



# NEWS

CHINMAYA MISSION® WEST BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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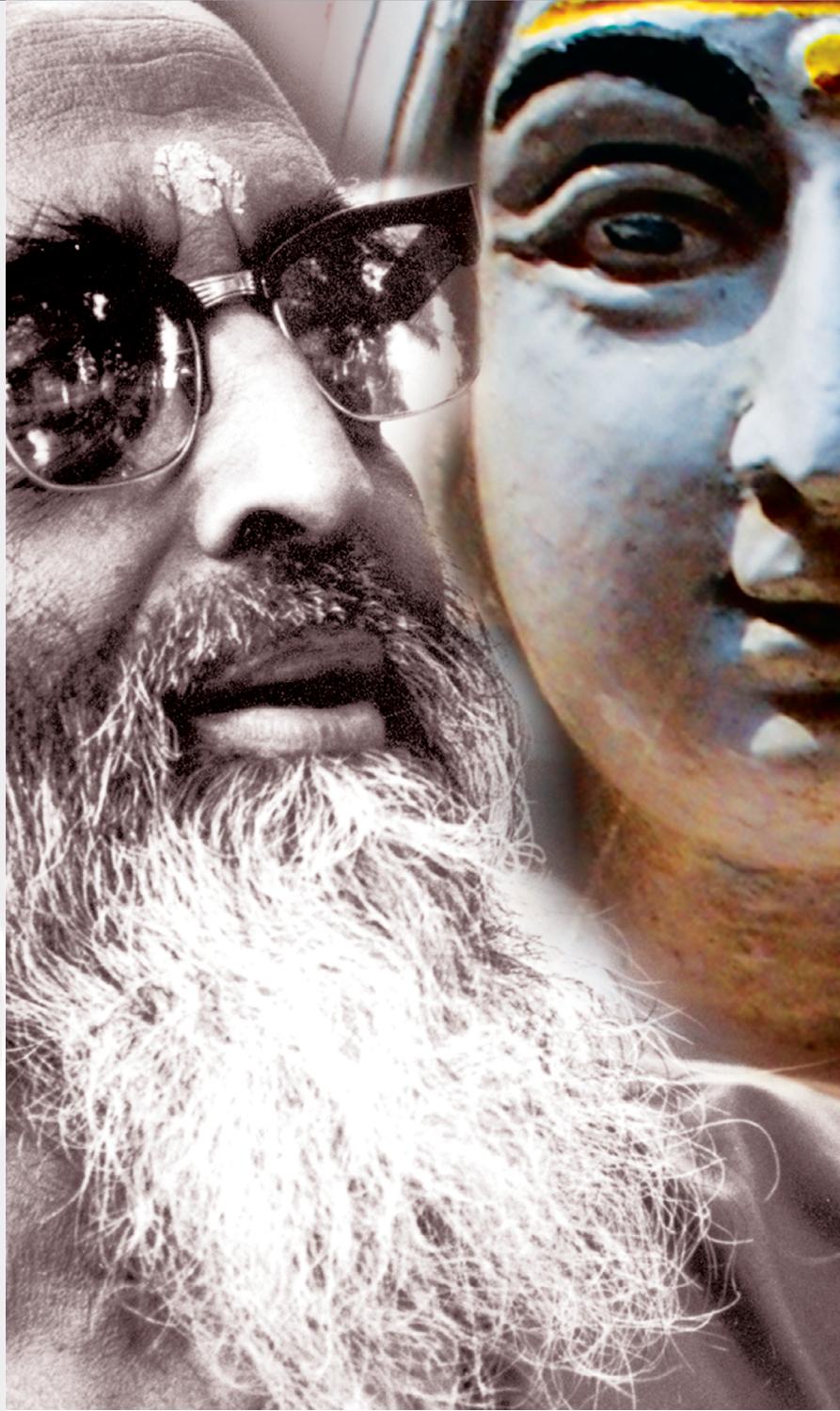
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 His Holiness Swami Tapovanam



 Ruler of the Universe! O Ishvari! Other than a deep devotion to Thy Lotus Feet I crave for no other gains in my life. . . . Give me constant, unhesitating, steady, and all-blissful devotion unto Thee. This supreme Bliss of devotion is itself the state of divine Sovereignty.

Source: *Hymn to Ganga*

 His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda

*Let us surrender ourselves to Him, make ourselves His agent in the world, to act on as best as we can, recognizing all the time, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching the world around as His expression, recognizing the divine Presence around, doing as best as we can to serve others. . . . We make ourselves a slave of the world because we want to take from the world.*

Source: *Chinmaya Lahari*



 His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda



*To maintain an attitude of dedication to the Lord at all times is not easy. Hence, it should be cultivated through bhakti. Alternately, when we act in a true karma yoga spirit, we become intimately aware of a higher Presence guiding and controlling our each step. This kindles a desire to love the Higher. This is the beginning of bhakti. . . . Continuous loving contemplation done with an attitude of Oneness with the Lord, is the best. The strength of this attitude helps us glide into supreme bhakti, which is pure Existence-Bliss, devoid of any attitude.*

Source: *You Ask, He Answers*

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



## Get Up!

A compilation of talks and writings by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

### Get Up from Your Chair

When you have disciplined the body and trained the mind to live a life of morals and values, diligently and cheerfully fulfilling your duties to parents, relations, dependents, and society, you will experience that your bosom is getting cleared of all unproductive, self-dissipating thoughts. Regrets of the past become meaningless, anxieties for the future a laughable joke, and all excitements of the present, a myth.

In such a relatively becalmed inner personality, the hunger to know God, who shines from behind the mind, becomes urgent and imperative. When the seeker then disciplines himself to live the 26 values of life given in *Gita*, Chapter 12, he is putting a tiger in his inner personality. With this extra mental stamina, gained from moral living, the seeker gets uplifted effortlessly into the path of contemplation. Meditation becomes easy, and very steady, because of his true and deep devotion.

In order to reach the top of a wall, we must use a ladder. But merely walking up a ladder will not get us to the top of the wall, for at the top we must leave the ladder and step onto the wall. In the same way, we can reach the Self only on transcending the BMI to go beyond it. The preparation of the BMI for this flight into ourselves is called spiritual *sadhana*. Those who ignore these early preparatory self-discipline efforts can reach but the fringes of Truth, but never the Truth. All yogas are preparations of the mind to turn in and seek the self.

Any experience the mind feels, is but an object of consciousness. You may experience peace, bliss, or fulfillment. All these are of God, not

God Himself. They are all His Nature; they all declare that you are on the right path. Never hold on to them. Drop them. Reject them and continue.

Remain silent and steady, expecting God-experience in all its infinite fullness. Here ends all self-effort. There you can but wait in faith. And He reveals; you get sucked into Him. *Nirvikalpa samadhi* also is a state of the mind (*dhi*). Go beyond it we must, to get absorbed into It, That which transcends all. Through the corridor of pure Consciousness we move into That which is not even Consciousness.

It is That, which plays as Consciousness among objects and thoughts. Empty all thoughts. . . Consciousness in its total purity, meaning when there are no objects for It to illumine, reveals Its true nature as Brahman, the one, sole Substratum of this universe of names and forms.

Awaken into that God-State. In that state alone all doubts end, all contradictions in *maya* clear away. This is not knowledge; it is wisdom. There, the individuality and its perceptions of a pluralistic world of things and beings slide away, and the individual, fully undressed of its BMI, becomes identical with the Self. The perceiver of the world dies. Therefore, in this final state, there is no world for you to negate. Since the world is not there, God, the Total Mind, has no function. The individuality (*jiva*), the world perceived (*jagat*) and God, the Creator-Sustainer-Destroyer Power (*Ishvara*), has no chair to sit and protect. All three, *jiva-jagat-Ishvara*, merge into this supreme State. Be this One.

Mere study alone is not sufficient. Study gives us information. The Scriptures only give us a roadmap. However much you may study the roadmap, you will never reach the pilgrim center. You study the map, roll it up, and keep it handy by your side, as it may be useful

en route during the journey. Now, you get up from your chair, get into your vehicle, and move on along the “way” the map indicates so clearly. . . .

### Get to the Source of Knowledge

It is a Vedic tradition in India, from the very dawn of history, to respect women; this is true to such an extent that our greatest scriptures are today called “Mother” *Shruti*. Thus, the Goddess of Learning is represented in Hinduism as a feminine deity called Shri Saraswati, She who gives the essence (*sara*) of our own Self (*sva*).

The Mother of Learning is represented as sitting on a lotus, because the Upanishads declare that a teacher who can teach the Reality must himself be well established in the experience of the Real. Seated on the supreme Reality, the Mother holds the sacred Scriptures in one hand and with the Lord’s conch and mace in another, representing the mind and intellect. She holds the veena and sings the enchanting melody of Truth as contained in the Upanishads and as experienced by Her.

*Shrotriyam* (one who knows the philosophy of the Upanishads well) and *Brahma-nishtham* (one who is well established in the subjective experience of the Self) are the two qualities of a true Teacher. In short, She represents not merely a man of Realization in *samadhi*, but a true Teacher who plays his knowledge upon the heartstrings of his disciples. She gathers the instrument, tunes up its strings properly, and starts singing. Soon, the wafting music enchants others to approach Her feet to learn the music and produce the same celestial melody by themselves.

She is wedded to the Creator (Lord Brahma), which is appropriate indeed, inasmuch as the Creator would certainly be helpless if He did not have the knowledge for what He has to create. All creative endeavors spring forth and sustain themselves only with knowledge of what to create and how to create.

This is the reason why in the nine days of *Devi Puja*, we invoke and worship Shri Kali (Durga) in the first three days, Shri Lakshmi in the next three days, and Goddess Saraswati in the concluding three days. Kali is the mighty power of destruction, invoked so that

the spiritual seeker can destroy all his negative tendencies in himself. Thereafter, Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, is invoked to cultivate the nobler emotions and sentiments in him, the inner wealth of his heart. One who has thus accomplished the cleansing of one’s inner personality alone can, with sure success, worship Shri Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning.

The study of the Upanishads is futile and cannot bring about any spiritual awakening in the one who has not made his heart pure. One must weed out the false values of desire, lust, and passion, and must cultivate love, charity, self-control, and other virtues. When one has thus invoked Kali and has adored Lakshmi, one is fit to enter the temple of Shri Saraswati. When such a mature student, properly prepared, comes to listen to the songs of Mother Saraswati, he not only understands Her divine music (Scriptures), but also comes to comprehend and experience that the Self in him is the Self everywhere. To experience this eternal oneness is the acme of peace and perfection—the state of Godhood, the realm of pure Consciousness.

After reaching this state Divine, the Upanishads declare, “There is no return.” There is no chance to fall back into the earlier misconceptions arising from the body-mind-intellect identifications. This state of perfect Freedom from the little ego, and the re-discovery of the Supreme Self, the large divine Personality within us, is called liberation (*moksha*). This supreme Reward for a life of intelligent self-control (*tapas*), deep study (*svadhyaya*), continuous reflection (*mananam*), and steady meditation (*nidhidhyasanam*) is symbolized in the Lotus that the Lady of Learning holds in her fourth hand.

The divine Book [Veda] is in Her *chitta*-hand [*chitta*, or memory]; Her veena is in her *manas* and *buddhi* hands, and the lotus is in Her *ahamkara*-hand. When the truths of the Upanishads are brought to our constant awareness, and when our mind and intellect, through a silent self-discussion within ourselves, sings the Song of the Self in our reflections, then the Wisdom born of experience floods our being (lotus) and lifts the dreary darkness of ignorance. The kindly Lady of Wisdom is Mother Shruti. She leads us to end our slavery to the devil in us, to the

passions and lusts. This is symbolized in the burning of the effigy of the lower-nature [*jiva* or individual ego] on the tenth day of *Durga Puja*, called *Dassehra*. This day is also called the Day of Enlightenment, or *Vidyarambha*.

May the blessings of Saraswati be ever upon our hearts, lips, and pens.

### Get to Know the Conditioned Intellect

**Q:** The intellect judges not only with the help of wisdom acquired, but also, as you said earlier, with the *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* that envelop the intellect at the time of judgment.

**A:** Yes, it is the intellect that judges and the intellect's judgment would change according to the moods of *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*.

**Q:** So, the conscience is the intellect with its accumulated wisdom, conditioned by the moods?

**A:** Yes, sure. And that's how mistakes are made.

**Q:** Can we say the power that judges an action is the intellect, conditioned by its moods and drawing on past experiences? And all this together we could call conscience?

**A:** The intellect does include the experiences of the past.

Suppose all your experiences are forgotten—the entire past. Say, you are under drugs. Then, there is no intellect, meaning, no past experience memorized.

Now, judge the present. The present is understood, evaluated by the mood of the mind. If the mind is slightly disturbed, your judgment and your interpretation of the data will be confused.

Then, when you act, at that moment, you will act as the intellect judged. Later you may realize that it was a mistake—which is why we say that a sin is only wrong judgment.

But the judgment became wrong because of the mood of the mind. Had I been quieter at that time, I would not have made that mistake. . .

### Get Up and Serve

*Excerpts from Why Serve?*

We live in a society. If each one of us was to live on a solitary island, the question “Why serve?” would not arise. It is only when we live in a society that this question arises.

