



**Divya Rasa - Temple of Love**  
**Centre for Healing, Learning, Research & Communication**  
**9176300657 / 9629427411**  
**[www.divyarasa.org](http://www.divyarasa.org), [DivyaRasa555@divyarasa.org](mailto:DivyaRasa555@divyarasa.org)**

**Monthly Story from Divya Rasa – October 2018**

It was in deep meditative state in 2007, when the words “Divya Rasa – Temple of Love” were revealed to us. Not much of the future meaning of these words was then understood. Later this message was given an addition “Center for Healing, Learning, Research and Communication”. Yet, it did not reveal its meaning.

In August 2014 it was the time for us to leave back the known circles, built-up lives and start discarding our accustomed identities. We headed to the town of Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu, as this was what the inner call was demanding. Had we known there were a dozen of autistic individuals, we later came to meet, around the South India demanding the same at that time, it would have been a lot less confusing. Life is about challenges and learning, not so often easy sailing.

Initial time in Tiruvannamalai had no directions and the given words did not reveal their meaning for many months. We filled our days with pilgrimages and meditation. It was only in the spring of 2015 when the circle of the two of us started growing, and new connections to the world of autism started rapidly appearing. The first ones to come and join were Kalpana with her knowledge on autism and practical understanding on special education, and Saravanan who brought the tunes of flutes and beats of djembe with him. By the end of June 2015 Divya Rasa Trust was established and a leasehold land of 2 acres had been acquired. It had then become very clear to us, that the work was largely to be done for people somehow affected by a condition called “Autism”. This was further underlined by the autistic children around the South India, who started connecting to us, even if we had never heard of them.

The first year of the Divya Rasa -experience was mainly sorting out and filtering the flood of information and establishing connections with other people inclined to similar work and service. The May 2016 saw the first summer camp organized by Divya Rasa. Day-care center for autistic individuals officially started functioning on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016. We then started with only four trustees: Thasleem, Pekka, Kalpana & Saravanan, and three children: Bharath, Nithya and Senthur. Deepa, the first staff hired to Divya Rasa was also present from the beginning. Since then, the crowd has grown and now we have 13 adolescent boys and girls, four daily working trustees and 3 hired staff. Here, it is good to remember the bold parents around South India, who had faith to their children and took the necessary steps to come to Tiruvannamalai and join hands with us in this effort. If we have chosen to march on with the blind faith alone, so have them, too.

Since the onset of the day-care center our lives have transformed outwardly and internally. The continuous and never-ending toiling of a small NGO taking its first steps is full of unexpected surprises and streams of challenges. While we were thinking and planning of something simple to be achieved, we could never anticipate all the unseen hurdles on the way to even the simplest goal.



**Divya Rasa - Temple of Love**  
**Centre for Healing, Learning, Research & Communication**  
**9176300657 / 9629427411**

**www.divyarasa.org, [DivyaRasa555@divyarasa.org](mailto:DivyaRasa555@divyarasa.org)**

Another challenge is posed by the actual function of Divya Rasa as the growing ground and home of autistic individuals. This would require acceptance, tolerance and even love; unconditionally. It has become a very evident fact to us, that it is we who are the ones so often wishing to change others to our liking. Hence, it is an ever ongoing unlearning experience to free ourselves from these ideas and habitual patterns. So far, it has become very clear to us that most of the ideas we have in our minds are irrelevant to the autistics. The simple idea of “letting the flower grow and bloom while witnessing it” will start shattering our ways of thinking and immediately arises the doubts to test our determination and faith. Yet, we understand that only through learning to listen to their silent language we can hope to find a mutually meaningful way to co-exist and co-evolve.

We started with a vision of creating something new; shifting the paradigm of autism, so to speak. While we have had our hands on the job, we have become aware that this is a global movement happening all around us. More and more people are trying to find a way to create a common ground with their autistic peers through deeply connecting to themselves, rather than just trying to fix others. This is a healthy change in perspective. We so often forget that without first finding our own ways, how can we ever guide others. We are happy to be a part of such a global shift in perception.

Our vision was to take autistic individuals, who have already experienced and benefited from the regular forms of therapy in to the fold of nature, and provide them space and time to grow and ground. We wished to provide opportunities to learn according to their individual needs, tendencies, capabilities and likes. This has proven to be much greater a challenge than we ever anticipated, as the communication we receive from the children is so subtle, we most often miss the whole communication (not to even speak about the point of the communication). From this perspective, it is interesting that Nature chose two people, who from the standard educational point of view know next to nothing about autism, to be there to start a Center for Healing, Learning, Research and Communication. In Tamil language there is a term “*pullikolam*”. As the two dots (*pulli*), who came to Tiruvannamalai, not knowing what is in store for future, we trust it to the Existence that the artwork of “*kolam*” (made with fine coloured sand) will take shape around these dots; to Arunachala we surrender.

On the personal level, the stress we face and the challenges we struggle to overcome, form a bright spot in the limelight for the hidden and suppressed emotions, ideas and facets of personality to pop up in the most unwanted manner. We owe to these circumstances, the changes and growth we may experience within. As someone has put it, “the pain is the best Teacher”. In communal living, where the sharp edges of egos are exposed, we can but accept the Teacher and the Teaching, or give up and go back to our familiar lifestyles.

With Faith and Patience,

Thasleem and Pekka



**Divya Rasa - Temple of Love**  
Centre for Healing, Learning, Research & Communication  
9176300657 / 9629427411  
[www.divyarasa.org](http://www.divyarasa.org), [DivyaRasa555@divyarasa.org](mailto:DivyaRasa555@divyarasa.org)



Above a part of the Divya Rasa team in front of our new healing and learning space -in shaping. Back row from left: **Kalpana**, Senthur, **Pekka**, Kali (the dog), Bala Aditya. Front row from the left: Ilayaraja, **Iswari**, **Nirmala**, Vishnu, Joanna, Aranganathan, Achuth, Akshay, Nitya and **Thasleem**.

Missing from the picture are **Saravanan**, **Deepa**, Bharath, Niranjana, Arjun and Ajay. Staff in bold font.

So far we have been running our daily activities in a rented space but we are slowly shifting our base to the land we have acquired. Due to the dense jungle of bureaucratic decision-making, we have been greatly delayed in doing this, but we hold the faith that the success comes slowly (as they say in Finland).





**Divya Rasa - Temple of Love**  
Centre for Healing, Learning, Research & Communication  
9176300657 / 9629427411  
[www.divyarasa.org](http://www.divyarasa.org), [DivyaRasa555@divyarasa.org](mailto:DivyaRasa555@divyarasa.org)



Few days back we got our first cow, named as Kashi Narayana. Since we have the two acres of land meant for all the living beings, we have decided to start a Goshala (cow farm) in the land. The cows not only bring life and their calm presence to the land where we work with children, but also provide a means for Divya Rasa to become a financially self-sustainable organization. Our vision is to generate funds for the trust through the various products we can derive from the milk, cow dung and cow urine. More of this to be revealed later.