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ಮೃತ್ತಿಕಾ ಗಣಪತಿ: ಶ್ರೇಷ್ಠ: ।

ಪರಿಸರ ಗಣಪತಿ

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Ganapati is coming...



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Sri Vinayaka Chaturthi is coming soon ... Aug 23 this year

.....

What thoughts cross your mind when u hear about Vinayaka Chaturthi

Did you think about...

- **Modak**..... 😊...Ok ...What else
- The shiny glossy colorful mesmerising idols of Ganapati
- And explosion of creativity in preparing the Ganapati idols, pandal decorations....
- Poojas, Bhajans,
- And... loud music, unattended garbageand..
- **Environmental damage ????????**

You know....



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- Vinayaka Chaturthi is celebrated in the Bhadrapada month every year.
- Idols of Ganapati of different sizes made of clay and other materials are setup in community pandals, individual homes and pooja performed on Chaturthi day and in many places for 10 days.
- All the idols are immersed in water on the same day or over the 10 days ending with Anantha Chaturdashi.
- This is typically a time for all the young folks in the area to get together, setup pooja pandals.... Go around all the nearby pooja pandals and view all the elaborate arrangements, decorations and of course... prasad...☺

Do you know?....



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- The idols were earlier usually made of clay, were not painted or used natural dyes, and there were only a few idols worshipped in the village /town.
- Nowadays, the idols are made of jute, hay, cloth, paper, wood, **Thermocol**, **Plaster of Paris**, adhesive materials and **synthetic paints**. Usually, the bigger idols are made using non-clay material.
- Thermocol is not-biodegradable **while paints contain heavy metals such as chromium, lead, nickel, cadmium and zinc**, Plaster of Paris is many times contaminated by Asbestos, a known carcinogen.
- Typically, the Ganapati idols that have **glossy, shiny finish** have been coloured using **synthetic paints**. These paints contain toxic ingredients that get released to the water and soil after immersion. **For example, the Golden color used for the crown gets its color from Chromium compounds, the green , yellow colors from lead and lead compounds**. These toxic chemicals have a harmful affect on plants, animals and humans.

Do you know?....



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- In many places, **the idols are immersed** in open wells, tanks, lakes, rivers, sea. These **water bodies** are also **used for drinking water and irrigation** and other activities. These toxins when released to water seep into the soil and cause both short-term and long-term impact on the environment and health.
- During the immersion, a lot of the pooja material is wrapped in **sealed plastic bags** and disposed off in the water bodies. At the pandals, lots of plastic is typically used for prasad, and not correctly disposed.
- The bio-accumulation of heavy metals in the biological system transfers the toxic elements from the producer to consumer level which can be a future **health hazard**.
- Detailed studies have been made by concerned individuals and various organizations that show **the increasing quantities of the toxic material** over the years.



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Pollution measurements ... (studies done in Bhopal, Bangalore)

Parameter	Pre-immersion	During immersion	Post-immersion
pH	8.1-8.3	8.5-8.7 ↑	8.7-8.9 ↑
Turbidity	19-29	18-21	38-45 ↑
D.O.	8-14.2	9.6-17.6 ↑	2.8-13.6 ↓
Alkalinity	96-114	86-114	102-130 ↑
Chloride	15.7-16.9	9.4-10.2 ↓	18.5-16.1
Total solids	144-167	156-172 ↑	137-144
BOD	13.2-28.8	20.4-34.4 ↑	13.2-36.4 ↑
COD	10-80	20-80	120-180 ↑

One 2Kg idol of Ganapati painted with lead based paints leaks 2gm or more of lead . Other heavy metals are also leaked based on the colours used.

