NID alumnus takes up spiritual path, by design

‘Maa Shonali’ is in Ahmedabad; to deliver lectures, conduct classes on ‘inner well-being’ from Oct 3 to Oct 7

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LIKE all other Communication Design graduates from National Institute of Design, Shonali too, could have made it big as a professional. However, for this 1997 batch designer, life had other plans in store. At 37, Shonali has morphed herself into an altogether different identity of Maa Shonali. She, is now designing the spiritual world of the highly successful professionals.

This young monk is in town to deliver a series of lectures on what she calls ‘inner well-being’. She says that her decision to move into the world of spirituality came as a natural process for her.

“Since childhood, I was inclined towards artistic pursuits. Her five year stint at NID opened her up to the process of exploring the world around for sustaining the creative urge,” she said.

“After NID, I worked with the street children at Mumbai, Nepal, Bangladesh, Vietnam and myriad other places for a few years,” she recounts, adding that it was during this period that her quest for exploring the world took an “inward turn.”

She added, “The turning point came when a friend took me to an introductory course of Isha Foundation of noted spiritual leader Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev. I found answers to my questions with Sadguru.”

While the philosophic stand of the foundation sounds unorthodox, Shonali explains that her monkhood has been a conscious personal choice made in the line of traditional guru-shishya parampara.

Born in a middle class family in Mumbai, today, she refuses to reveal much about her family.

“For me, this does not mean stepping out of the material world. Earlier, it used to be, my family, my job and my life but these things are no more of importance to me. Things seem to have expanded and now everyone I come across is a member of my family,” she says.

“Sadguru has indeed changed my life,” Shonali says maintaining that while the philosophy propagated by the foundation does not conform or reject any of the established schools, the meditative techniques designed by Jaggi Vasudev has been helping a lot of youth back home and abroad to evolve into better beings and explore their true potentials.

Maa Shonali, as she is known today, is busy conducting classes to relieve people of stress. “In Ahmedabad I am holding classes from October 3-7 next,” she says. Through this, she is also looking at professionally successful people, who might get inspired and contribute to the overall development of the society.

Shonali. Newsline photo by Javed Raja