



CHINMAYA NEWS

CHINMAYA MISSION® WEST BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

May 2008, No. 123

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To provide to individuals, from any background, the wisdom of Vedanta and the practical means for spiritual growth and happiness, enabling them to become positive contributors to society.

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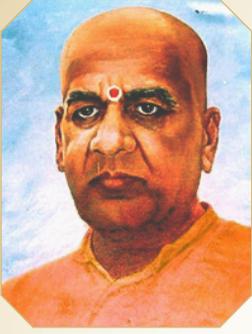
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His Holiness Swami Tapovanam

While carrying on mundane responsibilities, one should try to set aside more and more time for meditation, prayers, and scriptural reading as one progresses. One cannot relinquish the worldly responsibilities until the mind becomes pure and develops *viveka* and *vairagya*. Yet one has to carry on with mundane activities without expecting gain or loss, doing them for the service of God.

Realizing the *Atman* and constantly reveling in it is *moksha*. This is the ultimate goal of human life, and anything else—such as, doing your duty, prayer, reflecting on the Self, listening, and meditation—is an accessory or path leading to this realization. Please recognize that one has to continuously strive to reach the ultimate Goal.

Source: *Letter to Swami Govindagiri*

His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda

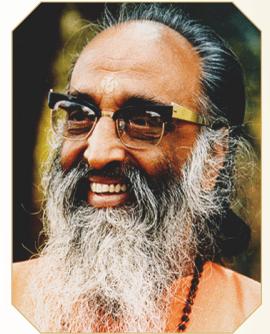
Plan out your work and then never neglect to work out your plan. The former without the latter is a sheer waste; and the latter without the former is merely unproductive confusion. Where these two are followed sincerely, success will shine, in spite of all the difficulties piled up en route.

In life, remember, it not always he who has little that is poor. Surely he who wants more is ever poor, even when he has gained total ownership of a whole kingdom.

The more you grow arrogantly egocentric, the more you become selfish and cut yourself off from others. And as the years pass by, you suffer from your own loneliness in life. Nobody else is then responsible for your sorrow. In your selfishness, you spent your days in building walls around you, rather than in throwing out bridges to reach out to others.

Cultivate friendliness, charity, concern for others. You are then never alone anywhere, at any time.

Source: *Devotion: Loving God (Mananam)*



His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda



Live a life of discipline. Be regular in your secular and spiritual studies. Regularly do some spiritual practices like *japa*, *puja*, or meditation. Develop love for God. Have faith in Him.

Beautify your personality. Someone rightly said, “Your inner beauty is reflected in the smiling faces of those around you.”

Remove all negativities from within. Regret deeply and take on some penance for any wrong you have done. Give up something you like each time you do something wrong, so that you do not do it again.

Practice and share all that you have learned. Organize talks and classes by which you can share this knowledge. Continue your *satsanga* through informal talks with your friends and relatives.

Let your family not complain that you are neglecting them. Become more responsible and accountable in your household duties. If they complain despite your best efforts, it is a different matter.

Be like sugar. It is not seen, but it imparts sweetness when mixed with anything.

Source: *Victorious Youth*

[Click here for Pujya Guruji's Itinerary](#)



The Path of Inquiry

by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Of all the methods of purifying the mind, inquiry, or *vichara*, is considered to be the best:

- Purified by the fire of knowledge, many have attained My Being.
– *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, 4.10
- O Partha, all actions, in their entirety, culminate in knowledge.
– *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, 4.33
- Certainly there is no purifier in this world like knowledge.
– *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, 4.38
- There is nothing here as purifying as knowledge. Many individuals purified by the penance of knowledge, have attained My Being. I undertake inquiry into the meaning of these words of the Lord for the sole purpose of gaining purity of mind. May Hari be pleased with me and may He bless me.
– *Manah Shodhanam*, 9-10

There are, in fact, many scriptural verses that extol the greatness of the path of inquiry and knowledge. All other methods of *sadhana* attempt to purify and control the ego, but the path of knowledge removes the very cause of the ego's existence, which is the ignorance of one's true nature as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

As seekers, it is our responsibility to contemplate upon, and inquire into, the meanings of Lord Krishna's statements to the best of our ability. But what need is there to inquire? Is it not enough to accept Lord Krishna's words? No, because we need to have clarity about how the "penance of knowledge" leads to purification. Moreover, the Lord has also said that the knowledge that results from contemplation is the best means of purification. May Lord Krishna be gracious and bless us in this endeavor.

for He has given us the intelligence needed for contemplation. *Yasya nasti svayam prajna shastram tasya karoti kim*: What can the scriptures do for a person if he does not have his own intelligence? An unintelligent person studying the scriptures is like a blind person standing in front of a mirror: *Lochanabhyam vibinasya darpanah kim karishyati*. The scriptures point out and explain spiritual concepts, but we must use our own intellect to understand their implications. In *Vivekachudamani*, Shri Shankaracharya also tells us, "The teachers and the scriptures point out the goal, but the disciple has to cross over his own ignorance and all other obstacles through intelligence, backed by the Lord's blessings" (477).

What is the path of inquiry? What is the difference between this path and the other means of purifying the mind that the scriptures prescribe? The fact is that we have many mental impurities, such as likes and dislikes, desire, anger, passion, ambition, and jealousy, which cause problems for us. As spiritual seekers, we become frightened and want to get rid of them immediately. We ask, "How can I get rid of anger?" However, we do not see the fallacy in the question itself, for the word 'how' implies a physical solution. Essentially, we are asking for a physical solution to a psychological problem. Someone may suggest cold showers or fasting as remedies for anger, but, in truth, there is no quick fix. A physical activity may appear to alleviate a mental problem temporarily, but the moment we think we are free of desire and passion, temptations return. For example, if I tell a friend, "I do not get angry anymore," he says with surprise, "You? Not angry anymore? You are the very incarnation of anger!" And suddenly I find myself angry because of my friend's remark! We can ask how to clean a dirty house because there are physical methods to do so, but there are no physical cures for psychological problems. Furthermore, we can define a time frame for solving physical problems, but not for psychological ones.

It is important to seek the Lord's blessings,

Therefore, in this path of inquiry, instead of asking

how to get rid of anger, greed, jealousy, and so on, we should first try to understand what they are, where they come from, how they manifest, and what disastrous results they may bring about. In this way, we become intensely aware of our mental impurities, and this awareness destroys passion instantaneously. Then there is no question of a time frame. This is the essence of the path of inquiry.

In summary, our first problem is that we are not fully aware of our mental impurities. When they express themselves, we are aware of them temporarily, but we do not understand them.

Secondly, we do not really comprehend the consequences of allowing the imperfections to persist. We must become intensely sensitive to them. The third and most significant problem is that we do not feel that there is anything wrong with having impurities. Our excuse is, "After all, we are only human beings," and we try to justify all our weaknesses by claiming that no human being is perfect. However, this is just an excuse for prolonging the existence of a weakness. The fact that there have been perfect people in the past such as Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, Shri Shankaracharya, and many others, proves that we too can become perfect.

We also have a tendency to consider our vices as virtues. We justify anger by saying, "Without anger, nothing gets done in the world. If I didn't get angry, everybody would take me for granted!" We justify greed as a motivation for prosperity by insisting that dissatisfaction with the status quo will goad us towards greater material progress. There should be progress, no doubt, but the motivating factor should be a virtuous one. When the motivation itself is wrong, the result will be disastrous.

Thus, contemplation, or *vichara*, is a useful method to purify the mind. If we practice these simple steps, the impurities of the mind will cease to exist altogether:

1. Be intensely conscious of the mind's impurities (anger, greed, passion, etc.)
2. See their implications and consequences
3. Understand them in their totality
4. Do not justify or glorify them

When we practice this awareness, it will lead to an inner beauty. There is a beautiful *subhashita* that says, "The ornament of a human being is physical beauty, but the ornament of physical beauty is virtue" (*narasya abharanam rupam, rupasya abharanam gunah*).

Faced with all these do-s and don't-s, an aspirant may feel discouraged by the difficulty of following the spiritual path. Even Yudhishtira asks Sage Narada, "Please show me one method by which all vices can be conquered." Narada replies, "Man can conquer all vices very quickly by devotion to his guru." All things are made possible by pure, total, and unconditional devotion to the teacher. Though we may claim that we have devotion to our teacher, it is generally conditioned. For example, we may feel that our guru should look only at us and smile at us in a certain manner, or that he should write a certain number of letters to us. If the guru shows a little anger, we complain. Such are the conditions and restrictions we try to impose on him. In *Bhaja Govindam*, Shri Shankaracharya says, "Be devoted to the lotus feet of your teacher and become liberated from *samsara* immediately."

We deprive ourselves of the ultimate goal of Self-realization because of the misconceptions and limitations of our own mind. The disciple who has surrendered with devotion to his or her guru will be liberated in as much time as it takes a river to merge into the ocean. Cultivating this level of faith and surrender takes time and effort, but once it is there, liberation is immediate.



Chinmaya Mission®
Washington D.C. Regional Center



Mahasamadhi Family Camp 2008
JULY 28 - AUGUST 3, 2008
Rocky Gap Resort
Cumberland, Maryland
Conducted by Pujya Swami Tejomayananda



Listen to talks on *Mundaka Upanishad* by Pujya Swami Tejomayananda (Head of Chinmaya Mission® worldwide) and absorb the timeless teachings to experience our inner Self.

