



SABHA NEWS

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EDITORS SPEAK:

Being endowed with the faculty of "Free Will", humans can attain greater heights in acquiring knowledge and attain happiness – so says Dr. R. Sujeer in his article "Towards Total Fulfillment". Interesting information about our mother tongue, Konkani, has been provided by Mr. Yogesh S. Kamath. Mr. K.R. Baliga writes on ways to deal with anger on the emotional front. On the health front, Mrs. Geetha Baliga writes about the humble, yet power-packed foods, which go a long way in improving our health and general well being. One of the holy places to attain the divine blessings, Mrs. Premi Shenoy has covered the Mookambika temple and Sneha Shenoy takes us to the heavenly abode for health and spiritual healing. Notable and well deserving achievements of our young members Mr. Rahul Baliga and Ms. Sangeetha Kamath and the vintage members Mr. Madhusudan Bhandarkar and Mrs. Chandri Bhat have been included. There is an informative write-up on the welfare schemes recently introduced for the benefit of the poorer section of the community members in Chennai.

TOWARDS TOTAL FULFILLMENT

- Dr. R. Sujeer

Among all living beings, human beings are unique for they alone, have "free-will". By free-will we mean the faculty of choice. Animals are born programmed and are not blessed with this power. Thus a human being can choose to take vegetarian or non-vegetarian food, can choose the design of his dress or choose not to dress at all, choose the kind of house to live in or the life style to lead. This faculty of choice is also extended to his pursuing goals – a single goal or often multiple goals. In and all through these goals man seeks to be happier and more secure. Though he relatively seems to attain his materialistic goals, the happiness and security that he gets seem to be temporary and fleeting. All experiences seem to leave him in a state of inadequacy and incompleteness. How often we come across a rich man surrounded by

luxuries, but totally insecure, unhappy and disgusted with life. It is said that Switzerland that boasts of the highest number of billionaires has the highest suicide rate in the world.

Our Vedas discuss this unique problem of man and his sense of incompleteness. The scriptures have a unique way of categorizing man's goals. It divides these pursuits into 2 key areas - that which leads to the Imperishable and that which leads to materialistic goals. It also classifies them into ethics, security, pleasure and freedom. Though these goals seem to be many and divergent, Veda says that, in and through all these goals, man seeks only unconditional joy or *ananda*. Thus the *purushartha* or goals are many, the *parama purushartha* or the ultimate goal is *eka ananda*.

The Upanishads or the end part of Veda are known as Vedanta. They discuss the topic of

joy in an elaborate manner. At a cursory glance, the source of joy seems to be objects – *visayas*. The objects that are outside being finite, the joy they give too is limited and fleeting and often mixed with sorrow. The sense organs or instruments through which objects are enjoyed or experienced are finite, subject to change or decay. Thus there is sorrow when one is not able to enjoy a given object. With the eyes fading with age, one is not able to read a book or watch the TV; when hearing gets weak with time, one is not able to enjoy good music or even hear what others say. The taste buds are not able to relish good food, as the teeth are no longer there, the nose has lost the sense of smell, and the taste buds having diminished, all the dishes seem to taste the same. The sense of touch too, wanes in time.

The next question that comes to one's mind is, why is one not able to enjoy this Infinite Self? The scriptures say that it is because of mental impurities or blocks in one's personality that one is not able to recognize the Self. These impurities can be removed by *Yoga – Karma yoga, Upasana yoga and Jnana yoga*. Just as a diamond, hidden in a muddy ore, is first cleansed by mechanical means, and then by use of chemicals and finally polished to bring out its inner luster, the individual has to practice *sadhana*, to realize the Self. This calls for a total reorientation of one's attitude and values.

Avoiding prohibited actions and doing *nitya karma*, or prescribed actions form the basic preparatory *sadhana*. Avoiding non-veg. food and intoxicating drinks is a must as these increase *tamas* (inertia) and reduce *satvik* qualities. The other important value we should cultivate is the company of saintly and good people and avoiding bad company. This has a tremendous effect on one's personality. The process of refining is faster with the help of *karma yoga*. This *yoga* of working with the right attitude makes the person more selfless and relieves him of his tensions. Thus a relative peace of mind can be achieved by following *karma yoga*. The restless nature of the mind is taken care of by *upasana*. Finally through a systematic study of the scriptures – listening to the teaching by a Guru, contemplating and finally abiding in one's own nature, one can enjoy the Vision that one is full, complete, infinite joy, peace and free from sorrow. Then one realizes the Unity underlying the creation – one without a second, *advaitam*. This transformation does not require one to renounce one's family, home or responsibilities and become a recluse. Living in the midst of all

responsibilities and family one can enjoy the Vision, like king Janaka.

Does one have to give up enjoyments? The great Sankara answers this in his "*Bhaja Govindam*" – *yogarato va bhogarato va sangarato va sangavihine ... ramate chititam* - let him be steeped in the enjoyment of *bhoga* or *yoga*, let him be attached or unattached, the person whose mind revels in himself, he alone enjoys".

Thus the scriptures help us to lead a better, happier, healthier life for ourselves and for the world and lead us to total fulfillment that materialism cannot.

