of the five basic elements of nature, in the havan - 'agni' (fire) is used as a medium which is the fastest way to establish communion with the Divine, acting as a link between human and Cosmic Consciousness.

We often pray, requesting the Divine for personal gains in different ways. A Havan in a similar way is a plea to the Divine, to fulfill a 'sankalp' (intent), with set 'vidhi-vidhaan' (processes/ methods), which have been created with utmost care and extensively experimented by ancient sages, who themselves were in an evolved internal state and they understood the limitations of a human body and mind. A Havan is conducted by using various earthly elements and by following the laws of the Universe, so as to raise the consciousness and vibrational frequency of the people involved in the process,



along with the surroundings, finally establishing a communion with the Divine. Every aspect of the process, the manner in which the 'havan kund' /pit or container is prepared, the multiple ingredients used in the process, the various Mantrs (chants) used during the havan [including the swar (phonation) and the metrics of the Mantr] have all been devised keeping in mind the highest scientific base and in liaison with the spiritual realm to attain maximum benefits.

Having understood this, it goes without saying that any alteration in the set process will dilute the purpose and may even modify or alter the result. Therefore the karta (conductor of the havan) should be well versed and experienced in conducting the entire process and most importantly be in that 'awakened' state and connected with the Divine!

The RIGVED - the most ancient compilation of knowledge on earth begins with details of a havan and many verses in this master piece of ancient literature are dedicated to the process of conducting a Havan.

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

A whole new meaning, insight and understanding of a havan can be discovered, as you go within and reflect on what exactly happens during this process.

The sound of the mantr chanting creates a vibrational energy, both within and without, resulting in the raising of one's consciousness, as well as enhances the environmental energies. The process of putting in an offering (ghee or clarified butter along with other ingredients), with resultant kindling of the fire, signifies that whatever you offer, you get back manifold, which is what actually happens during a havan. So if one offers one's own best quality, it will be enhanced manifold and returned back to the seeker. The PoornAahuti which is offered at the end of the havan is the 'complete offering of oneself' for a higher cause. When the Aahuti is offered into the fire in the right spirit, one is bestowed with immense grace to achieve the highest truth.

As one evolves one realizes, that that one owns nothing. Everything is of the Divine and everything belongs to Him alone! This is reflected beautifully in the following mantra, as Krishna tells Arjun (in which Brahman represents the Supreme):

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविरि ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्म कर्मसमाधिनः । । 24 । ।

brahmārpaa brahma havirbrahmāgnaubrahma āhutam brahmaivatenagantavya brahma-karma-samādhinā

Meaning: The act of offering is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman, offered by Brahman, in the fire of Brahman. By seeing Brahman in action, Brahman verily shall be attained by him. (Chapter IV verse 24 Bhagwad Gita).

So, though it may seem that 'we' are 'conducting' the havan and 'putting in the offering', as we internally reflect, one would realize that its all part of the Divine and His will and we are just a medium, being given yet another opportunity to connect with our inner sacred self.

Havan is an act of love, helping one to connect with the Divine. It makes one realize that the more you give to the world, the more you get from the Divine and helps in moving onwards in one's journey of life, from darkness to light, from negative to positive, from unhappiness to bliss.

It annihilates unwanted negative thoughts and can transform one, into one's 'Pure Self'.

SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE

Many scientific studies have been performed to study havans, including the various ingredients used in it, the impact of havans on physical illnesses and also on nature and the environment.

One of the purposes of a havan, is to enhance the energy of the human body and make it healthy. The electromagnetic waves generated thereby compounded with the sonic signals encoded in the mantrs help in intensifying and transmitting the desired benefits of yajñya in the



surrounding atmosphere and far beyond. Scientific studies demonstrate that a havan not only cleans the environment but also helps cleanse the body of toxins, which may be responsible for illnesses.

Myth - A Havan does not help in physical illness and its smoke, etc. can cause physical problems

*A research, which is published as a scientific paper, has demonstrated the usefulness of havans in the prevention and cure of epilepsy. Their metadata analysis demonstrates that the components of a Havan have a number of volatile oils whose vapors enter into the central nervous system through the nasal route and has therapeutic components, which can help in preventing epilepsy. Ref.- Journal of Epilepsy Research pISSN 2233-6249

*As per the research conducted by Dr. KundanLal (M.D. in Allopathic medicine) found that 1 k.g. of mango wood when burnt with havan samigri reduced bacterial count by 94%. The air sample even after 24 hrs. showed that bacteria count was lower by 96%. A Havan helps to prevent air borne infections like T.B. (Tuberculosis) and other viral infections. He has published a book in 1949 which is titled Yajnachikitsa (Yajna therapy).