Several Mission *acharyas* will conduct guided meditation, spiritual discourses, and activities for children and youth.

The backdrop for the retreat is the serene, nature-filled, award-winning Rocky Gap Resort (www.rockygapresort.com), in Cumberland, Maryland (near Washington DC).

The resort is surrounded by hills and an alpine lake, and adjacent to Rocky Gap Park.

It combines the best of quiet resort luxury and the calm serenity of Mother Nature.

The entire lodge has been reserved for use by the Mission during the retreat.

ADULTS

- 3 talks daily by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda on *Mundaka Upanishad*
- Morning guided meditation, group discussions, discourses by *acharyas*
- A unique opportunity to participate in a *Mahasamadhi Day Puja* with Pujya Guruji and *acharyas*

YOUTH

- Talks, discussions, and Q&A led by *acharyas*, geared toward college students and young professionals
- Outdoor activities, including Nature Trails

CHILDREN

- Bala Vihar classes and activities by *acharyas* and dedicated teachers
- Cultural activities, evening bonfire, outdoor games

Registration is now open. Registration Forms are also online.

For more information:

www.chinmayadc.org - mahasamadhicamp2008@chinmayadc.org

CHINMAYA MAHASAMADHI FAMILY CAMP 2008 - REGISTRATION FORM

JULY 28-AUGUST 3, 2008 (Check-in: July 28, 3:00 p.m., Check-out: August 3, 11:00 a.m.)

ROOM & BOARD - All "Individual" rates are per person. Children under 3 years are free.

Note: Parents will need to make arrangements for babysitting at their own cost.

There are a limited number of Suites available for larger families.

Please contact us for cost and availability.

	FULL CAMP	PARTIAL CAMP (Per Day**)	TOTAL
Individual: Single Occupancy*	\$1,200	\$250 x _____	= _____
Double Occupancy	\$ 800	\$165 x _____	= _____
Triple Occupancy	\$ 700	\$130 x _____	= _____
Quadruple Occupancy	\$ 600	\$115 x _____	= _____

(* Will you consider double occupancy if single occupancy room is not available? **Y / N**)

Family: Family of Two	\$1,600	\$325 x _____	= _____
Family of Two/Sharing+	\$1,200	\$250 x _____	= _____
Family of Three	\$1,950	\$400 x _____	= _____
Family of Four	\$2,250	\$450 x _____	= _____

** **Partial Attendance Dates:** from _____ to _____

+ Couple sharing a room with another couple is subject to room availability. Otherwise, the rate for Family of Two will apply.

REGISTRATION (FULL OR PARTIAL CAMP): - Required for all attendees (Tax Deductible)
\$100 x _____ (# Persons) = _____
\$125 x _____ (# Persons) = _____

ROCKY GAP CHILDREN'S PROGRAM PASS: - Required for all children 3 years and above
\$50 x _____ (# Children) = _____

TOTAL = _____

Enclosed Total Amount \$ _____ Check No. _____ for Registration/Room & Board/Pass

Make check payable to "CMWRC" & mail to CMWRC, 46 Norwood Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20905; Write "CMS Camp" in the memo field.

Family Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Tel (H) _____ Tel (W) _____ Tel (C) _____

ADULTS:	First Name	Gender	First Name	Gender	
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3.	_____	M/F	4.	_____	M/F

YOUTH/CHILDREN:	First Name	Date of Birth	Grade (Fall 2008)	Gender
1.	_____	_____	_____	M / F
2.	_____	_____	_____	M / F
3.	_____	_____	_____	M / F
4.	_____	_____	_____	M / F

Do you plan to travel to DC Area by air? **Y / N** (If yes, please include details.)

Please **COMPLETE THE FORM** and Return With Your Check By Mail to: CMWRC at the address given above.

Contacts: Sri Gopalakrishna (Camp Coordinator) 703-801-7311; Raju Chidambaram 703-461-8592;

Ramesh Golla (Registration) 571-220-9653

For more information visit: www.chinmayadc.org or e-mail mahasamadhicamp2008@chinmayadc.org

Dharma Sevak Course

August 9-22, 2008
Krishnalaya, CMW Retreat Center
Piercy, Northern California



Conducted by

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Text

Shvetashvatara Upanishad

Registration

(includes lodging/boarding; excludes transportation)

- Full Course only: \$1,100 per person
- This camp is for adults only, and is not a family camp. Space is limited. Register early.
- Arrive on Aug. 9 before 2 p.m. at San Francisco Airport. Our group chartered bus will leave at 2 p.m. for Piercy.
- On Aug. 23, departure from Piercy will be at 5:30 a.m., for arrival at San Francisco Airport at 11 a.m.

To get more information or to register (online registration is available), go to www.chinmayamission.org/krishnalaya.

For specific questions, e-mail info-krishnalaya@chinmayamission.org or call (707) 237-5321.

My Guru, Swami Chinmayananda

by Pujya Swamini Saradapriyananda

When I joined the ashram in 1965, Shri Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, was conducting a 21-day *yajna* in Bombay. We were allowed to attend a session on *Mundakopanishad* for the senior group before going to morning class. I was in seventh heaven. After years of monotonous work in an office, I was transported to another world where day after day, there was only spiritual study. All those around me had only one theme to talk about—the *Upanishad* or the jokes Swamiji made in class.

I came to the Bombay *yajna* with the sole purpose of joining the ashram. Though five or six days had passed, I hesitated to broach the subject with Swamiji. I was quite emotional at the time, and afraid of bursting into tears and making a fool of myself in front of him. Swamiji must have sensed this. One morning, he was explaining the meaning of a mantra that dealt with *brahmaloka* in the second chapter of *Bhagavad Gita*. He illustrated his point through this *Mundakopanishad* verse:

But they who perform *tapas* and *shradha* in the forest, have control over their senses, are learned, and live the life of a mendicant, go through the orb of the sun, their good and bad deeds consumed, where the immortal and undecaying *Purusha* is (1.2.11).

Gurudev said to me, “This is *brahmaloka*. Now that you have come here, you won’t go back!” My heart was thrilled with joy, but I still did not dare go to his cottage to make it final. In the next morning class, while reviewing the previous day’s lesson, he said, “You have come for the *yajna* for three weeks. What will happen to you? Will you go back to your office in Hyderabad?”

There was a lump in my throat. Go back from this heaven to that stinking drainage again? Never! The next day, I met Shri Gurudev at 4 a.m. in his cottage, and sought permission to join the ashram as a student. As I had feared, there was much emotion, but the purpose was achieved. Gurudev saw how I was nervously meddling with his desk keys while talking with him, but he said nothing.

On another occasion, I wished to speak to him about something personal, but by the time I reached the cottage, someone else was already there. Disappointed, I just prostrated and prepared to go away, but Swamiji sensed that there was something on my mind. He joked, “Any lump in the throat to get rid of?” That was exactly what I needed to do. So I smiled shyly, and the other person was sent away.

I asked, “Swamiji, why am I so emotional when I meet you?” Swamiji laughed and remarked, “You feel the emotion and are asking me for the reason!” I saw the logic of the remark and left it there. After attending to the main point that I had asked, Swamiji reverted to the question of emotion and said, “Perhaps, you are emotional by nature and are very sensitive always.”

“No Swamiji, my friends call me heartless!”

“Oh, then it is your spirit of surrender that makes you so emotional,” Swamiji diagnosed.

In those 21 days, I saw the way Gurudev functioned without taking rest even for an hour. In the mornings, 4-5 a.m., he was available for visitors, after which there was a class for the senior students on *Mundakopanishad*. Immediately after, he left for morning talks in the city, more than an hour’s drive away. Then he would go for the breakfast bhiksha. At 9 a.m. was a class in a girls’ college on *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 12. He would return to the ashram after that to teach *Atma Bodha* to the junior class. Later in the afternoon, he would leave to give a discourse in a college. In the evening, one could find him sitting in the lecture hall, ready to receive donations of gold ornaments from devotees for the war effort (those were days when the Indian army was resisting Chinese aggression). At 6:30 p.m., he would be at the podium, thundering away the deep truths of *sankhya yoga*, found in *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 2. Every night, there was a dinner bhiksha at some devotee’s house. On return, he would lie down in the van and reach the ashram at midnight. Even then, he would give some instructions to the office people and go to bed. When? He alone knew! Even with all this incessant work, at any given time,

he appeared fresh and exuberant, as if he had just woken up after hours of rest.

At one point, *Vivekachudamani* was being taught to us. The classes were intermittent, at most three or four days in a month. We would get huge doses of *shlokas* (verses) daily because the text was extensive, and it was important that full topics be completed in each session.

When Gurudev was away traveling to various *yajnas*, all of us would write to him freely about our problems and inner conflicts. We were sure to get a reply by the next mail as soon as our letters reached him. Once I wrote a long letter about my life in Hyderabad, the problems I had faced, and the wrong steps I had knowingly taken, just to get his opinion. The reply came back. “Got your kind letter. I liked reading every page of it.” All of my points had been answered.

My “kind letter”? And he liked reading so many pages of my bad handwriting? I was overwhelmed by the thought that Swamiji could be so humble in his attitude even to his own students. In a fit of emotion, shedding tears, I wrote back, “Swamiji, I am not fit to stand within a mile of you. You call my letter “kind”! You patiently read all the trash I had written and said you liked it!” In this manner I expressed myself several times. The next time when he came to the ashram, he looked at me and asked with a twinkle, “How is the fever?” Oh, what a joy that was for me!