Heavy Metal	Pre-immersion		During immersion		Post-immersion	
	Surface	Bottom	Surface	Bottom	Surface	Bottom
Ni (Nickel)	BDL	BDL	BDL	4	BDL	4
Cr (Chromium)	4	6	5	8	8	18
Mn (Magnesium)	102	240	112	326	116	340
Pb (Lead)	246	526	340	704	460	648

- BDL= Below detectable limit.
- BOD – Biological Oxygen Demand
- COD – Chemical Oxygen Demand

•*All units except pH and turbidity are in mg/l.

Health impact of the pollutants



Lead	Chromium	Cadmium	Manganese	Nickel
It has no role in human health.	Maximum allowable concentration in drinking water for chromium (VI) is 0.05 milligrams per litre.	Cadmium has no constructive purpose in the human body.	It is an essential traced element.	It is present in the body naturally.
Lead poisoning (also known as colica pictonium, saturnism, plumbism, or painter's colic) is a medical condition caused by increased levels of the metal lead in the blood.	High concentrations of chromium(III) in the cell can lead to DNA damage.	Cadmium and its compounds are extremely toxic even in low concentrations.	Manganese poisoning has been linked to impaired motor skills and cognitive disorders in children.	Exposure to nickel metal and soluble compounds should not exceed 0.05 mg/cm^3 .
Lead may cause irreversible neurological damage as well as renal disease, cardiovascular effects, and reproductive toxicity.	It damages the kidneys, the liver and blood cells through oxidation reactions resulting in haemolysis, Liver and Kidney damage. Skin allergy and many skin lesions.	High cadmium levels in the water, air, and soil has been particularly problematic in Japan. The rice that was grown in cadmium contaminated irrigation water resulted in itai-itai disease (Bone softening (Osteoporosis) and Kidney failure). It is also Carcinogenic.	A form of neurodegeneration similar to Parkinson's Disease called "manganism" has been linked to manganese exposure.	Sensitized individuals may show an allergy to nickel affecting their skin resulting dermatitis.

Ganapati pooja was not intended to create pollution....



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- We are contributing to pollution because of lack of awareness of the impact of the distorted practices during Ganapati pooja. Vinayaka Chaturthi, like most other Sanatana Dharma practices, is intended to promote awareness of the importance of the environment and the close dependencies between the human species and the environment.
- The Rishis were aware of the enormous negative impact of unmitigated human activities on the whole environment and its effect on human welfare. The various festivals at different times of the year are part of elaborate lessons/reminders to mankind about maintaining harmony with the environment apart from help with man's spiritual journey.

Significance of Ganapati pooja...



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- The image of Ganapati with his elephant head itself is a symbol of nature.
- The concept of preparing the idol with clay obtained from nature and returning it back to nature by immersion is very symbolic of the right path for mankind to return to the roots of nature.
- A special ritual during traditional Ganapati pooja is the Doorva Yugma Pooja (Archana of Lord Ganapati with grass).
- Another unique ritual during Ganapati pooja is the Archana with the leaves of 21 different plants, trees.

All this leads us to think about..



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- How come such a environment friendly practice has morphed into something with diabolically opposite effect. Is it being observed in the right spirit?
- How have the concepts and practices have deviated over time from the ideal, prescribed traditions.?
- We have been placing more emphasis on grandeur and pomp and color and ignoring the basic ideas behind Ganapati pooja.
- It is high time we review our practices and understand and perform the pooja in the right spirit

Ganapati is the God of Agriculture



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Shatavadhani Dr. R. Ganesh
Multi-lingual Scholar

