

Yoga 'kshemam'



G Muralidhar
with support from livelihoods team

First Edition

May 2018

Published

By

Livelihoods Team

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G Muralidhar

Muralidhar identifies himself as a life worker and his 30 years of work bears a testimony to it. Through his work at NDDDB, GCC, SERP, NRLM, NIRD, and by mentoring several developmental organisations, development professionals, grass root institutions and individuals, he acquired in depth, diverse experience and knowledge portfolio, with pan India outreach. Being an alumnus of NIT Warangal and IRMA, he brought in significant technical and management perspectives to people centred development.



One of Muralidhar's core contributions to development sector includes his extensive work with Community Based Organisations. As a State Advisor-Livelihoods, SERP, and as Lead, Capacity Building in NRLM, he created functional architecture for CBOs. His pivotal role in designing and penning down the framework for NRLM helped replicate institutions of women across the country. Muralidhar nurtured thousands of people's institutions with belief in the capacities and wisdom of poor, strength of collective action and the process of communitisation, thus ensuring their success. Muralidhar played a key role in promoting organisations like Kovel Foundation, CCN Network, Akshara, and NAANDI Foundation. He helped carve new vision for various organisations from charity mode to development mode, most recent being Help Age India. Through Akshara Livelihoods, he is enriching and spreading new livelihoods thinking and practice of TRUE (Tribal, Rural, Urban and Emerging) livelihoods, provides Visioning, Strategic Management Support, Monitoring and Learning, Training and Consulting services across the country.

As an academician, trainer and mentor, Muralidhar reached out to hundreds of students, development professionals, engaged in mentoring mentors at all levels and continues to do so. Presently, as member of Academic Committee, he is actively involved in curriculum and course improvement of PGDRDM, NIRD.

Presently, Muralidhar gives his time to developing framework, designing strategy, rendering technical support and facilitating implementation of Zero Budget Natural farming in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Through this, he is creating footprints in the agricultural sector of the state by institutionalising climate resilient natural farming.

**Dedicated to coexisting ourselves,
All the beings flowing together**

Let us go towards

**Truth
Light
Liberation
and therefore Bliss**

Preface

Yoga'kshemam'.

Atmayogam and Viswakshemam. Viswaatmayogam and Antahkshemam.

Being. Consciousness. Aananda. Satchidaanada. Amrita. Understanding, attention and care, and action for the innermost and for the Universe.

127 Yoga'kshemam's since November 2007 through May 2018 are presented together here celebrating the union of the innermost within and the outermost without.

Thanks to the yoga of Yoga'kshemam', Books came my way. Events came my way. Discussions came my way. Experience came my way. And they became part of Yoga'kshemam's of understanding, realization and articulation.

Yoga'kshemam' is a play of the innermost, reflecting and sharing the transition within to without and back. In life, living, livelihood, leveraging, leading, learning and love. Being useful now with whole of us, body, mind, heart and soul. With sarvendiyas. May be this is life, ending in joining the universe, the Krsna. If we are in sync, we dance with the tune of the cosmic flute; we play the instruments to the cosmic dance; we are in raas; and we are in Kurukshetra. It is possible. Innermost and outermost cannot be out of sync. If they want, they can be one, become one, any time. If only we live truly. If only we lead ourselves. If only we lose ourselves in learning. If only we love life, all life fully. If only we work together with more and more. If only we surrender to the innermost within. If only we become one with the universe. If we reflect, plan, practice, reflect, plan, practice and so on. If we read, listen, see, feel, think, be with nature and life, write and articulate what is coming to you from deep within. If we meditate. If we go silent deep into ourselves up to the innermost within. If we stretch out fully up to the outermost within. We are there. Krsna confirms.

Love is the essence of our being. We cannot be life without loving. We cannot be life without learning. We cannot be life without leading. We cannot be life without being useful. Being useful is the celebration of life, love, leadership and learning. This is existence transcending survival. This is active existence. This is active co-existence, in sync with the infinite intelligence of the Universe. We are blessed beings.

Let us love. All life. Let us unlearn and learn. Let us live, learn, love, lead and be led. Let us join in the world of Yoga, to experience and practice Aatmayoga. And let us celebrate.

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1. People's Collectives

Yogakshemam November 2007

As a world, we are in a state of transition. Change and Transformation is happening now at a pace hitherto not imagined. From hunter-gatherer to agriculture (100000+ years), to industry (10000+ years), to IT (a mere 300+ years), and now (single digit years)! Then, my great great grandfather was the best – I were to imitate/emulate him; gradually, I learnt from my parents; then, I learnt in school and go on to perform till I retire; now 'learn – de-learn – learn' in quick cycles lest I become obsolete. We need to cope with this pace.

2007 UN Population Report confirms that urban population in the world outstripped the rural population. India is fast catching up. What does it mean in terms of understanding livelihoods in general and of the poor in particular? We need to make a huge paradigm shift for allocating resources, focusing attention and addressing poverty. This becomes more relevant when half of the world's poor live in our sub-continent.

This April, Hyderabad has become Greater Hyderabad and now an A-1 city. This would mean more investments in Hyderabad Infrastructure, changing the land situation further in its vicinity. Transactions of Rs.40 Crore per acre in Hyderabad suburbs already are heard! It was Mecca Masjid blasts six months ago. A month ago, it was Lumbini Park and Gokul Chat blasts. An MNC representative walked away to Kaulalampur, instead of Hyderabad, to establish their IT unit, and 5000+ potential jobs were lost.

Governments are approving SEZ after SEZ across. Locals are opposing. There is a retail boom now, after the IT, cell phones and credit cards. What do the poor think about all these? How does the Daridra Narayana cope with his not-so-extravagant demand for a decent livelihood? Of course now, in SEZs, Governments talk of compensation - land, shares and jobs. People want jobs. The employers need candidates. What aparadox! The organizations, that train the youth to prepare them to match both, are increasing and the existing ones are growing up.

Of all the capitals, spiritual capital – the will to improve, achieve, and live a better and meaningful life for oneself and for the society, now and in future – matters the most, within the contours of ecological context that sets the limits to growth. All other capitals 'conspire' and cooperate. Contexts realign. Livelihoods arrows improve for one and all. People's collectives help in this process.

Self-reliant cooperative acts are coming in state after state. Yet, we see a Government Order saying that dairy cooperatives cannot be registered and the existing ones are deemed to be registered in the traditional act. A court quashes this. An assembly confirms the GO with a bill. What do we understand of all this?

Sec 581 of the companies' act provides for registration of producers' companies that function like cooperatives. JJ Irani Committee finds it not a good idea. One more Act is contemplated.

More and more states are coming up with a rural poverty reduction projects with livelihoods focus. These projects, DRDAs and most NGOs have ensured that women get into SHGs, linked to banks or Micro-finance institutions. Nobel Peace Prize to Md. Yunus and Grameen Bank has confirmed the importance of micro-finance in addressing credit needs of the poor. We witness the growth of MFIs in size, area etc., in double quick time. In AP alone, Banks have lent Rs.3500 crore last year to women SHGs. AP Chief Minister talks about ensuring credit of Rs. 100,000 per woman. Indian Government contemplates a bill to regulate MFIs. Ironically, we will have one more Act to regulate cooperatives!

These collectives and other support organizations require services of new and existing human resources. They need livelihoods orientation and continued learning support. They need to practice seeking

knowledge and skills to use resources optimally, and transferring these insights to people, to show the 'elephant' and the 'ant'.

We need large pool of bright minds and dedicated hands - professionals, community level resource persons, volunteers from mainstream, part-timers, full-timers and life-workers. We need non-poor partnerships and collaborations. They need platforms and forums to come and contribute. Like Akshara Sakthi - Livelihoods Volunteer Force - a platform for volunteers. Like Community Livelihoods Facilitators' Forums - informal self help groups of community level resource persons and leaders. Like Chelama LPC – Livelihoods Professionals' Collective. More platforms and more people into them are needed.

An ILO report on occupational profiles, sadly, does not list development work, while it is one of the largest domains employing people. It reinforces that development/livelihoods workers/professionals need to come together for meeting their solidarity, security and learning needs. To be more effective, we have to quickly pick up our multiple twin-capacities for – leading and following; mentoring and being mentored; learning and offering learning; being in-charge and let go; seeking support and supporting; being passionately attached to action and vision and detached to results; bird's view and worm's view; and planning for ends and action for means.

How do we go forward? As "this world has enough to feed the needs of every one" (Gandhi), get ready to "attend to the suffering" (Jesus), "throw away meditation ... attend to the suffering" (Buddha - and he went on to serve the suffering). Sanjaya, the reporter at Kurukshetra through the last stanza in Gita, sums up – "where man of wisdom Krishna and man of action Partha practice, there is prosperity, success, happiness/ welfare and fairness and justice."

For starters, yoga involves dialectics and logical reasoning, self and supreme knowledge, duty, renunciation, meditation, eternal spirit, devotion, commitment, practice, and of course, salvation, as articulated at length in Gita.

Wherever you are, whatever you are, whatever skills you have, your role is significant. Give time. Give energy. Give spirit. Apply yourself. We will be proud to say that we live in a better place where people live to love this world and die to ensure that this world lives and lives for everyone.

Come with us into the world of yoga – the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom, for prosperity, for success, for welfare, and for fairness and justice. Kshemam - well-being of the poor, well-being of the world and actually, our own wellbeing – is guaranteed.

2. Education for Sustainable Development

Yogakshemam December 2007

It may be a strange coincidence! The world poverty eradication day and the Livelihoods Professionals Collective's founding day are the same. It willy-nilly points out to an interesting, but not so obvious fact: livelihoods workers/professionals at the ground level are poor. Like the poor, they also need to come together for meeting their solidarity, security and learning needs.

I have been to Ahmedabad last week to participate in the 4th international conference on education for sustainable development, thanks to Centre for Environment Education. Over 1500 participants from 90 countries were there. As expected, Rajendra Pachauri was there for the inaugural session as the chief guest. Gandhi was there all over. I heard this name and reference at least 100 times in two days I was there. Sustainable development – we cannot gloss over Gandhi. It reminded us of 1992 Rio Conference, 2012 framework for addressing climate changes.

One interesting insight – one climate change aspect is the fall in pH of oceans from 8.2 to 8.1. Against this, when 8.2 pH is the best thing for human health, we seem to consume acidic air, acidic water, acidic food etc. The message is consume less acid; increase your pH. A child participant urged us to shift to solar energy. If we tap solar energy for a day, it can meet all our energy needs for more than a year. Interesting calculation! A youth participant has urged the leaders to listen – listen to people, listen to inner voice, listen to voiceless, etc. Listen to lead is the message! Gandhi's message – my life is my message, and he lived his life to give message.

In the conference, we were part of a thematic workshop –education for sustainable livelihoods, one of the thirty workshops being organized in parallel. Integrated knowledge – the elephant of the whole, the worm's view – the ant of the reality, the best practices distilled, the 'why' of the situation and the 'why' of the solution, in addition to 'how' and metaskills are the critical elements of the education in sustainable livelihoods, the workshop indicated. The education is required for the community, the community leaders and facilitators, the livelihoods workers and the policy makers. The collective action institutional processes themselves offer education.

Livelihoods Framework places highest premium on the spiritual capital – the will to improve, achieve, and live a better and meaningful life, now and in future, within the contours of limits to growth set by ecological and Environment context. Then, all the forces in the universe conspire to achieve your intent, as long as the intent is for universal good.

In response to Nara's expressed confusion, Narayana in Gita elaborates this very lucidly – there is no superior path. Any path taken, based on one's aptitude, towards the intent, will lead to the intent. We need to remember no one can remain action-less even for a moment. Everyone is driven to action helplessly indeed by the forces of Nature. Therefore, choosing a path towards the intent very early matters. Performing your obligatory duty, instead of not working or engaged in doubts and dilemmas, is the only way out as it would not be possible being without work.

Krishna explains further: Every individual has to be assigned a specific vocation as a duty and it has to be in tune with his natural aptitude, svabhava. He has to be engaged in that work, karma. No one can claim the right not to work. None has claim to akarma. Further, the enlightened one should inspire others by performing all works efficiently so that others can emulate. Because whatever they do, others follow. Whatever standard they set up, the world follows. While doing so, one should remember one's inferior natural work is better than superior unnatural work. Unnatural work produces too much stress.

Knowing the Self to be superior to the intellect, intellect purified by spiritual practices, superior to senses and body, one can discipline oneself through the practice, if one wills. For the one who has

attained yoga, the equanimity becomes the means of Self-realization. A person is said to have attained yogic perfection when he or she has no attachment to the fruits of work, at the same time on track without losing focus on the intent/vision/mission. A person is a yogi if s/he has both Self-knowledge and Self-realization, who has control over the mind and senses.

To practice yoga, one needs to know and remain committed to loving, with inner purity, without fear, to seek and to give. As we practice yoga, our intent will be a reality. When our intent is that people have portfolios of decent livelihoods, our path has to support people coming together as collectives and the professionals service these. Our path has to provide livelihoods orientation and continued learning support to the people already in the sector. Importantly, our path has to practice, practice to seek knowledge and skills to use resources optimally, and practice to transfer these insights to people, to place integrated and deeper whole before the people for them to make informed choices.

The leaders need to listen - listen to people, listen to inner voice, listen to voiceless, etc.

As we quickly pick up our multiple twin-capacities, we contribute more effectively to the learning, loving, leading livelihoods and life of the poor and people at large, and our own salvation.

Therefore, come with us into the world of yoga – the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom, for Prosperity, success, welfare, and fairness and justice. Our own, our Poor's and our world's Kshemam is the guaranteed bonus!

3. Meta Fishing Skills

Yogakshemam January 2008

Happy New Year 2008! Best Wishes for a satisfying and exciting life ahead to all of you!

During the month, I have been to 'National Conference on Farming' organized by Consortium of Indian Farmers' Associations' for a while at Hyderabad. A TV channel has asked us about the crisis in farming. Then, our livelihoods team went to Ongole and then to Guntur as part of the Livelihoods Orientation Campaigns. All of them have pointed out the looming crisis at large on all the traditional livelihoods and occupations.

We have grown from a mere 5 Crore families in farming with a mere 15% labour to about 15 Crore families with almost half as labour, in 60 years.

Yes, there is a crisis. A much larger crisis we ever imagined. The skewed resource distribution; the skewed skill distribution; the skewed information availability; growing middle and rich classes; widening gulf between the rich and the poor; reducing charity; business orientation in public services; increasing allocations to some programs like Employment Guarantee, Old age Pensions, Public Distribution System, Subsidy for low-interest loans, etc.; dying and drying traditional occupations; some paradoxes – unemployment and underemployment co-existing with employers not getting candidates for jobs, money of the poor in banks is more than the loans they receive, large unutilized infrastructure and investments for new infrastructure, demand for the products and services we cannot give and no market for the products and services we can give; rapidly changing climate –ecological, social, economic and cultural; globalization and liberalization; changing (accelerating) pace of life and decision making; low capacities of the facilitating civil society to teach the poor meta fishing skills (beyond fishing skills), rather than fishing skills and offering fish.

We have, for example, grown from a mere 5 Crore families in farming with a mere 15% labour to about 15 crore families with almost half as labour, in 60 years. The well-being of 10- 11 Crore families depends on how well the remaining 4-5 crore families get absorbed in the lucrative and decent nonfarm livelihoods quickly. That would mean a whopping $5 \times 2 = 10$ Crore jobs just to rehabilitate farmers and farm workers. The crisis situation is more pronounced with other traditional livelihoods. Growing middle class wants products and services and these people have to produce/provide these products/services.

Fortunately, the parents do not want their children to continue in these livelihoods. The youth are reluctant to Continue. If educated, the reluctance is higher. Unfortunately, the quality of our education is pathetic. A recent employability survey reveals that a mere 1% of our graduates and post-graduates are employable. This is slightly better for professional graduates. Our own experience in recruiting candidates reveals this amply. About 10000+ graduates/post graduates when assessed on four simple counts – writing 50-100 words in mother tongue about one self; reading a passage (in mother tongue) and responding to direct questions; translating a simple 2-3 sentences; and simple arithmetic problem – most of them could not score a minimum grade. Surprising but that is the reality we are living with.

Thus, we are constrained by competent human resources in general and in livelihoods domain in particular. We need to build livelihoods workers at the community level and at higher levels. We need them to be part of the people's institutions. We need them to provide services to poor for a reasonable fee. We need them to launch and manage enterprises that pool, process and market the produce and services of the poor and vice-versa. We also need the community leaders with commitment and competence.

Then, the livelihoods we are talking about are of the community. The community should be taking the decisions. Before that they need to be privy to the integrated 'livelihoods' knowledge (within the

community and outside). This integration, deeper analysis together with community and facilitation for evolving choices for the people, matters and livelihoods workers are required for this. Then the livelihoods workers are required to assist them in implementing their decisions.

Therefore, Livelihoods Orientation has to become a state, national, and global campaign to reach out to the poor and the people who work with and/or for the poor. Even the non-poor and the people who have the capacity to work with the poor have to be reached out.

We need to remember, 'Daridra Narayana' will not remain forever. S/he is bound to come out sooner or later. Then, s/he will put her third foot on the heads of all those persons who have not supported although they are in a position to support (that is, most of us).

Narayana elaborates to the confused (or is he feigning confusion?) Arjuna - one is considered the best yogi who regards every being like oneself, and who can feel the pain and pleasures of others as one's own. And he goes on to emphasize - the yogi-devotee - who lovingly contemplates on the people with supreme faith, whose mind is ever absorbed in them, who develops the plan of action to serve them and who facilitates/ensures implementation of those plans - is the best of all the yogis. Further, he points out that a person is said to have attained yogic perfection when he or she has no attachment to the fruits of work, at the same time on track without losing focus on the intent/vision/mission.

Thus, to practice yoga, one needs to know and remain committed to loving, with inner purity, without fear, to seek and to give. Importantly, our path has to practice to seek appreciation of the reality and its projected future and develop plans for action together with the communities. As we progress on this path, we contribute more effectively to our own salvation.

Come with us into the world of yoga – the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom for our learning, security, and prosperity.

4. Engaging Youth

Yogakshemam February 2008

It appears to be the month of Indians of the Year. NDTV announced Abdul Kalam as the Inspirational Leader of India, Manmohan Singh as the Leader of India, and Rajnikanth as the Entertainer of India so on. CNN-IBN identified Chidambaram in politics. It has also seen the announcements of India's civilian awards – Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Sri. In more than 100 names announced, no development worker could find a place.

Two things have struck me during the month to reinforce my convictions. One is on the way forward for youth employment and the other on the 'space' in the minds of the people through a variety of media including electronic media. The first one came from the discussions on a pilot to identify and build youth entrepreneurs, proposed by YES – Youth Employment Summit and HUDA – Hyderabad Urban Development Authority. The second came from informal discussions at Social Impact's Networking event.

When half of India is youth, when they have all the energy, enthusiasm and potential, then any one in general and livelihoods worker in particular cannot ignore youth. We need to catch them when they are children, when they are still in the schools, when they are prone to various attractions and when they want to express and demonstrate their independence. We need to work with the entire range of them.

Many of them do not want to continue in the occupations of their parents. Some are cut out for low-end jobs, some for high-end jobs, some for self-employment, some for micro-enterprises, some for leadership, some for community work, some for further advanced studies, and some others for future enterprises. Some need counseling, some need information, some need knowledge inputs, some need skills, some need market linkages, some need working capital, some need 'realization' and some others need adaptation. Most of them need inspiration, recognition, mentoring, support systems, solidarity collectives, livelihoods collectives, and meta (fishing) skills (beyond fish and fishing). All of them need soft life skills for leading productive lives.

This vast agenda is compounded with unemployment and underemployment co-existing with employers not getting candidates for jobs; constraint of competent human resources in general and in livelihoods domain in particular; growing middle class needs - products and services; rapidly changing climate – ecological, social, economic and cultural; globalization and liberalization; changing (accelerating) pace of life and decision-making; low capacities of the facilitating civil society to teach meta(fishing) skills. Rapidly expanding

ICT and IT Enabled Services have an important part to play in facilitating this agenda. We should get ready to work with them in all these agenda.

We need to work towards bringing the life, livelihoods, resources, environment, learning, leadership and love centre stage. This requires occupying the mind space for the people at large – the poor, and the non-poor; mind space of entrepreneurs and managers of enterprises; mind space of the four estates; mind space of the children; mind space of the leaders, technologists and scientists; mind space of the youth and the old; mind space of the illiterate and the educated; mind space of the women and the men; mind space of the credit providers and borrowers; mind space of the entertainers and the audience; so on. Thus, we need to build platforms for this. We need to use all 'channels'. We need to use all 'tools'. Importantly we need to build leaders with commitment and competence in the community, civil society and the four estates at various levels and on various dimensions.

We, therefore, need to integrate 'livelihoods' knowledge (within the community and outside), offer tools of deeper analysis to the community and their facilitators for evolving choices for the people. We need to build forums that offer skills in integration and using tools. It is time Livelihoods Orientation becomes an ongoing global campaign. When one gets into meditative silence (silence of voice/ senses, heart and mind) and 'expanded breathing' to take higher amounts of oxygen, s/he develops concentration, reaches a state of reduced stress and finds more meaning full life.

Krishna discusses the meaningful life in terms of resolves and pleasures with Arjuna. The three resolves referred to are goodness resolve for salvation; passion resolve for craving for fruits of work and attachment; and ignorance resolve that does not allow a person to give up sleep, fear, grief, despair, and carelessness. Krishna advocates goodness and is against the ignorance. The practice of the first resolve - spiritual practice - appears as poison in the beginning, but is like nectar in the end, comes by the grace of Self-knowledge and service of the humanity and life. The practice of passion results in sensual pleasures that appear as nectar in the beginning, but become poison in the end. And the practice of ignorance results in pleasure that confuses a person in the beginning and in the end. Krishna confirms that there is no being, who can remain free from these three modes.

Patanjali, a revered Rishi, eulogized by Krishna, gives us the eight steps to Yoga, the path of goodness – Yama (moral restraint), Niyama (discipline), Asanas (attitudes and body positions), Pranayama (breath control, therefore life control), Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses of sensual pleasures), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation towards the object/purpose) and Samadhi (transcendence).

Thus, to practice yoga, one needs to know and remain committed to loving, with inner purity, without fear, to seek and to give. Importantly, our path has to practice to seek appreciation of the reality and its projected future and develop plans for action together with the communities. All this without attachment to fruits of work. Come with us into the world of yoga – the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom. For our meaningful lives.

5. Taking Care of Our Aged and Ageing

Yogakshemam March 2008

February is the month of valentine. It is also the month of Budgets. It was also a month of the Aged, for us.

A great Gandhian social worker – Murlidhar Devdas Amte (Baba Amte) left us for good. May his soul rest in peace! It was a packed month – morning 8 to midnight 12/1 for 14- 15 days working with HelpAge India Program Staff who were getting inducted into development planning and project management and evolving its program vision and plan.

Remaining time mostly went in developing the management information system for the players in the cotton textile supply chain project. Another need of the day - loading livelihoods agenda on to micro-finance vehicles took some of our mind space and time.

One discussion led by Bhargava is still lingering in mind. How do we advocate? One way is to lobby for policy changes. The other is to organize the 'potential' make them demand. The most important, it appeared, is to appreciate the hegemony of dominant ideas on the mind, society, culture, literature and introduce alternative viable rationally sound ideas into the arena so that they slowly replace or fill the space to become part of the new hegemony. That would mean we need to argue the ideas logically, pilot test these ideas for their viability, demonstrate, and disseminate in a variety of forms that appeals to the mind that receives.

India is an ageing young nation. 8% are old now. This is increasing year by year. Life expectancy at 60 is more than 20 years. More than two-thirds of the older persons are working. The issue is how we could facilitate them to have decent portfolio of livelihoods that offers them remunerative enough income with less risks. Related issue is how we could reduce their expenditure without compromising the quality of life. The most important thing is how we could make old age that one should look forward to. With universal pensions for 65+ poor old and a host of benefits as senior citizens including 50% tariff for travel, old age has become less uncomfortable. Honestly, we all be old sooner or later and it is in our future interest that we side with the old in their struggle for better lives and livelihoods. We need to catch them when they are still young to prepare them for old age. Sure enough, they become a bit slow but that could be compensated with their experience, expertise and accumulated wisdom. They become a bit rigid but that could be compensated with their childlike 'tantrums'. They are friends with our children which we struggle to become.

Yes, some need counseling, some need information, some need knowledge inputs, some need skills, some need market linkages, some need working capital, some need 'realization' and some others need adaptation. Some of them are keen to have their wishes fulfilled. But most of them need productive engagement options, recognition, support systems, solidarity collectives, livelihoods collectives, etc. All of them need soft life skills for leading productive lives in the quick-paced dynamic contexts.

One of the greatest service that can be offered to the old-old (or dependent old!) is home care and palliative care. We can help them in their last journey being smoother and more comfortable. We are in short supply of care givers, both volunteers and paid care givers. We need to 'produce' them soon.

These intense days in the month have helped me control the 'street dogs' in the mind to let new dogs in. These include: The best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person; When one is in love, it shows; One should never say no to a gift from a child; Sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand; Ignore the facts that cannot be changed and ignoring the facts does not change the facts; Love, not time, heals all wounds; The easiest way for me to grow as a person is to

surround myself with people smarter/wiser than I am; All the happiness and growth occurs while doing; And the less time I have to work with, the more things I get done.

We need to work towards bringing life, livelihoods, resources, environment, learning, leadership and love centre stage for every one – young and old, men and women, marginalized, forgotten, poor and rich, professional and volunteer, secure and insecure, extrovert and introvert, skilled and unskilled, wise and ignorant, hardworking and smart working, debt-free and deep-in- debt, fit and not-so-fit, rural and urban, indigenous and migrant, believer and doubting, and spirited and dispirited.

Krishna discusses the ways to keep focus on the supreme purpose with Arjuna. If one remains focused on the purpose with heart, mind, and intellect through meditation and contemplation, one will find a way out to attain the purpose. If one is not able to focus the mind on the purpose, one has to work long to attain the purpose by a plan and practices such as a ritual, norm, rule, habit etc., such that you acquire abilities to remain focused on the purpose. If one is not able to practice and focus, then one has to perform the duty (protocol) just as an instrument to serve the purpose. If this is not possible, one can surrender, with complete faith, to a master/mentor (person) unto his/her will and renounce the attachment, anxiety and fruits of work with equanimity. Then also, one achieves the supreme purpose. This is Karma yoga of Krishna.

Thus, to practice yoga, one needs to know and remain committed to the purpose with love and purity. All this should be carried out without attachment to fruits of work.

Come with us into the world of yoga – the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom. For us attaining our purpose.

6. Freedom of Oppressed

Yogakshemam April 2008

It is time of Jattras across. Many parts of India are getting ready to usher in the New Year, Ugadi.

Another social worker of repute, Hemalatha Lavanam left us for good. May her soul rest in peace.

It was a warming up month – getting ready to the summer ahead. We had some showers, thanks to depression in Arbaian Sea, which is rare. Some hopping between the workshops and discussions – New Economic Culture, Vasanthi Foundation Lecture, NIRD's crisis in Handlooms, International Resource Centre for Poverty Reduction, Leadership for Weavers, Zero draft country strategy for World Bank in India etc., apart from the continued time spent in developing the management information system and digging deep within us.

Extra ordinary cooperator of our times, Rama Reddy, has become the President of Indian Cooperative Union (ICU) as it completes its sixty years of existence, recently. Gandhi was its mentor. He considered cooperative as a self-reliant association where people come together voluntarily to help each other. ICU proposes to move forward in promoting cooperative development forums in various parts of the country and build on the advocacy agenda in cooperation from Cooperative Development Foundation led by Rama Reddy in Hyderabad and Cooperative Initiative Panel consisting of legendary co-operators Dr Verghese Kurien, Mohan Dharia and Lakshmi Chand Jain.

One discussion that has consumed our time and energy is the 'oppressed'. Who are oppressed? Who oppresses them? One way is we apply pedagogy of the oppressed for the freedom of the oppressed. As a sequel, we can organize them and make them demand social and economic infrastructure. They can also benefit from ollectivization in terms of solidarity, bargaining, local purchase, value-addition and sales. The most important, it appeared, is to appreciate that there is no difference in the way the traditional oppressed communities and the new economically oppressed communities live now. Their sources of incomes, expenditure drains, ways of occupying time and coping (and not coping with risks) are more or less the same. The traditional oppression has caused some deprivations in terms of variety of capitals available to them, and the contexts, typically remained unfavorable. I am sure today's economic oppression has similar impact on the oppressed. It is true that the multiple, intensive comprehensive and naked oppression is giving way to more subtle, less visible and further less realized forms of oppression. It is in this context, we need to seek adherence to 'new' universal values of equity, justice and participation in reality, beyond the rhetoric and lip sympathy. Thus hegemony of dominant ideas around these values on the mind, society, culture, and literature with viable and compelling rationale should make its presence felt.

The Foundation Lecture at Kakinada for Kuchibhotla Vasanthi Foundation [A Score of Existence – Context, Path, Work: Reflections of a Development Worker] gave me an unique opportunity to dig deep into the last 20-30 years of one's life and work, its context, its path, its account. It stirred me deep within. It reminded me how far I am from my dream. With hindsight, I could see my drivers, my triggers, my supports and my constraints. It showed me gaps and opportunities in the context. It showed how strong or weak is the foundation for the work of another two decades now. I cherished every moment of it this digging deep. This can be relevant to other development workers, people who watch and support development workers, and importantly the potential and future development workers.

For starters. 1997 – I was at Anand, it appears now, to meet Vasanthi. She was a young friend who joined the ranks of my inspirers. By then, I had another young inspirer, Anuradha, who came into contact with me, as if Guru comes in search of the disciple, in the true Sanatana tradition, for a while –

mere one year. I am leading the path shown by her in her own way before her demise. Where am I after 20+ years in Development? Lots of unfin

ished agenda. Now, I am a livelihoods worker. Livelihoods domain and development sector is looking towards me as a promising mentor for livelihoods workers, entrepreneurs and organizations. I think this has been an awesome responsibility I have to cope with in the years to come.

Personally, I have become purer. I am on course to learn the 'art' of loving. I am learning to appreciate the second, third and fourth hand results and derive that vicarious pleasure. I am realizing that my duty begins and ends with 'doing' what I am supposed to do. I am realizing that I am a vehicle (or call me an instrument) and my job is to provide service as an instrument.

Krishna says 'It is better to seek further knowledge (*jnanam*) than to be engaged in repetitive practice (*abhyasa*) of the steps already learnt. Careful attention (*dhyanam*) to the implications of what has been learnt is superior to being engaged in gathering more knowledge (*jnanam*). *Karmaphalatyagam* is superior to meditation (*dhyanam*), intensive study. Such relinquishing leads soon to *santhi* (peace). Krishna's Karmayogis stay amidst society and conduct themselves as commoners and emerge as organizers. They are resolute in their mission, supreme purpose, paramartham. Then, they focus. Focus on Purpose, Plan, Protocol, and/or Person, at the least.

To practice yoga, one needs to know and remain committed, with physical, mental and energy bodies, to the purpose with love and purity. All this without attachment to fruits of work. Come with us into the world of yoga – the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom. For inching towards achieving awareness about us and our extended selves.

7. Microfinance and SHG Movement

Yogakshemam May 2008

Ugadi, Rama Navami and peaking up summer, remembering Dr BR Ambedkar has marked the month that went by. Cyclone in Myanmar has taken more than 60000 lives.

Gandhian, trustee of Gandhian Social Work in India, Nirmala Deshpande is no more with us. Probably there are no surviving direct followers of Gandhi now. May her soul rest in peace.

We began to experience the hot summer. Our travels and summer seem to be competing with each other. Livelihoods Orientations and Planning occupied our time during the month. We began to think about enhancing livelihoods of the urban poor. Distance Livelihoods Education has also been thought about. Continued time has been invested in Reviews and Brainstorming of Livelihoods Support Organizations and Projects, along with developing the management information system and digging deep within us.

We heard 2 million people participated in the inauguration of the Oneness temple in Chittoor. Some 10 people died in the stampede. Lots and lots of frustrated and/or restless people are flocking to 'religion' and 'spiritual' masters. The time has come to find ways and means to attract more and more people to the cause of enhancing livelihoods of the poor from all walks of life.

As I surf the TV channels, more and more channels have come up to provide 'spiritual' content. Then we have sports channels. We have music channels. Of course, we have a plenty of news channels. We may have to think of exclusive channels for development/livelihoods. We need to increase the coverage for development/livelihoods aspects with true livelihoods perspective.

As I see the growing micro-finance movement and SHG movement, it stirred me deep within. We see, in village after village, at least in South India, there are competing MFIs and credit providers/mechanisms to provide the credit to the poor. Of course, the terms are not uniform. People are availing the credit from formal multiple sources, apart from the informal sources. The issue is no longer the credit really speaking. The issue is the ideas for investing the amounts that can enhance the incomes and livelihoods for the poor. The platforms and forums created by the MF and SHG movement offer viable structures for taking up these ideas. Unfortunately, many of the structures largely remained unused for larger livelihoods agenda.

Our field visits in Warangal (Undivided Andhra Pradesh) and Karnataka, have indicated many gaps and opportunities that can be tapped –collective sourcing of raw materials, local value-addition and marketing where clusters of producers are present; collective sourcing of materials for reducing expenditures and meeting needs of the large number of poor like food etc.; encouraging entrepreneurs to service the needs of the poor and others; etc. The need to orient and offer livelihoods lenses to the staff in MF can be an important step in actualizing some of these possibilities.

More at the personal level, I am able to appreciate the need to set the direction, rather than focusing on nitty-gritty, and the need to move towards practicing universal values as completely as possible. When Ramakrishna responded to a request of the mother of a boy to tell her son not to eat jaggery, he needed a week's time to stop his habit of eating jaggery before telling the boy. As livelihoods workers and mentors we go through this again and again. The need is to be role models ourselves. Can we practice being true role models? Should we become 'professionals' where we just work for the objectives set whether we believe in them or not, as effectively and efficiently as possible?

Krishna waited a long time for his successor to spread the Karma Yoga and finally found Arjuna. When the chosen one is in doubt or dilemma, he went on to remind him of all the discussions on the subject they had, in the form of Bhagavadgita. It is important to realize the importance of the person who

argues, Krishna confirms. If Arjuna has not asked those questions, Krishna would not have responded with the responses.

The world is controlled by the yoga – union – law of attraction and love. As we think, we transmit our thoughts to the world and the world responds by conspiring to make them real. If we have conflicting thoughts, the world gets confused. Thus, the desire, vision, the intention and the intensity of this intention makes our vision a reality. If we seek Santhi and Joy – let us intensely desire for it.

It will happen. To practice yoga, one needs to know and remain committed, with physical, mental and energy bodies, to the purpose with love and purity, without attachment to fruits of work. Come with us into the world of yoga – the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom - for making definite strides towards achieving awareness about us and our extended selves.

8. Collectives and Congress

Yogakshemam June 2008

Disaster after disaster! After the devastating Nargis cyclone in Myanmar, the earth quake in China have taken lakhs of lives and severely affected millions of lives.

There were elections in Karnataka and bye-elections in AP. Strangely, all our summer travels and work were also in Karnataka and AP (Telangana)! Yediyurappa has been sworn in as Chief Minister heralding BJP getting power in a South Indian state. While Telangana sentiment has been endorsed more or less by all political players, Telangana Rashtra Samiti and its chief KCR have to take back most of their words. For an independent observer, it is clear that at least 33% of the votes polled are in favour of Telangana. Such a break-up was not available in 2004 elections as the elections were fought jointly at that time. Everyone now openly admits that there is groundswell of Telangana sentiment. A new party – Lok Satta could get more than 10% of the votes polled, indicating trouble for the big two in the next year elections. The party of Chiranjeevi is inching towards its launch soon. We are entering into transition times. Hesitant Times! Yet exciting times!

We are already into two months of rising prices. Government of India has contemplated for long and hiked fuel prices. This fuelled the inflation further up. PM Manmohan Singh is suggesting us to wait for the monsoon for inflation to cool off on its own! Still the subsidies on fuel including LPG continue. However people are unhappy as the transport costs are going to shoot up. India is witnessing bandhs all over the country protesting the hike in fuel prices.

As Indian Premier League has managed a collective business of more than Rs.1000 Crore in two months, between eight franchisees and BCCI, Amethi has managed to conduct a mega rural cricket league involving 2000 teams in 2000 matches in seven weeks. Lots of business! Lots of sponsorships! Lots of advertisements! Lots of livelihoods! And lots of entertainment! However, all these are short-lived. I was told this even would be there twice a year. Then, there is a prospect of livelihoods for four months a year. How many such livelihoods – not less than a million (0.5% of families in India)! And per capita income will be - not less than Rs.10000 per month!

Entire quarter has been reminding us that micro-finance and SHG movement is heading towards saturation. Collateral free funds (on loan) are being made available. From one end, the micro-finance domain is slowly adding micro-finance plus dimensions – like savings, insurance, loan in kind, repayment in kind, flexible installments, food security etc., all towards clear livelihoods domain. Thus, the progression is to the right on the micro-finance – livelihoods continuum. In view of this, there is a need to match this with a deep, broad and intense coalition of ideas in the livelihoods domain that enhance this thinking on the continuum. A livelihoods Congress where various practitioners come, meet, share, learn and build workable coalitions of ideas, on a periodic basis is the need. For this, we need to intensify livelihoods orientation campaigns, livelihoods yatras, increase print and electronic information availability, induct volunteers, source funds and importantly enhance the value for participating in such efforts for development workers within and outside government and development sector.

We need to rope in print media, TV channels, e-portals, e-groups, schools and teachers in the schools, community leaders, youth, community-based organizations, volunteer groups, spiritual masters, religious influencers, business leaders and philanthropists. We can not ignore the 'achieved' and the frustrated and/or restless.

We also need to organize. When we think the solution to the poor is 'collectivization', the same has to be practiced and demonstrated by the development workers – livelihoods workers including micro-finance workers, for learning, security and solidarity.

Yoga offers two ways of going forward. One – become everything. Other – become nothing. All of us are in between – in large number of hues. As we are Karma yogis, we keep trying to become one or two. As we try and do x, y, z to become, we get tired. With tiredness, we become ‘everything’ or ‘nothing’. Till we are dead tired, this will not happen. Therefore, our pursuit in practicing universal values has to continue till we are dead tired. May be this is ‘professionalism’ we should be after.

To practice yoga, one needs to know and remain committed, with spirit, thought, feel, word, and action domains, to the purpose. Honestly, it is possible, for all of us. Come with us into the world of yoga – the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom - for living our lives naturally, when us and they disappear and become ‘us’.

9. Credit Availability for SHGs

Yogakshemam July 2008

Another disaster struck. This time, it was in West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Increasing inflation and prices is unabated! Monsoon is progressing! Continued visits to Sundarbans, and Ganga Heart Land, and participation in business plan bids marked the month that went by. Government has carried out its threat to increase the petrol and diesel prices. But the international prices are still rising. Manmohan was suggesting us to wait for the monsoon for inflation to cool off on its own! The monsoon is underway and there are no signs of cooling off.

Amidst all these, Government's efforts seem to be focused on Nuclear Deal rather than containing inflation and prices, and restoring them back to previous levels, six months ago at least. With elections around the corner, most of us think this should be the Government priority. Prime Minister threatens to resign for nuclear deal, rather than for price rise. Left wants to withdraw support on nuclear deal. Samajwadi Party wants to support UPA. Interesting times! Yet no respite to common man and the poor! We are finding comfort in the fact that the situation is worse in all other countries.

Sagar Island in Sundarbans has shown us what it means to be fighting with the nature. Low lands away from the main land, embankments fighting tides, crabs and river flows, near absence of mangrove forests, rising sea, tidal floods, eroding land, decreasing per capita land holding, fluctuating salinity, charging aquifers with water conservation efforts else where, the islanders live a challenging life. This is accentuated by the lower realization of proportion of consumer rupee from the mainland for their products. Even then, surprisingly they lead a healthy life. I could not come across, so far, any place cleaner than this. There is also a scope to take advantage of the religious tourism on account of Ganga's milan with Sagar.

We have learnt in Raebareli and Amethi that cash credit limit availability to the poor SHGs is more revolutionary than the first, second, third, fourth and may be fifth round of loans from Banks to them. If a 15-member SHG gets a CCL of Rs.5 lakh, it is as good as a member receiving access to more than a lakh of rupees in a couple of years. This confirms, as we go on this route, that the issue, in poverty reduction and livelihoods, is no longer money but ideas for investing this money. That confirms the need to keep moving right on the micro-finance and livelihoods continuum. Many of the SHG federations and their higher order federations, many of the MFIs have started adding microfinance plus products. They have started to think about interventions at individual, group level, village level and beyond. They have started to think about local value addition, processing, skill building and inter-group linkages etc. This brings the lack of livelihoods professionals to the fore, once again.

At the same time, the interest rates and the terms of credit are inhuman, in parts of the country where the SHG movement and the micro-finance institutions have not reached. I am still hearing rates of 1000% per annum and more! I am still hearing about loans that only grow despite life-long services by the loan to the 'loan provider'! These areas need 'interventions' in credit immediately.

What is the way forward? A coalition of livelihoods ideas! A platform for livelihoods workers! We need to build these coalitions and platforms. We need livelihoods volunteers who bring new ideas from outside for pre-testing, piloting and validation; we need volunteers who invest time to explore livelihoods realities with the poor in their context and opportunities that are emerging in the horizon in the wake of globalization, liberalization, privatization and technological advancement in various fronts; we need people who spot the gaps in the value-chains that can be plugged by the poor; we need volunteers who offer skills for the poor to analyze their situation; we need angel investors; we need social venture capitalists with faith in the poor and their organizations; we need new service providers

providing services to the poor; we need platforms for the people to pool up best practitioners, to pool up ideas that are being tried and ideas that offer promise; we need 'bold' entrepreneurs; we need 'wise' mentors; we need 'passionate' supporters in civil society, media, bureaucracy and polity; we need writers and 'story tellers'; we need livelihoods orientation campaigners; we need livelihoods yatri; we need livelihoods portals; we need financing portals for livelihoods ideas; we need more 'bidding' networks and 'competitions'; we need livelihoods programs to build livelihoods workers; we need livelihoods life workers; we need percolation of livelihoods thinking into all walks of life; we need spiritual master who talk livelihoods; we need technical skill providers; we need marketers; we need financial analysts; we need ICT professionals bringing ICT for poor; in essence, we need a livelihoods world.

We need to build forums that meet security, mutual support, solidarity and learning needs of the livelihoods workers. We need to build para-workers and their platforms. Further, we need to build community leaders for livelihoods, nurture livelihoods gurus from the best practitioners and develop internal animators from the community for taking up promising ideas and getting ahead. We also need to identify micro-entrepreneurs and support.

It is a long way. Let us get going. This is yoga for us - offering one's knowledge, skills and resources (Krishna's prescription) to the poor, their organizations and the organizations that support them.

The practicing yogi continues to perform all her/his duties towards acquiring knowledge, skills and resources so that her/his offerings to the poor are more enriched and relevant. Thus, this does not call upon the yoga practitioners to lose their identities though it expects them to be devoted to it.

Join us in the world of yoga – the practice of action with knowledge and wisdom. You will not regret it.

10. Rural Development Management Programme at NIRD

Yogakshemam August 2008

As I write this, Beijing Olympics 2008 has just begun, to have 10000+ sportsmen in action. 14000+ Chinese performers welcomed them, led by their President, on 08 08 08 at 0808 PM (Chinese Time). A spectacular feat indeed! It shows a Nation has arrived!

It appears that inflation rate has stabilized at 12% and food prices have rested at higher level. Consumers have, more or less, learnt to tighten their belts. Unfortunately, the farmers are living through uncertainties.

Monsoon has caught up in South too, albeit late. North and Godavari areas in floods! Incessant rains all over!

Interactions with farmers, weavers, workers, and consumers, involvement in the new one-year program in rural development management and inducting the development workers in elders for elders movement have marked the month that went by.

Amidst all these, Government found its way on Nuclear Deal. Still there is no respite to common man and the poor!

I have participated in a meeting on developing a framework for taking forward the National Policy on Voluntary Sector 2007 in AP. While we welcome various 'mechanisms' at various levels for augmenting voluntary and non government efforts towards enhanced livelihoods and quality of life of the poor, we need to underline the variety in these efforts – some work with poor, some work with organizations that work with poor, some are federations and networks. And some are organizations of the poor themselves. The policy and the framework should create an environment for voluntary sector to thrive all across. The areas of cooperation with government should have different rules and methods for cooperation. No uniform processes will be good for all. The areas of cooperation and collaboration include policy, project design, planning, monitoring, social audit etc., capacity building, support services, piloting, research, knowledge building and dissemination, implementation, funding etc. The framework should enable and facilitate 'independent' voluntary effort, rather than constrain it. It should have a comprehensive database of these efforts. Finally, we need to realize that Government has to say where it wants to collaborate/ partner with voluntary efforts and how, rather than seeking to fit all voluntary efforts into a framework. There are millions of Community-based organizations, support organizations and their federal entities. What they need is some visioning and some competent human resources at various levels to help them realize their visions.

It appears that Government of India has stepped up its direct efforts to increase the availability of development Professionals in the country. Its NIRD has launched a 1-year Rural Development Management Program on 4 August 2008. 52 students are going through the program this year. Many such efforts within and outside the government are needed. Our initial involvement in the program thinking and acceptance to take a few sessions in this program has helped us to look at Rural Development Management once more. RDM – Principles and Practices – is the one-year program in 30 sessions. It launches Rural Development Management and appreciates its context(s). It explores what it means to be a Development Manager. It introduces Basic Management Concepts and Principles, with an overview of various elements of management. Finally, it introduces select principles and practices in RDM.

A Gallup's recent extensive research on Human Resource Engagement has identified 12 elements that help in great performance:

1. Job clarity on results

2. Having materials and tools to realize the outcomes (interestingly many of us do not know what results we need to achieve)
3. Matching strengths to jobs and developing the innate talent
4. Recognition and praise (within seven days!)
5. Caring about the people you work with
6. Mentoring
7. Valuing opinions and using everybody's brains for solutions for collective good
8. Connecting to a cause (mission/vision)
9. One for all and all for one (performance standards and rewards and punishments for deviants)
10. Trust (having a best friend at work!), fairness, dignity and regular personal two-way communication
11. Opportunities to learn and grow (a plan of growth for everyone!)
12. Knowledge and appreciation of the basics of the totality of the business/enterprise.

Can we move towards having these elements in our livelihoods organizations?

An unusual Professor at Carnegie Mellon, Randy Pausch, expired due to terminal cancer on 25 July 2008. May his soul rest in peace! His Last Lecture declares that he has done three things in life – building capabilities for pursuing dreams, pursuing dreams, enabling others to realize their dreams. For starters, Randy is the father of computer human interaction. His lessons learnt include – there are lots of people who help us – parents, teachers, mentors, friends, students etc.; keep having fun as there is no other way to be; have childlike wonder – curiosity; loyalty is a two-way street; never give up; we achieve because people help us to achieve; apologize when you mess up; focus on others. These are universal lessons. Aren't they?

Krishna says, if you are tied to the 'purpose', ably facilitated by the guru, you will find your 'marg' – plan of action. In other words, if we are tied to our 'purpose', we will be investing in building our capabilities. Once we have the capabilities, the action takes place on its own.

Building capabilities is a never-ending journey. Let us get going. This is yoga for us - offering our capabilities and enabling others to offer their capabilities –knowledge, skills and resources to the poor, their organizations and the organizations that support them happens on its own.

Join us in the world of yoga - the practice of acquiring abilities and action follows on its own. You will not regret it.

11. Beijing Olympics; Consultations on Coastal Management

Yogakshemam September 2008

Ramzan fasting has begun, followed by Ganesh Chaturthi, festival of charming God with elephant head. Krishanasthami has just passed by. As we are going through the festivities in quick succession, Bihar is going through the floods of gigantic proportions, dubbed to be more terrible than the Tsunami in terms of its impact. More than 5 million people are displaced. Strangely, the reason is that India has not attended to its maintenance functions on the structures on Kosi River in Nepal.

At Beijing Olympics 2008, the display of China to the world that a Nation has arrived continued even in the end show. Of course, it got close to 100 medals way ahead of everybody else. India could manage three medals – one gold in shooting and two bronzes – boxing and wrestling, thanks to Abhinav Bindra, Vijender Kumar and Sushil Kumar. Individual gold for India is the first in a century of Olympics!

Amidst all these, we are realizing that Nuclear Deal is a real 'deal' for India. We will not get high-end technology; we may not get Uranium supplies etc., if we go for tests!

Continued interpretations of the baseline data from farmers, weavers, workers, and consumers, continued involvement in the new one-year program in rural development management, going forward at Pochampally, some consultation meetings etc., have marked the month that went by.

A small group of NGOs have started to think about initiating a forum of NGOs in Greater Hyderabad. An informal forum of the donors in Hyderabad existed earlier. This new forum is expected to include a variety of CSOs including donors and support organisations. This will also be a formal body. It is an interesting idea forward. Let us see!

The next have been consultations of the Ministry of Environment and Forests on its new Coastal Management Zone Notification (in place of Coastal Zone Regulation) at the state level at Hyderabad. The conclusions of the consultations are straight forward - This change is not required; If really required, this needs to be stated with the clear rationale; the preamble of CMZ itself should include the rights of the coastal communities, the protection of coastal resources and the livelihoods of the coastal communities; these consultation should be with more than a specified minimum % of the population, say 0.1%, covering all the coastal villages; the scope for multiple interpretation needs to be reduced etc.

The third has to do with the evolution of an organizational set-up covering several similar projects undertaken by the partners, with feasibility, viability, sustainability and self reliance in focus.

The last has been a start-up lunch, an interesting idea where the start-up enterprise managers meet the potential partners, staff and investors, before, over and after lunch and size up each or one another.

Our involvement in the one-year program in rural development management of NIRD has helped us peep into development organisations – profit, non-profit and not-for profit; public, member and support; group, firm, trust, society, company, section 25 company, producers' company, cooperative; informal and formal; individual, group, federation, federation of federations and so on; organisation and institution etc.

Ganesha appears to be a role model for development workers! Ganesha's lessons for us include: purpose matters the most - act in good faith; take ownership and action for your actions and outcomes; faith in yourself to overcome obstacles; simplicity and modesty; and seek – read, explore, listen, learn and practice.

While we have faith in our pursuit, we need to learn take things that do not matter lightly. An alert and mature mind would take all these things in its stride. Seeing things in true light would reveal, many a time, how we are causing pain to ourselves by just our ways of thinking. It is like pricking oneself and thinking that there is pain. If we see this we stop pricking ourselves. Instead of entertaining judgmental

thoughts about people and going in circles over them, we need to remain focused on what needs to be and can be done and just do it.

Krishna discusses two ways – Jnana yoga and Karma yoga or alternatively referred to as Samakhya and Yoga. To achieve the purpose to which we are tied, we need to merge theory and practice appropriately. This merger is ably facilitated by the guru. It varies from person-to-person and situation-to-situation. As we progress, we are in the process of learning - theory and practice, we are also learning the art of facilitation and we start mentoring as we mature, towards building capabilities of those who offer promise, in addition to building our own capabilities.

Jnana yoga and Karma yoga are two tracks on which we have to go on and on. Let us not stop. This is yoga for us – mixing theory and practice of acquiring and offering our capabilities and enabling others to offer their capabilities.

Join us in the world of yoga – the merger of theory and practice of acquiring abilities. You will not regret it.

12. Livelihoods of Jharkhand

Yogakshemam October 2008

In a month, we moved from Ganesh to his mother, Durga Puja. Then we had Dusserah. Ramzan fasting has ended with Ramzan. We also went through a series of international days – from International Peace Day, International non-violence day, to International Day of Decent Work, International Food Day and International Day of Poverty Eradication. In between we have a World Tourism Day. As we are going through the pujas, fasts and festivities in quick succession, as we are remembering a series of international days, as Bihar is trying to limping back to normalcy after the floods of gigantic proportions, the world in general and US and Europe in particular are through a huge financial crisis, dubbed as 'financial tsunami', comparable to the great depression some 6 decades ago. Thankfully, as the experts say, India is not affected much as it could not /did not invest much in their primary market. However, the waves of Tsunami touched India with some roll back of some assignments and jobs.

Amidst all these, India and USA ink the Nuclear Deal, notwithstanding any and all objections in India and in US!

Livelihoods of Jharkhand have occupied most of the month. Some engagement with civil society in Western Himalayan Region has begun towards helping them to have plans for enhancing their capacities around their vision and plan for better livelihoods for the community in the region, particularly in the winters. Pochampally Mela, going forward at Pochampally, continued involvement in the new one-year program in rural development management, etc., have marked the month that went by.

A resource rich Jharkhand with large proportion of poor is an irony. And it should be surprising to many of us why some people live in extreme harsh conditions, like in cold desert areas of Spiti and Ladakh. When the temperatures go subzero for more than six months, going down as low as -30 deg Celsius coupled with wind chills, when one needs to earn whatever one has to in the six months before the winter, when the rainfall is less than 50 mm, and one's habitation is as small as 10-20 houses, with a population density of less than 2 persons per sq. km, you can not but salute the locals for their courage and their spirit of life!

It is a life-time experience and bliss to see Himalayas as the snow mounts up, on a bright moon night with a clear sky and seeing the water oozing out into small streams to make mighty perennial rivers of India and around! I feel excited, 'lost' and of course, blessed. This coupled with sub-zero solitude offers wonderful space and time for reflecting one's course forward.

Jharkhand and the winters of cold deserts interestingly talk about maximizing leisure time rather than material comforts and possessions. They seem to be in a yogic pursuit, in some sense. They seem to have converted that into a way of life like the monks and rishis.

Investing in civil society to acquire the capacities to achieve their visions, which in themselves are linked to the community vision for better future, better life and better livelihoods with choices and control, as an independent component is an interesting idea and needs to be pursued. While we understand the capacities get built with transactions and business, some tailored inputs hasten the process of building capacities. Many a time, most of us get lost in what and how part of the knowledge and skills. The most critical part, however, is the why and why not part. Of course, end of this investment is how it gets translated into the capacities of the communities.

To mentor young would-be practitioners of development and livelihoods in a class room situation is different from mentoring an associate in the real world. This learning came as a reinforcement from our involvement in the one-year program in rural development management of NIRD. We could adapt well and do a decent job!

As a development worker, one is in the business of developing and going forward rather than get stuck with anything. When more and more people with promise get, acquire capabilities and remain committed to development, s/he has done her/his bit. This would mean, we need to get out of entertaining judgments and just go after our pursuit. Be 'atal'.

This calls for one seeking yoga in thoughts, words, actions, insights, devotion and of course yoga in the spirit of being in all dimensions that are of consequence. This is the 'atma' yoga. It helps to have spiritual partners to enhance this practice, although may not be a must. It would be painful to miss the spiritual partner in this pursuit, particularly after realizing after n number of hits and misses that we are the partners.

Krishna advises: the yogi who diligently practices what he has mastered and is cleansed of all faults, perfects himself in all fields. For this he has to go through many stages of induction and practice and attain the highest level. It is not adequate to be recognized as a meditator (Tapasvi) who seeks to master the technique of achieving the goal. It is not enough to become a Jnani (knower) to gain theoretical knowledge of the concerned field of study or action. It is not enough to become a perfect doer (Karmi). One needs to be three in one, with clear focus on the purpose with faith and devotion from the inner self (antaratma).

Thus, we need to transcend Karma yoga and Jnana yoga, to enter Atma yoga where we are in union with our thoughts, words, actions, insights, devotion and the spirit of being. This is yoga for us.

Join us in the world of yoga – the merger of spirit of being with the being and life and the practice of acquiring abilities to transcend. You will not regret it.

13. Obama as 44th President of USA; Engagement with cold deserts of Western Himalayan Region

Yogakshemam November 2008

As United States of America elects Sri Barack Hussein Obama as its 44th President, they made history of choosing, for the first time, a black President. The verdict has been, without any doubt, for change – change, we can. He inherits the worst financial crisis, may be in the last six decades, as the first priority to focus energies. Obama, in his acceptance speech in a foot ball stadium in Chicago on the night of 4 November 2008, has been candid –

“... The road ahead will be long. Our climb will be steep. We may not get there in one year or even one term, I promise you - we as a people will get there. There will be setbacks and false starts. I will always be honest with you about the challenges we face. I will listen to you, especially when we disagree.

Let us remember that if this financial crisis taught us anything, it's that we cannot have a thriving Wall Street while Main Street suffers - in this country, we rise or fall as one nation; as one people.

*This is our moment. This is our time: to put our people back to work and open doors of opportunity for our kids; to restore prosperity and promote the cause of peace; ... to reaffirm that fundamental truth - that out of many, we are one; that while we breathe, we hope; and where we are met with cynicism and doubt and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: **Yes We Can.**”*

Capacities of the Civil Society in Cold Deserts of Western Himalayan Region in India have occupied most of the days of the month. The engagement has been towards developing plans for enhancing their capacities around their vision of enhanced food-security driven barley-based self-reliant livelihoods.

What a fall – from Himalayan heights to crowded Hyderabad! Fortunately, we have partnering souls in yogic pursuit right here to prevent the fall, at least emotionally, intellectually, energy-wise and importantly spiritually. The realization that we have no purpose that is more important or more significant, and therefore the universe would inspire us to set its priorities as our priorities in its own way! The sub-zero reflection on the course forward for me has given way for taking the next concrete steps in realizing the course.

When the people with less material comforts and possessions can be in a yogic pursuit, people with more material comforts and possessions, how can they escape this pursuit? When Guruji, Ravindra Sarma, Kalashramam, talks – “...people with ‘struggles’ in earlier times have ‘huge’ time for functions, events of life etc., why have we suffering from ‘lack of time’? Did we become slaves of the new culture of technology and machinery? ...” In some sense, Guruji has been endorsing – not just the Jharkhandis, Ladakhis, or the tribals, traditional communities have been in the pursuit of maximizing leisure. In that sense, we have lost our way, on our way!

Can we get back? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. This need gets compounded when one is a development worker, in the business of developing people, including self, and going forward rather than get stuck with anything.

This ‘atma’ yoga calls for one seeking yoga in thoughts, words, actions, insights, devotion and of course yoga in the spirit of being in all dimensions that are of consequence. It helps to have spiritual partners to enhance this practice. Going alone can be extremely tough but possible. The yoga or the spiritual partnership can make the soul factually realize that its original nature is ‘satchidaananda’ - ‘sat’ oreternal, ‘chit’ or full of knowledge, and ‘aananda’ or perpetually blissful. In the ‘ras lila’ of the souls - the absolute love, total and integral in all parts of being, flows between the souls to orchestrate this realization.

Krishna advises both conceptual clarity and rigorous practice are integral to atma yoga. The first one helps an individual soul in identifying a desirable cause and a suitable way forward. The second one helps in choosing the path of action. Thus an atma yogi, with intelligence and hard work, graduates as a participant leader amongst the practitioners, without being recognized as such. But one's role goes beyond to include and influence potential practitioners, supporters, advocates and the unconcerned majority. Thus, we need to enter atma yoga where we are in union with our co-participants in all dimensions of our being. This is yoga for us.

Join us in the world of yoga – in all dimensions of being – a union of concept practice and influence. You will not regret it.

14. 26/11 Attacks; Leading Life

Yogakshemam December 2008

26/11. Terrorists have moved from Bombs to Attacks. Mumbai Terror Strikes have jolted Mumbai, and India. A mere 10 terrorists could cause more than 200 people to lose their lives, apart from the Mumbai Anti-Terror Squad Chief and his deputies and the commandos/merinos. Aam Admi responded with grief, candle light vigils and solidarity marches. For the first time in the recent past, aam admi has put aside the 'politician'. Some heads rolled. Home Minister of India, Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra gave way to others. Strangely, bureaucrats remained outside the head-rolling game. Chidambaram moves from managing the financial crisis to managing the internal security crisis! Results of the elections to some states confirm that voters wanted to get going. Development is the key.

Some of the important international/world days during the month have been: 25/11 – International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women; 1/12 – World AIDS Day; 3/12 – International Day of Disabled Persons; 5/12 – International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development; 10/12 – Human Rights Day.

The month that was spent in four parts – one to go through a test of mentoring; two to go through and overwhelming explosion that one is part of a whole and the whole takes charge, occupying many a part, dimension and aspect and spreading; three to think about eldercare solutions around their variety of needs including medical needs; and four to take forced rest and keep the vocal chords at rest. Universe knows when to tell you 'shut up'. Simultaneously the course of way forward emanated from the sub-zero reflection is finding its way steadily.

I chanced upon the working of the human physiology which is talking about the need to cause the energy store houses in the body need to empty themselves so that their functioning improves. The storehouses include liver. This emptying is possible only with fasting – something like a 36 hour fast, may be with some water and less calorie liquids. This can be weekly. But one has to gradually reach there, starting with skipping lunch or dinner or breakfast and upping week by week. Fasting supplements/complements yogic pursuit and I have begun the fasting process in this month!