In 1967, Swamiji was conducting a lecture series in Aloka and took me along with him for chanting. It was my first experience being in such close proximity to Swamiji during a *yajna*, and it was quite a revelation to me. One young girl named Lakshmi accompanied us. We were given rooms on the third floor of the guest house of the Berar Oil Company.

It was a ten-day lecture series and Swamiji went out for *bhiksha* daily. He also went to other locales for at least one talk on a general topic. Altogether, Swamiji had to come up and down the three flights of stairs four or five times every day. It was a nonstop run by Swamiji for those ten days, and what energy he displayed!

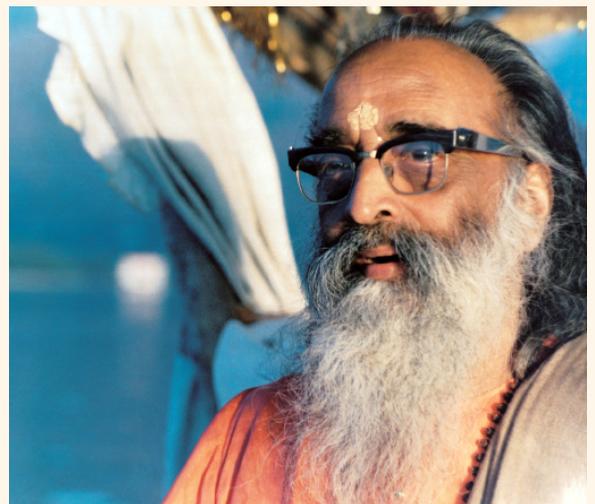
The food was luxurious and full of delicacies. Biscuits accompanied morning coffee. Breakfast consisted of four or five South Indian dishes, and lunch was always a sumptuous feast. Heavy snacks were offered at evening tea and again, the night

bhiksha was lavish. I fell sick within three days and even the smell of food nauseated me. Swamiji did full justice to all the dishes every time. After breakfast, he would leisurely continue to sit at the table, munching fistfuls of cashews from a bowl, conversing with the organizers and us. We threw in a word or two, but the dialogue was always with the chief organizer. While chewing on cashews, Swamiji would say, “Someone take the bowl away from here. Otherwise all of them will disappear into me.” It caused a lot of amusement, but I wondered how Swamiji could digest so much food. I understood it only after three years.

In 1969, when the Bombay ashram’s Jagadishvara Temple was consecrated, Swamiji had a high fever. Yet, he fasted for three days before the consecration. I then knew that fasting and feasting were the same for him. Matter went into matter. He had nothing to do with either!

Once, the heater and the toilet in Swamiji’s bathroom were not working. The heater was working at the place where we had our bath, but it was too far for Swamiji to go. It was the cold month of January, so they asked me to supply him with hot water in the mornings. Only two small jars were available, which I filled and delivered every early morning.

Now that I look back, the water could hardly have been sufficient. It never struck me to ask Swamiji whether he needed more, as both Lakshmi and myself were taking cold baths (this was the custom in the ashram). Swamiji could have asked me for more, but he did not say a word. Personal needs never occupied his thoughts! Yet, he was ever mindful of everyone else’s needs!



At the ashram I had plenty to do, as I was in charge of sending out *Tapovan Prasad* (Chinmaya Mission's monthly magazine). In Aloka, as soon as we arrived, we finished our bath and had breakfast. In the evening, after the *yajna* commenced, I wondered what to do with the long hours. Swamiji sat near the table in the huge drawing room and began writing letters. I went onto the terrace and stood there pondering; how helplessly I depended on him. If he called me for a moment, I went with joy. If he did not look at me, I was miserable. I knew that the whole day, as well as the next ten days of the *yajna*, would be similar. I asked myself if I would be able to survive them. I was very restless.

Swamiji was working at the table, and yet he was conscious of what I was feeling on the terrace. He knew the reason, too. He called me, took out the letters from the Bombay *guru dakshina* envelopes, and went through each one, giving me instructions on how to reply. Something to do at last! I was asked to keep an account of the letters to be mailed, and it did not stop there. He then asked me to teach English to Lakshmi. I felt amused and asked, "English?" Swamiji nodded and replied, "Yes, for one hour, every day."

All this kept me busy enough, and on the fourth day, I analyzed my restlessness. I approached Swamiji and asked him why I was feeling so restless. Swamiji inquired, "What are you restless for?" I replied, "For no reason at all. Nothing is lacking, but I am restless."

Then he clarified, "You were very active before coming to the ashram. Now, the work is not sufficient for you. So run about."

"Where to?" I asked. Swamiji kept quiet. I understood that I had to discover this for myself, per my capacities. In the ashram, there was some work to do, but here, what more could be done? It got me thinking. As I went on thinking, fine ideas started coming to me in a pictorial way, and I began putting them down on paper. I wondered what Swamiji's reaction would be and if he would approve. I was not sure. In order to find out, I mailed three of the pieces to Gurudev. I was in great suspense until I received his reply, which came as soon as he received my mail.

"I got your poems. One has been sent to *Tapovan Prasad* with a small correction. The second one has gone to Calcutta for the souvenir. Read Tagore and Sarojini Naidu's poems." Oh, the joy of it! More

and more poetry flowed out. I kept them all in sequence until Swamiji came to the ashram, and each time I handed them over to him. He patiently read them all even though they were in my terrible handwriting. He always encouraged me with a word, a look, or a line by mail.

My versification of Bhaja Govindam *shlokas* in English was promptly sent to the printers, where the text was given for reprint. When it appeared at the end of the text, I was happy. But when I went through the poems, they were anything but perfect. They were raw and contained no rhythm or melody. Yet Swamiji included them in his text in order to give me encouragement. What love!

Though I was very conscious of his great kindness in going through all the poems and having them printed, a familiarity of taking his love for granted crept into me. Of course, I did not know it then. I sent a new bunch to Swamiji when he was in Poona and wrote, "I have been sending several poems like this and taking up much of your time. If I am going beyond my limit, won't you tell me?" There was no reply, nor did I know what happened to the poems I had sent. Perhaps Swamiji thought he had helped me with them enough. Perhaps this was his way of teaching me a lesson. Whatever it was, I was in suspense.

As time passed and Swamiji did not even glance toward me, my sorrow deepened to agony. I wondered where I had gone wrong. The poems came out in mournful streams. When should I give them to Swamiji? Swamiji was leaving for his third global tour in just days. I felt desperate. To live in heaven along with His Father would have been pleasant. But to live with Him on earth could sometimes be worse than hell! To add to my misery, Swamiji fell sick. He had a high fever and developed backaches as well. He kept to his room and no visitors were allowed. Now, there was no hope in coming into contact with him.

Slowly, he recovered and started to receive people who had urgent work. Where was I? I just needed some sign from Swamiji that he was not angry with me. I sent a poem with a note, "Swamiji, this poem is too free. I do not know if it should be seen by anyone or not. If you think it should not be shown to anyone, I shall tear it up. Please instruct." At last, Swamiji relented and asked for me.

He lay on the bed; he was no longer sick, but needed much rest. He allowed me to ask questions.

At the end, I asked, “Swamiji, we are all getting caught up by the happenings around us, and consequently we react. How does the world appear to you? Do you see it as a dream?” He only smiled, for what kind of a reply could he give me? A waker can never explain the nature of a dream to the dreamers. At this point, I had already spent half an hour alone with him, and it was extremely gratifying. When he knew that I was quite content, he said, “Hari Om.” I got the hint, prostrated, and went away. Even in his pain, he was thinking of my needs, and ignoring his own rest! Reassured, I sent the entire bunch of poems to him. It bore the covering sentence, “Written in tears, but given in smiles.”

AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER

Thou bestoweth a smile—a shaft of light flashes into me
Thou speakest a word—a word of wisdom dawns in me
Thou keepest silence—a host of doubts flees in me
Thou givest Thy feet—a sweetness of grace flushes into me!

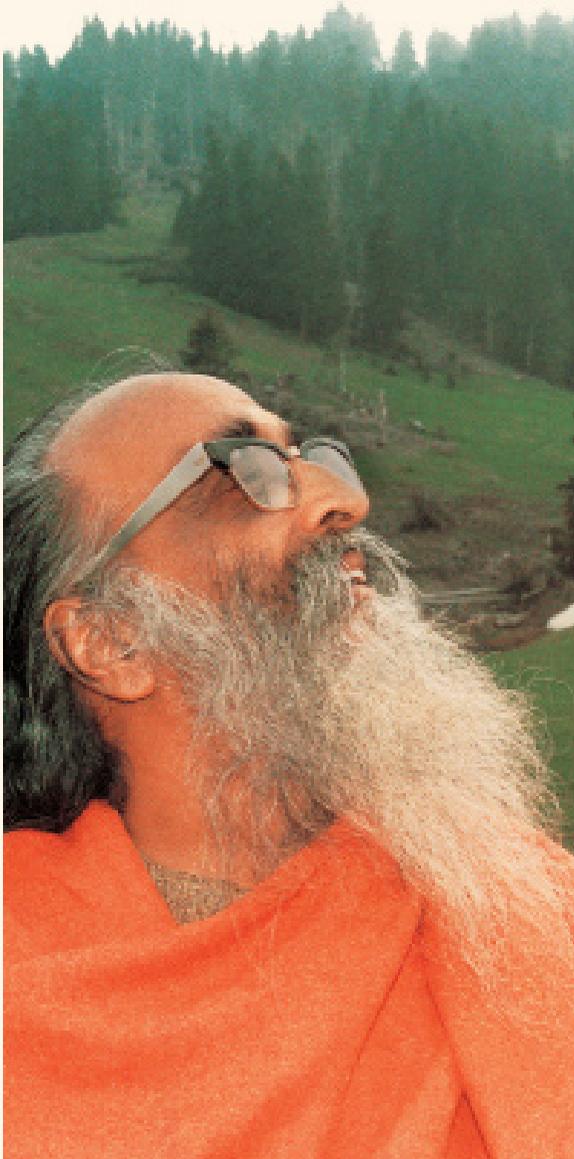
The veil rolls aside and the door opens.
Faint, hesitant light slowly creeps in
Washed in tears of true repentance and
Purified by the fires of ordeal
The inner shrine glows in delicate tints
And awaits Thee in thrilled anticipation.