Society is not merely individuals put together; there must be a cohesiveness among the individuals. History has again and again proved that as long as a community is integrated and united, as long as mental harmony in society is maintained, that community remains undefeated, living with great courage and easily prepared to face any challenge from outside. When there is no integration, however, even though there are billions in number, there is no strength, determination, or community accepted policy. Indeed, so long as members of society do not enter a field of action where they can put their shoulders together and work single-heartedly toward a common goal, there can arise no harmony among individuals. Today, in the modern science of management, they indicate that same harmony with a new term, “dynamism of togetherness.”

Where harmony is broken, the orchestration has failed. The common spring of inspiration dries up and each individual in the group becomes selfish. When the scriptures declare that to act without selfishness is to flood our lives with unbelievable dynamism, we generally jump to the conclusion that this philosophy is impractical and stupid. “Who can live in this world without ego?” we say. Whenever I ask the youngsters, or the officers, or others, “Why don't you serve society?” very often they reply with the question, “Why serve? What has society done for me except pull me down?”

First of all, never think that you can change the world. You cannot. Yet, you must try to serve the world as best as you can—for your inner growth and mental satisfaction. “But who can work without desire?” we insist. “Where there is no desire, where is the motivation to act?” Desire is our ardent expectation to enjoy the fruit of our action (*karma phala*). To give up this anxiety (*karma phala tyaga*) is one of the cardinal instructions for discovering dynamism in our activities. *Karma phala* is the result of

an action, which means it comes only after the action. We cannot act in the past, of course, nor can we act in the future. We can only act in the present. The result of an action only comes afterward, and therefore belongs to future periods of time.

Now, while I am functioning, if I become anxious about the fruit of the action (in other words, the unknown future), my mental vitality naturally gets dissipated. My present action becomes incompetent, in every way confused. And the incompetent, slipshod work of today can never yield great results tomorrow! What is wrong, then, when the *Gita* teaches us that while we are acting in the present, we must lift our mind from all fields of dissipation?

Dissipation in the mind due to the past is called “ego;” dissipation in the mind due to anxiety about the future is called “desire for the fruit.” Without dissipating the mind's vitality, either with memories of the past

or anxieties for the future, plunge into the present moment with all your dynamism. Then, the action cannot ever fail. Think. Man is made to win and succeed, not to lose and fail. To detach myself from the past and the future, and to bring my mind into the present and apply it rigorously to the piece of work at hand, is the answer given by those masters who discovered, lived, and were alive to the mechanics of work.

When your work is centered in the present, you outshine your own abilities. When the mind is not wandering into the past or the future, but is where your hands are working, you are at a new level of consciousness, in which the work becomes “inspired activity.” Thus, the selfless work you do is spectacularly beautiful and rewarding to the community and society. You are rewarded; your work is splendid; and society, nay, the world, is benefited by such selfless work.

Why serve? It is now for you to realize.

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or  
The One

## Message for Chinmaya Jayanti Day 2011

*Hari Om!*

*Eyes are two, but the vision is one. Lips are two, but the speech is one. Mahatmas are two – Bhagavan Adi Shankaracharyaji and Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayanandaji, but their vision is one – the vision of the oneness of the Self. Their message is one – know thy True Self and be free from all bondages. Their teaching through their lives is one – abiding and revelling in the Self, remain engaged in the welfare of all beings.*

*On 8th May, 2011, we pay our homage with utmost reverence to these two great Mahatmas.*

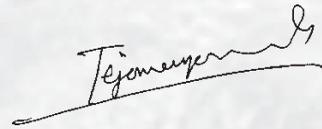
भव शङ्कर देशिक मे शरणम् ।

भव चिन्मय देशिक मे शरणम् ॥

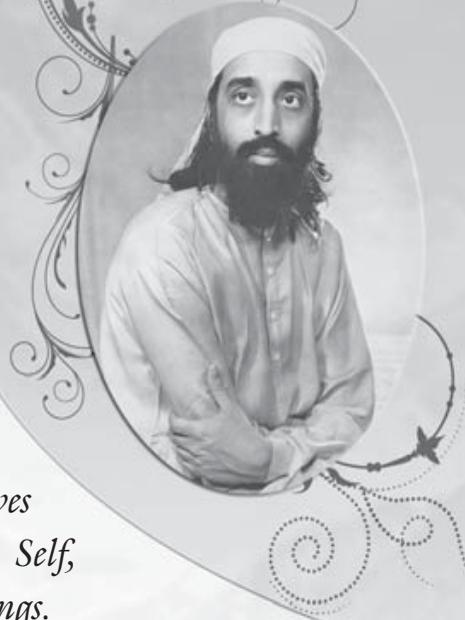
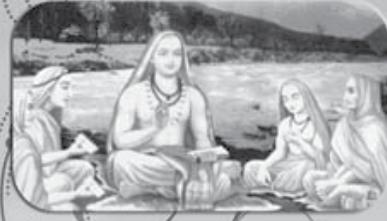
*bhava śaṅkara deśika me śaraṇam,*

*bhava cinmaya deśika me śaraṇam.*

*With Prem & Om,*



*Tejomayananda*



## The Brilliance of the Self

Talks by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda given at CM Houston, June 2009

Transcribed by Preeta Narain; continued from CMW News, January 2011

There are different kinds of *tejas*—*sharirik*, *bhautik*, *manasik*, *baudbhik*—but *adhyatmik teja* is something totally different. Just look at any picture of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi—you can see that glow. If only in the photograph you can see this, like in the photos of Swami Tapovanji Maharaj, then imagine what they must be in person. Pujya Gurudev was like this only—in his very presence there was this brilliant spiritual glow, despite his illnesses. People used to say it was his will power, but it was not will power—it was rising above body consciousness. To merely attempt rising above body consciousness, even will power would break down. No, this glow comes only from Self-realization. It is called *tejas-tejasvinam-aham*, or *adhyatmik teja*.

*Tejas tejasvinam-aham* comes in the *Bhagavad Gita* twice—once in Chapter 7, and again in Chapter 10. Lord Krishna says, “I am the *teja* of the *tejasvis* (the brilliance of the brilliant, the effulgence of the effulgent.” Every thing and being in this world has its own special quality and attraction, but if we think these attributes belong to that thing itself, then it is our misunderstanding. And when we become attached to those things, different reactions arise in our minds. Just as, if we see something in ourselves and some people praise us, we think, “Oh, I have become so great;” we become arrogant and attached to our skills or talents, owning them. But what we have to understand is that the Lord alone is the Substratum of this whole universe, so the beauty of the universe can be only when that thing is—this is-ness, alive-ness, freshness, newness, beauty, joy is the Lord Himself. He, as the common Factor, must be recognized. So, too, whatever good is within us is the expression of Lord’s grace alone. With this recognition, there comes humility, not arrogance. With this recognition our *asakti* (attachment) changes to *bhakti* (devotion).

The very vision of this whole universe becomes *bhakti*-oriented. For this, you don’t have to do anything additional. This is why when the men of Realization merely look at this world, and their very look is worship, realization, devotion. They don’t have to do anything else.

For this special type of recognition or vision, we require a special kind of intelligence, which is why *Bhagavan* also says, “*Buddhir-buddhimatam-asmi* (I am the Intelligence of intelligent beings).” In this world, there are the literate, the educated, the intelligent, the scholars—there are variations and gradations. If someone learns the 3 Rs of Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic, we say he is literate. But literacy is one thing, and education is another. Education must convert into knowledge. Knowledge must be converted into wisdom, and wisdom must become realization.

Some people have naive intelligence; some are street-wise; some are cunning, cheating, deceiving. Some are clever, but clever differs from cunningness, in that it doesn’t involve cheating or deceiving; such people just know how to deal with different kinds of people. But true intelligence is something still different. Through his intelligence, man can become crueller than even animals or more divine than even celestial beings. This is the beauty of intelligence, which we all have and use, but for different purposes.

First I will give some example of how people misuse actually, this cannot be called as use but misuse, abuse.

A man was carrying a two-pound bag of whole peanuts in shells, or *mungphali*. As he was walking, he saw a Lord Ganesha temple. So, he kept his bag down, went into the temple to offer *namaskaram* (prostrations), and when he came out, the bag was gone.

`syat, krta-krtyashcha, bharata.” The word *syat* is important, for it is a verb that means, “you will be” or “you will become.” *Bhagavan* says when we come to know this Truth [of the supreme Reality], then alone we will become wise. Until then, we are “otherwise!”

Thus, *buddhi* alone is being used, whether for cunningness and cheating or learning and literacy. But when a person starts to use his *buddhi* for discriminating between what is real and unreal, what is Self and not Self, and through Self-inquiry comes to realize the Truth, then alone can one truly be called *buddhiman*. This is meant by “*Etat buddhya buddhimaan syat,*” for you will become truly wise on knowing the Truth.

When *Bhagavan* says *buddhir-buddhimatam-asmī*, He says, “I am the Intelligence of the intelligent,” which means all knowledge arises from the Lord alone; He is the substratum of everything. But which type of *buddhi* is His *vibhuti* (glory) is important to know. The *buddhi* that is His *vibhuti* is the *buddhi* that helps us recognize Him, from whom everything has come forth. And when we use our *buddhi* to realize Him, then we understand His statement, “*Tejas-tejasvinam-aham.*” Then alone we can say we have understood the right use of *buddhi*, for otherwise, it is of no use.

Some people don’t use their *buddhi* at all, perhaps because they are afraid that if they will use up everything and later on when they need it, they won’t have anything left! Once, someone told me why people use very little of their *buddhi*—because it is said you can live without air for a few seconds, without water for a few hours, without food for few months, and without thinking forever! So people think, what is the need of thinking when I can live without it? In his discourses, Pujya Gurudev would often forcefully say, “Think!” And people would say, “Why?”

Our life is going on without thinking. For many people, only when they start thinking are problems created, so they stay away from it. But there is a saying, “Use it or lose it,” so the *buddhi* has to be used. It is used in daily life, in all fields, for many purposes, but the highest use of one’s *buddhi* is to realize the Truth. There are so many *shlokas* in our

scriptures that extol getting a human life and using one’s intelligence to get liberated from *samsara*. Indeed, if we do not do so, the scriptures call this as suicide. Thus, that *buddhi* is the *vibhuti* of the Lord by which we understand that the Lord alone is the Brilliance of the brilliant, the Beauty of the beautiful, the Sweetness of the sweet (*madhuradhipater-akbham madhuram*).

*Madhu* means sweet, like honey. Sweetness gives you happiness. So, *madhu* is that which gives you sweetness, beauty. And the one who is *madhuradhi-pati* is the Lord of all givers of sweetness and happiness. There may be many sources of happiness and beauty, but the one who is the Lord of all the sources is *madhuradhi-pater-akbham madhuram*. So, superficially, we may think it is the object, person, or quality that attracts us, but in reality, it is the Lord in them that attracts us. The only attraction is *Bhagavan* alone, and thus He is called “*Krishna*” (*akarshanat iti krshna*: that which attracts is called *krshna*). Wherever we go, it is only the *ananda* that attracts us, the beauty that attracts us, and that beauty is *Bhagavan*; that beauty should not be attributed to the object actually. If you can properly understand even this one point, it is enough—that anything and everything in this world that attracts us is actually the Lord.

To recognize this Truth, we require a special *buddhi*, and that *buddhi* comes by God’s grace. *Bhakta* Prahlada had this type of *buddhi*—*sarvam tyaktva harim bhajet* (“renouncing all, worship the Lord”), which made his father, Hiranyakashipu, terribly angry. Prahlada’s teachers had to defend their innocence and tell the father, “This is your child and whatever he is speaking was not taught by us.” In Hindi, they would have said, “*Voh to pataa nahin kahaan se aisi buddhi leke aaya hai.*” If he is born with that *buddhi*, what can anyone do?

In our *buddhi*, from where are the different thoughts and feelings arising? On analysis, we find that normally our thoughts and desires arise from our individual *vasanas*. From our *vasana* pool, *kamana* arises. Some persons, whose minds have expanded, and are identified with greater and nobler goals, have thoughts arise for the welfare of all, not for personal benefits. When Mahatma Gandhiji thought of freedom, he thought freedom

of for total India, not just Gujarat. Because thoughts that arise in such persons are not *ryashti vasanas*, or individual desires; they are for *samashti kalayana* (welfare of the whole). Such thoughts are very different.

In Maharashtra, when Samartha Ramdas Swami was a small boy, his mother went searching for him and finally found him sitting in an attic. When she asked him what he was doing there, he gave a powerful, and now famous, statement in Marathi. He said, “*Chinta karito vishwaa chi,*” or, “I am thinking about [the welfare of] the whole universe.” Such a little child—from where were such thoughts arising? Who thinks of the totality of the universe? At that age, little boys think of toys and games.

In the case of *sant mahatmas* (saints, sages, enlightened masters), such thoughts come directly rising from the Lord Himself. This is why we say it is not the mahatma’s *sankalpa*; it is *Bhagavat-sankalpa*. At one place, our Gurudev has said—and I have seen that

sentence. “CCMT/Chinmaya Mission has come as God’s Will. It will stay here as long as God wills, and it will go only when God wills it; otherwise it cannot go.” From this, what should we understand? The master is One with the Lord, so it is not his will. That is why *sant mahatmas* may say something inadvertently even, but that also may appear because it has come from their mouths, because their Source is the Divine.