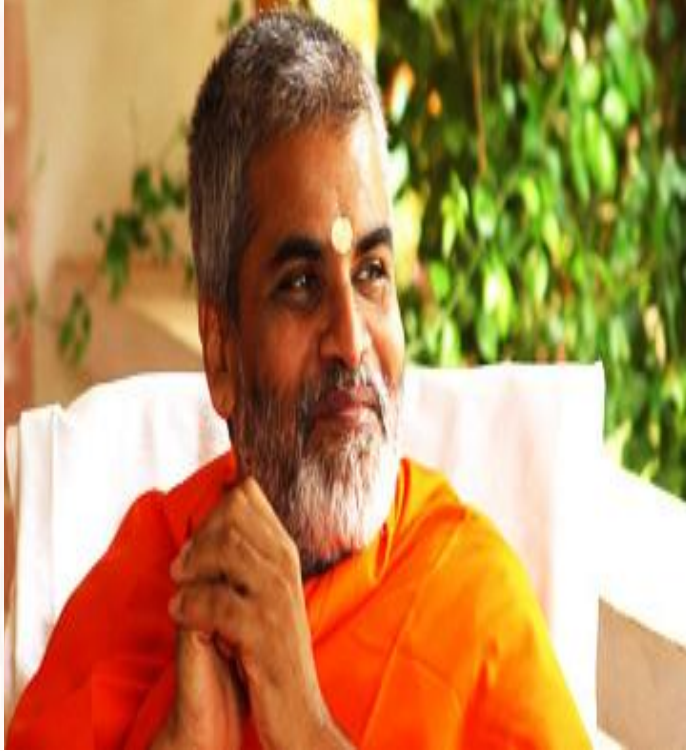
- When we worship Ganapati we are worshipping Mother Earth and its creations. It is a process of revisiting the creation and realizing the process of creation, sustenance and destruction.
- Ganapati is the God of Agriculture. We need two shovels and one plough, the shovels are represented by the large ears, the lone tusk represents the plough, the trunk indicates the source of irrigation.
- The idols of Ganapati must be made out of clay, it is better if it made with your hands, whatever the shape you are able to give it, ugly or crude it does not matter.
- According to the Agamas, the size of the idols should not be big. The amount of Naivedya offered to the deity twice a day and served as prasadam must be 10 times the size of the idol! If this idol is just the size of a fist, at least 1 kg of rice must be offered for naivedyam.. If not done in the right proportions, the pooja does not yield any fruit.
- The current practices with focus on pomp, splendor, lavishness has to be replaced with the original spirit of true devotion and submission and eco-friendly traditions.

Ganapati means Lord of the senses..



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**H.H. Swami Brahmanandaji
Chinmaya Mission, Bangalore**

- Ganapati means the Lord of the senses. That Lord is within us.
- Ganapati pooja is best performed with the attention turned inwards.
- All the practices and rituals during Ganapati pooja must be performed with great care.
- The idols used must be prepared of from clay, the immersion of the idols in clear water is a must. Use of shiny, pollution causing paints must be shunned.
- All the practices must be done in such a way that environment, our neighborhood, no-one gets adversely affected by the pooja.

Festivals are part of the great Indian spiritual and cultural traditions..



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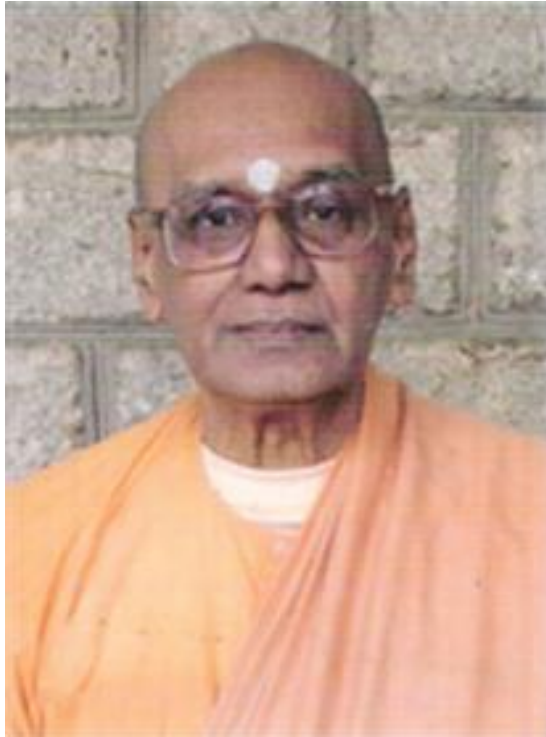
- India has a great spiritual and cultural tradition, it has been safeguarding us all these generations and helping us progress. Observing festivals like Ganapati is one of the examples of this tradition.
- If these festivals are celebrated in keeping with the spirit of ecological sustainment, it will bring great joy to all the people. Of late, we are seeing a distortion in the observance of these festivals.
- The practice of immersing painted Ganapati idols with toxic chemicals in water bodies like wells, lakes etc that are used for drinking water must be avoided.
- It is best if the idols are made of clay and not colored.
- In Sri Math, children prepare the idols from fresh clay do pooja and bury it in the mud. In the arid areas, it makes a lot of sense not to pollute the scarce water sources.