Master, grace the hollow of my heart with Thy hallowed form
Infuse into me the light to see and
The strength to walk the righteous path.
Allow me, Master, to wash Thy feet with tears of joy
And worship with the flower of my mind.

With a bowl in hand, full of sweet memories
I came to Thee seeking more.
Thou hast emptied the bowl
Of all that it had, depriving me of my all.

With a bowl in hand full of rosy visions
I came to Thee seeking more.
Thou hast taken away from the bowl
All that it contained, leaving me devoid of all.

Seated at Thy feet, gaze intent upon Thee,
I stretch my bowl in humility and surrender.
The bowl is bereft of all.
Pray, fill it with Thy grace and vision!



Chinmaya International Camp 2008

Dec. 26, 2008 - Jan. 1, 2009
Chinmaya Vibhooti, India



Conducted by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda
Vibhuti Yoga: Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 10
New Year Puja and Celebrations



Chinmaya Vibhooti is Chinmaya Mission Worldwide's new Vision and Resource Center. Situated in Maharashtra, India, it is a one-hour drive from Pune and a three-hour drive from Mumbai.

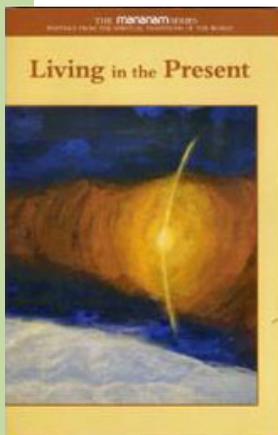


This camp is only for adults and youth (16 years and older). It will commence on the afternoon of Dec. 26 and conclude on the morning of Jan. 1.

Camp Registration: \$150 (includes full camp lodging and boarding)

To register, e-mail chinmaya_vibhooti@yahoo.com or contact Central Chinmaya Mission Trust at (91-22) 2857-2367.

Chinmaya Publications New *Mananam* Release



Living in the Present
New *Mananam* Release
\$10

Is living in the present the same as living in the moment? The present moment is fleeting and constantly changing. Moreover, when we live from moment to moment, we often find ourselves hurrying through life. But if we base our life on the solid and unchanging awareness of the present moment, it will give us true support through every challenge. We all have an unshakable and unchanging presence within us, and this is the true present. If we quiet the mind, we can recognize this presence and discover within our true infinite potential, leading us to a life of peace and harmony.

The writers featured in this issue are: Joel Goldsmith, Thich Nhat Hanh, J. Krishnamurti, Ramana Maharshi, Peter Russell, Swami Chidananda, Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Ishwarananda, Swami Jyotirmayananda, Swami Krishnananda, Swamini Saradapriyananda, Swami Sarvagatananda, Swami Shradhdhananda, Swami Tejomayananda, Eckhart Tolle, and Desmond Tutu.

Longing for the Lord

by Bela Pandya

We were in our third grade class, listening to a narration of the story of Tulsidasji and how he was waiting for Shri Rama-darshan.

"One day, on the banks of Chitrakoot, Tulsidasji was making sandalwood paste and Lord Rama himself came in the form of a small boy to receive the chandan. Had it not been for Shri Hanuman, Tulsidasji would have missed the opportunity to recognize the Lord. Oh, who can describe the pure bliss of Tulsidasji!"

On hearing these words, the littlest one in our class longingly burst out, "Oh, I would give away half my life just to have Shri Rama-darshan for half an hour!"

He, My Earth

by Anonymous

For me, in my universe, my guru is my Source. He is my earth—my solid, grounded, nourishing foundation. Like the earth, my guru supports, accepts, and strengthens all of creation. As Mother Earth sees all of creation as her own extension, so too, my guru is all.

I used to wonder where Mother Earth gets the power to bear the world's physical heavy burdens—of trucks weighing tons, of soccer players sliding and crashing, of animal herds on the move. I found out—from the mahatmas.

For, when a mahatma walks the earth, with every footstep, he kisses and blesses the earth—this I have seen. One such mahatma who traversed the earth and beyond is Param Pujya Swami Tapovanam Maharaj. An enigmatic recluse is just one apt description. Rare were the seekers who could dive into his eyes and refuse to budge until they directly experienced what, and how, he saw.

Swami Tapovanam is of that real Stuff that cannot be worded or verbalized. So we say, "Wow!"

and walk away. But it is not enough. To root ourselves into his Earth, his Truth, his unshakable Foundation, we will have to dig deep within and amass an infinite amount of love to seek and find the most obvious of truths: I am That.

Then we will be the guru. We will know ourselves as this unshakable foundation of Truth referred to here as Earth.

My guru is like earth, but he is so much more that cannot be described. It will be eons before we see masters and lives like Swami Tapovanam Maharaj—the crest jewel of renunciates, the epitome of a *virakta* mahatma. By the guru's grace, perhaps soon enough, eons, earth, and enigmatic recluses won't matter. Because we will see all as One.

Paint Buckets of Emotions

by Amanda Gaston-James

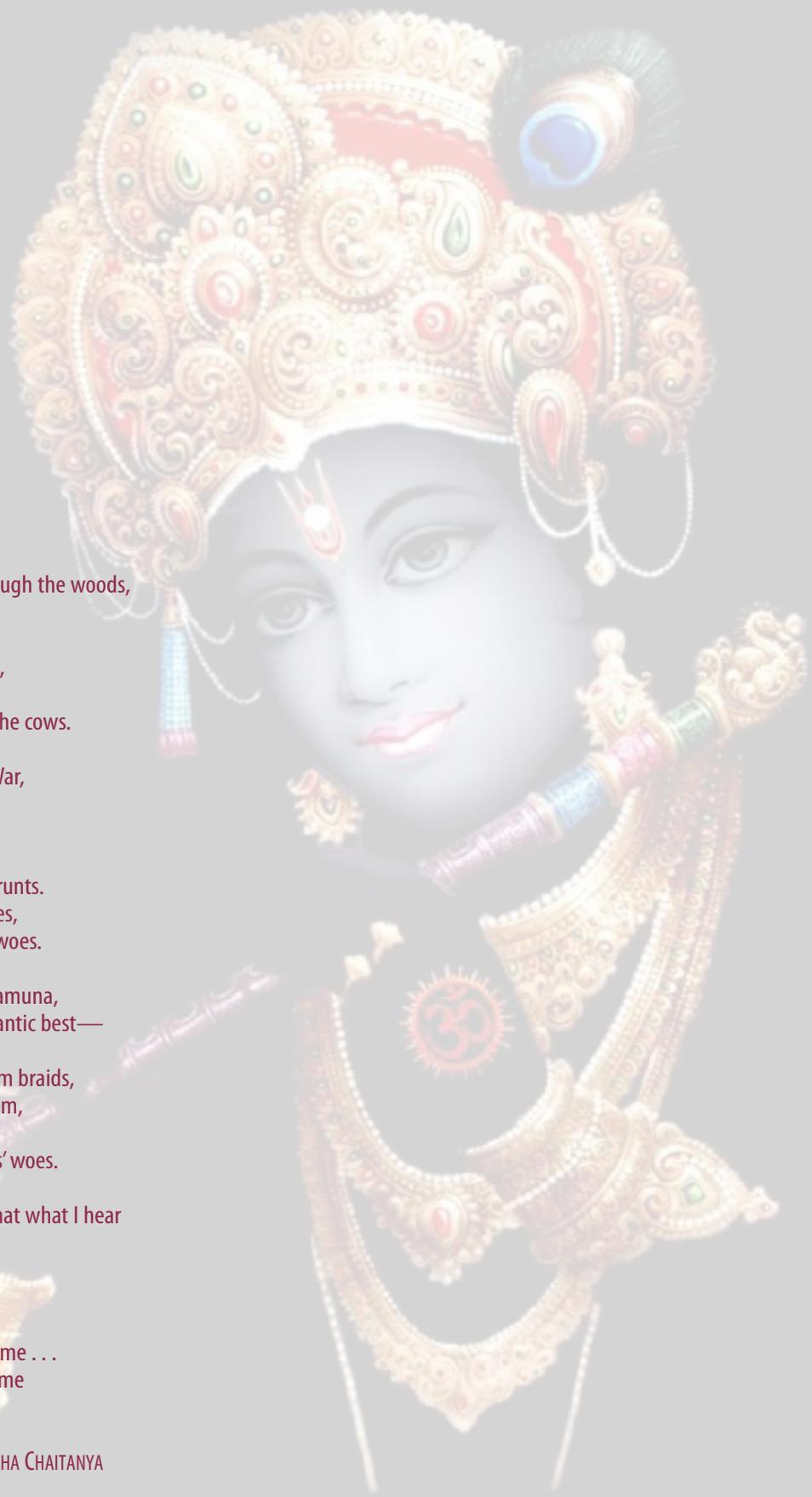
I heard, during several lectures on the second chapter of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, that when I am asleep, my world does not exist. And when I wake up, I create it. But if I create my world, why can't I control everything that happens in it? I was told my emotions are projected from my mind out into the world. And then they are reflected back to me. But I still couldn't understand what this meant until I rephrased it for myself.