So, we, too, have to think whether our thoughts are arising from our individual *vasanas* or from identification with the Lord Himself, the divine Source. This is why it is said that if we are in doubt and don’t know what to do, and even after consulting the scriptures the doubt or confusion remains, then go to a *mahapurusha*, and whatever he says will be right for you. At that time, whatever comes in that *mahapurusha*’s mind is what is to be done. This is “*Buddhir-buddhimatam-asmī.*”

to be continued

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## *Superimposition and De-superimposition: Evolving in Awareness*

by Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya

After the spiritual student has performed *karma yoga* (selfless service dedicated to the Lord) and *upasana* (meditation) and acquired the necessary qualifications, Bhagavan Shankaracharya asks the student to seek Self-knowledge.

The necessary preparation for the seeking of Self-knowledge is presented in the form of a five-point program. (1) *Karma yoga* is for purification of the mind. (2) *Upasana* is for concentration or single-pointedness of the mind, as well as for expansion of the mind, wherein one can uplift the mind from individual needs and demands. (3) *Shravanam* (hearing of Truth) is for the elimination of ignorance. (4) *Mananam* (reflection on Truth) is for the removal of doubts; and (5) *nidhidhyasanam* (meditation on Truth) is for the removal of erroneous notions, namely, two: I am this body-mind, and this world of plurality is real.

To remove these erroneous notions, Vedanta stresses the importance of *shravanam*, which means listening to what the teacher teaches from the scriptures (or based on the scriptures) and gathering the essence of, and absorbing, the scriptural teaching. The ability to absorb or grasp the meaning of the teaching is essential in understanding Vedanta.

The central theme, or subject matter, of Vedantic texts is the oneness between the *jiva* and *Ishvara*. “I am *Brahman*,” or infinite Consciousness, is the central theme of Vedanta. In one of his works, Bhagavan Adi Shankaracharya says, “*Shlokaradhena pravakshyami yaduktam grantha kotibibi.*” Or, “In half a stanza, I will tell what is said in scores of scriptures.” Such is the mastery of this great teacher that he can put the essence of all teachings in half a stanza. And if needed, he can go on writing commentary after commentary on every work as well.

There are three parts to Adi Shankaracharya’s *shloka*: “*Brahma satyam jagan-mithya. Jivo Brahmaiva naparah.*” (1) *Brahman* alone is the ultimate Truth. (2) The world of names and forms is illusory; it is only apparent. (3) This individual *jiva* is none other than *Brahman*, infinite Consciousness. The *jiva* is *Brahman*. These three statements are the essence of all Vedantic teachings.

The methodology of superimposition and de-superimposition is called *adhyaropa-apavada prakriya*. How is the knowledge of “*Brahma satyam . . .*” revealed in our scriptures? The scriptures use one method, or technique, to explain the whole universe. The method is called superimposition (*adhyaropa*). Its opposite is the negation of all erroneous notions, which is called de-superimposition (*apavada*). *Adhyaropa-apavada prakriya* is used to reveal the Truth and thereby remove the mistaken notions that “I am this body-mind, and this world of plurality is real.” There is a *shloka* referring to this technique that reveals the ultimate Truth. Everything comes automatically to those who truly understand and practice this *shloka*—such is the beauty of our scriptures. The *shloka* says, “*Adhyaropa-apavadabhyam nishprapancham prapanchyate shishyaya sukhabodhartham shastragnaih kalpitah kramah.*” Or, “By the method of superimposition and de-superimposition, the absolute Truth (free from creation) is revealed. The methodology is devised by the wise masters for easy comprehension by the student.”

What is revealed by this two-step process coined by the great masters to make known the ultimate Truth? That which is free from the world of plurality, and that in which there is no world. That which is *Brahman* is revealed (*nishprapancham prapanchyate*) for easy comprehension of the student. What are these two steps?

Prior to discussing this two-step process, we have to remember that superimposition (in the form of erroneous notions) is already present. We have already misunderstood the Truth. We have misunderstood our true identity. This misunderstanding, a basic defect, has

created the problems we are currently facing or experiencing. The scriptures progressively provide some corrective measures to remove our ignorance of Truth.

At first, the corrective measures suggested by our scriptures may not appeal to our intellects. They may not be convincing or seem absolutely correct. For example, assume there is a stain that does not belong on a cloth. To remove the black spot we apply some stain remover. A person may say that since there is already a stain on the cloth that does not belong to the cloth, why would we want to apply one more substance on the cloth in addition to the spot? But we know that after the stain remover absorbs all the dirt, we wash out the spot, thereby removing the dirt as well as the solution. Finally, what remains is the cloth as it was before the stain, in its natural state.

This dirt (erroneous notions) is what we call *adhyasa*, or inherent superimposition, that is already there in the body-mind-intellect. Fundamental confusion is already present, like the stain is already on the cloth. The scriptures provide the process or solution to remove erroneous notions, called *adhyaropa*. There is a minor distinction between what is already present (*adhyasa*, or inherent superimposition), and scriptural superimposition or *adhyaropa*. So, the two-step scriptural solution is applied, with the elimination of all superimposition being termed as de-superimposition, called *apavada*, or negation.

For example, we think we are only the body and nothing else, so we search for objects of pleasure to satisfy the needs and wants of the body. The scriptures say that since we think we are the body, then we should keep the body fit to enjoy pleasures. So, we start improving by working for fitness. When we are convinced that bodily fitness actually helps us enjoy life, then the scriptures ask, “If your body is healthy but your mind is disturbed, will you be able to enjoy life?” We say no and are now eager to know how to have a quiet, calm, balanced mind. This desire to calm the mind indicates we also have a mind; otherwise, we are only body-centered, body-oriented. Now, our focus has progressed to improving, correcting, and purifying the mind.

Thereafter, it is said that for all the objects we gather in our lives, we know the cause. But

there are a lot of unknown occurrences in our lives as well. From where do they arise? The scriptures say *karma*. Based on our actions, we receive objects of pleasure, people, and situations in our lives. Therefore, if we correct our *karmas*, we will have better objects, people, and improved situations that can lead to peaceful, happy lives. So, after focusing on our bodies and minds, we now focus on improving our *karmas*.

Slowly, the scriptures take us from the perception of “I am the body,” to “I am sense the organs,” to “I am the mind,” to “I am the doer/enjoyer of action/results.” The “things” that incur *karma* I was already doing, but not knowing that things were not always being done in the right way. So, the scriptures start refining our understanding and giving the right cause and effect connection at every step. Once we logically see the connection, we can validate and experience it in life. In this way, the scriptures gradually elevate one’s awareness.

The next question posed in the scriptures is, “Can you be happy when people in your surroundings are unhappy, suffering, starving, feeling insecure, or are in the midst of war, etc.?” When we say no, the scriptures show us how to work to benefit and uplift others, to share what we possess. In this way, people are inspired to do greater and nobler things for others and live idealistic lives.

When the scriptures next ask how we came into this world, how the world came to be, what is the world, from where did the world come, who we think we are, etc., then we begin to think, to inquire. For example, we can accept a biological explanation of a mother and father giving birth to children, but biology only explains the birth of the body. How does life come into the body?

When inquiry continues in this manner, we see that there can be no creation without a creator. The scriptures say the Creator is almighty, all-pervading; He is the One who gives the results of actions; He is kind and just, so accept Him as the Lord of your life. We are finite and He is infinite. We are little-knowing and He is all-knowing. We are little-pervading and He is all-pervading. We have little power and He is almighty. In this way, the scriptures show us the direction for spiritual growth, for our thinking to evolve.

Having progressed from a body-oriented, self-indulgent life to a doer whose actions are all noble, with control over the mind and senses, with faith in the scriptures and teachers, we continue evolving. It may not all happen in one lifetime. Just faith and sense control may take many lives, but at least we know the process. We finally come to discover that I am not the body, senses, *pranas*, mind, intellect, ego; I am the Consciousness that illumines all these faculties.

Then we ask, “Is this Consciousness finite or infinite? How do I arrive at this Consciousness?” In *Drṅ Drishya Viveka*, we learn that I am the Seer behind all the seen, the Consciousness that knows every faculty. And this infinite Consciousness is my real nature. Thus, whatever mistaken ideas I had about myself are all eliminated in steps and stages. Finally, even whatever understanding I got along my journey is also removed, and only the idea that “I am Consciousness” remains. In this manner, the scriptures give a complete teaching of superimposition and de-superimposition, gradually moving toward and giving us the ultimate teaching. This methodology for revealing Truth is *adhyaropa apavada prakriya*.

to be continued

## Wandering in the Mountains

by Michael Purewal

I’ve grown a new appreciation for Nature, here in the Vedanta Course at *Krishmalaya*. Almost every day I walk in the mountains in Northern California, amongst the majestic Redwoods, reflecting deeply. For many of us, there is a belief that a higher state of existence or consciousness exists. The question becomes how to realize our identity with this higher level of Reality.

Many mornings, there is a serene mist that covers these beautiful mountains and I’m lucky enough to see the mist evaporate before my eyes. I can’t stop but think that this is a depiction of what happens when one realizes the higher state of awareness. No matter what your belief or faith in this higher Existence (*moksha*, *nirvana*, or Truth) the effects of It

must be mind-boggling. It is said that only in a peaceful and calm mind can one transcend to the higher depths of Reality. Every morning, I can’t but help think that this mist represents all the agitations, worries, fears, and anxieties that constantly surface in the mind. Within each of us is a beautiful and positive mindset that is waiting to burst forth, but the fog of negativity, fears, and anxieties always hold us back, clouding our vision and judgment.

Under this thick robe of fog, I know a beautiful, emerald green river flows through these majestic mountains, but I can’t see this picturesque postcard view. It is only when the brilliance of the sunlight destroys the fog that the mountains are seen. Interestingly, the fog itself is created due to the sunlight, the same entity that destroys it. So, too, the brilliant light of consciousness within can destroy the veiling fears, anxieties, and negativities, which, once destroyed, reveals the “picture perfect postcard” within.

The sun, by nature, remains unaffected from the fog that helps create and destroy. The sun shines equally in a pristine lake or a dirty puddle of water. In the same manner, the light of consciousness remains unaffected whether we choose to destroy the veil of anxieties in our mind or continue to engage in them. That brilliance is always there; it is simply up to us if we want to revel in a higher state of existence. Do we choose to live in the stress-free, fearless, blissful sunlight? Or do we choose to stay in the anxious and fearful mist, focused on the dark clouds that constantly agitate us? What a feeling it must be to experience that higher state of existence or awakening. What a mindset one would have in facing all the opportunities and challenges of life.

So, what exactly is this higher state of existence? It is truly impossible to describe, for it is beyond what the mind/intellect can comprehend. But there are indicators that need deep reflection and mediation to start to feel the effects of that awareness, through expressions such as calmness in the mind and a more pleasant attitude in life.

Space is indivisible by nature; it can be “separated” when an object is placed in it. For example, if there is a building, there is space before the building, and obviously, there is

space inside the building; and if the building collapses, the space inside and surrounding the building isn’t affected. So, objects only appear to create divisions in space, just as we, as beings, only appear to create divisions on the Substratum that remains ever unaffected.

You take away a thought or an event, and time isn’t relevant. For example, you have one last thought before you go to bed; it’s not until the next thought in the morning that you have an idea regarding time. Time, too, is another dimension that is superimposed on the higher plane of existence.

We may say that there is never a state when space and time do not exist. But only when the mind (or more specifically, thoughts) is present, do space and time exist. In our deep sleep state, without the functioning mind, we are completely unaware of space and time. Upon waking, when we once again identify with our mind and the thought-flow commences, then do the concepts of space and time have reality.

Deep sleep grants rest and refreshment, a sign that this state provides happiness, but deep sleep is a state of ignorance. The exact opposite is “wakeful sleep,” or the deep state of meditation. In this state also there is peace and refreshment, but the key difference is that one is aware in this state. Once the mind is made quiet, peace exists that can't be found anywhere else but within.

In a practical sense, I am learning to accept every situation that comes in life. In a strong hurricane, the largest of trees can get uprooted and destroyed because they are rigid, yet the small and flexible blade of grass easily withstands the same onslaught. Spiritual unfoldment gives us the ability to be flexible in the hurricane of life, to accept and attain greater heights beyond our small individuality.

## CM Vancouver’s Bala Vihar

Raaj (age 13): Chinmaya Bala Vihar provides a great foundation for a strong moral compass and life of contentment. It also allows us to learn about the culture, songs, and stories of Hinduism. We study books and discuss the themes portrayed in the scriptures and prayers,

and this helps us see how they apply to our lives. The program is set an encouraging environment where one can learn as much as possible. I think Chinmaya Bala Vihar is a great place to learn the ways of life.

Arun (parent): For the last three years, we were looking for a school where our children could learn Indian spirituality. Growing up in India, I was busy year-round, worshipping God through different festival celebrations almost every month. I never realized how important it is to have spiritual education until I started reading spiritual texts over the last four years and experienced the benefits in daily life.

After moving to Vancouver three years ago, our friend told us about the school their son was attending. We soon learned to go on a Saturday morning and were pleasantly surprised to see our friend waiting for us outside. On the first day itself, we were won over by the selflessness, love, and kindness of the host family. From then, every week, the children look forward to attending the classes. Recently, a new Vedanta class for adults started, and now, my family and I rarely miss a class. I hope there are more communities around the world that start programs like Chinmaya Bala Vihar, which teaches children how to make the world a better place, and how to live life with contentment, compassion, and joy.