We wish all life peace, joy and love for ever. To achieve this, we need to overcome or at least handle anger, jealousy, possessiveness and greed. It is not easy to make these four zeroes despite best efforts. With some diligent practice, it is possible to handle jealousy and greed. One can bring them down to an insignificant level. Greed and jealousy go together. Limiting to one's survival, learning and universal good needs, you get into fair desires and intents/visions.

Then, sharing is possible. When the greed is not fulfilled, it generates an ill-feeling of jealousy. On the other hand, non greed desires, when pursued, and someone else achieves them, it generates a feeling of deep appreciation. Possessiveness is a trait acquired over a period of time. It will take a huge time, say 5-6 years, to get over it, with intense practice. Anger is the most difficult to get over. Partial limiting is the best one can aspire for. Anger can come from a variety of sources, a variety of dimensions and a variety of reasons. It is visible. Your body speaks it. Your emotion speaks it. Your writing speaks it. It is important to channel this into productive ends. Many a time anger does help. And if we master it, we become realized masters. To overcome these, we need to practice loving. Practice loving life. Practice loving awareness. Practice loving universe. Practice loving the whole. Then the peace and joy, er...bliss will be ours. As it did the other night - the night rained nectar! A stream of tides crossed the sea! A river flowed! Eyes soaked! Soul 'lost'!

Can this peace and bliss be ours? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If you taste it once, you do not want to be out of it. This 'atma' yoga calls for one seeking yoga in thoughts, words, actions, insights, devotion and of course yoga in the spirit of being in all dimensions that are of consequence. We need to develop a pure and clear window of yoga where this union, merger, confluence can be visualized so that we are aware of what we are seeking as yoga.

Radha and Krishna have practiced Atma Yoga in partnership. As they practiced yoga, Krishna blossomed into Yoga Jagatguru. Krishna advises the atma yoga practitioners to fix their minds only on their guides/partners. Their intellect also should 'dwell' only in their guides/partners. That is, they should prepare themselves mentally to belong to their yogic circle. The practitioner has to practice '*samadhi*' and fix his thought steadily on his/her mentor, as required for that stage of training - to identify oneself with universal thoughts, outlook and ideology. In the beginning, to get mastery, the practitioner has to perform and deliver one's mentor's calling without any doubt in mind. By doing such work, the practitioners fall in track of yogic perfection.

Thus, we need to enter atma yoga where we are in union with our co-practitioners/mentors in all dimensions of our being. This is yoga for us. Join us in the world of yoga – in all dimensions of being – a union of purpose, practice and practitioners. You will not regret it.

15. Young Nation

Yogakshemam January 2009

26/11 - India is still pushing its case with Pakistan to act and Pakistan is 'acting'. In the neighbouring Sri Lanka, LTTE loses its key city. May be it is the beginning of the end! In Gaza, Israel continues its attacks. Casualties are more than 2000 already. In Bagladesh, Sheik Hasina gets a land slide majority.

Majority of Jammu and Kashmir has voted after two decades, indicating 'we want some development too...' 38 year old Omar Abdullah becomes the youngest Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. It seems Indian politics are becoming youth-centric!

Still the financial crisis is deepening globally. By the latest count, more than a million jobs are lost in the country. We seem to be heading towards a ten million job cuts!!!

Everybody is telling us that we are a young nation with average age put at 25 years. A projection says we will be 29 years average by 2020. This is to say we are a young but graying nation. Most of our children up to 22-23 years are dependent and most of our elders above 65 years become dependent. Thus, we have a working span of 40-45 years. As the nation grows old, the ratio of dependents to earning adults increases. Right now, majority of the country is young and we need to celebrate National Youth Day (12 January).

Some of the important international days during the month have been: 18/12 – International Migrants Day; 19/12 – International Day for South-South Cooperation; 20/12 – International Human Solidarity Day. Of course, we observed Moharram and celebrated Christmas and English New Year. We are getting ready to celebrate Pongal, the harvest festival linked to the beginning of northward movement of the 'sun'.

The month that was spent on seven items broadly – exploring livelihoods ideas for 'desert' and beyond microfinance; reflecting on people's manifesto for next five years in India; thinking about eldercare; thinking about youth; identifying people for work; discussing livelihoods and charity trends and learning; and realizing that universe is calling us to open up to it and trust its intelligence. When the 'whole' takes charge of you, when you become aware of you being part of the cosmic orchestra, and when you are in tune with the flow and go with it, you become spontaneous, expand to love and realize various possibilities. Then, you are in eternal bliss. Universe responds to your thoughts. And you evolve into more conscious. Your consciousness expands and you merge in the whole. I seem to have 'lost' somewhere there!

My graduation to a 36 hour fasting a week, except some water and low calorie liquids, is still half way! I may take a couple of months to reach there. When you think youth, you remember 12 January, National Youth Day, and Swami Vivekananda. He said – "My faith is in the younger generation, the modern generation; out of them will come my workers. They will work out the whole problem (rebuilding India without poverty etc.), like lions."

"The young, the energetic, the string, the well-built, the intellectual, for them is the task". He wanted that they got education so that character was formed, strength of mind was increased, intellect expanded and they could stand on their own feet. Abdul Kalam is leading a vision, adapted from this thought of Vivekananda, through Lead India 2020 to build the youth of India. As a country, we should and in fact we are slowly but surely getting ready to handover the leadership to our young men and women in every sphere of life including political, economic, development and spiritual spheres.

The youth and the elderly, they have a bondage that helps to the youth to care for the needy elderly. The hug, the touch, the tap, the warm smile, an affectionate enquiry ... all these help the elderly in deriving their childlike joy and live happily. Of course, the care and concern are implicit in these.

We need to teach the youth and the children (future youth) to love life. Practice loving life. Practice loving universe. Practice loving the whole. For this we need to love; we need to practice love; we need to know nurturing love. Then the peace and joy will be everywhere. And the bliss will be ours. As it did the other night – when nectar rained, eyes soaked, soul 'lost'!

Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga and practice twin competences – being gentle yet dynamic. This would mean leading satvik life style with dynamism intact. This requires practice, discipline and patience. This 'atma' yoga calls for seeking yoga in thoughts, words, actions, and spirit. This requires support of a mentor or a co practitioner, like Radha supported Krishna or Krishna supported Arjuna.

Krishna advises the atma yoga practitioners/partners – there has to be no social distance between them, no physical distance and no attitudinal distance. He has noted that it is not power but subtle influence based on intense and focused observations in extensive and varied contexts that matters the most between them.

We need to practice atma yoga with our co-practitioners/ mentors in all dimensions of our being where gentleness and dynamism co-exist.

Join us in the world of yoga – for gentle dynamism and dynamic gentleness in all dimensions of our being – a union of purpose and practice, and practitioners – Nara and Narayana. You will not regret it.

16. Loving Life

Yogakshemam February 2009

India is getting ready for general elections for Lok Sabha. Many of its states are also getting ready for the state assembly elections.

Manmohan Singh undergoes by-pass and Vajpayee is on ventilator. Old guard is giving way!?! Bharatiya Janata Party goes back – brings Rama upfront; promises to build Ram Mandir. Yet, it is the only party which is unequivocal about creating small states. Third Front is materializing slowly. Congress wants to go alone nationally. Campaigns asking people to vote and honest to contest are gaining momentum. Even if 10% more votes – many equations and calculations go wrong.

This is also season of awards. Slum Dog Millionaire, Rahman in the West! Sunderlal Bahuguna, and Sister Nirmala are one of the few who represented development work in Padma Awards of the year. Vijay Mahajan considered for Indian of the Year – Public Service by CNNIBN!

Satyam is still in news. Advertisers do not miss the opportunity - a tagline from Amul “Satyam, Sharam, Scandalam”! Rajus are safe in Chanchalguda Jail, investigations are going slow and Satyam Board goes ahead to place an insider as its CEO.

We celebrated Republic Day with our Prime Minister in the hospital. President points out about increasing emphasis on people’s participation in development processes. She tells us - “.... The richness of a few cannot be at the cost of ... others ...The poor and the disadvantaged people need to be drawn into circles of growth A woman has a right to live with dignitySHGs have proved to be effective vehicles for the economic transformation....”

Of course, Barack Obama took over as the 44th President of USA. He has to take oath twice as he was not smooth first time! On this occasion, he has delivered a speech that moved the world – “....Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, they will be met.”

The month that was, spent on five items broadly –livelihoods on a scale and beyond micro-finance; people’s manifestos; eldercare; people for work; resource centres and learning programs; and intelligence of the universe. When you are in tune with the flow and go with it, you become spontaneous, expand to love and merge in eternal and universal ‘whole’.

I am still inching towards the 36-hour fasting a week, except some water and low calorie liquids. Meanwhile I have learnt more about tea and coffee. They: Enhance Mood; Boost Endurance and alertness; Boosts metabolic activity; and Improves Brain health. Anything beyond 575 mg caffeine/day is not beneficial. Beware! 100 mg in coffee cup; 46 mg in a cola can and 50 mg in tea cup.

Apart from fasting, some processes that better the health include: Drink more water, as much as 5-7 litres/day; Eat more fibre, as much as 30-40 grams/day; Eat often, say every 3 hours; Eat more and varied fruits and vegetables;

Choose local foods; Stretch and move around even at work, say every half-hour; Walk, use stairs; Consume less sugars; Be moderate on any foods/drinks. Then, the fasting works miracles for us!

When we have reconciled that what matters the most in life – air, water, food, warmth, shelter etc., and when we have reconciled that there is enough for everybody’s need, the way forward is loving life. In fact, life is love. The best use of life is love. The best expression of love is time. It is said –the best way to spell love is “TIME”. The best time to love is now. All the gifts, talents, opportunities, energy, relationships and resources we have need to be used for this. We recognize that great opportunities often disguise themselves in small, routine and seemingly insignificant tasks.

Elections are round the corner. It is time we as a country endorse the processes underway and get ready to handover the leadership to our young men and women in every sphere of life including political sphere apart from economic, development and spiritual spheres.

We need to teach them to love life. Practice loving life, the whole and universe. For this we need to be doing the same. Then the peace, joy and the bliss will be ours. As you mentor and nurture, as you get drenched in the nectar, tears swell, eyes soak and the souls 'lost'! Into the 'whole' and sum total of all souls!

Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga and pursue the discipline of developing all four intelligences and bonds – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Being aware, being fit, knowing the tools and the ability to use them, connecting with other life and souls, living a life of values are part of the discipline. Maturity in practicing this discipline is tested in a variety of situations – when others drive you down, when doubt creeps in, when drawn into quarrel, when things are not going right, when giving space for others, when your progress slows down, when others do not respond to you, when you nurture others, when you feel lazy, and when someone's trust is at the soul level beyond body, mind and heart.

Obviously, this requires practice and patience. This 'atma' yoga calls for seeking yoga in actions, thoughts and words, feelings and spirit.

Krishna advises the atma yoga practitioners/partners –they should be ever ready to take over the responsibility associated with the spread of knowledge throughout the society. As atma yoga practitioners, they should appreciate and practice the concept of contentment, actively guided and led by the co-practitioners and viceversa. We need to practice atma yoga with our co-practitioners/mentors in all dimensions of our being where the discipline of seeking yoga in physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions simultaneously is pursued.

Join us in the world of yoga - in all dimensions of our being –a union of purpose and practice, and practitioners – purusha and purushottama. You will not regret it.

17. Erich Fromm on Love

Yogakshemam March 2009

India announces general elections for Lok Sabha – April 16 through May 13. Andhra Pradesh and Orissa are also going through their assembly elections at the same time.

Political Parties are releasing their manifestos, announcing mergers and break-ups, announcing their candidates, media are making guesses through the opinion polls. Third front, fourth front are in the offing. Campaigns asking people to vote are gaining momentum. It is estimated that Indian Elections are costliest with more than Rs.10000 Crore flowing in. Andhra Pradesh is leading on this front.

Oscars came to India – to 'Slum Dog Millionaire', AR Rahman and 'Smile Pinky'. Satyam continues in news – it is being sold and bids are called for. CBI gets permission to question Rajus.

International Women's Day has passed without much fanfare. Some groups have begun efforts to bring the women's manifesto elements on to the manifesto tables of the political parties. Sivaratri fast and jagaran. The night of Lingodbhava. The night of marriage of Siva and Sakthi. The night of Anandatandavam of Siva and Sakthi. The month, that was, spent on three items broadly – sustainable and/or community managed elder care; manifestos of various sections of people; and love, freedom and being in the flows of the universe.

I am almost there on the 36-hour fasting a week, except some water and low calorie liquids. I could also attempt successfully being awake for 36-hours. Meanwhile I have learnt about practicing Keep It Simple and Stupid(KISS) principles – no lies (more lies you tell, more you must keep track of what you said to who, and when. Soon, you'll lose track and of course you lose); best effort; and no over complications (in your work or life). With fasting, jaagaran, yoga/meditation and KISS practice, with some life tips, gathered during the month, our life will be happier and may be blissful:

- ☑ Drink more water; Eat more fibre; Eat often; Use Energy; Smile; Make others smile
- ☑ Spend time with the children and/or elderly;
- ☑ Keep learning; Think about what you can do or control rather than all and sundry; Forgive; Make peace with the past and focus on the present and future;
- ☑ Remember what others think is none of your business
- ☑ Keep doing right things.

Then, the life works miracles for us! When we are clear on the result, hold the thought, may be a full couple of minutes, and ask. Universe conspires, responds and unfolds the result in its own way. Get ready to receive. Feel the result. Act on inspiration and clues that come your way.

As Erich Fromm puts it, the deepest necessity and the most powerful striving of humans is to achieve interpersonal union or togetherness or love. Love is active. It is seen in giving. What we give is ourselves, i.e give that which is alive in us – joy, sorrow, interest, concern, understanding, knowledge, skill, care, respect and time. If we do not have the ability, we acquire and then give. Giving does not mean giving up freedom. We may have to lose the ego to gain the soul. We give only if we are free to give. It enriches the giver by heightening the sense of being free and active with something value to others. Thus love strengthens our true individuality.

There are five elements in love – care (active concern for the life and growth), responsibility (effort to respond to the needs and being open), respect (life and individuality), knowledge (deeply on rational, intuitive, emotional and spiritual levels) and faith (in the loved). Thus, to love means to open ourselves, may mean to be vulnerable. Without the sense of openness, based on faith, there can be no love. Love is therefore an act of faith. It is not love if it demands losing freedom, individuality and growth. Further,

what love demands is that we separate the person from the person's wrong act. By all means express disapproval of the act, continuing to love the person. This brings us to love requiring an effort, concentration, practice and discipline.

Finally, the true goal of love is oneness (not the sameness). In the oneness of sum total of all souls, we live, we move and we have our being, through love. The general elections, we hope, endorse the leadership that evolves and nurtures the processes to build love, inclusion, oneness, giving and sharing, freedom with equity, in every sphere of consequence. All the thinking individuals respond to teach love to this leadership, now and in future. There is no doubt that this leadership will be with the youth. They need to love life, love the whole and universe. They need to practice. Then the peace, joy and the bliss will be ours. As you mentor and nurture them, as you play in and drink the nectar, you 'lose' yourself in the raas of the souls! Into the 'whole' and sum total of all souls!

Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga and truly surrender to the Sakthi of the universe. When you surrender and flow with the flows. Obviously, this is not easy. It requires practice and discipline. This 'atma' yoga calls for seeking yoga in actions, thoughts and words, feelings and spirit.

Krishna interprets surrender as more than devotion. He expects the atma yoga practitioners to be engaged in work – Karma yoga. They should be free from tie-ups with other causes, without entertaining enmity against anyone and being friendly with all beings. He wants them to keep their minds on the universe and the purpose of the universe with highest faith. As Krishna surrendered to Radha, as Siva surrendered to Sakthi, Krishna solicits that faith from the co practitioner.

We need to practice atma yoga with such faith in our co practitioners/ mentors, to seek yoga across actions to spirit.

Join us in the world of yoga –in all dimensions of our being –a union of purpose and tools – Siva and Sakthi, Krishna and Radha, Nara and Narayana. You will not regret it.

18. General Elections 2009

Yogakshemam April 2009

India is in the thick of election process. It appears that there is no political party/entity/alliance that can get absolute majority on its own. Regional parties are asserting. Post-poll alliances and patches are in the offing! Most parties have released their manifestos and announced their candidates. Only BJP talked about new states – Telangana and Darjeeling. All opinion polls talk hung Lok Sabha. Campaigns asking people to vote have gained momentum. We hear lot of cash is being seized. AP Assembly Elections are no different, with multi-cornered contests, heading for a hung Assembly!

Satyam's bids are in process. We may see its new owner on 13 April 2009. Meanwhile, CBI arrests three more officers of Satyam for helping Rajus. The month that was spent broadly on – sustainable and/or community-managed elder care; understanding electioneering; analyzing election manifestos of various parties; and being in the flows of the universe.

My next yogic practice, after I got initiated into 36-hour fasting a week, and occasional 36-hour jaagaran, is 24-hour silence a week. I am aware that it will take much longer, may be a year to reach there and remain there. Then, as you can guess, it will be a 3-hour thought silence a week. Some life tips, gathered during the month, to make our life happier and more blissful include:

- ☑ Love for love's sake, just as you breathe to live;
- ☑ Be aware that world is in our minds, nothing is impossible and you have the power;
- ☑ Learn to see and feel the life actually as it is – beautiful, passionate, vibrant, strong
- ☑ Be Yourself, by being free, by listening to your soul;
- ☑ Remember you are the master and uphold your ideals, if they are nearer to the truth;
- ☑ Open to learning and learn, think, say and do; and
- ☑ Appreciate and support Integrity in all its forms.

Then, the life guarantees lasting happiness, fulfillment and joy!

If there are rules – the rules to reward the good, honest and constructive, and the rules to punish the bad and the destructive, and if these rules are implemented efficiently, fairly and promptly, then the common person on the road/ street tends to move towards being good, honest and constructive, else s/he does not 'see' the incentive. On the other hand, if the reverse happens –when the good, honest and constructive are harassed and the bad and destructive are rewarded, the common person tends to move towards being bad and destructive. We now seem to be in the latter context. Can't we reverse this? Can't we begin to reverse this? Can we begin to see fairness in the wages people get? Can we begin to see the fair returns on investments? Can we begin to see the producers and service providers realizing fair share of the consumer rupee? Can we begin to see the growth including every interested individual despite their poverty?

The general elections, we hope, endorse the leadership that evolves and nurtures the processes to build and adhere to ethical norms and values that are based on integrity, love, inclusion, oneness, giving and sharing, freedom with equity, shared prosperity and resource sustainability, in every sphere of consequence. Simply put, based on 'life', love of life - its youth, vibrancy, diversity and whole. It ensures peace, joy and the bliss for all of us.

I am sure we will know how to identify such persons and choose them to lead us. You can't mistake them. Their eyes tell us. Their talk reveals them. Their silence shows them. Their gestures point them to us. They display the behavioural competencies for such progression. As we allow them to take leadership, we are playing our part in the life for lasting joy for all. Let us vote right leadership.

You need to identify opportunities and abilities to influence, mentor and nurture such leadership, in however small way it may be. It is to 'lose' yourself in the raas of the souls, into the 'whole' and into sum total of all souls!

Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we play to the tunes of raas of the souls in the universe. If you flow with the natural but gentle and subtle flows of the universe. The focus is on the play, the flow. And the focus is on teaching the play, the flow. Obviously, this is not easy. It requires practice and discipline. This 'atma' yoga calls for seeking yoga in actions, thoughts and words, feelings and spirit, in the context of this play and flow.

Krishna guarantees bliss to the atma yogi. He expects the atma yogi to keep her/his mind serene, peaceful, and calm without guilt, without vindictiveness. He claims that by constant practice and cleansing of all faults through multiple stages of instruction and learning, one could control restless mind. He desires yogi transcends 'meditation' (tapas), seeking knowledge (jnanam), and execution (karma); identifies with the universe; respects and deals with all persons with the same attitude. S/he is not lost to the universe and vice-versa. Thus, s/he flows with the purpose of the universe with highest faith.

We need to expand in atma yoga with faith in our mentors/ co-practitioners and our new generation leadership.

Join us in the world of yoga – becoming a part of the universal flows in all dimensions of our being – like Sivasakthi, Radhakrishna, Naranarayana, Prakritipurusha. You will not regret it.

19. General Election Results

Yogakshemam May 2009

Congratulations to Voters of India!

What a verdict! India has been through the intense election process. Results are out on 16 May and United Progressive Alliance is very near to the half-way mark in Lok Sabha (262/543). Many small players show interest in aligning with UPA. Thus, this can be dubbed as the decisive victory for Manmohan Singh and Congress. Apart from the parties, the new victor is youth. We have a younger Lok Sabha, with one-third of them are 'young' and we will have a younger Cabinet. As the multi-cornered contests thrived, the majorities with which the candidates won have become marginal. There are only a few could muster near 50% votes. One notices a strong third, or a fourth, taking substantial votes – 10-20% - in some large states that changed the outcome dramatically – AP, TN, Maharashtra, West Bengal, UP, Bihar, etc. We also see the rise of Trinamool in WB, Janata Dal (U) in Bihar and Congress in UP. Further, we see the co-existence of National Parties (50% votes) and Regional Parties on the national scene. In the three Assembly Elections held simultaneously, Sikkim Democratic Front swept all 32 seats in Sikkim, Biju Janata Dal swept Orissa (103/147) and Congress managed to get absolute majority on its own in AP (156/294). All of them got their consecutive second term!

An estimated Rs.500 Billion have flowed in the electioneering, a whopping Rs.2000 per household. So much for the black money! We hope new Government will not ignore tracing and bringing back the black money. Can the new government ignore the food crisis/ prices? Economic recession can not be left to itself. We need to cope with globalization. We need to start worrying about the climate change. We need to expand on competitive edge (s) for Indian workers. We need to deliver on livelihoods (employment), education and health. We have to include corruption free safety net to the poor, may be cash transfer to the institutions of the poor (women). We need to reduce the size of the administrative units for better and responsive governance – smaller GP, smaller Block, Smaller district and smaller state – this can not be postponed. We need to deliver on the promised devolution of powers and responsibilities to the local governments forthwith. We need to deliver on the manifesto and finally, we can not ignore corruption, the biggest menace!

Further, we can initiate true bottom-up planning processes. We need to position high quality development workers (say 25,000 in the country, one for 10000 families) with the community to help the community to analyze their situation, gaps and opportunities and plan. We can also build local development leaders in each village and neighborhood, some 2.5 million of them!

Amidst electioneering, Satyam got a new owner – Tech Mahindra, to acquire 51% stake. They are reviewing job cuts, we were told. LTTE is wiped out in Sri Lanka and its leaders including Prabhakaran are dead! The President proudly announces that now he has control on every inch of the land! More than a million people flee Swat in Pakistan! This month was spent broadly on – sustainable and/or community-managed elder care; following electioneering; thinking/planning for support and advocacy of livelihoods thinking/practice in general and collectives in particular; evolving Akshara-Gurukulam as an independent entity; and being in the flows of the universe.

As you might have guessed about my yogic practice, my struggle with 'silence' is continuing unlike the ease with fasting and jaagaran. Wish me luck. Some questions we need to ask ourselves, gathered during the month, to make our life happier and more blissful include:

- ☐ What is most important to me in life? What are the most, important things I need to do?
- ☐ What can I do to take the next leap instead of the next step?
- ☐ How and with whom can I partner to make 1+1=3?

- ☒ If my world was going to end soon, what would I be doing right now? Who can I learn from? How can I eliminate distractions?
- ☒ What can I do to slow down? How can I add Peace to the world?
- ☒ What beneficial routines can I start? How can I put worry on hold?
- ☒ Who can I thank? What am I grateful for? How can I be more compassionate today?
- ☒ What can I do to release negative energy in a positive way? What can I do to let go of my anger?
- ☒ What will I celebrate today? How will I “pay it forward” today?

The answers to these, we may take time to respond, guarantee lasting happiness, fulfillment and joy in life!

General elections have sent some 40% youth leaders. Some others are youth at heart. We hope that this youth leadership loves and supports ‘life’; builds and adheres to ethical norms and values based on integrity, love, inclusion, oneness, shared prosperity and resource sustainability. We need to get out of being caught up.

Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on the play, the flow. And the focus is on teaching the play, the flow. This ‘atma’ yoga calls for seeking yoga in actions, thoughts and words, feelings and spirit, in the context of this play and flow. This happens with flowing continuously, frequently and regularly from the stages of reasoning/conceptualization (vitarka), reflection (vichara), inner bliss (aananda), to pure being (asmita), and finally to realization - absolute bliss from lost identity (nirvikalpa), with discipline and practice.

Krishna guarantees absolute bliss to the atma yogi, if s/he immerses in relentless yogic practice. S/he has to accept that s/he does not have a soul but s/he is the soul and s/he has a body and a mind. Further, free of fear and full of love for all life, s/he has to realize that s/he is capable of serving the ‘whole’, complete ‘whole’ and choosing to work on the purpose of better life for all life in this universe. This realization dawns on a responsive and sensitive soul with constant practice and cleansing of all faults through multiple stages of instruction and learning. It is in this knowledge that a soul takes responsibility, acquires leadership and serves all ‘life’. Thus, s/he flows with the purpose of the universe with highest faith. We need to remember that atma yogis co-exist with faith in other atma yogi(s).

20. Bottom up Planning

Yogakshemam June 2009

New Government(s) in action! We were wrong. Now, we are not sure whether the youth are the victors really. Yet we know youth have to take charge of us, the country. Agatha Sangma, the youngest minister in the new government, represents this hope.

With near stable numbers in Lok Sabha, UPA did not find the need to come up with a common minimum program for the government for five years. However, President Pratibha Patel unveiled an 100-day program for the government. We need to wait for the Budget to know more of the intentions and plans. With a women troika – President, Governing Coalition Head and Speaker, in lead, we can be sure of 33% women reservation bill passed.

Since we are at the beginning of the five-year term, we can initiate true bottom-up planning processes, by positioning high quality development workers(say 25,000 in the country, one for 10000 families) and building local development leaders in each village and neighbour hood, some 2.5 million of them! It is also the time to think about a National Poverty Reduction Mission.As we progressed reasonably well on the Total Literacy, there is a need for National Universal Education Missionfor offering education to all up to the age of 18, including offering space and support to the students beyond the school hours. This, with the strengthened Skill Development Mission, with clarity on the competitive edge based skills, can make a huge difference to the poor and not-so-poor.

Meanwhile, Swine Flu has been declared a Pandemic by WHO. Satyam's new owner, Tech Mahindra, went in for public offer. Some 5000-10000 jobs are being reviewed. 26/11 investigations and trials are still inching forward. Prime Minister and Leader of Opposition are patching up. India and USA are coming closer publicly.

Between Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day, the scorching summer has extended into June and the monsoon has been playing mischief. The schools and colleges have opened.

This month was spent broadly on – thinking/planning for support and advocacy of livelihoods thinking/practice in general and collectives in particular and collectives of the marginalized. As ever, we could not escape being in the flows of the universe. Supporting in the efforts to revitalize governance in a national collective support organization, 'watching' walking the talk in tribal areas and coping with new realities around have also occupied the mind. I have also agreed to be an Adjunct Professor of a Business School in Hyderabad. A transition to 'Portfolio Entrepreneur' has begun! An idea to use a network of entrepreneurs to mentor more of them has emerged. Let us see how it grows!

With frequent travel, I need to readjust my fasting practice. While on travel, fasting can be from immediately after lunch on Thursday to just before dinner on Friday, so that it will be less 'troubling' to others around. Otherwise, it continues to be the same 36-hour fast on Friday. I could step up efforts in my struggle with 'silence'. I have also received a silent and gentle reminder of reducing stamina. Some lessons, life taught a 90-year old woman, Regina Brett, are worth mulling over for making our life happier and more blissful and they include:

- ☑ Life may not be fair but it is still good; when in doubt, just take the next step;
- ☑ Take a deep breath; Agree to disagree; Make peace with the past,
- ☑ Stay in touch; Cry with someone rather than alone;
- ☑ Do not compare with others; What others think of you is none of your business;
- ☑ Change is constant; Everything can change in the blink of an eye but don't worry;
- ☑ Get rid of anything that is not useful, beautiful or joyful;

- ☒ When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer;
- ☒ Now is special; today is special; Go with the flow; Choose life always;
- ☒ Forgive everyone, everything; All that truly matters is that you loved; Yield
- ☒ The most important sex organ is the brain;
- ☒ No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up; Believe in miracles

These, if we take time to mull over and start practicing in our own way, guarantee lasting happiness, fulfillment and joy in life!

I have got re-endorsement for the thinking of low maintenance life and bio-regeneration during the month so that the world remains a better place to live for us and for our successors. In the play of the souls in the milky way, and through the flows of universe, this month endorsed that the arrows deliver more than the bows and the strings of the bows, if only we learn to release the arrows and get out of being caught up, even if it means slowing down.

Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on the arrow, the sharpened arrow, the direction, the flow. This 'atma' yoga calls for seeking yoga in actions, thoughts and words, feelings and spirit, in the context of this flow. This happens with flowing continuously, frequently and regularly in the direction of natural flows of universe, as directed by guru, the archer through the string of the bow and mastered through discipline and practice.

Krishna guarantees absolute bliss to the atma yogi, the soul, if s/he immerses in relentless yogic practice of setting aside all doubts and dilemmas, and surrender completely to the will of the Guru with firm faith, unswerving devotion and loving contemplation. S/he shall be released in the direction of flows of the universe and liberated. By choosing to work on the purpose of better life for all life, with realization of the ability to do so, s/he takes responsibility, acquires leadership and serves all 'life'. This is 'liberation'. Krishna asks not to have fear. Join us in the world of yoga – celebrating all dimensions of our being and flowing through the raas of the souls. You will not regret it.

21. Fitter and Happier Life

Yogakshemam July 2009

Monsoon is still finding its way! Now, we are almost certain that the rains will be below normal this year, notwithstanding Varuna Yagnas and Cloud Seeding. Drought is looming large on the horizon.

Budgets are presented to Parliament! Mamata's Railway Budget on 3 July and Pranab's General Budget on 6 July! These are further to vote-on-accounts presented before elections. Ministry after Ministry is announcing their 100-day plans.

Governments still have to act on initiating bottom-up planning processes. Plans for building the cadres that facilitate organizing the poor are still not visible. Union Cabinet has approved the Food Security Bill for introduction in Parliament. We hear about launching National Livelihoods Mission and I guess it takes the role of National Poverty Reduction Mission and take responsibility for organizing at least 50% of poor women into SHGs, i.e. about 40-50 million women, based on the poverty figures one works with. Some one-third of them are already in the groups. Government has also approved introducing the Bill for Universal Education Rights.

This month was spent broadly on – continued thinking/ planning for support and advocacy of livelihoods thinking/practice in collectives of the marginalized. Inducting the facilitators of the entrepreneurs from the poor and not-so-poor, 'reading' the 'walk' in sparsely populated regions in Asia, discussing social entrepreneurship, non-timber forest produce and sourcing human 'resources' for enhancing livelihoods occupied the mind and time. The next step towards building and using the network of entrepreneurs to mentor more of them is planned for 1 August. Let us see how it grows! Thinking about the ways to support reducing school drop-outs on one hand and the experiment for building the 'bright' minds into future leaders have been engaging my waking hours.

My struggle with 'silence' continues, in addition to 'fasting' practice. The fasting, it occurred to me, has to gradually peak up by the fasting day and taper off gradually. I have also begun energy 'spending' practice to make the fasting practice more effective. I need to respond to silent and gentle reminder of reducing stamina.

The memorial service for Michael Jackson, the biggest event in the media history with more than one billion audience, has endorsed our yogic faith in spreading love, and therefore joy all around. His messages, the participants could put forth include - smile, spread smile, make people love each other and one another, make people believe in themselves, universe needs us, influence the people towards the natural flows of the universe. We may ponder over the following activities, considered as mistakes from the point of view of good health, and take necessary corrections in our practices to make our life fitter and happier -

- ☒ Crossing our legs at knees while we sit – think of moving both legs together to one side or crossing at ankles
- ☒ Using a hard tooth brush, not changing tooth brush often ;
- ☒ Eating out often,
- ☒ Skipping breakfast regularly – if you are trying to diet, take light dinner;
- ☒ Using high heels, when you want to walk a lot;
- ☒ Sleeping on a soft bed – try to sleep on a firm mattress, if not on the mat on the floor,
- ☒ Not using a thin pillow ,
- ☒ Not exercising at least 1/2 hour a day, 3-4 days a week

If we adapt not to do these, if we take time to consider and start responding in our own way, then we are on our way towards lasting joy in life! If this adaptation is coupled with the following do's, I gather, lasting bliss is guaranteed:

- ☒ Recognize your joy and anticipate/prepare for it,
- ☒ Surrender your nervous system and relax,
- ☒ Know the processes to seek joy,
- ☒ Allow time for joy to arrive,
- ☒ Use more ways channelize all energy and drive towards joy,
- ☒ Share, communicate and work with partners to multiply joy,
- ☒ Be ready for it physically, mentally and emotionally.

In the forest of the souls together, and through the gentle flows of universe, this month reminds me that we need to spend time, dexterity and energy to create the tension in the string of the bow, sharpen the arrow and sharpen more of them. This may mean we may slow down a bit. As bow exists, string exists, and arrows exist, we need to do this last bit, before they are released. It may take a minute more.

Hold on! Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on the final preparation – sharpening the arrow, building the tension in the string, seeing the eye of the 'bird' for the direction of the flow. Finally, acquire and give it enough momentum to last the duration of the flight. This 'atma' yoga calls for seeking yoga in actions, thoughts and words, feelings and spirit, in the context of this flow. This happens with mastery through discipline and practice.

Krishna guarantees absolute bliss to the atma yogi, the soul, if s/he immerses in relentless yogic practice of flight in the direction in which the Guru has released the soul, setting aside all doubts and dilemmas, and surrendering completely to the will of the Guru. The Guru, residing in the heart with shining lamp to take the yogi towards absolute bliss, releases the yogi in the direction of flows of the universe and serving all 'life'. This is 'liberation', Krishna confirms.

Join us in the world of yoga – celebrating surrender in all dimensions of our being to the flows of the souls. You will not regret it.

22. PGDRDM-1st Batch from NIRD

Yogakshemam August 2009

It is official. This is a drought year. 161 districts declared drought districts. The number will mount. In Andhra Pradesh, more 80% mandals (blocks) are in drought. Weatherman confirms rainfall, below normal (87%). They may revise this down further.

The first batch of 48 students of one-year post graduate diploma in rural development management in NIRD graduated out. I believe they are going to make a difference, significant difference, to rural poor! The second batch is getting ready to begin their classes. These constitute a fraction of our need. We need them in thousands per year. We need to scale up, scale deep and scale spread to achieve these numbers. Many more players – development institutes, trainers, development projects/departments/missions, donors, corporate bodies, universities, management education institutes, IITs and IIM etc. – all of them, need to work towards this.

This month was spent broadly on – marginalized communities and non-timber forest produce collectors continued to dominate our thinking space. Food Vendors, Social Entrepreneurs, NRM workers, Managers in Collectives, Livelihoods/Development Management Educators and Students, Children in schools and out-of-schools, Facilitators of Skills to young men and women, and explorers of India have engaged us through the month. Drought, deserts, prices and flu are on top of our minds. Going forward to find ways and materializing them for helping the poor to visualize the complete ‘elephant’ and dig deeper, so that they take their decisions and actions, has been our constant companion during all our waking hours.

The network of Social Entrepreneurs, SIANet, for solidarity, learning and support, has been launched on 1 August. I am sure; this network will facilitate and scale the concept - entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs – and mentor more of them in due course.

My ‘fasting’ practice and my struggle with ‘silence’ continue. It is time now to begin the struggle for ‘thought’ silence, may be for a few minutes a week. I still need to respond to silent and gentle reminder of reducing stamina.

Yogic practice appreciates that the joy of life is in the deep, mature and spiritual relationships and partnerships we have. The crux of the evolution of these relationships is in the emotional connection, communication and focus, and some of the elements include:

- ☒ Being completely absorbed – presence, focus, feeling of complete merger,
- ☒ Being deeply connected, aligned in energy flows and in sync;
- ☒ Deep intimacy with care, respect, and true acceptance,
- ☒ Extraordinary communication and heightened empathy, listening to both verbally and non-verbally and being sensitive in every little way,
- ☒ Uninhibited transparency, being emotionally naked and feeling unselfconscious,
- ☒ Surrendering to be truly seen, relinquishing and ultimately penetrating each other’s souls,
- ☒ Exploring, discovering deep inside and unleashing one’s sense of humour and laughter
- ☒ Reaching, transforming, healing, blissful and timeless state of awe and ecstasy.

If we integrate some of these elements in at least in some of our relationships, we will be on our way towards lasting joy in life for us as an individual and for the people involved with us!

If we think of adding some of the 90/10 principle of Stephen Covey, to the above elements, the joy multiplies: 10% of life is made up of what happens to us; 90% of life is decided by how we react

Don't let the past - negative result, action, word, thought etc., ruin the present and future Love life, all life - it is precious than anything else. In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, this month of Krishna reinforces the need to focus on to build the tension in the strings, before we release the arrows.

Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on the penultimate act - building the creative tension in the strings of the relationship bows of the souls of the universe. Seeing the eye of the 'bird' and releasing the arrow with enough momentum to last the duration of the flight and strike the eye, is the simple act that follows. This 'atma' yoga calls for seeking yoga in actions, thoughts and words, feelings and spirit, in the context of this flow. This happens with mastery through discipline, concentration and patient practice, after guru deeksha after passing the test of commitment, dedication and devotion towards pursuing the 'eye'.

Krishna guarantees absolute bliss to the atma yogi, the soul, if s/he immerses in relentless yogic pursuit through the 'liberation' in the direction of flows of the universe and serving all 'life'. Krishna confirms – whoever has identified the 'eye', the life of all life, thinks, discusses and works for it free from attachment, free from enmity to all creatures, reach the 'eye'. Knowing the will of the universe of souls, aided by guru, and surrendering to it will hasten this. Join us in the world of yoga – celebrating the creative tension in all dimensions of our being in the flows of the souls of the universe. You will not regret it.

23. Nurturing Development Professionals

Yogakshemam September 2009

The monsoon finally arrives. It addresses drinking water and electricity deficiencies to an extent. On the farm front, it adds to the drought. Whatever little crops that are there have been lost!

Andhra Pradesh sees the death of incumbent Chief Minister, Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy when he tried to fly to participate in the first 'surprise' visit (named Rachchabanda) to districts and villages. His helicopter hit Nallamala hills, around Srisailem, crashed and all the 5 travelers – Dr YSR, Dr Subramanyam, Wesley, Bhatia and MSN Reddy have lost their lives on the fateful 2 September 2009, confirmed on 3 September 2009. 4 September 2009 has been observed as a day of National mourning. AP continued to observe mourning till 10 September. Amidst mourning, Naraiah has sworn in as the interim Chief Minister and his cabinet colleagues have resworn in as Ministers. The pitch for anointing Dr YSR's son Jagan as the 'political heir' has been mounted within hours of the confirmation of the death of Dr YSR. At the same time, many followers seem to be heart-broken and leaving their lives!

The second batch of 52 students of one-year post graduate diploma in rural development management in NIRD has begun their learning journey. Within a week of their classes, they have been to villages for their village stay as part of their induction fieldwork. The first batch of the Food and Agribusiness School is beginning their first classes shortly. I have got a letter from Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda stating that they are starting a PG course in Social Work. NIRD and University of Hyderabad are jointly launching the PG Diploma in Sustainable Rural Development in a distance mode. Many more institutes are responding. However, these constitute a fraction of our need, of thousands per year. We need to scale up, scale deep and scale spread to achieve these numbers. Many more players, a spectrum of them, need to work towards this. Father Bogaert, who has contributed to creating the largest pool of social development professionals in the country through establishing and mentoring Xavier institutes across the country, takes leave of all of us, at the ripe age of 81, still on the job. May his soul rest in peace! He remains an inspiration to many of us!

Teachers' Day on 5 September made us to re-surrender our complete being to the teachers to guide us and show direction for way forward in deeds, words and thoughts. International Literacy Day on 8 September reminded us not to forget the campaign to ensure 3Rs – Read, Write and Arithmetic – to all.

Marginalized communities, non-timber forest produce collectors, elders, vulnerable key population, collectives, MFIs, clusters, slums, skill providers, civil society, mentors, teachers, students, volunteers, social entrepreneurs and writers continued to dominate our thinking space in this month. Drought, prices, flu, austerity and 'out of recession' statements are on top of our minds. Food Security, Nutrition, Migration, and Urban livelihoods took some time away. Civil Society Get-together to discuss 'Opportunities in Challenging Times' has explored the trends, possibilities and constraints for the people, for the people's institutions and the civil society-at-large going forward.

My 'fasting' practice and my struggle with 'silence' and 'thought silence' continue. I need to still figure out how I handle when I miss the 'fast'.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, these months of Krishna and Sakthi reinforce the need to sharpen the tools, before we use them and continue to sharpen as long as we use them. Learn to use the tool first, practice it and then use it. Till you hit the bird's eye. Set the 'sruti' before we play the instrument/flute. Learn to play, practice and play. Till the crescendo of the climax!

Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on learning, practice, mastery and not giving up till we reach the crescendo. Crescendo of the creative tension in the strings of the relationship bows

of the souls of the universe! Then what follows is a simple act, without further pre-meditation, of releasing the arrow with enough momentum to last the duration of the flight and strike the eye.

Krishna calls for seeking yoga in spirit, feelings, emotions, thoughts, sensations, speech and actions, through surrendering to the master/guru - body, senses, heart, mind, intellect and soul, in the context of confluence of the natural flows of the universe. Krishna confirms – whoever does his allocated work in being useful to all life, fixed in yoga without attachment with an even mind in success and failure – attains steady peace and gets purified to flow with the will of the universe of souls.

Join us in the world of yoga – celebrating the yoga of wisdom, action and devotion in all dimensions of our being in rasa siddhi in the flows of the souls of the universe. You will not regret it.

24. Floods, Floods of Thoughts

Yogakshemam October 2009

Arrived monsoon has come with torrential rains; torrential rains have turned into floods all over. Rivers, Krishna in particular, have been in spate, overflowing dams and reservoirs, breaking river embankments. We hear that these are the severest floods in a century. The overflows, for example at Vijayawada, are 100% more than the previous known highest.

Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are severely hit – estimated loss is more than Rs.250 Billion. Now, normalcy is returning. Relief is flowing to affected villages and families. Families and volunteers are cleaning up their houses and streets over 7-8 days now. Aerial Surveys including that of Prime Minister have got some advance relief from Government of India. It is estimated that the stated relief contributions are expected to exceed the estimated loss. The issue is how well and how much percentage of this amount reaches the flood victims, and when the contributions dry up after the current heightened emotions subside.

Recently released Human Development Report says that India has slipped down on Human Development front. Nobel Prizes announced have a surprise in the Peace Prize to Obama for his early initiatives, and articulated spirit and intent. Economics to Elinor Ostrom recognizes the principles of 'collective institutions'.

It is difficult to believe Dr Balagopal, Gandhi of Rights, is no more. The original human rights activist and advocate, rated as one of the six modern day philosophers, and simplicity personified, leaves back a huge vacuum. Let us learn to live without. I am sure. It is not easy but we must.

2 October 2009 (Gandhi's Birthday, Akshara's Foundation Day and International Day of Non-violence) has given us an opportunity to pledge - Let me be useful to all life, apart from remembering 'Mahatma' and seeking universe to conspire with us in our movement towards real from unreal, light from darkness and life from no life. It has sought commitment to the task of identifying, building and mentoring 64,000 pro poor/ pro-life development/livelihoods workers in India. 5 October (World Teachers' Day) made us to remember the teacher(s) who have/are making a difference by taking complete responsibility for our being and actions. 7 October reflections have shown the frailties in human body, heart and mind; it has also shown the tentativeness with which get going in many a thing.

May be, we are lost in the 'floods' and/or in the 'floods of thoughts', 21 September (International Day of Peace), 1 October (World Elders' Day), 7 October (International Day of Decent Work), 8 October (International Humanitarian Day), 10 October (World Mental Health Day), 14 October (International Day of Natural Disaster Reduction), 15 October (International Day of Rural Women), 16 October (World Food Day), 17 October (International Day for Eradication of Poverty) have passed by. World Tourism Day did not receive the earlier attention, may be due to continued recession. Drought, Floods, Climate Change, Marginalized communities, non-timber forest produce collectors, elders, vulnerable key population, collectives, MFIs, clusters, slums, skill providers, civil society, mentors, teachers, students, volunteers, social entrepreneurs and writers continued to dominate our thinking space in this month. Discussions on Sustainability, Sustainable Agriculture, and Livelihoods in the wake of recognition of Climate Change, Collectives, Local people servicing local needs and Human Resources that service the poor and their institutions continued to dominate temporal space of the month.

Building Social Entrepreneurship and Socially Responsible Innovations/Enterprises occupied the thinking space. When National Institute of Technology, Warangal announced the starting of a Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Development during its Golden Jubilee Foundation Day Celebrations on 10 October 2009, alumni began to contribute generously to the Centre. More and more such centres need

to come all across, to deliver more (substantial quantity with quality) with less (cost and resources) for more (people).

My 'fasting' practice and my struggle with 'silence' and 'thought silence' continue. I need to still figure out the complete protocol to handle myself six days of the week when I am not 'fasting'. Can it be left to itself?

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, this month of lights and victory reinforce the need to find and sharpen the tools to see the truth, to see the light and to see the life. Learn to find the tools first, find the ways to use them, practice these ways, know when to use each one and then use the tools. We need a set of tools used in a sequence till you reach the 'crescendo' and 'climax', starting with setting the stage, setting the 'sruti' and so on. Incidentally, that is the bliss!

Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on life and learning to be useful to life. Resolving the creative tension between crescendo of the climax of the confluence of the souls into the natural flows of universe and the current reality! Then what follows is a simple act, without further pre-meditation, of following the protocol of using the portfolio of instruments in the order with enough intensity and tone to last the duration of the flight and crescendo of the climax.

Krishna calls for seeking yoga of the devotion (bhakti), action (karma) and wisdom (jnaana) with devotion being the leader, together with the master/guru. Krishna confirms passage of three stages – oneness with universal energy flows, oneness with thought/spiritual flows, oneness with universal consciousness, to the one who seeks and flows in this yoga of yogas.

Join us in the world of yoga of yogas – lighting and celebrating the yoga of our being in pure advaita rasa siddhi! You will not regret it.

25. Pursuing Atma Yoga

Yogakshemam November 2009

The southwest monsoon ends and the northeast monsoon moves in. the fury of the floods moved to Tamil Nadu. It is now official – the food production has come down. The food prices are going up.

The rescue, relief and rehabilitation of the victims of flood have trailed off. The effort is now shifting to restoring livelihoods and enabling infrastructure. Simultaneously, the fury of the monsoon is now in Tamil Nadu taking 100+ lives!

Count of the international days that have gone by – World Development Information Day (24 October)! International Day for Tolerance (16 November)!

Floods, coastal communities, non-timber forest produce collectors, elders, collectives, clusters, slums, skill providers, training institutes, civil society, mentors, teachers, students, volunteers, resource persons, service providers, social entrepreneurs, micro-venture entrepreneurs and writers continued to dominate our thinking space in this month. National Rural Livelihoods Mission is certainly taking mind space.

My 'fasting' practice and my struggle with 'silence' and 'thought silence' continue. I need to still figure out how I handle when I miss the 'fast'. Further, I need to still figure out the complete protocol to handle myself six days of the week when not 'fasting'. Can it be left to itself? Also, a routine for 'silence' needs to be developed.

This month has taken me to Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Tantra, Vipassana, Atmadarshan and Jeevan Vidya. Vivekananda urges us to be useful to all life in general and the disadvantaged in particular. 'Savitri', considered the supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo's vision describes the soul carrying the divine truth within itself but descended into the grip of ignorance, is saved by another soul in their yoga. United they begin a greater age. One moment becomes eternal. Atmadarshan and Jeevan Vidya have asked to focus on a few things but the right ones, significant ones as they occur to us when we remain in the natural flows of the universe. Atmadarshan talks about Chakra Sadhana. Vipassana seeks silent meditation.

Tantra, yoga of wholeness and completeness through our beings at all levels – bodies, minds, hearts and souls, discusses the first moments of tasting immortality and becoming aware of divinity and appreciating and recreating the experience of oneness. It endorses – yoga is good and wholesome merging life force energies. The four basic steps include understanding oneself and each other, guiding breathing, accepting feelings fully and living in the moment fully. Anticipation, touch with all five+ senses, exploration, feel, silence, harmony, and time together are the critical ingredients. Self/mutual opening of all the seven charkas and merging and balancing the masculine and feminine energies that exist in each individual is the yoga. Of course, the ultimate is practicing complete surrender to drop being in control, to let go results, to show vulnerability, to suspend judgment, to let go in relationships, to open up and aroused completely for union in all dimensions.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, these months of lights and rains reinforce the need to be ever anticipating and attentive. Be always ready in all our dimensions for the divine soul taking you into it. No one tool suffices. Build a portfolio of tools. Keep them sharpened. Learn to use them and practice them. Continue to sharpen them. Till you hit the bird's eye. Keep playing raga after raga, till you transcend towards crescendo of climax and bliss. Forget not to set the 'sruti' befitting the frequency of play of the instrument, including the voice as an instrument of play. Learn to play, practice and play. More and more songs! More and more songs in more and more ragas! More till the crescendo of the climax!

Can we do this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is not on total expertise in music but on learning, practice, mastery of at least one and not giving up till we reach the crescendo. Bursting creative tension in the strings of the relationship bows of the souls of the universe to merge and dissolve into one! Then what follows is a simple act, without further pre-meditation, of being ready to be lost in being the instrument in their hands without scope for 'apaswara' so that you remain in their hands till the crescendo is reached.

Krishna calls for seeking yoga in spirit, feelings, emotions, thoughts, sensations, speech and actions, through surrendering to the master/guru - body, mind, heart, and soul, in the context of confluence of the natural flows of the universe. Krishna confirms – whoever does his/her work that is natural or naturally appeals to him/her in the spectrum of actions towards being useful to all life, attains steady peace and gets purified to flow with the free will of the universe of souls. S/he will have no agenda unfinished thereafter.

Join us in the world of yoga – celebrating the yoga of wisdom, action and devotion in all dimensions of our being towards complete advaita rasa siddhi and being useful to the life in the way it needs us. You will not regret it.

26. Path to Happiness

Yogakshemam December 2009

We had drought. We had floods. Still the economic recession is hanging around. May be we see light at the end of the tunnel. There is food shortage and the prices have spiralled up. Amidst all this, lots of our time, energy and some money, apart from the emotions, thoughts, and words have gone for 'reorganizing' Andhra Pradesh. It is official – Copenhagen has not delivered earth and environment.

Count of the international days that have gone by – World AIDS Day (1 December)! International Day of Disabled Persons (3 December)! International Volunteers Day for Economic and Social Development (5 December)! Human Rights Day (10 December)! Shortest day of the world (northern hemisphere) – winter solstice (21 December)!

Floods, coastal communities, non-timber forest produce collectors, vulnerable, elders, collectives, venture capital fund, innovation fund, rural tourism, skill providers, training institutes, civil society, mentors, teachers, students, volunteers, resource persons, service providers, social entrepreneurs, micro-venture entrepreneurs and writers continued to dominate our thinking space in this month.

Of course, Amber, Elise, and Caroline are still working on a business plan for 'livelihoods'.

It appears now 'fasting' has become a habit now. I need to put all my concentrated efforts in my practice of 'silence' and 'thought silence' continue. A walking protocol needs to emerge. It is interesting to see many a leader and/or an enthusiast taking up indefinite fast for Telangana or United Andhra over the month!

This month has nudged me to delve into 'bharatiyam'. It is a faith – vasudhaika kutumbakam - all life and non-life in this universe is one family. Therefore, it is towards a movement of People for Planet and Planet for People. It is for a planet, where all children have access to decent education, where all households have decent portfolios of livelihoods, and where people have fair choices to make! Thus, 'bharatiyam' is a way of caring, a way to make the planet free from poverty, a means to pay back to society, and an expression of live and let others live. A philosophy from India for the Planet and its people!

During the month, I have come across – things that can be tried to find the true path to happiness:

- ☑ Make a grateful list and be grateful,
- ☑ Think positive and push away negative thinking,
- ☑ Identify and seek small pleasures,
- ☑ Practice kindness,
- ☑ Make someone smile,
- ☑ Connect and invest in love,
- ☑ Exercise and eat healthy,
- ☑ Find a purpose to work for/with,
- ☑ Forget everything else and flow in your actions,
- ☑ Study, reflect, and nurture self to pursue the true path

This month has also asked me to reflect deep within, building on tantra yoga (discussed last month) – to remain open and aroused completely for merging and balancing the masculine and feminine energies that exist in each individual in all dimensions. Reflecting on being 'useful', the need to go through a personal visioning exercise has been strongly felt and a process has begun towards the same. While the 'vision' may be clear and the vision of realizing the vision has to go multiple iterations, the basic

elements in it include: be located in a small place, see more, write more and step up yatras and campaigns, practice being the instrument and complete surrender, begin identifying 10-20 mentors/ life workers and nurturing, and be available to all those who seek out.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, these midwinter months reinforce the need to be always ready in all our dimensions to have yogamritam. No one dimension suffices. Keep the antennas of all dimensions sharpened. Keep them active and charged up. Continue to tune in. Till you find sync. Keep playing raga after raga, till you resonate in sync. Till you reach crescendo of climax, bliss and yogamritam. Forget not to set the 'sruti' keeping it always in ready state. Forget not to surrender and being the instrument, useful and open instrument.

Can we be this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on being fully involved and having skill in involvement. Look around. No life is seeking a break from whatever it is doing. Rivers flow, sun shines, wind blows, and so on. Being involved for its own sake in the act, with the mind, heart and body, is the way forward. That is Atma Yoga, Atma Yogi pursuing yogamritam, being with the Guru exploring, showing, expressing, feeding, and teasing!

This effort of pursuit itself lets us articulate access to life(s), bond with, love, invite reconciliation and reconcile desire, be passionate, be ready and aroused, be excited, and be lost in the joyous pursuit.

Krishna plays flute to tell us for seeking yoga in all our dimensions, in whatever dimension (s) we are capable of being ready. Rest of the dimensions he takes care. Krishna confirms – whoever does his/her work/business with total involvement and with mastery of skills of total involvement towards being useful to all life, as if s/he worships them truly, attains silence, peace and flows with the free and natural flows of the universe of souls. S/he will be 'lost' in them forever.

Krishna Dwaipayana reveals: wherever there is the archer working in tandem with the Guru, prosperity, victory, happiness and sustainability rule. Join us in the world of yoga – celebrating the yoga of wisdom, action and devotion in all dimensions of our being towards complete advaitamrita siddhi and being useful to the life in the way it needs us. You will not regret it.

27. Remembering 'Anyway'

Yogakshemam January 2010

Food Prices continue to be 'up'. Indian Poor have drifted away from food security for sure!

Comrade, veteran CPM leader, Jyothi Basu, the longest serving chief minister in any state in India, marks the end of an era! He continues to be useful even after his death. His eyes and body were donated. 2010 is also declared as International Year of Biodiversity, International Year of Forests and International Year of Youth!

Floods, non-timber forest produce collectors, artisans and craftsmen, vulnerable, elders, collectives, collective entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurs and social enterprises, resources and livelihoods, business plans, business plan competitions, mentors and mentees, volunteers, writers, editors, students and Gandhi, apart from climate change, energy, food, water and small governance units, continued to dominate our thinking space in this month. Amber, Elise, and Caroline are still working on a business plan for 'livelihoods'. We have also started to work on the business plan of 'L-channel'.

'Fasting' continues as a habit. 'Silence' and 'Thought Silence' – efforts are on. Practice is on.

This month has let me 'lost' in reflection. It has also reminded me that I am in mid-life. The need to define/ outline the third phase of life, that may last 15-25 years, has been strongly felt. First phase was growing up into an adult. Second phase was in development action/support. What is next? Is it adjacency? Is it entirely different? Is it a combination of both? Is it a portfolio? Surely, it has to be an offering. It should let us flow in the flow of the universe. It would not let an opportunity filled with promise, rare and beautiful, go unfulfilled. Probably it would also help realize the full potential. When we know that we only have some skill in listening, thinking, reading, writing, and talking, this has to involve these skills and improving them significantly.

As I was in Anand for a day during the month, I remembered 'Anyway'. For many of you, it may be familiar. Anyway, I go over it!

- ☒ People are often unreasonable, illogical and self centered; **love them anyway**
- ☒ If you do good, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; **do good anyway**
- ☒ If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies; **succeed anyway**
- ☒ The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow; **do good anyway**
- ☒ Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable; **be honest and frank anyway**
- ☒ The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds; **think big anyway**
- ☒ People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs; **fight for a few underdogs anyway**
- ☒ What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight; **build anyway**
- ☒ People really need help but may attack you if you do help them; **help people anyway**
- ☒ Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth; **give the world the best you've anyway**

During the month, I got reinforcement - It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit! When we are done, big things look small and little things look big; *comparisons kill happiness*; we are all we are/have now; and pursuit matters, results come. This month has also asked me to reflect on development action/support. Support builds on the current reality/situation, which is not zero, seen through the eyes of the doers. Doers have to be in driver's seat and learner's seat. The mentor plays more the role of a midwife, catalyst, and facilitator to build learning capacity in the learner-doers.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, the sun 'traversing' north reinforces the need to listen to your innermost, however feeble it may be. It will ensure you reach glorious climactic expression, rasayogamritam. Be alert always and continue to sharpen the antenna. Forget not to surrender and be its instrument, useful and open instrument.

Can we be this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on being fully involved. This begins with – being interested and focused; listening and observing; stopping going on and on; having and communicating faith in full; being positive; being silent; and using body language. Getting rid of ego, ready to serve and become a good follower follows. Being connected, performing to ability even under extreme odds, doing little more, and let the world realize their potential are the next things. This would mean sharing. This would mean being a river, not a reservoir. Being involved for its own sake in the act, with the mind, heart and body, is the way forward. That is Atma Yoga, Atma Yogi in relentless pursuit of rasayogamritam!

An entrepreneur working with the Guru, exploring, tossing, expressing, discovering, and acquiring capacity for effective action!

Krishna confirms, playing flute in raas with Radha, seeking yoga in whatever dimension(s) we are capable and ready, universe knows how to make us ready in rest of the dimensions. For him, criticality is total involvement and complete devotion. Then, universe will take charge and grant silence, peace and flow with its free and natural flows. Forever 'lost'!

Krishna reveals: think of and reflect on the soul of universe, be devoted to it, serve it, spread this message; then joyous bliss is yours.

Join us in the world of yoga – yoga of capacity for effective action, action and devotion in all dimensions of our being towards being useful to life as it guides and innermost rasayoga mritisiddhi in every minute of life. You will not regret it.

28. Prerequisites of Being Useful

Yogakshemam February 2010

Food Inflation is near 20%! No signs yet of its downward trend! Si Krishna Committee is set up to assess the ground reality for formation of separate Telangana or otherwise. Resignations of public representatives are being pressed with a perception that the terms of reference of the committee are not for a separate Telangana.

Apart from Sivaratri (12 February) and Valentine's Day (14 February), the month also allowed a few international days to go by – World Day of Social Justice (20 February) and International Mother Language Day (21 February)!

Sustainable Rural Development – livelihoods and resources – the book in 24 units across 6 blocks – has consumed most of the month. Rural, Urban, Tribal, and Coastal farm and non-farm livelihoods, Poorest of the Poor vulnerable, elders, collectives, collective entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurs and social enterprises, knowledge management, innovations, mentors and mentees, networks and consortiums, volunteers, writers, editors, students and Gandhi, continued to dominate our thinking space in this month.

We are still awaiting the draft business plan for 'livelihoods' from Amber, Elise, and Caroline! Work on the business plan of 'L-channel' is inching forward.

'Fasting' continues as a habit. 'Silence' and 'Thought Silence' – efforts are on. Practice is on. This month, I had an occasion to combine fast with jaagaran!

This month has 'kept' me in reflection. Being a pane list at Sri Sri Institute of Management Studies in Goa pressed me to see inside on the path I have taken and become a livelihoods worker. Witnessing Empower Trust's Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Comprehensive Mental Healthcare at Guntur has taken me three decades back in life. Those were the times when the seeds of thinking beyond oneself were sown. Talking to Kaushiki Rao has made me search for social entrepreneurship in the marginalized for the marginalized. This reflection is reinforcing the need to draw the contours of the third phase of life. Of course, the purpose is being useful and giving the world the best we have. I know that it has to be an offering.

As I get reinforcement, during the month – we need a home, we need quality time, we need integrated knowledge, we need health, we need love, we need lasting relationships and we need union in freedom and universe, the reflection continues! As a supplement to this, I have come across the books of Saul Alinsky, John Dewey, Soren Kierkegaard, EF Schumacher, Albert Hirschman, Carl Rogers, etc., apart from Robert Chambers, Paulo Freire, Erich Fromm, and Krishna. They are letting this reflection to pick up momentum!