H.H. Dr. Sri Shivamurthy Murugha Sharanaru
Sri Murugha Math



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Pooja in the spirit of the scriptures..



H.H. Swami Harshanandaji
Sri Ramakrishna Math, Bangalore

- The efforts of Bala Gangadhar Tilak have led to the Ganapati festival taking social dimension it has now become a popular festival all over the country.
 - According to the scriptures, the idol of Ganapati has to be prepared from clay obtained from the tanks, ponds, lakes and other water bodies.
 - Unfortunately, the practice of using toxic chemicals to paint the idols has led to a lot of environmental damage. This has to be stopped, and only natural dyes of vegetable origin have to be used.
 - Also, in the name of Ganapati festival, a lot of activities that are against the spirit of our religion are taking place in the Ganapati pandals during the puja days and also during immersion.
 - Such activities must be avoided as it sets a very wrong precedent to our younger generation.
 - We need to wake up and observe this festival in a way suggested by our scriptures and approved by the great Gurus of this land.
- The festival must be celebrated in a way that will elevate the people participating in it and ensures no damage is done to the precious eco-system.

Ganapati worship with a sense of humility ..



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Sri Sri Sri Balagangadharanatha Swamiji

H.H. Sri Sri Sri Balagangadharanatha Swamiji
Sri Adichunchanagiri Mahasamsthana Math

- A movement to spread the awareness about the need for an ecologically friendly Ganapati festival is an essential and unavoidable need of the day.
- The practice of making large Ganapati idols with non-clay materials is gaining ground, along with the use of toxic colours. This is a big risk to the health of the people.
- Ganapati pooja has to be performed with concern about the environment and also the best cultural and spiritual practices should be reinforced.
- Ganapati will not be unhappy if you worship a naturally uncolored clay idol. In fact, he will appreciate it.
- Do not use any toxic paints in the making of the idols, it has a very significant impact on the environment.

Building a sense of environmental awareness and ownership..



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H.H. Sri Visvesha Teertha Swamiji
Sri Pejavara Adhokshaja Math

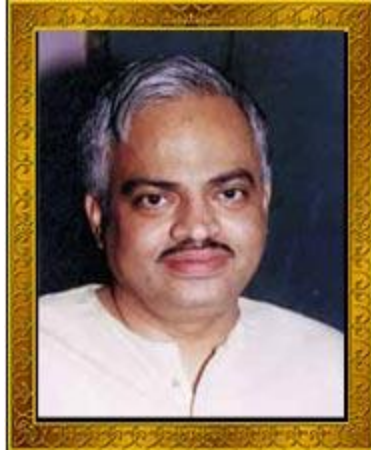
- We have to inculcate the perspective of patriotism, spirituality and environment protection in our everyday life and practice it.
- Sri Krishna sent this message of environment protection through his various deeds. Such messages are a very essential part of all Sanatana Dharma practices.
- Festivals must be celebrated with great energy and gaiety, but also with the concern for the environment and for the cultural and spiritual sensibilities.
- Any practices, events that violate the spirit of societal and environment welfare must be avoided.
- Use of big idols made with non-clay materials must be avoided. The idols used must be prepared of the idols from clay. Only natural dyes must be used to color the idols to prevent any environmental damage.
- A big movement to ensure a ecologically friendly , spiritually rich Ganapati festival must be taken up.