DEALING WITH ANGER

(Based on a talk by Swami Paramarthananda on 1/1/2008)

- K.R. Baliga

It is but natural that we human beings have desires which we want to fulfill. Often when we cannot get what we desire, anger arises within us. The scriptures say this is unavoidable because *prakriti* (nature) is made of three *gunas* (qualities) – *satwa*, *rajas* and *tamas* – and we have these in various proportions. When the feeling of anger is expressed in words or actions, it usually hurts persons who are at the receiving end. Quite often, the person who acted out of anger himself feels sorry or guilty a little later but still does not have the grace or humility to acknowledge it. On the contrary some may even justify their anger to be righteous quoting the scriptures!

Anger is a powerful and universal emotion. Everyone has been angry to some degree or other on innumerable occasions. If any one claims that he has not vented his anger, it must be towards his employers (lest he may lose his job) but the anger is sure to be felt by the family members when the person comes home. Even sages who were well-versed in scriptures have not been immune as shown by *Durvasa*, *Vishwamitra*, *Jamadagni* etc. Why, even Gods are not spared of anger – *Rudra* represents anger.

Our scriptures look upon anger as a serious problem of the mind affecting one's health and mind. In fact it is one of our six internal enemies. Mind is a very important instrument for achieving our ultimate goal, namely liberation. A mind which has lost its equipoise because of anger is hardly able to study scriptures and gain knowledge. On the transactional level too such a person will not be

able to get on with persons, or command respect and regard or make much progress in his life. Thus anger has to be treated as a serious problem because of its negative consequences and one has to work upon it sincerely. But first there has to be awareness about anger being one's serious problem as a disease of the mind.

Bhagawad Gita in Ch.2.62 to 64 indicates very graphically how anger caused by thwarted desires, if allowed to grow unchecked, can cause total destruction of one's personality. Later in Ch.16 Gita classifies human qualities in daive (divine) and asuric (demoniac) groups. In verse 4, anger is included among the prominent demoniac qualities. Desire, Anger and Greed are termed in Ch.6.2 as the three door-ways to hell. Thus as far as our scriptures are concerned, anger is squarely condemned and not given any justification at all in any circumstances. In fact, it was held that every time a sage lost his temper and cursed, he lost the wealth of tapas done for a thousand years!

Yet we come across a very large number of persons who say that their anger is righteous, caused by a genuine reason and for a noble purpose. They also advocate that some "good" anger is needed for success in life, to get things done. Otherwise, they argue, one runs the risk of being treated as a door-mat by all and sundry. But this view is not in accord with our scriptures. Scriptures do not make any such distinction between good and bad anger. All anger is bad; there is no "righteous" anger.

Scriptures do not assess anger on the basis of cause, purpose or motive. Anger is assessed only on the basis of consequences. What are the consequences of anger? The most damaging consequence is – anger destroys three cardinal positive virtues which are extremely important for human well-being at all levels of life – individual, family or social. These consequences are:

1. Loss of equanimity or poise. (Samatva naashaka). The Gita exhorts us to cultivate equipoise and not to be agitated because of loss/gain, pleasure/pain, praise/calumny etc. These, in fact, are the qualities of a person of steady wisdom (sthitha prajna) as mentioned in Bhagavad Gita Ch.2.38, 2.48, 2.53 and will lead one to ultimate peace or Braahmi state (Ch.2.71-72). Anger destroys all this.
2. Loss of sensitivity (Sookshmatva naashaka). A sensitive person is considerate to others and is careful not to hurt them physically or mentally. Ahimsa is considered as the supreme quality or parama dharma. During anger, the mind becomes extremely gross, taking violence as the only solution, blinding one to other feasible and reasonable solutions. That is why terms such as blinding rage, mad with anger etc. are used to describe these states. In fact anger is too expensive a remedy with unacceptable and lasting side-effects. A clear bad bargain to be avoided on all counts.
3. Loss of sensibility (Saavadhaanatva naashaka). Anger invariably is followed by impulsive responses where words and actions emerge without quality control. Human beings are endowed by viveka or the discriminating faculty and this is the only thing that distinguishes them from other animals or beasts. Lack of quality control on our words and action can have serious consequences as for example when Kausalya used harsh words against Bharata when he met her first after Dasharatha's death without bothering to hear him first, or when Seetha used harsh words against Lakshmana when Rama had gone out to capture the golden deer. Any amount of praise or good words said later cannot heal the scar left behind.

Thus serenity, sensitivity and sensibility are destroyed by anger and so one philosopher has termed anger as temporary insanity. So what is the remedy for avoiding these consequences? It is no use asking anyone "don't get angry" because anger happens without one's consent. The solution lies in controlling it from getting out of hand. Scriptures suggest four methods:

1. Prayer or praarthana to the Lord to increase our endurance or tolerance threshold. One gets angry only when the pain (bodily or mentally) exceeds a level which is specific to each person. This amounts to raising one's level of titiksha or endurance level.
2. Resolution or pratijna to understand that to be angered by some one is to be conquered by that person. You allow the condition of your mind to be determined by him and the switch is under his control. Understand that when you act out of anger, you act out of

weakness. You have to resolve firmly that, come what may, you will not lose the mastery over the situation.