Danish Ahmed has argued 'being useful' is a perspective or disposition –

"....Our perspective or disposition can either be positive/negative, and can be instantly transformed through conscious thought. Knowledge without direction is dormant stupidity....When you agree or are aligned with varying opinions, then you are not exercising acceptance and being useful....I market love, hope, and compassion I love everybody, in different ways, to varying degrees.Connectedness is caring through various forms of expression....."

Being useful at large includes Satyakarma at the body level, speech level and mind level. To be useful, one needs to be fit. Fitness requires water – as soon as you wake up; 30 minutes before any meal; before bath; and before sleep. Not less than 3 litres a day. Dr Devi Shetty suggests less carbohydrate,

less oil, more protein, more fruits and vegetable diet, some walking, no smoking, respecting internal biological clock and simple lifestyle. One need not look for perfection in everything in life.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, jaagaran visualizing celestial dance of 'siva' with 'sakthi' reinforces the need to listen to your innermost – 'give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will with love'. It will ensure you scale aananda sivathandavam. Surrender by becoming and being the useful and open instrument – the little flute of reeds!

Can we be this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on being fully involved. This begins with – listening (sravana), having faith and communicating (kirtana), remembering (smarana), rendering service (seva), worshipping (archana), respecting (vandana), be at hand for anything (dasya), being attached (sakhya) and surrender (atma-nivedana). This total involvement can be through being connected, service, friendship, affection, and yoga. This inspires us to move from strong interest to deep and lasting commitment and helps us perform to ability, potential ability, even under extreme odds. This would mean being a flow, flowing with the natural flows of the universe.

Being involved for its own sake in the act, with the mind, heart and body, therefore, being useful, is the way forward. That is Atma Yoga, Atma Yogi in relentless pursuit of aananda sivatandavayogaamritam! An entrepreneurial aspiration in relentless pursuit of opportunities as the universe unfolds them, even in the absence of resources! With the mentor in tow!

Krishna (Krishna of Radha, Krishna of Arjuna and Krishna of Krishna) confirms – if our mind is filled with universe, if we become universe's devotees, if we pursue what universe wants and nothing else, if we bow down to universe and thinking of universe forever, if we take universe itself as the supreme goal, universe conspires to take us into it. Guaranteed! Seeking yoga in whatever dimension(s) we are capable and ready is our involvement.

Then, universe will take charge, build capacity and readiness and grant silence, peace and flow with its free and natural flows. Forever! This is bliss!

Join us in the world of yoga – yoga of usefulness, pursuit, devotion and action in all dimensions of our being as it guides and innermost aananda sivatandava yogamritasiddhi in every minute of life. You will not regret it

29. Institutionalising SHGs

Yogakshemam March 2010

Inflation is extending to others from food! Budget of the middle class is on the anvil! Rajya Sabha has voted for Women Reservations in Parliament/Legislatures, as International Women's Day completes 100 years. Sri Krishna Committee gets going in its own way.

Apart from Holi (1 March) and International Women's Day (8 March), the month also allowed World Consumer Rights Day (15 March) to go by! World Day of Water (22 March) is reminding us of the action needed on the water front!

Appreciating efforts to mobilize poor into Self-help Groups and their federal institutional architecture and build their capacities, initiatives built on this foundation to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods, and actions for institutionalizing many of these for long-term sustenance of the results - has consumed most of the month. Next two months are also reserved for the same. Tribal, Coastal, Rural, Semi-urban and Urban farm and non-farm livelihoods, Tourism, Poorest of the Poor, elders, collectives, social entrepreneurs and social enterprises, networks and consortiums, and students, continued to dominate our thinking space in this month.

We have stepped up our time and energy inputs in building business plan(s) of 'L-channel' and related activities.

While 'fasting' has become a habit, efforts towards practicing 'silence' and 'thought silence' have become intense. At the same time, a feeble but growing contemplation has set in whether to continue with 'fasting' in the current mode, intensity, periodicity etc.

This month could also succeed in 'keeping' me in reflection. When I signed the Memorandum of Association to formally launch the SIANET, a network of social entrepreneurs (who have been part of Social Impact Programs), it occurred to most of us that there is a need to build a platform of all the development/livelihoods service providers in the country, for solidarity, resource sharing, complementing one another in services, mutual help and learning, standards and code of 'business' and importantly, increasing the support infrastructure/architecture/resources available, building capacities, offering quality control, mentoring the new entrants etc. It will also reduce/avoid some of the existing unhealthy practices of service providers and clients' vis-à-vis service providers and vice versa. This can begin with Hyderabad area initially and grow to reach the entire country with chapters. I hope some of our dear colleagues take this important agenda forward.

My travails and struggle to draw the contours of the third phase of life have not reached anywhere concretely yet. While we know, *the purpose is being useful and giving the world the best we have*. We know that it has to be an offering. May be I need to withdraw for a while and become incommunicado. May be I need to begin the processes of systematic exploration at the earliest. These include visiting development experiments that I could not go so far, talking to friends, guides and 'mentors', travelling and listening to the poor, marginalized and vulnerable across the country, in their corners and domains, listening to the younger generation(s) and older generation (s), tossing the feasible ideas that have the potential to last with a variety of stakeholders and drawing the contours. Towards this, the reflection continues! This reflection has to pick up momentum and reach a crescendo!

Being a development worker, we cannot escape Gandhi! While on reflection, we cannot escape Gurudev, Rabindranath Tagore!

"... Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life. This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and

dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.” fresh lease, fresh phase, fresh contours ...”

“... I must launch out my boat. ... I can see nothing before me. I wonder where lies ... path! Let me not force ... a poor preparation ... Freedom is all I want, but to hope for it I feel ashamed”

“... Where knowledge is free Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service ...

“... I give back the keys of my door—and I give up all claims to my house. I only ask for last kind words from you. ask not what I have with me to take there. I start on my journey with empty hands and expectant heart. ... and if the end comes here, let it come —let this be my parting word...”

Being useful at large means –respond to the indent, choose the most useful when there is a conflict in indents, listen deeply, inside you and through you to the universe, to find how to be useful, useful at large. Be useful. Do useful. Talk useful. Yes, think useful. Nothing else.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, colourful holi raas of immortal Raadha with her Krishna reinforces the need to surrender your instrument with love to your innermost for good, better still be its instrument, so that you play to its tunes – be ready forever – to be lost in the raas, in the ecstatic thrill of its touch beyond touch. It will ensure you scale aananda raas.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on being fully ready and involved, forever. This would mean being a flow, flowing with the natural flows of the universe, as universe prods you to flow, together completing the spiritual whole, aanandaraasayoga. That is Atma Yoga - Atma Yogi in relentless pursuit of aanandaraasayogaamritam! Krishna confirms – if our mind is filled with universe, if we pursue what universe wants and nothing else, if we bow down to universe and thinking of universe forever, if we take universe itself as the supreme goal, universe conspires to take us into it. Any which way you pursue, universe responds in the same way. Guaranteed! If pursue readiness and nothing else, universe will take charge, build capacity and grant flow with its free and natural flows.

Join us in the world of yoga – yoga of being ready and useful in all dimensions of our being as it guides and Inner most aanandaraasayogamritasiddhi in every second of life. You will not regret it.

30. Being Useful

Yogakshemam April 2010

Growth is back!

Earth Day (22 April) is reminding us of the action needed to save the earth for the future generations of life!

Appreciating efforts to mobilize poor into Self-help Groups and their federal institutional architecture and build their capacities, initiatives built on this foundation to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods, and actions for institutionalizing many of these for long-term sustenance of the results - has continued to consume most of the month. Tribal, Coastal, Rural, Semi-urban and Urban farm and nonfarm livelihoods, employment, jobs and enterprises, Tourism, Poorest of the Poor, elders, collectives, social entrepreneurs and social enterprises, networks and consortiums, and students, continued to dominate our thinking space, as always, in this month also.

Now the zero drafts of the business plans for L-info units -magazine(s), books, news centre(s), portal(s) and channel (s) are ready. The energy is now going into working through the details, processes and resources. Participant teacher pedagogy is also being tried out.

While 'fasting' and 'silence' have become habits, intensity of efforts towards practicing 'thought silence' has stepped up. I need inputs from the 'innermost'. Flow beyond 2011 is also evolving with these efforts and 'inner' guidance.

It is now clear that we the practicing social entrepreneurs need to come together at a variety of levels. This month's reflection has endorsed the need of a platform of all the development/livelihoods service providers in the country, for solidarity, resource sharing, mutual support services/help/learning, code of 'business' and increasing the supply of reliable responsive and responsible quality service providers. Our co-entrepreneurs are articulating similar sentiments and we hope this agenda gets going as soon as possible.

After it is established clearly that *the purpose is being useful and giving the world the best we have*, we need to develop the products and services of 'offering'. We need to figure out the architecture to make the 'offering'. We need to develop processes of 'offering'. We need to have a portfolio of plans of action. This, I understand take time. 2010 and 2011 are being devoted to get these ready through reflection processes, essentially systematic exploration of the entire canvass (es). This includes, as expressed earlier, exhaustive development visits, deep discussions with 'mentors', listening to the across-the-generation(s), feasible ideas and drawing contours. This reflection is picking up momentum!

Being useful, would also adopting ways that are more useful than others. Some better ways we can try to adapt, gathered during the month, include:

- ☒ Seeing alternative media,
- ☒ Taking responsibility for life,
- ☒ Being located locally, eat local, do business with locals
- ☒ Explore and try alternatives,
- ☒ Embrace the moment and follow what you love
- ☒ Trust in the universe and universe will 'conspire' to provide what you need

Being useful means ever active. It would not mean no failures and only successes, by whatever standards they are measured. As Ms. JK Rowling of Harry Potter fame says –

It is impossible to live without failing at something, unless you live so cautiously that you might as well not have lived at all – in which case, you fail by default. Failure meant a stripping away of the inessential... I began to direct all my energy into finishing the only work that mattered to me.Failure taught me things about myself that I could have learned no other way... I also found out that I had friends whose value was truly above the price of rubies. ...You will never truly know yourself, or the strength of your relationships, until both have been tested by adversity. ...Your qualifications, your CV, are not your life ... Life is difficult, and complicated, and beyond anyone's total control and the humility to know that will enable you to survive

The power of human empathy, leading to collective action, saves lives, and frees prisoners (lives). .

Unlike any other creature on this planet, humans can learn and understand, without having experienced. ... And many prefer not to exercise their imaginations at all. ...they can close their minds and hearts to any suffering that does not touch them personally. ... What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality. we touch other people's lives simply by existing..... we carry all the power we need inside ourselves... we have the power to imagine better....

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, Ugadi, Bihu, Vishu and other beginnings of new 'year' seek yoga, shatruchiyoga, navarasayoga in raadhakrishna raas, gaurisivataandavam, and prakritipurushatatvam and reinforce the need to playing the tunes of the 'innermost'.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on being fully useful, forever. Fully involved, firm and determined. Even in small useful tasks. Our nature turns more useful. Sentiments and Practices become useful. Support systems emerge. We join and flow with the natural flows of the universe. That is Atma Yoga - Atma Yogi in relentless pursuit of being in madhurayogaamritam!

Krishna confirms – if we surrender ourselves fully and completely to our true 'innermost', the universe, and we fill our hearts, minds and thoughts with the universe, and pursue what universe wants and nothing else, if we pursue universe itself as the supreme goal, universe envelops and takes us into it. Guaranteed! If pursue readiness and nothing else, universe will take charge, build capacity and grant flow with its free and natural flows.

Join us in the world of yoga – yoga of being useful in all dimensions of our being and innermost towards madhuraraasayogamritasiddhi in every second of life. You will not regret it.

31. Universe of Poor

Yogakshemam May 2010

Consolidation is the way forward now! Budha Purnima (27 May) is reminding us of sustainable ways of living and the need for practice of ways of mentoring and being mentored!

Let us remember 8 rights – meditation, attention, motive, resolve, effort, conduct, speech, and livelihood plus help. Let us surrender to intelligence of the universe, let us surrender to the will of universe and let us surrender to the flows of universe.

Lost in the universe of the institutions of the poor, livelihoods of the poor and their interlinked efforts! Appreciating the entire gamut of solidarity, savings, credit, insurance and remittance through a variety of service providers and stakeholders including the primary and federal people's institutions, appreciating the strength of the architecture of nested network of people's institutions, systems and efforts leveraging such architecture for bettering their lives and livelihoods, appreciating the play of institutions, leaders and human resources in taking these institutions and their efforts forward, and appreciating the ways and means for long-term sustenance of the results – has continued to consume most of the month. Tribal, Coastal, Rural, Semiurban and Urban farm and non-farm livelihoods, employment, jobs and enterprises, Poorest of the Poor, elders, collectives, social entrepreneurs and social enterprises, networks and consortiums, continued to dominate our thinking space, as always, in this month also.

There is a lull in the progress further on the zero drafts of the business plans for L-info units - magazine(s), books, news centre(s), portal(s) and channel (s). We need to reenergize the efforts towards working at speed through the details, processes and resources. Participant facilitated learning exercises are demonstrating responsive and responsible effort and learning behaviour, when the participants are mature and respect 'effort'. I need to learn to cope with the repercussions of intensified efforts in modest attempts at practicing 'thought silence'. Flow beyond 2011 continues to evolve with these efforts and 'inner' guidance.

It is clearly established now that the purpose is being useful and giving the world the best we have. We need to develop the products and services of 'offering'. We need to figure out the architecture to make the 'offering'. We need to develop processes of 'offering'. We need to have a portfolio of plans of action. I understand all this is a continual process. Yet a coherent way needs to be figured out. This year 2010-11 is devoted for figuring out this coherent way through the processes of reflection and systematic exploration combined with across-the-spectrum visits and discussions and drawing the contours with the 'innermost'. It has picked-up momentum now! This momentum got some forward gear shift inspiration from CK Prahlad, a legendary management guru and an academic-practitioner. His thought leadership evolved through observing business in action and in turn ideas reshaped businesses. His mantra – core competencies, bottom of the pyramid, global (macro) integration and local (micro) response! Being useful, would also mean being fit longer. Some tips that can be incorporated into our routines for this, gathered during the month, include:

- ☒ Drink water – 8-10 glasses a day,
- ☒ Eat,
 - More anti-oxidant natural fruits, nuts, vegetables,
 - Healthy cooking oils – no zero fat; rice bran oil is good,
 - Enough protein, about 120 grams a day, but reduce sugar to minimal,
- ☒ Take sunlight but prevent sunburn,

- ☑ Use minimal soap; Use retinoid-present cosmetics,
- ☑ Take care of hands and feet,
- ☑ Get massage - it reduces stress, promotes relaxation, stimulates skin, regulates blood pressure, purges toxins and eases stiffness in the joints.
- ☑ Exercise, walk/jog, do yoga and take fresh air often,
- ☑ Keep smiling; Meditate daily; Enjoy good sleep

Being useful means always adding ways to be useful. They come from the life we live. Azim Premji listed –

... Begin with strengths...Earn the rupee...When you lose, do not 'lose the lesson' ...It is important to first acknowledge, what we have received ...ultimately, your only competition is yourself ...Never give up ...Be open to change ... but not compromise on values ... like integrity, humility ...Have faith in our own ideas. ...

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, we seek yoga; we seek oneness, playing to the tunes of the 'innermost'. As there is nothing else to happen between birth and death but love, if we miss it, we have missed the whole opportunity of life of being useful, the very purpose of our life. We can't miss it, whatever be the cost. We have to have capacity to be useful and this comes from love and being one in all our dimensions – physical, mental, emotional and in consciousness - with the 'innermost'.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. The focus is on being fully useful, forever, free from dissonance, and surrendering to the universe. Fully involved, firm and determined. In essence, Atma Yoga – Atma Yogi's way of life of concentration on breath, meditation on truth, inner reflection and total surrender to the universe. In relentless pursuit of being in Buddha yogaamritam!

Krishna confirms – if we keep our minds on our true 'innermost', remain constantly united with our purpose of being useful, surrender ourselves fully and completely to our mentoring universe and innermost, they take us into them. Guaranteed! We become yukta atma.

Join us in the world of yoga – in all dimensions of our being and innermost - towards buddhayogamritisiddhi now and thereafter. You will not regret it.

32. Florence Shinn on Being Useful

Yogakshemam June 2010

From Mothers' Day to Fathers' Day!

Students are back in schools!

Continued to live in the universe of the institutions of the poor, needs of the poor and the efforts to meeting the needs of the poor! Still appreciating the architecture of institutions and their entire gamut of existing and potential activities! Vulnerable communities continued to 'engage' us! Education - Employment-Entrepreneurship-Enterprise value-chain(s) have been consuming our time! SHGs vs JLGs, mF vs mF+, Livelihoods, Leaders, Collectives, Social enterprises, Elders, Differently-abled, networks and consortiums, continued to dominate our thinking space, as always, in this month also.

Stepped up the processes of finalizing and taking forward the business plans for L-info units, all of them including magazine(s), books, news centre(s), portal(s) and channel (s)! Project Design and Planning processes for taking the processes of building and leveraging the institutions of the poor for their better livelihoods and lives are gaining momentum!

As I struggle to cope with the repercussions of practicing 'thought silence', I need to learn to practice and appreciate the variety of hues, dimensions and planes that co-exist, coevolve and co-guide me(us) and respond. Flows beyond 2011 continue to evolve with these efforts and 'inner' guidance.

2010-11 is dedicated to figuring out a coherent way for continual development of 'offering' – architecture, products and services, processes, contours – and plans of action (for serving the purpose of being useful). The processes of reflection, exploration, arguments and dialogues have picked -up momentum.

Being useful, would force us to explore who I am. When we are not body, mind, feelings, thoughts, actions, etc., although we have all of these, who are we? Is it soul or some core inner unit within that has some vision? Vision of being useful! Giving love, happiness and knowledge! Interestingly being useful lets you grow so that you become more useful.

A metaphysician, Florence Shinn in her 'The Game of Life' summed up some ways forward for being useful:

- ☒ Nothing stands between man and his highest ideals and every desire of his heart, but doubt and fear.
- ☒ Have absolute faith in the vision, absolute active faith and work accordingly
- ☒ Help others to hold on to the vision
- ☒ Thought '! Feelings '! Articulation '! Action '! Realized, Vision; so focus on the vision always, vision of what is desired rather than what is not desired
- ☒ Nothing can resist an absolutely non-resistant person
- ☒ Now is the right time; live suspended in the moment; obey the law, law serves you
- ☒ Forgetting and forgiving is part of giving and forgiving oneself is part of forgiving
- ☒ Love; Love whatever you do or do whatever you love
- ☒ Follow intuition, hunches, urges as they point the way
- ☒ Do not pre-judge others' intentions
- ☒ Faith is an effort of the will
- ☒ There is for each person, perfect self-expression –something s/he is to do, which no one else can do

☒ Accept what comes your way cheerfully

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, we constantly urge for and seek yoga, playing to the tunes of the 'innermost'. This is reflected in our urge to be one – in silence, seeing, listening, talking, arguing, touching, exploring, sharing, doing ... this is part of evolving, transforming and transcending into higher order oneness. This is how we are challenging ourselves every second together or otherwise. Mutuality guides us in all things we do including words and actions. We need to unfold our vision, and practice towards it. No exceptions. Seeking is not exclusion. All flow in the flow. Our vision and purpose is being useful. For this, we have to become a tool. A tool that sharpens itself with learning and using (practicing, writing ...). Needs, levels and needs of urge towards these needs fluctuate with time, practice and realization. When in ring, we can only continue to fight (seek)! We are in the ring of yoga.

We need to appreciate that we are living beings with myriad shortcomings and weaknesses. In the confluence of our flows, we delete some, erase some, modify some, and cleanse one another with care and diligence. That is one way to nurture and aid our flows and the flows of the universe. The capacity to be useful comes from being one in all our dimensions – physical, mental, emotional and in consciousness - with the 'innermost'. That is one way to evolve.

Can we evolve and be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. In essence, Atma Yoga is constant seeking of truth (knowledge and reflection), complete devotion and surrender to the universe, and dedicated pursuit of action for being useful. In relentless pursuit of being in viswagaanayogaamritam!

Krishna confirms – wherever the mentor and mentee work together, there is yoga and victory. Guaranteed! We become siddha atma.

Join us in the world of yoga – in all dimensions of our being and innermost - towards viswagaanayogamritasiddhi. You will not regret it.

33. Cooperative

Yogakshemam July 2010

Monsoon makes its way, in its own tortuous way! Many parts of the country are reeling under severe drought conditions!

Of course, we remembered World Population Day (11 July). The themes of the year are 'everyone counts' and 'open data' for development. World's Population is reckoned at 6.8 billion, with India accounting for 1.2 billion in them! We were told that we will be the country with the highest population in 15-16 years!

International Cooperative Day (First Saturday of July – 3 July or 7 July) did go unnoticed! Nevertheless, it has reminded us of the seven principles of cooperation. A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. The seven principles of cooperation are: Voluntary and Open Membership, Democratic Member Control, Member Economic Participation, Autonomy and Independence, Education, Training and Information, Cooperation among Cooperatives and Concern for the Community. Writer's Day (8 July) reminded us we as a mankind are moving away from writing and may be reading. Still, writing (and writers) is the central instrument of articulation of all ideas, thoughts, feelings, emotions and experience. Books (Writers) still inspire and heal. Sometimes they stir you to soul searching. Of course, they take us to lose ourselves in our innermost!

Continued to live in the universe of the institutions of the poor and the vulnerable, their needs and the efforts meeting these needs! Still appreciating the architecture of institutions and their entire gamut of existing and potential activities! Wage-Job-Self-employment continuum has been consuming our time! SHGs vs JLGs, mF vs mF+, Livelihoods, Leaders, Collectives, Social enterprises, networks and consortiums, continued to dominate our thinking space, as always, in this month also. Project Design and Planning processes for taking the processes of building and leveraging the institutions of the poor for their better livelihoods and lives are gaining momentum across the country! Inching forward in stepping up the processes of finalizing and taking forward the business plans for L-info units!

Struggle to cope with the repercussions of practicing 'thought silence' is being intensified. The processes to learn to practice and appreciate the variety of hues, dimensions and planes that co-exist, co-evolve and co-guide me (us) and respond have begun. Flows beyond 2011 continue to evolve with these efforts and 'inner' guidance. 2010-11, dedicated to figuring out a coherent way for continual development of 'offering' – architecture, products and services, processes, contours – and plans of action (for serving the purpose of being useful), is unfolding intense and deep processes of reflection, exploration, arguments and dialogues. The momentum has picked-up.

Being useful is a function of useful thoughts for way forward. An early pioneer of new thought – Prentice Mulford – in his 'Thoughts are Things' – says that the key for way forward is having thoughts for way forward. His summary includes:

- ☐ NEW thought is new life. It fills the person with joy. The blood in veins surges with a fresher impetus, lifting into ecstasy of emotion by a new conception. We desire and need always new and fresh thought.
- ☐ The consciousness of never-ending growth of improvement is also food for the growing mind.

- ☒ All experiences are valuable for the wisdom they bring or suggest. But when you have once gained wisdom and knowledge from any experience, there is little use in repeating it, especially if it has been unpleasant. Live in the pleasant remembrance (s), if you so desire. That will do you good.
- ☒ In all business, we must press on in mind to the successful result. We must see in mind or imagination the thing we plan completed, the system or method organized and in working order, ever growing stronger and more useful.
- ☒ Press onward to the thought of being strong, well and vigorous at that hour.
- ☒ Life is a continual advance forward. If we are advancing forward, it is better to look forward.
- ☒ Our thought is the unseen magnet, ever attracting its correspondence in things seen and tangible.
- ☒ Life means an ever-increasing freshness, an ever-increasing perception and realization of all that is grand, wonderful and beautiful in the universe, a constantly increasing discovery of more and more that is grand, beautiful and wonderful, and a constantly increasing capacity for the emotional part of our natures to sense such happiness.

Forget not to detoxify your body. I have been told ways to detoxify recently. These include: drink plenty of water, eat lots of fruits, whole grains, vegetables etc., increase intake of spices and take enough rest and exercise well. Rest is taken care.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the gentle flows of universe, we constantly seek new thoughts and actions based on these thoughts, playing to the tunes of the 'innermost'. This is reflected in our urge to evolve, transform and transcend into higher order oneness (yoga), beginning with oneness in all its dimensions. We are in the yogapravaaham, pressed on by yogaalochana!

Can we lose ourselves in this? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. In essence, Atma Yoga is constant seeking of truth (knowledge and reflection) of potential and instruments of realization, complete devotion and surrender to the universe, and dedicated plan and pursuit of action for being useful. In relentless pursuit of being in yogaalochanaamritam!

Krishna confirms – wherever the mentor and mentee work together in knowing (jnaana), with devotion (bhakti), followed up with action (karma), there is yoga. There is union with the universe. Guaranteed! We become ekaatma. We become one and see universe within us. Join us in the world of yoga – in all dimensions of our being and innermost - towards viswayogaalochanaamritasiddhi. You will not regret it.

34. Institutions of Poor

Yogakshemam August 2010

Monsoon progresses! From drought conditions, we move into floods across! Of course, we celebrated 63 years of independence on 15 August and season of festivals for the year. The roza days of Ramazan have also started.

We hear that China has become the second largest economy surpassing Japan during the month. A death of a first cousin has thrown many things helter-skelter. These include thought patterns, work schedules, emotional demands ... Balance of the time went in catching up with the pending documents. We should be ready for the end, sooner or later it is bound to come. At every moment, we should have all opportunities exhausted of being useful and loving. Let us appreciate that life is made up of millions of small moments of being so.

Institutional architecture for the poor, Employment continuum, ways and means for the vulnerable and marginalized, mF+ mF+ à Livelihoods Financing, Leaders, Collectives, Social enterprises, Social Responsibility, networks and consortiums ... continued to dominate our thinking and working space, as always, in this month also. Processes and way forward in states for poverty profiling, perspective plans, piloting, and building support architecture including structures, core teams, initial staff, resource pools/groups/organizations/networks are getting ready. Towards building and leveraging the institutions of the poor for their better livelihoods and lives! Continued to inch forward towards finalizing and taking forward the business plans for L-info units! Discussions have also begun to seed L-support unit(s) at national level.

The effort, to bring together the alumni (old students, teachers and other staff) of all gurukulams in the state (Andhra Pradesh) has begun, an idea of sagaurawa (with pride!) for solidarity, for being influential in ensuring quality education in the public domain, for better standards in these so called 'schools for the talented', and importantly each one of the alumni adopts a few students, a few families, a school, a village This network should encompass schools for boys and girls. This should encompass 'all' residential schools, be it for general, for BCs, for SCs or STs. Together, we are near 500,000 alumni and if all of us join hands, we would have adopted the entire Andhra Pradesh! Let the idea flourish! Let the idea spread to the entire country's residential schools including Navodaya schools! Whatever little we can do towards this, we should do. In the spirit of paying back to the society! Purely that and nothing else!

When faced with intense thoughts, in emotional and higher planes, of detachment, distance, lost in one or two things, getting ready to exit etc., it is a test of sorts to practice 'thought silence'. Coupled with severe physical uneasiness, this becomes further more difficult. At times, we blank out, blank out for long times. At times, we stare scaring others. At times, we tend to call it a day. In these times, we need the innermost the most and take charge. We need the balance to keep genial outer appearance and demeanor as we struggle to cope with the repercussions of intensity of practice of 'thought silence'. We need the guidance.

As 2010-11, dedicated to figuring out a coherent way for continual development of 'offering' – architecture, products and services, processes, contours – and plans of action (for serving the purpose of being useful), is unfolding intense and deep processes of reflection, exploration, arguments and dialogues, the events fuel these processes in their own way. Being useful is a function of time (its quality and quantity), non-time resources (their productivity, efficiency and effectiveness), and importantly leveraging oneself and 'levers' (catalyzed, leveraged and triggered). Another way to look at this is – do better, increase quality and quantity, and add more ways. Greater the usefulness, greater is the access

to more resources – spiritual, intellectual, human, social, physical and natural - including time and energy.

Dr Nerina Ramlakhan suggests in her book, 'Tired but Wired', to live restfully physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually, to be useful. Surely, not eight-hours sleep. We, as human beings, are designed to be able to adapt and flexible. Flexible is the key to life. This comes with living restfully. According to her, the ways for the same include:

- ☒ Eat breakfast within 45 minutes of rising; include protein in each meal; avoid eating heavily before bed time, but have a small snack/cup of milk before sleep.
- ☒ Have plenty of water everyday
- ☒ Do not be slave to technology
- ☒ Practice let go of control
- ☒ Look upon stress as a challenge and aim to strengthen stress coping strategies.
- ☒ Take time to build strong, supportive relationships
- ☒ Find ways to get rid of negative feelings constructively
- ☒ Try to switch off the brain and all those that alert the brain like computer, mobile etc.
- ☒ Do some gentle yoga to calm the nervous system
- ☒ Prioritize what is important and do it first
- ☒ Make time for it for values and care
- ☒ Have faith in the universe; Nurture spirituality within you

Like the old saying goes, 'however much busy you are, there is always room for a cup of coffee with a friend'. In the confluence of the souls, and through the flows of universe, we are in the 'yogapravaaham' seeking yogayoga to be lost in our 'innermost' and 'universe'. Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Atma Yoga seeks truth (knowledge and reflection) of potential and instruments of realization, and practices them with proactive complete devotion, responsibility, integrity and love, and surrender to being useful. In relentless pursuit of being in jeevanayogaamritam!

Krishna confirms – when there is union with the universe, nothing else matters. When the veil of separation exists, we only have to become conscious of this veil. We become ekaatma, viswaatma. The yoga traid – jnaana, karma and bakthi – help us to become conscious with faith. Join us in the world of yoga – in all dimensions of our being and innermost - towards jeevanayogaamritisiddhi. You will not regret it.

35. The Science of Being Well

Yogakshemam September 2010

Regular and normal rains after a long time! People say it is three decades now.

Ramzan and Ganesh Chaturthi on the same day! Less number of idols, small idols, less crowds mark Ganesh this year! Is the rising prices that caused this? We also hear that another recession is on its way in US. What is in store than for us? Bihar is going to polls. Nitish?

US declare that India is the third most powerful nation in the world, next only to US and China. We also hear mixed comments on Common Wealth Games; so much for the power! Ability without intent cannot become power.

This has been a month of getting ready to see the roll-out of National Rural Livelihoods Mission. Framework for implementation is emerging. Deeply into it! With time, energy, intensity!

Institutional architecture for the poor, Farming System, Agriculture, Employment continuum, Induction, Building Human Resources, Resource Centres, Consortiums, Planning for 2017, ... continued to dominate our thinking and working space, as always, in this month also. Getting deeper into understanding poverty and level of living! Now is the time for planning, convergence and partnerships across the country. Towards building and leveraging the institutions of the poor for their better livelihoods and lives over the coming 7 years!

Also, back with students! Their rivers are flowing; their books are published; they are opening up to plan for themselves and plan for the poor. Interesting discovery, rather an endorsement, during the month: Deeper learning and better learning results come with mixing study environments, mixing content, spacing sessions, selftesting or all the above, and not from spending continuous hours on one issue. Mix and learn is the message. Let us ignite the flame in our souls to learn and be useful, learn while being useful and be useful while learning. Inching on L-units has slowed down. Need to press the accelerator. I realize deep down, it has picked up speed. Missed and need to catch up on some rest, some variety, some nutrition, some sleep, some flows to get flow in and merge!

When lost in two or three pursuits, when you miss water, food, sleep and care for long spells, it appears 'thought silence' comes in on its own. As you blank out. As you stare into the distance. Then, the innermost lets you lose in and take you into the purpose of being useful. Intense and deep processes of reflection, exploration, arguments and dialogues, conspired jointly by the universe and the innermost, unfold in their own way. Let the innermost see, feel, touch, and appreciate you, your each and every cell; let the innermost take care of you; then the innermost takes charge, deep within.

Many endorsements during the month – take care of the small things. They take care of the big things. Some small things include – Give and give cheerfully; Say sorry, looking the person in the eye; first impression lasts long; dream and let others dream; love is the only way to live life completely; fight fairly; do not judge people by their families; think on feet; do not lose the lesson, even if you lose; value relationships and friendships; Smile, and smile even on phone; spend some time alone. Then these small things take you in the flow of being useful. Wallace Wattle suggests in his 'The Science of Being Well', being well is a function of how we do our voluntary functions of life, beginning with mental actions – thinking and use of will – so that we form a conception of ourselves in perfect shape/fitness/health, and think only those thoughts which are in harmony with that conception; We need to eat only when we have an earned hunger, and then take the best foods of the healthy people in the zone in which we live, i.e. local food; Of course, we need to enjoy eating; Keep your spine straight and your chest flexible, and breathe pure air; we need some grateful meditation; we need to earn sleep and sleep in an

environment of fresh air. In a nutshell - make yourself one with Health in thought, word, and action. Then we live restfully physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually, to be useful.

As Krish Radhakrishna puts - Here is a 'quickest way' to create a new mindset: internal reality. Experience new things! Do different to be different. Change comes from doing. Doing something you have never done. Minor, major does not matter. If you do the same old things, you get the same results.

Here are three suggestions from Deepak Chopra on applying the law of giving in daily life: gift; gratefully receive gifts that life has to offer; keep wealth circulating through giving and receiving precious of caring, affection, appreciation, and love.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the flows of universe, we are in the 'yogapravaahasangamam' seeking aikyayoga to be one with 'innermost' and 'universe'. Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Atma Yoga seeks knowledge, reflection, exploration, devotion, and surrender to being useful. In relentless pursuit of being in praanayogasudha!

Krishna confirms – when there is union of the innermost with the universe, there is nothing in between, except a veil of doubts, dilemmas and internal conflicts. This veil disappears with the yoga triad– jnaana, karma and bakthi. We see viswaroopam and become one with viswaatma.

Join us in the world of yoga – for the union with the innermost and universe in all dimensions of our being - towards praanayogasudhasiddhi. You will not regret it.

36. Finding Meaning and Happiness in Life

Yogakshemam October 2010

Common Wealth Games – good show, despite all controversies! Investigations started immediately!

Interestingly, Ayodhya Verdict says Ramajanamabhooni (a place believed to be so) is a legal person! Court asks the parties to co-exist. The economic projections are that India outpaces China in a year or two and slowly inches forward to catch up with China in 2-3 decades!

India and the world celebrated 2 October (Mahatma Gandhi's birthday; International Non-violence Day).

October is also the month of festivals in India. Hope you had happy Navratri and Dussehra! While on Hindu festivals, we have many sub-religions in the country - Ganapatyam, Shakteyam, Shaivism, Vaishnavam, Krishnaism, Sikhism, Ramakrishna Movement, so on. Buddhism and Jainism have also been considered as subreligions in the country. Thus, it appears Hinduism takes all sub-religions into its fold! Now, I also read research conclusion that Krishna was a historic person, probably lived 125 years (b. 21 July 3228 BC) and died on 18 February 3102 BC, when seven planets aligned on a single line and solar eclipse occurred. This date marks the start of Kaliyuga!

National Rural Livelihoods Mission is likely to be supplemented with National Rural Livelihoods Project. As we await the formal launch, NRLM juggernaut rolls on slowly but steadily. Framework for implementation is still emerging! Our time, energy, and intensity are deeply into them! As we were discussing them on 7 October 2010, the news came in that the noble soul of SR Sankaran rested in peace. A rishi and legend is no more. An exceptional human being, simplicity and integrity personified, and the tallest civil servant touched us in many ways. We may take a very long time to readjust our lives to this new reality!

Community and support Institutional architecture for the livelihoods of the poor, and Human and other resources for them, continued to dominate our thinking and working space, as always, in this month also. We have also begun to dig deeper into understanding poverty and level of living! Also, still with students! Students rekindle life in us. They accelerate learning in us. In their rivers! In their books! In their plans! Let us keep the flame alive in our souls to be useful while learning and to be learning while being useful. Like our Sankaran! L-units are picking up their natural momentum!

I need to catch up badly with some inner silence, some rest, some sleep, some energy of a variety of dimensions, some reduced pain, some semblance of emotional balance, some warmth, and importantly some flows of different levels and hues! As I catch up with these, intense and deep processes of reflection, exploration, arguments and dialogues, conspired jointly by the universe and the innermost, unfold in their own way. Let the innermost take charge, deep within and direct each and every cell to flow and merge in the larger flows.

Paul Rogers' research endorses – 'those making decisions fastest are four times as likely to make the best decisions. Those making the best decisions are eight times as likely as others to excel at execution. Decision-making must be a team effort but the teams must not be too big – not more than seven members.

Clay Christensen, a Professor at Harvard Business School, says finding meaning and therefore, happiness in life is dependent on three aspects - first, happiness in work, happiness in relationships, and happiness in being on the right side of the law. The keys for life include: having a purpose, a strategy to achieve it, allocating resources, a culture, going beyond marginal costs and benefits, humility with self-esteem, and a right metric of success in life. At the end what matters most is the significance of influence on the life in and around.

Achieving excellence in this is a result of six practices – pursuing what we love, doing the hardest work first (even on a daily basis), intense sessions of work, seeking expert feedback intermittently, relaxing and taking renewal breaks, and ritualizing tasks that require will and discipline. Joe Vitale concludes from www.tut.com that giving gives the ability to give more. If you think, you see. If you see, you touch it. If you touch it, you feel it. If you feel it, you love it. If you love it, give it. Giving speaks loudest about your belief in self, abundance and love. When the Universe hears, more will be with you to give.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the flows of universe, we are in the 'yogalochanagamanam' seeking sahadamanayoga to flow together with 'innermost' and 'universe'.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Atma Yoga seeks Guru for being useful. In relentless pursuit of being ready to surrender to the Guru! Guru manifests in various ways in different places for various reasons based on our intensity of longing and prepared readiness. A series of Gurus take us forward step by step with the power to be us, without losing our identity in the sahadamanayoga.

Krishna confirms – when the body, mind, heart and soul move in tandem as suggested by the innermost, equipped with jnaana, karma and bakthi, we see, touch, feel, love and be one with viswaatma for sure. Join us in the world of yoga – for the realization that innermost itself is the universe in all dimensions of our being - towards sahadamanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

37. Mind, Human Relationships, Human Love

Yogakshemam November 2010

Scams and Crises! Telecom, Adarsh, Housing Finance!

Raja quits and Chavan gives way to Chavan! Parliament is still stalled!

Bihar elects Nitish again; AP changes its CM and Karnataka in governance mess!

Obama's America says India is an emerged/developed nation!

Deepavali, the festival of lights, is celebrated across! For many parts of the country, next day marks the New Year!

MFI Crisis and MFI Ordinance in AP have put the pressure on MFIs to 'behave', register and charge lower interest rates. Surely, MF operations will not be the same! We hear that Government of AP is planning to repeal the member-friendly Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act. Hope the new Government under N Kiran Kumar Reddy will not push for it!

National Rural Livelihoods Mission is making states to realign many projects. States are gearing up with poverty profiling and evolving perspective plans, pending launch of NRLM.

Institutional architecture for the livelihoods of the poor, projects/programs/missions on livelihoods and resources for them, continued to dominate our thinking and working space, as always, in this month also. Still with students! To be useful while learning and to be learning while being useful! I heard 'Learn and Earn' and 'Earn and Learn' is emerging.

I still need to catch up badly with some inner silence, rest, sleep, multiple energies, balance, multiple flows and practice of let go. Let the innermost take charge, deep within and outside and direct each and every cell to flow and merge in the larger flows. Let us give it to people who help us stay in touch with our inner world.

As James Allen says –

“Mind is the master-weaver, both of the inner garment of character and the outer garment of circumstance, and that, as they may have hitherto woven in ignorance and pain they may now weave in enlightenment and happiness. All that a man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of his own thoughts. ...

A man's weakness and strength, purity and impurity, are his own and not another man's. They are brought about by himself and not by another; and they can only be altered by himself, never by another. His condition is also his own, and not another man's. His sufferings and his happiness are evolved from within. As he thinks, so is he; as he continues to think, so he remains. Your vision is the promise of what you shall one day be; your ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil.”

Joe Vitale tells –

“Give it to people who inspire you, serve you, heal you, and love you. Give it to people without expecting them to return it, but give it knowing it will come back to you multiplied from some source. Give time and you'll get time. Give love and you'll get love. Give them* something from your heart.”

** Think of the person or persons who made you feel good about your purpose of being useful*

Stephen Hawking, arguably the most brilliant person of the world, says – “God is impersonal. God is the name people give to the reason we are here. But I think that reason is the laws of physics rather than someone with whom one can have a personal relationship.”

Interestingly, the small details of our lives are what really matter in a relationship. Human relationships and human values, founded on self-knowledge and self-exploration, are a source of our perennial happiness.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the flows of universe, we are in the 'yogaalochanasangamam' seeking sahasangamayoga to merge and flow together with 'innermost' and 'universe'.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Atma Yoga seeks Soucha, Santosha, Tapas, Swadhyaya and Pranidhana – Purity, Contentment, Austerity, Self-study and Total Surrender for being useful. In relentless pursuit! Towards together in co-existence, in sharing, in working, in getting enlightened, and in bliss!

Krishna confirms – when the body, mind, heart and soul move in tandem with knowledge, action and devotion to the innermost and the universe, being lost in the viswaparamatma is for sure.

Join us in the world of yoga – for the realization that mind of the innermost and the supermind of the universe are identical in all dimensions of our being – towards sahasangamayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

38. Unwinding

Yogakshemam December 2010

Parliament stalled for the entire winter session! Farmers in AP are committing suicides – they need relief! Telangana is getting 'ready'! Human Rights Activist, Dr Binayaksen has been sentenced for life term.

Christmas is celebrated across! Long New Year celebrations (24 December – 1 January) as a concept has emerged!

40-day Deekshas are gaining the imagination of people. How I wish some of this Maadhavaseva becomes Maanavaseva!

Institutional architecture for the livelihoods of the poor, projects/ programs/missions on livelihoods and resources for them, continued to dominate our thinking and working space, as always, in this month also.

'Students' have become a permanent feature in our work! The question – what can we do with individual nonpermanent migrants? – is still troubling us.

Livelihoods on the coast to the livelihoods in the desert are vying for space in the mind. Nuances of Family-based care and Family Support are being appreciated. How do we move from charity to support for self-reliance?

I may have to wait for another month or two to catch up with some rest, sleep, multiple energies, balance, multiple flows etc., which I am in need badly. Transition and Reflection are playing to the hilt. I guess that is the way! Star(s) in the Eyes and Tears from the Eyes!

Let the innermost pursue relentlessly, for the innermost is aware deep within and outside. For we are designed to seek happiness and provide happiness in flowing andflowing relentlessly! To be able to give is the joy. So let me. If you are stressed for long periods of time, or in chronic stress, it shows. I gathered that the one or more signs of this include – constant colds, teeth grinding (in sleep), upset stomach and abdominal pain, (nagging) pain in the back, difficulty in falling asleep, headaches (migraines), irrational thinking, acne/pimples, sensitive gums, itchy skin or rashes, eye twitching, hair loss etc. Beware! Start unwinding if you see any of these signs intensely.

One of the beautiful thoughts of Buddha – '...

When it (mind) is disturbed, just let it be. Give it a little time. It will settle down on its own. ... It will happen. It is effortless. ..."

In the Game of Life, as Florence Scovel Shinn says –

"The simple rules are fearless faith, nonresistance and love! ... Love is the most powerful chemical in the universe, and dissolves everything which is not of itself! ... Be sensitive to intuitive leads ..."

Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton talk about 'Orange Revolution' of coming and being together in shared experiences, shared symbols, shared challenges, shared rewards, shared balance as a whole, shared voice, shared knowledge and skills, shared competition, shared fun – laughing and bonding, shared environment, shared relationships, shared food and ultimately shared time.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the flows of universe, we are in the 'yogaatmeeyam' seeking aatmeeyayogabandham to merge and flow together with 'innermost' and 'universe'.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentlessly! Towards co-exploration and discovery in all planes that matter. With simplicity in strength; in truth; in beauty; in doing; in being; in intensity; in recognition; in worship; and in living! For being useful and continuing to be useful!

Krshna expects positive response from naras (free men and women), when they are able to feel not bound to toe the lines of the clans and communities. A '*nara*' with *sraddha* and without envy, who takes up and performs the challenge of times, would attain *mukti*.

Krishna stands guarantee. Confirms success when the body, mind, heart and soul move in tandem with knowledge, action and devotion to the innermost and the universe, for meeting this challenge.

Join us in the world of yoga – for the realization that flows in and out of the innermost into and out of the universe define our being - towards yogaatmabandhasiddhi. You will not regret it.

39. Rural Livelihoods Agenda

Yogakshemam January 2011

Some action around! Sri Krishna Commission submits its report on Telangana and stirrings thereafter; Malegam Committee submits its report on MFIs; Investigations into 2G and CWG are in progress; Manmohan shuffles his Cabinet; Some people in-charge are sacked; Now we know Makarajyothi at Sabarimala is manmade as a tradition; More than Rs.2.0 lakh Crore investment flows into Gujarat committed; Food inflation soared to 16%.

Let us hope the spirit of Civil Liberties Advocate, KG Kannabiran, continues to guide us.

Of course, we remembered Swami Vivekananda (12 January) and we will remember Mahatma Gandhi (30 January).

Let us also note that 2011 is also the International Year of Forests and World Veterinary Year to appreciate all life beyond human beings.

Institutional architecture for the livelihoods of the poor, projects/programs/missions on livelihoods and resources for them, continued to dominate our thinking and working space, as always, in this month also. Various continuums in livelihoods have come to the fore. What is the way forward for us as 'Commons' is one of the key resources of the poor – has taken a lot of thinking time.

Rolling-out rural livelihoods agenda across the country – through the mission(s), through the models and innovations, through the community and support institutional architecture, through the knowledge dissemination, through the creation of the livelihoods and knowledge workers, through the capacity building, through the learning platforms, through the increased funds allocations and availability, through increased understanding and appreciation of the livelihoods reality of the poor, through the portals and channels and through the campaigns – is slowly acquiring the character of a national movement. Seeds have been sown and some have started to sprout.

I am still to catch up with some rest, sleep, multiple energies, balance, multiple flows etc. Transition and Reflection continue playing to the hilt. Relentless pursuit of nayanataras and by nayanataras! We are designed to flow relentlessly even beneath/underneath the ice sheet on the surface. So be it.

During the month, there is an endorsement – life, all life, and matter the most. Great relationships sustain life. For these, we need to take responsibility – 100/0. We need to do our 100 without thinking of any return, without being affected by any other return not anticipated. This needs to persist. This needs to go on.

The second endorsement in the month is on the need for emphasis on equal opportunities, equitable access and equitable fruits and results commensurate with the effort and performance, rather than on equal fruits and results.

The third endorsement is that sharing knowledge keeps us learning.

In the Book 'Being the Boss' Linda Hill and Kent Lineback talk about managing oneself, one's network and one's team for being useful and deliver responsibility through exerting influence. "Trust is the foundation of all forms of influence other than coercion ..."; "...build and nurture a broad network of ongoing relationships ..."; "...creating a real team (collective of varied skills that want to stick together) and managing their people as a whole..." Of course on these three imperatives, one needs to periodically [daily/weekly/monthly] assess oneself, plan, work the plan and review.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the flows of universe, visible and/or invisible, we are in the 'yogamathanam' seeking amritayogaanatham to create, expand and lost in the flows of the 'innermost' and 'universe'.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentlessly! With simplicity! For being useful and continuing to be useful!

Krshna confirms that any free soul that practices and pursues this thought of being useful with single-minded concentration and devotion would indeed attain mukti and become part of the viswamahatma. Wherever the Guru and the Disciple work in tandem, srivijayabhuti (prosperity, victory and welfare to life) and dhruvaniti (conducive context) would be certain.

Join us in the world of yoga – for the realization of the eternal flows of the innermost and the universe define our being - towards amritayogaananthasiddhi. You will not regret it.

40. Life, Learning, Creativity

Yogakshemam February 2011

Some action around! Egypt sends its Mubarak out! More countries to follow suit!

Corruption continues to surface!

JPC on 2G Scam! Telangana stirs go on - non-cooperation in action!

Vineel Krishna kidnapped and released!

Vijay Mahajan is on Shodh Yatra across the country for ABCD - Atmashuddhi, Basics, Connecting, Demonstrating that Difference can be made.

International Women's Day, World Consumer Rights Day, International day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, World Day for Water, World Theatre Day and International Day of Achievers are awaiting us in March.

Institutional architecture for the livelihoods of the poor, employment and enterprises of and for poor, livelihoods for destitute, disabled and elderly, perspective way forward for projects/programs/missions of livelihoods in the country, knowledge human resources at various levels for all of these and support structures that make them available and knowledge management and learning channels and platforms continued to dominate our thinking and working space, as always, in this month also.

Endorsement that we live in various continuums and knowledge is the key commons is redefining our ways of work and the way we look at access.

Livelihoods agenda across the country has to be a national movement and the signs are visible.

Patience is running out for the common man. S/he cannot tolerate vulgar display of wealth and silence on corruption for long. Knowledge workers would lead the way.

Catching up some rest, sleep and draining has become further difficult. While abundant multiple energies and flows across layers and balance is the need, I am not anywhere towards it, right now.

This is accentuated by continuing transition and reflection. Relentless pursuit does not see the drops and stars in the eyes. Unfettered it continues as we are designed to flow relentlessly. Because flow is life! So be it!

During the month, there is an endorsement – faith is a matter of faith. There is no other way. Relationships are matters of faith and they sustain life. Let the small things do not come in the way of great relationships all of us can have.

The second endorsement in the month is that we live to be useful. We are useful when we learn, when we are happy, when we have stamina and fit, and when we have excitement and adrenalin flows. Keep walking.

The third endorsement is that we need to seek out unless rejected totally. When sought, all of us rise to the occasion.

The fourth endorsement is that we need to learn to keep small things small. If we do not, we miss important and precious things in life. It is possible that we may miss the life itself.

The fifth endorsement is that woman is strong; she lives long; her emotional stamina is high; her creativity is high; her competitive spirit is high; her ability to care is high; her ability to remember is high; and her ability to fight back is high. She is the winner. She is the driver. She is the controller without appearing as one.

In the Book 'The Dark Side of Creativity: Original Thinkers Can be More Dishonest', Francesca Gino and Dan Arieli talk about creativity as a common aspiration for individuals, organizations, and societies.

However, they conclude that creative (rather than intelligent) individuals who work in more creative positions are also more morally flexible.

In the confluence of the souls, and through the flows of universe, we are in the 'yogasivam' seeking sivataandavayogalayam to explore, surrender and lose in the dance of the master.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentlessly! With simple pursuit! For being lost in the dance of usefulness!

Krshna confirms that any free soul that practices and pursues this dance of being useful with single-minded concentration and devotion, his flute's music let you dance towards fully lost in the viswaviswam. He cannot but play the flute.

Join us in the world of yoga – for becoming the universal 'flow' of the innermost and define our flowing being - towards sivataandavayogalayasiddhi. You will not regret it.

41. 10 Ideas on Frugal Living

Yogakshemam March 2011

Happy World Cup! India wins the Cup! Indo-Pak Cricket diplomacy at Maholi!

Tsunami in Japan!

Gadhafi is still fighting!

Some stirrings for International Women's Day (8 March), World Water Day (24 March), and Earth Hour (8.00-9.00 PM on 25 March)! World Consumers' Rights day (15 March), International Day for Achievers (24 March) and World Theatre Day (27 March) have just passed. We await World Health Day (7 April), International Day for Street Children (12 April), World Entrepreneurship Day (16 April), World Creative and Innovation Day (21 April), Earth Day (22 April) and World Books Day (23 April).

Employment and enterprises of and for poor, livelihoods for destitute, disabled and elderly, perspective way forward for projects/programs/missions of livelihoods in the country, partnerships and collaborations for knowledge human resources at various levels, and knowledge management and learning channels and platforms continued to dominate our thinking and working space as always, in this month also. Endorsement that we live in various continuums across various contexts and knowledge is the key commons that needs to be real commons to all is driving us.

Census provisional data is out. We are 1.21 billion, growing at 17.6% per decade. This is the sharpest decline in decadal growth. It also shows 5 million less children in the age group 0-6 years! % of Children of the total population has decreased. Alarming trends include sex ratio of less than 900 in North India (while there is a marginal improvement in the country – 940 from 933 in 2001) and decreased sex ratio in children to 914 from 927, women are still at 65% literacy, big cities have grown bigger, etc. Soon we are also going to have census of the poor.

The six-seven years ahead, 2011-18, appear to be the watershed years in the course of racing towards poverty reduction, with myriad ways and a variety of pressures including Millennium Development Goals. A nation wants response and a nation is responding. Livelihoods movement is picking up momentum silently. Knowledge workers would to gear up and be two steps ahead of this momentum so that they can help the people in the movement!

The deficit in rest and sleep is huge and it takes a longtime to catch up with. Stressed and strained times make you see the drops and stars in the eyes. Yet, we hope and pursue our flows. We are designed for relentless pursuit. Because flow and pursuit is life! So be it!

During the month, ten items of frugal living for a sustainable world have been gathered –

1. Let us not buy items that we do not need (for starters, basics include air, water, food, clothing, items for work etc.)
2. Let us buy only we have the money
3. Let us purchase by value and longterm cost, not by price
4. Let us be patient and wait in purchasing new gadgets
5. let us buy functionality rather than features for the sake of features
6. Let us look for alternatives before we buy
7. Let us buy because we really need, not because we are in competition with others
8. Let us look for price cuts and discounts before we buy
9. Let us not waste money, resources and time
10. Let us buy from the producers and service providers as directly as possible.

In the Book 'Oneness with All Life', Eckhart Tolle talks about the greatest goal you can set to make peace with your life, no matter your circumstances. His insights towards this include – stay with facts rather than making up stories – facing facts is always empowering; catch the voice in your head, which is no more than a thought; experience the present moment – You thought something else was more important. One small error, one misperception, creates a world of suffering; accept the present moment and find the perfection that is untouched by time. The more shared past there is in a relationship, the more present you need to be; otherwise, you will be forced to relive the past again and again.... Equating the physical body with "I," the body that is destined to grow old, wither and die, always leads to suffering. ... You do not become good by trying to be good, but by finding the goodness that is already within you and allowing that goodness to emerge. ... If peace is really what you want, then you will choose peace.

In the confluence of the souls, we are in the 'yogaraas' seeking and relishing sarvendriyaraasayogam to explore, play and dance to the tunes of mutual masters and mutual surrender and merged flow.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentlessly! Simply! For being lost in the 'raas' of usefulness!

Krishna confirms that any free soul that practices and pursues the 'raas' of being useful with single-minded devotion, he guides you with his tunes so that he is lost in you and you lost fully lost in the viswaatma.

Join us in the world of yoga – for becoming the 'flow' of the innermost and define our flowing being at peace – towards santharaasayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

42. Vijay Mahajan's Shodh Yatra

Yogakshemam April 2011

We look forward to May Day (1 May), Mothers' Day (8 May – second Sunday in May), Fair Trade Day (14 May – second Saturday in May). Family Day, Information Society Day, Diversity Days are also coming in May.

We also await Buddha Purnima (17 May).

Back again to institutions, employment, enterprises, livelihoods of the poor, destitute, disabled and elderly! Partnerships and collaborations for identifying and inducting knowledge workers at various levels, and knowledge and learning channels continued to dominate our working space as always, in this month also. Of course, our contribution towards pressing the accelerator of silently picking up momentum of the national livelihoods movement continues in its own small way!

Also, apart from Cricket, entire month's media space in the country is mostly dominated by Sathya Sai Baba. Sathya Sai Baba (23 November 1926 – 24 April 2011), a 'miracle' worker and spiritual teacher and one of the 100 most spiritually influential people in the world (Watkins Review 2011), leaves behind a Rs.500-1500 billion Satya Sai Central Trust that provides education, health, drinking water in many parts of the country, more than a lakh volunteers across the world and 30 million+ devotees.

Flow and pursuit persists because we are designed for being so, despite mounting deficits in rest and sleep. So be it!

During the month, tips to gain control and simplify workflow have been gathered – break the work down to manageable small pieces; say no; focus on what really matters and what needs to be done; cut out distractions, particularly minor distractions; move from one piece of task to another on completing the first piece only; plan the workflow and time.

The Hindu's Code of Editorial Values, adopted this month, has some relevance for all of us who are in the business of influencing through communication and articulation – protect and foster the bond of trust between the articulator and the readers/audience; protect the integrity of the content; founding principles – these include fairness, justice, and faith and hope in the capacity of the people; and core universal editorial values – truth, independence, responsible citizenship, humane, commitment to social good, professionalism and balance.

Vijay Mahajan's Shodh Yatra (30 January – 18 April 2011) has been captured in his blog 'www.vijaymahajan.wordpress.com'. It needs to be published for wider circulation. The blog discusses the journey of search for truth (an extended grassroots enquiry into lives and livelihoods of poor people) after 30 years in leading development agenda and dialogue in the country and beyond. It reminds me of the eleven vows of Gandhi as part of the early morning prayer in my Sarvail Gurukulam – *ahimsa satyam asteya brahmacharyam asangraha sareera srama aswaada sarvatrabhayavarjanam sarva dharmasamanata swadeshi sparshabhaavana [non-violence, truth, non-possession, chastity, non-stealing, physical labour, palate control, fearlessness, religious equality, local and touchability]*. It is also autobiographical recounting VM's journey of 30 years and his various associates and their work. The ABCD of Shodh Yatra presented are: A - atma-shuddhi (to mean enabling self-evolution); B – basics of BASIX and beyond; C – connecting with common citizen; and D – demonstrating the difference can be made.

His conclusions include – the poor continue to be resilient and improvise for better livelihoods; Government is doing a massive but difficult job towards poverty reduction – we need to work with them to better their acts and initiatives; many continue to contribute, let us take inspiration from them and their work; rededicated BASIX to work with the poor in a sustainable (environmental, institutional and

financial) manner. It ends – *‘My Yatra ends in Pochampally, the Shodh continues...’* It reinforced my resolve to see development in action all across and talk to the serious actors, may be over a much longer period. May be I should begin it in Pochampally or from Bapu Ghat or from the originating place of a river.

Another reinforcement for ‘shodh’ includes - ‘Madhyastha Darshan’ - The human has a will to live, with happiness which requires knowledge. With knowledge about the self, existence (co-existence) and humane conduct, the human becomes resolved, happy and be in harmony within and without. The human needs to understand this harmony, already in existence, and be in it.

In the confluence of the souls, we are in the ‘jeevanadarshan’ seeking and relishing sahaastitvarasayogam to understand, resolve and be in harmony with universal co-existence and sahgamanam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentless focus on understanding co-existence, for being lost in the harmony of usefulness! Krishna confirms – any free soul that practices and pursues the knowledge of existence and being useful, with devotion and action, is guided for being merged in the viswaatma.

Join us in the world of yoga – for being in harmony with coexistence of the innermost and viswaatama – towards sahgamanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

43. Values of an Employee

Yogakshemam May 2011

Happy Buddha Purnima! There was some activity for May Day, Mothers' Day (8 May) and World No tobacco Day (31 May). We also remembered Gurudev Vishwakavi Rabindranath Tagore (May 7).

We also await monsoon and mirgam! Summer is taking its toll on all of us!

Fully immersed in institutions of people, women, differentiable and elderly, for savings, credit, insurance, health, collective business and solidarity! Partnerships and collaborations for identifying and inducting knowledge workers at various levels, and knowledge and learning channels continued to dominate our working space. Of course, the preparations for writing the report of the working group of planning commission on National Rural Livelihoods Mission is also taking its time.

The national launch of National Rural Livelihoods Mission on 3 June 2011 at Banswara is expected to step-up NRLM processes in the country!

Nara Chandra Babu Naidu admits that he was carried away by the 'certificates' of Bill Clinto, Bill Gates, Tony Blair, Wolfenson etc., and now he realizes that wealth needs to be distributed equitably apart from facilitating its creation!

As we take reprieve from Sathya Sai Baba, Cricket, Examinations and Elections, the Telangana is coming back to central stage. Jayalalithaa comes back in Tamil Nadu, Mamata takes charge in West Bengal, Oommen Chand scrapes through in Kerala. Rahul Gandhi fights for farmers in UP and MSP (Minimum Support Prices) agitations are not able to impress Union Government.

Flow and pursuit persists because we are designed for being so, despite mounting deficits in rest and sleep. So be it!