My emotions are like buckets of colored paint in all the shades of the rainbow.

My world, while I am asleep, is a black and white one, where all the characters and objects are outlined in black and filled in with white.

When I open my eyes in the morning and start creating my reality, I color my world by splashing my emotional paint onto this black and white canvas around me.

The people in this reality have free will to move around in the world no matter what paints are on them. My only control is over how I see and interpret the colors I splash on them.



THE GAME

Krishna,
O pastoral hero!
As You wandered through the woods,
You led the cowherds,
Sang to the birds,
Leaned on tree trunks,
Sat on the boughs,
And played music to the cows.

In the Mahabharata War,
You nursed soldiers,
Massaged the horses,
Led from the front,
And gladly suffered brunts.
You made clever moves,
And lessened Arjun's woes.

On the banks of the Yamuna,
You were at Your romantic best—
Stealing clothes,
Removing tangles from braids,
Tucking flowers in them,
Painting Radha's toes,
And smothering gopis' woes.

Something tells me that what I hear
Is not mere hearsay.
I miss being there,
I miss seeing You
Do all this.
But what a crying shame . . .
That You didn't make me
Part of the game.

- BRAHMACHARINI VIVIDISHA CHAITANYA

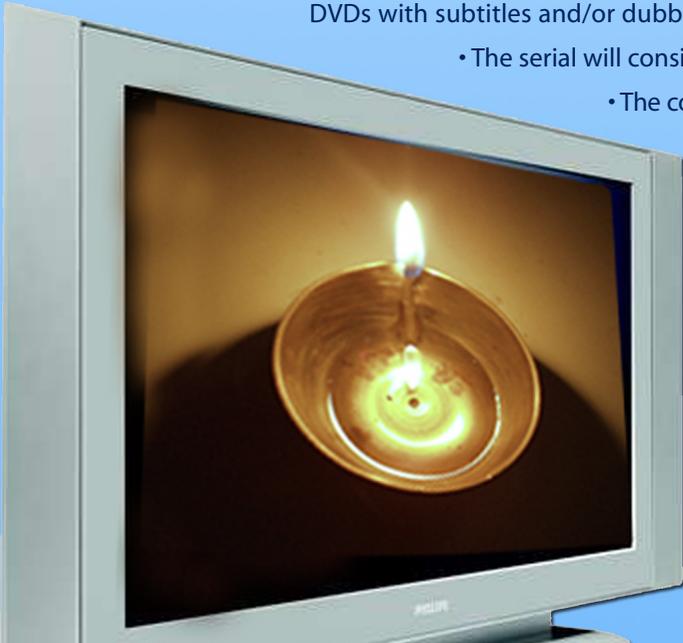
upanishād gāṅgā

The impact of televised media is tremendous, as seen by the success of the TV serials on *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The theme of the Upanishads, however, is unique and has never been telecast as a serial to date. Chinmaya Mission® is privileged to take up this project under its new wing, “Chinmaya Creations.”

- *Upanishad Ganga* is a made-for-television serial that will be dedicated to Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji, who began his spiritual work with teachings on the Upanishads.
- In each episode, the main Upanishadic concepts will be explained through a blend of traditional and contemporary approaches, through drama, dance, music, and captivating stories. Each episode is aimed at depicting teachings that have practical implications in daily life and that inspire individual, inner transformation.
- The episodes will address both: 1) the lay audience or the general public, who know little about the Upanishads and 2) the scholars who are already exposed to this knowledge.
- This serial will emphasize the Upanishadic message that “All problems are due to lack of right thinking. Human life is rare and precious. Its main purpose is to enquire into and realize the supreme Truth, which is the support of this world and the Self of all beings. This Realization can be gained through purity of mind and the Upanishadic wisdom learned from an enlightened Master. The realized Master ever remains engaged in the welfare of all beings.”
- A core team of Chinmaya Mission acharyas and scholars will do the research and conceptualization of each episode.
- Chinmaya Mission has selected and appointed Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi (of *Chanayka* fame) as the Creative Director of this serial.
- The serial will be in Hindi, as its largest audience will be Hindi-speaking. Eventually DVDs with subtitles and/or dubbing will be released in various languages.
- The serial will consist of a total of 52 episodes.
- The cost of each episode is approximately \$35,000.

- To date, over 13 episodes have been completed and previewed by the creators as well as people from different backgrounds. Their high acclaim and positive feedback has been greatly inspiring.

We invite all those who value this project to donate generously. All donations are tax-deductible.



Interested donors who wish to donate in US\$ may contact their local Chinmaya Mission centers and specify the purpose of the donation. Donors who wish to donate in Indian rupees may contact Central Chinmaya Mission Trust at ccmt@chinmayamission.org for details.

CIF'S CORRESPONDENCE VEDANTA COURSE

THE CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION (CIF) IS PLEASED TO INVITE ALL SPIRITUAL STUDENTS TO ENROLL IN ITS PROGRESSIVE HOME-STUDY PROGRAM FOR VEDANTIC STUDIES.

OBJECTIVE

The primary aim of these courses is to provide clarity and depth in a seeker's Vedantic studies. Each course covers, in a series of 24 detailed lessons, various central Vedantic concepts as taught in introductory texts such as Vivekachudamani, Atma Bodha, Tattva Bodha, Vakya Vritti, and Panchadashi.

LEVELS

CIF's one-year correspondence Vedanta Course is offered on two levels, Basic/Foundation and Advanced. While students must have general Vedantic knowledge before opting for the advanced course, CIF's specific basic course is not a pre-requisite to sign up for the advanced course, which provides an in-depth understanding of principal Vedantic concepts.

ABOUT CIF

Established in 1989, CIF is a research center for Sanskrit and Indology, recognized by the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, India. Swami Chinmayananda visualized CIF as a bridge between East and West, past and present, science and spirituality, pundit and public. CIF is located in Kerala, India, at the maternal ancestral home and birthplace of the Advaita Vedantin, Adi Shankara.

REGISTRATION

Students may choose to enroll at any time during the year in either a postal correspondence course or an online correspondence course [lessons are sent via e-mail].

E-COURSE: US\$100; POSTAL COURSE: US\$175
VISIT WWW.CHINFO.ORG TO REGISTER
OR GET MORE DETAILS.

CM Dallas-Fort Worth: New Property

by Ashok Dandekar

CM Dallas-Fort Worth recently purchased a 28-acre plot of land in Melissa, a northeastern suburb of Dallas. Swami Shantananda performed the *bhumi puja* on March 23, 2008. We are grateful to him for visiting and blessing us on such short notice. It is perhaps no small coincidence that ten years ago, on March 24, 1998, Swamiji performed the *bhumi puja* of our current Dallas ashram, *Chinmaya Saaket*. We all felt blessed that Swamiji was able to be with us again.

We are deeply grateful for Pujya Gurudev's grace and Pujya Guruji's blessings throughout!

Satyakama

by Anil Kishore

A preview episode of *Upanishad Ganga* was presented at CM Washington DC on March 28 by CMW President Dr. Apparao Mukkamala, in the presence of an eager audience, including Acharya Anantji and Acharya Vilasiniji.

Upanishad Ganga is a historic project envisioned by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda to educate the public about Upanishadic teachings and inner transformation through 52 30-minute episodes made for television. Each dramatic episode features captivating stories that illustrate philosophical and practical Vedantic teachings.

The preview episode of *Satyakama* focuses on the importance of education, which has the power to break down the barriers of caste, race, religion, language, poverty, and family background. Another concept dramatized in this episode is *satyam-eva jayate*, or "truth alone is victorious." When one seeks the truth and nothing but the truth, no matter how bitter, one is empowered with the wisdom to face all challenges and be victorious in the long run.

The episodes, directed by Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi of *Chanakya* fame, are conceptualized by a team of CM *acharyas* and scholars. The Hindi serial will eventually be released as DVDs with subtitles or dubbing in various languages.

Let us bask in the glory of our scriptures as we look forward to viewing these episodes with friends and family. As is evident, this is a very important project for Chinmaya Mission that deserves our generous support. Each episode's production cost is \$35,000. Donations may be sent to your local center.

Holi ke Rang, Ragon ke Sang

by Subba Rao

Music enthusiasts at *Chinmaya Vibhooti* in Kolwan, India witnessed a delightful fusion of *raga* and *ranga*, March 21-23. Away from the bustle of city life, the never-ending target-chasing, and the meeting of deadlines, music lovers tuned into the serene surroundings of hills, cool breezes, and soul-filling silence to experience the *naada bindu* in their hearts. At the end of the three days, all the participants were grateful to Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda for conceiving this unique pathway to bliss: *Chinmaya Naada Bindu* (CNB).

CNB Director Pramodini Rao, lovingly called Didi, was ably supported by a team of young and talented musicians: Himanshu Nanda, Anupam Mishra, Sachikanta Rath, and Ujwala Acharya. Accomplished musician and singer Susheela Acharya was also present at all the sessions, accompanying the singers on harmonium or nodding in appreciation as many of her devotional songs were sung with joy and love.