3. Acceptance or prasaada bhaavana with the clear understanding that we do not call all the shots, there are situations over which we do not have full control, that there are several factors totally unpredictable. Hence you cannot have pre-set norms for what you can expect in your transactions with the world. As the Jewish saying goes – you cannot decide what fish you will catch when you go fishing. Your control is over what you can do (Gita Ch.2.47) when the results do not conform to the expectations and you have to face contrary results, accept these as a prasada (no equivalent English term) of the Lord, augment your efforts and try again.
4. The preceding three steps are for preventing or minimizing the rise of anger. But there will be occasions when you get angry despite these three steps. So the fourth one is to diffuse anger that has arisen despite all your efforts. This is done by bringing up a pratipaksha bhaavana, a quality opposite to that which has caused anger to emerge. The most important thing is not to talk and to refrain from action when the anger is boiling within. In Japan, some companies keep a punching bag with a picture of the boss in special rooms. Any employee angry with the boss can go there and punch it to his heart's content. Another way could be to write a real nasty letter to the person (the target of your anger) keep it safely away from every one, and tear it off the next day. This is an ideal way to release the pent-up anger.

How can we know whether one has made any progress by adopting all these methods. This is done by recourse to FIR where –

F is frequency i.e. how often do I get angry during a day or a week or a month.

I is intensity i.e. how demonstrative is my anger as seen by raising the voice, shouting, abusing, banging things etc.

R is recovery time i.e. how soon do I come back to a normal state and forget the incident. Some persons take their anger even till death. The

ideal way is for your anger to be like a line drawn on water. With vigilant practice, you should be able to lower F and I virtually to zero and thereby make R an irrelevant factor.

Whatever you thought could be achieved by anger can be achieved by other methods. One who gets angry to achieve something is no better than a child throwing tantrums for a chocolate. Similarly, if one has to punish some one, it should not be out of anger, but out of a sense of justice, fair play and with an intention to correct the behaviour of that person.

SIMPLE POWER FOODS THAT HEAL

- Geetha Baliga

Today India has entered the 21st century with a bang. Prosperity has come to us with its share of stress, insomnia, obesity, blood sugar and cholesterol. We can no longer buckle our belts but our knees are buckling!

It is not possible to stay away from junk food all the time, especially for the children. So we have to try to “eat healthy” by incorporating some of the traditional foods our grammies swore by:

AMLA: Did you know that the humble amla or avalo contains 20 times more vitamin C than an orange? It has awesome healing properties. It strengthens digestion, treats hyperacidity, gastritis, constipation, flatulence and colitis, It lowers cholesterol and is a good protection against heart disease. It protects also the liver and has high iron content. It activates the body's immune system making it a potent disease – fighter.

CINNAMON: The latest reports tell us that this bark we know as a dalchini is a strong stimulator of insulin secretion. Just one pinch of dalchini in your food helps to bring down your high blood sugar. Sprinkle it on your oats or in your tea.

ALMONDS: Eat at least four almonds a day. (Yes; it is costly but no costlier than other junk foods.) Almonds have the capacity to lower the LDL or “bad” cholesterol significantly. This means a reduced risk of heart disease. Also the fibre content in almonds slows the actual absorption of carbohydrates into the body, thereby helping in managing diabetes. Almonds have several medicinal properties that help in preserving the

vitality of the brain. They have also been found excellent for dealing with constipation and anemia.

METHI or FENUGREEK: It is good for diabetes. It brings down elevated blood sugar and cholesterol levels. It may also cure an upset stomach. A teaspoon of methi can be eaten neat early morning or lightly warm some methi, powder it and add to buttermilk. This is known to stop loose motion. Or add whole methi seeds to a bowl of milk when setting curds. Add them to your dosa or idli batter. Nursing mothers can take a teaspoon daily, as it is a milk enhancer.

BANANA: This unique tropical fruit is extremely high in potassium yet low in salt, making it perfect to beat blood pressure. It is high in iron and hence useful in anemia. High in fibre, it helps prevent constipation. It contains tryptophan, a type of protein that the body uses to make you relax, improve the mood and prevent depression. It neutralizes over-acidity and reduces irritation caused by ulcers by coating the stomach lining. Bananas are high in B vitamins that help calm the nervous system. Snacking on bananas between meals helps to keep blood sugar levels up and avoid morning sickness.

MOOKAMBIKA TEMPLE

- Premi Shenoy

One of the temples in South Kanara often visited by the people of Tamil Nadu and Kerala is the Mookambika Temple at Kollur situated on the banks of the river Souparnika in the midst of dense forest of Kootachadri range of Western Ghats. The doyen of Tamil Nadu politics, the former Chief Minister M.G, Ramachandran was an ardent devotee of the Goddess and donated a golden sword.