During the month, secrets to grow younger and live longer have been gathered (courtesy – Deepak Chopra) – affirm everyday and every way – 'I am increasing my mental and physical capacity'; get into restful awareness/meditate regularly; sleep restfully after eating early, walking a bit and writing down the thoughts; take balanced food that includes six tastes – sweet, salty, sour, pungent, bitter and astringent – and rainbow colors; walk around and exercise a bit; be in human contact by staying connected/related and being in love and friendship; laugh freely, be essential yourself, maintain a youthful mind and carry out a childlike activity as often as possible. I have also gathered a list of values for someone who wants to work with others (be an employee) –

Strong work ethic – loving the work, working hard, working smart

Dependability – on time, responsible, keep others informed

Positive attitude

Adaptability – flexibility as per the changing needs

Integrity – moral fibre, sense of honesty, trust, ethics

Self-motivated – discipline, professionalism

Motivated to Learn

Self-confidence – admit mistakes, recognize strengths and weaknesses, work on the negatives

Professionalism – timely, quality, learning, behavior

Loyalty to the ends and means

I have read a poem/song 'Waqt Nahin' [No time] – it roughly translates as – People can access any joy/pleasure; yet, they have no time for a little smile. In the world of running day and night, there is no time for 'life'. ... there are lots of friends in the mobile, yet there is no time for friendship, ... there is no time

for even own people... there is no time for sleeping... there is no time for crying too...in fact, there is no time for getting tired ...there is no time for own dreams even ... there is no time to live Life is to live and we need to find all the time for it.

Soul's Journey into Joy, of blissful merger in the Soul of the Universe, is possible with using a trident of love – love as everyone wants/needs to be loved; make each one feel s/he is important; and praise/appreciate each one and her/ his contribution as everyone needs appreciation. Use this trident and express it – liberally – verbally and non-verbally – thoughts, words and deeds. Show it. As Sriram says 'stab' with trishulam. What you get is not blood but love. And you journey into Joy.

In the confluence of the souls, we are in 'trishulayaanam' seeking and relishing saha-amritayogam to be in harmony with universal raas leela and sahathaandavam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentless focus on understanding co-existence through expression of love, importance and appreciation, for being in universal usefulness! Krishna confirms - any free soul that practices and pursues relentless devotion achieves knowledge of existence and being useful and sees direction for action, for being one viswaatma. Join us in the world of yoga – for the joyous co-existence of the innermost and viswaatama – towards saharaasathaandavayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

44. Remaining Relevant After 40

Yogakshemam June 2011

Welcome to Rains! They are still coming! Missed watching the longest lunar eclipse of the century directly because of the clouds! Had to be satisfied with seeing on the television!

We also miss Dr Raj Arole (Jamkhed fame)!

We await Doctors' Day (1 July), International Day of Cooperatives (2 July) and International Cooperative Day (7 July), Writers' Day (8 July) and World Population Day (11 July).

Still immersed in institutions of poor! Lost in the thought pursuit of reducing knowledge middlemen! Youth lens, knowledge workers and young professionals, community owned microfinance+, convergence, knowledge and learning channels are dominating our working space. Efforts towards writing the report of the working group of planning commission on National Rural Livelihoods Mission are still to pick up momentum.

Finally, National Rural Livelihoods Mission has been officially/formally launched nationally on 3 June 2011 at Banswara in the presence of more than 100,000 women. It was a small item in the media. We hope now it will pick up momentum in the country!

India Against Corruption campaign(s) are settling down! Sathya Sai Trust is cracking. Telangana is warming up for more fireworks in July. Chiranjeevi has quit cinema. UPA is planning a Cabinet reshuffle. IMF gets a new boss. Examinations are over and Counseling is due.

When you are almost out of 'life', the reflection, realization and rekindled wisdom makes you aware of what you are designed for and slows your flow and pushes you to intense pursuit towards the design! When the innermost in the design shows the design, there is no other way to be! When the early mentors, associates and co-travelers come back to you to reinforce the original design, there is no other way to be!

HelpAge India released a report "Elder abuse and crime in India" and it says - Nationally, daughter-in-law and son are the major abusers of the elderly. The forms of abuse include showing disrespect, verbal abuse (speaking loudly, using foul language, name calling, accusing and blaming), and physical abuse. Elders have accepted the abuse passively with 98% not registering the complaint.

Knowledge workers/activists in Development, Poverty Reduction, Livelihoods and Environment domain, I gather during the month, have to display a trinity of having the humility, knowing the elephant and silent gradual system change effort.

Penelope Trunk, gives tips for remaining relevant when we are over 40 - generally people hit a peak in fifteen years and payment for experience beyond fifteen years is not significant; therefore, to remain relevant and continue to increase our value, we have to learn skills outside of our past/present fields; these skills include – using social media including web presence and blogging and building community around us, processing and synthesizing information faster, better and in collaborative ways (remember that we are in the knowledge market), building bridges by working with wide range of people with wider set of skills and remaining in touch with them socially and professionally, managing our personal brand with a sense of who we are, what we do and what is unique about us and articulate, and committing to being open, life-long learning, quick adaptability to shifts in market and communicating the same.

Let us not forget that we are in the business of influencing the dynamic knowledge market (s).

When we are writing for action, there are few things that have to be kept in mind, I understand now (courtesy - David Silverman) –

- ☐ One paragraph, one point of view;

- ☒ One sentence, one idea;
- ☒ We have to tell the focus in the first sentence (or in the title or a subject line before the first sentence); People do not read but scan – therefore, easy to read titles, subject lines, headings, and bullet lists, are all helpful in getting across the message; and
- ☒ We have to say what we mean to say. We cannot expect anything to be inferred.

Soul's Flight towards blissful merger in the Soul of the Universe, is possible with the flight itself by leaving everything here and now. Like when you die. Leave things of the world to the world. Leave things of the journey to the journey. Forget what is right and what is wrong. Break free. Break free in the darkness. Break free from the veils, from the layers, from the chains and from the boxes. Leave everything aside and break free to fly off to be useful in thoughts, words and deeds. Then, what you have is joy. Joy is in flying and joy is in merger.

In the confluence of the souls, we are in 'vihangagamanam' seeking and relishing sahangamanayogam with prakriti.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentless focus on flying hand in hand, for being in universal usefulness! Krishna confirms - any flying soul that practices and pursues relentless flight becomes one with prakriti and joins viswaatma. Join us in the world of yoga – for the joyous flight of the innermost and viswaatama – towards prakritisangamayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

45. Imperatives' for being an Effective Transformational Leader

Yogakshemam July 2011

Rains finally come. They are still coming! UPA reshuffles Cabinets. Jairam Ramesh takes charge of Rural Development and Drinking Water. AP is back with T-agitation and United-agitation. Terror strikes in Maximum City. Counseling is in progress across. Anantha Padmanabha of Thiruvananthapuram emerges as the richest deity in the world. There was some activity for World Population Day (11 July).

Still lost in the institutions of the poor, knowledge assimilation and dissemination with reduced knowledge intermediaries! Working Group on National Rural Livelihoods Mission is also gaining momentum! Incidentally, Jairam Ramesh signed on the loan agreement with World Bank for National Rural Livelihoods Project (NRLP) that supports NRLM effort, on 18 July 2011. One more trigger for NRLM to gain momentum!

NSS 2009-10 confirms our worst fears. As a country, nearly half of our expenditure is on food. About 60% rural India spends less than Rs.1000 per month. 60% of this, i.e. Rs.600 is on food. The top 10% of the country spends 10 times the bottom 10%.

Interesting! It is a crime in our country to attempt to commit suicide. But, we can do fast unto death legally. Police Commissioners think we need permission to fast in public domain. Large number of us fast intermittently and many an ascetic keep on fasting. Many of our poor starve quite regularly. All of us do not take permission. If food security act comes in soon, is there a guarantee that no one starves and therefore, do we need permission to fast?

When you are down, all energy is sapped and finished, the reflection, realization and rekindled wisdom presents greatest original opportunities. As you get back, you slow down a bit and push yourself to intense pursuit towards these original opportunities! Therefore, original potential!

Livelihoods Knowledge workers/activists, I gather during the month, have to keep shifting between getting the work done and doing. Towards this dynamic shift, they need to have a way of reading the future at least to a limited extent. Gavin Edwards tells us with 'utter certainty' what the 21st century holds –

- ☒ We move in electric cars; we use male birth control pills; videophones replace normal phones;
- ☒ Rising oceans will make most coastal cities unlivable.
- ☒ Humans will walk on Mars, and on the moons of Jupiter and Saturn
- ☒ The human lifespan will double, at least.
- ☒ The American two-party system will collapse; political parties will have explicit corporate alliances.
- ☒ Nuclear weapons will be used in a Sino-Soviet conflict.
- ☒ We will bioengineer animals with the ability of human speech. They will have their own sitcoms.
- ☒ South Africa will emerge as a major world power.
- ☒ Teledildonics will be more popular than flesh-on-flesh sex.
- ☒ Humanity will not exterminate itself.

Interesting!

Linda Hill, discusses 'three imperatives' for being an effective transformational leader, which we can potentially become – manage yourself, manage your network, and manage your team; there is a need

for fundamental shift in the mindset that you are a network builder and cultivator than the doer; and this is a lengthy and difficult journey of unlearning, learning and change and it takes long time and great effort; new competencies need to be acquired such as how to coach people, how to give feedback, and how to set the direction and get people to execute that. Let us remind ourselves that we are in the business of transformation towards free open access knowledge marketplace.

Soul's blissful merger in the Soul of the Universe is possible and begins with the thoughts of intent - as these thoughts are expressed/ articulated in words and action leaving everything else here and now. Like when you dream in a sleep. Be in the dream. Be in the thought. Lose yourself in the thought. Then thought takes over. Dream takes over. It becomes words. It becomes actions. It becomes journey. It becomes flight. It becomes flow. It continues in merger and flow of usefulness. Direction of flow of usefulness is presented to you and you respond. You are guided all through. This is joy. This is bliss. Thought is joy. Joy is thought. Joy is in thinking. In the confluence of the souls, we are in 'sahaalochanapravaaham' seeking and relishing sangamaanantarasahapravaahayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentless devoted thought, for being in universal usefulness! Krishna confirms - any devoted thinking soul that thinks and pursues relentless thought attracts viswaatma to it. Join us in the world of yoga – for the joyous thoughts of the inner most and viswaatama – towards sahapravaahayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

46. Loss of Shashi Rajagopalan

Yogakshemam August 2011

Happy Independence!

Farmers are on crop holiday. Anna Hazare gets ready to fast on Lok Pal again. Sonia is recuperating from cancer surgery.

Hyderabad is now part of sixth zone, even for Police.

T-agitation and United-agitation are warming up.

There was a huge exchange of greetings for Friendship Day (30 July).

Still lost in the institutions of the poor, knowledge assimilation and dissemination with reduced knowledge intermediaries! Working Group on National Rural Livelihoods Mission is also gaining momentum! Incidentally, Jairam Ramesh signed on the loan agreement with World Bank for National Rural Livelihoods Project (NRLP) that supports NRLM effort, on 18 July 2011. One more trigger for NRLM to gain momentum!

We are in the month of Ramzan. Krishnaasthami and Ganesh are round the corner!

Yet we are down. Our Shashi Rajagopalan bids adieu to this world! She has been a mentor to many without her knowing (or saying!) it. She taught us the importance of crossing the 'it's and dotting the 'l's diligently! In her last known interview, she presses us to pursue 'collectives of the poor' with a mission and passion. Let us push ourselves! In our businesses of influence, in our efforts in the public domain, in our institutions that facilitate collectives, in our actions that demonstrate collectivism and through our co-workers and associates!

Working together and fighting with her in various efforts over thousands of hours have made us sharper and more insightful in the domain of member-owned and membercontrolled collectives, the Acts that facilitate them and their support institutions/organizations, particularly in the government and civil society arena.

Amidst all this, the entire month has been spent on consultations, reflections and articulation for way forward in rural livelihoods and rural livelihoods collectives in India.

Many of us think that we will never have enough time to do all the things we need to do/get done. Krishon Radhakrishna says, " ... there is all the time in the world if only we are stress free. .. the greatest achievements have often come from the simplest of ideas and in the simplest forms. To experience a simplified life, we first have to learn to slow down long enough to see through all the clutter. We need to realize that we are powerful magnets that attracted this life to ourselves - no matter what - good or bad. ...". If we simplify our lives, with less or no stress and complexity and anchored by a simple purpose of being useful, we give this world our greatest possible contribution.

I gather, during the month, children articulate love much better than the adults (courtesy – Prakash) - "*... love is what makes you smile when you are tired; ...love is kissing me to sleep at night ... love is to greet me first everyday ...love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day ... love is when you eyes brighten up ...*". Let us give, have and get this love.

Jeevan Vidya says – Understanding culminates in the point of enlightenment. We need to focus on understanding and expansion and enlightenment are natural and spontaneous.

Understanding requires abhyaas (practice, dedicated time with patience) of reflection upon listening, seeing, appreciating. What is understood needs to be manifest in one's living. This is possible in co-

existence with other life, people and realities. This begins when logic ends. Logic is incapable of grasping the wholeness. At this time, imagination comes to the fore. Resonance of imaginations of the teacher and the student as expanded by the teacher begins. It includes 'faith and assurance' that the imagination is worth pursuing, and 'listening' to unravel the imagination and 'imagination' going back and forth. As the practice goes on and the journey goes on, enlightenment dawns suddenly and spontaneously.

Then the self-driven living of the soul merged in the soul of the universe begins. Thus, the driver is the practice of living usefully as indented by 'life'. Rest follows in resonance. In the dreams, in the thoughts, in the words, in the actions and in the journey! It is the flight. It is the flow. It is the merged flow of usefulness. Resonance presents you direction and you respond. This is joy. This is bliss.

In the confluence of the souls, we are in 'abhyaaspravaham' seeking and relishing swachaalakajeevanayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentless dedicated practice of thought, word and action for being useful! Krishna confirms – viswaatma manifests in the soul in dedicated relentless pursuit of usefulness in thought, knowledge and action.

Join us in the world of yoga – for the resonance of coexistence the innermost and viswaatma – towards sakhyaapraanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

47. Pitfalls of Ineffective Managers

Yogakshemam September 2011

Lok Sabha passes a 'sense of House' resolution conceding 3 demands: Lokayukthas in all states; lower bureaucracy under Lokpal; and Citizen Charters after 13-day fast by Anna Hazare.

Of course, Durga Puja, Dusserah, and Deepavali are also awaited.

I think we continue to pursue ad infinitum the institutions of the poor and vulnerable, knowledge assimilation and dissemination with reduced knowledge intermediaries! Working Group on National Rural Livelihoods Mission is looking at the finer details of its report! Empowering women and women leaders without increasing their burden continues to engage us.

Amidst all this, the entire month has been spent on consultations, reflections and articulation for way forward. Yet we continue to be down. Manoharan is diagnosed stage 4, liver cancer and going through chemotherapy at CMC Vellore.

A bomb blast, an earthquake, 10 cm rain in a day and all in quick succession make you realize that Universe has her/ his way, once again! So much for our ability in pursuing our 'freedom' and 'independence'.

All this has taken me to Santi Mantra repeatedly –

AUM sarveshaam svastir bhavatu, sarveshaam saantir bhavatu
sarveshaam poornam bhavatu, sarveshaam mangalam bhavatu
sarve bhavantu sukhinah, sarve santu niraamayaah
sarve bhadraani pashyantu, maa kashchidh dukh bhaagbhavet

Let all have health, peace, completeness, wellbeing, happiness, beautiful vision, prosperity and no misery. Let there be peace.

This happiness comes from some silence, smiling, standing, walking and moving, sleeping, dreaming, staying in touch, spending time with old and children, lots of water and fibre, no gossip, forgetting and forgiving, being in the present, giving love and getting rid of all things that are not useful, beautiful and joyful within and around you.

Many of us in development work end up in spinal problems because we lead bad life style and have bad postures and long hours. Be careful. Exercise. Avoid stressful life. Maintain correct back posture. Have support to back as far as possible. Travel on road in small stretches of 1-2 hours in one go. Sleep on hard surface. Avoid sleeping on spring mattresses. Do not go for a thick pillow. Carry no weight or light weight. Avoid alcohol and smoking. Smile and Laugh. Show love and care and be in physical contact with the loved and the beloved.

I have heard about seven habits of highly ineffective managers –

1. Continually break the word;
2. Chastise employees publicly
3. Dig into private lives of employees and talk about them
4. Withhold positive feedback
5. Pretend all-knowing
6. Speak before listening

7. Be afraid of discipline and disciplining

We need to kick out these habits in us. Let us keep trying and kick them out. We also need to get self-discipline into us. Success is tons of discipline. *“Do what you should do, when you should do it, whether you feel like doing it or not.”* It is the only key to take charge of our life.

Then the self-disciplined living of the soul merged in the soul of the universe takes you ahead towards the intent of ‘life’ to living usefully. In the dreams, in the thoughts, in the words, in the actions and in the journey! It is the flight. It is the flow. It is the resonance of merged flow of usefulness. It offers direction and you respond. This is life. This is pure amritam. This is endless joy.

In the confluence of the souls, we are in ‘pravahamadhuram’ seeking and relishing madhuraamritayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentless dedicated focus on being useful! In waking hours! In sleeping hours! Krishna confirms – viswaatma manifests in the soul and directs it in being useful in thought, knowledge and action.

Join us in the world of yoga – for the joyous crescendo of co-existence the innermost and viswaatma – towards suddhamadhuraamritayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

48. Leadership

Yogakshemam October 2011

Vande Gandheyam! World Celebrates International Day of Non-Violence!

We see Elders' Melas all around!

Telangana people's stir is active now for more than 20 days.

Happy Durga Puja! Happy Dusserah! Happy Deepavali!

Let us remember all our 'teachers' again! How can we get tired of remembering them again and again?

We await International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction (12 October – Second Wednesday of October), International Day of Rural Women (15 October), World Food Day (16 October), International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October), United Nations Day (24 October), World Development Information Day (24 October), and World Freedom Day (9 November).

Ad Infinitum Pursuit of Collectivization and Knowledge Assimilation and Dissemination with reduced intermediary chain sums up our key focus! Empowering women and women leaders without increasing their burden continue to be our engagement now.

Earthquake in Sikkim caused devastation estimated to be more than Rs.100,000 Crore and Floods in Odisha and Bihar have effected more than 2 million people. Amidst all this, we discuss the 'poverty line' – can this be Rs.26/Rs.32 per day? Should not they be at least be twice these numbers?

As we got together on 2 October, we thought we should observe introspective silence of at least one minute, at least once in a day; we should write at least one page on topic/theme of interest every day; we should read at least one book a month; and we should be spending at least a day in a month in the field, with the poor.

As we realize that we have to do whatever we want to do right now, we need to learn to arrest procrastination. I gather some important tips/steps towards the same – have a clear vision/ picture of all that needs to be achieved and why so that you are convinced internally; learn to be more efficient with your time; keep detailed daily, weekly, monthly and beyond schedules and follow-up on them; change your ways so that you remain fit; become clear about consequences of the task and incorporate in the schedule; look at e-mails and messages in allocated times and reduce the number of distractions as much as possible; break tasks into manageable chunks so that you complete sub-tasks at one go; and finally starting is the most important thing and that drives so that you get moving. Moving is important.

To be in development, you need to be in leadership in some situation or the other. As Krish puts it – the quintessence of leadership is in letting it go. We are not in control while sleeping, while dreaming. Body functions on its own. As you relax, the body parts work. This is surrender. As you think and feel, body responds. Then the leader sets an example. Leader cares for others with him. Importantly, a leader creates leaders. A leader carries on without any need for authority or position. Challenges do not disturb the leader seriously. The leader stretches her/himself beyond the comfort zone. Leader should know when to use the head and when to use the heart, without mixing up both. Leader should have the ability to see multiple dimensions and get multiple views and information from multiple sources. Leader needs to communicate and articulate vision, plan and direction. Finally, a leader stops judging and surrenders.

As we lead our souls to merge in the soul of the universe, we lead ourselves towards the intent of 'life' of living usefully every time and everywhere. It is the surrender. It is the relaxed surface with flow beneath it. It is letting it go and it takes over. It gives pure 'sudha'. This is endless.

In the confluence of the souls, we are in 'jyothsnapravaham' seeking and relishing aakashasudhaayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Relentless dedicated effort to surrender in being useful! In trials and tribulations! In tiring and exciting minutes! Krishna confirms – viswaatma takes over when antaraatma surrenders towards being useful in thought, knowledge and action.

Join us in the world of yoga – for the joyous co-existence the innermost and viswaatma – towards ksheerasaagarasudhaayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

49. Laws of Excellence

Yogakshemam November 2011

We are now 7 billion. Let us welcome the 7 billionth baby (Nargis?) into this world!

Happy Winter! Happy Karthika! Happy Bakrid!

'Telangana' goes on. 42 days of strike by employees ends. An ex-minister is on an indefinite fast since 1 November. 97-year Konda Lakshman Babuji observes 7-day fast in New Delhi. Mayawati hints at splitting UP into 4 states.

Today is World Freedom Day (9 November). Where is the freedom? Freedom seems to be missing.

No respite from inflation and rising prices.

We await World Immunization Day (November 10), World Kindness Day (November 13), World Toilet Day (November 19), Universal Children's Day (November 20), World Hello and Television Day (November 21), International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3), International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development (December 5), International Day against Corruption (December 9) and Human Rights Day (December 10).

Ad Infinitum Pursuit of Collectivization, Knowledge Assimilation and Dissemination, Reduced Intermediary Chains, Equity and Empowerment and Care of the Vulnerable sums up our key focus! Larger outreach, Scaling-up, Empowering women leaders, Working on Producer-Consumer Value Chains, Young professionals, Distance learning and e-knowledge and e-accountability, apart from Livelihoods Management, are engaging us right now.

We continue to live our resolutions - observe introspective silence of at least one minute a day; write at least one page on topic/theme of interest every day; read at least one book a month; and spend at least a day in a month in the field, with the poor. It is exhilarating!

We miss Steve Jobs, a visionary of the world! In the words of his sister – *He worked at what he loved. He worked really hard. Everyday. Love was his supreme virtue. He lived simple. He was humble. He liked to keep learning. He treasured happiness. Death did not happen to him. He achieved it.*

I gather some principles to achieve success (and excellence) at work, in relationships and in prosperity – desire success; know what you want; do not give up; believe in yourself; do not stop learning; do what you love; and find happiness at every instance. Whatever we think, human mind works to make it real and return in kind.

Dr Henry Jekyll sums them up as '48 Laws of Excellence'. Select laws include –

Make Trustworthy Friends; Be Relentlessly Open About Your Intentions; Always Say Exactly Enough To Be Understood Perfectly; Cultivate Self-Discipline; Learn to Inspire Independence; Cultivate an Air of Dynamism; Commit to yourself; Do not Hide Your Talents/Gifts; Concentrate/Focus; Get Your Hands Dirty; Make Specific, Contingent Plans; Create Options; Discover Each Man's Excellence; Focus on Results, not on problems; Connect with Others; Accept help; and Claim Excellence, as it is your Birthright.

Steve Jobs again. He says: *You have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. Only way to do great work is to love what you do – keep looking until you find it. Do not settle. Have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Remembering that you are going to die soon helps to take right and big decisions. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.*

Frustration, depression, loneliness and boredom cannot drive life. Life is about discovering a new possibility in each moment. Its beauty is transforming the 'difficult' moments into small inspirations into

our life. The joy of life is in pursuing unleashing of the potential in every moment. The joy of life is in expressing love through acceptance of all that is, has been, will be and will not be.

As we pursue living in love with the soul of the universe, we live a 'life' of useful living every time and everywhere. In the confluence of the souls, we are in 'aksharakaarthikam' seeking and relishing amritadamodarayogarm.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Keep surrendering, with rejuvenated vigour, to being useful! Relentlessly! Till it becomes effortless! In getting dissolved together in practice of usefulness! Krishna confirms – antaraatma gets the 'charge' of leading viswaatma when antaraatma pursues usefulness in thought, knowledge and action.

Join us in the world of yoga – for the intense joy of togetherness of the innermost and viswaatma - towards aksharaamiritayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

50. We cannot Delegate Love and Care

Yogakshemam December 2011

'Telangana' status shows silence before the storm! No respite from inflation and rising prices.

Children's Day (14 November) passes! Child sex ratio has gone down to its lowest level since Independence – 914. Female feticides continue unabated.

Lost in watching Full Lunar Eclipse (10 December)!

Of course, we await Christmas, New Year and Pongal. We also want to remember Guru Gobind. Sat Sri Akal! Satyam Sivam Sundaram! Om sarvesham svastir bhavatu, santir bhavatu, purnam bhavatu, mangalam bhavatu! May health, peace, fullness and prosperity be unto all!

Collectivization, Institutions, Leadership and Governance, Value Chains, Vulnerabilities, Employment and Enterprises, Continuums, Contexts and Capitals, and Framework(s) sum up our key focus! Larger outreach, Scaling-up, Systems, Professionals (Community, Young and Senior), Distance learning and e-knowledge and e-accountability, apart from Livelihoods Management, continue to engage us now.

In an unusual book, 'Honey Money', Catherine Hakim discusses 'erotic capital' [comprising beauty, sexual attractiveness, social ability, liveliness (physical fitness, social energy and good humour), social presentation, sexual competence and fertility] and using it to meet the 'deficit'.

I gather some tips for being more productive/useful (courtesy – Ilya Pozin) – split the tasks to end results into smaller chunks that can be done in a few hours; stop switching from task-to-task quickly (not more than 4-5 tasks a day; men need to limit to even less number of tasks!); avoid distractions (be deliberate about this); schedule to see/use e-mails only 3-4 times a day; use phone to converse, rather than e-mail and sms; set agenda for the day before you sleep or immediately before starting the workday; and work in 60-90 minute slots.

As development/livelihoods workers and entrepreneurs, we need to be thankful to our customers; co-workers; opportunities to add value to people's lives; freedom for trying crazy things; patience and understanding of the people co-existing with you; payment to the value delivered; light at the end of the tunnel; freedom to change that is not working; acceptance of people around you of the job you have taken up; relentless pursuit under difficult circumstances and resource crunch; the failures and the successes; the pleasure of helping the co-workers; and the opportunities and chances to try, try and try.

Hiring new co-workers and associates is an important part of our work. Be sure to notice their work ethics, including how they use their time, attendance, timeliness, resource use and demands, assertion (quiet vs vociferous), gossiping, histrionics and living in the past and in the future, from day 1. If deviation is beyond reasonable limits, the de-hiring decision has to be taken immediately.

Obama said in 2005, "... You have a debt to those who helped you get here. ...You have an obligation to those who are less fortunate than you... Individual salvation has always depended on collective salvation... When you hitch your wagon to something larger ... you realize your true potential." So true!

I realize during the month - when someone asks about you although that person may be busy, be sure that someone loves you. Remember that we cannot delegate 'love and care'. It connects another being. It generates 'more for you is more for me' feeling. The sense of self expands to include other beings. Every being has a unique calling and this calling needs to be heard and acted upon. This requires managing the boundary, walking the talk, supporting in the moments that matter and integrity. It requires trust. Trust travels the fastest.

As we pursue living in high trust with the soul of the universe, we 'live' usefully. In the confluence of the souls, we are in 'anantam' seeking and relishing parasparadhyaanayogarm.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Be in the present. Surrender. Keep responding to the inner-calling for being useful! Relentlessly! Dissolve in the practice of usefulness! Krishna confirms – viswaatma takes in antaraatma and pursues usefulness in thought, knowledge and action for antaraatma.

Join us in the world of yoga – for the endless joy of indulgence of the innermost and viswaatma - towards anantayogasiddhi. You will not regret it. Forget not to try suryanamaskar, it helps.

51. Food as Medicine

Yogakshemam January 2012

'Telangana' drizzle is on again! Cold is high but short-lived!

Amidst winter solstice, New Year and makara sankranti, it has been a month of roller coaster ride, emotionally speaking! A young friend's spouse expired. A young colleague has been in hospital for a multi-organ failure, caused by blood poisoning. A friend is fighting the battle with milk. A friend's memorial lecture goes on for over 20 years. Severe viral fever grounds me for a week. Self-control to perform under duress/excitement has been hit. Deadlines have been extended. Efficiency levels have fallen dramatically. Irritations kept cropping up for something or the other. Memory has not helped. All suggestions for a slow down and transition to a new phase with a new pace(s). A couple of hearty and very very long talks with friends retain the sanity. Many more may be needed. It appears certainly onto a new way. A couple named their son. Neel is a good name.

Probably the first modern day Gurukulam of the country in the public domain – AP Residential School, Sarvail celebrates its Ruby Jubilee. This has led to multiple government residential schools for the talented in AP and the country, followed by Navodaya Vidyalayas and ashram schools all over the country. Between them, they produce 200,000 first class/distinction school graduates every year in the country. The model(s) practiced are time-tested and emulated all over.

Now, we await World Day of Social Justice (February 20), International Mother Language Day (February 21) and World Thinking Day (February 22). Of course, we know February 14 is Valentine's Day. Hope you had a good hug on January 21, World 'Hugging' Day.

Livelihoods beyond rural, Enterprises beyond individual, Institutions beyond savings and credit, Leadership beyond government, Value Chains beyond product, Vulnerabilities beyond nature, Employment beyond wage and job, Continuums beyond education, Contexts beyond ecological, Capitals beyond financial, and Frameworks beyond frames sum up our key focus! Larger outreach, scaling-up, deepening vulnerability, leadership, knowledge and learning management, and mentoring continue to engage us now.

Kushwant Singh gives eight focus areas for good life and happiness – good health, reasonable amounts of money for small pleasures of life, own home, understanding companion(s), lack of envy (avoid comparing with others), not allowing others to descend on you for gossip, fulfilling hobbies (rather than parties), and daily introspection and meditation.

Krish confirms that emotions are more powerful than thoughts and promises. All emotions are a result of a past or expectation of a future. When the mind is in the present, we can relish the emotions, rather than become their slaves. Let us get to the present and be there.

I gather that food serves as medicine -

- ☑ Eat ginger and garlic to fight cold, headache, inflammation, pain, and nausea
- ☑ Eat curd and honey to prevent fevers
- ☑ Drink Tea to build immunity and prevent fat deposits
- ☑ Eat honey to get good sleep
- ☑ Eat onions to fight asthma
- ☑ Eat banana to settle an upset stomach
- ☑ Eat pepper for coughs
- ☑ Eat cabbage to fight ulcers

- ☒ Eat peanuts to regulate blood sugar
- ☒ Eat kiwi, apple, orange, watermelon, strawberry, guava, papaya regularly to improve the immunity
- ☒ Eat tomato to prevent prostate problems

I realize during the month – surrender is the surest indicator of love with the trust and faith that love takes care of everything. Surrender to the world to respond to its biggest problems. Connect with the people working on big problems. Travel in search of solution to the big problems. Then our love helps us to be good at serving what the world needs. Be useful. Daily struggles define us and bring out the best in us to love. Surrender to being useful.

As we pursue surrender to the soul of the universe, we 'live' usefully. In the confluence of the souls, we are in 'saagaram' seeking and relishing sangamayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Surrender. Be in the Present. Be Useful! Reflect! Relentlessly! Krishna confirms – Surrender is the surest way to viswaatma taking over antaraatma. Join us in the world of yoga – for liberated happiness - towards saagarasangamayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

52. No is new Yes

Yogakshemam February 2012

Government announced Padma awards including in the 'development' area. These include: Satya Narayan Goenka (Padma Bhushan), Shamshad Begum, Reeta Devi, Dr PK Gopal, Phoolbasan Bai Yadav, Dr G Muniratnam, Niranjana Pandya, Dr Uma Tuli, Sat Paul Varma, Binny Yanga, YH Malegam, Pravin Parekh and Dr Kartikeya Sarabhai (all Padma Sri).

Elections are going on in 5 states. Union Government postpones introduction of budget in Parliament to March 16. However, many states are introducing budgets in their assemblies.

Telangana is warming up. This time, it is by-polls! It appears that the preparations for a transition into a new phase with a new pace are on. While I do not know what this phase is about and its pace, universe is conspiring and building a momentum in its characteristic ways.

Now, we await UN Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (Women's Day, 8 March), World Consumer Rights Day (15 March), International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March), World Water Day (22 March), World Meteorological Day (23 March) and International Day for Achievers (24 March).

Increasing the availability of information, knowledge, skills, tools, resources and support in the broad domain of livelihoods to the poor without unfair intermediaries sums up our key focus. Therefore, livelihoods everywhere, enterprises of every hue, institutions that meet every need, leadership in every situation, value-chains for every product and service, vulnerabilities however they exist, employment of every type, continuums in every aspect, contexts of every dimension, capitals of every variety, and learning of every kind are elements in our canvas! Larger reach (scale, breadth, and depth) drives us. Knowledge and learning management, professionals and mentoring continue to engage us.

Carpe Diem says – NO is a new yes. Most of us do acknowledge that back-to-back meetings, responding to email, or putting out fires etc., do not serve us well — personally or professionally. We seem to be prisoners of the urgent. We need to choose between yes and no many a time. Choosing requires reflection, reflection takes time. A 'no' uttered from the deepest conviction is better than a 'yes' merely uttered to please, or worse, to avoid trouble. Living in a world of relentless demands and infinite option would also mean deciding what to do less of, or to stop doing altogether. His four simple practices for a more intentional life -

1. *Schedule in anything that feels important, by building rituals.*
2. *Take stock of what has happened that day and decide the most important implementation intentions to be accomplished the next day.*
3. *Do the most important thing on the list of intentions during the high energy slot of the next day.*
4. *Take scheduled breaks for renewal during the day.*

I gather during the month that love benefits life and living physically and biologically through the release of dehydroepiandrosterone –

- ☒ *Reduces stress - a passionate relationship relieves tension, reduces negative energy, produces a sense of well being and helps to cope better in a stressful situation;*
- ☒ *Promotes mental health by calming the mind and body and improves memory recall;*
- ☒ *Develops more white blood cells and helps in killing cancerous cells;*
- ☒ *Reduces pain by activating the part of the brain that keeps pain under control;*

- ☒ *Improves blood circulation – by pounding faster than normal contributing to efficient working of all organs;*
- ☒ *Helps in living longer;*
- ☒ *Lowers blood pressure;*
- ☒ *Reduces risk of heart diseases – by expressing feelings of affection that lowers cholesterol levels;*
- ☒ *Lessens getting sick and heals faster; and*
- ☒ *Keeps younger*

I realize during the month that merger is the next step after surrender. When you merge with and become part of the universe of existence, Universe drives you to respond to its biggest needs. Then, you have no other existence beyond being useful. It begins with loving. Love is a skill set human beings develop and use through their own will. And it needs to be practiced.

Practice love. Love to surrender. Surrender to merge. Merge to continue being useful, to connect and to flow as one.

As we pursue merger in the soul of the universe, we 'live' usefully. In the confluence of the souls, we are 'ekam' seeking and relishing aikyayogarm.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Connect. Flow forever. Surrender and Merge. Reflect and be Useful! Relentlessly! Krishna confirms – bliss exists on all sides for those who are useful to the universe with thoughts, words and actions, free from desire and anger. Join us in the world of yoga – for life of bliss - towards viswaikyasiddhi. You will not regret it.

53. Strategic Skills in Leadership

Yogakshemam March 2012

Mixed Results in the elections in 5 states. A young Akhilesh takes charge in UP. UPA has become more tentative.

Rail and Main Budgets have been introduced in Parliament. Telangana is heating up. Suicides are back. Leaders that matter dodge and/or play a wait and watch game.

Life at large, Livelihoods, Leadership, Love, Learning and Linkages (6L) of/for/by the poor, individually, collectively and institutionally; and building individuals and institutions at various levels, of various hues and in various domains are the key foci of our work.

Every one of us are in leadership positions day-in and day-out. Leadership entails strategic thinking skills. I gather from Paul J. H. Schoemaker that these include –

- ☐ *Anticipate (vision beyond the focus and boundaries– peripheral vision);*
- ☐ *Think critically to dig deep to the root and challenging mindsets and beliefs;*
- ☐ *Interpret by seeking patterns and testing multiple hypotheses;*
- ☐ *Decide even with incomplete information and diverse views, without being a victim of analysis paralysis;*
- ☐ *Align and follow through to build necessary support;*
- ☐ *De-learn and learn by encouraging honest and rigorous feedback and celebrating success and failures.*

According to Damiana Bazadona, most of the successful leaders surround themselves with smart people; demand accountability; connect emotionally with people; inspire people with vision and confidence; present and fully engaged with people when with people; are inherently optimistic. Further I gather from Jeff Haden – they ignore job descriptions; are eccentric to stretch boundaries and challenge the status quo; fit seamlessly into teams when warranted; recognize others' contribution; tackle sensitive issues privately; bring important issues to the fore; have deeper drive; and keep improving the processes.

We also need to be aware of the negative people in our lives. They need to be dealt with. Notice them; Understand sources of their negativity; remain completely detached; ask for something positive; see them as the opportunities to grow; and analyze the feelings and causes so that you remain immune.

Let us be aware of the facts about us, I have chanced upon during the month –

- ☐ We miss small changes (inattention blindness);
- ☐ We can remember only 3 to 4 things at a time;
- ☐ We make most of our decisions unconsciously;
- ☐ We can't multi-task;
- ☐ We are addicted to seeking information;
- ☐ We have close ties with not more than 150 persons;
- ☐ Activities in sync bond people;
- ☐ We need information coming in bits and pieces;
- ☐ Nobody chooses tougher means to achieve the same end;
- ☐ Even the illusion of progress inspires;
- ☐ Our minds wander about 30% of the time.

We are still coping with shock and grief. Manoharan has succumbed to liver cancer finally on 27 February at Gudalur. We remain committed to carry on. He would not like us to stop doing whatever we are doing and carrying on. May be we should add more to what we do. More intensity, more quality and more significance! Can we think of supporting young men and women coming into development with a scholarship? Can we think of adopting villages, families, children, schools...? Can we come together every year? Can we put together the work at various places for us to learn and appreciate? Can we have a video? Can we have a film? Can we run 'musings' or run the blog?

I realize during the month that there is no other existence beyond being useful. Pursuit achieves it. Spiritual partnership with the universe guarantees this. Partnership requires practice to connect and flow as one.

As we partner with the soul of the universe, we 'remain' useful. In the universe taking over, we dissolve in it and naranaaraayanayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. Partner and Practice to remain in partnership, for reflection and being useful! Relentlessly! Krishna confirms – nara, the free agent, with thoughts, words and actions for usefulness and liberation, enveloped by naaraayana on all sides, will remain forever useful and be liberated.

Join us in the world of yoga – for shared life of bliss - towards yogayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

54. Influencing Oneself before Influencing Others

Yogakshemam April 2012

Sachin, Rekha and Anu Aga have been nominated to Rajyasabha. First Colloquium towards Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation that catalyses civil society action in the country is just concluded.

6L of/for/by the poor, individually, collectively and institutionally; and building individuals and institutions at various levels, of various hues and in various domains remain the key foci of our work. Commitment, Courage, Compassion and Communication are the key drivers.

We are in the business of influence. Then that should be the highest priority. This begins with influencing oneself first. I understand from Gary Zukav, this comes with complete commitment to this change.

- ☒ Paying attention to emotions, thoughts, and intentions is critical because they influence what we are, what we say and what we do.
- ☒ If we watch our behavior and reactions day-in and day-out, we learn about ourselves for influencing ourselves.
- ☒ Of course, we need to have the courage to take responsibility for all our feelings, experiences and actions.
- ☒ We need to practice integrity at all times.
- ☒ We need to learn to release any distance from anyone and be present.
- ☒ By consulting intuition and choosing intention first, we need to take next steps, trusting the universe.
- ☒ And we need to enjoy life.

Jerry Rao says the common mistake we make is - being in a hurry - quick resolutions, quick answers, and quick fulfillments. We need to pursue patience. Lack of patience often precipitates to crises, which can be avoided. Remember doing right thing also requires a knack. His lessons for us include –

- ☒ Write well (we cannot be good managers if we cannot write well);
- ☒ Speak up (we cannot be silent for long);
- ☒ Intelligence is not everything; Character, communication, friendliness and lateral networking are equally important, if not more;
- ☒ Do not pursue what is the most fashionable; Look at something that is contra-intuitive;
- ☒ It is important to be useful while trying to do something different; Be the best in the field you have chosen;
- ☒ Acquire broader-skills; We have to learn how to learn; We must know how to unlearn a particular thing quickly, given the need; and
- ☒ Remember this skill of learning how to learn takes time – 20 to 30 years. If we do learn this skill really, we are going to do well in life.

Networking is crucial for a development worker. It is about mutual give and take. But we need to be careful about the members of our network. According to Dan Schawbel, we need to scan our networks for three types of people and if we spot one, we need to get rid of them from our networks. They include – the users (they always seek and take, they do not give); the backstabbers (they lead us up the garden path and let us fall; we need to listen to others in the network before we become sure); and the

sketchballs (truly unreliable people – we cannot be in their company, they tarnish our image too and they can take us down)

Life goes on, without Manohoran physically with us. He is in our minds, thoughts and actions more than ever now. He is there on the earth. He is in the air. He is in the water. He is in the fire and he is in the sky. He is in the Panchabhutas that love us and make us live.

As Cumulonimbus rains in Delhi recently played havoc with the flight I was in and as a creepy 'insect' in Bihar crawled on the eye, ear, neck and the back to make you numb for more than 3 days, I realize there is no existence beyond usefulness now. I also realize, thanks to Krish, that love is the highest power we possess to be in complete harmony with the law of life. The more we love, the greater power we feel. Love makes our lives incredible, magnificent, joyous and harmonious. Love is in giving and in being useful. This needs to be pursued. Practice and pursuit of spiritual partnership with the universe guarantees this. Connecting and flowing as one is penultimate process before one becomes one with the one.

As we connect and flow with the soul of the universe, we give and love to be useful. In the love of the universe, we float and relish viswasaakshatkarayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we learn to love fully with dedication, determination and discipline; practice relentlessly with concentration; and reflect, earn the ability and give the universe what it needs without it asking! Krishna confirms – love with thoughts, words and actions are the surest way to the universe in its glorious whole.

Join us in the world of yoga – for love of life and blissful life of love - towards viswasaayujyayogayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

55. Hiring People

Yogaskhemam May 2012

Happy Mothers' Day! Happy Budhdha Purnima! Let us celebrate Budhdha! Let us celebrate 100 years of Gurudev Rabindranath! Whatever you want to say, he has already said. Let us read and reflect Gitanjali again and again.

Anand continues his reign on world chess. Fifth time around!

6L – life, livelihoods, leadership, linkages, learning and love - of/for/by the poor, individually, collectively and institutionally at various levels, of various hues and in various domains remain the key foci of our work. Notebook of Process, Jeevan Vidya, Celebrating Life with Wisdom, Flowing with Universe ... are taking us forward.

Leslie Perlow suggests that most of us do not actually work but monitor our work most of the time. We do not have any predictable time offs. We end up having ad hoc offs, sometimes plain exhaustion. Thus, while we seek control over time, we end up having no time to control. Planning is the way out. Let us take small steps – take half-a- day off a week; daily individual plans and weekly plans with partners/team; and build covers for one another, in case of absence. They work.

We, in the business of influence, are vindicated once again. We need information/knowledge channel which authentic, pro-poor and simple to serve various needs of the poor as directly as possible. And this is feasible and possible. Ranganath could start a 'Public TV' with about Rs.100 million by cutting capital and operational costs, in March 2012 from Bengaluru. We need an English Channel and Portal for the development fraternity and other stakeholders and we need local channels and portals for the community professionals and the poor themselves. Public TV launch endorses that this is feasible, possible, and sustainable. And we are already convinced that this is useful. Let us get going on this.

I gather during the month that we in the business of influence are like teachers with long-lasting impacts on the lives of the students. The teachers inspire the students towards greatness. To influence successfully -

- ☐ One needs to engage and hold the attention of the people
- ☐ One needs to have clear objectives
- ☐ One needs to be disciplined and have the skills to promote positive behavior
- ☐ One needs to listen to the people and respond
- ☐ One needs to engage other stakeholders so that they will not come in the way of learning of the primary stakeholders
- ☐ One needs to be available
- ☐ One needs have faith in the capacity of the people and work to unleash this capacity
- ☐ One needs to know their requirement, aptitude and standards
- ☐ One needs to have thorough knowledge in the matter and have enthusiasm for the issue
- ☐ One needs to be passionate and excited about influencing and working with them
- ☐ One needs to have strong rapport, trust and lasting relationships with them

Let us hope to be influencers with teacher's competencies and qualities.

As Mohit Chandra says, we look for the following common key attributes while we hire people to work with us –

- ☒ 3R skills - read, write and arithmetic; and speak fluently (English);
- ☒ 'Jugaad' - good at Problem solving, thinking outside the box and seeking new ways of doing things;
- ☒ Engaging deeply and seek clarifications;
- ☒ Hunger for Learning, de-learning and re-learning; and
- ☒ Professional and ethical.

Good life and fit life is needed for people in the business of working with others. I gather, apart from keeping calorie consumption and saturated fat intake down, eating plenty of wholegrain, fresh fruits and vegetables; and cutting down on salt and sugar, there are specific foods that help. These include – Avocado (blood pressure management), Ginger (digestion and blood circulation), Cruciferous vegetables (cabbage, cauliflower, radish etc., fighting toxins), brown rice (increases calorie availability through the day), soya (protein nutrition), garlic (blood thinning), nuts (minerals and immunity), berries and watermelon (antioxidants, vitamins), and water (at least 4 litres) & other liquids. These also help in aging slowly.

Life goes on. We are beginning the process of reflecting on 25 years of Manoharan in Development and the years that ushered him into these 25 years. Can I expect all his associates to send in their reflection on Mano and their association in the coming days? As I reflect on Manoharan, family and friends apart, IRMA and Dairy Board fraternity comes in. Girijan fraternity comes in. A Anuradha comes in. ACCORD fraternity comes in.

Satish's advice to Annie – go when and where you were needed and be there – translates as 'be useful' for us.

Being useful is a demonstration of the love, the highest 'sastra' you have, in life, life of the universe. Sastra needs to be used and use of the sastra needs to be practiced with ability and will. As we learn and acquire ability and taste for 'use', we pursue learn, practice and use ad infinitum. That is joyous unending celebration of life. As we flow in, the universe joins in our flow and becomes one with us as aanandapravaahayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue usefulness to this universe relentlessly with concentration! Krishna confirms – universe has a plan for all free souls to flow with it if only they are committed and interested and show their commitment in thoughts, words and actions.

Join us in the world of yoga – for acquiring the sastras of love for useful and blissful life - towards viswavivekayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

56. Traits to be cultivated in Leadership

Yogakshemam June 2012

Happy Transition from summer to Monsoon! Happy Fathers' Day!

Let us celebrate childhood, children, music, service and public service! Let us remain available to give blood when someone needs.

Let us remain committed to maintain, if not better' the integrity of the World Environment. Let us fight ongoing desertification and denudation. Let us fight drought.

Let us celebrate 'satyameva jayathe'!

Pranab gets ready to be President of India!

7i – insights, ideas, initiatives, instruments, interventions, individuals and institutions towards 7L – life, living, livelihoods, linkages, leadership, learning and love - remain the key foci of our work.

As we celebrate International Day and Week of Cooperation, let us accept Co-existence, Cooperation, Collectivization, Collaboration and Convergence becoming our ways of life. Let us celebrate and spread the spirit of Amul.

It is important to be effective. Efficiency, consistency and quality may add to this. Harnoor Channi-Tiwary suggests some tips to be effective - *be punctual - reach office/meetings before time, not linking with staying late; make a to-do list of big and small tasks and execute; set expectations early; look the part - appropriate to the setting/environment; learn to say 'no' – without rejecting greater work challenges; be in the orchestra, not solo; and share the log sheet of self-rated progress and way forward.*

I gather during the month that we in the business of influence are like entrepreneurs impacting the society in general and the poor and the workers working with the poor in particular. The entrepreneurs pursue relentlessly. To pursue influence successfully – looking out for new interesting ways/instruments/ideas for influence – meeting people from a variety of walks of life; moving beyond criticism and failures – stubborn in pursuit without giving up; working with people complementing one's abilities – no point in having all people with same skills; scaling up in multiple ways – using technology, people, processes, institutional models, dissemination etc.; and keep updating oneself with changes and developments all around – networking, learning and being in the loop. Let us hope to be influencers with entrepreneurial competencies and qualities. Let us remember that funding for the ideas starts with friends and family first. To be more effective seek exposure, teachers/mentors, wider networking, long-term perspective and big picture, low cost methods and simple life.

Of course, leadership is important in the business of influence. Ginka Toegel and Jean-LOusi Barsoux discuss the Big Five clusters of traits (across times, contexts and cultures) that need to be cultivated to be in leadership –

1. Stability (play of emotional stability and impatience);
2. Extraversion (play of assertion and introspection, individual and social);
3. Openness (play of focused innovation and respect for tradition/practice);
4. Agreeableness (play of getting along with others/considerate, trust and rationale/logic); and
5. Conscientiousness (play of thorough analysis and gut feeling)

The most effective leaders are self-aware on where they stand on these Big Five and their idiosyncrasies. Feedback from others augments this self-awareness. They realize that they cannot succeed in multiple roles equally. They have had to work on themselves in order to manage or tone down traits that limit their usefulness or effectiveness. This required hard work and introspection. They need to invest in

developing one's coaching skills. They need to find colleagues who complement them. Finally, they need to adapt to changing situations and contexts with a short notice. As my student, Hussain, confirms – they can do so if they can 'love' whom they are leading.

As we live, lead and are led, let us appreciate – no one has the responsibility of treating us well; no one and nothing is indispensable; life is short; if the loved one leaves us, time will wash away its aches and sadness; whatever knowledge gained is a weapon in life; becoming responsible for one's decisions and their consequences; honoring one's word is important but not expecting others to honor theirs; there are no free lunches; and time together is a treasure to be treasured.

And life goes on. A young intern, Vaishnavi has taken the task of putting together some early reflections on 25 years of Manoharan's Development Odyssey. Of course, we need to enrich it and take this forward.

Living being useful is a demonstration of the love, the highest 'end' we have. Means is the end and end is the means. This needs to be practiced, with will; and with skill. As we exercise the power ad infinitum to use the skill with will, we lose ourselves in a growing virtuous web of blissful endless flowing celebration of life, the life of the universe. This is yoganantaanandam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue our power to be useful with willingness and mastery of skills relentlessly with concentration! Krishna confirms – universe has a plan to take these free souls into it.

Join us in the world of yoga – for acquiring the power of love for living being useful - towards viswasakthiyogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

57. Influencing

Yogakshemam July 2012

Monsoon is inching forward with reluctance! Floods in Assam, Drought in the country!!!

Hope all of us had the 'grace' of the Guru, Jagadguru! Happy Gurupurnima!

Let the tribe of writers (articulators) with authentic experiential and rational knowledge flourish!

Let us value friendships, friendships that lasted! Let us value life, the life ecosystem! Let us find ways to stabilize the life and population!

Let us pay back to the original inhabitants for letting us co-exist with them! Let the baton pass to the enlightened and empowered young generation!

Let us remember Mandela!

Rest in peace: Rustom-e-Hind, Super Hero Dara Singh; Super Star Rajesh Khanna, Writer of '7 Habits', Stephen Covey. Let us not forget his seventh habit – 'sharpen the axe'.

Pranab is almost there amidst mild controversies! Ansari is sure to be re-elected!

Our focus on 7i for 7L has taken us to appreciate the essence of Ls during the month, most of the time. *However, attending half-day Life Enrichment Seminar – An Eye on 'I', led by Sri Ramhas reinforced my transition and transformation thoughts. Visit www.yogapranam.com.*

During the month, I gather the key to going forward in the business of influence from Dr Cheema. These include: *being up-to-date with eye on detail; exploring; get going despite failures and criticisms; extending oneself with supplementary and complementary resources and forces; and reaching out to more and more in multiple ways.*

Jeff Haden stresses on beliefs that matter to influence and succeed -

'I fill time' - impose will on the time

'I choose people to be with' - attract people with the work

'I contribute daily' – past contribution is a past contribution

'I add value' – results, not experience; actions are louder than descriptive adjectives

'Failure is mine' – own failure and take responsibility

'I volunteer' – take opportunities to act

'I do what is required' – respond to the needs

'I can be told what is to be done' – clients have the rights

'I walk the extra mile' – even if it is lonely up there

Be early. Stay late. Make the extra phone call. Send the extra email. Do the extra research. Don't wait to be asked; offer.

People in the business of influence need charisma and Sivakumar shared the good news that charisma is learnable and cultivatable. John Antonakis, Marika Fenley, and Sue Liechti wrote in 'Learning Charisma' – Charismatic Leadership Tactics, CLTs need to be studied, religiously practiced and deployed with care. Charisma involves powerful and reasoned rhetoric, personal and moral credibility, and arousing emotions and passions. It helps to connect, compare and contrast; it engages the group and distills the messages; it shows integrity, authority and passion; and it expresses with voice, face and body.

12 most universal, effective and important CLTs identified include 9 verbal and 3 nonverbal –

verbal: metaphors, similes, and analogies; stories and anecdotes; contrasts; rhetorical questions; three-part lists; expressions of moral conviction; reflections of the group's sentiments; the setting of high goals; and conveying confidence that they can be achieved;

Nonverbal: animated voice, facial expressions, and gestures.

The way forward is lots and lots of preparation, disciplined practice and working out appropriate combinations over a long period of time.

Olivia Fox Cabane discusses Charisma Myth and concludes - it is a learnable set of social skills; there is no one form of charisma. There are various styles of charisma (visionary, focus and warmth, intelligence, authority, kindness). It is not possible to fake charisma because it is not possible to fake charismatic body language and micro-facial expressions. With practice one can achieve one or more styles of charisma and lead.

As we live, lead and are led, let us appreciate – while we are important, we are a short-lived insignificant speck in this universe; we are part of a symbiotic universe and our existence is a function of existence of and dependence on other animate/inanimate objects; there is diversity and existential equity around us everywhere; our present/potential achievement is infinitesimally small vis-à-vis what we have been 'graced' with; what we have including knowledge is merely with us as its trustees for the time being to be shared with all; 'I' of life resists surrendering to the universe's infinite intelligence and humility helps in flowing with it; and living with and loving all life and nature, apart from intense reflection, is a way to above appreciation.

And the appreciation has to go on. As we appreciate, we seek joy, expansion and spread of joy and celebration of life and spread and expanded joy in life.

Seeking eternal celebration of life is the highest 'end' we have. Untiring reflecting on this appreciation is the means to this 'end'. This needs to be practiced, with will, to take this cerebral consciousness through emotional consciousness to biological consciousness. Slowly we lose ourselves in blissful endless flowing celebration of life, the life of the universe.

This is aanandaviswaatmasaakshatkaarayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue relentless 'reflection' of life, all lives and universe, with concentration! Day-in and day-out! With appreciation! Improving appreciation and consciousness with more inner and outer exposure, exploration and living with all 'life' and nature with all love. Krishna confirms – universe takes the free soul to flow with it, without seeking.

Join us in the world of yoga – for celebrating life with love - towards viswaanandayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

58. Truisms

Yogakshemam August 2012

Amidst floods here and there, drought in the country!

Olympics 2012 end. We could get 2 Silvers and 4 Bronzes!

Let the humanity, humanitarianism and the will and the rule of the people triumph! Let simple living be the new world fashion!

Let us remember and honour all our teachers! Let there be no illiterates and digital illiterates amongst us!

Our focus on 7i for 7L has taken us to appreciate the essence of Ls during the month, most of the time. Satyameva Jayathe's 13 episodes end. But, it reminds us again the need for a channel dedicated to aam admi's needs.

Till Roenneberg, in his book, "Internal Time: Chronotypes, Social Jet Lag, and Why You're So Tired" confirms that each of us has our own internal biological timing and there can be a disconnect between the biological time and social time, causing social jet lag. Our performance peaks/optimizes when our biological time and social time are in sync. A 20-30 minute walk in the open helps in compressing/expanding the biological time. Aligning social time with biological time helps. This should be our goal.

During the month, Steve Tobak presented 'truisms' that need to be appreciated by all of us who 'manage' –

- ☒ *Neither strategy nor execution works without the other;*
- ☒ *Belief in us matters;*
- ☒ *Beginning matters - all empires have humble beginnings;*
- ☒ *Working on weaknesses is the key for way forward;*
- ☒ *We need to get going without waiting for all the answers (this is almost an impossibility);*
- ☒ *It is important to know when to analyze and when to act;*
- ☒ *Delivery is more important than intentions;*
- ☒ *Let us not take ourselves too seriously;*
- ☒ *There are no excuses when the buck stops;*
- ☒ *Listening is more important than talking;*
- ☒ *We get what we pay for; adapting quickly brings success;*
- ☒ *Saying sorry and making up is fine; and*
- ☒ *We thrive when our problem discoverers feel empowered to find solutions*

Alok Kejriwal has also listed his learning's working in 'Marwari Business School' (with his father) for becoming an entrepreneur: bottom line - money; creative accounting; living the trust; waiting and watching; adjusting attitude; rewards from risks; and constant process innovation.

Only happy people can help others. Happiness is in helping and influencing. Rekha Shetty in 'Innovate Happily' tells us Mantras for increasing Happiness Quotient in us – *ask questions; analyze men, material, machines, methods, market and money for all problems; join in solving everyone's problem; appreciate that everything is changing, momentary and unpredictable; do not be in a hurry; transformation is the*

key in this world; know that you are not in-charge of this Universe; wisdom of the elders is valuable; and restating the problems opens up new possibilities and improved solutions.

Again, I have got an endorsement this month, this time from Jeevan Vidya – happiness is not a function of the result, and rather happiness is in the act of doing itself. As we pay attention to the reality, we understand the laws of our existence. Then, we do, whatever we do, with happiness.

If we do things for happiness, we get into frustrated expectations, stress and unhappiness. Peter Bregman confirms this. The way out is - change the reality (may create stress); change the expectations (may be tough); and get a perspective. If the worst that can happen is 10, the value of this frustration may be 1, 2 and so on? Then, it is not worth a bother. It can become a pleasant surprise as a bonus.

Dr Jandhyala tells us to go through an enjoyable process of eating healthy – *1500 calories diet with less than 50% carbohydrates/sugars, rest unsaturated fats and proteins, for sedentary workers.*

Kyle Wiens underscores the importance of writing correctly if we are in the business of influence. Spellings and grammar add to our credibility in all our writings, e-writings, blogs, posts, e-mails, material on the websites etc. Here, only our words speak. They project us in our physical absence. And, people judge us by them. If someone cannot write daily use small words and phrases correctly, after many of years of exposure to them, her/his learning curve is not OK for us in the business of influence. Devil is in the details. And if someone who does not care about the nitty-gritty details, s/he cannot make a grade in our business.

By being in business of influence, we take 'leadership' role. Dave Logan emphasizes that *the leadership is a virtuous cycle of growing people's aspirations; demanding results consistent with aspirations; and using results to further expanding the aspirations. Neither living in the world of aspirations (vision) nor living in the reality would work. The leaders need to deal in both the worlds and build a bridge between the two worlds.*

As we live the virtuous cycle of leadership, let us appreciate that we need at least three mentors – one for immediate agenda; one for medium-term, say five years; and one for long-term. Let us have them! Let us also appreciate that we achieve almost nothing alone. We need inspirers/ instigators, motivators/cheer leaders, rationale builders/devil's advocates, taskmasters/in-charges, networkers/connectors, and gurus/mentors/heroes.

As we appreciate, we seek joy in living, spreading joy and celebrating life. Reflecting on what we are blessed with and giving this 'bounty' to others is joyous. This needs to be practiced, with will to synchronize our external, cerebral, emotional and biological times, needs, and consciousness. We melt into the flows of the universe. This is viswatrivenisangamayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue relentless celebration of life with love, day-in and day-out! If we spread celebration to all 'life' and 'nature'! Krishna confirms – celebration is surrender and universe takes the free soul in its flow, without seeking.

Join us in the world of yoga – for celebration of life and love – towards sahapravaahaanandayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

59. Dr Verghese Kurien-He too had a Dream

Yogakshemam September 2012

Rest in Peace Konda Laxman Bapuji! Welcome back, Yuvraj!

Felt like an orphan at once on one hand, and felt more determined on the other hand. Of the farmers, by the farmers and for the farmers, Dr Verghese Kurien, 26 November 1921 – 09 September 2012, rest in peace! I am still humbled, intrigued yet inspired by your subtle ways of mentoring young persons. 2 years of your inspiration in IRMA and 3 years of working with you in Dairy Board and Brains Trust in the early days of my work made all the difference in life. I do not know for sure whether you have realized this. Then again, another 2 years with Tree Growers later when you were around, your inspiring presence has been felt acutely.

As 'corruption' appears to be the way for 'success', you persisted with INTEGRITY. As 'compromise' appears to be the driver today, you persisted with straight talk.

Master of L1, L2 and L3 [*L1: Life, Living and Livelihoods; L2: Linkages; L3: Leadership, Learning and Love*], Kurien made a difference to the lives of the poor on a large scale in the aspects that make a crucial difference to them. He went on to influence I1, I2 and I3 [*I1: insights; I2: ideas, innovations, initiatives and interventions; I3: individuals and institutions*] for over six decades. So much for his competencies - tenacity, patient impatience, self-control and concern with impact!