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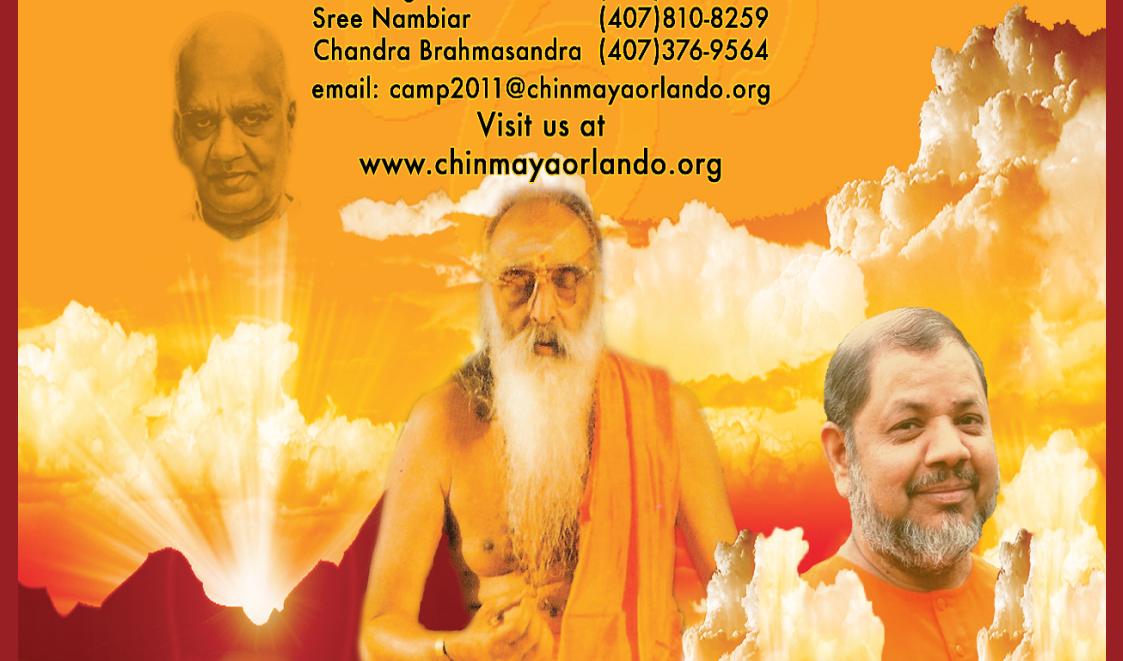
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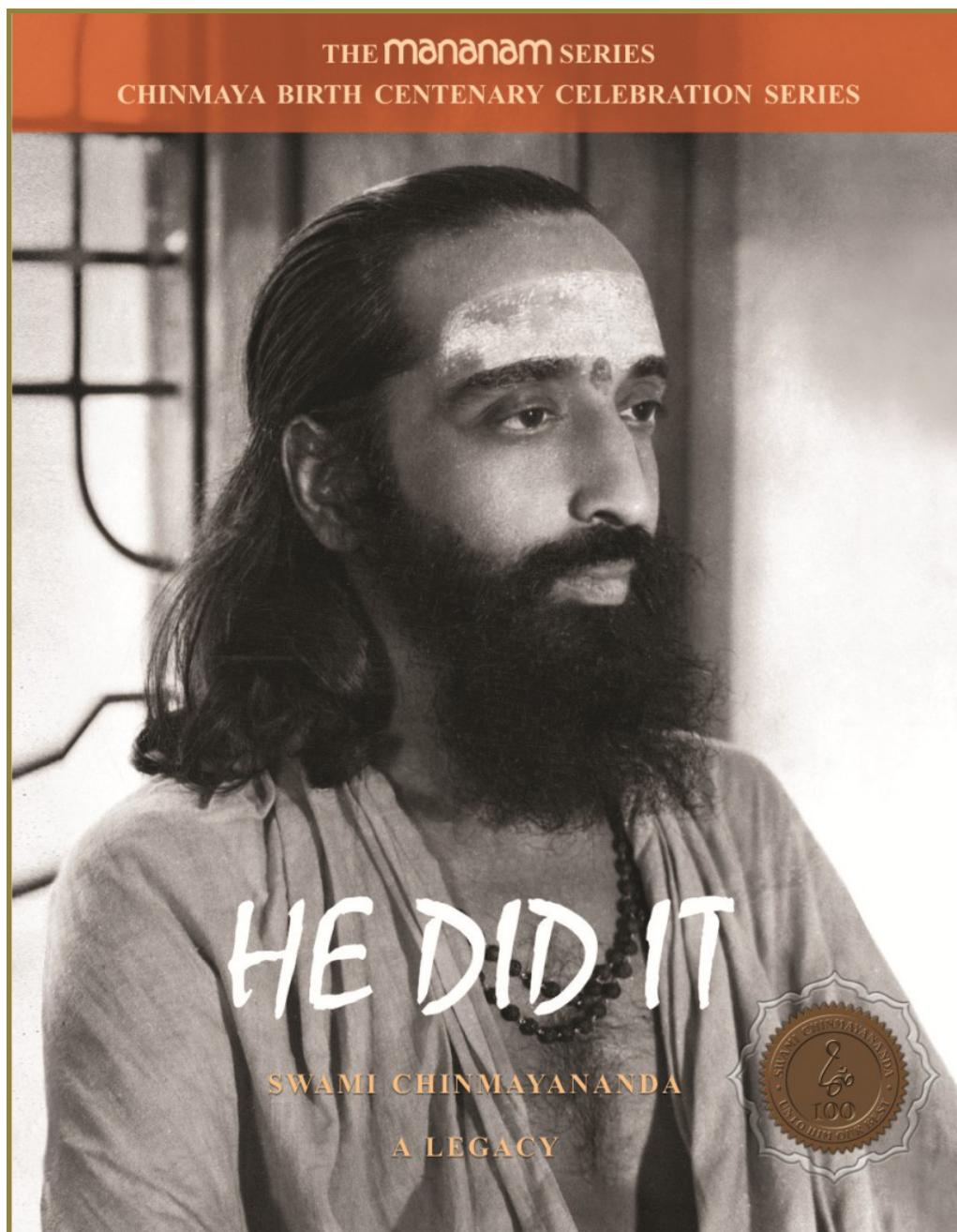
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## FEATURE

# The One

by S. Ramakrishnan

*Reprinted from Resurgence of the Light*



Swami Chinmayananda is one of the luminous gems that came from the mighty flood of modern Indian Renaissance, a multifaceted renaissance, of which the first phase culminated in Indian independence on August 15, 1947.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna makes a standing proclamation, "I come forth age after age, to protect, preserve, and foster *dharma* (righteousness)." In fulfillment of this standing proclamation, India has been blessed with a perennial procession of saints, sages, and high-souled men and women from all segments of life. They sprang up and continue to spring up in different regions of India. The language of each is different, but the essence of their message is one and indivisible. The traditions and legacies they bequeath are the cementing elements of unity in diversity. These minstrels of God are the real architects and builders of India from the past, the present, and the future.

Modern Indian Renaissance is a God-inspired continuation of the grand divine design proclaimed in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the "morning star," then followed Devendranath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen and the Brahma Samaj, Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission. . . . Ramana Maharishi and his gospel of Self-inquiry, and Mahatama Gandhi and the *Satyagraha* (nonviolence) movement.

Swami Chinmayananda is among India's finest additions to the galaxy of stalwarts and selfless nation builders. Young Balakrishna, as Swami Chinmayananda was known in his early years, was a fiery youth, witnessing the unfoldment of the first

phase of modern Indian Renaissance. A questing soul, it was the religious and spiritual aspect of this renaissance movement that gripped his imagination. This eventually brought about an inner transformation in him, a spiritual rebirth.

Just as the earthbound, crawling caterpillar ultimately emerges as the many-hued butterfly and wings its way into the wide expanse, free and untrammelled, the birth of a saint is preceded by the extinction of his lower self. This is an eternal truth tested and attested to, time and time again.

When Buddha, the emperor of the realm of the Spirit, came into being, Gautama, the prince of the tiny kingdom of Kapilavastu, died. Swami Vivekananda came into being when Narendra, the university-educated, modern skeptic, died. Likewise, Balakrishna, brilliant, handsome, witty, and with a spring of degrees in literature and law suffixed to his name, was transformed into Swami Chinmayananda, thanks to the two alchemists of modern India, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, and Swami Tapovan Maharaj of Uttarkashi.

Swami Chinmayananda is no stranger to the world of science. He is one who has apprehended the limitations of science and progressed from physics to metaphysics. Modern science has conferred many bonuses on mankind. It has helped man conquer many dreaded diseases. It has equipped him to fly like birds in the sky, and swim like fish in the sea. But, alas, in the process, it has made him lose the ability to live on earth as a sane human being.

How? Why? The reason is plain and simple. Science has, up to now, solely preoccupied itself with the outer man and the glorification of external values, while it has devalued ethics and totally neglected the inner man.

Atomic physicist Albert Einstein declared in 1952, "Science without religion is lame, and religion without science is blind." . . . The distinguished astrophysicist, Dr. Robert Milikan, has reiterated, "It seems to me that the two great pillars upon which all human well-being and human progress rest are: First, the spirit of religion, and second, the spirit of science. Neither can attain its largest effectiveness without the support of the other." A harmonious blending of ancient insights and modern discoveries of science and spirituality is a unique feature of Indian culture.

Dr. Arnold Toynbee, the historian's historian, after surveying the development of the entire human race came to the conclusion that, "A chapter which has had a Western beginning

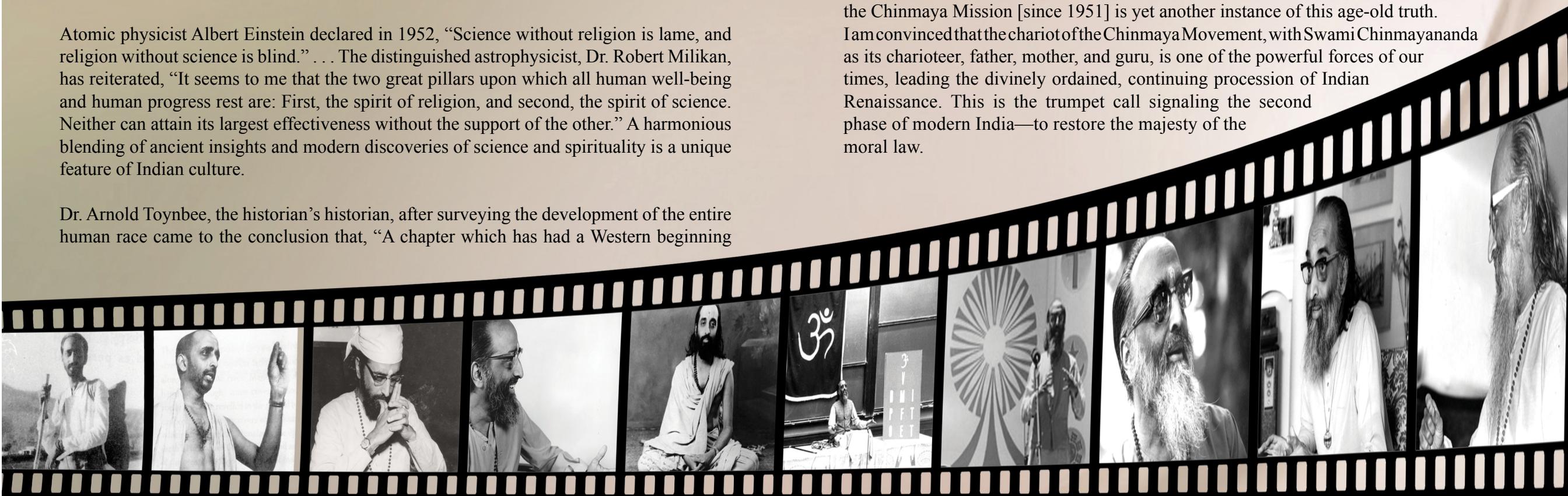
will have to have an Indian ending if the salvation for mankind in this atomic age is the Indian way: Emperor Ashoka's and Mahatama Gandhi's principles of nonviolence, and Shri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions."

The Hindus are a very ancient race. Theirs is not a founded religion. Its name is *Sanatana Dharma* and not Hinduism, which is the later name given to it. Our religion and culture have a history of over five millennia, if not more. There are hardly any races of the other ancient cultures such as the Sumerian, the Assyrian, the Babylonian, and the Egyptian. But Indian culture, after passing through several vicissitudes, survives almost in its pristine form.

Historic India is not a country, a merely geographical entity. It is a comprehensive culture, with an amazing, unbroken continuity dating back to the beginning of time. It is beginningless (*anadi*), endless (*ananta*), and everlasting (*sanatana*). . . .

Swami Chinmayananda can be appropriately compared to a spiritual Ganga, flowing placidly at times and tumultuously at other times, but cleansing, purifying, and inspiring at all times. He is a divine integrator, minstrel of divine glory, and an inexhaustible reservoir of inspiration.