Kollur is a bustling and busy pilgrimage centre now thanks to the vast improvement in road transport with all rivers in the district having been bridged. But in the early 1940's, my uncle says that pilgrims had to come to Baindur (half way between Kundapur and Honavar), halt overnight and take a bus at about 7 a.m. to return by the same bus leaving Kollur by 4 p.m. Kollur was surrounded by dense forest with plenty of wild life – tigers, cheetahs and hyenas. Anyone staying overnight in Kollur was advised not to venture outdoors in the night lest be a prey to a prowling tiger.

The main deity is the magnificent Jyothilinga with a golden line in the centre. The pilgrims are enabled to see it by reflecting the sun's rays on the lingam using a mirror held outside. The splendid 90 cm tall punchaloha idol of the goddess was also installed by Sankaracharya in the temple.

Near Kollur is the Kootachadri peak where Adi Sankaracharya had sat in meditation. It is believed that a Brahmin couple brought an 8 year old mute boy asking the Acharya to bless the child. On asking the young lad who he was, he replied in chaste Sanskrit versa that he was the veritable Brahman. This boy later known as Hastaamalaka became one of the four most prominent disciples of Adi Sankara. It is also reputed that Sankaracharya wrote the beautiful "Soundarya Lahari" in Kollur depicting Devi's magnificence and beauty.

Skanda Purana states that Kollur was formerly known as Kolapura named after a sage called "Kola". A demon called Karihasura was made dumb (Mooka) by Goddess. To fulfill the last wish of this Asura, the Goddess named herself after him and thereafter came to be popularly known as "Mookambika".

Various Kings had donated priceless ornaments to the Devi which include a very rare palm-sized emerald which is priceless. This was once stolen by gypsies but was later returned to the temple. A 14 meter high steel pillar fixed on top of the hill has not rusted for centuries like the one in the famous Qutab Minar complex in Delhi. Being a temple dedicated to the Devi, Navarathri is celebrated here with great pomp and splendour, attracting devotees in thousands.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Reasons for sleeping and waking up early.

Evening at 9 – 11 p.m. is the time for eliminating unnecessary/toxic chemicals (detoxification) from the antibody system (lymph nodes). This time duration should be spent by relaxing or listening to music. If during this time a housewife is still in an un-relaxed state such as washing the dishes or monitoring children doing their home-work, this will have a negative impact on health.

Evening at 11 p.m. – 1 a.m. is the detoxification process in the liver, and ideally should be done in a deep sleep state.

Early morning 1-3 a.m. is the detoxification process in the gall, also ideally done in a deep sleep state.

Early morning 3 – 5 a.m - detoxification in the lungs. Therefore there will sometimes be a severe cough for cough sufferers during this time.

Morning 5 – 7 a.m. – detoxification in the colon, you should empty your bowel.

Morning 7 – 9 a.m. – absorption of nutrients in the small intestine, you should be having breakfast at this time. Breakfast should be earlier, before 6.30 a.m. for those who are sick. Breakfast before 7.30 a.m. is very beneficial to those wanting to stay fit. Those who always skip breakfast, should change their habits, and it is still better to eat breakfast late until 9 – 10 a.m. rather than no meal at all.

Sleeping late and waking up too late will disrupt the process of removing unnecessary chemicals. Aside from that, midnight to 4.00 a.m. is the time when the bone marrow produces blood. Therefore, have a good sleep and don't sleep late.

Take care about your health.

NEW WELFARE SCHEMES

The Sabha has introduced a few welfare measures for the benefit of economically weaker sections of our community living in Chennai and whose total family income does not exceed Rs.1,50,000 per annum.

1. Assistance for severely handicapped or disabled persons:

A monthly assistance of Rs.500 will be given for the benefit of the eligible persons provided the application is examined and cleared by a panel of doctors nominated by the Sabha as a deserving case.

2. Assistance for medical treatment:

Financial assistance up to a maximum of Rs.5000 in each case is extended to cover the cost of surgical/medical treatment (only in general wards requiring hospitalization for at least 24 hours.) Actual cost of tests and treatment, medicines, aids like hearing aids, crutches and even training in special institutions for the handicapped are taken into account. But the assistance under the scheme is limited to Rs.5000 in each case.

The assistance is given only to such cases which are examined and recommended by a panel of doctors nominated by the Sabha.

Applications forms as also further details may be obtained from the Sabha's Office.

About Konkani language ...

- Yogesh Sadananda Kamath

The Central Sahitya Akademi recognized Konkani as an independent literary language of India. On 30th May, 1987, Goa declared Konkani as the "Rajbhas" (State language) on the occasion of being raised from Union territory into a full-fledged twenty-fifth state of the Indian Union. On 20 August 1992, the Govt of India added Konkani to the Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution as one among the 18 national languages of India. And from then on the denominations of currency notes are specified in Konkani also.

Konkani is a language that takes its name from the narrow belt of land stretching along the west coast of India, from Thane in Maharashtra to Kasaragod in Kerala, known from times immemorial as the 'Konkan' – one of the ancient 'Janapadas'(regions) of the Indian subcontinent and the 'abode of Konkas'. References to the Konkas and their habitat, also known then as Kondgkan or Kongvan are reportedly found in ancient literature notably in the 'Brihatsamhita' in Sanskrit and in the 'Sangam' writings in Tamil. According to 1971 census, the total Konkani-speaking population was 15,22,684. But this certainly is an under-estimation, as many Konkani speakers were wrongly enumerated as speakers of other languages. It is therefore necessary for all Konkanis to make sure that during the next census in 2011 at least, we indicate our language as Konkani.