Myth - Havan causes air pollution

*In another study, the impact of agnihotr havan on environmental air was studied, where it was found that a havan can effectively reduce air pollution by criteria pollutants like SO_x, NO_x, CO, RSPM, and SPM, providing a non-conventional solution to air pollution

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(A word of caution, the wood burning smoke created during the havan, may cause bronchial irritation, so be careful during acute stages of asthma / bronchitis).

Myth - Havan increases air microbes and infections

*Another study on the effect of havans on environment and plants, showed significant decrease in microbial colony count after Agnihotr havans. In their study, levels of Sox dropped significantly after performing Agnihotr havans while NO_x levels remain the same clearly stating that it can keep the pollutants in the surrounding air under check.

Ref.-

<http://www.agnihotra.com.au/wpcontent/uploads/2015/08/Scientific-study-of-Vedic-Knowledge-Agnihotra.pdf>

*One of the main ingredients used is cow 'Ghee' or 'Clarified Butter' which has enormous beneficial properties. This ghee when burnt like oil will produce natural fumes that heal the respiratory system and clear any blood clots and bacterium affecting the nasal, lungs and veins.

Myth - Havan involves cutting of trees and disturbs nature

*A commonly misunderstood fact is that a havan involves cutting of trees for the wood (generally mango wood) to be used. However, the wood used in a havan is dry and comprises of the smaller dried branches of mango trees which fall and are used thereby causing no harm to the tree.

In the MaitriBodh Parivaar, havans are regularly performed with full sanctity and understanding of the above facts and most importantly by 'awakened' souls, who have been trained extensively and are experienced to perform this sacred process. There have been profound experiences and outcomes, whenever and wherever such havans have been performed. One can visit MaitribodhParivaar's website for details and avail this most wonderful opportunity.

A doctor by profession, (currently working as a Consultant Radiologist in P.D. Hinduja Hospital, Mumbai) Mitr Sut - as he is fondly called also teaches and conducts spiritual sessions and shares the insights gained from his Master Dadashreeji.





Significance of Dakshina

Maitreyi Kanika beautifully explains the concept and spiritual aspect involved when one offers Dakshina

For those of us who are familiar with the word 'Dakshina' might relate it to either a ritual or something to do with a teacher – disciple relationship. I too thought so until under our Divine Friend's Guidance, I started to understand the concept of giving and receiving.

**"It's in giving that you will receive."
- Dadashreeji**

Through our various interactions we are constantly in the process of sharing with other human beings, Nature and the Divine Himself. These interactions involve giving and receiving and thus, leading to exchange of some kind of value. When there is sharing or giving of knowledge or energy, it needs to be compensated in some form of equivalent value else it becomes a debt for the receiver. If one has received a favor in any form, monetary or kind or even prayers, then they are indebted to return

it. It might be possible that it takes some time to repay based on the situations but it can't be ignored or nullified in any way as it would create karmic repercussions.

According to Vedic literature, our interactions with others and the very existence on the Earth plane makes us indebted to three kinds of Rins (debts) – also known as Tri Rins. These Rins relate to the debt of a human being towards those who have given him the spiritual, physical and social life and lays down the duties one has towards each.

First of these Rins is the Dev Rin which is the debt towards the Divine who has provided life and made this entire creation which supports us from the moment we are born. This includes all the Divine forms and energies that make our existence possible. In some texts, the debt



towards the environment is mentioned separately as the Bhut Rin but it is covered under the Dev Rin as ultimately the environment is a part of Creation itself and we are indebted to the Creator who created everything. Dev Rin helps us acknowledge the presence of the Divine in everything around and makes us feel humbled by the benevolence of the Creator.

Second Rin is Pitru Rin which is a debt towards our ancestors and parents who are the medium for one to be born as a human being on Earth. This debt makes us appreciate the love and care of our parents who painstakingly bring up a child into an individual who can then positively contribute towards society. One of the most significant stories in mythology which tells us about love and devotion to one's parents is that of Shravan Kumar who carried his blind parents on his shoulders to fulfill their wish of going on a holy pilgrimage; and gave up his own life during this journey.