After a brief introduction to *raga* and *tala*, the campers were treated to the brilliant singing of Chinmaya Swaranjali members, flute recitals by Himanshu Nanda, group *bhajans*, and an open session for enthusiastic participants—young and old—to give solo performances in multiple languages.

Evening *satsangs*, spiced with stories and anecdotes, were held by Brahmachari Shailesh Chaitanya, resident acharya of CM Pune. He stressed the importance of listening to one's inner voice and maintaining peace of mind.

The concluding performances by Himanshu, Pramodini Didi, and the evening's Special Guest Kiran Parlikar, who treated the audience to

compositions of Sant Tukaram, were icing on the cake.



The festival of *Holi* came during the camp, and it would have been incomplete without *Holika-dahana* and playing with colors. So, on the night of the 21st, a huge bonfire was lit, in which *Holika*, painstakingly made with eco-friendly materials by Shyamala Acharya, was burned. The

next day, there was a frenzy of colors, later washed away by a powerful garden hose.

With Pujya Guruji's blessings, the premises of Chinmaya Naada Bindu will soon be ready to offer more music and dance camps.

CM Bala Vihar Launched in Delaware

by Vivek Shenoy

Swami Siddhananda, resident *acharya* of CM Philadelphia, addressed over 50 adults and children in Hockessin, Delaware on February 9. A group of interested devotees who wanted Vedantic studies for themselves and their children, invited Swamiji, who spoke about the greatness of Vedanta and the benefits of starting a Chinmaya Bala Vihar and Study Group.

The one-hour talk was followed by a Q&A session with many thought-provoking questions. One five-year old boy asked Swamiji, "Why is God important?" An adult asked, "When our Christian friends ask why Hindus have so many gods, how can we respond to them?" The Q&A session was followed by *bhajans* led Swamiji and other devotees, and concluded with *arati*.

The meeting was well-received by all the attendees and as a result of this introduction by Swamiji, the group committed to commencing CM activities in Delaware on March 8.

Mahashivaratri at Chinmaya Dhara

by Bharat Bhaga

I woke up on the morning of *Mahashivaratri* to the chanting of "Om Namah Shivaya." The strains of chanting continued to reverberate in my mind the whole day while I was school, perhaps as a prelude to the night's celebration to come.

That evening, when I returned from school, my

mother had already packed everything we needed to take with us to the *Chinmaya Dhara* ashram of CM Niagara Falls.

The *Mahashivaratri* celebrations at *Chinmaya Dhara* started at 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 6, and ended at midnight. The *akhandanama-japa* of "Om Namah Shivaya" intensified at 11 p.m. for the grand finale at midnight. The celebration concluded with hymns in praise of Mother Ganga.

Invigorated by the chanting, the night still felt young to us. We felt energized and ready for our daily activities the next day. I felt as though I could work for another week without any sleep! All of us enjoyed the midnight *prasada*.

The memories of the *Mahashivaratri* celebrations that night are still with me today. I am proud to have stayed up all night to be part of the historic celebration of the first *Mahashivaratri* at *Chinmaya Dhara*.

CM Activities Come to Alabama

by Raghavan Raju



Saturday, January 26, was a historic day for the Hindu community in Birmingham, Alabama, as Swami Siddhananda, the resident *acharya* of CM Philadelphia, Philadelphia inaugurated its new Chinmaya Study Group and Bala Vihar.

During the three-hour inaugural session, Swamiji addressed an audience of 70 adults and children on the work of Chinmaya Mission, the importance of *satsanga*, and the benefits of Chinmaya Study Groups and Bala Vihars in the spiritual upliftment of local communities, the relevance of Vedanta in daily life, and the importance of discipline and meditation in maximizing one's potential.

Swamiji was visiting CM Atlanta and Dr. Raghu helped the newly organized Birmingham group by arranging Swamiji's visit. Dr. Raghu also gave a brief talk on Chinmaya Mission and its impact on enriching the lives of all community members. The program concluded with a melodious *bhajan* session led by Swamiji. For more information, contact chinmayaAL@gmail.com.



*CM Princeton
Chinmaya Vrindavan*



CM Atlanta



*CM Chicago
Yamunotri*

Mahashivaratri Celebrations



*CM Ann Arbor
Chinmaya Arantika*

CM Miami



*CM Los Angeles
Kashi*



*CM Boston
Chinmaya Maruti*



*CM Trinidad
Chinmaya Vidyalya*



*CM Toronto
Chinmaya Shivalaya*



CM Alpharetta



CM Ottawa



*CM Orlando
Kairalya*



Conscious Living

by Kishore and Subha Pathial

Swami Ishwarananda conducted two talks in Oregon, March 17-19: *Conscious Living 101*, presented to a high-tech audience at Intel Corporation's Hawthorn Farms Campus in Beaverton, and *Meditation & Medication* at Willamette Valley Medical Center in McMinnville. The crux of both talks was the mind-body connection, its relationship to disease, and the methods to effectively manage the mind's thought flow.

In his Intel talk, Swamiji suggested setting aside "worry time." He provided the audience with a "worry worksheet," since "worrying efficiently" is the key to worry management. Swamiji advised maintaining the attitude of a witness toward all situations by shifting one's sense of identity from "ego" to "awareness." He then outlined successful meditation techniques for effective mind management, and concluded with a quote from Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda: "Silence the mind and listen; this is the final state of true meditation."

At the Willamette Valley Medical Center, addressing an overflowing crowd of doctors and nurses, Swamiji explored the subtle connection between a healthy mind and a healthy body. "Today, everyone is constantly trying to multitask, at the cost of neglecting inner and spiritual development. However, the brain, like the computer, can only operate in a single thread at any given time. Therefore, when there is a multitude of random thoughts, individual efficiency drops dramatically."

To learn how to refocus the mind, Swamiji spoke about the link between breathing patterns and thought flow. When the breathing is shallow and rapid, it is counter-productive to calming the mind and improving one's efficiency. Swamiji demonstrated that simply focusing on one's natural breathing pattern is a powerful tool readily available to everyone, every living minute. He added that as one gets more established in this awareness practice, one sees the gradual reduction in thoughts and a mind more controlled. Once this happens, the practitioner learns to focus on and savor the silence between the thoughts, thus bringing him/her closer to the Self.

CM Fairfield Celebrates Mahashivaratri

by N. Ganapathi



CM Fairfield families assembled on Connecticut's Sacred Heart University campus to celebrate the sacred festival of *Mahashivaratri* on Sunday, March 2. The event began with *Lingashtakam* and *bhajans*, after which all the children, seated on the floor in neat rows, performed *puja* by offering water, flowers, *vibhuti*, *kumkum*, and raisins to the five idols of Lord Shiva and picture of Lord Shiva and Mother Parvati at the main altar. The *puja* was followed by an explanation of the *Tryambakam Mantra*, *Shiva-Panchakshari Stotram*, and a portion of *Rudram*. The program concluded with *arati*, the CM Pledge, and *prasada*.

We Are One

by Nimmi Raghunathan

Almost 1,000 Chinmaya Mission devotees, adults, youth, and children, gathered on March 30 at Craig Park for one of the biggest and most exuberant *Holi* celebrations in Southern California. The CM event was effectively planned and hosted by CM Los Angeles (CMLA).



The morning's gray skies could do nothing to dampen the spirits of the devotees who began arriving early. Nature befittingly cooperated through everyone's sunny disposition, and soon the afternoon warmed up, making it more conducive for the play of colors to come.

The day began with games—the kind that many grew up with in India, and the kind that memories are made of—sack races, three-legged races, and the ever-popular tug-of-war of "boys vs. girls"—all of which were filled with fun and hilarity.

The highlight of the afternoon was the birthday celebration of CM Tustin's resident *acharya*, Swami Ishwarananda. The park resounded with the chanting of "*Om sahanavavatu . . .*" as the crowd gathered

to where a specially prepared *badam-halva* cake and flowers had been placed. Swamiji cut the cake and everyone sang, “*Janma-dinam-idam . . .*” the Sanskrit birthday song composed by Pujya Guruji.



Swamiji was recognized for his teaching capabilities and leadership by Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya, resident *acharya* of CM Los Angeles, and other speakers. Swamiji thanked everyone for their love and support, joking that not many people could say that over 900 people showed up for their birthday celebration! Indeed, several members who had come for the event from the further areas of Southern California were grateful for the joint celebration, as it gave them a chance to spend time with Swamiji.

As Swamiji released helium-filled “peace” balloons, he drew an analogy between their varied colors and the inspiring words of Martin Luther King, that essentially we are all the same inside, regardless of what color we are on the outside.

After a delicious lunch that included sandwiches and *aloo tikkis*, the main festivities began, with the two *acharyas* taking the lead in throwing colors on one and all. The park grounds were soon misted in a rainbow of blues, yellows, pinks, and purples. In the good-natured spirit of *Holi*, children charged at their parents, uncles, aunts, friends, and more, and were pleasantly merciless with each other.

By the time the afternoon wound down, the multitudes of colors on every face could not veil the love and oneness. Now we were all the same, not only from the inside, but the outside, too.

Seva Bhava

by K. R. Sundararaghavan



CM Alpharetta’s 34 devotees—adults and children—inspected, sorted, and repacked 7,519 pounds donated, non-perishable food items (enough to serve 5,012 meals) at the Atlanta

Community Food Bank Product Rescue Center on March 15.