Konkani is a living language, rich in heritage and resourceful folklore that is colorful and full of variety. Konkani people are intelligent and creative - having made a mark on the national scene in various fields like art, literature, music, theatre, commerce, journalism, administration, science, education, banking, politics, films etc.

Just like there are different varieties of mangoes, there are different flavors of Konkani based on regions namely Bombay, Goa, Canara and Malabar tracing back to the colonial times. Added to these are those spoken by Roman

ACHIEVEMENTS

Catholics in Goa/Mangalore and Navayats in Bhatkal. This diversity, along with words borrowed from local languages, has enriched Konkani and made it omnipresent on the west coast of India. With increasing use of English, we have “Konglish” as well, mostly spoken by our youth. There are some so-called highly-educated who still feel Konkani is not sophisticated enough and one has to search for Konkani words in their conversations.

There is a deep-rooted misconception that Konkani has no script. This doesn't seem to be correct, since Konkani like Marathi and Hindi used the Devanagari script. But the Portuguese rulers then had tried their best to destroy the religion, culture and language. Also the use of Devanagari script for Konkani was forcibly stopped; they had to use Roman script. Those who left Goa and settled elsewhere to protect their religion, language and culture then adopted the local scripts – Kannada or Malayalam. It is unfortunate that there is a controversy going on about the uniform script to be adopted for Konkani. It is hoped that without being politically-motivated, the senior stalwarts of the Konkani-speaking community will have the good sense of agreeing to have a common script officially for standardization. This might in due course, enable Konkani to be better understood by all. In parallel, let Konkani continue to be expressed in regional languages - that way Konkani would not be restricted to Goa state alone but would thrive in other states as well with regional fervor.

Konkani has flourished in Karnataka through Kannada script and this has brought back some words into daily use which was long forgotten probably due to Portuguese, Marathi influence. These rediscovered words are mostly Sanskrit since Kannada vocabulary is largely Sanskrit-based. Talking about folklore literature, some Konkani proverbs draw similarities with Kannada 'nudigattus'.

Now there are study circles around the globe and Konkani is also taught as a subject in Carmel university of USA and Lisbon University of Portugal.

Long live classical, divine Konkani...!

The Sabha is grateful to Sri Vasant M. Shanbhag, Canara Traders & Printers Pvt. Ltd. for the production of this issue, free of charge. He is the Joint Secretary of our Sabha.

We are very happy and honoured to include in this Newsletter the achievements of some of our members. Surely there are many more such flowers blossoming unseen because they have not been reported. We would love to hear from you about them and to share it with all our readers.

Chandri Bhat:

This 70 years young ever-smiling active lady is the acknowledged “Queen of Flavours” in Chennai. A consultant to many multinational domestic kitchen appliance manufacturers, a cookery teacher par excellence, a



food stylist and a cheerful cookery demonstrator over the TV – she is the numero uno cookery expert in the South of India. She is the moving spirit behind Chennai Culinary Institute – a cookery school that uses its profits to train under-privileged women for a career in cooking. Thereafter she extended its activities to a bakery to support boys from economically disadvantaged background. Not content to carry on with just Indian cooking, she mastered the cuisines of other countries like Kuwait, Thailand, Singapore, Austria, France, Sri Lanka etc. She is a consultant to many star hotels in the city.

Always very keen to learn, she spent four weeks on an intensive training at “Ferrandi” a most reputed culinary institute in Paris from which some of the most famous European Chefs have graduated. She also attended a week-long workshop conducted by the Bangkok University Cooking Institute to perfect her repertoire of Thai cuisine.

Chandri Bhat is also a very eloquent speaker in Konkani and well-versed in Konkani traditions and culture. For several years she used to compere programmes in the Annual Family Get-Togethers of the Sabha, and she also served as a Member of the Sabha's Managing Committee. She now plans to write a cookery book – not the run of the mill compilation of just recipes but one enriched by her experiments and experience in cooking. All our best wishes to this Konkani lady who has reached the top of her chosen career.

Madhusudan Bhandarkar

Bank Managers, like doctors, reputedly have a poor hand-writing although they may be good with figures. Our member, Madhusudan Bhandarkar who worked with the Syndicate Bank is a calligraphy expert and has collected a wonderful set of over 50 calligraphy pens from all over the world. One of the prized items is a quill. Not only is he fascinated with these pens, but he likes to experiment with them. There are various types of calligraphy pens to suit various styles and it is the nib that makes all the difference. But more than that, it is the person wielding the pen.

Madhusudan Bhandarkar is also a versatile harmonium player and is a constant support to the Bhajan Singers in Madras Shri Kashi Math and in the Sabha. We are all proud to see him making a mark in his hobby. Madhusudan Bhandarkar and his wife Bharati have recently shifted to Mangalore.