The third Rin is called Rishi Rin which is a debt towards Rishis, Gurus and Masters who have propagated the knowledge of living a holistic human life (different from animals) for eons. This debt is towards the teachers who show the path of experiencing human life as a journey towards the highest and to live in awareness that the ultimate goal is to merge with the Divine.

The knowledge of these Rins helps us to be appreciative of how everything in creation is working together to provide us sustenance. While the feeling of gratitude and debt helps one stay humble, it is important to also try to repay the debt through physical actions. These Rins can be repaid in various forms. Dev Rin is repaid by performing Havans as an act of gratitude and love towards the Divine by giving offerings into the holy fire. Pitru Rin may be repaid by taking

care of our parents and propagating the family lineage. Rishi Rin may be repaid by offering Dakshina to the Guru who provides the knowledge of the self.

Dakshina as a concept comes from the idea of a physical offering towards repaying a debt. "Dakshina is a Sanskrit term that refers to an offering or gift, typically to a guru or priest. The word comes from the Sanskrit, da, meaning 'offering' or 'giving'; kshi, meaning 'to abide' or 'to dwell in'; and na, meaning 'knowledge'.

It is important to understand, that Dakshina must be given with a feeling of gratitude, thus it needs to be something which is of utmost value to the giver. In Vedic times, Dakshina was given in the form of commodities that were considered of value like gold coins or cows or food grains. In the current time, we know that money is a valuable commodity (for most of the people) and thus Dakshina is offered in the form of money.

However, living under the Grace and Blessings of Dadashreeji we know that the most valuable thing is Love. Our Divine Friend has given us abundance and has never asked for anything in return. But we feel the gratitude in our hearts and are motivated to offer something at His Lotus Feet. This feeling of gratitude and debt helps us in living a life of humility and seva bhaav. The biggest Dakshina that one can offer to Dadashreeji is spreading Love and offering Selfless Service to humanity.

**"Be instrumental in helping society. It becomes your solemn duty to pass Love on to others."
- Dadashreeji**

"What Is Dakshina? - Definition from Yogapedia." Yogapedia.com, www.yogapedia.com/definition/5415/dakshina.

A design teacher by profession and spiritual seeker at heart, Maitreyi Kanika lives to spread Dadashreeji's message of Love and Transformation everywhere. Keeping the focus on Divine Lotus Feet she flows through life, experiencing Gratitude for the Divine in every moment.



Pilgrimage or Guru?

Padmapad was one of the main disciples of Acharya Adishankar. Once, Padmapad desired to visit many places of pilgrimage and bathe in many holy rivers. Hence he sought permission from his Guru, Shankar.

To that Acharya Shankar said: "My dear disciple! Instead of wasting time wandering hither and thither, one can attain the same merit of pilgrimage by staying with ones Guru and serving Him. By worshipping the Guru, one attains the same merit as derived from worshipping the images of Gods. The water that washes the Guru's feet is the same as the waters of numerous holy rivers".

At these words of Acharya Shankar, Padmapad humbly expressed his desire, while not defying his Guru's words. "OLord! It is good to accept the Guru's words without question. However, please allow me to say something. Though I know fully well that the company of one's Guru is better than the pilgrimage, my mind is not content with not

going on the pilgrimage. Whatever difficulties you speak of are common to all who undertake the pilgrimage. Has anyone attained self-realisation living in comfort and luxury?"

Padmapad further explained "Bathing in rivers, gives peace of mind. The experiences of travelling in many places broadens ones mind. Meeting with ascetics and monks, staying in various places helps tackle the obstacles in spiritual life. When a pilgrimage has so many benefits to offer, who would lose an opportunity to go on one. Through faith and devotion, one remains close to the Guru, even though he is physically far from me. And so, my Master I

seek your permission to go on this pilgrimage, which has the potential benefitting me in many ways".

Overjoyed on hearing these enthusiastic words from his disciple, Padmapad, Acharya Shankar was pleased and spoke encouragingly: "O child I told you to stay with Me to check your firmness. You have My blessings to go on this pilgrimage with complete faith and devotion".