Some three decades ago, on that blessed day in 1951, when Swami Chinmayananda descended to the plains from the heights of Gangotri to share his spiritual inheritance with the rest of mankind, he ceased to be an individual. And a movement, at first very small, began to take shape. A mighty oak grows out of a tiny acorn. The phenomenal growth of the Chinmaya Mission [since 1951] is yet another instance of this age-old truth. I am convinced that the chariot of the Chinmaya Movement, with Swami Chinmayananda as its charioteer, father, mother, and guru, is one of the powerful forces of our times, leading the divinely ordained, continuing procession of Indian Renaissance. This is the trumpet call signaling the second phase of modern India—to restore the majesty of the moral law.





Celebrating

Shankara, the Spiritual General

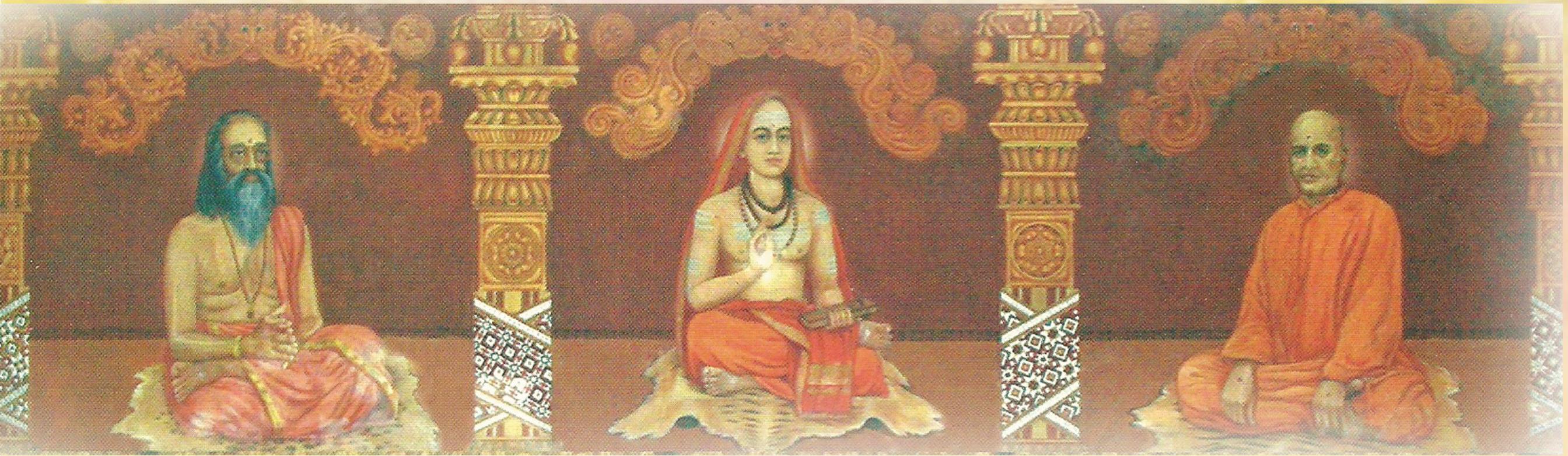
by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

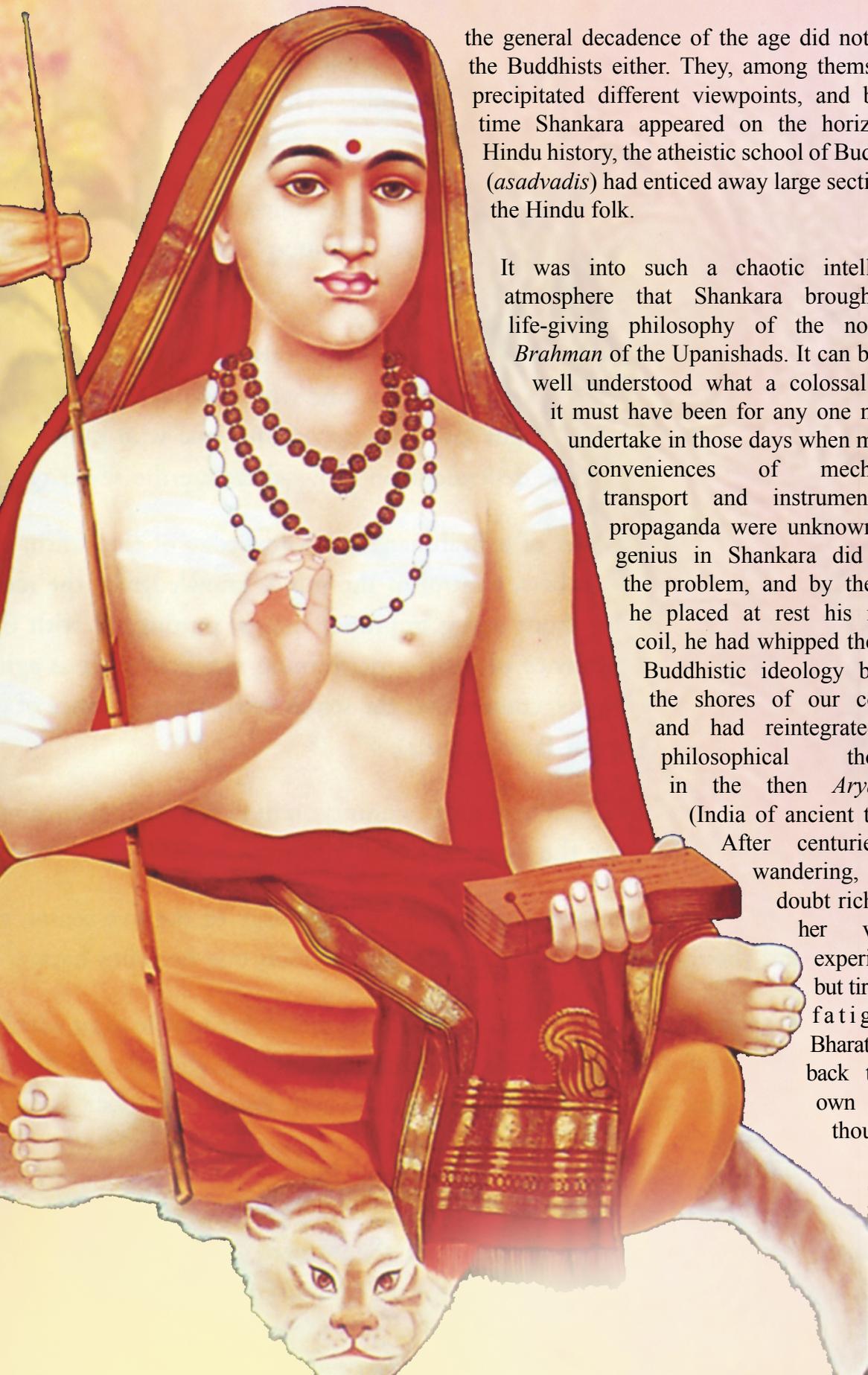
# *Adi Shankara Mahotsava*

On May 8, 2011, Chinmaya Mission Worldwide celebrated the blessed *jayanti* of two of the world's greatest spiritual giants: Bhagavan Adi Shankaracharya and Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. Based on the non-dual Vedantic teachings of Adi Shankaracharya, Chinmaya Mission has seen over 60 years of growth and service, offering the world a philosophy that is logical, practical, devotional, and mystical at once.

Bhagavadpada Acharya Shankara was not only a great thinker and the noblest of Advaitic philosophers, but he was essentially an inspired champion of Hinduism, and one of the most vigorous missionaries in our country. Such a powerful leader was needed at that time when Hinduism had been almost smothered within the enticing entanglements of the Buddhistic philosophy, and consequently the decadent Hindu society came to be disunited and broken up into numberless sects and denominations, each championing a different viewpoint and engaged in mutual quarrels and endless argumentations. Each pundit, as it were, had his own followers, his own philosophy, his own interpretation; each one was a vehement and powerful opponent of all other views. This intellectual disintegration, especially in the scriptural field, was never before so serious, and so dangerously calamitous, as in the times of Shankara.

It had been at a similar time, when our society was fertile for any ideal thought or practical philosophy to thrive, that the beautiful values of non-injury, self-control, love, and affection of the Buddha had come to enchant alike the kings and their subjects of this country. But





the general decadence of the age did not spare the Buddhists either. They, among themselves, precipitated different viewpoints, and by the time Shankara appeared on the horizon of Hindu history, the atheistic school of Buddhists (*asadvadis*) had enticed away large sections of the Hindu folk.

It was into such a chaotic intellectual atmosphere that Shankara brought his life-giving philosophy of the non-dual *Brahman* of the Upanishads. It can be very well understood what a colossal work it must have been for any one man to undertake in those days when modern conveniences of mechanical transport and instruments of propaganda were unknown. The genius in Shankara did solve the problem, and by the time he placed at rest his mortal coil, he had whipped the false Buddhistic ideology beyond the shores of our country and had reintegrated the philosophical thoughts in the then *Aryavarta* (India of ancient times).

After centuries of wandering, no doubt richer for her various experiences, but tired and fatigued, Bharat came back to her own native thoughts.

## Early Years of Adi Shankaracharya

by Dr. A. Ramaswamy Iyengar

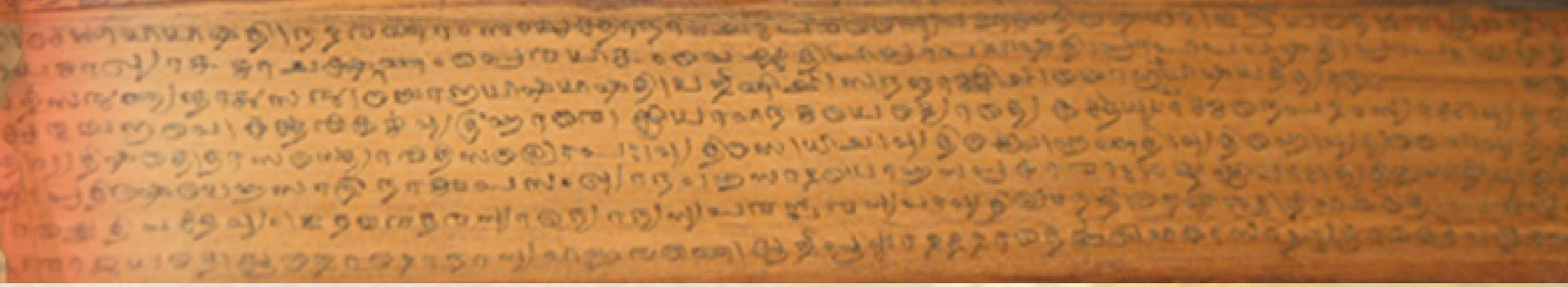
According to the patriarch of the family, Adi Shankara was born (*circa 780-820 A.D.*) in Veliyanad, in Kerala, India. Shivaguru, his father, hailed from Kalady, which is just 50 miles from Veliyanad. After a brief stay at Kalady, Shankara was brought back to Veliyanad for his *upanayana* (sacred thread) ceremony and his early studies. Due to his father's ill health he went back to be with him in Kalady; soon thereafter, his father died.

One day, while bathing in the river, a crocodile got hold of Shankara's legs and started pulling him deeper into the river. The young Shankara cried out for help, but his mother, Aryamba could not help him. As the crocodile dragged him further into the river, Shankara it is told, begged his mother to permit him accept *sannyasa*. Although on a number of earlier occasions his mother had refused him permission, seeing the tragedy in front of her, Aryamba sadly relented. It is said that with Shankara's prayer to the Lord affirming that he had renounced everything, the crocodile left its hold on him mysteriously. Shankara then left Kalady in search of a teacher.

Legend has it that Adi Shankara was residing in his mother's ancestral house in *Melpazhur Mana* (in Veliyanad) for a short time, even after he had become a world teacher, and that his *Hymn on Uma-Maheshwara* was composed there. It was also during this time that his immortal commentaries on *Prasthan Traya* (*Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Brahma Sutras*) came to be reduced to ashes in a fire that gutted the entire *padipura* (entrance gatehouse) where the Acharya's maternal uncle had kept those precious scrolls. Fortunately for humanity, the commentaries in their entirety were miraculously preserved in the marvelous memory of Padmapadacharya, Adi Shankara's foremost disciple.

After his father's death, Adi Shankara's mother, Aryamba remained in poverty, neglect, and dishonor. She fell ill and longed to see her son. It is said that Adi Shankara kept the promise he gave his mother when he left home, that he would come back to serve her in her last days. When Aryamba died, the local community did not help Shankara in cremating her mortal remains. So Shankara himself had to cut the dead body into three pieces, carry it to the cremation grounds and invoke the fire upon the green banana trees that were used instead of dried wood.

Stories about Adi Shankara, who is variously referred to as *Jagadguru* (world teacher), and *Acharya* (teacher), and the legends surrounding his life, are of great interest to every scholar. The search and research into his life, his dwelling place, and village continue to this day, in the hope of finding articles and personal effects that could speak more about his greatness. Various palm leaf manuscripts carrying commentaries on different subjects, as well as information about the ancient family *Mana* that is now part of the Chinmaya International Foundation, were with his family up to some 50 years ago. It is said that on the request of some people who offered to have them printed, the family parted with them, but these were not returned. Likewise, it is also said that one anklet of Adi Shankara was with the family for very many generations, but with the passage of time, it was also lost.



# Chinmaya International Foundation

# The Glorious Life

by Dr. Krishna Iyer

The Chinmaya International Foundation is located at the sacred birthplace of Adi Shankaracharya, the great philosopher, saint, and exponent of *Advaita Vedanta*. This home of Aryamba, his holy mother, is located in Veliyanad, in the Edakkattuvayal village in the Ernakulam District, in Kerala, India.