YOUNG ACHIEVERS

Rahul Baliga

This young man of 21 years has toppled from the winners' pedestal, the stalwarts from the Army who have been cornering the National Rowing Championships in India for decades. In February 2008, history was made in Hyderabad when Rahul became the first civilian to win the Championship.

Rahul is the son of Ramesh Baliga and Asha Baliga and the proud grandson of Mr. & Mrs. U.N. Baliga who need no introduction to our members. Rahul was interested in sports right from his childhood and started rowing for the Madras Boat Club since 2005. He was lucky to get a good



coach who put him through grueling steps to emerge as the number one. Rahul studied in SRM Engineering College. It is indeed a mark of his determination that has enabled him to find time for sports too. Rahul's coach is convinced that Rahul is the find of a life-time.

Rahul feels that we Indians are too obsessed with cricket. If just a part of all the money heaped on cricket could be diverted to other deserving sports it would indeed do wonders to the entire sports scenario and that would be the prerequisite to improve India's medals tally in international sports meets.

The Adyar river stretch available to the Madras Boat Club where Rahul practices is only about 650 metres long and is not capable of providing meaningful practice for the 2000 metre sweep events. Yet Rahul was not disheartened and as he says –“Requisites for excelling in sports are strong mind and sheer will power. After all, races are won by heart”.

Usually sportsmen are not brilliant in academic studies. But Rahul completed his Engineering Degree with a first class and without any arrears. Rahul is interested in music too and plays the key board.

Our best wishes to this Young Achiever with an advice – Please don't rest on your oars and keep rowing to reach further levels of excellence in all spheres of life.

Sangeeta Praveen Kamath



Sangeeta Praveen Kamath has secured the University Gold Medal on completion of her B. Arch Degree course from the School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University, Guindy, Chennai. Sangeeta, who is the daughter of Mrs. Anita and Mr. Praveen Kamath and the granddaughter of Mrs. Hemalatha and Mr. K.R. Kamath has always been an academically inclined student right from her school days when she obtained the second rank at the national level in the All-India Senior Secondary Examination held by the CBSE in Class 10. The Sabha honoured her as a “Young Achiever” in 2002 for this academic achievement at the national level. She was also specially invited that year to witness the Republic Day Parade from the President’s box. She went on to secure the first rank in the entrance exam for Architecture conducted by the Anna University for admission to the B. Arch course. She has won many laurels for her institution both at school and college level, the most recent being the third prize at the national level in ‘Habitat 2035’, an environment-friendly and futuristic green residence design competition conducted by the Indian Green Building Congress for students of Architecture. She has successfully completed her B. Arch Course and has been awarded the gold medal for obtaining the highest Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) in the University and has been declared the University Topper.

Young Sangeeta has never stood second in her career so far and we would indeed look forward to hear laurels after laurels being garnered by her.

Rs.11,42,000 GIVEN AS FREE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Sabha disbursed Rs.11,42,000 in free scholarships to 479 students in 2007/2008 as against Rs.9,67,500 to 470 students in 2006/2007.

TO HARIDWAR – FOR HEALTH AND HOLINESS

- Sneha Shenoy

Way before I visited Haridwar in the November of 2007, I thought of it as another holy place with scores of sadhus meditating and praying by the Ganges, and a whole lot of temples. However, the trip was not just a religious pilgrimage, but one with a twist in it. Throw in a little bit of bending, deep breathing and relaxation.

Trivia: Situated in the northern state of Uttaranchal, Haridwar translates to *hari ke dwaar* or gateway to the Gods. The way you pronounce it decided by whether you are a follower of Shiv (Har) or Vishnu (Hari), hence Hardwar or Haridwar respectively.

The ‘twist’ in our trip I refer to is Baba Ramdev’s Aashram, 22 kms short of Haridwar when approaching from Delhi. Situated in the very isolated Bahadarabad, its quite an oasis in the desert.



Entrance to the aashram, Patanjali Yogpeeth

To recollect our trip, I wouldn’t exactly call it one planned to high levels of precision. We had return tickets to and from our destination Delhi, and a ride to the bus stand in Delhi. Bus, I would say is the best and safest mode of transport, as there are stretches where it gets fairly desolate, so unless you are in a largish group, refrain from traveling by car. The most comfortable way to travel is to stick

to trains traveling between Delhi and Dehradun, as they stop at Haridwar as well.

Patanjali Yogpeeth is nothing like what one would associate with an ashram. Equipped with modern amenities, it is a fairly well-kept place given the turnover of visitors. In addition to conducting morning yoga classes, there are also doctors catering to all types of ailments.

The campus spread over acres of land could qualify as a tourist attraction. Across the gates, which make a very impressive entrance is a pathway running through the gardens right to the main structure. The garden is dotted with statues of Patanjali, the father of Yoga Shastra God of Health Dhanwantri and others.

The entire process of having a check –up is also very organized. You need to register at a counter, with details of the ailment, for which you get assigned an appropriate doctor. The doctors blending modern medicine with ayurveda and yoga, churn out prescriptions with unusual un-antibiotic names.