Surely, he got the initiation from Tribhuvan Kaka in the beginning and Shastriji later. Surely, he got the support of his friends and relatives – Dalaya, Ravi Mathai, HM Patel et al, apart from Ms. Molly Kurien. Surely, he got able lieutenants – Jhala, Aneja, Ms.Patel, Shailendra, Punjarath, Chothani etc., in Dairy Board, Kamaladevi, Haldipur, Tushar in IRMA, Bakshi, Vyas etc., in Amul and GCMMF. Surely, he could draw attention of the powers of the day. Surely, Michael Halse and Tom Carter could write good conceptual notes for him. But, he could start almost from the scratch to build the national/global institutional architecture with multiple nested institutions in milk, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables, trees and commons, salt, electricity and so on.

Of about 50 million dairy farmers, some 13 million farmers could be collectivized in 130,000 cooperatives and 175 unions (Anand Pattern). Some 2-3 million could also be collectivized outside Anand Pattern. India became self-reliant in milk, producing more than 125 Million Tons per annum (or 290 gms/day per capita availability) from a mere 20 Million Tons per annum in 60s. Milk cooperatives could get a 6.5% share of this milk from about 30% of the farmers. Another 5 million other farmers could be collectivized around other commodities.

In the process, he could work with a variety of institutional forms – cooperative – first, second, third and fourth tiers, company - private limited and public limited, society, trust, government corporation, institution under Parliament, informal associations and panels, multi-state cooperative, etc. But, he remained a paid servant/representative of the farmers till the very end! He was the founder chairman of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation since 1973 for 33 years. GCMMF and AMUL have achieved business turnovers exceeding Rs.10,000 Crore/year now. He was the founder chairman of National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India for over 30 years. He received numerous awards including Padma Vibhushan and World Food Prize. He was also appointed Chancellor of Allahabad University in 2006. Bharat Ratna has evaded him though. Milkman of India, Father of White Revolution and People's Chairman remain his popular titles.

I had the privilege of working with him and being mentored by him and his lieutenant Dr RP Aneja during 1989-92, early in my development work, as part of the core team on Market Intervention Operation in edible oilseeds and oils in NDDB and in Brains-trust in IRMA. My dear friend, who

succumbed to cancer earlier in the year, Manoharan have been the co-mentees. Also, I had the privilege of working in and knowing many of these institutions facilitated/inspired by him starting with Amul and IRMA. These include Dairy Board, NTGCF, FES, HPCL, IDMC, Tribhuvandas Foundation, Milk Cooperatives, Union and Federations across the country, NCDFI, Operation Flood, Mother Dairies, Technology Mission on Dairy Development, Operation Golden flow, Oilseeds cooperatives, unions and federations across the country, HOGA, Bhavnagar Vegetable Products, DHARA Vegetable Oil Company, Technology Mission on Oilseeds, Cooperative Initiative Panel, Indian Immunologicals, Sabarmati Ashram Gaushala, Bidaj Farm, Neem Biocide Plant, Anandalaya, Vidya Dairy, Sugam Dairy, Sabarmati Salt Farmers, DaCunha Associates, Indian Dairy Association, so on. The famous brands we know include – AMUL, Amulya, Amulspray, Vijaya, Nandini, Aavin, DHARA, Lokdhara, Mother Dairy, SAFAL, etc.

He instilled in us the faith in the capacity of people and therefore hope in livelihoods enhancement, poverty reduction and people's prosperity. This hope would be greatly facilitated through collectivization and sustained collective action and on scale. Institutions, internal animation and external facilitation would ensure this. Working on the ecosystem and convergence for rights, entitlements and services could not be ignored. Building on the existing first and market first are the mantras he asked us to meditate on. Providing fish, giving fishing skills and teaching meta-fishing all in quick succession are important for people's prosperity. He has asked us to be human and humane. He showed us the way of love. He demonstrated and drilled in us the faith in cooperation and provided us with the spirit and the logic cooperation to go ahead and go on. He taught us - Integration, Systems Orientation, Going lateral, Unlearning and learning, Shared vision, Integrity, Discipline, Rigor, Homework, Direct articulation and to the point as quickly as possible but strategic, Listening to the unheard, Patient impatience, Spotting the talent, Mentoring etc. He mentored us in 'anyway' – "... *Give the world your best anyway*".

As we appreciate 'anyway', we seek joy in celebrating co-existence. With spirit, experience, knowledge and action in being useful with your true and full potential to all 'life; we melt into the flows of the universe. This is trikaranasahayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue relentless 'anyway'! Krishna confirms – keep going and universe takes the free soul along.

Join us in the world of yoga – for celebration of love – towards nijakarmayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

60. Bapuji; Loss of Acharya Konda Laxman Bapuji

Yogakshemam October 2012

*Happy Freedom! Hope we have all freedoms, including freedom of peace, knowledge and mental health!
Happy Tourism!*

Happy Hearts! Happy Helping! Happy Smiles! Happy Humane! Happy Elders! Happy Teachers again!

Happy Biodiversity! Happy Habitat! Happy Vegetarianism! Happy Ahimsa! Happy Animals!

Let us remember Shastri and Gandhi on their birthday – 2 October 2012.

Gandhi remains an inspiration to the world. His ways could not be ignored by any one. His 11 vows prayer, which was our prayer in our Sarvail Gurukulam in the early morning still rings in my head - *Ahimsa (nonviolence), Satya (truth/integrity), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (self-discipline), Aparigraha (non-possession), Sharirshrama (physical labour), Aswada (control of the palate), Sarvatra Bhayavarjana (fearlessness), Sarva Dharma Samanvatva (equality of all religions), Swadeshi (use local goods) and Sparshbhavana (touchability).*

Gandhi also reconfirms – *we are transient and insignificant; our existence is fully dependent on other animate/inanimate objects; diversity and equity is the way all around us; our achievement << ‘grace’ received; we are trustees of what we have for a while; ‘I’ comes in the way of surrendering to and flowing with the universe’s infinite intelligence; and intense reflection and loving time with all life and nature is a way forward for sure.*

2 October is also the Akshara Day. We have reconfirmed to ourselves that we are in the business of influence and knowledge in the livelihoods/development domain. We reflected on the ways forward to mentor the mentors of ‘livelihoods’ Support Individuals, Entrepreneurs and Organizations at the scale this country needs.

A day before, we reflected on the ways to help elders to lead a life on their own with social, financial and ‘livelihoods’ security and importantly, dignity.

As if losing one legend Dr V Kurien was not enough, we lost another legend Acharya Konda Lakshman Bapuji, a rare breed of freedom fighter-lawyer-politician-social justice activist succumbed to old age; was still active at 96 (born on 27 September 1915) till the last day of earthly existence on 21 September 2012. He was cremated at his ‘Jaladrushyam’ on the banks of Hussain Sagar. Rest in peace! He has been a torch bearer of all the fights against injustice throughout his life and today he is synonymous with Telangana with social justice. He has been a hope to all the marginalized in general, socially oppressed in particular. He has been a mentor of new leadership amongst them in particular all over the country. Weavers had a lion’s share in his mind space and activity portfolio. He was the co-founder of Hyco (now APCO Fabrics), way back in 50s. He was the tallest leader of the 20+ million weavers of the country. Leaving ministership in 1969, he went on to mentor and lead the causes and movements of the marginalized including Telangana for over four decades. He represented our constituency several times. My father has been a long-term colleague in his socio-political movements over this period. I have been fortunate to meet him several times at his home ‘Jaladrushyam’ and at our home, and listen to him. He graced the occasion of sixty years of my father and greeted my parents with a shawl in our native village.

As I write this, T-leaders are observing silence at Bapughat to protest and attract attention. T-issue has reached a decision junction. This round of fight is more than a decade-long and ‘livelihoods’ of about half of the 10 million households in Telangana are getting affected negatively with domestic product in millions per day is getting lost. T cannot wait any longer.

I learnt during the month, sleep is something you cannot ignore. Naturally we would have more than one bout of sleep in a day (read: night). But, this has been affected with modern day night light and cell phones. We started having less quality and sound sleep. Having less sleep gives less time for body to repair itself naturally. The way out is neither caffeine nor sleeping pills. Try out – work when not sleeping; have all that is basic adequately with pleasure – air, water, food and nutrition, clothes, touch and warmth of relationships, creativity et al ; sleep punctually - same time every night; avoid bluish lights; and meditation and relaxation before going to sleep.

So, can we cut tiring travel? Can we cut endless phone talks? Can we cut e-addiction? Can we cut S-A-D [smoking, alcohol, drugs]? Can we cut doing something others can do/are doing? Can we focus on a few items where we can make a huge difference? And we can go and put all the effort in those works with complete involvement and happiness, till we are dead tired to sleep. In the morning we would be fresh again.

We seek joy in our life of co-existence. We are part of the bio-diversity in the life of co-existence. This is our reality. Let us appreciate this. Let us find ways to be useful to this life of co-existence with intense inner spirit, pooled up experience, distilled knowledge and focused action. Then, the universe embraces you with open arms and takes you in. It lets to flow along with its natural flows. In fact, the flows merge. This is atmasaayujyayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue relentless intense 'offering'! Krishna confirms – the universe is ever ready to test the relentlessness and intensity of the offering. If it is of the quality it is looking for, it just takes the offering and the offering free soul along.

Join us in the world of yoga – for celebration of loving co-existence – towards sahadamanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

61. Constant Reflection and Articulation

Yogakshemam November 2012

Happy Mental Health! Happy Vision! Happy Girl Child! Happy Relief from Disasters! Happy Rural Woman! Happy Post! Happy Standards! Happy Statistics! Happy Information! Happy Animation! Happy Helping! Good Food to All! No Poverty, Please! Peace and Development through Science! Let us be strong to resist diseases! Let us be kind and tolerant!

Many Happy Returns, Amitabh Bachchan! Let us remember Patel on his birthday – 31 October 2012. Sandy kills 100, destroys USD 50 Billion, and has affected 50+ million; Nilam is kinder a bit!

Yerran Naidu, Rest in Peace!

Transition is the name of the month that has gone by!

Entrepreneurial effort is a mixed bag of failures and successes. Success builds on the lessons of failures. These include – entrepreneur needs company and a team would be in place as early as possible; entrepreneur should keep trying with ideas, innovations and approaching investors tirelessly; market accepts small little new things; co-founders are important; plans and contingency plans are prerequisite; and one should not give up too early.

Our existence and happiness is a function of our relationships. We need to have a framework for them and we need to operate within the framework. We need to nurture them with care within the confines of the framework. We need to remember that relationship has more than one being involved. Further, we have a composite web of multiple relationships and each one comes with its own rules and norms. We need to accommodate all these relationships within the framework of relationship you have.

I gathered during the month - to be happy, we need to be away from smoke, drink and drugs; we need to have alternative engagements for some time in a day, in a week, in a month and in a year; we need to stop postponing the little things; we need to stop not-so-constructive criticism; we need not make any excuses and we need to get going; we need to be ourselves; and we need to let go control, brooding and resisting changes.

Constant reflection and its articulation help us to evolve. We need to look at us and size up ourselves every now and then. We need to have this written down and/or shared with someone. Reflection would be sharp with eye for detail, having conceptual clarity supported with reading and following the developments across, knowing and accounting the failures, articulating the achievements with humility and due credit to all those who helped, knowing strengths, weaknesses, ladders that help and snakes that come in the way etc. Reflection is always against the subscribed values and vision of achievement and being. Reflection would also focus on the processes, preparation/homework for achieving the vision and scanning the internal and external environment. Reflection would also include having a latest ready note on oneself and its review. Articulation is better if that is punctuated with examples and models. Our vision and values do get reflected in our role models, coworkers, and relationships; and the opportunities and challenges that are being pursued. Reflection and articulation would include them too.

Articulation, therefore, teaching, of late has become dependent on technology. Anthony Pitucco and Stewart Barr remind us how we are losing touch with the arts of teaching, as ICT takes over – unfold the idea gradually; knowing the participants and respond to them, without giving out the snapshot; improvisation on the spot; and flexibility for contextualization.

Apart from speaking and writing, another major way of communication is e-mail. But, we need to follow some etiquette – have a right subject; be precise and focused on a single aspect with most important

first; seek response if that is the expectation; make it short and simple; personalize; present elegantly – font, format etc.; sign off with care; and do not spam.

We achieve more in a team that gels well, with high morale and motivation. Happy people achieve more. A happy leader makes individuals in the team happy. Our happiness is a function of our emotions, our engagements, our relationships, meaningful and purpose-driven living, and sense of achievement.

Of course, this would mean we need to have more time. We get more time by saving time – do not be online always – go online 3-4 times a day; work offline as much as possible; do less and do when it is a must; do not have tightly scheduled meetings; sleep in multiple shifts; and do not pack too many things into that one minute we have. This way we end up having more ‘time’ for living pursuing 3S – satyam (truthful), sivam (useful) and sundaram (in harmony with nature).

Deepak Chopra informs us – knowing one’s true nature takes us closer to our true potential; if we need x, we need to give x out and we get the x back in multiples of what we have given; we reap what we sow; when we harness the forces of harmony, joy and love, we create success with effortless ease; intention and desire take us through the mechanics of realization; we need to give up the attachment with the results but not with the efforts towards the results; and when our purpose of life is fulfilled, we are filled with ecstasy and bliss.

We seek ecstasy and bliss in our life of unity amidst diversity. We co-exist and our life is fully dependent on the other life and ‘non-life’. Our life processes are designed so that we lead a life of least disturbance to the deeper nature order. If this order is disturbed, it needs to be restored. This requires living, pursuing and leading 3S life – satyam (truthful), sivam (useful) and sundaram (appreciating and co-existing with the beauty of the life, nature and universe). This is the life of co-existence of the inner self and universal self. Slowly the increasing joy of realizing oneness with the infinitely diverse universe takes over. This is atmavivekaanandayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue intense truthful useful natural spirited co-existence! Krishna confirms – the universe is waiting for this oneness but it is looking for a free soul with this realization to merge with.

Join us in the world of yoga – for celebration of 3S co-existence – towards krishnaanubhutiogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

62. The Art of Listening

Yogakshemam December 2012

As we go through the fiction of the end of the universe (21 December 2012), we experience the month, month and a half of tough transition! It has been a roller coaster ride all the way! Damini is still struggling for survival in New Delhi. India is shouting its lungs out for justice now and in future to all.

Modi achieves hatrick!

Aam Aadmi Party comes into being. I do not know where the aam aadmi will go.

Pandit Ravi Shankar, Rest in Peace! Bal Thackeray, Rest in Peace!

National and Universal Children's Days, National Integration Day, World Science Day for Peace and Development, World Immunization Day, World Kindness Day, International Day of Tolerance, International Students' Day, World TV and Phone Days, World Fisheries Day, World Philosophy Day – they went by in November. In December, the days that went by include – World AIDS Day, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, International Volunteer Day, Human Rights Day, Human Solidarity Day and International Migrants Day etc.

International Anti-Corruption Day, world is at a loss how to celebrate it when corruption is all around and processes of justice go on and go on. International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, how can we celebrate? Can we achieve this intent in the near future?

26 November was Dr Kurien's birthday. We remembered him. I had an occasion on 1 December to recollect the person I know in the talk 'Rural Management: Dr Kurien's Way'. Earlier I have been to First National Symposium on Rural Management at XIMB; and it has also focused on Kurien's effort in establishing Rural Management as a discipline. MS Swaminathan delivered the first Dr Kurien's Memorial lecture at IRMA.

Now, Ms. Molly Kurien also bid adieu to all of us!

During the month, I have faced the ordeal of getting Aadhar Registration. Why can't the government give, once for all, the right of having all the necessary cards? The departments should be punished for the citizens not having them. Ration Card, Election Card, Passport, PAN Card and so on so forth. Why should the citizen go through so much pain to have these cards and registrations.

Age seems to have caught up with me – complete medical check-up reveals some signs of sugar, cholesterol, uric acid etc., and therefore some more regimented life is in store! Going through medical checkup has been an ordeal in itself.

Hospitals, I could not escape. I have to spend some more days, as our brother and his wife met with a fatal road accident, a head-on collision. They have survived and are recovering.

I gather during the month that – meetings would not let you do things: in fact, they come in the way, many a time; career and life are not the same: life should drive us; a person who is nice to you but not someone else, is not a nice person; our friends love us anyway; and never stop trying something new. This is the only way to be useful to this universe.

Further, to be useful, we need to listen.

Listening requires –

- Minimizing both internal and external distractions;
- Changing listening intensity and style with the situation;
- Showing that we are listening non-verbally constantly;
- Identifying and remembering the most important things;

- ☒ Demonstrating empathy;
- ☒ Saving advice for another time unless it is sought;
- ☒ Not interrupting in the middle;
- ☒ Not prejudging the message;
- ☒ Staying focused on the subject; and
- ☒ Being clearheaded even if the topic is emotional.

The most important thing is giving undivided time.

We seek giving undivided time amidst multiple agenda. We seek ecstasy and bliss of giving this time to the life of the universe and losing ourselves in it. In giving undivided time, we listen, we see, we touch, we taste, we smell, we feel, we think, and we co-exist. We exist and live in each other. We become the life of the universe. This is the life of co-existence of the inner self and universal self. The joy of oneness takes over. This is sahasangamaanandayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue intense dedicated undivided time of listening with all the senses for co-existence! Krishna confirms – the universe keeps sending its messages to the one who is listening and waiting for oneness so that the free soul with realization can respond and merge with the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for celebration of listening with all senses and co-existence – towards viswaikyayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

63. Learning and Gurukulas

Yogakshemam January 2013

Let us remember Vivekananda and Gandhi.

I could not catch up Sarvail Alumni Meet and Sagar Parivar Meet, despite my best efforts.

I gather during the month that we should not talk loudly at work when others are sharing the workspace; we should let others have privacy as much as that is possible in a work environment; and we should not be interested/focused on others' personal lives. To lead our associates, as Kalam says –

- ☒ We should have a vision;
- ☒ We have the passion to transform this vision into action;
- ☒ We must be able to travel into unexplored parts;
- ☒ We must know how to manage success and failure;
- ☒ We must have courage to take decisions;
- ☒ We should have management skills;
- ☒ Our actions should be transparent; and
- ☒ We must work and succeed with integrity.

I also gather during the month that the small activities lasting not even 10 minutes are effective in keeping us fit. A total of 150 minutes in a week in short bursts of 10 minutes would do a lot of good in keeping us fit.

I have just visited Nalanda University Heritage Site, one of the early residential education institutions of high order. It used to have 10000 students and 1500 teachers in residence, clearly indicating 1:6 teacher student ratios. Individual and shared accommodation for students was available. The classrooms and staying rooms were so near to each other so that energy of the students was on learning and nothing else. Entry into the University was possible only if they satisfy the entry-test conducted by the learned gate keepers. The subjects of study include Multi-religion texts, yoga and meditation, philosophy, logic, science, art and culture etc.

The AP Residential School at Sarvail, a modern day model Gurukulam, a model for Residential Schools and Navodaya Schools in the country, appears in hindsight that it is modeled after Nalanda. For uninitiated, Nalanda means endless knowledge sharing.

The visit has reconfirmed my vision to reach out through knowledge and mentoring outreach over the coming 15-20 years of third phase of existence – at least 1% villages, 10% blocks, 50% districts, 100% states; 10 hours with 1 million professionals/community professionals, 6-24 months with 1000 learning associates, 5+ years with 100 long-term associates, 10 legacy associates; and long-term association with 100+ significant efforts. All this, broadly, in the development/livelihoods domain!

As a South Indian experiencing winter cold in Delhi and other parts of North India in December and January, I get reminded of Transition 7 – transitory speck in this universe; symbiotic dependent life; ecological equity; infinitesimally small achievement vis-à-vis what one is blessed with; trusteeship; ego coming the way of humility to accept these five axioms; and reflecting and living with nature and life. When you come across the 'one' who shares and takes you up the spiritual heights, you being on transition 7 gets a quick confirmation. A sure road to bliss!

We seek responding to the inner voice with undivided attention amidst multiple temptations that will not let us heed to it. We seek ecstasy and bliss of giving this time and effort to the life of the soul, life of the universe. We seek losing ourselves. In this relentless pursuit, we exist, co-exist and exist together in

each other. We become the life; we become the universe; and we become one. The joy of oneness and inner peace pervades all around. This is naalandaanandayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue intense dedicated undivided attention with all the senses for getting ready to becoming one with the 'one'! Krshna, together with Mahavir, Buddha and Siva, confirms – the universe keeps searching for the one who is ready and/or who is likely to be ready. It communicates in its own way to the one who is waiting and trying. The free soul with the deepest intent would respond, achieve readiness and gets subsumed in the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for achieving the ability to see the clutter all around, identifying the 'one' in the chaos, preparing to get ready and celebrating oneness – towards vivekaanandayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

64. Reflections on Life

Yogakshemam February 2013

Some of the alumni of Girijan Cooperative Corporation could get together after about 20 years after our trials for more than a year.

Pope Benedict calls it a day!

I could get endorsement of my reflection of life so far from a 90 year old man that

- ☒ Life is not fair at times, but on the overall it has been a blessing
- ☒ Keep taking small steps, even if in doubt
- ☒ Life is too short and therefore, enjoy it
- ☒ When in trouble, your family and friends help you out
- ☒ There is no need to win all the arguments
- ☒ We can cry; and crying with someone helps healing
- ☒ Savings should start early in life
- ☒ While eating, do not resist too much or too hard
- ☒ Make peace with the past and get going
- ☒ It is our unique life and there is no need for any comparison
- ☒ Relationships make the life
- ☒ Deep breaths calm the mind
- ☒ All that is not useful should be disposed off immediately
- ☒ Pursue your deep vision/desire till the end
- ☒ Today is special
- ☒ Be ready and flow
- ☒ Choose life whenever you have choice
- ☒ Time heals almost everything
- ☒ Change is the way of life and miracles do happen
- ☒ Life is a precious gift
- ☒ All that matters in the end is that we love

Love is expressed in relationships. This expression begins with mutual exploration, being open, transparent and 'naked', regular pat on the back, improved stamina to engage, be ready to make first move and/or respond quickly, taking time to invest and work, identify points of leverage and activate, changing locations, positions and experimentation, showing responsibility, engaging, talking and occasional/unexpected surprises.

Only thing we could do is managing our time. To manage this better, we need to plan and keep maintaining a to-do list; we need to set immediate, short-term and long-term goals; we need to prioritize particularly the important and not so urgent; we need to move away from distractions some way; we need to resist the temptation to procrastination; we need to avoid taking more than we can chew – to say no; we need to slow down and take up tasks only that we have to do; we need to budget and provide focused time to the task; we need to take breaks during the day, week, month and year; and we need to schedule suitably based on matching tasks and energy levels.

We also need to find happiness at work where we spend most of our time. Some simple ways include – work environment, flexitime, flexi-place, freedom on means, social group/club, lunch/dinner get togethers/get aways, retreats, holidays etc.

I have been reminded of the posture of IRMA-NDDDB days – Do Not Quit –

Rest if you must, but don't you quit

stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,

It is when things seem worse that you must not quit.

May be you take some 'off', change the location of work, you may change the instruments and methods, you may change the points of leverage, but you must not quit.

In these circumstances, mediation is important. As Yogi Mccaw puts, meditation is not painful. Mediation is the end. Mediation may provide a sense of centredness and expanded viewpoint and may lead to a realization to that meditation is our natural state of being. The secret is that meditation is being natural and ordinary.

When you travel with your co-meditators who share and take you forward on the spiritual journey, it is the bliss! Journey is the end.

We journey on responding to the inner voice and losing ourselves. In this relentless pursuit, we become natural and ordinary and be one with nature and universe. This is prakritiyogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue meditation with all the senses for becoming one with the 'one'! Krishna confirms – the universe communicates with the meditating free soul with devotion and takes it in.

Join us in the world of yoga – for achieving the ability to be natural and ordinary amidst the clutter and chaos, and celebrating oneness with nature – towards mahakumbhaamritayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

65. Being Useful and Managing Ourselves

Yogakshemam March 2013

We (me with Bindu, Sanjeev and Raghu) could go to Gudalur to spend some time with Durga and Vennila on 9-10 March 2013. We missed Manoharan Memorial Lecture by Shashank Kela on 24 March 2013 but Mathew could give us an account later.

Being useful to the Universe is primarily dependent on how well we manage ourselves. Harvard Business Review's 10 Must Reads on Managing Yourself gives many endorsements on how we manage ourselves.

Clayton Christensen says – have a purpose and create a strategy for your life as early as possible, allocate most resources to aspects that matter the most, build a culture of coexistence and living together, define what we stand for and hold on to it 100% of the time (it is much easier that way), be humble to learn from everyone (and one can be humble when one feels good about oneself) and think about the metric by which we are judged and make a resolution to live everyday to achieve that metric (for most of us, it will be the number of lives 'touched').

Peter Drucker asserts that our achievement is a function of our management of ourselves. Only when we operate from a combination of our strengths and self-knowledge, we can achieve true and lasting excellence. We need to know our strengths and build on them. We need to know how we work. We need to know our values and whether our values and the values of the organizations we work for are in sync. We need to know where we belong and we quickly transit to that 'place' so that we do miracles. We need to know what and how we contribute our best and get going towards that. It is also important that we realize that our contribution to the universe peaks in the second half of our lives and we should be meaningfully positioned to contribute our peak by then.

Managing oneself includes managing time – individual imposed, system imposed and self-imposed. We need to increase the share of the self-imposed time to achieve our usefulness to the universe. This would be possible if we practice trust-relationships. We need to seek our associates to get going on their own keeping us in the loop. We need to be mentors and mentees.

Tony Schwartz and Catherine McCarthy advise us to manage our energy rather than our time. Our energy – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual – needs renewal. Renewal is a function of regular breaks and smaller but focused bursts of energy. Living core values enhances energy renewal. Reflection time adds to the renewal. We need to transcend Attention Deficit Trait through trusting relations, cared brain, and reflective meditation/yoga.

Stewart Friedman asks us to practice total leadership. Our life has work, home, community and self domains. We need to reflect and assess reality as a whole in these domains, prioritize across and act to resolve the creative tension slowly so that we build on small wins for big changes cumulatively.

Sumantra Ghosal and Heike Bruch indicate that we can make a difference - by slowing down and focusing on the prioritized demands, by developing a long-term strategy to liberate/develop resources, and by exploring alternatives using the freedom that exists to act.

Robert Quinn urges us to enter the Fundamental State of Leadership that all of us are bestowed with. We need to realize that we have been in/through our fundamental states of leadership previously and we can be there again and again if we want. This transformation happens when we ask and seek answers to – Are we results centered? Are we internally directed (by core values)? Are we other focused (collective good)? And Are we externally open (learning in real time)?

Robert Kaplan suggests to regularly step back and take time to reflect on – setting and communicating vision and priorities; spending time on key priorities; taking and giving honest proactive feedback;

delegating and decision-making de-bottlenecking; plans vis-à-vis reality outside; leading under pressure aligned with core values; and staying true to ourselves. This periodic reflection sets our agenda forward. And it is important to note that genuine happiness, smiles and laughter are contagious and result in increased usefulness to the Universe.

When you travel with your associates with happiness on the journey of useful life, it is the spiritual journey! It is the bliss! It is the beginning of the end!

We journey on responding to needs of the universe listening to our inner voice. We become one with universe. This is upayogayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue meditation with all the senses on usefulness to the 'one'! Krishna confirms – the universe becomes one with the reflecting free soul and the soul becomes one with the universe with dedicated action.

Join us in the world of yoga – for reflecting and improving our capabilities to be more useful, – towards raadhavasantayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

66. Universal Truths as we live, lead and are led

Yogakshemam April 2013

Manoharan continues to be in the thoughts and discussions. I ended up reading various mails he has sent over the last 2-3 years. One of them is the text of the Commencement Address of Steve Jobs. Three stories – three endorsements-

1. You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.
2. The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle.
3. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become.... Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.

During the month I gather that we need to avoid – one who refuses to do anything new; one who always looks for a deal; one who is obsessed with how one spends time; one who does not know what s/he is looking for; one who controls every 'second'; and the one who don't like partner's friends.

This month has endorsed Daniel Goleman's assertion - *"Overloading attention shrinks mental control. Life immersed in digital distractions creates a near constant cognitive overload. And that overload wears out self-control."* Therefore, let us turn off phones and emails at least 2 hours of our waking time every day and two half days every week; and spend at least an hour a day to read/write/do an activity unconnected with our main work/routine.

Subrato Bagchi describes achievers who save themselves from self-destruction - they are in a marathon of over 40 years; they deliver; they own failures but success; they seek forgiveness; they seek advice from people with higher reputation capital; they listen to the people who love them; they do not succumb to the high testosterone; they do not retrofit the reasoning to the pre-decided pathways; they do not go after recognition; they bother about the company they keep; they build some 'back up'; when they have to leave, they leave with grace; they respect the system(s); and they trust the larger power of the universe.

To be useful, we need to harness the ability. For this, we need to repeatedly step outside of our comfort zones. Let us acknowledge that it helps; let us embrace the discomfort; let us notice our fears; let us not over-think about it; let us go the whole hog; let us celebrate; and let us reflect. Of course, as JT O'Donnell says, everyday, we need to do some items routinely on a daily basis that add value to ourselves and the world. I remembered the signal from the inner voice – lose in the flow and keep flowing towards merger in the flow of the universe. If the flow is wrong, we will know and we get to change the course of the flow. A recent 75-year long longitudinal study (by Harvard) confirms that the flowing is the end. Warm relationships are the clues to lasting joy of satisfied life. It concludes: *Happiness is Love. Full stop. We know - Genuine happiness results in increased usefulness to the Universe.*

In this context, as we live, lead and are led, it is important that we appreciate these universal truths and glued to them -

- ☐ We are a short-lived insignificant speck in this universe;

- ☒ Our existence is a function of existence of and dependence on other animate/inanimate objects;
- ☒ There is diversity and existential equity around us everywhere;
- ☒ Our present/potential achievement is infinitesimally small vis-à-vis what we have been 'graced' with;
- ☒ What we have/got is merely with us as its trustees for the time being;
- ☒ 'i' of life resists surrendering to the universe's infinite intelligence and humility helps in flowing with it; and
- ☒ Living with and loving all life and nature, apart from intense reflection, is a way to above appreciation.

This is the spiritual journey! It is the bliss! It is the beginning of the end, driven by antaraatma into antaryaami! This is antaryamiyogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue deep and intense reflection with all the senses on usefulness to the 'universe'! Krishna confirms – the free soul with dedicate thought, speech and action becomes one with the universe, for sure.

Join us in the world of yoga – for improving our capabilities and being more useful – towards sangamayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

67. Doing What We Like

Yogakshemam May 2013

The month endorsed that traveling should not be postponed. Traveling is a habit and that needs to be formed early in life. These moments define our lives. We are a result of our intentional habits. We are what we repeatedly do.

Gathered during the month - scaling-up does not always mean increasing our size, direct outreach, working through partners etc. That is through influencing or educating the leaders and future leaders for influence.

I came across 'How to Avoid Work: A 1949 Guide to Doing What You Love' by William Reilly. We have some 16 hours a day. We can put this time incessantly to anything without growing weary unless we love it, unless it is not work. Money never comes first in self-expression of any kind. Happiness lies in the pursuit of our goals and achievements in our chosen areas. Ultimately, we are our masters, masters of our time, our purpose and our life. Let us remain so.

To be able to do what we like we should not be too worried about the prestige, and prestige would follow if we do what we like. Success metrics have to be defined by us. The best way to get approval is not to need it, because we have our own metrics. We move from work to creative labour to flow. We need to flow. This is our life. We need to do what we love and do often. If we don't like something, we have to change it. If we don't like the job, we have to quit. If we do what we love, the love awaits us. In the ultimate analysis, there is no sharp distinction between our work and our play. We simply pursue our vision of excellence through whatever we are doing. For us, we always appear to be doing both simultaneously. Also, we have multi-faceted experiences, interests, values and talents. It means we need to allow our various petals of our identity to fully unfold.

Reinforcements of the month include 'strongest careers are not linear'.

What we want to do in the long run is a function of what we do now in bits and pieces. See the world. Taste the odd opportunities. Pick up small challenges. Be ready to change plans often. Follow own dream. Blend talents that are present. Seek out friends. Change mind when called for. Seek elders' advice. Look around, read books. Seek support. Spend time before spending money. Let the purpose rule and let us do our best. Be relaxed.

For getting the life back, for many of us who have almost lost it, the first step is to get sufficient sleep every night to feel more physically energized, emotionally resilient and mentally clear, followed by – move more; eat often but in small doses; take a break every 60-90 minutes; invest time and provide absorbed attention with people; appreciate and thank people for making our lives better; doing the most important things first; keep reflecting quietly every day; keep learning regimen every day; and give time to others and to the world at large.

We need to keep our soul free from clutter every now and then. Seek solitude, meditation and spending time with nature and loved ones. A soul that has awakened/awakening has difficulty in lying. It walks barefoot often. It is biased with the marginalized and complete strangers know it. It lives as naturally as possible and it picks up healing. It senses possibilities early. It is creative and revels in art and art forms. It needs more solitude. It finds it difficult to do what it does not really enjoy. It is obsessed to bring the truth to light. It can't keep track of time. It is kind. It is not keen on consuming negative energy. It goes about changing the world in its own way.

Happiness is what we are all concerned with. It is feeling good and right in an atmosphere of growth; making others happy gives happiness and happy person can only make others happy; in happy times,

time runs faster; we are not happy unless we think we are happy; Happy life is built on the foundation of happy nature; It all begins with us; No one else can make us happy; and it is NOW.

I had to stumble upon Leslie's letter in 'The Bridge Across Forever' by Richard Bach this month. A wonderful letter! It aptly captures the value of nurturing and preserving relationship(s) of consequence – "... I have felt if anything in my life deserved departure from previously established patterns, going beyond all known limitations, this relationship did. ... I recognized the rare and lovely opportunity we had while we had it, and gave all I could, in the purest and highest sense, to preserve it... I am comforted by this now. ... I have grown with you, and learned much from you, and I know I have made major positive contributions to you. We are both better people for having touched one another..."

This is the spiritual journey! It is the bliss! It is antaraatma driving it! This is krishnayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue deep and intense reflection with all the senses for happiness through usefulness to the 'universe'! Krishna confirms – antaratma and antaryami are meant to be together when the free soul yearns for it with thought, speech and action.

Join us in the world of yoga – for being happy and useful – towards krisnakrisnayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

68. Managing Self, Team, Business

Yogakshemam June 2013

Happy Environment!

This month witnessed the Himalayan Tragedy in Himalayas that took 10,000+ lives and 100,000+ stranded and rescued in Kedarnath area.

This month has also seen the transfer of VV Lakshminarayana from AP operations of CBI, back to Maharashtra.

This month sees the narrowing of the fight between NaMo and RaGa on one hand and some glimmering hope for federal front. In any case, India is getting ready for Elections.

This month emphasized the differences between leaders and managers – every effective manager is a leader but every leader need not be a manager. Leaders ask questions, leaders call attention to mistakes indirectly, leaders reward the smallest improvements too, leaders emphasize the good, and leaders give credit. Can we be leaders? Can we produce more of them?

I came across Harvard Business Review 'Management Tips' discussing Managing Self, Managing Team and Managing Business. The Tips include –

- ☐ *Let us have a Leadership Vision, long-term.*
- ☐ *Let us schedule Regular Meetings with Self*
- ☐ *Let us manage our limited energy – take breaks, reduce interruptions, do what we love*
- ☐ *Let us decrease our technology dependence*
- ☐ *Let us keep to-do list and do the most important thing first*
- ☐ *Let us schedule time and energy for non-urgent things*
- ☐ *Let us not micromanage ourselves*
- ☐ *Let us give up control and let us set direction*
- ☐ *Let us have people we enjoy working with and take up issues we enjoy solving*
- ☐ *Let us take breaks everyday – exercise, cell-off, solve puzzles*
- ☐ *Let us identify our unique skills and focus on the distinctive skill set*
- ☐ *Let us achieve thought leadership*
- ☐ *Let get over our mental barriers*
- ☐ *Let us have 30-second 'about myself' pitch always ready*
- ☐ *Let us nurture humanness, intuition, tough empathy and uniqueness in us*
- ☐ *Let us keep things simple*
- ☐ *Let us be transformational – give love, growth, space for contribution and meaning*
- ☐ *Let us build a culture of trust and mentoring*
- ☐ *Let us assess behaviours in addition to results*
- ☐ *Let us identify hidden talents of our associates*
- ☐ *Let us identify our smartest and work with them differently – stretch and challenge them*
- ☐ *Let us inspire, engage and trust*
- ☐ *Let us innovate with less and make low-cost mistakes*

☐ *Let us be cost-effective*

Leadership is love for the universe. Leading is being useful to the universe in the way universe wants. It involves thinking, articulation and doing. It requires unlearning, learning and practice over a long period of time with dedication, intense and concentrated effort and discipline. Leading requires building leaders to lead.

This is the spiritual journey! The bliss is in the journey! This is krishnakrishnayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue deep and intense reflection deep within for unlearning, learning and mentoring leaders for being useful to the 'universe'! Krishna confirms – lead (antaryami) and led (antaraatma) are free souls yearning to be one together with thought, speech and action and they are meant to mutually change positions constantly.

Join us in the world of yoga – for leading and being led – towards krisnaraadhayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

69. Being Productive and Efficient

Yogakshemam July 2013

Telangana is announced!

India is getting ready for Elections! Parties are not ready for transparency in their affairs: they say no to 'comply with RTI'.

This month endorses living in the moment as the way for us – happiness is a by-product; success is being useful to the world through our own calling; first things first; being brave is doing the right things despite our fears; strongest people feel the pain, accept it, learn from it and fight through it; only we, no one else, hold ourselves back; there are no automatic entitlements from others; there is some discomfort in while we grow; and it is never too late for anything.

Most of us in the business of being useful are entrepreneurial in our modus operandi. Benjamin Franklin offers us a set of lessons –

- ☑ Having and adhering to a strict personal code of conduct
- ☑ Well-maintained daily routine
- ☑ People skills
- ☑ Doing more and saying less
- ☑ No procrastination
- ☑ Assessing pros and cons
- ☑ Perseverance
- ☑ Seizing opportunities
- ☑ Keep trying something new and learning from mistakes
- ☑ Welcoming change

For many of us who are in teams and team managements, meetings are a must. But, we know meetings are the biggest productivity killers. Some tips, I gathered during the month, to reduce the loss include –

- ☑ Having a note circulated before the meeting;
- ☑ Giving 10-15 minutes to ensure that this note is read before the discussion begins;
- ☑ No presentations, but only clarifications and discussions;
- ☑ Defining the objective of the meeting and identifying the driver of the meeting;
- ☑ Taking time to define jargon, semantics and first principles;
- ☑ Assigning someone to take notes and circulating the notes taken; and
- ☑ Summarizing conclusions and next steps

Being useful to the universe is a function of our ability to influence and get influenced. Influence is a function of likeability of our cause and/or our persona. If we don't like people, people won't like us. And to like people, we need to accept them. If we accept them, they'll accept us. For acceptance, we need to appreciate that –

- ☑ An individual is not either 1 or 0;
- ☑ Everyone is better than us at something or the other;
- ☑ At a basic level, people are more similar than they are different;
- ☑ People have reasons for their behavior;
- ☑ In the end, we all die equal; and

- ☒ It begins with a real smile

I can't agree more with Peter Buffet when he says –

- ☒ Nearly every time someone feels better by doing good, on the other side of the world (or street), someone else is further locked into a system that will not allow the true flourishing of his or her nature or the opportunity to live a joyful and fulfilled life.
- ☒ There are people working hard at showing examples of other ways to live in a functioning society that truly creates greater prosperity for all. Money should be spent trying out concepts that shatter current structures and systems that have turned much of the world into one vast market.
- ☒ As long as most folks are patting themselves on the back for charitable acts, we've got a perpetual poverty machine going on.

Humanism is an expression of love for the universe. Humanism is being useful to the universe in the way universe wants. Leading with humanism involves thinking, articulation and doing. It requires listening to the ground, unlearning, learning and practice over a long period of time with dedication, intense and concentrated effort and discipline. Humanism means mentoring ourselves to be truly human and humane and lead.

This journey is spiritual! This journey is the bliss! This is krishnamaargam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we are human! If we live in the moment with the people! If we practice deep and intense reflection deep within for unlearning and learning for being useful to the 'universe'! If we mentor leaders to lead with humanism! Krishna confirms – supreme (paramaatma) and free soul (jeevaatma) are meant to be together in thought, speech and action and they are meant to co-exist in each other eternally.

Join us in the world of yoga – for leading with humanism – towards krisnamaargayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

70. Practising Self Evaluation

Yogakshemam August 2013

Right to Information, Right to Employment and now Right to Food! Food Security Ordinance is moving towards becoming an Act!

This month endorses that the way to mastery is 'deliberate' practice – a constant sense of self-evaluation and of focusing on one's weaknesses. It requires effort of relentlessly focusing on our weaknesses and inventing new ways to root them out. When we say 10,000 hours of effort for any significant achievement, we are talking about this deliberate practice for mastery.

We cannot agree more when Bob Fuller proposes - none of us will live balanced lives until we fully embrace the principle that "dignity is not negotiable. This would mean a living wage, universal healthcare and quality education for all.

My new learning is that a disabled person does not like s/he being referred to as 'person with a disability'. S/he does not mind being referred as 'disabled' - disabled by a society that places physical, social, attitudinal and architectural barriers in her/his way. Disabled means 'prevented from functioning'.

We tend to make a judgment of the persons with their handshakes. But we need to be careful to discount for the biases that go with them. One way is to postpone shaking hands towards the end of the interaction/meeting.

All of us in the business of being useful to the world need to balance our work, life and family. It is almost impossible to be doing it all. During the month I gathered –

- ☑ The best way is to start with writing out our Personal Values and Long-Term Goals on a sheet (may be at the bottom). Add rows on top each with headings for our possible set of activities that have to be done. Make copies, say one per week.
- ☑ Start every week with one sheet and put a date on the top for record. Fill the activities to be done during the week in the beginning of the week itself. As the week progresses, add/delete/modify the activities. Indicate the completed and incomplete activities. Write remarks for not completed activities.
- ☑ The possibility of increased work-life-family balance would tend to improve if we get habituated to this tracking system.

I remembered Vivekananda –

"my thoughts seem to come from a great, great distance in the interior of my own heart."

I remembered Tagore.

"S/he it is, the innermost, who awakens my being with her/his deep hidden touches.

S/he it is who puts her/his enchantment upon these eyes and joyfully plays on the chords of my heart in varied cadence of pleasure and pain.

S/he it is who weaves the web of this maya in evanescent hues of gold and silver, blue and green, and lets peep out through the folds her/his feet, at whose touch I forget myself.

Days come and ages pass, and it is ever s/he who moves my heart in many a name, in many a guise, in many a rapture of joy and sorrow."

Innermost is the driver for our expression of love for the universe. If we listen, innermost guides us to be useful to the universe in the way universe wants. Lead by innermost, our thoughts, words and deeds go in the direction of being useful. Enhancing the present 'feeble' voice of innermost requires us to

deliberately practice the processes of unlearning and learning, assessment and correction of errors and practice, over a long period of time with dedication, intense and concentrated effort and discipline. Innermost would surely mentor us to be useful and lead us into universe.

This deliberate practice is spiritual! This practice is the bliss! This is krishnaprakriti.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we are willing! If we have the energy, time, and faculties to be with the innermost! If we practice deliberate practice of intense reflection deep within and listening to the innermost's thoughts and voice! If we mentor leaders to listen to the innermost and act! Krishna confirms – aatma (soul) and antaraatma (innermost) are meant to be together in each other eternally.

Join us in the world of yoga – for listening to the innermost and leading – towards prakritipurushayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

71. 10 Things to make us Happier

Yogakshemam September 2013

Let us remember all our teachers who have made and been making a difference to our lives!

5 states are going to polls!

This month endorses that we are the instruments of the universe, the master. Our usefulness and growth begins with the master's belief and faith in us that we can be instruments in the first place. It is followed by the gentle push, gentle nudging and sometimes a calculated hard knock. The master always conveys the message in simplest manner and in a variety of ways. The key is not in the play of the instrument but making us into useful instruments slowly and steadily. In fact, the master lets us to chisel, evolve and grow into an useful instrument, with little obvious tips. Then of course, we are impacted for a life time and beyond. And the teachers are the master's hands in shaping us into these instruments. So many of them, in so many forms!

The second endorsement of the month is that we need to have mastery in one, followed by one more and one more. When the rich and the poor have multiple livelihoods, why are we getting stuck with a single 'job'? Why are we not going adding multiplicity into our works to realize our complete potential? Is not our decent living and satisfaction is a function of doing more things? Not just doing one thing perfectly (?). We do not have to be struggling in one to do another. We can do both and more well. All of us possess a variety of skills and we want to realize the potential in all of them. Despite success in one pursuit, we would like to enjoy developing and using other skills. Let us do more and enjoy doing. It recharges us and refreshes us too. Some tips gathered for this include -

- ☑ Start a hobby
- ☑ Be a volunteer
- ☑ Be a part of a small business
- ☑ Diversify in a small way
- ☑ Teach, Consult, Mentor
- ☑ Go to school again
- ☑ Take a sabbatical
- ☑ Travel and be with nature
- ☑ Work on your inner self
- ☑ Treat this as an investment

I learnt during the month that the happiness/satisfaction that is derived from fulfillment of a deeper purpose/meaning of life lasts longer and in fact works on the genes. Belle Beth Cooper lists 10 simple things that we can do today to make us happier –

1. 7-minute exercise, yoga mudra, meditation etc., releasing proteins and endorphins that make us feel happier.
2. More sleep, including power naps, becoming less sensitive to negative emotions and recalling pleasant memories
3. Short commute over a big house or a better job
4. Intimate time and strong relationships with people who matter to us, and helping others even if we are introverts
5. Going outside and spending 20 minutes a day in the fresh air [happiness is maximized at 13.9°C!]

6. Helping others, at least 2 hours per week and pro-social spending
7. Smiling really using eye sockets with positive thoughts
8. Planning a trip, penciling on the calendar, even if we do not undertake one
9. Meditating, meditating regularly resulting in immediate experience of calm and contentment and altered brain wiring for happiness
10. Practicing gratitude expression in words, writing and action

Getting older is enjoyable and all things being equal, getting old gives greater happiness. Incidentally, too much of tidiness does not support creativity and to that extent it is not a happiness booster.

The innermost and the master are two sides of the same coin. Together, they drive us towards expression of love for the universe. If we listen, the innermost and the master guide us to be useful to the universe in the way universe wants. Lead by innermost and master, our thoughts, words and deeds go in the direction of being useful. When in sync, the interplay and reverberations of the innermost and the master push us to climactic crescendo. This synchronization is what we need to strive for through deliberate practice for a long time. Innermost and master would surely evolve interplays towards being useful and leading us into universe.

This interplay is the bliss! This is krishnamaanasam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we let the master in! If we let the innermost reach the master! If we practice listening to the innermost's thoughts and voice and to the master! If we let them to unlearn and learn from each other! Krishna confirms – the master and the innermost are meant to be together and act eternally.

Join us in the world of yoga – for listening to the innermost and the master – towards krishnakrishnayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

72. Taking Decisions Subconsciously

Yogakshemam October 2013

Let us remember Gandhi! Let us remember Shastri! Let us remember Patel!

Polls in 5 states, Opinion Polls project - advantage BJP!

Narendra Modi, the BJP's PM candidate!

Sachin Tendulkar announced his retirement from Cricket!

This month informs me that Gandhi is an example of practitioner of participation to the core.

This month endorses again that we do better when we submit ourselves to the master.

Belle Beth Cooper reinforces that we take most decisions subconsciously and seek facts for articulation of the logic for that decision. Subconsciously -

- ☒ We seek information that matches our beliefs rather than being completely open. This is a confirmation bias, most of us seem to have. Therefore, it is important that we constantly challenge our beliefs on a regular basis to avoid getting caught up in the confirmation bias.
- ☒ We confuse initial conditions/selection parameters with results.
- ☒ We worry about things we have already lost. We are wired to feel loss far more strongly than gain. It is difficult to get the sunk cost principle into our heads.
- ☒ We forget probability and think that past results change the probability now although there is no such link.
- ☒ We tend to get into post-purchase rationalization.
- ☒ We tend to make wrong decisions when we have more options even though some of the options are not real or not useful. The trick is to throwing out the useless or unreal options out before decision-making.
- ☒ We believe our memories more than the facts.
- ☒ We make mistakes when language acts as a limitation.

It is important for all of us to start the day well. Following things can help in the same -

- ☒ Arrive in time
- ☒ Take a deep breath, walk around, meet people, smiles
- ☒ Give your five minutes to think of the day
- ☒ Start the day on a clean slate
- ☒ Get out of moodiness, have a coffee
- ☒ Make a to-do list
- ☒ Be in the present
- ☒ Check for goals of the day from colleagues
- ☒ Organize the workspace, clear yesterday out
- ☒ Don't be distracted by e-mail inbox or in-tray
- ☒ See snail mails, notes and voice mails
- ☒ Complete urgent e-mails and urgent calls immediately
- ☒ Take a mid-morning break

In the ultimate analysis of life, three things seem to be critical for us – work, companionship and balance. This would mean realization that we cannot do everything all by ourselves; life is a marathon with resilience; we need to give before we get; we need time, place and support for recovery; and the people are better off for having known us.

For people like us, we seem to have several stages/transitions in our lives –

- ☒ Schooling (first 20-25 years);
- ☒ De-schooling and working to peak (second 15-25 years);
- ☒ Second innings and preparing to pursue the unpursued (third 10-20 years);
- ☒ Inertia of first and second innings and Spiritual Journey (next 5-25 years); and
- ☒ Renunciation/Nirvaana

Interestingly, these transitions happen in our lives whether we are conscious or not. If we become conscious, we can prepare for the transition. It is possible that we may shorten a transition, if we could work on it. This journey is extremely gratifying and therefore keeps us in eternal happiness.

The master's grace falls on us when we are ready. Above journey prepares us for the master's grace. The master speaks in various ways including through the innermost. Initially, the innermost is not audible. It requires training and practice to listen to the innermost and act. If we do so, we remain useful to the universe. Innermost drives us towards expression of our love for the universe. When in play, the innermost pushes us to climactic crescendo. This play of the innermost is what we need to strive for through deliberate practice for a long time. Innermost would surely keep playing in we evolving useful and flowing into universe. Innermost could not help but take us in.

This play of the innermost is the bliss! This is krishnaantarangamaanasam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we let the innermost to take charge! If we let the innermost reach out to you! If we practice listening to the innermost's thoughts, words and signals! If we let ourselves be in the innermost's charge! Krishna confirms – the soul within and the soul without are meant to be lost in each other eternally.

Join us in the world of yoga – for playing with the innermost – towards krishnaantarangayasiddhi. You will not regret it.

73. Mentally Strong Social Entrepreneur

Yogakshemam November 2013

Polls in 5 states go on!

Sachin Tendulkar is a Bharat Ratna! Remembering Dr Verghese Kurien, Social Entrepreneur-at-large!

This month takes me to the threshold of transition. All my excuses seem to be over. I need to get going beyond schooling and de-schooling, to pursue the core deep within.

Amy Morin lists a mentally strong social entrepreneur would not be doing. These include –

- ☒ No time to feel sorry for themselves [optimism does not die]
- ☒ No transfers of control to others who make them feel inferior or bad.
- ☒ No shying away from change.
- ☒ No time for things they cannot control.
- ☒ No extra steps to please others (naturally kind and fair)
- ☒ No fear to take calculated risks
- ☒ No time to dwell in the past
- ☒ No time, energy and investment for making the same mistakes over and over
- ☒ No time and energy for resenting other's successes
- ☒ No giving up with failure
- ☒ No fear of being alone and no fear of being with others
- ☒ No expectations from this world without homework and intense effort
- ☒ No immediate results and no short cuts

To be mentally strong, it requires lots and lots of practice, discipline, effort and continual self-reflection. This would be improved with the help from the master.

The initial de-schooling and work has to be transformed and developed over a long period of time, may be a decade or two, to achieve the glorious potential that exists within us. This gets accentuated and picks up pace working with the master and the master's grace. The potential becomes the symphony for the universe. It requires exploring each other's depths together. It requires careful weaving together of the two into one. This transformation of weaving requires unbroken time together of the deep within and the without. Otherwise, the possible may not be a reality.

Within and without have the same vision of something wonderful yet separated by solid walls. Both are frustrated and are in constant struggle – one breaking the walls and the other building the walls. It causes deep and intense pain on one level or the other. This resistance needs to be appreciated and melted out.

Twenty-plus years since the opening and de-schooling process has been initiated, the learning and transition into a next phase is pulling the steely exterior with all its force to surrender. No waiting is possible now, it appears. While it is the best it could reach, it has to go without its full development and climactic expression in the form of a finest weave.

Surely, 'without' is better by the touch of the 'within', even if they are not woven into one. Even if something deep goes unfulfilled for now! They continue to touch each other till the end.

Weaving together of the within and without is the master's work and grace. It happens when we are ready. Getting ready is intense preparation, training, practice with intense effort with single minded pursuit. Pursuit of the universe! Pursuit of the 'within'! If we do so, we become and remain useful to

the universe with all the love we possibly can give. This signals readiness to the master. When ready, the master takes the 'within' and 'without' and weaves them together. When ready, the master gets into the 'within' and pushes us to get woven together. The master separates and chooses the 'within' from others who are masquerading as 'within's. Then the 'within' would surely persist with weaving with 'without' in we evolving into eternal weave of warp and weft of the universe.

This weave of the 'within' and 'without' is the bliss! This is krishnaambaram.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue and get ready! If we choose the 'within' from duplicates! If we let the 'within' be in touch with the 'without'! If we let the 'within' take over the task of weaving! If we let 'within' and 'without' be woven together! If we let the master take the charge of nurturing and mentoring the 'within'! Krishna confirms – 'within' and 'without' are meant to be woven together and lost in each other eternally.

Join us in the world of yoga – for letting our 'within' and 'without' be woven together – towards krishnaambarayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

74. Irrefutable Laws of Leadership

Yogakshemam December 2013

AAP makes history in Delhi. Congress loses Delhi and Rajasthan and retains Mizoram.

BJP retains MP and Chattisgarh. Remembering Manoharan, Development Monk!

This month confirms that Transition is the way out. The pathways need to be built. There is not much time.

John Maxwell lists 'irrefutable' laws of leadership. These are –

- ☒ One's leadership ability determines one's effectiveness;
- ☒ True measure of leadership is influence; it is not the same as management, entrepreneurship, pioneering, knowledge or position. It includes inner person (character), deep relationships, grasp of facts for vision, intuition, expertise, experience and ability to deliver
- ☒ Leadership is a process that develops daily; learning is ongoing as a result of discipline and perseverance
- ☒ Leadership is a plenty of preparation and intense charting a course of actions, based on faith and facts;
- ☒ Leadership is adding value through serving others – care, help grow, relate, reach out;
- ☒ Leadership is Trust;
- ☒ Leadership is Respect;
- ☒ Leadership is Intuition – reading the situation, the trends, the resources, the people and the self;
- ☒ Leadership is Magnetism – attract the same kernel
- ☒ Leadership is Connecting authentically – with self, with knowledge, with practice, with adaptation, with hope, belief and focus on the 'connected';
- ☒ Leadership is a function of the inner circle – with complementarities, value-add and team chemistry;
- ☒ Leadership is 'let go' and empowerment against insecurity, resistance to change, and lack of self-worth;
- ☒ Leadership is visioning and being an example – what, how and why;
- ☒ Leadership is leader first, dream next;
- ☒ Leadership is a leader dedicated to victory and building a team with shared vision;
- ☒ Leadership is Momentum
- ☒ Leadership is Prioritization – based on requirement, return and reward; focus on 80%.
- ☒ Leadership is Giving up comfort zone;
- ☒ Leadership is Timing;
- ☒ Leadership is developing leaders; and
- ☒ Leader's lasting value is measured by Legacy – living it, finding people to carry on with it, passing the baton, and nurturing/mentoring them.

To lead, we need to take responsibility and prepare for it. We need to practice, put in disciplined effort and reflect. All of us are meant to be leaders with the glorious potential within us. We are leaders and

we are led. In the skilful hands of the master, we realize our potential to be led and lead simultaneously. We will lead by getting led by the master into the symphony for the universe. It requires leader and the led exploring each other's depths together. It requires careful knitting together of the lead and the led into one. This transformation requires unbroken time together of the lead and the led as co-leads. Though separated physically, co-leads have the same vision of something wonderful for this universe for them to be one. No waiting is possible now. They complement each other. Their senses complement one another. They begin to become one and the distinction disappears. They become one.

Knitting together of the lead and led for the universe is the work and grace of the master leader of the universe. It happens when we are ready. Getting ready is intense preparation, training, practice with intense effort. Universe is pursuing relentlessly! 'Within' is pursuing endlessly! If we let our body, senses and our little world fall in line, we join hands with the pursuing 'within' and the universe to become and remain useful to the universe. This joining with 'within' signals readiness to the master leader. Then the master leader takes charge and lets us knit ourselves together. The master leader pushes us to get knit together. The master leader lets us throw away others who do not fit the knitting together. Then we would surely persist with getting knit together as the master leader's chosen eternal team of the universe.

This teaming of the 'within' and 'without' is the bliss! This is krishnadalam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue and get ready! If we choose to alternate between the led and the lead! If we choose out the ones that do not have the will to complement the led or the lead! If we let the led and the lead be in touch forever! If we let the lead take over the task of knitting! If we let the led and lead to emerge as co-leads! If we let ourselves to practice the nurturing and mentoring the led and the lead! Krishna confirms – the led and the lead are meant to be co-leads together lost in each other eternally.

Join us in the world of yoga – for letting the led and the lead be knit together – towards brindaavanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

75. List of Books for Our children

Yogakshemam January 2014

We are celebrating the anniversary of 150 years of Swami Vivekananda.

Let us remember the martyrs for our freedom and development.

This month reconfirms that Transition is the way out. This has to be triggered by ourselves. It is not an entitlement. One needs to work for it. It requires several trials before one hit on the right pathway. One needs to take the initiative. There is no good excuse to avoid it now. One needs to offer something worthwhile for each of the partners. It is not enough to think about it. It is important to act on the thoughts, beliefs and intentions. In the end, being useful only matters.

I gathered a list of books our children should read before they grow. These include -

- ☒ Mahabharata
- ☒ The Why-why girl
- ☒ Granny's Sari
- ☒ Barefoot Husain
- ☒ All About Nothing
- ☒ Handmade India
- ☒ Malgudi Days
- ☒ We the Children of India
- ☒ Why are you afraid to hold my hand
- ☒ Mathematwist: Number Tales from Around the World
- ☒ Little Indians
- ☒ One World
- ☒ Sorry, Best Friend
- ☒ The Jungle Book
- ☒ Girls of India Series
- ☒ First Look at Science Series
- ☒ History of India
- ☒ The Rusty Series
- ☒ A Trail of Paint
- ☒ The 14th Dalai Lama
- ☒ Letters from a Father to a Daughter
- ☒ Ramayana
- ☒ Excuse me, is this India?
- ☒ Haroun and the Sea Stories
- ☒ A man called Bapu
- ☒ Gitanjali
- ☒ The Bible
- ☒ The Quran

☒ Bhagavad Gita

Rolf Dobelli in his 'The Art of Thinking Clearly' lists various systematic cognitive errors in our thinking patterns. These include –

- ☒ We overestimate their chances of success
- ☒ We think that we quickly recognize patterns
- ☒ We think that we do not have confirmation bias
- ☒ We think we are more charismatic than what we actually are
- ☒ We have a bias to spend more time with people who think like us
- ☒ We do not verify knowledge that comes our way
- ☒ We think selecting right people is not important and it could be substituted with extensive training
- ☒ We would tend to conform with our peers although they are not right
- ☒ We would remain attached with the past investment rather than future benefits
- ☒ We do not want to unlearn and we tend to be blind to disconfirming evidence

To be useful, we need to practice the art of thinking clearly. We need to put in disciplined effort and reflect. All of us are meant to think to bring out the glorious potential within us. We think and therefore we act. Our usefulness is in our action. With the thoughtful grace of the master, we realize our potential to think and act. Our action led by clear thinking lets us be part of the symphony for the universe. This clear thinking and action requires unbroken time together with the inner self. Slowly the distinction disappears and they become one.

Unbroken time together is the grace of the soul of the universe, when we are ready. Getting ready is intense preparation, training, practice with intense effort. As our body, senses and thoughts fall in line, 'within' signals readiness and the soul of the universe takes charge and lets us persist with working for the universe for eternal togetherness in the universe.

This eternal togetherness is the bliss! This is krishnasangamam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue and get ready! If we think clearly and act! If we stop making errors in thinking! If we let the thoughts into action! If we let the inner self to lead the thoughts! If we let ourselves to practice the nurturing and mentoring the body, the senses and the thoughts towards listening to 'within'! Krishna confirms – 'within' reflects the universe and universe reflects the 'within' and therefore, we as a medium lose ourselves as they reach out to each other eternally.

Join us in the world of yoga – for losing ourselves in the eternal togetherness – towards viswamaanasayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

76. Coping with Stress

Yogakshemam February 2014

Happy Valentine! This is a special 142(14)14!