Guru Shankar further advised His disciple: "There may be many paths to reach your destination, but take the one, that is most used. Lesser known paths are used by thieves and robbers. Seek monks, scholars and sages

wherever you go and have useful discussions with them. You would know of rare things by having such discussions. This knowledge would make you enthusiastic and alleviate your suffering and make you fearless". He also cautioned His disciple: "Do not stay in one place for many days as that would become bondage. Also it

would delay your schedule of reaching various destinations. Don't mix with strangers and evil people. Don't indulge in unnecessary talks and quarrels with anybody. Be pure and honest in all your dealings. Move about as one in the bliss of Atman". With these words, Acharya Shankar bid goodbye to Guru Padmapad on his journey.

This conversation helps us understand clearly the Guru's greatness, the benefits of pilgrimage and the things a pilgrim should follow for a trouble free and enlightening Pilgrimage!!!

Reference: Prabuddha Bharata, August 2016, Vo.121, No.8.

"Instead of wasting time wandering hither and thither, one can attain the same merit of pilgrimage by staying with ones guru and serving him".



FASTING: A Remedy

We generally fast, but are we doing it the right way?

Sheetal Maniar shares the benefits of fasting and guides on how one should fast

"All diseases begin in the gut" - Hippocrates

Give a Sunday to the gut. We all require a rest day so that we bounce back with more vigour and vitality. Similarly, our gut also requires a holiday. Overloading the stomach with unnecessary food is one of the most common abuses of the body. Eat sparingly and promote longevity.

Health Benefits of Fasting

According to a 2013 review published in the British Medical Journal:

- Fasting promotes cellular regeneration by triggering autophagy, which is a natural process needed to renew damaged cells.
- It helps inhibit cancerous growths and chronic disease development.
- Normalizes insulin and leptin sensitivity. Insulin and leptin resistance is one of the principal factors for numerous chronic diseases, including diabetes.
- Fasting shifts the body's dependence on glucose, which then stops its constant craving for sugar, thus normalizing insulin and leptin sensitivity.
- Shifts the body to burn fat for fuel. While fasting, it may feel like the body is starved, this can actually help you avoid cravings and hunger pangs by resetting your body's glucose dependence.
- Fasting boosts cognitive function by providing the brain with fat instead of glucose.
- Fasting helps in the prevention of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease because of the boost in brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein that is both neuroprotective and brain-stimulating.

Why Is Fasting Effective?

- Body has a phenomenal capacity to repair & cure all by itself, given the adequate conditions and environment.

- Researchers suggest that the reason why fasting works so well is because it's closest to the diet of our ancestors, who used to pluck fruits or hunt for food.
- The easy access to food nowadays has completely eliminated the normal 'feast and famine' cycle the body needs for regeneration and cell replacement.
- Fasting gives the body adequate time to clean up and remove toxins from the body, which it cannot do with an all-day grazing diet. Not only does fasting trigger the body's ability to heal and produce efficient cells, it also transitions your body into burning fat for fuel, which is a better source of energy.

How to fast?

- Generally the time ranges from 14 to 18 hours.
- Eliminate all processed foods from your diet, consume natural and healthy food during the six to eight hour window as eating processed foods will defeat the purpose of detoxifying the body.
- Drink plenty of water and liquids to keep yourself feeling full, satisfied & hydrated. This will help you curb cravings.
- One day prior at night give your gut a cleanse by a laxative that is a herb called Haritaki (harde) or Isabgol (Psyllium Seed Husk).
- First thing in the morning is to give an acid wash to your gut by consuming lime & soda - bi - carb solution.

Method: 1 lime mixed in 1 ltr water with 1/4 tsp of soda-bi-carbonate (khane ka soda). Deep freeze and grate the lemon peel, eating it with the lime solution is very crucial to maintain the PH balance.

Precautions: Pregnant women, diabetic patients & ones who are suffering from serious ailments should avoid Fasting.

Dr. Sheetal Maniar is a physiotherapist by profession, a PhD holder in alternative medicine from the Indian Board of Alternative Medicine. Also holds a degree in nutrition from AMCC, Calcutta and is a counselor too. She has a penchant for curing her patients at the physical, emotional & spiritual levels.



A Sneak Peek into a Teenager's Psychological Development

As caring adults we can positively influence the development of growing children by providing them with emotional, informational and tangible support says **Maitreyi Cecilia**

The most critical years in a child's development are the pre-teenage and teenage years, when children are transitioning into young adults.

