

OUR INSTITUTIONS

The blazing summer heat of Vijayawada forces us to go to river Krishna for a refreshing bath, everyday during summer. Normally I used to go to river Krishna directly from the GYM and few of my friends used to accompany me. Sundays being the holidays for the gymnasium and for us, we used to laze around and skip our regular Krishna visit too. As this summer was exceedingly hot, Sanjay (one of my friend) asked me if I could accompany him to river Krishna on a particular Sunday. As I am extremely fond of playing in the water I readily accepted. As planned earlier both of us reached river Krishna by around 5.00 Am. immediately after parking our vehicles Sanjay asked "Madhu shall we jog for a while before taking a plunge in Krishna? I accepted to his proposal without any hesitation and both of us started to jog in the lanes of Sithanagaram, which is situated on the banks of river Krishna. After jogging for about half a kilometer we could faintly hear some melodious chants coming from a distance. Those chants were very melodious and captivated us. We were going towards the place from where those chants emanated even without our knowledge. I felt as if I was being dragged by the mystic power of those chants. As we went closer and closer those

chants became clearer and clearer. For a moment I wondered if those chants were of celestial origin. In our pursuit to trace the origin of those chants we entered a pleasant Asram.

As we entered the asram we could see a group of young boys sitting beneath a tree and chanting those enchanting chants. They used to move their heads and some of them moved their hands too, while chanting those chants. Their movements were pleasing and were perfectly synchronized with the rhythm of those chants. They were attired in yellow Dhothis, had a Sikha on their heads and had painted their foreheads. Their bright and attractive countenances were very pleasing. We stopped at the distance of 10 feet from them. They continued to chant without being disturbed by our presence. We stood as if we were spellbound by those chants. That Sunday morning seemed to be extremely pleasant. The gentle breeze blowing from the eastern direction appeared to rejuvenate our sweated bodies, the atmosphere over there seemed to exhilarate our impatient minds and the vibrations emanating from those chants seemed to quench our parched souls. We stood still, probably without even moving our eyelids! Though I had listened to such chants in the temples, they had not made any impact on me.

However the chants of these boys totally enchanted me and left an everlasting impact on me. Till then I had never expected the human voice to be so powerful and fascinating. Just as a deer becomes captivated by the sound of the flute I was captivated by those chants.

After sometime those kids stopped those chants and we were back to our normal state. Those kids folded their books and were about to disperse. Sanjay wanted to get back as it was 7.00 Am. by then and we had planned to return to Vijayawada by that time. However my inquisitiveness stopped me from going. I approached a couple of boys who were still there. One of them was sober and seemed to be innocent and the other seemed to be playful and naughty. As I approached them, I casually asked what is your name? To that the innocent boy said I am Krishna and the one who seemed naughty said 'Lakshmikanth' with a chuckle and with playfulness writ large on his face. I further posed the following questions to them.

- I : what were you chanting so far?
 L : *Vedas* (with a naughty smile)
 I : what are *Vedas*?
 K : (innocently put his lower lip out and shook his head to indicate I don't know)
 L : They are ... I don't know.
 I : why are you chanting them?
 L : for a better future.
 K : because they are good.
 I : what is your age?

Both of them: thirteen years.

- I : did you ever go to school?
 K : I have studied till 6th standard in an English medium school. (Same reply from Lakshmikanth too)
 I : who taught you to chant *Vedas*?
 K : our Guruji!
 I : what is the name of your Guruji?
 L : Govardhana:charya!
 I : do you live in this Ashram?
 K : we are basically from Hyderabad but we have come here to study *Vedas*.
 I : do you pay any fees for learning *Vedas*?
 L : (vociferously) Jeeyar swamivaru takes care of everything.
 L : (even before I could open my mouth) it is getting late for our morning prayers so please contact our Guruji for more details.

Even as he was saying so I could see a man yelling at them with a frown on his face, for being late for the prayers. Both of them ran into a big building, which looked like their prayer hall. Sanjay was getting impatient, as it was getting late for us. Hence I had to go but I did so with a determination to return to the asram at the earliest to know more about the *Vedas* and the institution. While going out of the asram we noticed a board with the name of the institution (JEEYAR EDUCATIONAL TRUST) boldly painted on it, hanging at the gate.