Telangana is official now.

Largest Election Exercise of the World is on.

This month reconfirms that love is the way for transition. Love begins with the self. Love is not an entitlement. Love is a way and we need to work hard and practice to love. Failure is the first part of love. To achieve one success, there will be ten micro-failures. Therefore, we have to be open to failure and learning. Loving has to be learnt. There are no excuses not to be in the path of love. We need to keep going forward, with a smile. Love means we are useful. Usefulness is the essence of love. Usefulness is a function of ability, time and using the ability with a purpose. Thoughts, beliefs and intentions bring this improvements in the ability, investments of time and aligning with the purpose. This is love. This is loving. The transition is to be built on this foundation.

During the month, I gather – intermittent stress is a contributor to great performance; and managing emotions in times of stress to remain calm and in control is the key to top performance. Prolonged stress does not contribute to high performance. In fact, it decreases cognitive performance. Instead it increases the risk of heart disease, depression, and obesity. Therefore, coping with the stress is critical. Some of the effective strategies include –

- ☒ Appreciate what we have; be grateful for what we got
- ☒ Avoid asking 'what if' as far as possible
- ☒ Think and stay positive
- ☒ Disconnect and become offline intermittently
- ☒ Limit caffeine intake
- ☒ Sleep adequately
- ☒ Reduce negative self-talk; if required write it down
- ☒ Reframe the perspective
- ☒ Focus on breathing
- ☒ Recognize, have support systems and use them

To be useful, we need to practice the art of managing stress. We need to put in disciplined effort. Vision of usefulness provides the creative tension and our actions to resolve the tension is contingent on this. Mission of usefulness provides the drive and creates intermittent stress for accentuated and accelerated actions for usefulness. This vision and mission requires co-travelers in the journey of usefulness. They become mutual supporting systems. Defined values of usefulness would ensure that we remain on this path without getting into any detours.

Usefulness to the universe and realizing glorious potential within us are the two sides of the same coin. Consolidated realized glorious potential within us is the larger good to the universe. Our usefulness, therefore, is in our actions towards realizing the potential. These actions are actions of love. Love lets us attract our co-travelers to become teams of symphony for the universe. To be together in the symphony of the universe, we need to become one with the inner self.

Transition is for this oneness. For unbroken time together. The time is now. The universe signals readiness. The soul of the universe is beckoning. We have to get ready. The inner self has to take charge

in we getting ready and the body, senses and thoughts falling in line. As 'within' persists with 'transition', eternal togetherness in the universe is the way out.

This persistence of 'within' is the bliss! This is raadhavasantham.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue, persist and get ready! If we listen to the soul of the universe! If we respond to its call! If we set our vision and mission of usefulness! If we realize the creative tension of not being together with our 'within'! If we keep persisting with resolving this creative tension! If we let the 'within' to take charge! If we let the 'within' to take us in and climax! Krishna confirms –'within' is the universe and universe is 'within'. Therefore, universe pursues us to lose ourselves in the universe eternally.

Join us in the world of yoga –for being pursued by the universe, if only we are willing–towards krishnavasanthayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

77. Transition in Life

Yogakshemam March 2014

Telangana Appointed Day is 2 June. Preparations are going on at brisk pace.

9-phase Election Processes are in progress. Election Code is in vogue. Parties are finalizing alliances, seat sharing arrangements, vote sharing tactics, etc. Manifestos are being released. Candidates are being announced. Initial advantage appears to be with BJP. Middle Game and End Game will be critical.

Transition times, transition results, transition ways.

Transition is in the air.

Transition is for legacy and it needs us to live. Transition requires us to have 'life'. Transition requires linkages. Transition requires authentic leadership. Learning and of course, love are integral to transition.

Life could be divided into four phases –

1. Getting ready (initial learning, first 15-30 years);
2. Working (prime livelihood, second 0-40 years);
3. Transition (fulfilment beyond working, third 10-40 years); and
4. Towards nirvana (last 0-10 years).

Of these three phases, the third phase is the most mature and critical phase towards maximized usefulness to this universe. In this phase, we discover and realize our latent and inner potential with lasting impact and legacy. Obviously this begins with the self, but extends to the universe. We keep going forward. Transition means we are useful. Usefulness is the essence of transition. Transition combines wisdom of learning over the years, the realization of the potential of highest impact, ability, time, and purpose and brings forth usefulness of highest order. Transition is therefore a transformation. Transformation is caused collectively by thoughts, beliefs and intentions towards improvements in the ability, investments of time and aligning with the purpose.

The month has endorsed the importance of consistent writing for all our letters, documents, notes etc. We need to follow a style and format guide consistently. The elements of consistent, crisp and good writing that require norms to be followed include –

- ☑ American English vs British English vs Indian English, and exceptions
- ☑ Gender neutral language
- ☑ Size of the Page
- ☑ Justification of the Paragraph
- ☑ Header
- ☑ Footer
- ☑ Capitalization
- ☑ Lower, Upper Case
- ☑ Hyphenation
- ☑ Bullets, numbered bullets, sub-bullets
- ☑ Titles, Captions
- ☑ Headings
- ☑ Currencies

- ☒ Dates, Date Ranges, Years
- ☒ Time, Clock
- ☒ Units, Ranges, Weights and Measures
- ☒ Active Voice vs Passive Voice
- ☒ Indirect Speech vs Direct Speech
- ☒ First Person vs Third Person
- ☒ Hyphenation
- ☒ Numbers, ratios and fractions
- ☒ Line Space, Paragraph Space
- ☒ Paragraph indent
- ☒ Fonts and Font sizes
- ☒ Punctuation
- ☒ Bold vs underline vs italicize vs normal
- ☒ References
- ☒ Abbreviations/Acronyms, plurals of abbreviations
- ☒ Use of apostrophe
- ☒ Abstracts
- ☒ Power Point presentations

To be useful, we need to communicate. We need articulate communication. We need to write. We need to present. This requires practice and disciplined effort.

Transition for realizing glorious potential within us and usefulness to the universe is the same thing said in two different ways. Consolidated realized glorious potential within us is the larger good to the universe. Our transition, therefore, our usefulness is in our actions towards realizing the potential. These actions are combined actions to integrate learning, potential, invested time and effort. Integration lets us attract our co-travelers to become teams of symphony for the universe. To lead and to be led for the symphony of the universe, we need to become integral to the inner self.

This integration is the transition. The time is now. The inner self has to take charge now. Body, senses and thoughts fall in line now. As 'within' persists with 'transition', eternal integration in the universe is the way out.

This persistence with integration is the bliss! This is raadhapallavam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue, persist and get ready! If we go after the soul of the universe! If we respond to its call! If we set our values of integration! If we realize the creative tension of not becoming our identities on integration! If we keep persisting with resolving this creative tension! If we take charge together! If we climax together! Krsna confirms – together we are the universe and universe is 'us'. Therefore, universe pursues us and we pursue universe eternally.

Join us in the world of yoga – for mutual pursuance – towards krishnavapallavayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

78. Management

Yogakshemam April 2014

9-phase Election Processes are still in progress.

Transition continues to be in the air.

Management is a critical skillset for all of us in the business of transition and transformation.

In the four phases of life, most of us move into management positions. Management involves managing self, managing people and teams, managing projects and performance, managing institutions and managing information. Most of us moved into management with time. We have not prepared for ourselves for this. Therefore, we end up simply managing. Or *Simply Managing, courtesy Henry Mintzberg.*

Managing has three critical dimensions – information, people and action.

1. 50% of our management time is on information and communication as monitor, nerve centre, disseminator and spokesperson; followed by information and control via decision-making in terms of designing, delegating, authorizing, allocating, and deeming.
2. Managing People inside involves leading in terms of helping to energize individuals and develop individuals; helping to build and maintain teams; and helping to establish and strengthen culture. Managing People outside involves linking to them in terms of networking, representing, conveying and convincing, transmitting and buffering.
3. Managing Action translates as doing in terms of engaging in projects, handling disturbances, building coalitions, and conducting negotiations.

Competencies for Managing include –

- ☒ Personal Competencies – internal self-management, external self-management, scheduling
- ☒ Interpersonal Competencies – leading individuals, leading groups, leading units, administering, linking the units
- ☒ Informational Competencies – verbal communication, non-verbal communication, analyzing data
- ☒ Actional Competencies – designing, mobilizing

Managers cannot be created in the classrooms. Managing is learnt on the job, enhanced by a variety of experiences and challenges. Management Development Programs help them to make meaning of experience through reflection and sharing. Management Development should include organization development designed to drive change. Management Programs have to be around managerial mindsets

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- ☒ Reflection, about managing self
- ☒ Analysis, about managing organizations
- ☒ Worldliness, about managing context
- ☒ Collaboration, about managing relationships
- ☒ Action, about managing change

10 days in each module. 50 days over 3-6 months!

Managing naturally is seen as engaged to be engaging and connected to be connecting. From management to communityship!

Managing naturally is the way for transition for realizing glorious potential within us and usefulness to the universe. Our transition, therefore, our usefulness is in our actions towards acquiring information, people and action management and realizing the potential. Integration lets us identify and attract our co-travelers to become teams of symphony of action for the universe. This is managing naturally and simply. A platform for information. A channel for relevance. A coalition for networks. A team for teams. A portfolio of practices.

This is the transition. The time is now. The inner self has to take charge now. As 'within' persists with 'transition', universe leads eternal natural integral management within.

This persistence with living the nature's way is the bliss! This is prakritiramaneeyam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we go after the soul of the universe! If we respond to its call! If we follow the inseparable ways of prakriti. If we set our values of natural integration management! If we realize the creative tension of not becoming one with the nature! With the inner nature! If we keep persisting with resolving this creative tension! If handover charge altogether to the nature! Because that is simple, natural and lets us lost together! Krisna confirms – if we pursue the universe and the universe pursues 'us'. It lets us catch up and be with it eternally.

Join us in the world of yoga – for letting caught up – towards prakritipurushayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

79. 2014-Year of Transition

Yogakshemam May 2014

Election ends. Results are out. Narendra Modi wins.

It is confirmed 2014 is a transition year. I gathered that we have to start:

- ☒ Spending time with the right people
- ☒ Facing the problems head on
- ☒ Being honest with self about everything
- ☒ Making our own happiness a priority
- ☒ Being self, genuinely and proudly
- ☒ Noticing and living in the present
- ☒ Valuing the lessons from mistakes
- ☒ Being more polite
- ☒ Enjoying the things what we already have
- ☒ Creating our own happiness
- ☒ Giving our ideas and dreams a chance
- ☒ Believing that we are ready for the next step
- ☒ Entering new relationships for the right reasons
- ☒ Giving new people we meet a chance
- ☒ Competing against an earlier version of self
- ☒ Cheering for other people's victories
- ☒ Looking for the silver lining in tough situations
- ☒ Forgiving ourselves and others
- ☒ Helping those around us
- ☒ Listening to our own inner voices
- ☒ Being attentive to our stress level and take short breaks
- ☒ Noticing the beauty of small moments
- ☒ Accepting things when they are less than perfect
- ☒ Working toward our goals every single day
- ☒ Being more open about how we feel
- ☒ Taking full accountability for our own lives
- ☒ Actively nurturing our most important relationships
- ☒ Concentrating on the things we can control
- ☒ Focusing on the possibility of positive outcomes
- ☒ Noticing how wealthy we are right now

These 'starts' begin the transition and transformation through knowledge, people and action. These 'starts' take us to realizing glorious potential within us and usefulness to the universe. Let us establish the transition now - see the world around us in its various hues and colours, meet the people and communities around us in their various moods and ways, meet the institutions and people working

for/with the people in their own ways and forms, and take the walk around with co-travelers in transition and transformation.

As our co-travelers walk around, see the world together, listen to the people and communities, and interact with the people who are making a difference, the teams of symphony of action for the universe evolve and emerge. This is natural and simple evolution of transition to transformation. These teams anchor platforms for information, channels for relevance, and coalitions for networking. A team for teams would emerge to anchor a portfolio of practices for spreading on a universal scale.

This is the transition led transformation. Now is the time. The inner self is in-charge now. As 'within' commands 'transition', universe takes charge, mentors and guides eternal natural evolution and integration within.

Keep acting in response to the command of the 'within' is the bliss! This is prakritimaanasaam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we respond to the universe! If we catch its calls and signals! If we listen to the signals of the 'within'! If we see the oneness of the 'within' and the 'universe'! If we remain glued to the ways of prakriti! If we set our values for playing along with the natural evolution and integration ways of the universe! Of the inner nature! If we live within these set values! If we can allow 'within' to take charge fully! This is natural. This lets us lost 'within' and therefore in the universe! Krisna confirms – if we go with the inner universe and the universal universe pursues 'us'. It takes us in it.

Join us in the world of yoga – for going with 'within' – towards viswamaanasaayasiddhi. You will not regret it.

80. Lens of Krishna-Transcending Transition

Yogakshemam June 2014

Happy Environment Day!

Let the people cope with the changing climate!

Let people be more simple and natural!

Narendra Modi is now in charge of India.

Understanding Krishna's song from the lens of Krishna as a man is essential for taking steps towards transcending transition. These include -

- ☐ Tend to be a Stithapragna – sorrow does not fail his pulse and joy does not make his heart beat faster;
- ☐ Tend to move away from Desire, Fear and Anger in the mind
- ☐ Tend to be attached to things or persons – be attached to their qualities
- ☐ This is possible if we remain focused and meditate on the universe
- ☐ Realizing action is an essential part of existence, we need to get going without attachment to the results of these actions
- ☐ These actions should be intended for the benefit of the universe at large. Then the sin or the benefit would not bond us and we remain free.
- ☐ This universe has seen the time from ancient times to now and it would see the future for ages. Universe has taught us what is right and what is naturally right. Universe is there always, era after era, technology after technology, and it finds ways to purge elements that are not useful to the universe. The universe waits but acts surely.
- ☐ Ways to merge in Universe are many and all of them lead to the universe even if we do not realize. Universe is kind to accept all ways, always.
- ☐ Becoming free from all bondages except the impending merger in universe is the bliss. This state of mind takes us to remain one with the universe now itself rather than in the 'end'.
- ☐ Pleasures that arise from attachment are transitory and they are sources of pain. The way out is to get out of these attachments with a beginning and an end.
- ☐ This would mean we continue to do what we are supposed to do, as dictated by the universe in its myriad ways.
- ☐ Therefore, renunciation is renunciation of desire for benefits for self. And whatever desire we have for the benefit for the universe, universe would guide us to realize it.
- ☐ Universe is everything. Every micro-cosm is a miniature replica of an element of the universe. All that is part of the universe is the universe itself.
- ☐ Universe is the creator, sustainer and destroyer. It is Omnipresent. Omniscient. All powerful. Universe never sleeps and never less alert.
- ☐ Therefore, love the universe. Love the life. Love the nature. Love the beauty. Love the elements of the universe. We will surely become one with the universe. The true bliss, eternal joy, is there for us.

As many co-travelers, particularly who are making a difference or on the verge of making a difference, to the universe, join in this journey of transition, the transition would take us around, to see the world

together, listen to the people and communities, the symphony of action for the universe picks up momentum. We move from transition to transformation on a universal scale.

Now is the time. This is the bliss! This is munimaanaviswam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we flow with the transition! If we co-travel with the 'within'! If we go the ways of silent nature! Of the inner nature! If we can allow 'within' to take charge fully! This lets us lost 'within' and therefore in the universe! Krishna confirms – if we go the way of the universe and the universe takes us in.

Join us in the world of yoga – for going the way of the universe – towards amalahajamaanasayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

81. Pursuing Happiness

Yogakshemam July 2014

Let us learn to give and forgive!

Let us appreciate to work on stabilizing population in the world we live. Let us make space for tigers to increase in the world.

The month has endorsed that it is possible to live meaningful life with less, provided we are purpose driven. The most important aspects in life then would boil down to health, relationships, passion, freedom and contribution. It would mean getting rid of the internal mental and emotional clutter and material clutter that does not add value. It would then offer control on our focus, time and resources, so as to find and align our life with our values and beliefs.

The month has also confirmed that we can pursue happiness. Happiness seems to be a result of our genes, values and events in our lives. *48% of happiness is attributable to genes. 40% of happiness, although short-lived, is linked to isolated events. The remaining portion of happiness is in our control and emanates from the pursuit of faith, family, community (read: friendships) and work that creates value in our lives and others' lives.* To share happiness, we need to work towards ensuring that freedom to pursue happiness through meaningful work is accessible to all.

For enduring happiness, loving people is the way forward rather than loving pleasures. Unhappiness increases the activity in the right side of the brain and the happiness increases the activity on the left side of the brain. It is possible that we are happy quite often and unhappy equally. Pursuit of intrinsic goals such as relationships provides happier moments and pursuit of extrinsic goals such as reputation, money etc., provides more unhappy moments. Thus, as we love things rather than people and pursue things accordingly we attract more unhappy moments; and as we love people rather than things and pursue relationships, we attract more happy moments. We have to bold to love people – family, friends, associates, acquaintances, strangers, enemies, self and God. If you are in the 'development' world, it is possible. It would be liberating. It would be augmenting joy in life. It would require to be away from 'materialism'. It would require a lens to screen our basic desires too.

Daniel Kahneman distinguishes experiencing happiness versus remembering experiencing happiness. While we need to be pursuing the first, we end up focusing on the latter quite often. After a certain level, it is confirmed that the money does not buy experiential happiness while lack of money certainly buys misery.

Pattabhiram tells us to devote 1% of our time for stress free happiness – 15 minutes a day – laughing looking at the mirror as soon as we get up, being seated in vajraasan for five minutes, taking a sky walk for a minute, doing a crossword/puzzle/sudoku, give time to exchange mutual trust with family and friends by being, talking, embracing, touching and teaching them, and meditate.

As we move on to transformation from transition, towards universal happiness, we reach viswantaraalam. That is the bliss. Now is the time.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue happiness! If we pursue meaningful contribution to the universe, the way it desires! If we pursue people! If we remain focused! If we keep our focus on contributing and 'within' together! Krishna confirms – universe takes the contributor in eternally. Join us in the world of yoga – for contributing to the demands of the universe – towards antaraalamaanasayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

82. Freedom

Yogakshemam August 2014

Remembered Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's Let My Country Awake

Where the mind is without fear and the head held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action;

Can In to that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi's message on 15 August 1947 appears still relevant – "That state of mind which ensures complete freedom is what we must attempt to achieve and help all the living beings on earth to lead a happy life.

- ☐ *He went on to explain the meaning of the national flag. Chakra in the centre of our National Flag reminds us of the moral values. Further, the Chakra makes us contemplate on the spiritual discipline imparted by Krishna in the Gita. That Dharma which shines in the form of a Chakra is clear from Krishna's reference to the Chakra as "Evam pravartitam chakram" in the Gita. The three stripes of saffron, white and green indicate the prosperity, knowledge and strength. He wished us Dharma or Righteousness, Wealth/prosperity, Knowledge, Strength, Happiness and Moksha or Liberation.*
- ☐ *He wanted us to move from Nation having the freedom to we becoming independent. This would be possible if we understand ourselves fully, and if we try to control, albeit gradually the mind and set it at rest. For this to happen, every day at least some time should be set apart for practicing the control of mind and bereft of other thoughts. Then gradually, the mind would become calm. Spiritual knowledge would accrue to us fast if we practice this. Then we would truly become independent.*
- ☐ *He exhorted us - We must regard other living beings as we would regard ourselves. Even at the risk of death, truth alone must be spoken. Petty social feuds must be averted totally, Every one must strive for improving his knowledge and his spiritual attainments and move with others in an atmosphere of kindness. We must sincerely wish that all people should live happily and peacefully.*

This month reconfirms, for enduring happiness, loving life and people is the way forward rather than loving pleasures. Pursuit of intrinsic goals such as relationships provides happier moments. As we love people and pursue relationships, we attract more happy moments. We have to bold to love people – family, friends, associates, acquaintances, strangers, enemies, self and God. It would be liberating. It would be augmenting joy in life. Of course, we need to reduce the deficit in trust with family and friends by being, talking, embracing, touching and teaching them, and meditate.

As we transform towards greater universal happiness, we are on viswaamalaanandaabhiyaan. That is the journey of the bliss. Now is the time.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue the journey! If we pursue being independent! If we pursue people! If we build relationships! If we remain at it! If we keep our focus on

the journey of transition and transformation! Krishna confirms – journey is the way forward to become one with universe for good.

Join us in the world of yoga – for being on the journey of transformation – towards antahkaranasuddhisiddhi. You will not regret it.

83. Illusions

Yogakshemam September 2014

Remembered Richard Bach's Illusions:

- ☒ The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other's life. Rarely do members of one family grow up under the same roof
- ☒ Your conscience is the measure of the honesty of your selfishness. Listen to it carefully
- ☒ You're never given a dream without also being given the power to make it true
- ☒ What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly
- ☒ It's important. We are all free to do whatever we want to do
- ☒ Negative attachments - if you really want to remove them from your life, you just relax and remove them from your thinking. That's all there is to it
- ☒ There is no such thing as a problem without a gift for you in its hands
- ☒ You're always free to change your mind and choose a different future, or a different past
- ☒ You are never given a wish without also being given the power to make it true. You may have to work for it however
- ☒ The only obligation we have in any lifetime is to be true to ourselves
- ☒ Learning is finding out what you already know. Doing is demonstrating that you know it. Teaching is reminding others that they know just as well as you. We are learners, doers and teachers simultaneously
- ☒ Happiness is a choice. It is not always an easy one Real 'illusions'!

Then remembered the star of the eyes, as the eyes moisten a bit, is the 'letter' to remind us that we need to coexist and flow together till the end.

"... I long for the richness and fullness of further development... you unable to go back, I unable to go forward, in a constant state of struggle

.... Away and apart or together and apart, it is too unhappy ...

.... my precious friend ... the glorious climactic expression of a relationship grown to full blossom (!) glad to know I recognized the rare and lovely opportunity we had while we had it, and gave all I could, in the purest and highest sense, to preserve it...."

This month reconfirms, we are only instruments of the master. When 'amma' was detected with adeno carcinoma, surgery appeared a sure solution. Definitive procedure was to be abandoned on the surgery table as it was found to be aggressive and fast spreading as a creeper, and touched most of the key organs. We can only pray for her smooth and less painful departure. Life has to go on for the rest of us.

Amidst all this, our heart and mind are busy reflecting on what we pursue and why. The reflection reconfirms 'hurrying' up transition and transformation processes towards augmenting joy in life in inching towards merger in the universe.

As we transform, we are on viswapravaahasangamayogam. Journey of the bliss. Now is the time.

Can we be there?

Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue the journey! If we stay on course! If we go on and keep flowing! If we as travelers hold on to each other! If we grow on each other's strengths and complement each other! If we try experiencing the joy of flowing together! If we help ourselves outgrow our own

selves, through mutual inspiration and support! Krishna confirms we merge in the universe and we become the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for flowing and transforming together – towards viswakrsnaikyayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

84. The Art of Now

Yogakshemam October 2014

Floods in Kashmir/Srinagar: loss more than Rs.25,000 crore!

Hudhud Cyclone hit North Coastal Andhra/Visakhapatnam: Loss more than Rs. half a lakh crore!

I chanced upon the art of NOW. Relevant to the dot now. Our brightest future is a function of our ability to pay attention to the present. The six steps to living in the moment are –

1. To improve our performance, we should stop thinking about it (we should be unselfconscious). We need to focus on things outside of ourselves. We need to be one with things outside of us. We need to focus on the experience. We need to let ourselves go
2. To avoid worrying about the future, we need to focus on the present, relishing or luxuriating or savoring in whatever we are doing at the present moment
3. If we want a future with our significant other, we need to inhabit the present, breathe. We need to focus on our breathing
4. To make the most of time, we need to lose track of it. We need to flow. We flow when we are engrossed in a task such that we lose track of everything else around us. We feel as if our awareness merges with the action we are performing
5. If something is bothering us, we need to move toward it rather than away from it. We need to accept. We need to let the emotion be there, without judging it, clinging to it, or pushing it away. Acceptance relieves us of this extra suffering
6. We need to know that we don't know. We need to be engaged in the passing moment, without losing ourselves in our thoughts. This is possible if we look for new things

We can become mindful at any moment just by paying attention to our immediate experience. We can do it right now, by becoming the witness and observing the moment through our five senses, without judging it. Let us wake up, become aware of being alive, and breathe. Nothing happens next. It's not a destination. This is it.

This month, as we live in the NOW, reconfirms we are only instruments of the master. 'Amma' settled back in the village living on saline, with no hope in her eyes and heart. Star of the eyes has gone invisible, inaudible, away from touch, feel, smell, and taste. A young colleague has suffered a bad accident in the Himalayan roads and recovering. We pray for the master to respond. Life has to go on.

Amidst all this, the heart and mind are persisting with reflecting on way forward. It reconfirms and reminds the need for flowing with the spotless. It reconfirms the urgent need for transition and transformation. It assures the joy in life in inching towards merger in the universe. As we flow, we are on pravaahanairmalyayogam. Journey of parivartan. Journey of the bliss. Now is the time.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue flowing! If we stay on course! If we live in the now with all the senses in tandem! If we have our thoughts, words and deeds are in sync! If the dark and the spotless flow hand in hand, reinforcing each other, taking all that comes in the way along forward in the flow! Krishna confirms being in the now with complete devotion in the spotless is the surest way for becoming one with the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for being in the now and flowing together – towards jagannaatakakrishnayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

85. Learning from Gita

Yogakshemam November 2014

Let us remember Dr V Kurien!

As my mother rested for good on 21 November 2014, I have been spending my time village, Gundrampally, in mourning (shraddha) reflecting. I have heard Gita several times during this period and I thought of presenting its brief summary, even if it means repetition -

A 700+ verse (in 18 chapters) Gita, a sub-part, within the epic, Mahabharata, is a great source of inspiration to many of us. In Gita, we see three dominant threads – life of dharma, renunciation with enlightenment and devotion. It synthesizes yoga of knowledge, yoga of action, yoga of transcendence and yoga of devotion. It brings together Vedanta, Samkhya and Bhakti. In some sense, it is a field book (practitioner's guide) to reorganize our inner ways of thinking, feeling, and action in our everyday lives, based on knowledge, devotion and action wherein results are automatically taken care, towards liberation or union (yoga) with the ultimate or universe of reality, progressively from karma to bhakti to gyana.

Karma would be 'inaction in action and action in inaction' without attachment. This would mean desireless action, renouncing fruits of action, dedicating all action for yoga, and surrendering oneself body and soul. This would mean control of all mental desires and tendencies for transient pleasures.

Bhakti would have two elements - faith (sraddha) and total surrender. It includes meditation on the universe, free from ill will for any life (creature).

Gyana would have wisdom and knowledge, and cosmic experience at the micro-level and microcosmic realization at the cosmic level. Seeing the difference between the body and the knower of the body and knowing the way out of the material bondage forms the key means on the path of gyana.

Gita's essence includes:

- ☐ Fight (action) with knowledge and detachment;
- ☐ Regulate senses and be fixed on being part of the Universe;
- ☐ Prepare and wait for bonafide Guru to appear;
- ☐ Know that knowledge-seeking and action are not contradictory;
- ☐ Fix consciousness on the Universe (sum total of all souls);
- ☐ Sankhya, Karma, Gyana and Dhyana Yogas are the stepping stones towards Universal Consciousness
- ☐ Of these, Dhyana is superior and constant practice with determination is the key
- ☐ Know that everything in existence is a combination of material and spiritual energies of this Universe
- ☐ Dhyana Yoga with devotion is the way to joining the Universe
- ☐ Universe creates, maintains and annihilates
- ☐ Universe seeks intense devotion, not any specific offering
- ☐ Devotion itself destroys ignorance if any in the devotee
- ☐ Then the devotee becomes the instrument of the Universe for the purposes of the Universe
- ☐ Servicing the Universe directly is superior and all other paths end up in this path in due course
- ☐ Freedom from material entanglement comes from the knowledge of the material nature – saathvik, rajas and tamas and dissociation from lower order material nature

- ☒ Complete Surrender to Universe in devotion can transcend these modes
- ☒ Universe is everything; it is the splendor of the sun, it is the fire of digestion, it is the brain, it is the heart.
- ☒ Lust, anger and greed are the key elements of demonic mentality and therefore, need to be given up
- ☒ In conclusion, Gita persuades us to practice love and devotion to the Universe.
- ☒ When the surrendered devotee and the Universe co-exist in harmony, the victory is theirs.

This month, as we reflect, reconfirms we are only instruments of the Universe. 'Amma' gave up the fight and rested, within two days of being off from the drip. We pray for her soul to rest in peace. And we get going. Life has to go on. A jhalak of the plain star in the eyes!

As we inch forward, we are on vairaagyayogam. Journey of sristi after laya.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we pursue pursuit! If we renounce the unpursuable! If we allow annihilation of indiscipline of our senses! If we let our thoughts, words and deeds be in sync! If we truly let ourselves be the instruments! Krsna confirms practitioner of love becomes surely one with the universe. Join us in the world of yoga – for being in sync – towards swatiyogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

86. Transition in Long Term

Yogakshemam December 2014

I remember my friend SS Manoharan!

Completed the Shraddh rites for the mother and went into deep reflective mode! Slowly, getting back, with the reconfirmation that we are only instruments of the Universe!

As the endorsement comes to what Sugunasri articulated 'within manifests without', the reflection has been trying to answer two existential questions –

Where am I coming from?

Where am I going to?

In essence, this reflection has provided me the basis for this transition I am going through and embarked upon. This would have been more beautiful if the clear sky, pure flowing water, plain lands with flora and fauna, cleansing fire and gentle east pleasant wind are with me. I had only a jhalak of them during this period!

A family in Telangana that migrated at least once in every generation, with no land and wealth. No schooling till 7. A residential school admission made all the difference, but residential college gave a miss. Miracle happened so that I could be in residential college at Nagarjunasagar and lived on the banks of river Krishna.

Sunkenpally, Gundrampally, Sarvail, Sagar, Warangal, Guntur, Anand, Visakha, Hyderabad – a wonderful journey!

Engineer, Teacher, Community Coordinator, Officer-in-charge, Project Manager, Life Worker, Adviser, Mentor, Editor, Lead ... – an exciting evolution, with an array of mentors in a string of institutions of significance in our country and outside!

Now, the transition in the horizon for a next long-term agenda of flowing freely towards building, supporting and mentoring national development and livelihoods movement with leadership. This would include people, knowledge, communication, training, projects/programmes. Institutions/organizations.... This would include scale. This would include variety and diversity. This hopes 'within' manifests without builds, supports, mentors and lets me flow, individually and together.

Borrowing the words of Bill George in True North, transition is into third phase of giving back (being useful to the universe the way it wants to our fullest potential) after the second phase (leading) and the first phase (preparing to lead). Therefore, the way forward would include persisting ('any way') with clear direction (of the flow) and seeking help from support structures (that will not let us lose the direction).

The timing of all this is what our hearts take a call. Let us allow our hearts to take charge. This is hridayaraagayogam. Flowing with the melody of the inner flute.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we use the tools of the mind to make the heart into a flute to be played! If we allow our hearts to be touched by the inner self to play on our hearts! If the heart gets to live with the clear skies, natural lands, serene waters, cleansing flames and gentle breezes! If we let our thoughts, words and deeds be in sync with the heart governed by the universe! If we let

without manifest within so that within manifests without! If we truly let ourselves be the flute! Krsna confirms a ready flute articulating its readiness would be played and the song would be the song of the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for being in sync –towards krsnaraagayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

87. Sarvail: My Journey with Gurukulam

Yogakshemam January 2015

I remember Swami Vivekaananda! Also remember Mahatma Gandhi!

One of the strongest influences on us is the schooling. For me, this has been from the state-run Residential School and Residential College, equivalent of Gurukulam in the modern times.

Thanks to the initiative by PV Narasimha Rao, the combined AP set up the first three Residential Schools at Sarvail, Tadikonda and Kodigenahalli. I was in Sarvail. Soon, Junior College came up at Nagarjuna Sagar. I was there. Their influence and the influence of the teachers and the co-students on us have been life changing. It has made all the difference in our lives.

Traditional Gurukulams in new incarnation! Getting up in the Brahma Muhurat every day, reciting Gandhi's Ekadasa Vrata (Ahimsa et al), in the school assembly by 0700 hrs followed by classes, going beyond the text books, post-lunch supervised assignments, Then it was time for pursuit of special interests and tutorials, followed by games and sports, and evening roll-call where we recite 'yambrahma...' on gita. Self-study with teacher in the vicinity, after early dinner, would end the day, taking some time for individual and peers.

Gurukulams let us explore and understand our interests and potential. We were introduced to art, music, literature, etc. We learnt to use library and reference material. We read vignaanasarvasvam (encyclopedia). We did TulasiGanitam. We learnt cooperative competition. We had a balanced curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular portfolio of activities. We participated in district and state competitions, science exhibitions etc., to stand out clearly often. We tried and many of us won Olympiads, and talent search examinations. We were public persons 24X7, except for the sleeping time. We practiced 'management'. We led and we were led. We missed our families. But, this was compensated well with our ever-available Gurus, loco(local) parents. We became part of their families.

The early Principals (Sastri, Penchalaiah, Srinivasa Reddy, Suguna etc.) and early teachers (Rama Murthy, BLN, Ramanamurthy, Sridhar, Vidya, Vijayaraghavaacharyulu, Goli Venkatramaiah et al), initial batches of students and Venka Reddy at the helm made a huge difference to establishing Gurukulam tradition, with 1:10 teacher: student ratio.

We did well in public examinations. There were state ranks in good numbers. We did well in various admission tests and joined the prestigious institutes. Finally, many of us are working in sought after careers in the public domain and in the professional domains. Our alumni are known for their dedicated service wherever they are. Amongst us, there are state, national and international public servants; there are social, business and political leaders; there are managers/executives in non-government, government and business organizations; there are successful professionals, entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs; etc. There is no sector in which our alumni are not there – healthcare, engineering, IT, architects, chartered accountants, various civil services, arming, yoga, politics, outsourcing, contract services, infrastructure, roads and buildings, trade unions, education, various businesses, etc. There are distinguished stars in these sectors. And now, they started receiving awards at state and national levels. As alumni we started 'pay back'.

These results led to increase in residential schools in each district/sub district, for boys, and for girls. For all meritorious in general and other social categories. The two states together produce about 10,000/year alumni together.

We also have abhyudaya schools (residential) for STs now. Importantly, the country set up a navodaya school in each district, producing some half a lakh alumni every year.

On this reflection, it appears essential that we take the Gurukulam to all in general, the poor and meritorious in particular. This should form part of the transition agenda now. *I am sure, clearly the sky, the water, the earth, the fire and the wind would come along.*

This is viswavidyayogam. Playing to the tune of the inner flute.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we let our thoughts, words and deeds be in sync with the heart governed by the universe! If we truly let ourselves be the flute, the instrument, in the hands of the universe! Krishna confirms no ready instrument would be left out of the orchestra of the universe. Join us in the world of yoga –for being one with universe–towards krsnasangamayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

88. Living within Limits

Yogakshemam February 2015

This month, Nyla Coehlo (at Co-creating New Practice: 2nd National Workshop on Innovation in Livelihoods Education at XIMB, Bhubaneswar) has taken me to a new course. The set of interesting statistics urged us change our ways of living! Change our ways of development! She calls for an effective sustainable relevant development! Transformation! Paradigm Shift!

Learning is an intuitive, instinctive phenomenon. Organized and systematized education is a relatively recent entrant globally. Some serious shortcomings in the present system of school education appear to be:

- ☒ It fails to address in any effective way serious current issues such as the climate crisis, the energy crisis, the food and health crisis, the loss of community, environmental degradation etc.;
- ☒ It fails to the specific educational needs of rural, pastoral, tribal, migrant, marginalized, artisan communities, etc.;
- ☒ It fails to discuss violent conflict over essential natural endowments (land, water, air, forests, minerals, fossil fuels), financial instability, inequity in resource and energy distribution, degenerate value systems, persistent poverty;
- ☒ The learning environment is not yet child friendly and child centric, with emphasis on learning by rote;
- ☒ There is hardly any provision for the learning of necessary life skills.

These shortcomings need to be addressed.

We have made a mistake of misusing and privatizing the three basic necessities of life namely land, water and air, instead of restricting ourselves to judicious usufruct rights over the biosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and the atmosphere. There are 9 broad environmental categories of indicators for safe operations within the Planetary

Boundaries (we are living in) identified so far –

- ☒ Biosphere integrity;
- ☒ Land use;
- ☒ Freshwater use;
- ☒ Nitrogen and phosphorus cycles;
- ☒ Stratospheric ozone;
- ☒ Ocean acidification;
- ☒ Climate change;
- ☒ Chemical pollution and novel entities; and
- ☒ Aerosol loading in the atmosphere.

We have overshot the safe boundaries already in 5 out of the 9, except land, water, climate and ocean acidification. Biosphere integrity is in a critical stage.

Socio-economic trends like population, urban population, real GDP, FDI, primary energy use, fertilizer consumption, large dams, water use, paper production, transportation, telecommunications, international tourism etc., and Earth system trends like Carbon dioxide, Nitrous oxide, Methane, Marine fish capture, Shrimp aquaculture, Nitrogen to coastal zone, tropical forest loss, Domesticated land,

Terrestrial biosphere degradation etc., show a frenzied activity over the last 50-60 years. It is like the past 50-60 years have compensated for the past 5000-10000 years and more.

Historically, civilizations have collapsed when ecological services have collapsed or energy surplus has been exhausted. Also historically prior to such a collapse there has been frenzied activity, great show of prowess, (false) sense of power and control, exuberance, celebration...akin to what we see in most parts of the globe. We are seeing destruction of all life support systems – land, forests, rivers, food etc., and we are seeing intolerance towards dissenting voices.

For society and world to move forward with resilience, it is necessary at the earliest to transform the central paradigms of our times –anthropocentricity and cheap and affordable energy – to the new ones – universe centricity (ecozoic), earth/living systems and limits to energy.

This new worldview needs to be central in our development discourse and dialogue, policy advocacy at various levels of governance in this world and our ways and content of education so that the cultural transformation begins to get grounded. The elements of the way forward include functional communities close to land, water, air and energy (sun), collaboration, cooperation, simple living that meets basic needs, volunteerism, localization, communitization, commons, ecosystems that meet life's needs and livelihoods.

On this reflection, aided by Nyla (I met her again, may not be a coincidence!) it appears essential that we take this jolt and begin our transition to the new path quickly. *I am sure earth systems without any doubt come along with living systems.*

This is viswajeevayogam. Inner flute in communion with the intrinsic tune of the universe!

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we listen to the signals and signature tunes of the universe

through its agents! If we truly let the universe play its ragas through us as its flutes! Krsna confirms universe is

in the instrument and instrument is in the universe. Join us in the world of yoga – for being the universe – towards naranaaraayanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

89. Experiences

Yogakshemam March 2015

This month, Stuffocation by James Wallman has reinforced the need for experience over possession(s); to do over to have; to be an experientialist. It points out that 'experience' is better in making us happy because –

- ☒ Experiences are more prone for positive re-interpretation, even if they appear unpleasant or embarrassing at that moment;
- ☒ Experiences are not prone to getting used to;
- ☒ Experiences are less likely comparable;
- ☒ Therefore, experiences are more conducive for well-being than material goods;
- ☒ Experiences are viewed as contributing to and part of our identities; and
- ☒ Experiences bring us closer to other people.
- ☒ Ofcourse, the unintended consequences of having is stress, unhappiness and stuffocation.

The way forward is de-stuffocate – get rid of all that we do not use for a month or a year; do not re-stuffocate; and stop adding anything physical to show. Can we do this?

The 7 habits, if we commit to, would help us in this journey of 'experience' –

Tools to analyse

1. Know our stuff (ask how often we use our possessions, how much do we really need, and do our things give us experiences that make us happy)
2. Find our ladder (to do something we love) (ask do we love the ladder we are on – the work we do, what do we talk when we are with our friends, and what do we aspire for)

Principles to live by

3. Be here now (absorbed in the present flow) (ask do we want to do what we are doing now, are we utterly absorbed in the moment, and why are we doing this)
4. Be our own audience (ask are we doing this for ourselves, are we doing to impress others, and would we do if no one knows about this)

Shortcuts to smarter spending

5. Put People First (at crossroads ask will we do this with others, how might we do with others and will this spending money, time and energy bring us closer to other people)
6. Spend Well and Feel Good (ask will we feel good with this spend, is it of use now really, are we spending time and energy on what matters to us)
7. Choose Life, Choose Experience (ask are we investing in an experience, are we not adding any thing physical at the end of the day/month/year, and does it create a memory)

On this reflection, Experiential Life is the critical part of the transition we are seeking. This would include spending time with the communities, spending time with the people working with the communities, spending time with the people who make life better and happier for the communities and increasing the number of people who do this. This would mean increasing influencing efforts. This would mean networking. This would mean coming together of people working for the communities. This would mean collectivization. This would mean communitization. This would mean rationalization. This would mean merging communitization and professionalization with capacities. This would mean increase experience in the hands of the communities to choose. Through those who graduated. Through the process videos.

Through the exposures and immersions. Through the story, song, dance and drama. Through showing the elephant. Through the bird's view and worm's view.

This is viswaanubhavayogam. Playing the inner flute as part of the orchestra of the universe!

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we look around and pick up the hues of the orchestra of the universe through its various instruments! If we truly sync into the orchestra of the universe and play the flute as a part! Krsna confirms flute is a part of the orchestra of the universe and flute becomes on with the orchestra.

Join us in the world of yoga –for joining the orchestra of the universe and losing in it – towards krsnabrindagaanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

90. Making Power Work for Us

Yogakshemam April 2015

This month, The Power Book by Rose Herceghas introduced various (200) ways to make power work for us, in being useful to the universe, and in serving the universe as we flow forward.

These include –

- ☒ Zip it – few relevant words and reassuring smile
- ☒ Wearing it lightly – now show of power
- ☒ Taking a breath (before responding)
- ☒ Being funny and merciful
- ☒ Keeping some things for ourselves (a little mystery is good)
- ☒ Being patient
- ☒ Getting straight to the point (as quickly as possible)
- ☒ Speaking up in the meeting (not after it)
- ☒ Getting to know the person (deeply)
- ☒ Looking good everyday
- ☒ Putting people at ease
- ☒ Inculcating the desire in others to be great
- ☒ Feeling the vibe in the room
- ☒ Addressing each one by name
- ☒ Taking back control, when absolutely necessary
- ☒ Displaying high energy
- ☒ Moving away from Powerpoints
- ☒ Being current
- ☒ Showing backbone when it matters
- ☒ Just moving forward
- ☒ Looking for counter-trends
- ☒ Taking time off, seeking solitude
- ☒ Picking the talent
- ☒ Saying no
- ☒ Reinventing oneself
- ☒ Calling an audible (change course seeing the context)
- ☒ Having faith in people
- ☒ Important is more important than urgent
- ☒ Taking the sleepover test
- ☒ Picking the road less travelled
- ☒ Having a Plan B
- ☒ Planting the seed and walking away
- ☒ Remembering our story, our history

- ☐ Reading a book, reading the book
- ☐ Having a concern with impact, every time
- ☐ Making peace with uncertainty and needing nothing
- ☐ Enduring criticism without resentment
- ☐ Being worthy of trust
- ☐ Guarding the reputation with one's life
- ☐ Delivering the promise
- ☐ Creating a vacuum
- ☐ Knowing we are not God and behaving accordingly
- ☐ Forgiving
- ☐ Asking great questions and telling great stories
- ☐ Having gratitude

The way forward is making the power in our hands as a good kind. Can we do this?

This is sakthisivayogam. Using the power in the hands for the good of the universe!

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we look around and pick up the hues of the power play of the universe through its various power players! If we truly visualize the power of the universe and enhance it with our little power play! Krsna confirms we are energy beings and our high-energy power play is integral to the power play of the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga –for flowing with the energy of universe and playing the high-energy game – towards krsnaraasayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

91. Five Choices

Yogakshemam May 2015

This month, *The 5 Choices: the path to extraordinary productivity* (by Kory Kogon, Adam Merrill and Leena Rinne) introduces time management redefined to increase the productivity and empower the individual to make more selective high impact choices about where to invest our valuable time, attention and energy. The 5 Choices –

1. Act on the Important; do not react to the urgent
 - ☐ Get out of working under pressure feeling
 - ☐ Do not procrastinate
 - ☐ Do not accommodate other's work
 - ☐ Do not be afraid to say no
 - ☐ Practice Pause-Clarify-Decide
 - ☐ Have a Time Matrix and go with it
2. Go for Extraordinary; do not settle for ordinary
 - ☐ Celebrate-Assess-Validate the role and performance for extraordinary
 - ☐ Have a Purpose that is linked to Passion
 - ☐ Set Tangible Goals
3. Schedule the Big Rocks; do not sort gravel
 - ☐ Prepare Master Checklist
 - ☐ Spend 30 minutes each week and 10 minutes each day on planning
 - ☐ Allocate specific timeslots
 - ☐ Review roles and goals, schedule the big items, organize the rest
4. Rule the Technology; do not let it rule us
 - ☐ Manage the Core 4 – appointments, tasks, contacts, notes/documents
 - ☐ Practice 3 Master Moves – win without fighting (automate the routine); organize; link to locate (information when needed)
5. Fuel the fire; do not burn out
 - ☐ Manage the 5 Energy Drivers – Move, Eat, Sleep, Relax, Connect
 - ☐ Take physical and brain breaks; take the stairs; take a walk; keep walking; exercise
 - ☐ Eat high-quality natural colourful calories, fats, proteins, complex carbohydrates; eat 4-6 times a day; drink plenty of water; take careful nutrition supplements
 - ☐ Be serious about sleep; manage fixed timings; seek sleep environment and avoid disturbances
 - ☐ Take quiet breaks, power naps, walks, treks; pursue hobby; talk to friends; listen to music; watch movies; meditate/do yoga; take deep breaths; read, write; explore
 - ☐ Keep calm when the heat is on; write down and challenge automatic negative thoughts
 - ☐ Invest time, have and maximize human moments by physical presence and complete attention; make eye contact, listen, relax without any hurry

As we make more decisions than ever, as our attention is under unprecedented attack, and as we are suffering from a personal energy crisis, the way forward is becoming an extraordinary productivity leader. Can we be? We can be one by:

- ☑ Explicit public commitment to the purpose
- ☑ Time Matrix culture
- ☑ Strategic pauses
- ☑ Positive rituals
- ☑ Rewarding the important
- ☑ Defined goals and roles
- ☑ Planning and scheduling
- ☑ Using thinking brain more than the reactive brain

This is raamajaanakiyogam. Purpose-centric! Being conscious in the moment!

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we focus our attention on the universe! If we truly connect with the life in the universe and enhance it with our little attention and care! If we truly care ourselves! If we truly care for usefulness to universe with extraordinary productivity leadership! Krsna confirms we are social beings and being connected with the universe and its various play partners is our extraordinary social purpose.

Join us in the world of yoga – for flowing with the play of life of universe and connecting with the universe with extraordinarily ordained usefulness –towards viswakalyanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

92. Lessons Life has Taught Me

Yogakshemam June 2015

Happy Monsoon!

Happy Yoga!

This month, the find I have is “LESSONS life has taught me” by JP Vaswani. Dalai Lama says is life of Dharma. These include –

- ☒ We are not alone. In the endless adventure of existence, we have our unfailing companions. Just look around.
- ☒ Everything happens to us at the right time, to the right person at the right place.
- ☒ If we surrender fully, we shall be free from fear, anxiety, worry, stress and tension. All we need to do is hand ourselves over, with childlike trust.
- ☒ Thought is a tremendous force in our life. Thoughts shape our attitudes. Attitudes mould our character. Character influences our life. By changing our thought pattern, we can change our life.
- ☒ Problems are stepping stones to a better, richer and more radiant life. Problems help us to crack our shells so that ‘grace’ can enter our lives.
- ☒ Neither rites nor rituals, neither creed nor ceremonies are required to improve the condition of the world. All that is needed is love to one another and all.
- ☒ If we want to get ‘one’, we need to lose ourselves and become ‘one’s’.
- ☒ We know we are coming closer to liberation, if our hearts are becoming more tender and compassionate to the needs of those around us.
- ☒ The best exercise fir heart is to reach down and lift up as many as we can.
- ☒ Life is too short to be spent in fault-finding, holding grudges or keeping memory of wrongs done to us. Forgive and forget, even before it is asked for.
- ☒ If we have moved in the wrong direction, we need not worry. Let us make the U-turn. The past does not and cannot bind us.
- ☒ Let us open our eyes and see, we find miracles all around us. A seed grows into a tree. A caterpillar becomes a butterfly.
- ☒ Let us open our hearts to let love in. Love is the power that pulls. All things in the universe gravitate to us.
- ☒ Let us give, give and give. This releases us from the bondage of the ego and to the things.
- ☒ We must never forget that every thought, every word, every action, every feeling and every emotion is recorded in the memory of the nature. We may be able to deceive those around us, may be ourselves, but we cannot deceive nature.
- ☒ When we are vexed with a problem and tried hard to find a way out and could not, had over to the Universe, it shows a way and takes care of it.
- ☒ Universe wants us to work for it in love.
- ☒ The more we love, the more we know. The key to knowledge is love.
- ☒ An infinite potential lies hidden within us. We are unaware of it. There can be no limit to what we can do and achieve.
- ☒ Enlightenment comes to us when we are ‘graced’. We can only strive for it.

- ☒ The greatest intoxication is that of the ego. The worst madness is that of anger. When we are free from arrogance and anger, we find goodness and beauty wherever we go.
- ☒ Insults are like bad coins. We cannot avoid them but we need not accept them.
- ☒ The test of a person is how much s/he can bear, and how much s/he can share and how soon s/he confesses a mistake and makes amends for it.
- ☒ Think positively. Eat sparingly. Exercise regularly. Walk as much as we can. Be careful to see that our thoughts and actions are clean.
- ☒ Let us live these lessons.

This is nityajeevanayogam. Being conscious in the moment!

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we truly lose ourselves in the universe! If we truly love the universe! Krsna confirms if we walk towards the universe, we reach the universe, irrespective of the paths. In fact, we are already there as long as we are walking.

Join us in the world of yoga – for flowing in the river of life and losing ourselves in the universe – towards viswaantarangayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

93. Humanity

Yogakshemam July 2015

Happy Nature! Happy Population!

Happy Cooperatives!

Happy Mathematics!

Reinforcement of the month has been - If Panchasutra works well in our SHGs, it should give Panchaphalita: Identity (pahchaan), Solidarity (not alone), Access to Rights, Entitlements and Programs (hak), Well-being (better life and livelihoods), and Freedom (Choice). This is poverty reduction and empowerment.

Assuming Krsna is not a God gives us hope that we can also try and achieve near impossible things if we apply ourselves intensively and relentlessly. If we have hope and faith, we can. K has a plan always. Let us also have a plan always. Krishna Udayasankar's Govinda, Kaurava and Kurukshetra takes us on these thought paths.

How are we governed? Greater than apathy is duty (karma). Greater than duty is reason (jnana). Reason calls for sacrificing an individual for family, family for a village, village for a nation/universe. Greater than reason is compassion (bhakti). The system we protect must be worth the sacrifice. If not, the system needs to be changed. System that does not keep the very essence of existence (Sri) protected, needs to be overhauled. Existence and Universe coexist. There is no Naaraayana without Sri and there is no Sri without Naaraayana. Duty, Reason and Compassion are means to an end, the Truth is one. The Humanity. The Universe. The sum total of all souls. Faith in the humanity, faith in the universe is meaningless without faith in the individual. Each individual has a sense of duty, sense of reason and a sense of compassion coexisting in her/him. Therefore, the faith in the collective will of the humanity (individuals) to function as a collective reasoning being is not unfounded. It functions as one when the compassion in each individual takes supremacy over all other things and the collective will of the humanity could be exercised. Naaraayana and Sri co-exist.

No one person can save the world. The fact that we each try, against all odds, is what the world is worth saving for. We do what we do, not for the world but because of who we are. We are humanity. There is a quality inherent in each one of us that no ruler, no emperor, no lord can take away with or without due cause. Call it freedom, call it self-respect, call it self-determination. We need a system that guarantees these. We need to fight because it is our duty when something is ours to be done; we need to fight because reason demands that the world around must now change; we need to fight out of compassion to protect the weak and ensure justice; and we need to fight because we are human and we are humanity and we seek oneness. We seek to balance the living universe, fighting the imbalance.

Universe lives. Humanity lives. Dreams and Future live. Hope lives. Love, Friendship, Companionship and Life live.

This is janaswamyayogam. Having faith in the collective will of the humanity consciously! And surrendering to the infinite intelligence of universe!

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we truly let our compassion rule us and the universe! If we truly interpret reason with the lens of the compassion! If we truly apply the logic of the reason to our duties, responsibilities and commitments! If we truly let karma, jnana and bhakti take us forward towards surrendering to the humanity and the universe! If we truly listen to the universe within us! If we truly let Prakriti and Purusha to coexist with dignity! If we truly see the co-existence of life and death! If we truly get the essence of togetherness of Sri and Naaraayana! If we see the dance of the

inner self to the melodies from the flute of the universe! Krsna confirms if we intend intensely with hope, faith, plan and action, the universe conspires and takes us forward into it.

Join us in the world of yoga – for flowing along the paths of duty, reason and compassion towards losing in the universe – towards srinaaraayanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

94. Learning Leadership

Yogakshemam August 2015

Happy Guru Purnima! Let us remember all the Gurus who made a huge difference to our lives!

Happy Independence and Freedom!

Let us have Identity, Solidarity, Rights and Entitlements, Well-being (life and livelihoods) and Freedom, for all.

A Year with Peter Drucker (52 Weeks of Coaching for Leadership Effectiveness) by Joseph Maciariello reiterates that leadership learning is iterative. Key principles include:

- ☐ Leaders get the right things done and you can trust them; Trust would imply that leader means what he says.
- ☐ Leader is consistent with unquestionable integrity; adversity is the test of leadership.
- ☐ Leader makes the important as priority rather than the urgent
- ☐ Leader starts with what needs to be done
- ☐ Leader harmonizes short term and long-term agenda
- ☐ Leader focuses on areas with least effort that yield greatest impact
- ☐ Leader needs to abandon yesterday to create tomorrow
- ☐ Leader is not afraid of strength in associates
- ☐ Leadership is a responsibility
- ☐ Leaders delegate except setting standards
- ☐ Leader lifts a person's vision to higher sights, raises a person's performance to a higher standard and builds a personality beyond its normal limitations
- ☐ Leader is responsible for team performance and for community well-being
- ☐ Leader's purpose is make common men do uncommon things
- ☐ Leader needs to work on developing new concepts, new ways of seeing the world and new ways of relating to individuals, organizations etc.
- ☐ Leader needs to appreciate and handle the knowledge society together with its psychological pressures and emotional traumas
- ☐ Leader leads self, team, institution, program by practice and application of knowledge and wisdom
- ☐ Leader sets mission and uses it as a tool to force the team in that direction
- ☐ Leader sees opportunities, and spots and develops competence and commitment
- ☐ Leader knows that central planning does not work but the spirit needs to be intact
- ☐ Leader ensures the individual member a status and a function
- ☐ Leader builds leaders and works for legacy
- ☐ Leader puts the resources where results are
- ☐ Leader changes direction (towards impact outside of oneself) even if it is very late (in terms of age)
- ☐ Leader anticipates the future and readies for it and/or puts a new idea into practice to give direction and shape to the future
- ☐ Leader seeks true joy of life being useful significantly to the universe

- ☒ Leader goes beyond duty and reason, and acts with compassion. Leader combines duty, reason and compassion.
- ☒ Leader knows that knowledge has to be reaffirmed, relearned, and repracticed all the time
- ☒ Leader instills values so that members walk the extra mile, make the extra commitment, do the hardwork of rethinking, trying new things and rebuilding, in times of adversity
- ☒ Leader knows that values are the ultimate test; and ethics are a clear value system
- ☒ Leader mentors because s/he can envision what a person can become
- ☒ Leader loses track of time in doing things that matter
- ☒ Leader never stops unlearning and learning

Leader has manager in her/him and the manager has a leader in her/him. Each one of us is a leader. Leader lives. Humanity lives. Universe lives. Life lives.

This is loknaayakayogam. Having faith in the leadership of the humanity and universe consciously! And serving the leadership of universe!

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we truly let the universe lead us! If we truly listen to the universe within us! If we truly let our leadership flourish! If we let leaders grow into leadership! If we focus on the legacy of leadership! If we see the leader in us dancing to the melodies from the flute of the universe! Krsna confirms if Naraayana leads Nara with hope, faith, plan and action, the universe conspires and takes Nara forward.

Join us in the world of yoga – for flowing and leading our way of being useful to the universe and losing in it – towards srinaayakayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

95. Universe and Us

Yogakshemam September 2015

Let us be ready to have the Guru to enhance our capacities for increased usefulness to Universe.

'Transcendence' by APJ Abdul Kalam with Arun Tiwari hints, us to go forward on the path of creative leadership. The discussion includes:

- ☒ Eight attributes to have – faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness and love
- ☒ India 2020
 - Reduced rural urban divide
 - Equitable and adequate access to energy and water
 - Agriculture, Industry and Services work together
 - Education with a value system is not denied to any meritorious
 - Best destination for talented scholars, scientists and investors
 - Best health care available to all
 - Responsive transparent corruption free governance
 - Poverty-free, literate, crime-free (against women and children) without none feeling alienated
 - Prosperous healthy secure peaceful and happy with sustainable growth path
 - Best places to live and proud of its leadership

Sum up by Einstein: A human being is a part of the whole (universe), a part limited in time and space. Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

Sum up by Max Planck: There is no matter as such. All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force, which brings the particle of an atom to vibration and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter.

Bruce Lipton in 'The Biology of Belief': Life was an amalgam of science and spirituality. Every thought we are thinking, every movement we make, everything around is basically energy. Therefore, thoughts and intentions are very powerful when it comes to forming the reality we live in.

The process of awakening with energy is inevitable and natural, when it occurs. Once we become aware of our true nature and the world, there is no turning back. We are born with incredible intelligence, the ability to feel things intensely, and to create amazing works of art.

Spinoza integrates: In nature, there is nothing contingent, but all things have been determined from the necessity of the nature to exist and produce an effect in a certain way. Things could have produced in no other way and in no other order than they have been produced.

This is the highest virtue – the intellectual love/knowledge of the Universe

Spiritual action is applied at four levels – obedience, belief, understanding and knowledge. We begin to encounter true knowledge when let our spiritual principles be infinite.

JC Bose: Humans, animals, and plants are members of continuum of existence and this includes the inorganic world. There is no sharp demarcation between the realms of the living and non-living. At the

source of both the inner and outer lives is the same Mahashakti who powers the living and non-living, the atom and the universe.

Charles Darwin: All the organic beings that have ever lived on this earth may have descended from one primordial form.

James Lovelock: Gaia is a living breathing community of all living beings evolving in harmony with their non-living environment. All life is one. There is one common consciousness linking into one great cosmic unity.

It is about nine billion years since big bang, about 4.6 billion years of forming solar system and we may last another 1.1 billion years more.

Eight facets of creative leadership: fearlessness, courage, ethical living, non-violence, forgiveness, compassion, vision and cooperation.

We need fearlessness of Nachiketa, and the courage of Abdul Qadir. Leader needs to transcend the fears of poverty, criticism, ill-health, loss of someone's love, old age and death. Here, we are not talking temporary fears.

Creative leaders transcend five senses and use intuition, foresight, trust and empathy for peace. Moral fibre defines them.

These leaders practice non-violence, forgiveness and compassion. They lead with vision and corresponding action. They elicit cooperation. Collective action is their way.

Our inner and outer life depends on the labours of other living beings, living and dead, and that we must exert ourselves in order to give in the same measure as we received and are still receiving. Let us make our universe more livable to all of us.

Each one of us could be this leader.

This is srijananaayakayogam. Having faith in the potential leadership of us, the individuals, for serving humanity and universe consciously!

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we practice leading as led by the universe! If we open up to be infinite! If we practice fearlessness! If we practice transcending five senses! If we practice ahimsa, kshama and karuna! If we lead with vision for collective action! If we practice gracious gratefulness! Krsna confirms universe uses useful individuals and takes them in. Join us in the world of yoga – for flowing in the usefulness to the universe – towards srijanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

96. Systems Thinking on Life

Yogakshemam October 2015

Let Non-violence pervade all across! Happy Elders' Day!

Let us remember Gandhi, Shastri! Let us celebrate Centenary of Achaarya Konda Lakshman Bapuji!

United Nations unanimously resolves Agenda 2030 – Sustainable Development Goals/Global Goals. Hope this will be better implemented than the previous MDGs.