The volunteers included children as young as 9 years old. It took about three hours to get all the items ready for delivery to the homeless shelters, soup kitchens, day care centers, nursing homes, job raining programs, and battered women’s shelters that served the neediest people of Metropolitan Atlanta and Northwest Georgia. The enthusiasm of all the volunteers was infectious as they worked united in a spirit of serving the community and having fun together.

Shri Rama Navami Celebrations

Submitted by CM Philadelphia

CM Philadelphia and Princeton celebrated *Shri Rama Navami* and *Vishu*, April 12-13. A *Shri Ganesha Puja* by Swami Siddhananda commenced the program at 8 a.m., which was followed by the *akhanda-parayana* of *Shri Ramacharitamana* that concluded 24 hours later. After the *parayana*, *Shri Hanuman Chalisa* chanting and *Shri Rama Navami Puja* were conducted.

On Sunday, the Exton Bala Vihar children gave a two-hour performance that included *Mahabharata* Jeopardy, and the meaning of *Lingashtakam*, and the significance of the *Navagrahas*, *Rama Navami*, and *Guru Stotram*. It was a joy to see how well the children had imbibed the sacred values taught at Bala Vihar, and how confidently they were able to present what they had learnt. The program concluded with *Vishukkani* and *Vishu Kaineettam*, *arati*, and *prasada*.

Interfaith Panel in of Portland

by Sudhir Menon

CM Portland’s Subha Varma Pathial represented Hinduism on an interfaith panel organized by the University of Portland on February 19. The panel consisted of representatives from Christianity, Islam, Judaism, *CatHolicism*, and Sikhism. Each representative was asked to present the essential beliefs of their faith in an effort to help clear some of the common misconceptions.

Mrs. Pathial said Hinduism is monotheistic and presented some of its core beliefs, such as seeing divinity in all, and believing in the one, changeless Truth that is seen as different names and forms. She also spoke on the caste system, idol worship, and destiny.

Chinmaya mission purohit course 2008-2010



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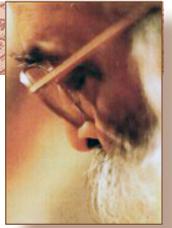
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Candidates will be informed of the specific interview locations.

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Pujya Gurudev

Continued from CMW News, January 2008

An interview of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda by Pritish Nandy, telecast in the 1980s on BBC; edited for print herein

Would you believe, like some God-men do, that liberating the libido is the only way for man to transcend his environment and achieve spiritual freedom?

Before answering this question, I would like to know, what is this word “God-man?” Everybody uses it; it’s become a journalistic lingo.

Well, let me try and explain. There are religious teachers: we call them gurus. Then, there are those who think they are more than teachers: we call them God-men. I confess the term is a bit tongue-in-cheek. But what can you do when an *acharya* graduates into a *Bhagavan*, or a ‘materializer’ starts with fistfuls of *vibhuti* and then begins to bring out quartz watches? The gurus and the *Bhagavans* don’t like being clubbed together. What can I do?

But what is God? (*laughs*) Unless you know what is God how can you call anyone God-man or man-God? Man, I know. But what is God?

Bhagavan?

Bhagavan. Does it really mean God? A *Bhagavan* has certain qualities: He is a man who is capable of commanding Nature, who can attract a large number of people, who can cure diseases, or who can do something ordinary people can’t. It is someone who has that mental power to forecast things correctly, to read other people’s minds. These qualities were in Krishna and, therefore, we called him *Bhagavan*. And since Krishna is considered an avatar in this country, by association of ideas, the word can come to mean God. I have no objection. Because, according to Vedanta, even you, who do not know, you are nothing but a *Bhagavan*. I am a man. I can prove to you right now! But because too many people are sitting here, it will not be decent. But I don’t know whether I am a God-man. (*laughs*)

To get back to my question, do you think

liberating the libido has anything to do with spiritual Self-realization?

What is the libido? According to Vedanta *shastra*, it is the pressure of the past on you. Habit. The tendency to repeat, *ad nauseum*, one’s past actions—we call it *vasanas*. *Vasana* means “fragrance”—the fragrance of what we have done and thought. Whatever we do—karma—and whatever we think of, they all leave impressions on us and pressurize us to repeat ourselves.

For five years, you drink a cup of coffee at three in the afternoon. After that, you don’t need a wristwatch. Whatever you may be doing at that time, you will crave a cup of coffee. It is the pressure of the past and it takes away your freedom to think anything original. The average man is, therefore, only a repetitive bird, repeating like a *tota* (parrot). Unless these past pressures are eliminated, we cannot re-think and re-view the world around us. We see now through a mind colored by the past. So, to recognize the world as it is, and to re-estimate one’s own place in the scheme of things, first cleanse the mind. All the scriptures in the world tell you this.

When the mind is freed from the past, it is free to fly into newer climes and make new discoveries. Only then does the mind become meditation-worthy—just as a plane must be air-worthy, a boat ocean-worthy, a car road-worthy. Some of the greatest of men have been notoriously immoral in their activities and this is a dichotomy in their personality. Therefore, spirituality insists on self-unfoldment. “Lift yourself by yourself,” says the *Gita*, and it gives you the logic behind every term used.

So you believe in logic?

Oh yes! The average man is intellectual. But the Truth lies beyond the intellect. With the intellect, we have to go beyond the intellect. So, I must first convince the intellect that it is logical; only then will I consider the possibility that there is something

beyond. There is a method by which you can take off from the intellect and it's called contemplation. First, the intellect has to be satisfied. Only then can we know freedom.

What is this freedom you speak of?

At this moment, what is your freedom? Your freedom is to go on a marked line. If your early morning bed tea is not there, you are most miserable. If, at the next moment, your wife doesn't smile the exact amount, you are miserable. If she smiles too much, you are worried: Why is she grinning at me? And if it is less, then "She is not happy." How dangerously balanced are our joys! Thereafter, comes breakfast. I must have the things I like. Nothing else. If it's anything else, life instantly becomes a misery. When I go to work, everyone must smile at me. Everything you do, from morning till evening, you are repeating yourself. You have no freedom at all. I can make you angry in no time. I can displace the papers on your table, leave, and look through your window: I will see you dancing around in anger! (*laughs*)

Thus, we give our strings to the world outside to pull and make us dance as it wishes. We have no freedom. The outer world dictates us all the time. And the mind and intellect persecute us. I am a poor slave, being kicked from within by my own equipment, and from without by the world around me. What freedom are you talking about? Only a man who is detached can be free. He is like the wind.

How does a man detach himself from the world around him?

O Narayana! That is all of yoga, including rituals (*chuckles*)—the rituals that you rejected. All these are necessary in order to learn the art of [inner] withdrawal. Stand apart as a witness to everything. Even anger. They are in me; I am not in them. You must feel this, just as an ocean does. How do you think an ocean would introduce itself?

What you see as waves are in me, but I am not in them. Each wave conceiving itself as a separate entity has a birth date. It grows, reaches its highest peak, becomes vain, and starts dipping. "O Lord, what have I done that this should happen to me!" it asks. Until, at last, the small waves start eating it up. "Millions of waves have I eaten up myself, and now these waves are eating me up!" it thinks. The downcast wave starts screaming. Like this, millions

of waves are always screaming. It is these stupid waves that make the roar of the seas.

But the ocean says, "The waves are in me, yes. Without me, there can be no waves. But the sorrows and joys of the waves are not mine." For why should the ocean be happy when a solitary wave is rising? Or why should it cry when a wave is dying?

In this way, you will have to detach yourself. The body, the mind, and the intellect are in you—but you are not in them. You are not a shareholder in their joys and sorrows. Only then can you become a man, free from the equipments of life. This is called freedom, or *mukti*.

But can a society like ours progress in materialistic terms and retain this spiritual freedom?

Material development is not possible without inner development. Character is important. Why is it that the Chinese, Japanese, and Americans are so good at materialism? Isn't it because they have materialistic ethics, commercial ethics? . . .

. . . **The ideal of progress is totally Western. We never had progress on an altar in India. In fact, this Western concept of progress should strike us as illusory—*maya*. Why are you, a Swami, impressed by such norms of progress? Isn't this kind of progress alien to our culture?**

No. Lakshmi is worshipped in India. But we never worship Lakshmi without Narayana. What we want now is so called materialistic civilization—that is, we should ignore Narayana and wink at Lakshmi. Be careful. Lakshmi without Narayana, or wealth without character, is suicidal. A rash young man suddenly gets money—he will damn himself. A man of character gets wealth—he will use it wisely.

Can modern science and religion coexist intelligently without constantly being at war? Must they walk separate routes?

You are talking in the language of the 19th century. A century back, this question was valid. It no longer is. Physics and metaphysics have merged today.

Are you referring to the attempts of people like Frijof Capra to bring Western physics and Eastern mysticism on a common platform? Are you referring to books like *The Tao of Physics* or *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*?

Chinmaya Naada Bindu

is one of Central Chinmaya Mission Trust's most enterprising and visionary ventures. Its conception was based on the same premises as of Chinmaya Mission's many educational institutes for Vedantic studies, academics, nursing, and management. It is therefore of no small significance that a new educational institute, one fully dedicated to Indian classical music and dance, will soon be added under the Chinmaya Mission banner.