Generally, hormonal changes begin even before a child has arrived into the teenage years. Puberty can begin for girls as young as eight and nine for boys. Factors such as genetics, environment, diet, exercise also determine the age at which the child attains puberty. Some also attain it at an older age thereby generating anxiety at times.

As parents we need to first understand that our child is not exactly growing in the same era as ourselves. They have instant access to the internet and many other sources of information. Hence the best contribution in our child's life in the pre-teen phase is honest communication. A preteen expert Rosalind Wiseman, author of *Queen Bee Moms & Kingpin Dads* says, "You need to practice having conversations with your pre-teen in which you can recognize their growing independence, without acting like it's a personal rejection of you even if it feels that way, and conveying information to them while respecting their need to make their own decisions."

During this phase, children are also developing organizational and reasoning skills. Due to their specific brain development, some of their memory skills are still maturing. As caregivers we can help children by setting daily routines to enable them to organize and remember their activities.

We can encourage children to identify their own interests: such as music, art and science. Help them cultivate their interests in a productive manner. Participating in social activities, cleanliness drives and reading for fun also help.

As teenagers they get conscious of peer expressions and body language. They are particular about what their friends think of

them. This is the age when teens experience immense stress and have unstable emotions which translate into being tearful and arguing with elders.

This is a good age to introduce stress control techniques such as breath watch and meditation. Encourage them to choose their friends based on shared interests rather than popularity. Teach them skills of expressing themselves honestly and how to repair friendships after a fight, how to make amends without losing their temper.

"Family support is a stress buffer. Teens whose families provide companionship, problem-solving and emotional support are less likely to become depressed after exposure to severe stress", according to a 2016 study in the *Journal of Family Psychology*.

At this age, there is an amplified response of the adolescent's brain to dopamine, a chemical associated with pleasure and satisfaction. This could lead to a higher risk taking behavior such as dangerous driving, poor relationship choices and indulging in smoking or alcoholism.

During this phase, caregivers and parents can be supportive as friends without being judgmental or argumentative. Teenage mental stability and good choices being made are generally linked to their relationship with their parents. The closeness to parents includes having parents' respect and help talking through problems with an absence of arguing or yelling.

Parents can think of themselves as a gardener who plant the seed and nourish the plant by watering it daily and caring for the environment in which it grows. The gardener cannot control or determine the characteristics of the plant. Similarly, parents can constantly support the child and given them the tools to help them adequately mature and strengthen their roots to always support them constantly.

Maitreyi Cecilia is a Pediatrician, currently training in Pediatric Neurology at Duke University, USA. Her greatest passions are child health and their spiritual growth. She envisions to aid caregivers and parents in the holistic physical, mental and spiritual development of children.





Be(a)ware of Procrastination

Maitreyi Anuradha shares the way out and the solutions on how one could stop procrastination from stopping us do our best

Once upon a time, witnessing a sage fasting for ten days, a group of monkeys decide to observe Fasting for a day. In the very first hour of the morning, the monkeys avoid looking at the fully ripe mangoes hanging on the luscious green tree. After a while, the monkeys began talking, "We have decided not to eat the fruits but we can definitely look at them." So, all the monkeys began looking at the mangoes. Another hour passed, one monkey said, "The decision is about not eating the fruits; we can pluck them to keep them ready to eat for tomorrow." So they all plucked the mangoes and stared at the heap of ripe mangoes on the ground. By noon one of

them said, "Look at this unbearable heat. Due of the strong sunlight, all the mangoes will rot. It is not morally right to let food be wasted. Let us eat the mangoes today, we can always observe the fast tomorrow."

Just like these monkeys, we too make so many plans. We all make our detailed 'To Do' plan with great enthusiasm in order to achieve our goals easily. But when we try to implement the plan, various thoughts distract us and we invariably try to postpone the parts we dislike. For example – Just when one takes up studying the most difficult subject, an uncontrollable urge



to snack or chat with a friend or just check the Facebook for one last time might set in. Before we know, the break time has exceeded the study time, and one invariably has to shift this study portion to the next day. This procrastination can cost heavily in the long run.