'The Systems of View of Life' [A Unifying Vision] by Fritzof Caora and Pier Luigi Luisi take us through a systemic conception of web of life – universe as a whole is a living self-regulating system. This includes:

- ☒ Systems Thinking is characterized by whole, multi-disciplinarity, relationships, mapping, qualities, processes, non-linearity, epistemic observations, approximate knowledge/understanding
- ☒ Life is a synergy of three domains – environment, cognition and autopoietic unit
- ☒ The world we see outside and the world we see inside are converging
- ☒ There are the different functions and components that combine and together produce a transient non-localizeable relationally formed self, which nevertheless manifests itself as a perceivable entity
- ☒ Evolutionary changes may be triggered by randomness and contingency, but the integration is a complex and highly ordered process, part of life's self-organization
- ☒ The complexity of Homo sapiens is Consciousness, spirituality, artistic creativity, abstract thinking and rationality intertwine with each other in an intricate maze
- ☒ Mind and body represent two complementary aspects of the phenomenon of life – process and structure
- ☒ Things derive their being and nature by mutual dependence and are nothing in themselves
- ☒ Enlightened wisdom (bodhi) includes intuitive intelligence (prajna) and compassion (karuna)
- ☒ Spirituality and spiritual experiences are fully consistent with modern science and systems view of life and deep ecology provides a bridge between science and spirituality
- ☒ Education and learning may include explicitly ecological and spiritual dimensions very early
- ☒ Living organism, read human, has a pattern (network of contents, matter), a structure (form), a set of processes (self-directed changes) and a meaning (purpose) and engages in some involuntary activities (survival) and in voluntary activities (freedom)
- ☒ Human organizations need to be alive and pursue life enhancing orientation and practice
- ☒ Fundamental interdependence between healthy soil, healthy individuals and healthy communities needs to be recognized and acted on
- ☒ Sustainable communities of plants, animals, microorganisms and 'non-life' evolve their patterns of living over time in continual interaction with the nature, as long as they do not interfere with the nature's inherent ability to sustain life
- ☒ Eco-literacy should include web of life (networks), flows of energy, cycles of nature, nested systems (living), dynamic balance (self-organization) and development
- ☒ Major problems of our time are systemic problems and require systemic solutions solving several problems simultaneously

- ☒ We are in a race between tipping points in nature and our systems. Can the Governments, Business, Civil Society and Community with transforming leaders work together?
- ☒ Transition to a sustainable future is possible but overwhelming
- ☒ Hope is a state of mind. Either we have hope within us or we do not. It is a dimension of the soul. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well. It is the certainty that something make sense regardless of how it turns out.
- ☒ Just as we need no morals to make us breathe, if our 'self' in the wide sense embraces another being(s), we care without feeling any moral pressure to do it. Can we extend our 'self'?

Each one of us could extend our 'self'. Each one of us could be the self-organizing life system of the universe.

This is viswavyaaptiyogam. Having hope in our ability to extend ourselves and widening and deepening ourselves for caring the universe, the life in the universe and the humanity in the universe without moral pressure, unconsciously, subconsciously and consciously!

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we practice breathing! If we practice focusing on breathing! If we practice breathing consciously! If we practice to see, hear, smell, taste, touch and feel the universe consciously! If we practice to see no difference in self and the universe! If we make universe to breathe consciously! If we see no difference whether we breathe or the universe breathes! If we just breathe without any pressure! If we widen and deepen ourselves without our effort! If we transcend ourselves! If we remain focused on being useful! If we remain away from interfering with infinite intelligence of the universe! Krsna confirms universe confirms extended self becomes one with the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for flowing in the care of the extended self, the universe – towards jeevayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

97. Idea of India

Yogakshemam November 2015

Let us remember Dr V Kurien!

Recently Modi recounts Idea of India eloquently in the Parliament –

- ☒ Satyameva Jayathe (Truth);
- ☒ Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah (Non-violence);
- ☒ Paudommein Paramaatma (God in Plants);
- ☒ Let good thoughts come from everywhere in the world;
- ☒ Sarva Panth Samabhavah (All spiritual paths are treated equal);
- ☒ Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (World is one family);
- ☒ Sarve Bhavanthu Sukhinah Sarve Santhu Niraamayah (Happiness, Prosperity, Health to All);
- ☒ Sahanaavathu Sahanaubhunakthu Sahaveeryam Karavaavahi Tejaswinaavadheetamastu Maavidwishaavahai (Protection and Nourishment to All, Working together with high energy, Sharpened intellect without hostility to All);
- ☒ Happiness in reducing the pain and suffering of all living beings;
- ☒ Devotion in God through empathy of the suffering of others;
- ☒ Daridraanarayan Seva (Serving the God in the poor);
- ☒ By actions, human becomes God;
- ☒ Naari Tu Naaraayani (Woman is Goddess);
- ☒ Yatra Naaryastu Pujyante Ramante Tatra Devataah (Where women are respected, there divinity blossoms);and
- ☒ Janani Janmabhoomi Swargaadapi Gariyasi (Mother and Motherland are more than Heaven)

Hope India works to this Idea of India with dignity to all. Hope we along with Modi move India of 12+1 religions, 122 languages and 1600 dialects with socio-cultural-economic diversity of various hues and nuances to this Idea of India truly.

Each one of us could extend our 'self' to this Idea of India truly. Each one of us could demonstrate and contribute our bit to this Idea of India.

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's poem is remembered -

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high

Where knowledge is free

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments

By narrow domestic walls

Where words come out from the depth of truth

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way

Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit

Where the mind is led forward by thee

Into ever-widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake

This Idea of India be real and let us work towards it. In this India, we have our individual identities; we are not lonely (we care and support others truly); we have capacity (ability – knowledge, skills, resources); we have our rights (and entitlements) secured/ accessed; we have our dignified well-being (decent livelihoods and lives) and we have freedom and choice(s).

This is bhaaratyatayogam. This is viswajaneenata. Having hope in our ability to extend ourselves and widening and deepening ourselves for caring India and the universe, the life in India and the universe and the humanity in India and the universe without moral pressure, unconsciously, subconsciously and consciously!

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we practice usefulness! If we practice focusing on being useful! If we practice usefulness consciously! If we practice to be useful to the universe with all senses - seeing, hearing, smelling, taste, touch and consciously! If we practice to see no difference in self and the universe! If we act useful without any pressure! If we widen and deepen ourselves to be useful effortlessly! If we transcend ourselves! If we play along with the infinite intelligence of the universe! Krsna confirms useful free individual in joy is always with the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for flowing in the free and joyous universe – towards viswajaneenayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

98. What Every Leader Need to know?

Yogakshemam December 2015

Vasudhaika Kutumbakam. South Asia Union (a la European Union, financial, economic and/or cultural). Bharat Varsh. Or Akhand Bharat. Are they real possibilities? Or utopian articulations?

John Maxwell's 'The Complete 101 Collection' discusses what every leader needs to know -

- ☒ Attitude is always a player on the team;
- ☒ Talent is not enough;
- ☒ Attitude and Potential go hand in hand;
- ☒ Attitude determines our approach to life and our relationships with people;
- ☒ Attitude is the 'only' difference between success and failure;
- ☒ Attitude is changeable but requires willingness, faith, plan, change in thought pattern and effort;
- ☒ The greatest battle we wage against failure occurs on the inside, not the outside;
- ☒ Embrace adversity – adversity creates resilience, develops maturity, stretches performance, adds more opportunities, prompts innovation, and motivates;
- ☒ Every successful person is someone who failed, yet never regarded himself as a failure;
- ☒ The successful person fails forward - values people, praises effort and rewards performance; rejects rejection, sees failure as temporary isolated incidents, keeps expectations realistic, focuses on strengths, varies approaches and bounces back;
- ☒ Success is knowing the purpose in life, growing to reach the maximum potential possible and sowing seeds that benefit others;
- ☒ We need to give up to go up;
- ☒ Growth must be intentional;
- ☒ Let us be better tomorrow than we are today;
- ☒ Higher the Leadership, greater the Effectiveness;
- ☒ Leadership develops daily, not in a day;
- ☒ Leaders are learners, learning is ongoing, a result of self-discipline and perseverance;
- ☒ Leaders are self-disciplined, follow 20/80 principle, and focus on effectiveness and efficiency in that order;
- ☒ Trust is the foundation and Vision sets the direction;
- ☒ True measure of leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less – not management, not entrepreneurship, not knowledge, not pioneering and not position, but leader may be all of these;
- ☒ Leadership levels – position (have to follow), relationships (want to follow, love), results (good to follow, admire), people development (empowering to follow, loyal) and personhood (can't help but follow, seek out);
- ☒ The higher we go, the longer it takes, higher the level of commitment, easier it is to lead, greater the growth and need to take others to higher levels;
- ☒ Leader's lasting value is measured by legacy and succession;
- ☒ 'Anyway' Leadership Commandments –

- People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered – love them anyway
 - If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives – do good anyway
 - If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies – succeed anyway
 - The good you do today will perhaps be forgotten tomorrow – do good anyway
 - Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable – be honest and frank anyway
 - The biggest man with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest man with the smallest mind – think big anyway
 - People favour underdogs but follow only hot dogs – fight for a few underdogs anyway
 - What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight – build anyway
 - People really need help but may attack you if you help them – help them anyway
 - Give the world the best that you have and you will get kicked in the teeth – give the world the best that you have anyway. If better is possible, and then good is not enough.
- ☑ Believing in people before they have proved themselves is the key to motivating people to reach their potential;
 - ☑ When words and actions match, people know they can trust;
 - ☑ A servant leader puts others ahead and serves out of love;
 - ☑ Great leaders seek out and find potential leaders, then transform them into good leaders, taking them through five steps - Model, Mentor, Monitor, Motivate, Multiply – and giving them responsibility, authority and accountability;
 - ☑ Mentoring Leaders dedicate themselves to developing others.

The task before us is to be the leader and multiply leaders. Let us get ready.

This is naayakayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we are willing! If we desire! If we have an end in mind! If the purpose and vision is seen! If we have a plan! If we invest ourselves! If we are relentless! If we do not stop the efforts! If we are not affected by temporary failures! If we persist! If we do not stop the learning and practice! If we love the universe! If we are committed to the universe! If we transcend ourselves! If we have hope and faith in people and the universe! Krsna confirms free individual's path of devoted servant leadership with wisdom is straight into the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for losing in the service of the flow of the free and joyous universe – towards karmayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

99. Nine domains of Intelligence

Yogakshemam January 2016

Happy Youth Day! Let us remember Vivekaananda.

Let us remember Gandhi.

One cannot be in the leadership of Development and/or Transformation unless one appreciates the existing status/situation/scenario all across. This would require keeping track of what is happening around very closely. Life is to be lived. Life is to be celebrated. Life is to be supported and nurtured. We lead life and life leads us. Therefore, we need to be there in the now and here. This is the Joy. This is the source of Joy. Universe has graced us to be its part. We suffer for the past because of our memory and we suffer for the future because of our imagination. Memory and imagination need to be managed, controlled and steered differently towards Possibilities and realizing Possibilities.

These possibilities are discovered when we are in the present, applying our nine dimensions/ domains of intelligence (as theorized by Howard Gardner) -

- ☒ Naturalistic Intelligence (sensitivity to natural world)
- ☒ Musical Intelligence (sensitivity to sounds)
- ☒ Logical-Mathematical Intelligence (analytical and reasoning)
- ☒ Existential Intelligence (sensitivity to very reason for existence)
- ☒ Interpersonal Intelligence (sensitivity to people and emotions)
- ☒ Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence (mind-body coordination)
- ☒ Linguistic Intelligence (conceptual and articulation capacity)
- ☒ Intra-Personal Intelligence (understanding self)
- ☒ Spatial Intelligence (geographic, geometric and 3 dimensional orientation)

These intelligences provide mental abilities –

Left: logic, linear, verbal, temporal, rational, analytical, abstract, symbolic, digital, etc.; and Right: Intuitive, holistic, non-verbal, non-temporal, non-rational, synthetic, analogical, concrete, spatial etc. These intelligences are shaped/augmented by memory/mind. It has various types/elements – evolutionary, genetic, experiential, conscious, sub-conscious, unconscious; it includes recognition and recall; and it includes associative and declarative.

Consciousness has levels (Buddhist) - First 5 levels – use our bodily senses - sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch; 6th level –the layer that integrates and processes the information from the various senses into a coherent whole; 7th level (inner life) – looks inward, referred as mano and is concerned with the sense of the self; 8th level (alaya, unconscious); 9th level (amala, pure consciousness) – eternal self and cosmos in harmony. Meditation allows us to deepen our level of consciousness from 6 to 7 to 8 and slowly to 9.

Thus, the organs (Indriyas), the mind (Manas), the determinative faculty (Buddhi, intellect), and egoism (Ahamkara, identity), together grouped as Antahkarana, shape our overall present intelligence, our

comprehension, appreciation and articulation abilities and our tendencies. This whole is referred as Chitta. The waves of thought, a force, in the Chitta are Vrittis. The real soul is behind with all these instruments and abilities. The tendencies have three parts - tamas, rajas and sattva. It is possible to change the portfolio of these parts with varying intensities. As we work on the portfolio of tendencies, it is possible to attain the 100% sattva tendency, characterized by serenity and calmness but intensely active. The Chitta is always trying to get back to its natural pure state, but the organs draw it out. To restrain it, to check this outward tendency, we need to be very focused. Concentrated effort using one or more intelligences is required. Then the Chitta moves from scattering (wavering multiple activities), darkening (dullness leading to injury to life and others), gathering (coming to inner centre-stage), one-pointed (trying to concentrate) and concentrated (Samadhi, oneness in the Universe). This effort can be initiated and orchestrated through meditation and karma, gyana and bhakti yoga.

This is anthahkaranayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we are willing! If we want, intensify our willing into articulation! If we reflect inside! If we contemplate on nature and art! If we silence ripples of thoughts unfocussed! If we start moving to darkness into light! If we move from noise to calmness! If we move from clutter to aesthetic! If we do not stop the efforts! If we do not stop the practice! If we have hope and faith in the universe! Krsna confirms a yearning Radha cannot be outside the universe for long.

Join us in the world of yoga – for using the senses to reflect inside and move inside into the flow of the free and joyous universe – towards chittayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

100. Gandhiji and Love

Yogakshemam February 2016

I seek Liberation for us. I seek Freedom for us. I seek Freedom for us from slavery; from bondage; and from 'constructs'. I seek merger for us in the truth, in love and in nature. Let us celebrate life. Let us celebrate the spirit of life in us. Let us live the spirit of life. We lead life and life leads us.

Remembered Manoharan.

Remembered Gurukulam and early morning prayer. Our vows include –Truth; Non-violence; Non-thieving; Celibacy; Control of the Palate; Non-possession; Physical Labour; Swadeshi; Fearlessness; No untouchability; Religious Equality; and Vernacular Languages. This has been adopted from Gandhiji's Ashram vows. I came across 'The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi', a distilled compilation of his thoughts.

This book took me to 'LOVE'.

Force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. Soul force, being natural, is not noted in history. Cohesive force among animate beings is love. We notice it between father and son, between brother and sister, friend and friend. We have to learn to use that force among all that lives. Where there is love, there is life. All the teachers that ever lived have preached this with more or less vigour. Love never claims. It ever gives.

There is a real and substantial unity in all the variety that we see around us. The forms are many, but the informing spirit is one. How can there be room for distinctions of high and low where there is this all-embracing fundamental unity underlying the outward diversity? We must widen the circle of our love till the scope of our love becomes co-terminus with the Universe.

Forgiveness is a quality of the soul, and therefore, a positive quality. 'Conquer anger', says Lord Buddha, 'by non-anger'. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. There is nothing except the cup of love which we can offer to those who oppose us. We are trying every moment of our lives to be guided by love.

One cannot be in the leadership of Development and/or Transformation unless one is a lover. A Krsna. Committed to life. Committed to reform that benefits the larger life. The universe.

This took me to Tagore's Gitanjali. Understand 'you' as Universe.

You have made me endless..You fill me with fresh life...

At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable...

Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs.

Now it is time to sit quite, face to face with thee, and to sing dedication of live in this silent and overflowing leisure.

Only let me make my life simple and straight, like a flute of reed for thee to fill with music...

Why do I ever miss your sight whose breath touches my sleep?

...thy love keeps me free.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ... let my country awake.

... Give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will with love.

.. thy love loses itself in the love of thy lover.

...The innermost one awakens my being with deep hidden touches.

... I hasten ... but I find that yet there is time.

...My whole body and my limbs have thrilled with his touch who is beyond touch.

... Let all my songs gather together their diverse strains into a single current and flow to a sea of silence.

This is gitanjaliyogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we are loving! If we are loving the universe! If we practice loving! If we do not stop the practice! Krsna confirms love is the sure way to join the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for conquering the anger with ‘non-anger’ and moving into the flow of the free and joyous universe – towards maanasayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

101. The Art of Being

Yogakshemam March 2016

Writing is integral to most of our work. George Orwell suggested –

- ☒ Avoid using metaphors, similes, etc., used to seeing often. Think of fresh ones;
- ☒ Prefer short words to long ones;
- ☒ Try cutting a lot of your word-count;
- ☒ Don't over-use the passive voice;
- ☒ Prefer everyday English to foreign, scientific or jargon words; and
- ☒ Do not over use "never" and "always."

We work with Bosses and we are Bosses to some others. Research says: a good boss improves a team's performance; effect of a boss is multiplicative; and better boss gets more out of each individual team member. Therefore, getting the team leader is the most important step.

It is true that all bosses are not high performers. In service industry, we want to attract, retain and empower high performers. They are gifted in a certain way (a combination of wisdom/knowledge, skill, passion, energy, networking...). They are not many. And they are not coming to 'livelihoods', social development or poverty reduction domain. But, it is easily possible that we can create 'near' high performers if we can help them to find the right role with facilitating environment that includes performance assessment/management is continuous/ continual.

Erich Fromm discusses the 'art of being' in "The Art of Being". Breakthroughs required - from the possession-centered to the activity-centered orientation; and from selfishness and egotism to solidarity and altruism. The goal of living is to grow optimally according to the conditions of human existence and thus to become fully what one potentially is. This is total liberation. This begins with the understanding of the nature of both outer and inner chains. These chains include property-driven materialism and individual intrinsic tendencies toward narcissism. If "wellbeing" - functioning well as a person, not as an instrument — is our goal, then the way out is – the dual breakthrough of one's narcissism and of property structure of one's existence. If a person has the will and the determination, an experience of wellbeing — fleeting and small as it may be —becomes the most powerful motivation for further progress. Awareness, will, practice, tolerance of fear and of new experience, they are all necessary to succeed in this pursuit towards transformation to "I am what I do" and "I am what I am" from "I am what I have".

I seek this Transformation in us. I seek this Liberation for us. I seek this Freedom for us. I seek this wellbeing for us. Let us be. Let us flow. Let us live. Let us lead. Let us do. Let us celebrate. Let us celebrate the spirit of life in us. Let us live the spirit of life.

I remembered –

- Social Integrator Krsna.
- Krsna in Kurukshetra.
- Krsna as Chief of People's Council at Dwaraka.
- Krsna liberating Mathura.
- Krsna in Brindaavan.
- Krsna playing the flute.

Krsna, a leader par excellence: Leading transformation; Mentoring leaders; Leaving legacy; Managing Boundary; Integrating team(s); Always accessible to his people; Vision-driven; Detached attachment to

'end'; Friend, guide and philosopher; Endowed with all the spiritual capital one needs; Driven by love, learning, linkages, and life at large. Led lead the leader and leader serves the led. Joy in universe's wellbeing. Universe rejoices in co-existence.

This is krsnayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we are living! If we are being! If we are doing! If we are experiencing! If we are flowing! If we are willing! If we are exploring! If we are exploring deep within and without! If we are letting the universe to explore in! If we are with the nature in its various hues and forms! If we are with the less reached and unreached! If we are in the present! If we are in now and here! If we push ourselves to our limits! If we keep pushing ourselves to our limits! If we are reflecting! If we are listening to universe! If we are listening to our inner voice! If we are practicing! Krsna confirms being, doing and loving is the life in the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga –for serving the led to be lead into the life of the joyous universe – towards krsna'skrsnayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

102. Loving in the Moment

Yogakshemam April 2016

Be in the Moment!

Be with Krsna!

Gina Lake's "Loving in the Moment" suggests –

- ☒ We can see the divine in each other and one another.
- ☒ Our conscious and unconscious ideas interfere and come in the way.
- ☒ We often see the other not as s/he actually is, but as we suppose s/he is.
- ☒ If we drop into the core of our Being, we find co-existence of oneness and love; and we can build from there.
- ☒ We need to live from a deeper place, the Essence. Essence has 'intentions' for us in this lifetime and they involve relationships with others. We need to catch up with them.
- ☒ Essence knows how to live with love and grace.
- ☒ We are one with everything that exists. Oneness is our nature and we need to discover it. It is possible through twoness. It is possible through experience of separation.
- ☒ True love bleeds through into this sense of separation and beckons us back to our natural state, with awareness and appreciation of our individuality and uniqueness.
- ☒ Love breaks the spell of the egoic state of consciousness and releases us from the pain of separation. It is the love from relationship that ultimately frees us.
- ☒ Despite the challenges the relationships pose, they are the arena in which love is developed.
- ☒ The ego cannot coexist with love. When we are expressing love, we are aligned with Essence.
- ☒ Essence has more opportunities to be experienced in relationship because the desire for relationship creates an openness to love. To return to Essence, we need to learn to love. We are programmed to return to Essence through love.
- ☒ We are here to experience differences and the resulting conflict because that's one way we learn to love. The pain of difficult relationships motivates us to overcome our barriers to loving. We learn to see what is lovable in. We fall in love with their Essence and learn to overlook their imperfections and ego.
- ☒ Some people have a more refined ego and personality. They have learned to be kind, polite, and considerate. When people behave kindly and lovingly, Essence is expressing itself through them, and they are easy to love as a result.
- ☒ If you behave lovingly, others respond lovingly, regardless of whether or not you actually feel loving. This is like practicing good behavior. Whether good behavior comes from actual goodness or not is not as important as the behavior itself.
- ☒ It is better if the behavior flows from love and goodwill. But if it doesn't, it's still fine.
- ☒ We learn to love by being loved. We open up as the ego is disarmed. It breaks through the egoic state of consciousness and evokes love in us, which brings us into alignment with Essence and with the other qualities of Essence: peace, joy, serenity, happiness, kindness,

compassion, patience, and fortitude etc.

- ☒ Therefore, love is the greatest gift we can give another. Love is the gift that allows others to relax and return to Essence and the true happiness and peace that are rightfully ours. Even loving acts and words are so powerful to change our consciousness and the consciousness of others.

We seek return to our Essence. We seek this Love for us. We seek these loving thoughts, words and acts for us. We seek joy for us. Let us be together. Let us flow together. Let us do together. Let us celebrate together. Let us celebrate the spirit of life in us together. Let us live the spirit of life together.

Let us remember Nara and Naarayan; Krsna and Krsna; Radha and Krsna; Yashoda and Krsna; People and Krsna; Cows and Krsna; Gopikas and Krsna; Satya and Krsna; Rukmini and Krsna; Flute and Krsna.....

We rejoice and Universe rejoices in reciprocation.

This is the yogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we are loving! If we are acting love! If we are expressing love! If we are thinking, saying and showing love! If we are acknowledging and experiencing love! If we are willing! If we are with the nature in its various hues and forms! If we are in now and here! If we are practicing! Krsna confirms love is the surest way to oneness with the universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for joyous opening up and living our Essence into the universe – towards nijayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

103. Benefits of Yoga

Yogakshemam May 2016

Happy Buddha Purnima!

Buddham Saranam Gachchaami, Dharmam Saranam Gachchaami, Sangam Saranam Gachchaami.

Remembered Tagore and his Gitanjali.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high

Where knowledge is free

Into ever-widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake

Let us be free, free from slavery of thoughts, words and action.

Yoga and Dhyana are the key elements in Buddhapatham. The benefits of yoga to us include:

- ☑ Improvement in our body flexibility
- ☑ Building our muscle strength
- ☑ Improvement in our postures
- ☑ Preventing cartilage and joint breakdown
- ☑ Protecting our spines
- ☑ Improving our bone health
- ☑ Increasing our blood flow, especially in hands and feet
- ☑ Increasing the drainage of our lymphs and boosting immunity
- ☑ Improves cardiovascular conditioning – lowering resting heart rate, increasing endurance, improving maximum uptake of oxygen
- ☑ Reducing our blood pressure
- ☑ Regulating our adrenal glands
- ☑ Making us happier
- ☑ Making us move more and eat less
- ☑ Lowering our blood sugar
- ☑ Helping us focus – focus on the present, improving coordination, reaction time, memory, etc.
- ☑ Relaxing our system and shifting the balance from the sympathetic nervous system (or the fight-or-flight response) to the calming and restorative parasympathetic nervous system.
- ☑ Increasing our ability to feel what our bodies are doing and where they are in the space and improving our balance.
- ☑ Maintaining our nervous system
- ☑ Releasing tension in our limbs, tongues, eyes, and the muscles of the face and neck
- ☑ Sleeping deeper and better
- ☑ Boosting immune system functionality
- ☑ Increasing lung room and breathing through the nose
- ☑ Preventing digestive problems

- ☒ Slowing down the mental loops of frustration, regret, anger, fear, and desire that can cause stress.
- ☒ Increasing our self-esteem and increased feelings of gratitude, empathy, and forgiveness, and sensing that we are part of something bigger.
- ☒ Reducing the body pains and making us more active
- ☒ Improving our inner strength
- ☒ Building awareness for transformation and increasing feelings of compassion and interconnection
- ☒ Supporting in improving relationships
- ☒ Soothing sinuses and facilitating drainage
- ☒ Controlling and guiding the body's healing through the mind and imagery
- ☒ Keeping the allergies and viruses away to a large extent
- ☒ Taking on service to others as it gives meaning to our lives
- ☒ Building self-care, and improving the power to effect change and offer hope
- ☒ Appreciating interconnectivity and holistic
- ☒ Believing and trusting

We meditate. We do Dhyaana. We do Aasanas. We practice Yoga. We seek. We seek freedom. We seek liberation. We seek oneness with the partners and with the universe. We seek Bliss. We seek togetherness in being, flowing, doing, celebrating and celebrating the life. We live the spirit of life together. Universe lives in us. This is yoga. This is nijayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we reflect! If we meditate! If we focus! If we practice! If we surrender to the universe! If we believe! If we trust! If we are willing! If we are in now and here! Sanjaya reiterates that Krsna confirms that surrendered to the manifest, or to the unmanifest, reach the universe surely. Then, there will be victory, transformation and freedom. There will be wealth and well-being.

Yatra yogesvarah krsno yatra partho dhanur-dharah

Tatra srir vijayo bhutir dhruva nitir matir mama

Join us in the world of yoga –for improved living condition at present to each one of us individually; and for the transformation and freedom in the surrender to the universe –towards naranaaraayanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

104. Yatra-The Journey

Yogakshemam June 2016

Schools have started. Monsoon has set in. Rains have started although late.

Yoga seeks union and yoga seeks liberation. Yoga is looking inside. Yoga is exploring and cherishing the nature. Yoga is relationships. Yoga is connectedness.

This is also time to transit to the third stage of life, the third innings. I see being a life worker is the essential yoga. While on purpose, I see four domains -

1. Yatra – to appreciate and be useful
 - ☐ All States/UTs in a year;
 - ☐ All regions in 2-3 years;
 - ☐ All districts in 4-5 years;
 - ☐ 50% blocks in 5-7 years;
 - ☐ 5% GPs in 7-8 years; and
 - ☐ 5% villages in 8-9 years.
2. Reach for Influencing Collectives in 9-10 years
 - ☐ 1000 Community Institutions
 - ☐ 1000 GPs
 - ☐ 500 Collectives at Cluster and above levels
 - ☐ 500 Civil Society Organizations
 - ☐ 100 large organizations/enterprises/foundations
 - ☐ 100 organizations/programs of state governments
 - ☐ 10 national government organizations/programs
3. Reach for Mentoring/Learning Influence of Individuals in 9-10 years
 - ☐ 10 Million, 1-2 hours
 - ☐ 1 Million, 5-6 hours
 - ☐ 100 Thousand, 2-6 days
 - ☐ 10 Thousand, 2-6 weeks
 - ☐ 5 Thousand, 2-6 months
 - ☐ 1 Thousand, 1-2 years
 - ☐ 100, 3-5 years
 - ☐ 25, 6-8 years
 - ☐ 12, life workers
4. Support Intervention Areas
 - ☐ Mentors, Life workers, Fellows, Interns

- ☐ Network of Support Professionals
- ☐ Visioning
- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Management
- ☐ Magazine, Portal and Channel
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Centres on Collectivization and Collectives
- ☐ TRUE Livelihoods Support
- ☐ Centres of Self-Employment, Enterprises and Jobs
- ☐ Health, Education, and Tuition Centres
- ☐ Adoption of GPs, Community Institutions etc.
- ☐ Community Resource Centres
- ☐ Livelihoods Education
- ☐ Learning Forums
- ☐ Career Counseling
- ☐ Coaching
- ☐ Web Marketing
- ☐ Social Enterprises and Social Entrepreneurship Development Etc.

We support. We work. We seek Union. We practice Yoga. We reflect. We dwell deep. We analyze. We support in analysis. We support in Planning. We work for Collectivization. We work for Communitization. We work for Inclusion. We work for Vulnerability Reduction. We pursue Convergence. We support Collectives. We augment employment. We support de-risking.

We seek togetherness in being, flowing, doing, celebrating and celebrating the life. We live the spirit of life together. Universe lives in us. This is yoga. This is sahayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we focus! If we practice! If we believe! If we trust! If we are willing! If we are in now and here! Krsna confirms a yoga combining gyana, karma and bhakthi guarantees reaching the universe surely.

Join us in the world of yoga –for the transformation and freedom as a result of enhanced identity, solidarity, capacity, access to rights and our well-being – lives and livelihoods – and surrender to the universe –towards krsnajanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

105. My Journey with UNDP/NRLM

Yogakshemam July 2016

Doctors' Day! Mandela Day!

Population Day!

Cooperatives Day! Guru Purnima!

Let us be thankful to the Gurus who have/are helping us to get light into our lives.

My tenure with UNDP-NRLM has been concluded on 1 July 2016. My journey with NRLM began in 2010 as a trickle, with the work on evolving Framework for Implementation. And what a journey! It has been a roller-coaster drive for a livelihoods, poverty reduction and development life worker. The Framework has been approved in December 2010 and NRLM itself was formally launched in June 2011. Meanwhile, Planning Commission's Working Group on NRLM was constituted in March 2011 and I supported the working group as its anchor. Its recommendations were presented in November 2011 and accepted. My full-time tenure with UNDP/NRLM, as Lead, Capacity Building, NRLM, has begun in 2012.

The brief was simply stated - build the capacity of NRLM (including SRLMs and Community) and strengthen the hands of the Mission Director. Gradually this meant building the team, increasing competent HR in NRLM, and supporting in establishing processes and systems in NMMU/NRLPS; supporting across verticals; integrating the support to states; working with NROs; CBAs; NRLM Cells; Resource Persons etc. It meant creating learning platforms/forums – writeshops. It meant evolving, appraising and supporting/facilitating annual action plans. It meant expanded base, faster and deeper inclusion and saturation, universalization/ mainstreaming. It meant HR Rationalization and Communitization. It meant community taking over the mission fully. It meant community institutions and mission units having vision and working to the vision. It meant mature inspired servant leadership for transformation in the hands of the community. It is meant to be a Janaandolan by the Community, across the country. We are almost there, with National Resource Group, 1000+ Resource Persons at the state level and 100,000+ Community Resource Persons in the Blocks, may be in 3 months from now. We are already in 3000+ Blocks and are ready to reach all the Blocks in 2 years flat from now.

MoRD's NMMU of NRLM has been subsumed in NRLPS, integrating/lead technical support agency of NRLM. Skills has become a separate division. NMMU/NRLPS has been servicing both. Reaching down to 50 numbers and managing with 50 professionals for both RL and Skills has been a constant struggle in NRLPS.

My base has been changed twice – Delhi à Hyderabad à Delhi. I lost my mother – she succumbed to stomach cancer in just about 3 months of initial diagnosis, leaving my father alone in my village. NRLM has let me cope with all this with ease.

Senior Management's silent but sure faith and subtle inspiration has made all the difference. Being part of the core of the Mission Leadership, one was intrinsically part of/linked to many concentric and overlapping circles - CBT, NMMU, NRLM; NMMU, MoRD RL Team, Skills Team, MoRD, NRMC Team, CARE Team, WB Team, UNDP Team; National Team in NMMU, NIRD NRLM Cells, NROs, SRLMs, SAPs in SRLMs, Resource Centres, Resource Persons, Resource Agencies, CRPs, Cadres, Leaders, Institutions. Their synergetic response and support helped in integrating the whole and going forward.

UNDP Team, BMGF-CARE Team and WB Team have played their part, in their own ways, nudging and

inspiring us forward. NRLM Fellows have made a huge difference, in their special ways. MoRD Team and NMMU have more or less merged. NRMCTeam has supported to their best ability.

NRLM Cells in NIRD, NROs, NRPs etc. have made the task easier. They taught me servant leadership and led learning facilitation. Many an SRLM has given us ways forward, may be even without their full knowledge. Apart from the staff of SRLMs, 100+ colleagues have walked/been walking with me during this period, learning, integrating the core, and being useful to the community at large, in their own ways, but within the broad NRLM framework and contours.

They have expanded learning and joy to me, to one another, to the team, to the mission and to the community. Community Leaders and Cadres have shown that they are better learners and superior leaders of transformation. Communities across the states have given so much love, I have become a better human being today. My liberation and mukti is now guaranteed.

It has been a wonderful journey that reached a high note. Thanks a lot to all who have been part of this yatra. I have no choice but to continue in this journey, may be using a different vehicle or a different mode of transport. It has been a blessing in disguise. I needed this break, to go on in my own way, in the service in the L-domain. The cardinal values - Hope, Faith and Promise - continue to drive me. I continue to be an integral part of L-Janaandolan.

We seek togetherness in being, flowing, doing, celebrating and celebrating life, living, livelihoods, linkages, leadership, learning and love. We live the spirit of life together, for enhancing identity, solidarity, capacity, access to rights, lives and livelihoods (well-being) and freedom and choices for the people, for the universe. This is Janaandolan. This is janayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we focus! If we practice! If we believe! If we trust! If we are willing! If hope, faith and promise drive us! Krsna confirms we are already there and we need to get going.

Join us in the world of yoga –for transformation and liberation–towards krsnakrsnayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

106. Reducing Rural Poverty

Yogakshemam August 2016

Independence! Raksha Bandhan! Friendships for life! Pramukh Swam: Rest in Peace.

If I have to choose 3 items for priority focus, in poverty reduction-livelihoods-development domain, they will be Communitization, Visioning and Leadership.

Key directions for reducing rural poverty in the country include -

- ☑ Reach all Target HHs by 2020/21 – enter all Blocks intensively by 2018/19.
- ☑ Position thoroughly inducted key Mission leadership in the states, about 500 nationally
- ☑ Support in recruiting, inducting and positioning NFs, at least 500/year
- ☑ Roll-out Community Operational Manuals and HR Manuals immediately
- ☑ Establish Performance Management System and roll-out HR Audit
- ☑ Develop Expansion, Inclusion and Saturation Architecture – Community Resource Persons and Trainers - quickly; use apprenticeship models
- ☑ Ensure Inclusion, Gender, Social Action, Food, Nutrition, Health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene and Social Development becomes part of the foundation work
- ☑ Implement 18-month protocols of Expansion, Inclusion and Saturation in Blocks
- ☑ Develop Community Cadres (one per 10 members of SHG) to meet various needs
- ☑ Build Community Training Centres and State/Regional Resource Centres
- ☑ Build a strong pool of multi-thematic State Resource Persons immediately
- ☑ Augment the National Pool
- ☑ Develop and Deploy 40+ multi-thematic Block Resource Persons to deliver Block CB
- ☑ **Start COMMUNITIZATION on Day 1** of entry in the Block
- ☑ Take community into Mission positions
- ☑ Handover Mission agenda, including mobilization, capacity building etc., to Community immediately
- ☑ Capitalize all the institutions as quickly as possible
- ☑ Initiate and roll-out Vulnerability Reduction Planning, Convergence Planning and their dovetailing and implementation
- ☑ Initiate and roll-out village level livelihoods and employment planning
- ☑ Position dedicated State Anchor Team Leads in the regional locations, without any specific thematic responsibility; and let SATLs build their multi-thematic teams; provide access to a mentor (a senior professional) to each state
- ☑ Let SA Teams spend at least 10 days a month in each state/UT to support the state on the ground, including field stays
- ☑ Conduct Visioning of States
- ☑ Conduct State Workshops on Visioning of CLFs and BLFs
- ☑ Conduct National Workshop for State Mission Leadership at the earliest
- ☑ Conduct State Workshops on federation registration, byelaws and books quickly
- ☑ Take up demonstration of PIP-PPA, VRP and Convergence Plans initially
- ☑ Conduct Learning workshops on various themes/aspects
- ☑ Document and share successful experiences (Best Practices)
- ☑ Institute 3-5 member Missions (with SA, NMMU members, NRPs, NIRD Cell members) to states half-yearly
- ☑ Conduct National Writeshop, Regional /State level writeshops
- ☑ Institute mechanisms for tracking progress in the states -

- ☒ Expansion: Blocks/Clusters; Saturation: Villages
- ☒ Communitization: Blocks
- ☒ COM adaptation and roll-out: States
- ☒ HR related: Grievance Redressal Mechanism, Anti-sexual Harassment Committees, HR Manual, Performance Management System; HR Numbers in States
- ☒ Capacity Building: Staff and Community, Calendars and Expenditure
- ☒ Community Training Centres and Trainers at Block level
- ☒ Cadres In multiple themes at various levels, including Community Resource Persons and Trainers
- ☒ Trainings to Members, Leaders, Cadres, Staff and Resource Persons
- ☒ Institutions: Formation and Registration
- ☒ Funds to Community
- ☒ Institute a system of making and submitting Quarterly Reports on various verticals
- ☒ Develop a mechanism to integrate plans at HH, Village, Block and State levels, and facilitate the realization of the plans
- ☒ Seek funds, in sync with Poverty Reduction Goals of India and SDG; Build bureaucratic and political constituency for Rural Poverty Reduction
- ☒ Work closely and ensure synergies with urban poverty reduction effort at National and State levels

This effort - let us term it as Portfolio 25. If we add the urban dimension, we can term it as TRUE Portfolio 25. It has 7 elements – knowledge channel(s) with micro-insights and macro-perspectives; livelihoods learning and resources; talent support and fellowships; mentoring and supporting individuals, organizations and enterprises; visioning and long-term partnering; consulting; and national networks, associations, and forums. Integration is by a group of mentors.

We need more and more of us to be in TRUE Portfolio 25 together flowing, doing, celebrating and living life. Our spirit of life, living, livelihoods, leveraging, leading, learning, and love here and now takes people to fight for enhancing identity, solidarity, capacity, access to rights, lives and livelihoods (well-being) and freedom and choices for themselves. This is a fight by the universe. This is Viswaaandolan. This is krsnayogam. Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we reflect! If we figure out! If we start! If we include! If we practice! If we trust! If we are willing! Krsna confirms we are just his instruments; and we are him.

Join us in the world of yoga – for becoming one with the universe and its instrument (s) - towards viswasaakshaatkaarayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

107. The Art of Strategic Leadership

Yogakshemam September 2016

Rest in Peace, Pramukh Swami! Saint Theresa of Kolkata! Bakrid! Engineers' Day!

Learning Pickups during the month –

"Dream more, learn more, do more and become more to help people to dream more, learn more, do more and become more."

If I have to choose 3 items for priority focus, in poverty reduction-livelihoods-development domain, they will be Communitization, Visioning and Leadership.

The heart of these 3 items is LEADERSHIP. Learning Leadership. Caring Leadership. Loving Leadership. Building Leaders. Building Teams. Building Institutions. Working for Legacy. Visionary. Role Model. Managing boundary. Managing relationships. Managing collaborations. Leveraging.

As drawn from **'The Art of Strategic Leadership'** by Steven Stowell and Stephanie Mead, this starts with

-

- ☒ *Following the followers; knowing the team*
- ☒ *Looking at the future, while coping with the present*
- ☒ *Focusing on the essential minimum and delegating and letting others go*
- ☒ *Owning up and letting others owning up*
 - *Understanding the effort in entirety or how the whole thing works*
 - *Entrepreneurial spirit*
 - *Accountability for Results*
 - *Taking charge of the less defined/undefined*
 - *Responsibility for costs and results*
- ☒ *Displaying tenacity*
 - *Tireless drive and stamina*
 - *Not giving up*
 - *Deleting the unnecessary parts, deferring the things that can wait, delegating and focusing on the essential minimum*
- ☒ *Taking calculated risks*
 - *Understanding risks*
 - *Dealing with them in an informed manner – preventing, reducing, reducing the damage, coping and overcoming*
- ☒ *Working with flex-agility*
 - *Speed (fast thinking, quick action)*
 - *Dexterity (mastery)*

- *Unlearning and learning quickly*
- *Shifting between foci – long-term to short-term; strategic to operational*
- *Responding to unexpected (thinking on the feet)*
- ☒ *Changing the style as per the need and situation*
- ☒ *Being up-to-date (aware)*
 - *Discipline to remain up-to-date and reflect*
 - *Information (from within and outside)*
 - *Analysis, interpretation and deriving meaning/patterns of information*
 - *Actions based on the above*
- ☒ *Driving Change*
 - *Understanding own inclination to change – change-averse, change-tolerant or change-seeking*
 - *Pooling up change agents*
 - *Proactively anticipating change and prepare for it and/or or championing change*
- ☒ *Visioning*
 - *Simple achievable but compelling shared vision*
 - *Focused*
 - *All planning around vision*
 - *With all the hope, faith and promise*
- ☒ *Gradually building up*
 - *Building on the current reality*
 - *Improving performance now, plugging gaps and getting going*
 - *Streamlining, adopting best practices, and trying continuous improvements*
 - *Overhauling, complementary and supplementary activities*
 - *Preparing for the future*
- ☒ *Integrating*
- ☒ *Planning for Legacy*

All of us are born leaders and we keep leading our own way. Like any art, our leadership could be more effective with conscious awareness, patient concentration, tenacious discipline and 10,000+ hours of practice. Centrality of desirable leadership is love. Love for the lead and the Universe.

Then, we learn well, we follow well, we do well, we think well and we be well. We see and plan future and pathways to the future. We build leaders. Then, we are good leaders, good facilitators, good teachers, good trainers, good learning facilitators, good mentors and good professionals. Then, we are good brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, partners, friends, colleagues and associates and so on. We are good human beings, not human 'havings'.

We need to persist in being beings. We need to be leading flowing, doing, celebrating and living life. The spirit of serving and leading has to take us over into the lap of the Universe with all the love and we become one with the Universe. This is loknaayakanaatakam. This is loksangrahayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we reflect! If we are conscious! If we remain up-to-date! If we vision! If we see what next! If we practice! If we concentrate! If we have discipline! If we are willing! If we do not give up! Krsna confirms he takes us into him; he integrates all of us for his purposes, if we tell him so.

Join us in the world of yoga – for getting integrated into the universe and its purposes—towards jagannaayakasakhyatayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

108. Gita and Universe

Yogakshemam October 2016

This month has taken me to Gita, translated by Eknath Easwaran.

It begins with the conflict within whether to engage in war with the evil even if they are related to us very closely. The teacher/mentor says go ahead. We need to go ahead. We cannot abdicate our responsibility, taken by us on our own in the first place. We need to go ahead and engage in action. Results are the worry of the universe. This is the yoga of Nishkaama karma. We need to move away from attachment. And we are capable of being this.

There are two paths, Jnana yoga and Karma yoga. Even if we take the Jnana yoga, we cannot shirk engaging in action. Action cannot be avoided. At least to maintain our bodies, we need to engage in action. Cause and effect are cyclical, one leads to the other, other leads to another and so on. Our actions are conditioned by natural inclinations, which in turn are conditioned by the interaction with the universe. Let us know that the pecking order is inner soul à intellect à mind à senses à body. Let us listen to the inner soul to act.

Free Action without attachment is the way. There is no renunciation possible without action. If we are seeking universe, all paths take us there. This is the wisdom. This is yoga and if followed, universe takes us in. This is facilitated hugely by meditation and reflection. Initially we may need suitable place(s), postures, moderate food, sleep etc., for these. It helps if we are able to focus, focus inside or on the universe with intense concentration.

No one knows the Universe fully. Universe is everything. When we are devoted to something with complete faith, the Universe joins hands and delivers it. We need to meditate constantly on the Universe and serve it. Cosmos/Universe goes on its own way as per its rules. Whatever we do is the act of the Universe. We give all love to the Universe to be one with it, in due course. Krsnaarpanam now leads to Krsnayogam later.

Let us know that Universe is the knowledge, light, power, beauty, divinity, good and the being – prakriti. Let us know that Time consumes everything. Let us know that we are its instruments. Let us visualize Universe and Time and realize ourselves in them. Let us be aware and conscious that only through actions with unfailing devotion and faith free from ill-will to any element of prakriti, we become one with the Universe, for good. Knowledge and actions are fine. Bhakti/Devotion is the surest way. Surrender in entirety is the surest way.

Five areas of sense perception, five elements, five sense organs, five organs of action, three elements of the mind (manas, buddhi and ahamkara-chitta) constitute the kshetra and the inner soul is the kshetragna, the knower. Let us know that the inner soul is the microcosm or a manifestation of the soul of the Universe itself. Therefore, it can transcend the three gunas of prakriti – sattva, rajas and tamas. A varying portfolio of these three gunas is present in each one of us. We move, as we practice and pursue, towards sattva dominant portfolio initially and gradually transcend the gunas, with love and devotion to the 'soul'. Then we are ready to be merged into the soul of the Universe.

The sum total of all souls - the supreme self - provides prana and supports prakriti from within. We need to transcend lust, anger and greed. We need to be fearless, pure, determined; we need to give, love, serve and be truthful; we need to be detached; and we need to be self-disciplined. This is sattvik practice and we move closer to the 'soul' within and outside. Sattva can be augmented with appropriate diet, actions, practices, and interests.

Let us be aware and adore the Universe; and let us take all actions for the sake of Universe. Universe loves us and is keen to take us in.

This is what YogeswaraKrsna taking us towards overflowing joy. This is krsnaarpanayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga.If we meditate and reflect! If we are aware and conscious! If we practice self-discipline and detachment! If we are willing! Krsna confirms the loving devoted yogis are meant to be one with the Universe.Join us in the world of yoga –for loving, caring and serving the elements of the prakriti and the universe towards its purposes–towards krsnagitayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

109. Designing Your Life

Yogakshemam November 2016

This month, I have chanced upon 'Designing Your Life' by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans. Its tagline is 'build a life that works for you'. It reframes existing dysfunctional beliefs as -

- ☒ Three quarters of all college grads do not end up working in a career related to their majors;
- ☒ True happiness comes from designing a life that works for us;
- ☒ It is never too late to design a life we love;
- ☒ We cannot know where we are going until we know where we are;
- ☒ We will not know always where we are going – but we can always know whether we are going in the right direction;
- ☒ Enjoyment is a guide to finding the right work for us;
- ☒ We are never stuck, because we can always generate a lot of ideas;
- ☒ We need a lot of ideas so that we can explore any number of possibilities for our future;
- ☒ There are multiple great lives and plans within us, and we get to choose which one to choose our way forward to next;
- ☒ We should build prototypes to explore questions about our alternatives;
- ☒ We should focus on hiring manager's need to find the right persons;
- ☒ We design our dream jobs through a process of actively seeking and co-creating it;
- ☒ Networking is just asking for directions;
- ☒ We are pursuing a number of offers;
- ☒ There is no right choice – only good choosing;
- ☒ Happiness is letting go of what we do not need;
- ☒ Life is a process, not an outcome;
- ☒ Life is an infinite game, with no winners and losers;
- ☒ We live and design our lives in collaboration with others; and
- ☒ We never finish designing our lives – life is a joyous and never-ending design project of building our way forward.

We need to acquire and practice five mindsets of design thinking – being curious; having bias to action (keep trying); reframing problems (into solution spaces); being aware/knowing that the design is a process/journey; and collaborating (partnering-seeking help).

Designing life begins where we are right now, in terms of work, play, love and health.

We need to become conscious of the level of work-play-love-health portfolio, against a benchmark. Reflect on Work and Life, in terms of purpose, relationships, aspirations, impacts, emotions etc. Do a daily log of activities for some 30-100 days, in terms of engagement, energy and flow; and reflect on the log every week. Choose activity set(s) of high engagement, energy and flow. Choose at least three sets of portfolios (five-year plans) – the things we do; the things we do when the first set is not there suddenly; the things we do if we care less for money or acceptance of the world around us.

Based on these, develop prototype(s) of action, taking feedback from others – particularly collaborators. Develop Options, Narrow down the list; choose one through cognitive, emotional, meditative/spiritual knowing and reflective experiencing. The let go and move on. Build a Team that want to live a designed life as a community.

We need to remember the compass and track the progress against this compass. We need to set some practices going on in our lives. These daily/weekly practices may include – yoga, meditation, reading, writing, blogging, poetry, painting/drawing, prayer, reflection, diary, being in touch, walking, cycling, seeing sunrise/ sunset, playing with children, conversations with ‘significant others’ etc.

This is setting us in a direction of life we earnestly seek from within. This is setting us into the purpose of life. The purpose of life, Universe has set for us. Then the joy is ours. Then the legacy is certain. This is jeevanayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we meditate and reflect! If we are curious, if we are aware and conscious, if we are biased to action and if we are partnering! If we have the compass set and if we practice our daily practices! If we are willing! Krsna confirms the get-going devoted karmayogi goes into the Universe.

Join us in the world of yoga –for having life that benefits the body, soul, nature and universe and their purposes–towards krsnaswechchayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

110. The Mind

Yogakshemam December 2016

National Milk Day! Let us remember Dr Kurien. National Constitution Day!

Deep Trivedi's 'I am the Mind' is emphatic – The Mind is much more powerful than the brain. 'Once I am Set – All Set... No Failures – No Frustration'. The main import includes -

- ☐ The seven states of the Mind – Three tempestuous states - Conscious; Sub-conscious; and Unconscious; Four Power States - Super Conscious; Collective Conscious; Spontaneous; and Ultimate.
- ☐ Our life outcomes are a function of the state of the mind in which we dwell
- ☐ Child is born with the Super Conscious state of the Mind. Slowly s/he learns to dwell in other states.
- ☐ The Mind and the Brain are two absolutely different entities.
- ☐ Getting into Power States needs practice.
- ☐ The Mind does not have any physical existence in the body.
- ☐ The Mind is fuelled by the energy of a human being.
- ☐ The Mind has nothing to do with society or with traditions.
- ☐ In fact, the Mind has nothing to do with anyone else. It is complete in itself.
- ☐ The Mind is absolutely creative and spontaneous. It works for its joy.
- ☐ The Mind simply flows. The finest creations simply flow from within the Mind.
- ☐ The Mind is simple and straightforward. It is the way it is.
- ☐ The Mind and the brain are engaged in constant battle for dominance over one another.
- ☐ Therefore, it is crucial for a human being to fine-tune and maintain the harmony between these two powerful entities.
- ☐ The Mind is the ultimate controller of the life. We cannot suppress it for long. It resurfaces in other ways, may be in more monstrous forms.
- ☐ If we know the Mind, we know 'all'.
- ☐ Unconditioning of the Mind and brain is the way for progress in life.
- ☐ Life is nothing but the 'present'.
- ☐ The future is absolutely uncertain and nothing can be more foolish than pondering over it. An effort to accommodate the past or the future in the present is the root cause of all miseries.
- ☐ Even the most intelligent of human beings cannot live more than a moment at a time.
- ☐ If we do not possess a strong inner personality, we will be exploited by the entire world like mere objects.
- ☐ We are not machines to be switched on and off by others.

- ☒ Only if we are capable of standing alone in a crowd, we can attain a great success.
- ☒ Every one of us is exceptional.
- ☒ We need to accept ourselves as we truly are and move ahead.
- ☒ There is no reason why we have to feel superior. Comparison is the problem monger.
- ☒ No one can be ever ours other than ourselves.
- ☒ No individual or thing possesses the power to make a person unhappy.
- ☒ A human being is unhappy because of her/his involvement with things and people.
- ☒ Greater the involvement, it brings more miseries.
- ☒ Any kind of choice or having any kind of preference fuels our involvement.
- ☒ Expectation inevitably brings miseries in its wake.
- ☒ Nothing can fulfill our expectations.
- ☒ Our acceptance or non-acceptance does not change the reality at all.
- ☒ Know what can be changed and expect to change those that can be changed.
- ☒ The one who recognizes how and when to use water is far more intelligent than the one who knows its formula.
- ☒ The one who can differentiate between the essential and the non-essential is the one who is intelligent.
- ☒ It is important to eradicate all that is unnecessary from life.
- ☒ Hypocrisy is not the solution to any problem.
- ☒ Frittering away time and energy in frivolous tasks leads to a life of despair.
- ☒ Our life is meant to accomplish legendary and creative legacy.
- ☒ We are endowed with the power of creativity and we need to harness it.
- ☒ Due diligence before putting belief is critical.
- ☒ Creativity simply flows. Allow it to start flowing.
- ☒ Concentration is the greatest magic a human being can perform. This is possible only in the field of our interest. Only if we have energy in us.
- ☒ While we are in concentration, no energy is lost. Be absorbed and practice being absorbed.
- ☒ Ambitious are less successful. Wholehearted pursuit takes us to unprecedented peaks of success.
- ☒ Even all the formidable powers of nature put together cannot enslave man.
- ☒ Confidence increases with growing experience and pursuing the field with our potentiality.
- ☒ We are absolutely free.
- ☒ Contentment moves us on the ladder of success. It is guide to finding the right pursuit for us.
- ☒ Life is living.

This is antaryogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga.If we are willing! Krsna confirms that we are the Universe.

Join us in the world of yoga – for flowing – towards krsnaantaryogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

111. Simply Managing

Yogakshemam January 2017

Manoharan has been/is in thoughts.

Henry Mintzberg's 'Simply Managing' focuses on what managers do and what managers can do better. It informs us that managing and leading co-exist. It confirms that management is a practice, an integrated art, science and craft, learned through experience and rooted in the context. Manager has to help bring out the best in others, so that they can know better, decide better and act better. Key imports from the book include -

- ☐ Managing is a job with a perpetual pre-occupation.
- ☐ Significant activities seem to be interspersed with the mundane in no particular pattern. Therefore, the manager must be prepared to shift moods quickly and frequently.
- ☐ To some extent, managers have to tolerate interruptions.
- ☐ Managers become conditioned by their workload.
- ☐ Manager is worried about what s/he might do and what s/he must do.
- ☐ Managers become proficient at their superficiality.
- ☐ The pressures of managers do not encourage development of reflective planners.
- ☐ Managers depend more on informal information rather than the formal.
- ☐ Talk is the technology of leadership and management.
- ☐ Most organizations tend to remain local to the team.
- ☐ Successful managers create some of their own obligations and take advantage of others' obligations.
- ☐ Global networking is coming at the expense of local conversing.
- ☐ Managing is a calculated chaos and controlled disorder.
- ☐ Managing takes place in three planes – information, people and action – through communicating and controlling, leading and doing. Manager's portfolio includes framing, scheduling and communicating in four layers – self, in the team, in the larger team and outside.
- ☐ Framing establishes the context. Scheduling brings the frame to life.
- ☐ Flow of information and driving behavior in the team are in information plane.
- ☐ This would mean Manager is the nerve centre, information processor, monitor, disseminator, and spokes person.
- ☐ Controlling is to ensure people accomplish their work. Decision making includes designing, delegating, authorizing, allocating resources and deeming (target setting).
- ☐ Managing people is leading individuals, teams and units/organizations. Leading includes helping to energize individuals; to develop individuals; to build and maintain teams; and to establish and strengthen culture.

- ☐ Managers are external linkers as much as they are internal leaders. Linking includes networking, representing, conveying and convincing, transmitting, buffering (the flow of influence). They need to be managing the edges - the boundaries.
- ☐ Two aspects of doing are proactive work, and reactive disturbance handling. Doing includes engaging in projects/tasks, tangible experience, handing disturbances.
- ☐ Dealing with outside world includes building coalitions around specific issues and using these coalitions to conduct negotiations with various players.
- ☐ Manager has to practice a well-rounded job – no to too much of anything – thinking, doing; leading, linking, communicating, action, controlling etc.
- ☐ Effective managers exercise a dynamic balance across these. Management has to be learnt on the job.
- ☐ There is a continuum of managing – total managing to no managing – maximal, participative, shared, distributed, supportive, minimal.
- ☐ Managerial Effectiveness is seen on seven threads – energetic (personal); reflective; analytic; worldly (life experience, sophisticated, practical); collaborative; proactive; integrative (social) – balanced dynamically.
- ☐ A key purpose of managing is to strive for synthesis continuously.
- ☐ Managers think in order to act and act in order to think to discover what works. They think while they act.
- ☐ There are no perfect managers. It is better to choose the devil we know; it is better to listen to the managed; and it may be better to choose an insider or an outside insider.
- ☐ There are no effective managers in all contexts. We have managerial effectiveness and a manager contributes to its maximization. Many a time, effectiveness can be judged but may not be measured. We need to measure what we can and rest needs to be judged.
- ☐ Managers are not created in classrooms. Managing is learned on the job, enhanced by a variety of experiences and challenges. Learning programs can help in sharpening the lessons from experience and practice. Managing is self-learnt and can be facilitated by classrooms and mentors.
- ☐ Effective Managing is being engaged to be engaging and being connected to be connecting. Each one of us is managing life, if not anything.

This is saadhakayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we are willing! Krsna confirms that Universe is the instrument of the dedicated practitioner..

Join us in the world of yoga –for flowing in the flow –towards krsnasaadhanayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

112. Life and Purpose

Yogakshemam February 2017

Jeff Goins' 'The Art of Work' focuses on discovering what we were meant to do. It informs us that finding our purpose is more of a path/journey rather than a plan. There seem to be three phases (preparation, action and completion) or seven distinct/overlapping stages –

Preparation: awareness, apprenticeship, practice;

Action: discovery, profession, mastery;

Completion: legacy.

Awareness comes from living and listening to our lives. It does not just happen. It needs to be cultivated. It is not around our existing ability but around our potential. If we see our various significant events/activities in our lives, we notice a thread, a thread of our potential. No portions of our lives are wasted. They are all leading us in the direction of our life's works. Work prepares us for the next step. Regular/continual reflection as a practice helps us in becoming more and more aware.

This calling does not come individually. A group of mentors are involved in the process. Help is available. Apprenticeship may last several years. It might take about 10 years to be a master of a craft. We need help in apprenticeship-deliberate/accidental. May be a series of them. May be with multiple Mentors. We need to be open and look in right places and accept humbly what we find. Thus, it is an intentional process of choosing the opportunities we need towards our life's works. We come to cross roads where we have to decide way forward and we need to decide.

Practice may be painful but has to be endured. We may have to do more and more. Several failures, injuries and hurts are part of it. It is not just the amount of practice. It includes of right kinds of practice. It is important to try and improve. We need to discipline ourselves to lean in the most difficult parts rather than quitting. Practice requires love, context, inherent motivation and to our limits. Here, the calling, resonance with calling, and the pace of progress in practice comes into the picture of delivering eminent performance in something good to this world.

Discovery is through a series of intentional decisions. 'We just know' is not true generally. Get a call, respond to the call through action, and begin to believe through testing and conformations are the stages in discovery. Call does not wait for us to be fully prepared and ready. It appears a bit earlier than that. Many a time, we do not take a leap but we get on to the bridge. Following the direction rather than the destination drives us. All of us can bring our best to the table and contribute.

Profession leads us forward, moving on from failures and reinforcing successes in the direction of our life's works. It is a constant progression of submitting to a larger purpose through action. Failures are not bad. They help us move forward.

Mastery is in having a portfolio life that lets us learn more and use it in creative ways forward. Calling is

not one thing. It is a set of things. We embrace a diverse set of activities. We may have fee work, salary work, homework, study work and gift work. Or Work, home, play and purpose. Mastery is doing our absolute best, without trying to be famous, for the benefit of the world.

A life is not significant except for its impact. Our purpose is our entire life. It is more than doing something good. It is becoming some one good and let the goodness impact the world. Can this legacy drive us? We must become our calling. It is not settling for good when we were called to greatness. Work supports life and not vice-versa. Life is to be lived the fullest. We do our work well passionately while letting go of the result. In the end, what significant legacy we leave behind matters the most. Thus our purpose/calling is familiar, visible, challenging, requiring faith and time. It is bigger than us and it integrates well with rest of our life.

We need to move in the direction of finding our purpose and move. All of us can.

This is paramarthayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we live and practice! Krsna confirms that devotion, knowledge and action take us into the Universe for sure.