It is believed that Shri Shankara's *upanayanam* (sacred thread ceremony) was conducted here. Known traditionally as the *Melpazhur Mana*, this place has been fittingly renamed by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda as *Adi Shankara Nilayam*.

This ancient *nambudri* family home's *nalukettu* (four-winged structure), is an excellent example of the splendid architectural style of old Kerala, in which structural strength is admirably blended with practical utility and artistic workmanship. Even after centuries, the exquisite wooden paneling and engraving endures, bearing eloquent testimony to the keen artisanship of ancient days.

This sprawling *nalukettu* stands on an 8.3-acre plot of land amidst luxuriant sun-blessed greenery, a water pond, and a temple complex with the shrines of Lord Ayyappa, Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Shiva (in the form of Vettakkorumagan, the family deity of *Melpazhur Mana*), Nagayakshi, and Bhagavati.

The four-winged *Mana* was originally an eight-winged structure (*ettukettu*, with four inner wings and four outer wings). Even though downsized, it continues to exude the spiritual glory and affluence of old. It is the eastern wing that houses the sacred room where Adi Shankara is said to have been born. In this sacred birth room of Adi Shankara is a traditional lamp that stays lit year-round (*nityajyoti*), diffusing an aura of divinity.

Adi Shankara was a great thinker and the noblest exponent of *Advaita* philosophy. We are indebted to him for the revival of Hinduism and for establishing the supremacy of *Sanatana Dharma*, which recognizes the spiritual essence of Life and its infinite expressions.

Adi Shankara is considered to be born in Kalady, a small village in the Ernakulam District in Kerala. Today, Kalady is a holy place of pilgrimage where the Shringeri *Math* and the Kanchi *Kamakoti Pitham* have built great monuments in the Acharya's memory.

Indian and foreign scholars alike, now concede that Adi Shankara was born between the 8th and 9th century A.D., His parents were Shivaguru of Kaippilly Illam (a *nambudri* household) near Kalady and Arya Antharjanam belonging to Melpazhur Mana near the famous Chottanikkara temple in Veliyanad. For the learned scholar, Shivaguru, his marriage to Aryamba was a late one. When after many years of marriage they did not have a child, the devoted couple went to Trichur to worship Lord Shiva at the temple and their prayers bore fruit when, in due course of time, with the Lord's blessings, Aryamba gave birth to Adi Shankara.

Some say that Shivaguru attained eternal peace before his son was born but there are other scholars who hold the view that Shivaguru died when Shankara was three years old. The early life of Acharya is shrouded in mystery and legend.

The history of *nambudiris* can be traced back 3,000 years to two sects called Panniyur and Sukapuram, each of varied culture, attire, rituals, etc. Over time, as internecine quarrels between these sects grew, their power base eroded. Subsequently, a few of these *nambudri* groups left and resettled elsewhere, one place being the Melpazhur Mana, the maternal home and birthplace of Adi Shankara.

When Adi Shankara's *upanayanam* was conducted at the age of seven, legend has it that he gave four *shaligramas* (sacred stones), indicative of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, *moksha* to his maternal home.

Adi Shankara never felt he was a only a Keralite. He thought of himself as a *sat-putra* (good son) of Bharata or India, and he made the whole of India his home.



# A Life Worth Living

*Compilation of writings*

Adi Shankara traveled far and wide in search of a worthy guru to initiate him and he found Shri Govindapadacharya, the disciple of the renowned Acharya Gaudapada, on the banks of the Narmada River in central India. In Shri Govindacharya's ashram, he was accepted as a disciple and initiated into the *paramahansa* order of *sannyasa*. Seeing the intellectual acumen of his disciple, the *acharya* asked Adi Shankara to expound the philosophy of Vedanta through commentaries on the principal *Upanishads*, the *Brahma Sutras*, and *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*.

Adi Shankara took leave of his guru and traveled to various holy places in India, composing scores of commentaries, barely a teenager at the time. During his travels, he attracted many notable disciples. These commentaries, called *bhashyas*, stand at the pinnacle of Indian philosophical writing, and have triggered a long tradition of sub-commentaries known as *varttikas*, *tikas* and *tippanis*. Adi Shankaracharya's commentaries are revered and studied by scholars and students even today. In addition, he wrote independent treatises called introductory texts and Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.

Adi Shankara also engaged in debate with leaders of other philosophical schools of thought, becoming celebrated and undefeated. Through his travels and hermitages that grew where he went, he came to establish *mathas*, or monasteries in the four quarters of India. These pilgrim centers were administered by his four foremost disciples and they continue to function today. Their heads have also come to be known as Shankaracharya-s, in honor of their founder.

After his mother's death, he resumed his travels, visiting many holy places, reviving rituals at temples that had fallen into neglect and composing many devotional hymns. By the time Adi Shankara reached the age of 32, he had led a short but eventful life. He retired to the Himalayas and disappeared inside a cave near Kedarnath. This cave is traditionally pointed out as the site of his *samadhi*. Other variations place his last days in various states, including in Maharashtra, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

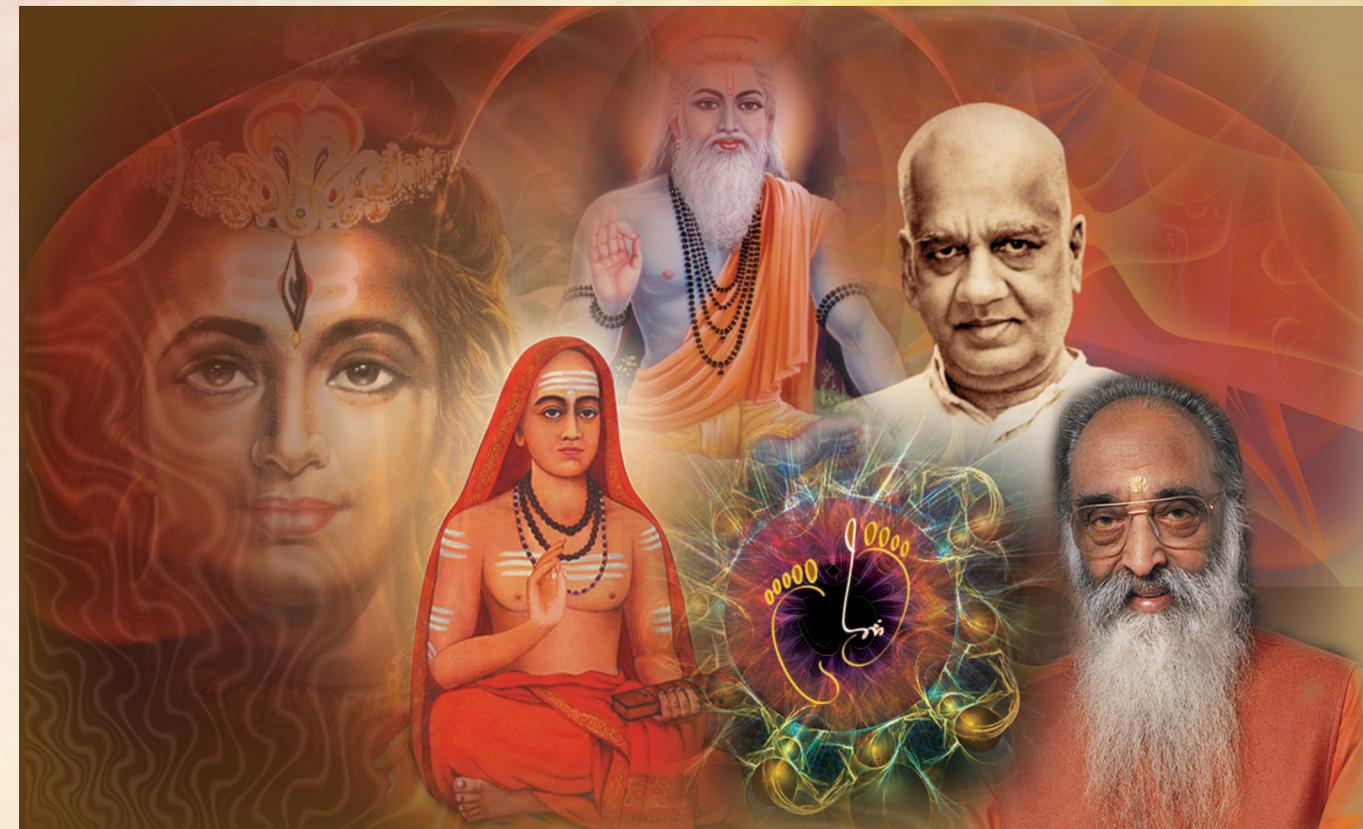
True to the traditions of *sannyasa*, Adi Shankaracharya was a peripatetic monk, who traveled the length and breadth of the country in his short lifetime. His fame spread so far and wide, that various legends are recounted about him from different parts of India. The true *sannyasi*, he lived completely untouched by the fabric of society, so much so, that even the location of Kalady, his birthplace, remained generally unknown for a long time.

# Introduction to Advaita-Prakarana-Manjari

*published by Society of Abidance in Truth*

The revelation of Truth is by the Truth alone, revealing Itself to Itself. This Self-knowledge, ineffable and immutable, is the illuminative spiritual teaching of *Advaita Vedanta*, taught by the wondrous sage Adi Shankara, the great Acharya. Having realized *Brahman* as his own Self, he reveals the Self with perfect clarity, for the liberating benefit of all those who, struggling in *samsara*, yearn for the realization of the supreme Truth, so that they may be eternally happy and at peace.

The teachings by Shri Shankara are of a timeless value, as they deal with the highest wisdom concerning the nature of one's own Self, revealing that if this Self be realized as it truly, innately, it is *Brahman*, without the least differentiation. This, one's true nature, apart from which there is no individual or object, is indivisible, formless, unborn, imperishable, and of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss.



Ignorance regarding the Self is the cause of imagined bondage. Such ignorance, which is of the quality of veiling and projection, manifests as misidentification with what is not one's real identity and attachment to objects, that is, confusion regarding what is real and what is not. Knowledge of the Self alone ends such ignorance, revealing the unreal nature of its forms and of the ignorance itself. If the Knowledge imparted in these teachings of Shri Shankara is fully realized, there remains no illusion or delusion, no object or individual, no creation and no birth, no bondage and no ignorance, no one bound and no one ignorant. *Brahman* alone is, and That you are. That is the sole-existent Reality.

Illusion, being unreal, has no power to sustain or destroy itself. The superimposition of that which is not real, upon that which is real lends seeming sustenance, to that which has never actually come to be. Destruction of illusion can be only by that which is not of the illusion, yet for the homogenous absolute Reality, *Brahman*, which alone is the Self, there is never any such thing as illusion. Therefore, in Truth, there is no creation

of illusion and no destruction of illusion. Nevertheless, the forever unmanifest Reality, which is Knowledge itself, displays itself as the power of that Knowledge, both in terms of its shining, or revelation, and its blissfully liberating nature.

This is the light and power of Shankara's word. What could be more powerful than Reality, Being, and what could be more luminous than Consciousness, which is the Knowledge? As Self-knowledge is not to be delusively imagined to be perceptual, conceptual, or divisible into a triad of knower, knowing, and known, it is non-dual in nature; and its omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience are due to the illimitable, formless, eternal Self, which is One without a second.

Therefore, while the Truth is most eloquently taught in Silence, as declared and exemplified in Shri Ramana Maharshi and in Shri Shankara himself, and as depicted in the form of Dakshinamurti, that same Truth alone, without any diminution, is the meaning, power, and revelation of what has been uttered and written by such a great sage as Adi Shankara.

## NEWS

### CORD Service Project for CM Youth

CORD USA announces a service project for youth in CORD Sidhabari. This is an opportunity for high schoolers enrolled in Chinmaya Bala Vihar to travel to India and volunteer their time serving the under-served. This year's project to CORD Sidhabari, located in the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh, India, is a comprehensive, integrated rural development and women's empowerment program that was initiated in 1985 with Pujya Gurudev's grace and blessings.

Similar service project visits have been successful over recent years and have had dramatic impacts on participants. These visits are also great extracurricular activities for college applications and wonderful, practical exercises that compliment all the years of learning in Chinmaya Bala Vihar.

Admittance to this service visit is on a first-come, first-served basis. The application deadline is May 30, 2011. Download project and application details at [www.cordusa.org/servicevisit2011.zip](http://www.cordusa.org/servicevisit2011.zip). More information about CORD USA and Sidhabari can be found at [www.cordusa.org](http://www.cordusa.org). Questions: contact Vijaya Cherukuri at [vijaya@cordusa.org](mailto:vijaya@cordusa.org), toll free (866) 580-5508.

### Workshop at Piercy for HSU Students

by Akhilesh Menawat

It is always great to see people take their first step into the realm of spirituality. Professor Sara Hart and ten of her students from Humboldt State University, joined Swami Ishwarananda's CHYK retreat at the *Krishnalaya* ashram in Piercy, California, February 11-13, 2011. Swamiji spoke on "Why Spirituality?" comparing spirituality, science, and ritualism, explaining how one must look within oneself for solutions. In his "Brief Introduction to Vedanta," he discussed the subtle concept of the ultimate

Consciousness and how the three *gunas* shape each individual; In the "Art of Meditation," he taught students what meditation truly is and techniques to quiet the mind.