Situated on the *Chinmaya Vibhooti* site in Kolwan, near Pune, India, *Chinmaya Naada Bindu*, a residential school of Indian classical music and dance, will invite and welcome students from all over the world. The main subjects will be vocal music, instrumental music, and all major Indian dance forms. Affiliated to a reputed university, *Chinmaya Naada Bindu* will house appointed, highly qualified faculty and a visiting faculty of celebrated contemporary artists. The school will be an ideal place of inspiration for musicians and music lovers to follow in the music traditions and lineage of a *guru-shishya parampara*.

If you would like to support this project through funding or personal talents, please contact ccmt@chinmayamission.org.

To learn more about the programs that will be offered at *Chinmaya Naada Bindu*, contact Director Pramodini Rao at pramodinirao@gmail.com.



Yes, yes, yes. Beautiful books. Like the one about the repair of motorcycles.

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance?

Ai ya! Magnificent book! Like our Vedic textbooks. We have always had materialistic sciences studied together with religious sciences. This integration was always there in our scriptures. Ayurveda, medicinal science, is a part of our Vedas. It is only through the materialistic sciences that we can reach out to the higher. We have been sent here to exhaustively chew the world around us—to chew it and spit it out with no regrets. If a man runs after women and wine, don't blame him. Let him do it intelligently. There's nothing wrong in that.

But what is life and how can one learn to face death with greater confidence?

With knowledge. Even today, in Africa, they are afraid of a thousand things that we were afraid of many years ago. Knowledge is the answer to all fears, even death. Today, you are afraid of death because you don't know what it is. Fear arises out of ignorance. You are afraid of going into a dark room. Why? You don't know. Once you do know that there is nothing there, you are not afraid. Death is a fear because you [don't take] enough time to think about it.

And you don't know what lies beyond it.

That's right. Many people are afraid of lightning. Every lightning, they think, has their name on it. Once you understand that the lightning you see can never strike you—that it has already struck somewhere else—you will never be afraid. The lightning that gets you, you will never see. Knowing this, you will thereafter always enjoy the fireworks in the sky, for lightning is one of the most beautiful sights you can ever see.

So freedom from fear is . . .

Freedom from everything. It is the first step toward true Knowledge. It is only when you are ignorant that you are afraid.

Is there life after death?

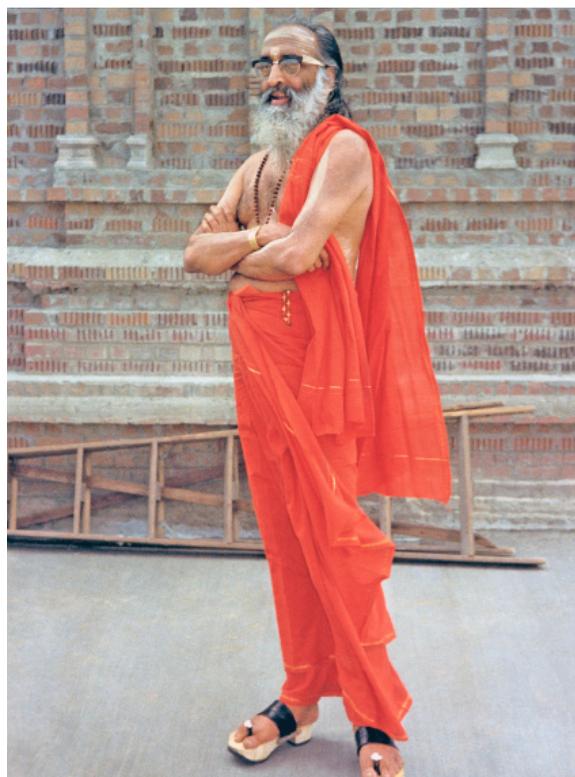
What is death? Can you tell me what is on the other side? (*laughs*) Death is the empty body you leave behind when you leave your body and go away. So death is a state of the body, not you. (*claps with*

glee) Who are you? Who is in this body? Who is now experiencing everything through the body?

The self?

No. The mind and intellect—the inner equipment operates through the body, right? I hear through my ears. I see through my eyes. I experience through my body, my senses. I am the experienter who experiences the outer world through this body. I go to work everyday and use my business equipment—phones, computers, telex—to contact the outer world to conduct my business. When I gather all my equipments and move from Premises A to a better site B, I am born again in Shop B. In front of Shop A, I would write, “Moved: Three blocks down, on the left.”

In the same way, when you move out of this body with everything you have—all your equipment, your faculties—the condition of the body is called death. Every body must die, but nobody can die. This life of yours is just one incident in your eternal existence. You will appear again in another body—in fresh pastures, with a new body, a new wife, new children, a new profession. (*laughs*) *Majaa hai marne mein* (it is fun to die). Once you realize this, you will think of death as a great adventure. You will be anxious to die.



The only things that hold one back are your attachments. The money, the women, the fixtures. Play! Play with everything—with money, with everything in the world, knowing that you are here only temporarily. Play as a sojourner, not as a native of the place. Poet, writer, translator of the Upanishads—these are only parts of one's present guise. Next time you will perhaps be a swami. Who knows?

You called schizophrenia “the Arjuna disease” in one of your *Gita* talks. But it is no longer just a human affliction. People, cultures, and nations are suffering from this personality breakup. How can mankind cure this problem and find its true identity?

By reading the *Gita*. Arjuna conquered it by listening to Krishna. In the last chapter, he says, “I shall fight. Did I say I won't? I don't remember having said I won't.” He conquered his indecision.

But wasn't his indecision, his refusal to fight, supremely moral?

Such indecision is moral, true. But it can produce only disaster for the decision-maker and society. I won't say it's immoral, but that which brings unhappiness to you and to society is called evil. That which brings happiness to everyone is a noble and virtuous act.

But the same act, at different points of history, can have totally different connotations. It can be differently interpreted. Galileo was persecuted in his time. Today, he would be a hero if he were to make the same kind of discoveries. Scientists, messiahs, poets, and philosophers have been killed at some points of history, and worshipped at others for saying almost the same things. How can you judge an act independent of its timeframe?

Your attention is on the act. I am asking you to attend to the individual. Take Rama walking away from the palace. When he walked away, he must have known that his father was very sensitive and might even die because of his decision to go away. The public said, “Remain, Rama! *Rama zindabad! Bharat murdabad!*” As the modern politician, Rama could have said, “The *jantaa* wants me, so I will stay.” But he said instead, “I must keep my father's promise, even though it's my stepmother's insistence. It's unjust I know, but it is a word given.” So he walked out.

The readiness to sacrifice the comfort and security of the present, to live up to the ideals you have set for yourself, is noble. In Hinduism, your greatness lies not in what you possess, but what you did with what you possessed. In the modern, materialistic world, what you possess is the criterion of your glory. How you got it, nobody questions. What you do with it, nobody questions. In India, we are not concerned with what you have. It is what you did with what you had. This is in our vocabulary. In North India, a swami is still called maharaja. What is his job? *Bhiksha*. A swami is a beggar but, still he is called a maharaja. Not just a raja. A maharaja. See how wonderful our faith is.

But it is true in all faiths. When Mother Teresa gives up the securities of her cloistered existence and chooses to come out and work with the poor and the dying, she is demonstrating religion in action. Most of us would have no interest in Mother Teresa the Catholic nun. But every one of us deeply respects Mother Teresa the social worker. The only religion of our time that has any respectability is religion in action, not Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, or Islam. Theologians can go to hell, as far as common man is concerned. We need those who actually work for social causes. For love. Isn't this as it should be?

Perfect. But also remember that without Mother Teresa the nun you would never had a Mother Teresa the social worker. It is religion that is behind everything she does. So you cannot discount that. She is what she is because of her past.

What is the future going to be like for man?

The future depends on the past modified by the present. Never ask anyone about the future—even an astrologer. The future is not in the sun, moon, stars, or planets. The present is a product of the past; the future is the past modified in the present. If you don't modify the past, you will continue [the same way] forever. Your future will be nothing other than the past.

A last question. Do you believe in the existence of God or a supreme Power?

Honestly speaking, if you want me to speak in an autobiographical mood, I will say I believe in God. But this question is illogical, because my belief or disbelief is not going to help you or the world. You are inquisitive and that's why you ask. It is my belief

*May the earth drum a rhythm for our forward march on the path to enlightenment.
May the wind and waters nourish our vital force, making us fit for higher contemplations.
Let the heavenly light be our ally, always.*

- James Hausman

and you can't ask me why I believe. In belief there is no logic. I believe, full stop.

Recently, a youngster came to my ashram. He said, "Swamiji, yesterday I listened to your talk. Can I talk to you in private?"

So I asked everybody to leave. The youngster then said, "Swamiji, I don't believe in God."

I asked him, "Son, what God are you talking about? Which God do you not believe in?"

He said, "Swamiji, this rascal God, who is the cause of all the confusion in the world—all the poverty, death, infant mortality, wars, and so much human suffering. I don't believe in such a God."

I said, "Son, in this room, at this moment, there are two nonbelievers. I also don't believe in such a God."

The fellow was flabbergasted. He said, "Then what God do you believe in?"

I said, "Now this is a creative question that I will answer." So I clapped my hands and called everyone in, for there was nothing private about the conversation anymore.

Yes, you have also asked me a creative question. My answer is simple: I believe in my God. Read your own translations of the Upanishads, read my introduction to them, and you will know what that God is.

THE INNER EYE

Inner reflection

will make your eyes close

to see the Master

Inner reflection

will transform you within

to be the Master

Outer vision

will keep your eyes open

like the camera lens

Outer vision

will take you around the world

of maya

- ANONYMOUS