If we look closely, the problem is not unknown. We know it, yet we choose and get carried away by it. The only simple remedy that is a cure to this is TO BE AWARE. For the first few times, one can merely be aware of these procrastinating ways of mind. This awareness enables one to identify the root cause of delaying the work such as non-interest, low priority, lack of guidance etc. Upon identifying the causes, we must devise our own ways to address these into specific, easy implementable solutions.

Following are a few suggestions that could help:

Realistic goals - Keep small measurable and achievable goals rather than setting unrealistic targets. Create a structure, a deadline. Break difficult work into small chunks.

Maintaining a diary - Note down every time you deviate from your schedule/plan, why you procrastinated, how long you procrastinated and how it delayed your plan. Over time you will realize common reasons why you procrastinate and how you can work on them.

Keep yourself healthy - It is very important to eat and drink right to keep your body light and strong. It helps to keep your mind alert and

active. Daily exercise (a physical activity of your liking) of even 15 minutes will help boost your energy for the whole day.

Reflect before you sleep - It is a good habit to analyse what you did in the day, what you learnt and what you can do better tomorrow. It helps to give yourself a plan for the next day and prevents procrastination

Energy boosters - Electrolytes play a vital role in improving concentration and alertness. Coconut water, fruits like apples, bananas and pears are rich in electrolytes, vitamins, potassium, minerals and thus aid in concentration.

Eat consciously - Substitute mid night snacks with makhanas (foxnut) and dry fruits.

Quality sleep - Get a mobile free 7 hours sleep. Keeping the mobile away help improve the quality of sleep

Meditate - Meditating aids in improving focus and concentration.

With this will begin an innate willingness to check procrastination, and soon enable us to channelize our thoughts towards positivity and achieving our goal.

So the next time your mind asks for a break, Be Aware, Smile & Align!

Maitreyi Anuradha is a computer Engineer - MBA, has been training with students and corporates for their individual growth. She is passionate about helping individuals to explore, understand and bring out their true potential. While working with underprivileged, she dreams about bridging the gap between facilities available for holistic development.



Positivity and Team Work



A science competition was announced in Grade Five. The teacher used a lottery system to group students into teams of two, so that there would be no partiality. All the young children gathered to brain storm over their ideas.

Arjun was teamed up with Jay. While working with Jay, Arjun realized Jay couldn't follow his ideas and was often slow in grasping concepts. This led to some frustration as he felt he would be slowed down by his team-mate. Watching all the groups successfully work on their projects, Arjun was frustrated and expressed his feelings to his best friend, his mother.

He said, "Ma, I have all these amazing ideas, but I don't think any of them will be successful because Jay slows me down". His mother smiled and replied, "What is Jay's strength?"

Arjun exclaimed almost instantly "Art!, Jay is by far the best artist in our class."

His mother responded " So how about you communicate with Jay tomorrow and split responsibilities? Entrust Jay with the artistic aspect of your project, while you steer the concept and design. Divide and conquer!" Arjun agreed with his mother's idea.

Next day, Arjun woke up early and came up with a plan to divide responsibilities between Jay and himself. He then shared his ideas with Jay and since Jay felt comfortable with art he happily took up all the responsibilities he was given. Both Arjun and Jay individually focused on what they felt most passionate about and yet, at the same time they worked together on a single project using their focused strengths.

By afternoon, as the deadline approached, all the children were beaming with energy to show off their projects to the judges.

When the judges came up to Arjun and Jay, they were fascinated with the fine work and perfection of the project. The judges enquired how the two boys came up with such an exquisite project in such a short span of time. Both of them giggled and responded "Strong team work!"

The learning from this story:

- 1) Most often our frustrations with others stems from a lack of understanding each other. We often compare and fail to identify the positive qualities that others possess.
- 2) Team work: Working in a team needs honest communication, identification of each other's strengths and the division of work based on individual strengths to attain perfection in the end.

The Divine Play



Bodh 1

Pune: 3rd& 24th Feb, Delhi: 7th& 11th Feb, Indore: 18th Feb,
Mumbai (Andheri – East): 24th Feb, Marathi Bodh: 24th Feb,
Quad Cities, Davenport, Iowa: 17th Feb

Seekers from diverse age groups were touched and overwhelmed with their experiences during Bodh. Our Divine Friend Dadashreeji continues to touch innumerable lives with His Grace and Love helping all take a positive step towards a transformational life.