The students, all in their early- to mid-20s, arrived Friday afternoon and left Sunday afternoon. In their two full days of ashram life, they were all open-minded and accepting of everything around them, curious to know the meaning behind every ritual. It was inspiring for the CHYKs to see such interest.



The students, all from the Department of Religious Studies at HSU, showed much awareness in everyday ashram life, along with classroom knowledge that brought forth thought-provoking discussions. Each student came in with a basic understanding of Vedanta and was eager to learn more. When Swamiji first met the students and asked them what they wanted to learn this weekend, he was met with the answer: "Everything!" From that moment on, the weekend was full of discussions, classes, Q&A sessions, and even some clips from Pujya Gurudev's talks on "Logic of Spirituality."

"We are definitely interested in coming back," said one of the students during farewells on Sunday afternoon. Another said, "This is really interesting stuff," as he mulled over the day's activities and all that he had learnt. "It's so true!" exclaimed another, as Swamiji went over the three *gunas* and explained how everything around us is a manifestation of the combination of them.



“I learned a great deal, as, I know, did my students,” said Professor Hart in her e-mail of thanks. “I am so happy to see my students enriched themselves by being here, where Vedanta is practiced and not just lectured!” remarked Prof. Herbrechtsmeier, Department Head at HSU, who visited the students during the weekend.



As Pujya Gurudev has said, “Spirituality is neither the privilege of the poor nor the luxury of the rich. It is the choice of the wise man.” Whether we have studied Vedanta for 40 years or were just exposed to it last weekend, all the attendees were reminded that each person must make the constant choice to follow the right path.

## Mahashivaratri Celebration at Shri Saumyakashi Shivalaya

by Chitra Divakaruni and K. Shivaramakrishnan

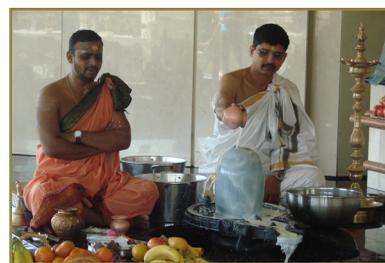
Scores of ardent devotees congregated at the Shri Saumyakashi Shivalaya temple of CM Houston on the evening of Wednesday, March 3, 2011, to observe the holy and auspicious occasion of *Mahashivaratri* with great devotion and celebration.



*Mahashivaratri* is observed every year on the fourteenth day of *Krishna Paksha* (waning moon) in the Hindu month of *Magha*. Traditionally, Hindus fast all day, offer prayers to Lord Shiva in the evening, and meditate all night long. At Shri Saumyakashi Shivalaya, this auspicious occasion began in the morning with *Mahanyasa-purvaka Rudrabhishekam*. It is believed that performing *Rudrabhishekam* bestows prosperity, leads to the fulfillment of all desires, removes negative tendencies, and spreads happiness in life. Devotees, young and old, were deep in meditation as the melody of the chants engulfed the temple. The mood was serene and austere, befitting the occasion. It was a glorious evening with clear skies and a gentle cool breeze as the devotees began to gather around 7 p.m. The majestic temple dome, shaped like a *Shivalingam* glowed in the brilliant evening light. The event was organized impeccably with attention given to every last detail under the watchful guidance of CM Houston’s Acharyas Gaurang and Darshana Nanavaty, and the tireless efforts of numerous volunteers.



As the devotees, adorned in colorful traditional Indian clothes, entered the temple, they were seated in an orderly fashion in the main hall. They brought flowers and fruits to offer to Lord Shiva while the continuous melodious chanting of the manta “*Om Namah Shivaya*” resonated in the hall and set the mood. Before long, the hall was full and the devotion in the air was palpable.



With the customary precision that one has come to expect at Chinmaya Mission Houston, the festivities began promptly as scheduled, and the priest’s mellifluous and powerful chanting rang through the air as he began the *shodasha-upachara* (16-step) *puja*. Several devotees accompanied in the hymn recitations of *Rudram* and *Chamakam*. The *abhishekam* of the *Shivalingam* was performed with five different *dravyas*: milk, yogurt, honey, ghee, sugar, and water. It is said that each *dravya* blesses with a unique quality: Milk blesses with purity and piety; yogurt is for prosperity and progeny; honey is for sweet speech; ghee is for victory; sugar is for happiness; water is for purity and cleansing.



After chanting *Rudram*, the devotees chanted *Durga Suktam*, *Shri Suktam*, *Purusha Suktam*, and *Manyu Suktam*. When the screen came down, the priest offered *alankara* with *vibhuti*, *chandana*, *kumkum*, and flower garlands. As devotees waited patiently for the screen to come up, they sang captivating *bhajans*. In due time, everyone received the divine *darshan* of Lord Shiva in full splendor. The evening *puja* activities concluded with *aarti*, *mantra-pushpam*, and *ashtavadhana seva*, which includes the chanting of verses from the four Vedas, and *sangita aradhana*. The sweet voices of two Bala Vihar students filled the air with a beautiful rendition of the Tyagaraja *kirtana*, “*Shiva Ena Radha*.”

The temple was transformed into a *dhyana mandir* as many devotees stayed back for silent meditation and contemplation until midnight. The lights were dimmed, and a peaceful and blissful atmosphere pervaded, with the soft, continuous chant of *Om Namah Shivaya* playing in the background. At midnight, *maha-aarti* was offered.

A continuous stream of devotees, over 2,000 of them, visited the temple to seek Lord Shiva’s blessings. The highlight of this year’s celebration was the *kshirabhishekam* offered by all devotees to the *utsava-lingam*. While *Rudrabhishekam* was performed in the temple by the priest, all the devotees offered milk *abhishekam* to the *utsava-lingam* installed on the lower level. The beautifully decorated hall resonated with the devotion of one and all as they made their offerings absorbed in the single-pointed thought of the name of Lord Shiva.

*Mahashivaratri* continued on to Saturday and Sunday, when three beautiful *maha-mrtyunjaya homas* were offered in the hall of *Chinmaya Prabha*. The fire ceremony on the stage captured the attention of a hall full of devotees who watched and listened in pin-drop silence. All devotees were given black sesame seeds and flattened rice to offer in the *homa* and reap its benefits. This sacred *homa* is said to bring health and protection on the physical level, peace of mind and fearlessness on the mental level, and deep spiritual understanding on the intellectual level. In this *homam*, the sacred *tryambaka mantra* is repeated 108 times. The *homam* ended with *aarti* and *prasadam*.

## Insightful Development Workshop

by Louis Medina

An insightful workshop on “Personal Development” was organized for nearly 70 hopeful seekers on April 30, 2011, in a joint effort between CM Bakersfield and Bakersfield Memorial Hospital.

Permeating the four-hour mind-body health workshop at Memorial’s Founder’s Hall was the wisdom of Swami Ishwarananda (CM Los Angeles), and Eric Moss (drug, alcohol, and suicide counselor).

CM Bakersfield President, Dr. Anil Mehta, opened the conference by pointing out an important spiritual truth: The problems of the world (war, crime, pollution, waste) can only be alleviated as people begin to take control over their individual lives to affect positive change in society around them.

Eric Moss followed Dr. Mehta's welcome and introduced some practical metaphorical models geared toward healthy goal setting. One was a wheel-pie model with six slices of personal development: mental, physical, social, family, financial, and spiritual. If one of these areas is not in balance, he told the audience, the wheel won't be round anymore and one's journey through life will be rough. He then introduced a ladder model on goal setting with manageable steps for personal objectives. Swamiji's presentation provided thought-provoking insights for those preoccupied with problems in life. "We are not aware of how long we remain preoccupied," he said, "and those who are preoccupied cannot have personal development." Swamiji's advice was in-depth yet simple, drawing from Pujya Gurudev's teachings: "The individual who has mastered himself can master the world."

Swamiji was quick to warn that the ego should always be in check. "We should not hesitate to seek help if we want to achieve personal development . . . but don't have ego about seeking help and don't show ego when offering help," he said. "True believers of God do everything with faith in the Lord and their work is in the spirit of gratitude."

Swamiji's guided meditation session followed, and after that, a Q&A session, during which it became apparent that drug and alcohol abuse is a big scourge in modern society and a disruptive force in the lives of the family members.

One of the most fruitful results of this collaborative event was the laying of a foundation for possible joint workshops with Swamiji and Eric Moss in the future, including some geared for youth.

## CM Princeton Mahabharata Show

by Pavani Avva, Uma Sarwadnya, Keethana Thekhalli, Nina Sajankila, Ananya Srinivasan, Bharat Kanwar, Vidya Akavoor, Sanjana Pemmaraju

The Chinmaya Bala Vihar sixth and eighth grade students of CM Princeton proudly presented an intriguing play entitled, "Scenes

from the Mahabharata" on Sunday February 27, 2011. The play was well received and applauded for the outstanding performances that were beautifully choreographed and scripted by various Chinmaya Bala Vihar teachers.



The first presentation of Ekalavya's *guru-bhakti* was portrayed by sixth graders, wherein a tribal boy, Ekalavya, confessed that he shot arrows so masterfully because his guru had blessed with such teachings. Ekalavya said his guru had never actually taught him, but had made a statue of Dronacharya, making him his guru, learning through meditation and self-discipline. Dronacharya asked for Ekalavya's right thumb as *guru dakshina*, to which Ekalavya readily agreed, exemplifying true devotion to the teacher.

The set for Draupadi's *svayamvara* was in itself enchanting, with stunning, colorful thrones and costumes. The *matsya-yantra*, or revolving golden fish on a pole, was created by the students with the clever use of ropes and levers. The *yantra* was the highlight of the scene, inviting many suitors who tried, but could not lift the bow. Finally, Arjuna, disguised as a *brahmana*, lifted the bow to shoot the eye of the revolving target, and won the hand of the beautiful princess Draupadi.

In interviews of select audience members, they appreciated the detail given to all the costumes, sets, and props. One said, "I liked it when Arjuna did a cartwheel."

## Hanuman Chalisa and Holi with Swami Prakashananda

by Madhu Sharma

CM Los Angeles's Chinmaya Bala Vihar groups in Conejo Valley and Agoura Hills welcomed Swami Prakashananda (CM

Trinidad) and enjoyed his enlightening talk on "Why Chant *Hanuman Chalisa*" on Saturday, March 19, 2011.



Swamiji opened his talk with a few questions to the audience of 80 children and adults. He spoke on the children's day-to-day experiences and helped relate them to the teachings in *Hanuman Chalisa*. Swamiji used fast food, cartoon, and technology references to create analogies and connect with the children. His humor and simple yet profound teachings kept the children, as well as adults, engaged throughout the talk. Swamiji helped everyone understand the meaning of select *Hanuman Chalisa* verses and the benefits of chanting *Hanuman Chalisa*. These included increased joy, purity and intelligence; sense control and right decision-making; selfless service; cheer, dynamism, and positive energy; and the removal of fear ("our fear of darkness, ghosts, and goblins will go away").



Swamiji's keen sense of humor, observations of daily life, easy rapport with the audience, and delivery of wisdom in simple words mesmerized everyone. In just one hour, he touched everyone's heart and opened their mind so as to better understand the depth of the teachings in *Hanuman Chalisa* and give everyone a cherished and memorable experience. The session concluded with *aarti*, *prasad*, and lunch.

During his visit, Swamiji also spoke to the San Fernando Bala Vihar on the symbolism of the burning of Holika. Through the story of the renowned child-devotee, Prahlada, Swamiji taught various principles of devotion and Vedanta, including the power of God's name, and the burning of desires with the power of knowledge. Just as Holika got destroyed between the fire of knowledge and the power of devotion, Swamiji said our desires and ignorance can be burned away by the same. The event was attended by almost 100 devotees and concluded with Swamiji's melodious *bhajans*, *aarti*, and *prasadam*.

## CM Vancouver on the Air

by Jasmina Jankovic

Chinmaya Mission Vancouver's classes are being enjoyed by a bigger spiritual family that finds in these classes a fulfillment for the heart and intellect. Chinmaya Bala Vihar and classes on Vedanta and Sanskrit chanting are conducted weekly. Jaya Muzumdar, who returned last year after completing the two-year residential Vedanta Course at *Sandeepany Sadhanalaya*, was invited to speak on *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* on a local radio show. She also gave a talk on *bhakti* at the local temple in Surrey and was interviewed on a TV show, in which she spoke about Pujya Guruji's upcoming *jnana yajna* in Vancouver.

## Love and Peace in LA

by Madhu Sharma

It was with full attention and eagerness that the children and parents of CM Los Angeles's Northridge Bala Vihar listened to a tale with a moral message by Acharya Vimal Chaitanya (CM Rio Grande Region) on February 6, 2011.

In the story, a young girl from a village at the forest's edge gets a marriage proposal from a tiger. The tiger even succumbs to his father-in-law's demands to remove the tiger's teeth and claws. At last, the once proud, strong tiger is made a slave to the cunning father-in-law. Thus did the tiger, in his eagerness to marry the village maiden, give up his teeth (sense of enjoyment of the work) and his paws (positive work ethics).

In the same way, said Vimalji, when work is not done with the correct attitude of surrender, when work is done with anticipation for the fruits of the action, we become enslaved and controlled by the world. Vimalji encouraged the children to adopt the attitude of a *karma yogi* by physically exerting oneself to do work, mentally focusing energy on the work, and intellectually adopting morals and ethics when performing the work. He said the most important aspect is to have *prasada buddhi*, so that no matter what the outcome, we always cheerfully accept it and keep striving.