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Thus says Sri Guruji regarding Parisara Ganapati!



Dr. A.Chandrashekara Udupa
(Doctorji)
Divine Park, Saligrama

- Lord **GANAPATI** is always pleased provided you have

Generosity,

Adjustment,

New outlook,

Alertness,

Purity,

Appreciation,

Tolerance and

Introspection

- To realise Him, better inculcate perfect Faith, Devotion, Yearning first and practice praying for the welfare of all *Jeevakotis* in this Universe.

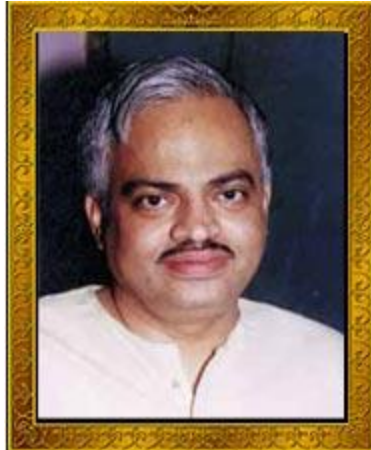
Continued....

Thus says Sri Guruji regarding Parisara Ganapati!



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Dr. A.Chandrashekara Udupa
(Doctorji)
Divine Park, Saligrama

- Be humble and never grumble. God always sees the inner purity of Heart-Mind Complex and not at all the external pomp and luxury. So install His glory in your heart first and then lead a life of duty, dedication and direction.
- When Lord Ganesh dwells in your heart, then no need to worship another idol. So pray humbly to Him to glorify Himself in your intellect first and relay inner tuition in your intuition and then there is not at all an urge to dispose Him in your Life-time.
- Till His greatness remains well imprinted in your Intellect, you have to worship Him on Ganesha Chowthi day and immerse Him in a river remembering the motto 'free the mud to mud only!' But be benevolent to the Nature and never harm its mildness and texture and succumb to kukarma and suffer later!"

Ganesha is the Lord of Wisdom..



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H.H. Sri Sri Ravishankar Guruji
The Art of Living

- On the night of Ganesh Chaturti, we are warned not to look at the moon... It is said that if you look at the moon on this night, then you will get blamed for something you didn't do! So don't look at the moon!!!
- Funny....., is there some deeper meaning to this?. The moon symbolizes the mind... Just as the moon waxes and wanes, the mind goes up and down... Some days it makes you feel good, other times it can drag you down into the pits of despair for the smallest of reasons... The mind is what constantly gets you into trouble...
- Ganesha is the Lord of Wisdom and it is He who teaches us how to get over the vagrancies of the mind, how to be established firmly in Knowledge and let nothing shake us out from the Bliss of the Being. And so on the day when we are going to celebrate Lord Ganesha, we don't look at the moon... meaning Follow Knowledge, not your little mind! .
- Don't look at the moon! Don't let that small mind of yours rule you... Be in Knowledge, Be wise, Be happy! Celebrate Ganapati in Satsangh, in the spirit of knowledge and reverence for nature.

Ganesha is the Lord of Wisdom..



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H.H. Sri Sri Ravishankar Guruji
The Art of Living

- We should make sure we consider the impact on the environment when we celebrate Ganapati pooja.
- If you use Ganapati idols which are colored using synthetic paints, we should not immerse these idols. If you necessarily have to immerse the idols, then you should use only paints based on natural dyes.
- Actually you should not use any paints, you should use idols that are made of clay and just retain the natural color. See the elephant , it has only one color, so the Ganapati idol you use for worship should not have any additional color.
- Use of any harmful paints will mean you are disrespecting Mother Ganga Bhavani.

continued..

Ganesha is the Lord of Wisdom..