Children's Bodh – 19th Feb & 25th Feb (Mumbai)

Children's Bodh conducted brings together children from different backgrounds to experience the commonality that all are bound by Love. It helps children open up enough to share their internal and external world of feelings, likes, dislikes, emotions and disharmony.

During the session a girl shared that while she was praying and thanking Mother Earth, a big bright Sunflower appeared in front of her eyes and shook hands with her with a warm smile.



Sangat Session - 10th Feb (Hyderabad)

Sangat Sessions are not only a source of spiritual teachings for our daily life but also show us the path of love and bond with the Divine.

Maitri Aarohan Classes

These spiritual classes are not only a source of spiritual knowledge and wisdom they are becoming the highlight in the life of a seekers journey. The direction and guidance we all seek in our life has found a face through these and all are able to ask their queries and get satisfactory answers so as to move towards a positive life.

Mahashivratri - 13th Feb

Shivratri was celebrated at ShantiKshetra Premgiri Ashram with devotees coming from all cities to offer their gratitude at the Lotus Feet of our Divine Mother and Maha Kaaleshwar at Shaktipeetham. The celebrations continued till late night and everyone received enormous blessings.



Maitri Sessions

6th Feb - Quad cities, Davenport Iowa , 10th Feb - Hyderabad , 5th Feb -Delhi , 4th Feb – Pune, 21st Feb - Amritsar, 22nd Feb – Ludhiana, Every Tuesday and Saturday in Tihar Jail, New Delhi

Maitri Sessions are a source of Spiritual knowledge with Divine Grace and guidance. This month these sessions were conducted in various cities and venues reaching out to more and more people thus spreading Divine Grace and Love to all.



Aushadh Aarogya Kendra

23rd Feb, Jamrung Village School

150 adults and children received free medical examination and medicine with the support of doctors from Hinduja Hospital who were accompanied by their staff to help support the cause of MaitriBodh Parivaar.



Lions Club: 22nd Feb Colaba, Mumbai

An event was organized by MaitriBodh Parivaar members at the Lions Club. All participants experienced bliss and peace and went back with hearts full of gratitude for the Divine Grace they experienced.



Maitri Sambodh Dyan: 5th Feb, Jaipur

Maitri Sambodh Dhyan was conducted for 1100 youth at Janaki Devi School auditorium in Jaipur. The session proved to be a new way of life for the youth.

Maitri Sambodh Dhyan and Maitri Light sessions are being regularly conducted all over India and abroad.



Indore: 17th & 18th Feb

Within a span of two days, six sessions were conducted in Indore where many participants experienced the bliss of being connected to Divine Friend Dadashreeji. Sessions were conducted at Bara Bhai School, Inner wheel club, Patidar Yoga centrewith senior citizens, and at a devotees residence. Maitri Light benefits and how it works in our life was shared. Participants experienced the power of prayers and healing through Maitri Light.



Upcoming Events

Awakening with Dadashreeji For Registration Contact: +91 7506264794	18th & 25th Mar' 18 10am - 2 pm	ShantiKshetra Premgiri Ashram (Karjat)
Awakening to Self Realization (Bodh 1) For Registration Contact: 9967062992	16th Mar	Mulund
Purification (Bodh 2) For Registration Contact: +91 9791613099 For Registration Contact: +91 9810340557	16th - 18th Mar 31st Mar - 1st Apr	Kotagiri (Tamil Nadu) Vasant Kunj (New Delhi)
Chaitra Navratri Havans For Registration Contact: +91 7009466171	18th - 25th Mar	ShantiKshetra Premgiri Ashram (Karjat)
Heal the Soul (Bodh 4) For Registration Contact: +91 9773860267, +91 8355840124	Batch 1: 18th - 22nd Apr'18 Batch 2: 25th Apr - 29th Apr'18	ShantiKshetra Premgiri Ashram (Karjat)



The following Mitrs / Maitreyis are Regional Events Representatives (REPS) across India.

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Mo : 98203 79973

Delhi

Maitreyi Surbhee
Mo: 9833075979

Bangalore

Mitr Manikandan
Mo : 95914 27000

Pune

Mitr Gaurav
Mo : 95605 73908

Indore

Maitreyi Ranjana
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In case you wish to organize any of the events in your region, kindly contact the REPS first. They shall guide you through the process.



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