The main attractions that we managed to catch in Haridwar were the temples of Mansadevi and Chandidevi respectively. Both temples are accessible by cable car, which goes by the name of Udan-Khatola. Mansadevi situated atop the Shivaliks offers a panoramic view of the city of Haridwar. “Mansa” means wishes, devotees visiting the temple tie sacred threads that cover practically the entire temple. They are said to return to untie the thread once their wishes are fulfilled.

Mansadevi is the second most popular attraction after Hari ke Pauri. The aarti that takes place on this ghat every evening, is a must watch. The force with which the river flows is simply unbelievable, there’s almost a magical feeling witnessing the entire evening.

Rishikesh, located in the foothills of the Himalayas is situated 25 kms ahead of Haridwar. It is surrounded by hills on three sides, with the Ganges running through it. Although of late, the city has also become a popular spot for white-water rafting, we, on our quest for the spiritual and religious stuck to the temples and ashrams that dot the entire area around the famous *Lakshman Jhoola*, a suspension bridge across the Ganges. Further ahead is the more recently constructed *Ram Jhoola* which connects the *Shivanand Ashram* with *Swarg Ashram*.

The name *Baba Kali Kamliwale Panchayati Kshetra* as quaint as it sounds stuck in my head; the institution provides boarding and lodging facilities to pilgrims. Baba Kali Kamliwale, was a great saint named Swami Vishudanandaji, who was instrumental in setting up Swarg Ashram. The area surrounding this ashram bustles with activity filled with temples, shops, eateries and more ashrams.



The Shiva statue on the banks of the Ganges at Chidanand Ashram.

Shivanand Ashram has many rooms where pilgrims can stay and organizes regular yoga classes. It was set up by Swami Shivanand, a doctor by profession, who practiced in Malaya, renounced his family and set up the ashram in 1924.

For lunch we visited *Chotiwalla*, a modestly priced decent joint serving dishes cooked in lots and lots and lots of ghee, best described as the McDonalds of Rishikesh. We did peer into Lucky restaurant in Swargashram, but they appeared more interested in serving the *goras* over us Indians.

Gita Ashram, near Lakshman Jhoola is famous for its depicted walls with scenes, paintings and statues from Mahabharatha and Ramayana. A

branch of the well known Gita Press is situated here.

The evening Aarti at the Swami Chidanand aashram is magnificent. The entire evening consists of a puja on the banks of the Ganga, with devotional songs being chanted by children of all age groups. A must visit for one and all. Its very different from the one in Haridwar.

To sum it all, it was really a rejuvenating and spiritual experience.

MEENA G. SHANBHAG

- Maya Rao

Meena Shanbhag was an active member of the Gurukrupa Bhajan Mandali and had contributed in a great way to its progress.

Besides being a soft-spoken and silent worker, she was a good writer of meaningful and wonderful aarathi songs and bhajans in Konkani. The songs written by her were sweet and touched everyone's heart and were appreciated by all.

She had written and sung songs for Lord Ganapathi, Lord Sri Ram, Varamahalakshmi and other social functions like "Lagna Chudi" (i.e. the custom of adorning of bangles to the bride before her wedding), "Gurbini Aarathi", cradling ceremony of the new-born baby etc.

Being the Secretary of the S.G.S. Sabha Mahila Vibhag she took an active part in organizing cultural programmes in a successful manner. She was also a good director and also played a key role in organizing skits and dances with the help of children and women of Mahila Vibhag.

During Ganesh Chaturthi functions she was an expert in making beautiful garlands which were used for adorning Lord Ganesh. In one of the Mahila Vibhag programmes, she taught other members, the art of making beautiful garlands with a variety of flowers.

As we look back and remember the wonderful and good hearted person that she was, who, even in her brief period of life, had become a star in herself. Even today the songs written by her are sung and enjoyed, reminding us of a person who will be remembered with warmth in our hearts.

(Editor's note: Meena Shanbhag, wife of Mr. Gopal M. Shanbhag passed away on 20-5-2008 at age 52.)

LIP SMACKING DISHES

We reproduce below 4 recipes out of the remaining 12 entries of the contest our Mahila Vibhag conducted in November 2007 for dishes using Karathe (bittergourd)

Karela Bharta

- Surekha Kamath

Ingredients: 4 ½ kg. Bitter Gourd – sliced; 2 Big Onions and 2 Tomatoes (chopped finely); 7-8 Green Chillies – slit; 5-6 Pods Garlic; 1 Teaspoon Chilli Powder; ½ Teaspoon Haldi; Salt to taste; Coriander Leaves; Oil – 4 Teaspoon.

Method:

Keep oil in kadai. Add the garlic, when it becomes light brown add bitter gourd and Green Chillies and fry well till light brown. Then add the powders and onions, tomatoes and salt. Cover and cook till soft. Garnish with coriander leaves.

Bitter Gourd Chutney

- Veena Sujeer

Ingredients: Bitter Gourd – ½ kg; Onion – 2 Big; Tamarind Paste – 200 gm; Jaggery – 200 gm; Salt – 1 Teaspoon; Oil – 3 Table Spoons; Mustard – ½ Teaspoon; Methi – ¼ Teaspoon; Chilli Powder – 2 Teaspoons.