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H.H. Sri Sri Ravishankar Guruji
The Art of Living

- Before immersing the idols, normally the water element, Ganga Bhavani is worshipped. However, after the worship, if we immerse idols painted with toxic chemicals, pooja items in sealed plastic bags and other non biodegradable material and pollute the water, we will be actually showing disrespect to Ganga Bhavani.
- We have to keep the Pancha Tatva, The five elements – space, air, fire, water, earth free from pollution. That is real worship.
- Let us keep Ganapati in our heart when we perform the pooja and make sure we do not harm the environment.

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What you can do...



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- Now, that you are aware , it is the beginning of the larger work that needs to be done to get back on track.
- It is a huge task, one that can be done with the collaboration, co-operation of all the stakeholders including makers, dealers, consumers.
- All the makers of the idols have to be educated about the importance of preparing unpainted idols. They must be provided information about and access to the naturally available dyes and their preparation.
- It has to be started at the individual level with you.
- You can make a difference, with your actions and also by spreading the awareness .



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What you can do...

- Use small idols (12 – 14 inches tall) made of **clay** only.
- Use only **idols that are uncolored**. Once the decorations are done you will not really notice the absence of colors.
- If you must use painted idols, remember the **shiny** material is most damaging because of the **heavy metal** content.
- Natural dye based paints do not give a glossy finish, but do look as pretty and cause no damage to the environment.
- Do not immerse big idols , re-use / exchange with others for the next year. **For the immersion, you can use only the small , clay , unpainted idols**. This is being organized and practiced in Pune.
- Do not immerse idols with paints , artificial materials in water bodies used for drinking .. wells, ponds, lakes.
- **Share this information** with your friends, relatives, colleagues and promote awareness. Forward the message, add links on your blogs, put up a note on your office/school/college notice board...

Visit parisaranaganapati.net



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- This site has lots of resources to help with the promotion of eco-friendly Ganapati Pooja. This site has :
 - ❖ Details of vendors supplying ecoGanesha idols.
 - ❖ Videos, documents of ecoGanesha Idol making.
 - ❖ Details on the natural dyes and their preparation.
 - ❖ Details on the environmental studies.
 - ❖ Full length videos of the messages from the Dharma Gurus. Transcriptions of the messages.
 - ❖ A Forum to discuss ideas and co-ordinate efforts to make this mission possible. Links to other resources, organizations promoting greener Ganapati celebrations...

Acknowledgements...



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ಅನಿವೇದಮಸ್ಸಿದ್ಧೇಷು ಸಾಧಿತೇಷ್ವನಹಂಕೃತಿಮ್ |
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-ರಾಳಪಲ್ಲಿ ಅನಂತಕೃಷ್ಣ ಶರ್ಮ

ಸಾಧಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದುದಕ್ಕೆ ಬೇಸರಿಸದಂತೆಯೂ, ಸಾಧಿಸಿರುವುದರ ಬಗೆಗೆ
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ಸಾಧಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದರ ಬಗೆಗೆ ಆಲಸ್ಯ ಬಾರದಂತೆಯೂ ನನ್ನನ್ನು
ಅನುಗ್ರಹಿಸು.

अनिर्वेदमस्सिधेषु साधितेष्वनहंकृतिम् |
अनालस्यं च साध्येषु कृत्येष्वनुगृहाण नः||
-ರಾಱಲಪಲ್ಲಲ ಅನಂತಕೃಷ್ಣಾ ಶರ್ಮ

Grant me the fortitude to not get dejected when I fail in
my efforts, deflate my bloated ego when I succeed, and
remove laziness and indifference towards my current and
future efforts.

-Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sharma

Inspiration



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DSN Course*

Divya

Samaj

Nirman



DSN - Creating a Divine Society
DSN translates to "Creating a Divine
Society - Do Something Now ."

*Shri.NaickJi, Koramangala, Bangalore, May 2007



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