Join us in the world of yoga –for flowing in the flow of life of legacy –towards krsnatvayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

113. Scaling Up

Yogakshemam March 2017

Subroto Bagchi's 'The Elephant Catchers' focuses on breakthrough growth and scale. The scale has to with numbers, size, depth, more dimensions, more variants, more ways and/or more options. And everything need not be scaled. Some things in life are meant to stay small and life has a way of ensuring everything has its place. If we want to, need to and must to scale up something we should know how to go about doing that. The key principles/lessons for scaling-up include -

- ☐ *One should be at peace with idea of scale and the purpose should drive the scale*
- ☐ *Simplicity is a key tool in scaling-up – simple communication, simple organization, simple product, simple processes, methods and systems etc.*
- ☐ *Strategy and scale go hand in hand; great strategy appeals to emotions yet it is simple; and it is not couched in great analytics.*
- ☐ *Scaling organizations mimic living beings – systemic view for physical, intellectual and emotional infrastructure. Digital strategy linking environment (customers), ends, parts and limbs linked to the centre, like the nervous system, is a must. These organizations build their capacities for future.*
- ☐ *Those who hunt rabbits (small) rarely become elephant (big) catchers. We need to hire new expertise but they do not come with guarantee.*
- ☐ *Dedicated hard work, being quick to learn and impressive story whatever be the domain help in scaling-up.*
- ☐ *Growing organizations need both the hunters and the farmers.*
- ☐ *Overdependence is not desirable and sub-optimal relationships are not good.*
- ☐ *Doing things with eyes open is important.*
- ☐ *It does not take technology to create great things; and it takes people.*
- ☐ *Life is about constant growth, but any unnatural growth is inherently destructive.*
- ☐ *In setting the strategic direction for scaling-up, the board becomes the guardian angel that balances the three-legged stool of investor, customer and employee expectations.*
- ☐ *Consultants/resource persons have a useful role if they are dealt with effectively – reference check with earlier assignments/clients; clarity on mutual expectations; clarity on fee structure and payment terms; recommendations are to be considered but not meant for blind implementation; each person has to be assessed for the role relevance, ability and usefulness; wherever required, training for roll-out has to be budgeted and the roll-out team has to be involved from the beginning; commitment to change is a pre-requisite for taking consulting services; and we have to remember that consultant has to service the enterprise.*
- ☐ *Branding including name, logo, tagline, values (a few, may be 2-3), colours, brochure, cards, ID cards, pictures, videos, website, annual reports etc., contribute to the progression in the journey of scaling-up.*
- ☐ *Handling the media and press is another important area of focus in scaling-up. This has to be learnt.*
- ☐ *Scaling-up entails Social Responsibility with sustained engagement with a cause. Good people alone can build good organizations and good societies. This has to be done.*

- ☐ *Scaling requires hiring of people with ability to build, capacity to think differently etc., rather than qualifications, experience or pedigree. These are to be figured out early. When in doubt, do not hire.*
- ☐ *Hired persons have to be inducted – introductions; philosophy and exposure; 90-100 day plans; and regular meetings*
- ☐ *No management should be afraid to fire non-performance. It comes in the way of scaling-up.*
- ☐ *Leaders should spend quality one-on-one time with the key persons. They need to make thoughts visible, may be on boards; dashboards; or mails. Leader needs to be a critical questioner, performance reviewer and ultimate sense-maker.*
- ☐ *As an integral part of the culture, meeting people and experiencing situations/practices outside of the area of work helps in figuring out and improving scaling-up ways. It is the way to make best practices as next practices.*
- ☐ *Using assessment of leadership attributes – Ninja, Coach, Thought Leaders, Rainmaker and Mentor/Gardener, hunter and farmer, etc., helps in positioning people rightly and taking their services in scaling-up.*
- ☐ *It is important to mentor the leaders, beginning with letting them understand themselves first and letting them appreciate that their superior need not be smarter than themselves.*
- ☐ *Brahmas have to give ways to Vishnus and Vishnus to Sivas, preserving faith in order to build a legacy outliving them.*
- ☐ *Remember, Khalil Gibran ‘Your children are not your children.... They come through you but not from you, and though they are with you they belong not to you.’*

We need to move in the direction of our purpose and its scaling up. All of us can.

This is antaraarthayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we live and practice! Krsna confirms that dedicated devotion, unending pursuit of learning and endogenous actions guarantee Universe takes us in.

Join us in the world of yoga –for flowing in the flow of life and beyond–towards yogayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

114. Moments of Power

Yogakshemam April 2017

John Cross, Rafael Gomez and Kevin Money have an engaging book on how to maximize key management moments of power 'The Little Black Book for Managers'. This book focuses on the moments of power, identifying them when they occur and maximizing the positives and reducing the negatives. The key takeaways include -

- ☐ *If we are managers or team leaders, our real job is not the job description or Terms of Reference. It is actually to keep on increasing the team output; it is to get the job done better with fewer resources and smaller budgets; and it is to get ourselves redundant.*
- ☐ *We need to respond quickly to changes in circumstances and adjust working hours and work allocations to achieve maximum possible team output.*
- ☐ *We need to enthuse our associates and get greater commitment to achieving the 'bigger picture' so that they set their own objectives, results/milestones and timelines.*
- ☐ *We need to be focused on doing right rather than mindless targets.*
- ☐ *We need to identify, assess and communicate our team's potential and reorganize resources to achieve it.*
- ☐ *We need to have up-to-date performance figures with us.*
- ☐ *We need to break down activities into smaller items for planning and progressing.*
- ☐ *We need to be current and be ready to make investments into future.*
- ☐ *We need to be ready and prepared for equal and opposite reaction when we take action.*
- ☐ *We need to have messages that stick, for the goals that are being pursued challenging the status quo.*
- ☐ *We need to focus our time and energy on the people who change and change others.*
- ☐ *We need to have realistic costs and timelines based on experience and practicality.*
- ☐ *We need to do good even if we do not benefit personally and professionally.*
- ☐ *We need to inspire.*
- ☐ *We need to remember that we are in managing and leading zone, not in operating zone.*
- ☐ *We need to focus on strengths and accentuating and using them. We need not be glued to weaknesses and get over them quickly.*
- ☐ *We need to invest time rather than spend it.*
- ☐ *We need to protect ourselves from our potential time stealers –messages, phones, meetings and people.*
- ☐ *We need to listen, read, appreciate, analyse, write etc., rather than talk.*
- ☐ *We need to exercise control on our emotions, without losing sensitivity.*
- ☐ *We need to forget about focus on being liked; instead focus on results.*
- ☐ *We need not undermine ourselves.*
- ☐ *We need to share our issues and problems and seek solutions and contribution to solutions publicly.*
- ☐ *We have our opinions and they need to be expressed.*
- ☐ *Ideas have to be fought through.*

- ☒ *Intrigue is not a bad thing.*
- ☒ *Pacing the work matters.*
- ☒ *No is fine. Silence is not acceptable. Silence has to be heard.*
- ☒ *Over delivery is better.*
- ☒ *The team has to be happy.*
- ☒ *Responding without waiting for knock on the door is useful.*
- ☒ *Trust and more trust is the way for the team.*
- ☒ *More responsibility to people than their age and experience empowers them.*
- ☒ *Authority has to be used sparingly and wisely.*
- ☒ *Need for Change and Change has to be appreciated first.*
- ☒ *Conflicts in the team have to be dealt with swiftly.*
- ☒ *Successes have to be reinforced and celebrated.*
- ☒ *Truth has to be told early before the rumours float around.*
- ☒ *Messenger has to be respected and not shot at.*
- ☒ *Team building cannot be outsourced/sub-contracted.*
- ☒ *Doing together - Thinking, brainstorming, mind mapping etc., matter to the team.*
- ☒ *Of course, disruptive behavior is not fine.*
- ☒ *Generational differences and role types and differences of the team members have to be taken into consideration.*
- ☒ *Distance workers are different team players.*
- ☒ *Sub-optimal performances cannot be tolerated.*
- ☒ *Talented people too need kicks and pats.*
- ☒ *Let members know their personality differences – (E/I)(S/N)(T/F)(J/P)
[Extroversion/Introversion; Sensing/Intuition; Thinking/Feeling; Judging/Perceiving]*
- ☒ *360 degree feedback is useful.*
- ☒ *Sometimes it is better to adapt and other sometimes, it is better to innovate.*
- ☒ *We are recruiting the person, not the CV.*
- ☒ *A plan with commitment is superior to a perfect plan.*
- ☒ *Let the team know/see/experience the results of their work first hand.*
- ☒ *Stress signals have to be seen and acted upon.*
- ☒ *More team rewards help.*
- ☒ *We need to reward individuals the way they would have liked. Being fair is important.*
- ☒ *Committing and doing right things is superior to luring with quick incentives. Taking the stick if required is not bad.*
- ☒ *Talents have to be tapped. But STAR (situation-task-action-result) briefing and debriefing has to be scheduled deliberately.*
- ☒ *Asking is more important than telling. Delegation is a must.*
- ☒ *Beware of ‘monkeys’; Stand up for people; Say no to micromanagement; Share feelings.*
- ☒ *Difficult People help us; See if culture has to change; Accept if one has to leave, or we have to move on.*

We are leaders and managers rolled into one. We need to set our purpose, get our team and get going. We need to get our agenda to scale-up. All of us do this.

This is antahkaranayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We are almost there! If we live and practice, we cross the last mile! Krsna confirms that devotion, commitment, action and practice take us into the Universe.

Join us in the world of yoga –for flowing in the flow of hope, faith and promise of life and beyond– towards pranayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

115. The Mindful Leader

Yogakshemam May 2017

Michael Bunting described Practices for Transforming our Leadership, our Organization and our Lives in 'The Mindful Leader' to provide insights for self-awareness, wellbeing and effectiveness with mindfulness principles integrated with leadership. The equation is simple – Highly engaged organizations are more effective; the key to improving our organization's engagement is our leadership behavior; mindfulness (practical application of self-awareness) is the most effective method of recognizing and improving our behavior. More specific takeaways include -

- ☒ When we are well, our wellness spills onto others. And when we are unwell, that too spills onto others. Be well. It is incumbent on leaders to be well and to lead from a centre of wellness and non-reactivity, even in the toughest circumstances.
- ☒ The four foundations of mindfulness are – mindfulness of the body/senses; mindfulness of feeling tone; mindfulness of thoughts; and mindfulness of the way we interpret/make meaning.
- ☒ The stages of developing mindfulness are – no real mindfulness; too late mindfulness; mindfulness of the impulse; and dissolution of the impulse and habit.
- ☒ Mindfulness meditation causes changes in the brain at cellular, structural and functional level. Therefore, it reduces stress and anxiety, improves cognitive skills, enhances creativity, betters relationships, increases compassion, enhances self-insight and intuition, and offers health benefits.
- ☒ Mindfulness can be practiced formally and/or informally.
- ☒ 90% of long-term happiness is predicted by how our brain processes the world.
- ☒ The best leaders inspire us to become better people through their own example. Choosing responsibility, compassion and generosity in the face of challenge is very inspiring.
- ☒ Mindfulness makes us recognize that we are accountable. It also gives us the tools for being, behaving and seeing the world differently and reducing suffering of us and others.
- ☒ Mindfulness is the practice of embracing all of life, both the joy and the pain.
- ☒ Kindness/Compassion is a form of mindfulness.
- ☒ Everyone shares responsibility. 100% from the leader and 100% from the team, equaling 200%.
- ☒ It is easier to wear sandals than to cover the world with carpet.
- ☒ Happiness is when what we thank, what we say and what we do are in harmony.
- ☒ Basic values of mindfulness include – ahimsa; satyam; asteyam; brahmacharya; asangraha; aaswadha.
- ☒ Fewer the values, the better. Each value should have behavioural standard and shared stories.
- ☒ The mindful leader is grounded in and guided by wholesome life-serving values. Values and mindfulness are part of the virtuous circle. Hope, Faith and Promise are our values.

- ☒ Every word we speak and action we take has a tangible impact on us and on everyone else. Our level of consciousness makes a difference in the world. Therefore, our task must be to widen our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole nature in its beauty.
- ☒ It is in our DNA to want to make a difference and create a legacy.
- ☒ Change happens one person at a time.
- ☒ We need to be in beginner's mind. The traits include – associating – connecting dots and recognizing patterns; questioning; observing; experimenting; and networking.
- ☒ As we heal our own insecurities and become whole, we need to enable and empower others to shine.
- ☒ Through loving kindness, empathetic joy and gratitude, we can unleash the greatness in our people. They can flower from within.
- ☒ There is not enough darkness in all the world to snuff out the light of one little candle.
- ☒ The truth sets us free.
- ☒ Mindful leadership is a change in behavior that takes time, starting with one step at a time, remembering that discomfort is progress. Practice is the essence.
- ☒ Thus the practices are:
 - Take 200% accountability;
 - Lead with mindful values;
 - Inspire a mindful vision;
 - Cultivate beginner's mind;
 - Empower others to shine;
 - Nourish others with love; and
 - Transform for good.

We are teams; we are leaders; and we could be mindful. We can be mindful leaders. We need to be accountable and we need to seek accountability; we need life-serving values; we need to have shared inspiring vision; we need to be open, curious and unlearning and learning mode; we need to let others get going; we need to nurture the team; and we need to change ourselves to be mindful and to lead mindfully. We need to practice.

This is methoantahkaranayogam. Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We are almost there! If we are self-aware! If we practice to be self-aware of our thoughts, words and actions! If we practice reflect before talking and acting! If we live with values of hope, faith and promise! If we connect with all life and care for it! If we work with others for them to take charge! If we care and let them grow! If we live and practice! Krsna confirms that we are already in the Universe and we only need to realize this. Join us in the world of yoga –for flowing in the flow of interdependence, loving kindness, compassion and joy –towards yogayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

116. Innovations and Entrepreneurship

Yogakshemam June 2017

Let us laugh!

Let us remember to care ourselves, our co-life, and our life ecosystems.

Let us remember Gurudev Rabindranath!

Let us welcome Monsoon, after days and days of scorching heat!

Peter Drucker writes about Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The book discusses Principles, Practices and the Discipline. Specific elements discussed include -

- ☐ Entrepreneurs' main tool is innovation.
- ☐ Systematic Innovation monitors seven sources of innovative opportunity. These are:
 - *the unexpected successes, failures, events etc.;*
 - *the incongruities between reality as it actually is and reality as it is assumed;*
 - *the process need(s);*
 - *the changes in industry/market structures;*
 - *demographic changes;*
 - *changes in perception, mood and meaning;*
 - *new scientific and non-scientific knowledge*
- ☐ Successful Innovations based on bright ideas form the majority. Yet bright ideas are the riskiest and least successful source of innovation opportunities. Casualty rate is enormous. 1 out of 100 may click and meet its costs. 1 out of 500 may make real money.
- ☐ Therefore, it makes enormous sense to go after purposeful innovations rather than bright ideas, while they need to be appreciated, rewarded and supported when the promise is seen.
- ☐ The Do's of Innovation – analyse the opportunities; appreciate the innovation conceptually and as perceived; make it simple and focused; let it start small; aim at leadership.
- ☐ The Don'ts –Do not try to be too clever; do not try to do too many things at once; do not try to innovate for the future.
- ☐ Conditions for successful innovation include – hard, focused and purposeful work; building on strengths; and effect in economy and society – change in behaviour and/or process.
- ☐ Successful Innovators are conservative and they take calculated risks while trying to minimize them further. They are not risk focused and they are opportunity-focused.
- ☐ Entrepreneurship is in the existing business, existing public-service institution and the new venture.
- ☐ Entrepreneurial Management requires policies and practices in four major areas – entrepreneurial climate/receptivity to innovation; measurement/appraisal of performance and learning to improve performance; organization structure, staffing and management;

and don'ts to avoid entrepreneurial stifling.

- ☒ For public services to be entrepreneurial, they need to have a well-articulated mission, and goals; willingness to revisit these based on progress/review; search for innovative opportunities for changes in mission/goals and processes. The need for social innovation in general and innovation in public service is the greatest. And this is the foremost political task of our generation.
- ☒ For the new ventures, it needs focus on the market; financial foresight and planning; top management team early; an early decision on the role and work of the founding entrepreneur(s); and independent objective outside advice.
- ☒ Entrepreneurship also requires one or more strategies (practices and policies outside) outside the enterprise. These include –
 - *'Fustest with the mostest' – aiming at leadership position, going full throttle, completely focussed*
 - *'Hitting them where they ain't' – creative imitation and entrepreneurial judo, enter the space that is not serviced with an attractive solution building on an existing innovation that has not spread yet.*
 - *'Ecological niche' – toll-gate (may be small but essential and we can only do), specialty skill (the best, and remain the best) and specialty market (knowing the market well/fully)*
 - *Changing the economic characteristics of a product, a market or an industry – creating a customer by creating utility to the customer, pricing around value to the customer, adaptation to customer's reality and delivering true value to customer.*
- ☒ Quality is not what we think but what the customer thinks.
- ☒ Entrepreneurial strategy is a decision-making area and a judgment.
- ☒ We can not have high-tech entrepreneurship succeeding without economy of innovators and entrepreneurs with access to capital in no-tech, low-tech and middle-tech surviving and succeeding.
- ☒ We need to work on taking care of the redundant workers; we need to close not-so-useful public services while we open new ones that are needed.
- ☒ We need to encourage habits of flexibility, continuous learning, de-learning and relearning and acceptance of change as normal and as opportunities for institutions and individuals.
- ☒ Entrepreneurial Society may well be the future of Welfare State or a new hybrid of the two.

Incidentally we are self-employed entrepreneur dominate country already. It has to be reform itself to emerging realities, crises and opportunities.

We are individuals; we are entrepreneurs; we are intrapreneurs; we lead teams of entrepreneurial individuals and we facilitate and support enterprises. We need to be in learning mode till the end, learning, unlearning and relearning. We need to cherish and promote learning values. We need to have

shared inspiring vision for learning and making difference. We need to mentor entrepreneurship. We need to practice.

This is outsaahikayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We are already there! If we get into forever learning mode! If we practice! If we practice to be self-aware of our thoughts, words and actions for learning! If we connect with all life, care for it and learn from it! If we work with others for them to learn and take charge! If we learn to practice and practice to learn! Krsna confirms that learning, devotion and action keep us in the Universe and we have to become aware.

Join us in the world of yoga –for flowing in the flow of exploration, excitement, and joy – towards sahaprakritiogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

117. Philosophy of Yoga

Yogakshemam July 2017

Happy Cooperation! Let us collectivize! Let us have milk!

Let us welcome GST – one nation one tax.

BKS Iyengar writes about the Core of the Yoga Sutras, introducing the Philosophy of Yoga. Yoga is defined as the cessation of waves and movements of consciousness. Mental fluctuations are connected to the subtle body. The practice of yoga develops four types of Samadhi – self-analysis, synthesis, bliss and the experience of a Pure Being. Through cultivation of friendliness, compassion, joy and indifference to pleasure and pain, virtue and vice, consciousness become favourably disposed, serene and benevolent.

- ☐ Yoga acts as a means to lift the chitta from klesachitta to manovrittichitta to nirodhachitta to divyachitta.
- ☐ Human transits through four asramas – brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha and sanyasi. The four aims (purusharthas) of life are dharma artha, kaama and moksha.
- ☐ We move through, as we practice yoga, samaadhi, saadhana, vibhutiadkaivalya. Kaivalya means freedom from infatuations and to reach the final freedom, moksha.
- ☐ Then the accomplished saadhaka/yogi lives in satyam (truth), sivam (eternal) and sundaram (beauty of life).
- ☐ A yogi also transits from karma (general action), to vikarma (action with pleasant motivation), to sukarma (good actions with auspicious motivations), to akarma (actions free from expectations of reactions and rewards, performed effortlessly).
- ☐ Further, a yogi also transits through jnana (knowledge of objects) to vijnaana (scientific enquiry) to sujnaana (spiritual knowledge) to prajnaana (experiential wisdom).
- ☐ A yogi also transits through states of relationship with God – saalokya (feeling God) to saameepya (closeness to God) to saarupya (embracing God) to saayujya (living in God).
- ☐ A yogi also transits through Paripakva Karma (ripe action) to Para Jnaana (true knowledge) to Para Bhakti (utter devotion) to Saranaagati (total surrender fully).
- ☐ All these culminate and lead to fifth purushartha - Aatmadarshana and Viswaatmadarshana.
- ☐ Fix the gaze on the tip of the nose. This non-movement of the eyes pacifies and quietens the brain, stabilizing the mind and consciousness. If the eyes flicker, the brain, mind and consciousness also flicker and are perturbed. Steady eyes with restfulness release stress from the brain and stabilize the mind to be attentive to its means and goal.
- ☐ Yoga is a way to maintain an even temper and oneness in one's word, work and thought.
- ☐ The meaning of yoga is to restrain oneself from all bonds of pain and sorrow.
- ☐ Yoga is a mental discipline for restraining the fluctuations of thoughts so that consciousness is kept in an unoscillated, steady and stable state.
- ☐ The brain has four lobes – vitarka (analysis, argumentation); vichaara (logical insight,

synthesis); aananda (seat of joy); and asmita (seat of the self).

- ☐ Heart's emotional divisions are – friendliness (maitri), compassion (karuna), gladness (mudita) and indifference (upeksa) towards pleasure and pain. These have to be harmonized.
- ☐ Life is a continuous process.
- ☐ Five elements – earth, water, fire, air and ether; five vayus – apaana, praana, samaana, udaana, vyaana; five kosa – annamaya, praanamaya, manomaya, vijnaanamaya and aanandamaya.
- ☐ Bahiranga, Antaranga and Antaratma Saadhana; Saadhanakarma includes tapas, svaadhyaya of aasana, pranayama and dhyana, and being one with the core; Tapas covers yama, niyama, aasana and pranayama.
- ☐ We are yogis – karma yogis, jnaana yogis, kriya yogis, and bhakti yogis. May be all rolled-into one. We seek oneness with the innermost and the universe. We know they are identical.

We are yogis; we can be yogis; we follow asthang; we are practitioners; we practice; we lead practitioners; we mentor leads. We are learners; and we are in learning mode till the end. We pursue our purposes of life.

This is nijayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We are always there! If we want! If we plan! If we pursue! If we learn! If we practice! If we practice oneness of actions, words and thoughts! If we practice to be self-aware of our thoughts, words and actions! If we connect with all life, care for it and learn from it! If we connect with five elements! If we practice transits of yoga! If we learn to practice and practice to learn! Krsna confirms that he is yogeswar and a yogi is one with yogeswar and merges in Krsnaviswam.

Join us in the world of yoga –for flowing in the flow of being aware, practice and transiting forward – towards Krsnaishwaryayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

118. Ideas that will Shape Future

Yogakshemam August 2017

Happy Cooperation! We are 135 Crore and growing.

Hope we really have demographic dividend!

Let us educate all! Let us educate all girl children! Happy Skilling! Happy Justice everywhere and for everyone! Let us transform the world! Let us let tigers live!

Humanitarianism is being remembered.

President Ramnath Kovind took charge. Venkaiah Naidu is certain to be Vice President of India.

GST has come. Services, and Professional, Technical and Management Support Services to Development, Poverty Reduction and Livelihoods should not attract any GST. If Food, Extension, Education, Health, etc., can have no or low tax, not having GST for Development Services makes eminent sense. It does not make sense to increase the cost of service to poor, and the organizations working for them, by this 18% GST.

“This will change EVERYTHING – ideas that will shape the future” edited by John Brockman introduces several seemingly radical but actually feasible ideas with the potential to change the world. Some of them include –

- ☒ Scientific Idea of Evolution to influence the human consciousness and science and technology in a big way.
- ☒ DNA – writing the software of life.
- ☒ Development biology and neuroscience are changing our understanding of who we are.
- ☒ Robotics and the brain-machine interface.
- ☒ Full flourishing solar technology.
- ☒ Personalized Medicine.
- ☒ A method for groups of people and machines to work together to make decisions in a way that takes advantage of scale.
- ☒ Confidence in materialism is draining away.
- ☒ A cure for humankind’s existential loneliness.
- ☒ Decoding the brain.
- ☒ Ever-changing culture of things is making and keeping us human.
- ☒ Living longer.
- ☒ Sleeping giants may wake up –
 - Disappearance of summer sea-ice over Arctic Ocean
 - Increased melting and glacier flow of Greenland Icesheet
 - ‘unsticking’ of West Antarctic Ice Sheet from its bed
 - rapid die-back of Amazon Forests
 - disruption of Indian Monsoon

- release of methane from frozen soils
- shift to a permanent El Nino-like state
- ☒ Climate's challenges.
- ☒ Accidental Nuclear War.
- ☒ Breakdown of Computers.
- ☒ Growing Perception of a clash between Safety and Liberty.
- ☒ Sustainability requires that we pass on to the next generation the resources that we received from our forebears.
- ☒ Alternatives to 'oil'.
- ☒ Intentional change in the relationship between people and planet.
- ☒ Changes in population structure
 - Sex ratio
 - Age structure
 - Kinship systems
 - Income distribution
- ☒ Technology changes ways of education.
- ☒ Information finds us just in the nick of the time.
- ☒ The ubiquitous mobile smart phone.
- ☒ Death of beaming TV channels.
- ☒ Renewable Energy trading.
- ☒ Automated near universal translations.
- ☒ Artificial will.
- ☒ Biohacking becomes real.
- ☒ Recognition that body is not a machine.
- ☒ Life is a continuous process.

We are yogis – thought yogis, apart from action, word, emotion. We seek oneness with the innermost and the universe in the thought first. Thought introduces, considers, and reflects to new ideas for human progress and progress of the Universe, and gives go ahead. These go 'aheads' manifest in emotions, words and action, if we pursue relentlessly. This is Oohayogam. Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We are always there! If we want! If we pursue! If we practice! If we practice thoughts as leads of actions and words! If we practice to be self-aware of our thoughts! If we connect with all life, care for it, learn from it and establish thought connect! If we connect in reflection with universe and its elements! If we learn to think practice and practice to learn! Krsna confirms that he is there for us if we have the universe in our thoughts. Join us in the world of yoga –for flowing in the flow of being in thinking forever of transiting forward – towards Krsnachaitanyogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

119. Inner Engineering

Yogakshemam September 2017

Let us be thankful to the indigenous.

Happy Youth!

Let Humanitarianism Triumph!

Let us remember our teachers!

Hope we celebrate Charity/Philanthropy, Democracy, Peace, Heart, Tourism and Coffee.

“Inner Engineering: A Yogi’s guide to Joy” by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev introduces well-being.

- ☒ Well-being is just a deep sense of pleasantness within. If the body feels pleasant, it is health. If it becomes very pleasant, it is pleasure. If the mind becomes pleasant, it is peace. If it becomes very pleasant, it is joy. If the emotions become pleasant, it is love. If they become very pleasant, it is compassion. If life energies become pleasant, it is bliss. If they become very pleasant, it is ecstasy. What we are seeking is pleasantness within and without. When pleasantness is within, it is peace, joy, happiness and if the surroundings become pleasant, it is branded as success. Thus all the human experience is a question of pleasantness and unpleasantness in varying degrees.
- ☒ All the technology only brings comfort and convenience to us, not well-being. We need to understand that unless we do the right things, the right things will not happen to us. This is true not just of the outside world, but also the inside.
- ☒ All human experience is 100% self-created. Everything that ever happened to us, we experienced right within us.
- ☒ Do not look for a way out of misery. Do not look for a way out of suffering. There is only one way – and that is ‘in’.
- ☒ The foundations of peace and joy are in accessing and organizing the inner nature of our being.
- ☒ If we wake up to ourselves as an existential being, a living being, then our destiny will be our own. 100%.
- ☒ We take responsibility for our lives. Responsibility simply means our ability to respond and respond. Responsibility is freedom.
- ☒ In rage, we become one with a group; out of rage, we become one with the universe.
- ☒ A brighter tomorrow is possible if we accept – we are responsible for the way we are now.
- ☒ Resentment, anger, jealousy, pain, hurt and depression are poisons we drink and expect someone else to die. Life does not work that way.
- ☒ Responsibility is not reaction; it offers choice of action.
- ☒ Responsibility is about being, it is not about talking, thinking or doing.
- ☒ Love is not something we do; it is just the way we are.

- ☒ Our responsibility is limitless; if we are willing, we can respond to everything.
- ☒ Yoga is being in perfect alignment, in absolute harmony, in complete sync with existence.
- ☒ The layers we unravel are annamayakosha (physical body); manomayakosha (mental body); praanamayakosha (energy body), vignanamayakosha (etheric body), and anandamayakosha (beyond physical realms of life), one after the other.
- ☒ The work begins with the three dimensions –body, mind and energy.
- ☒ The ways forward are karmayoga, gnanayoga, bhakti yoga and kriya yoga. If we can integrate all these, it is great.
- ☒ Yoga is not about being superhuman; it is about realizing that being human is super.
- ☒ Start with the body, the ultimate machine. We have two forces with us – instinct of self-preservation and the constant desire to expand to become boundless. Let us try to know life beyond senses using life sense. Let us listen to life. We do not use more than a minute fraction of our potential.
- ☒ Let us be in touch with the earth. Let us be in sync with the sun.
- ☒ Start with bhutashuddhi and move to bhutasiddhi.
- ☒ Eat so that our brains and bodies work. They work better when the stomach is empty.
- ☒ Eat the food that our bodies are comfortable with.
- ☒ Consumption of clarified butter without sugar cleanses, heals and lubricates the alimentary canal.
- ☒ Move to restfulness from restlessness.
- ☒ The simple act of holding hands is the simplest way to experience a state of union.
- ☒ We are on the verge of breaking down because we have made a small aspect of our life the whole of our life.
- ☒ Sit alone undisturbed in all ways for an hour, once in a week.
- ☒ Do not be an outsider to the life process. Become a devotee. Dissolve.
- ☒ Be a lover.

We are born yogis. We seek oneness with the innermost and the universe. If only we are willing.

This is Trsnayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We are already there! If we only see! If we practice to see! If we practice to be self-aware! If we see we being in connect with all life! If we learn to see and practice to see! Krsna demonstrates that he is always with us for us.

Join us in the world of yoga –for being in the flow –towards Trsnakrsnayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

120. Coming Together, Working Together

Yogakshemam October 2017

Charity! Philanthropy! Literacy! Democracy! Peace! Heart! Happy Right to Know! Happy Tourism! Happy Coffee!

Let us remain grateful to our teachers who have taken/are taking us forward!

Ahimsa! Aarjava! Sahayoga! Tolerance!

Happy Smile!

Happy Life and Living! Happy Information, Knowledge, Skills, Resources!

Aarjava. Aksharaarjava. Aarjava Astitva. Aarjava Jaatra. The thought that dominated the month is how do we get on with simple living with the mind, heart and body in sync. Can we have space for the all human beings, all animal life, all life, the entire universe with all its nuances and diverse facets? Can the universe with its infinite intelligence guide us?

Can the children and young minds dwell in and grow up in this thinking, context and maahol? It appears possible. It must be possible. It is the onlyway available. It takes us forward. For a long time to come.

We need to show examples. We need locales and villages as examples. We need to show communities living like this. We need to live as examples. We need to talk plain. We need to think simple and long-term. We need to show the calculations of limits and urgency. We need to show failures of opposite. We need quotes. We need proverbs. We need stories. We need anecdotes. We need songs. We need lyrics. We need videos. We need consultations. We need orientation. We need workshops. We need skilling. We need celebrations. We need conversations. We need role models. We need teachers. We need writers. We need volunteers. We need projects. We need collectives. We need associations. We need chapters. It needs to be the benchmark everyone to aspire. One needs to feel guilty, if not able to measure up. It needs to be part of new values and value-system we live with. It should become a habit, may be an 'addiction'.

Seeds are being sown all around. Sprouts of examples are there all around. Aarjava is coming into being. Let it bloom in many a place, many a heart. Let it proliferate everywhere. We are also progressing on pooling up professionals from across the country (and may be outside too) and in various elements/themes across the larger livelihoods-poverty reduction-development domain to service the sector in a consulting mode as deeply and comprehensively as possible, as locally as possible, at as low a cost as possible. The form of the pooling up is Limited Liability Partnership, a la consulting organizations across the world. The registration process of this 'Sahayog' has been set in motion now.

Some other work going on in the background is bringing the livelihoods-poverty reduction-development professionals together for their identity, solidarity, learning, security, savings and engagement. Most of these professionals/workers are unorganized/ill-organized. These professionals are at various levels/layers – community professionals, student (would be/ potential/trainee) professionals, entry professionals, mid-level professionals, senior professionals, elder professionals, eminent professionals etc. Some are volunteers; some are part -timers; some are working at no/low fee; some have found the career/life/future in this work; some do social responsibility; some do pay back etc. They seek identity;

they seek solidarity – a feeling of not being alone; they seek to meet their basic needs through savings, credit and other collectivized/ aggregated leveraging; they want security and insurance concerns addressed to an extent, through mutual help/support; they want to be current and up-to-date in the domain and they want to unlearn/learn and have skills that are required in the domain at any point of time; they want to meet and be in touch; they want to get engaged in diverse works; they want to get counselled and placed if they want to leave the present engagement; they want to be organized and they want to benefit from the strength of the numbers they have; and they want to work for the well-being of the universe including themselves. They want to achieve freedom. Millions of them.

This is Astitva. This is Yogakshemam. This has to happen. Soon.

We are all essentially yogis, whether others accept or not. We are willing and we seek oneness with the innermost and the universe. We are winning over ourselves.

This is Astitvavijayayogam.

Can we be there ?Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga.We are already there! We can see! We are at practice!
We are becoming selfaware! We are in connect with all life! We are unlearning and learning to see and practice to see! Krsna demonstrates that we are not different from him and each one of us is a Krsna.

Join us in the world of yoga –for being in the flow –towards Krsnaastitvayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

121. 7LCx

Yogakshemam November 2017

Peace and Development! Kindness! Tolerance! Happy Children! Students! Men, Women and Transgenders! Happy Savings! Happy Integration and Unity! Happy Sanitation! Television and Telephones!

Let us work for reduced violence! Let us work for reduced obesity!

Let us be philosophical!

Let us work for vulnerable – persons with AIDS, Slavery, Disabilities!

Happy Soils! Cheetahs! Mountains!

Happy Volunteers! Happy Rights! Solidarity!

Chris Fussell's ONE MISSION articulated How Leaders build a Team of Teams. It begins with –

- ☑ Creating an aligning narrative
- ☑ Communicating narrative
- ☑ Establishing interconnection(s)
- ☑ Acquiring operating rhythm
- ☑ Providing decision space to the members – overcoming/identifying deviance, neglect and supporting positive deviance
- ☑ Pushing boundaries
- ☑ Building and leveraging liaisons
- ☑ Strategic leadership

7L and Coexistence are the dominant themes that occupied our mind during the month. The progress on pooling up professionals from across the country (and may be outside too) and in various elements/themes across the larger livelihoods-poverty reduction-development domain to service the sector in a consulting mode as deeply and comprehensively as possible, as locally as possible, at as low a cost as possible. 7L Coexistence (7Lx/7LCx) is in pipeline. 7Lx will have scope to pool up several layers of life-workers, associates and staff –

- ☑ Interns
- ☑ Volunteers
- ☑ Resource Persons at various levels as required from time-to-time
- ☑ Staff/Professionals at various levels, including community professionals
- ☑ Associates
- ☑ Associate Life-workers
- ☑ Senior Associate Life-workers
- ☑ Core Life-workers
- ☑ Distinguished Life-workers

☐ Advisers

Apart from these, life-time investors and angel investors may also play their part.

Apart from consulting services, 7Lx plans to service members in several ways – email id, savings, mutual support, learning/being current/up-to-date, training/exposure visit, aggregated/pooled up servicing of needs etc.

Identifying HR, mentoring and running Learning Programs for HR in Self-help Movement, Natural Farming Movement, Livelihoods of Vulnerable and Poor, Aarjava Campaign etc., are the additional elements of activity portfolio. More and more people have to join hands. More and more people need to be serviced and served. Let us get going.

This is Sahayoga. This is Yogakshemam. This is the only way. For Universe to conspire and take us forward.

We are all essentially sahayogis, whether we accept or not. We are willing and we seek oneness with the innermost and the universe. That is our way. Victory is ours. Victory over ourselves.

This is Astitvasahayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We are almost there! We can see the path! We can see the 'end'! We are practicing with awareness! With co-existence! With Astitva! We are unlearning and learning to see and practice to see! Krsna suggests that we are his microcosms and each one of us is a Krsna. Join us in the world of yoga – for flowing – towards Krsnayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

122. The Art of Thinking Clearly

Yogakshemam December 2017

Let us work for vulnerable – persons with AIDS, Slavery, Disabilities!

No Corruption, Please!

Happy Children! Students! Men, Women and Transgenders!

Happy Soils! Cheetahs! Mountains!

Let us work for reduced violence! Let us work for reduced obesity! Happy Rights! Solidarity! Governance! Happy Volunteers! Let us reduce Push Migration! Let us work with Migrants to increase their joy! Happy Computers! Mathematics! Tea!

The Art of Thinking Clearly Rolf Dobelli followed up with The Art of The Good Life on clear thinking for business and a better life. The toolkit offered include –

- ☒ Mental accounting: interpreting positively or constructively
- ☒ Constant readjustment: repeated replanning
- ☒ Non-negotiables/pledges and sticking to them 100%
- ☒ Radical acceptance and black box thinking: keep track of assumptions and results to figure what went wrong so that it can be tackled at its root
- ☒ Considering technology counter productivity: if it does not genuinely contribute something, we can do without it; let us try switching on our brains rather than the gadgets
- ☒ Steering clear of stupidity, foolishness and trends: keep omitting
- ☒ Staying humble and paying back willingly and ungrudgingly as our success, if any, belongs to the universe really
- ☒ Introspecting and taking feelings seriously: others' feelings more than our feelings
- ☒ Differentiating and strengthening internal clarity and external persona
- ☒ Resisting deep-seated biological reflex of spontaneous yes: 5-second no
- ☒ Resisting to focus on trivialities and acquiring wide-angle lens: minutes to days/weeks
- ☒ Buying less and experiencing more
- ☒ Having enough savings quickly and become less concerned about money: live modestly
- ☒ Knowing our limits and finding our circle of competence
- ☒ Enduring persistence with long-term thinking
- ☒ Building on the actual talent and skills we have and the world cares for
- ☒ Focusing on the inner scorecard, with a friendly disinterest in the external praise and censure
- ☒ Avoiding situations in which we have to change other people: hire for right attitude, train for skills; work with people we like and trust
- ☒ Having achievable but not so easy life goals

- ☒ Balancing moment-to-moment experiencing self and remembering self
- ☒ Making long-term plans and experiencing the present
- ☒ Seeing ourselves as realistically as possible: keep a diary and refer once in a while
- ☒ Balancing enjoyment and meaning in life
- ☒ Building a clear circle of dignity tightly, sharply and living it
- ☒ Having mutual, insurance and fulfilling work
- ☒ Living with a few but truly relevant opinions
- ☒ Seeing happiness in our mental fortresses
- ☒ Combining social responsibility and irresponsibility
- ☒ Managing focus, time and money deliberately
- ☒ Choosing and reading books
- ☒ Thinking independently
- ☒ Training ourselves for being sensitive to happiness
- ☒ Knowing the point of maximum deliberation and turning to action
- ☒ Keeping our feet in others' shoes often and going with the protagonists
- ☒ Realizing that we make a difference in our lives mostly, and being away from the illusion that we make 'history'
- ☒ Adhering to form with content rather than just the form
- ☒ Running our own race: specialize radically enough so that we are on top
- ☒ Skipping the rat race
- ☒ Having connections with crazy freaks
- ☒ Sampling the universe of possibility as much as possible and then becoming selective
- ☒ Keeping necessities, goals and expectations separately and managing expectations
- ☒ Working with good ideas, good products, good investments etc., and when in doubt, ignoring them
- ☒ Remembering: everyone of us is merely one among billions; we are all living inside an infinitesimal sliver of time with a random beginning and a random end; and we are all dependent beings
- ☒ Taking the direct route of internal or inner gain rather than a roundabout

More and more people must join hands for good life and happy living. More and more people need to be serviced and served. Let us get going. This is Subhayoga. This is Yogakshemam. This is one of the right ways. We seek the gain of the inner universe and therefore, the universe. That is our way.

This is Aarjavasahayogam. Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We are marching ahead, albeit slowly! We see the path! We see the 'end'! We are practicing! We are unlearning, learning and practicing! Krsna confirms that he did not realize he is Krsna till he practiced and each one of us is a part of Krsna himself. Join us in the world of yoga – for living – towards Krsnaarjavayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

123. Fifty Spiritual Classics

Yogakshemam January 2018

Happy Solstice! Happy Sankranti! Pongal! Happy Youth! Happy Girl Children! Happy Farmers!

Happy Republic! Happy Voters!

Let us remember Luis Braille! Happy Technology! Happy NRIs! Let us laugh! Let us comfort! Let us preserve privacy of our data! Let us work for bettering the lot of street children!

Chinaveerabhadru led me to Nachiyar Thirumozhi today. Lost in its trance. A sequel to the more famous Tiruppavai. Andal/Godha prays, meditates and sings for union with Krsna. 143 stanzas give us the complete struggle cycle towards 'liberation'. Starting with praying to Manmatha, it goes on to pray Krsna directly – in Brindavanam as Gopikas playing with Krsna with his tantrums; in the lake taking bath as Krsna takes away the dresses, and later returns after tough negotiations, and Gopikas miss Krsna badly; nightingale as the messenger to Krsna for describing the state; meeting and marrying Krsna in the dream; speaking to Panchajanya, the conch, about its fortune to be with Krsna intimately; talking to dark clouds to be messengers of the sad state; feeling sad when the rains come but Krsna does not come; cursing flowering flowers, dancing peacocks, and singing nightingales, given the state of affairs at her end, and starts to lose hope; comparing with sita, Rukmini et al and feels sad, and starts cursing Krsna nor keeping the words and promises made; describing various places from Mathura to Dwarka and requesting people to take to these places and to him; begging them to at least bring his articles to comforted with, and wanting comfort by offering herself in full or in various parts on to him; and enquiring about Krsna and responding that he is there.

Complete and comprehensive.

Today I also remembered Gitanjali. Do not miss to read this. I need to put energy to recollect the translation I attempted some three decades ago. Soon.

I was going through the 50 Spiritual Classics. Apart from Gita, Quran, and Bible, my quick further shortlist of not to ignore at all at any cost category (and I read and are helping me for the journey ahead) includes:

- ☑ St. Augustine's Confessions;
- ☑ Richard Bach's Jonathan Livingston Seagull (and later, The Bridge Across Forever – and the Leslie's letter in particular);
- ☑ Fritjof Capra's The Tao of Physics;
- ☑ Gandhi's My Experiments with Truth;
- ☑ Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet;
- ☑ Dag Hammarskjold's Markings;
- ☑ Herman Hesse's Siddhartha;
- ☑ Aldous Huxley's The Doors of Perception;
- ☑ J Krishnamurti's Think on These Things;
- ☑ Thich Nhat Hanh's The Miracle of Mindfulness;

- ☒ Robert Pirsig's Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance;
- ☒ Idries Shah's The Way of the Sufi;
- ☒ Mother Teresa's A Simple Path;
- ☒ Eckhart Tolle's The Power of Now;
- ☒ Ken Wilber's A Theory of Everything;
- ☒ Paramahansa Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogi; and
- ☒ Gary Zukav's The Seat of the Soul

And this list must include:

- ☒ Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali;
- ☒ The Capital;
- ☒ Andal's Thituppavai and Nachiyar Thirumozhi;
- ☒ Paul Coelho's Alchemy;
- ☒ Notes to Myself;
- ☒ The Art of Loving; and
- ☒ Notes of Vivekananda, Ramana and Aurobindo.

There is one other book, I am keen that everyone should read: Gita (as if Krsna is not God) [I miss the exact title, but something like this].

More and more people must join hands for life, living, livelihoods, linkages, leadership, learning and love. We can begin with any L and we will reach all Ls and the life and love. More and more people need to be serviced and served. Let us get going.

This is L-yoga. This is L-being. These are the ways.

We seek to gain the core and therefore, ever expanding whole. We seek to look into and reach the centre. Both in unison is our way.

This is saptayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We are marching ahead, albeit slowly! We see the path! We are practicing! We are digging into micro! We are exploring macro! We are loving, learning, leading, linkages, livelihoods, living and life! We are transcending life to all human life to all life to all beings. We are on our way. Krsna confirms that Krsna takes all of us who are on their way to him and into him.

Join us in the world of yoga – for life – towards Krsnasahayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

124. The Future of Professions

Yogakshemam February 2018

Happy Blood Blue Super Moon! Happy Budget!

Let us fight Cancer! Let us work for social justice! Let us speak in our mother languages! Let us work for thriving good NGO movement! Let science and mathematics thrive! Let us be rational and rationally spiritual! Let us sleep, rest and be fully active! Let us be happy and joyous! Let equity and equality flourish without discrimination all across!

Wetlands! Sparrows! Wildlife! Forests! Water! Transgenders! Women! Consumers!

Puppetry! Theatre! Poetry! Colours!

Again, Chinaveerabhadru led me to Rumi this time. Through a book RUMI by Annemarie Schimmel. Three important dimensions – divine love – when you are thirsty and search for water, water is also searching for you; forms, stages and nuances of love – it is everything – borderless sea, water fall, life support, wild life, worm, bird, emperor, doctor, so on so forth; and seeing life and love in day-to-day existence. Rumi is teaching us the discipline of love to go to heaven from the nuances of daily chores.

May be – Kabir learnt from Rumi; and Tagore from Kabir.

The Future of The Professions by Richard Susskind (father) and Daniel Susskind (son) is looking at how technology transforms the work of human experts. The difficulty lies not in the new ideas (new dogs in the street), but in escaping from the old ones (old dogs in the street).

- ☒ Professionals have knowledge that others do not have in that domain.
- ☒ Admission into profession tends to depend on certain credentials.
- ☒ Activities of the professions are regulated in terms of exclusivity in doing certain tasks, self-regulation in the profession itself, and/or code of conduct specific to the profession.
- ☒ There is something called professional ethic, broadly running across the professions.
- ☒ Technology is changing the professions and the ways of the professions. Health. Education. Divinity. Law. Press/Media. Management Consulting. IT. Tax and Audit. Architecture. Livelihoods. Poverty Reduction. Social Development. Ecology. So on. So forth.
- ☒ Patterns and Trends across Professions include –
 - Reactive to proactive
 - More-for-less
 - Automation
 - Innovation
 - Multiple ways of communication
 - Data mastery
 - Relationship building
 - Diversification
 - Disintermediation and re-intermediation

Paraprofessionalization
Flexible self-employment
New specialists
Machines
Online self-help and collaboration
Personalization and mass customization
Emerging Business Models
Demystification

- ☒ Constantly evolving Information substructure of the society is influencing the ways of sharing experience and expertise.
- ☒ Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Siri and Google, Wiki, Robotics, Affective computing, Pervasive devices, Connected Humans (facebook, linkedin, skype, whatsapp ...), e-commerce – they are changing the professions and their ways.
- ☒ Liberation of expertise and knowledge commons.
- ☒ Decomposition into tasks and division of labour.
- ☒ Models of production and distribution of practical expertise include from traditional, networked experts, paraprofessionals, communities, embedded to machine generated.
- ☒ There are limits (moral) to markets. Standardization may lose traditional crafts in the various professions. Personal interactions may be the casualty.
- ☒ Increasingly capable non-thinking machines, differently evolved needs for human beings, increased technological un/underemployment, uncertainties and job-losses etc., are certain in the future. The trends are already there.
- ☒ Knowledge commons in professions happen because knowledge tends to get liberated, given the ecosystem and technology in its favour.

The future is in having most of the help, guidance, advice, news, insights etc., available through liberalized expertise. This in turn leads to having direct access to living, and help for healthier and happier lives for most of us in the universe.

This is Parivartan yoga. This is transformation.

We seek to transform ourselves in ever expanding whole to be sharing expertise and experience with no or little cost.

This is sahayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We are flowing ahead together, albeit slowly! We feel the path and guide one another! We are practicing! We are exploring micro and macro simultaneously! We are transforming ourselves! We transforming all life and all beings. We are on our way. Krsna confirms that Krsna keeps watching all along and comes to take us into him.

Join us in the world of yoga – for life – towards aanandaamayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

125. A Resonant Leader

Yogakshemam March 2018

Happy Mother Tongue!

Happy NGOs!

Happy Science!

Happy Life, Wild Life, Sparrows, Forests, Water, Atmosphere!

Happy Women!

Happy Consumers!

Happiness is our path and destiny!

Poetry! Puppetry! Theatre!

All of us are fools.

Health! Mother Earth! Copy Rights! English! Health at Work! Dance!

Resonant Leadership by Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee discusses Practical Framework for how leaders can create and sustain resonance in their relationships, their teams and their organizations. Leaders need to renew physically, mentally and emotionally again and again. Leaders can't sustain effectiveness unless they sustain themselves.

Leaders go through power stress day after day, fighting fire after fire and slowly burn out. The problem is not the stress but the lack of adequate recovery time. The key is to manage the cycle of sacrifice and renewal for resonance. The renewal is a holistic process that involves the mind, body, heart, and spirit. It all begins with mindfulness, hope and compassion. A resonant leader has to –

- ☑ Be inspirational;
- ☑ Create overall positive emotional tone characterized by hope;
- ☑ Be in touch with others, knowing their hearts and minds, experiencing and demonstrating compassion; and
- ☑ Be mindful, authentic and in tune with self, others and environment.

Leaders manage themselves and relationships with personal competencies –

- ☑ Self-awareness (including self-assessment and confidence);
- ☑ Self-management (including control, transparency, adaptability, initiative and optimism);
- ☑ Social awareness; and
- ☑ Relationship management (including inspiration, influence, nurturing, catalysing change, building bonds and teamwork)

Leaders avoid sacrifice syndrome. They are in the cycle of Sacrifice and Renewal. This cycle includes:

Resonant Relationships → Effective Leadership → Sacrifices → Renewal → Sustainable Leadership

Trouble in the work/business, friends leave, bad compromises, deep advices from people who matter etc., serve as the final wake-up calls to pursue renewal. Else sacrifices are not worth taking. Renewal

happens through relationships, teams and organizations by being mindful, having hope and having compassion. These benefit the leader in her/his renewal. Professional excellence adds to it. This would involve knowing the core values we cherish. This would involve knowing rhythms in the career and personal life.

Renewal is an intentional process, beginning with discovering ideal self, real self with strengths and weaknesses, learning agenda to move towards the ideal self, experimenting and practicing new habits and reinforcing the existing strengths, and developing and maintaining close personal relationships. As you develop resonance with self, resonance with others happens and vice-versa. The ideal self is like the personal vision we are pursuing and the legacy we want to leave behind.

Leaders need to cultivate and practice Mindfulness. This includes reflection (contemplation, meditation, etc.), and supportive relationships. Hope (and Faith) drive Renewal. Realizable vision and dream gives us hope. Compassion is the third source of Renewal. This includes understanding others' feelings and experiences, care, and acting on these feelings and care.

We have everything in us to be a leader, great leader. It begins with personal transformation, as Gandhi said - 'Be the change you wish to see in the world'. As Goethe said –

“What you can do, or dream you can, begin it.

Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.”

The future of this universe is in having resonant leadership in all of us, human life and life. This leadership and these leaders lead us to having direct access to fulfilling lives, meaningful living, with resonant relationships, happy unlearning and learning and caring love from all of us to all of us and the universe.

This is Sahajharyoga. This is sacrifice and renewal.

We seek to resonate and flow together with understanding and care in ever expanding whole.

This is sahagamanayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. We feel the path together and guide one another! We are flowing and practicing! We are touching and exploring micro and macro simultaneously! We are sacrificing, renewing and transforming ourselves! We are on our way. Krsna confirms that Krsna flows with us, if we are willing to flow with him.

Join us in the world of yoga –for life–towards aanandaharyogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

126. Aikya
Yogakshemam April 2018

Happy Health! Medicine! Health at Work! Mother Earth!

Happy Copy Rights! Intellectual Property! English!

Happy Workers!

Midwives! Red Cross! Nurses! Families! Mothers!

Press Freedom! Communication! Information! Development Dialogue! Cultural Diversity! Biological Diversity! Migratory Birds!

Fair Trade!

Laughter!

Stephen Hawking, the rational spirit and genius, rested.

March has also made us to reiterate our deep values: Love, Usefulness, Time, and Integrity. These include learning, humility, discipline (concentration and patience), and being truthful come what may. Those who are not able to measure up, need to pack up. Those who cannot pack up on their own, need to be helped to get packed up.

On 24 March 2018, Earth Hour Day, a few Development Workers came together to Found Aikya Forum of Development Workers (Aikya Forum) for Development Workers nationally. Development Workers particularly at the cutting edge. On the ground. Aikya Forum's raison d'être is to come together and evolve as a collective(s) and platform of development workers across geographies, themes, categories and interests for enhancing their identity, solidarity, capacities, access to possibilities and well-being at national level and beyond. Inter alia its key agenda has to be – enhancing identity, solidarity and mutual help; building knowledge/ learning/capacities; facilitating access to various services meeting financial, security, work, collectivization and related needs; and networking.

Aikya Forum would be an Association under Societies' Registration Act, with registered office in Hyderabad. Its non-negotiables include Inclusion and solidarity; learning; and mutual help. Its membership is for life and is limited to Development Workers.

Development Work has emerged as an important portfolio of livelihoods of people at large. Some 20 million are working in the Livelihoods-Poverty Reduction-Social Development domain. Their earnings for majority of them barely hovers around casual minimum wages. On ad hoc contracts, renewed from project to project. Uncertain Projects. Number of them work for 15-20 days a month. Not full-timers. Some of them work for 3-4 hours a day. Minimum wages are not discussed. Skills are limited to the task at hand. Learning and growing to become mature professionals is not in the reckoning. Stuck in some sense. Stagnation at the bottom of the pyramid. Many of these talk about rights and entitlements to people at large while they do not discuss the same for themselves! It is decidedly unorganized with no allies. While some of them cross over to politics, most remain and live a poor life with no access to learning, social security, bankability, credit, insurance etc. Identity, solidarity and mutual support is missing.

Funds from donors are dwindling; companies are implementing directly; governments are taking over development function; and collectives are growing. Development Worker is still to adapt to the emerging context and still be useful and eke out a meaningful livelihoods portfolio.

Aikya Forum is a response to this situation by the development workers for themselves. Its vision is at least 0.5-1% of the Development Workers across geographies, themes of work, categories and levels would come together in the coming 5-10 years. Development Workers organize themselves at various levels, in various themes etc., as chapters, apart from coming together at national level.

As of now, Aikya Forum is getting ready to be registered soon with an Initial Board. Interested Members are increasing day-by-day. As the registration process is done, official enrolment begins and general body of the enrolled members would formally elect its First Board as per the Articles of Association of Aikya. This should be in 3-8 months from now.

We are with them in their journey, in our own ways. We want at least 10% of Development Workers should be organized. It is possible. May be in a decade. Let more Aikyas blossom, flourish and work together.

As Development Workers, we have everything in us to be leaders and it has to begin with personal transformation. Aikya is a means to it. The future of this universe is in having development workers leading us towards fulfilling lives and simple and meaningful living, with resonant relationships and caring love from all of us to all of us and the universe.

This is Sanghayoga. This is identity, solidarity and support. We flow together in ever expanding whole.

This is aikyayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we feel one another! If we are for one another! If we support one another! If we flow and practice! If we love and learn! If we are useful every now! If we are truthful! Krsna confirms that our useful work flows to Krsna, and Krsna flows with us.

Join us in the world of yoga – for life – towards aikyasangamayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

127. Leader

Yogakshemam May 2018

May Day!

Happy Workers! Happy Press!

Midwives! Red Cross! Peacekeepers! Nurses!

Families! Mothers! Press Freedom! Telecommunication and Information Society! Development Dialogue! Cultural Diversity! Biological Diversity! Migratory Birds!

Hope Metrology helps!

Happy No Tobacco! No Asthma!

Happy Fair Trade!

Keep Laughing!

Parents! Fathers! Children! No Child Labour!

No Elder Abuse! Autism is not bad! Sickle Cells! Blood Donors! Refugees are part of us!

Milk! Bicycle! Environment! No Pests! Oceans! Wind! Stop Desertification and Drought!

New Art! Music! Yoga! Whistle Blowers! Cooperatives!

Ravindra Kumara Sharma, 65, Guruji and Kalaashramavaasi: soul became one with ashram now.

April has seen us listening and talking to more than 400 state level trainers of community resource persons and internal community resource persons, on Leadership and Communication. The gist includes -

Leader has followers who are people and born leaders themselves. As the born leader grows up, her/his potential reduces with time, as s/he is tempered by family, school(s), friends, society and various other elements of the socio-ecosystem in which s/he lives. While leadership is innate, it remains dormant and at times remains invisible and never comes out clearly. NASA longitudinal experiment articulates that creativity index of an individual falls to an abysmal 5% as one reaches adulthood. Therefore it becomes important to catch people young and nurture and polish the leadership potential of the people.

Leader's essential agenda, therefore, is to nurture leaders and the great leaders do this with gusto and single-mindedly. Great leaders cannot do anything else but nurturing leaders, leaders greater than the self. Interestingly, all of us are capable of being or becoming great leaders. We have the potential and it is up to us to unlock this potential. Great leaders do have three necessary traits – they are adaptive: they change the leadership styles as required from time-to-time, as per the situation and circumstances; they are transformation-focussed: they show the inner courage to resist the status-quo and the vested interests that benefit from the status-quo and they marshal change from within to without; and they are servant leaders and lead irrespective of whether they have been labelled as leaders or not. They do not know anything else but leading wherever they are.

Great leaders lead leaders, not followers; they lead to last, for legacy, with an echoing concern of what after us; they lead change with open arms, for the larger good of the poor and vulnerable; they lead teams and teams, not just a few individuals; they lead partners, by creating forums for partnerships; and they lead themselves. Flowing in the leadership, with leading self is their hall mark. The evidence of

their great leadership is in their effective communication, deep accountability and raining love on the leaders around. Like the mother to the child; and like the guru to the student. They give what is needed without being asked. They give after earning, if they do not have. This is not easy. This art is to be learnt. With discipline, concentration and patience. For at least 10,000 hours. The way we learn music. Dance. Art. We can do it if we want. Practice, Practice and Practice. Plan, Practice, Reflect, Plan, Practice and so on.

If we do not do this, when opportunity knocks, which is quite often, we will be inadequate. We live in Leadership-Management-Action Continuum. We catapult ourselves into leadership. Integrating. Being a role model. Being a boundary manager. We need to respond. To respond, we need to have the ability and we need to develop the ability. Let us plan and be ready, every time.

Effective Communication meets the needs of the other party. It communicates Hope (of better life), Faith (in the capacity or potential), and Promise (of being with you till you become better-off). It is communication between the equals (peers) in multiple forms, through multiple media using multiple technologies. The content is always friendly without hurting the sentiments. Multiple messages and multiple times with variations in messages are required. Communication should be short. Simple (in the local language and in the cultural context). Coherent. With all five sense organs of the Body. With the gut. With the Hands. With the entire Body. With Heart. With Mind. With Soul. With all Indriyas. With Sarvendriyas. With others around. Communication should be upwards, downwards, sideways and inwards. With the self. It should be authentic. Do what we say and say what we do. Walk the talk and talk the walk.

We are leaders. We communicate. We are accountable. We love. We give. We walk. We talk. We have within us to be Useful Adaptive Servant Leaders for Transformation. Let us plan and get going there.

The future of this universe is in we leading ourselves and leaders around us with sarvendriyas towards simple meaningful fulfilling life for all of us and the universe.

This is Sangrahayoga. This is leading leaders. This is flowing together in ever expanding whole.

This is sarvendriayogam.

Can we be there? Yes, if we pursue Atma Yoga. If we lead ourselves into the flow! If we lead usefulness! If we flow leading! If we nudge one another along in the flow! If we plan and practice flowing and leading! If we love, learn, give and flow! Krsna confirms that Krsna takes the flow to Krsna as long as we flow.

Join us in the world of yoga –for life–towards lokasangrahayogasiddhi. You will not regret it.

* * *

Walked/walking with us

G Muralidhar
T Venkateshwarlu
V Aravind Kumar
M Bhavya
K Chayadevi
S Laxman
S Mahidhar Reddy
K Ramesh
G Swathi
S Himabindu
T Vina
V Ankith
T Aparna Gayathri
K Bharathi
G Bhargava
Bhima Shankar
Chandranshu Gupta
G Dayanandu
Deepthi
Dharmendhar
Glen Shewcheck
Ira Rambe
S Janaki
K Krishna Chaithanya
P Kishore
Krishna Murari
M Lavanya
P Madhavi
B Madhusudhan

P Madhusudhan
G Madhu Vamsi
Manjula
Mansi Kaushik
P Mahesh
V Murali
D Narasimha Reddy
Naval Shaini
G Pulakeshi
M Nilendu
T Nirmala
LB Prakash
M Raja Srinivas
Ch Ramesh
R Ratna Madhavi
G Ravindra
Ramanjaneyulu
S Rekha
B Ramya
B Sai Srinivas
M Siddhardha
K Sridevi
P Soumya
R Swati
M Vijaybhasker
A Venkata Ramana
K Visweswar Rao
A Uma