Method:

Cut Bitter Gourd and remove the seeds. Cut onions into four and peel. Put them in a pressure pan. Add tamarind paste and jaggery and boil it for one whistle. After it cools down blend it in a mixer. In a non-stick pan put oil, heat and add mustard and methi. After it sputters add the blended mixture. Add Chilli powder and salt and keep on a show flame (for about 1 hour) till it comes to Halwa consistency. This can be preserved in a fridge for a few weeks.

Pancharatna

- Smita Ganesh Kamath

Ingredients: Maida – 1 cup; Rawa – 1 cup; Sugar – 1 cup; Milk – 1 cup; Buttermilk – 1 cup; One spoon baking powder; Almonds, Cashew nuts and Poppy seeds for decoration.

Method:

Mix all the above ingredients well and keep it for one hour. Then add baking powder, nuts and vanilla essence. Then pour the mixture in a greased (with ghee) pan. Bake it for 20 minutes at

240 degrees in oven and decorate with poppy seeds.

Jhat – Phat Barfi (Instant Burfi)

Ingredients: Rava – 1 cup; Ghee – 1 cup; Milk – 1 cup, Sugar – 2 cups; Kesar or Cardamom.

Method:

Roast the rava in ghee till you get a good aroma. Mix all the ingredients in a glass bowl and microwave on high for 5 minutes. Take out and stir. Keep on high again for 2 minutes. Put the mixture on a greased plate. Cut into desired shape.

SGS Sabha Charitable Trust

The Old Age Home run by the Trust continued its work successfully. The residents are happy and continue to reside there as a well-knit family. The modified first floor of the Dr. K.P.Mahale Centre started getting revenue on bookings for social functions. Though the amount is very small at present, the outlook seems bright and encouraging.

The lectures on Vishnu Sahasra Nama by Mr.K.R.Baliga were completed in February 2008 and thereafter he started giving talks on Bhaja Govindam. Mrs. Deepa Shenoy's lectures on spiritual matters started in January 2008 and is continuing. Mrs.Vijayalakshmi R.Pai continues to teach the residents Bhajans regularly. Mr. Krishna Rao who was giving weekly talks on Maha Bharatha from August 2007 completed his talks in December 2007. The Trust will welcome any other volunteers who can give talks on spiritual topics or any other matter of interest. Those who wish to volunteer may please contact Mr.A.Arjuna Pai on phone 24867022 / 24881860 or Old Age Home on 26449585

Dr. Mrs. Shantha Kamath continues her visit to the Old Age Home and takes care of the health of the residents.

The Trustees are glad to inform our overseas members that the Trust can now receive donations in foreign currency. It is an opportunity for our overseas members, friends and well wishers to contribute for the development of the Old Age Home. The Trustees propose to start a paid old age home, a clinic, a creche, etc in due course. We have received from April 2008 to June 2008 4 donations worth US\$ 1000 (Rs. 42,330). We hope

the response will be much more generous in the coming years.

Between 1st December 2007 and 31st May 2008 the Trust received sponsorship donation for 100 days expenses at Rs.1500/- per day. A special appeal is made to all the readers of this newsletter to come forward and sponsor a day's expenses by donating just Rs.1500/- on any important date in the life of each of their family members such as birthday, wedding day, etc.

Donations to the Trust are eligible for Income Tax concession under section 80G. Cheques drawn favouring "SGS Sabha Charitable Trust" may be sent to the Trust's office at No.55, Habibullah Road, T.Nagar, Chennai – 600 017.

OUR HOMAGE TO DR. KOPPIKAR

Dr. S. P. Koppikar, an old member of the Sabha expired on 15th April 2008 at the ripe age of 93 years. He was a prominent Homeopathy physician in Chennai having started his career as early as in 1937, serving his patients tirelessly with great care and courtesy. He has written two books both being of autobiographical nature – "Serendipity" and "70 years' experience in Homeopathy". We pay our homage to this doyen of Homeopathic medicines.

WE MISS THEM

Since the publication of the last Newsletter No.31 in January 2008 the Sabha has come to know about the sad demise of the following members:

B.K. Shenoy, Aurangabad	03-01-2000
Mrs. Shambavi Bai, Hosur	13-01-2003
Mrs. Meera Kamath, Bangalore	24-09-2007
A.Viswanatha Prabhu,Kayamkulam	Not known
V.N. Kamath, Mumbai	13-01-2008
K. Satish Shenoy	02-02- 2008
Mrs.Sarita R.M.Kasbekar	07-02-2008
N.Sathyananda Kamath	01-03-2008
Dr. V.R. Prabhu, Mumbai	02-11-2007
Mrs. Meena G. Shanbhag	20-05-2008

IMPORTANT REQUEST

We once again repeat our request to members to inform Sabha Office as soon as there is any change in their addresses to avoid inconvenience or non-delivery of letters. We continue to receive quite a large number of communications addressed to the members undelivered.