Vimalji also spoke to the adults on “Love and Peace” as the two fundamental ingredients of happiness, namely, the search to find peace and the need to be loved. He said we struggle with the world and attempt to find peace during the temporary absence of our troubles, while unlimited peace lies within us. Similarly, we all wish to have love, but seek it in conditional relationships, rather than with the unconditional Infinite. He said to engender caring and compassion without expecting anything in return, *sadhana* is needed. He added how *dhana* (wealth) should not lead to excess and overindulgence, and how the body and mind should be sharpened by engaging in *tapas* and *yajna*, so that we learn to work with the attitude of *karma yogis*.

## Holi Celebrations at CM Phoenix

by Yamini Arora

CM Phoenix has been growing steadily over the last few years, now standing at a little over 80 families from around the valley. On March 20, 2011, over 180 CM family members

celebrated *Holi* with great enthusiasm in a park. The celebrations kicked off at 9:30 a.m. and friends and family were greeted with *Holi* music and beautifully laid out *gulaal*. Within one hour, everyone was as colorful as could be. The day's games began with an icebreaker wherein four teams with captains were formed: *Pichkaaris*, *Gulaals*, *Gubbaare*, and *Gujjias*. This set the stage for the subsequent games for all age groups—a *Holi* quiz, tug-of-war, and a balloon relay.



The *Holi* quiz tested everyone's knowledge about *Holi* and its associated rituals across the different parts of India. Teams displayed their strength in a few rounds of tug-of-war and children were thrilled to have this round dedicated especially to them. The balloon relay race with children and adults took some effort and demonstration, but when the word “Go!” was shouted, there was no turning back. Teams in pairs sprinted with deflated balloons, inflated and tied them, and finally raced back three-legged to fill another 20 balloons. In less than 15 minutes of strategizing, cheering, falling, and confusion, the teams were done with their 20-balloon bunch, which the younger children were happy to start playing with thereafter.



Finally, all attendees broke into different groups for age-appropriate activities and games. These included “Duck Duck *Holi* Hai,” “What Day Is It,” finger-painting, volleyball, and *antaakshari*. By the time the activities were done, everyone

had built up a big enough appetite for the delicious lunch awaiting them—a perfect ending to an enjoyable celebration. Volunteers who helped organize the event put in their best and participants made the efforts worthwhile with their enthusiasm.



## Festivals Celebrated at CM New York

by Runjhun Saklani

The Long Island Bala Vihar of CM New York celebrated the *Mahashivaratri* festival on Sunday, March 6, 2011. The program started with the chanting of *Lingashtakam* and the *Mrtyunjaya* mantra. The Bala Vihar teachers methodically explained the significance of *Mahashivaratri* and symbolism of Lord Shiva to the children. Everyone chanted the 108 names of Lord Shiva as each child offered milk *abhishekam* to the *Shivalingam*. The program concluded with *aarti*, the Chinmaya Mission pledge, and *prasadam*.



The Long Island and Manhattan Bala Vihars of CM New York celebrated *Rama Navami* on April 9 and 10, respectively. The programs began with opening prayers and the chanting of *Rama-nama*. The 108-name *archana* of Lord Rama was



conducted under guidance of Acharya Krishna Moorthy. The program concluded with *bhajans*, *aarti*, and *prasadam*.

## CM Houston Hosts Arts Alliance

by Uma Aggarwal; photos by Jay Deshmukh

East met West in a day of joyful culture and thought-provoking philosophy when CM Houston (CMH) welcomed over 150 non-Indian members of the Houston Arts Alliance to an experience of “Sacred Spaces, Sacred Songs: Insight On Sight,” on Saturday, February 26, 2011, at the *Chinmaya Prabha* ashram. The curiosity that brought this enthusiastic group was met with a warm respectful welcome, a prime hallmark of Chinmaya and Indian culture.



The guests were first introduced to the beautiful shrine at the temple, *Shri Saumyakashi Shivalaya*, where they participated with awe in the guided *puja*. Divinity filled the air with the music of CMH's children's orchestra and the Vedic chanting of the temple priest.

In the *Chinmaya Smrti* hall, the visitors were spellbound as they were treated to a comprehensive multimedia show with a traditional *bharatanatyam* performance, a melodious bhajan, and a colorful *raas* performance, all transporting one to India's rich heartlands. “A Day in the Life of a Hindu” was a Chinmaya Bala Vihar presentation introducing the wisdom of simple prayers that guide them in activities, from waking and studying to eating and sleeping. The guests were also bedazzled by the diversity of



India's regional costumes that Chinmaya Bala Vihar parents displayed.

With this insightful yet simple introduction to Vedanta, Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty spoke on the true unity of human thought amid diverse cultures, and got the audience thinking about the fundamental questions of life's purpose, what happiness is, and the glory of selfless work, drawing ideas from the immortal *Bhagavad Gita*.



As the formal presentations concluded, the group was inspired by, and greatly appreciative of, the arts and crafts display that showcased the Indian art of *rangoli* and *diyas*. The show ended with an Indian taste fest where everyone enjoyed savory Indian snacks. The success of this sacred experience of interfaith and cultural understanding was evident as the group marveled at each aspect of the day and expressed how the *Gita* transcended cultures with its relevance.

## Successful CORD Walk in LA

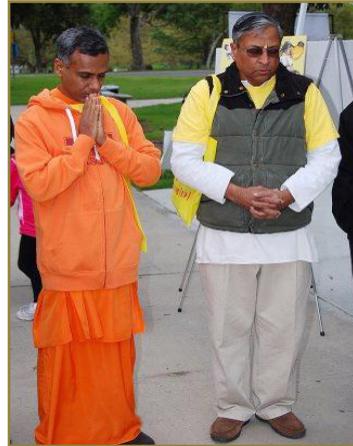
by Rusheel Nayak

CM Los Angeles held its annual CORD walkathon at Mile Square Park in Fountain Valley on Sunday, March 20, 2011. Volunteers set this year's goal for the walkathon to not only raise funds, but also increase participation and CORD awareness. The event succeeded and exceeded expectations on all counts, with



over 200 young and old walkers participating, and over \$15,000 in funds raised.

The morning of the walk was extremely cold, and ominous dark clouds dotted the Southern California skies, but enthusiastic and undeterred volunteers were determined to conduct the walkathon, come rain or shine. In keen volunteer spirit, everyone prepared for the event and the arrival of visiting acharya, Swami Prakashananda (CM Trinidad), and resident acharya, Acharya Mahadevan.



Both *acharyas* led the walkers promptly at 9 a.m. after reciting a short prayer. The motivated participants followed, carrying bright yellow "I love CORD" bags. The walkers had barely set off on their course, when they were greeted with rain showers. Quickly, umbrellas were pulled out and jacket hoods were donned, without curbing the enthusiasm of the participants and with plenty of smiling faces.

At the walk, participants also learned about nutrition from Vidya Kudva, a nutritionist, who talked about the importance of eating healthy foods and how a traditional Indian meal can contribute to a healthy lifestyle. In addition, Vidya Venkatesh demonstrated and taught the *Surya Namaskar*.

A highlight of the walkathon was the raffle. The crowd waited with anticipation for the winning tickets to be drawn by the *acharyas*. Volunteers broke out in a chorus of "C-O-R-D!" exhibiting their passion and commitment to the social service project. Madhukar Patel of the San Gabriel chapter won the iPod, and Armaan Patel of the Tustin chapter won the iPad.

After the banners had been put away and the numbers had been tallied, the feeling that the walkathon had brought a diverse number of

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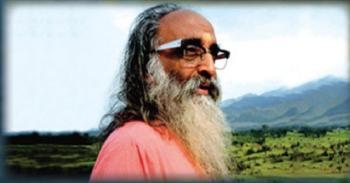
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- Aug. 12-14, Washington DC: All You Need Is Love (electric.relaxation226@gmail.com, 301-300-9909)
- Aug. 26-28, Boston: Efficiency through Spirituality (sailajanjoshi@gmail.com, 508-369-6174)
- Dec. 19-Jan. 7, India: Chinmaya Inspiration Yatra (lifeseva@gmail.com, 905-356-4451)

people together for a common and uplifting cause was satisfying to all.



The author participated in the youth CORD service project at Thamaraiykkam in Tamil Nadu, in 2009. The group worked on a wide array of projects including tutoring children, helping at the medical clinic, and planting fruit trees for villagers.

## Chinmaya Anandam CORD Initiative

by P.N. Kannan (CORD Director, Thamaraiykkam)

To provide a platform for the uniform development of the differently abled, CORD Thamaraiykkam recently formed a “Chinmaya Anandam” group to help physically or mentally challenged village men and women. The program was launched on January 23, 2011 with R. Silambarasan as facilitator, who recently completed the six-month Chinmaya Samaj Sevak Course and is himself physically challenged. Silambarasan motivated 26 persons with disabilities (PWDs) to join *Chinmaya Anandam*, and more are expected to join.



Regular savings, suitable income generation activities, skill development programs, and joint efforts with CORD to obtain maximum benefits from government programs, are some of the activities planned.

A screening camp for persons with mobility disabilities was organized at a government village school by Dr. Sunder, a former CHYK and an eminent orthodontist from Chennai, and his team. A husband and wife of visiting rehabilitation specialists from Seattle, Washington, USA also participated in the camp.

## Mahashivaratri at Chinmaya Vrindavan

Report submitted by CM Princeton

*Mahashivaratri* falls on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the dark fortnight in the *Magha* month, and is a sacred event to Hindus worldwide. Devotees observe the auspicious day with an early morning and a holy bath. They visit the temple to offer prayers to Lord Shiva. Fasting is generally observed throughout the day, or is broken after the evening *puja*.

This year, CM Princeton observed *Shivaratri* on March 2, at the *Chinmaya Vrindavan* ashram. The day began early with a *Ganapati homam*. The *trikala Rudrabhishekams* were performed at 8 a.m., 12 noon, and 6:30 p.m. The evening *puja* commenced with *bhajans* by the Chinmaya Swaranjali group. *Ekadasha Rudrabhishekam* was also performed to worship the 11 distinct forms of Lord Shiva. The *abhishekam* was offered with milk, yogurt, honey, sugar, fruit juice, turmeric, sandalwood, and *vibhuti*, while *Rudram* was chanted throughout.



Devotees chanted “*Om Namah Shivaya*” until midnight, after which the resident *acharya*, Swami Shantananda, spoke on the significance of *Mahashivaratri*.



## Gandhi, Gathering, and Gita in Trinidad

Report submitted by CM Trinidad

### Gandhi Memorial Lecture

CM Trinidad held its annual Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture on Sunday, February 13, 2011. The address was delivered by the Honorable Malay Misha, High Commissioner of India to Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Misha spoke on "Women as a Force for Social Change," emphasizing the prominent roles that India's women freedom fighters played during British rule.

The High Commissioner's lecture evolved into an inspirational message that spoke volumes to the audience of Trinidad and Tobago, which recently elected its first female Prime Minister.

The evening lecture included participation of members of the Indian High Commission, Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Cooperation, and other diplomats. The academic circle was also well represented, with professors from related disciplines at the University of Trinidad and Tobago and the University of the West Indies. CM Trinidad also presented a documentary that included a brief biography on Mahatma Gandhi's life, film clips of him, and *bhajans* that were close to his heart. The *bhajans* were rendered by the students of the Chinmaya Vidyalaya primary schools and high school.

The remembrance of, and homage to, Mahatma Gandhi holds a special significance to CM Trinidad, as it was on Gandhiji's birth anniversary that this Chinmaya Mission center came to life. CM Trinidad's programs dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, such as the *Shanti Yatra* (Peace March) and the Memorial Lecture, are designed to inspire each *sadhaka* (spiritual seeker) to reflect on his or her personal life, to show and encourage seekers on how to make strides toward a more peaceful existence.

### School Fundraising Banquet

The soothing and scintillating sounds of the *Naada Sangama* Steel Pan Orchestra emanated from CM Trinidad's beautifully decorated

multipurpose ashram hall on December 30, 2010. This was indeed one of the many highlights CM Trinidad's annual banquet, a fundraiser for the local Chinmaya Vidyalayas (pre-k, primary, and high schools). For many CM Family and community members, December 30 has become synonymous with this banquet, which is a well-patronized social gathering enjoyed by all.

The evening's distinguished guest was the Minister and Member of Parliament, Rudranath Indarsingh. Over 400 guests were treated to a sumptuous Indian dinner and many exuberantly attested that the star dish was the *kulfi* dessert prepared by CM Trinidad's resident *acharya*, Swami Prakashananda.

### Gita Symposium

"*Karma Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita*" was the theme of CHYK Trinidad's Gita Symposium in December 2010, commemorating *Gita Jayanti*. After a *Gita parayana* (chanting of all verses) in the recently inaugurated *Radha-Krishna Mandir*, research papers from Mission and CHYK members from as far as Japan, were presented. Attendees included members from the Hindu Students' Council of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Movement for the Encouragement of Dharmic Services.

Discussions stemming from pertinent and relevant concerns on the theme were guided by an esteemed panel, comprised of Swami Prakashananda (CM Trinidad), Ravi Bharati, and Professor Vijay Narayansingh. For the last six years, the symposium has been an invaluable forum for research, dialogue, and inquiry based on the *Bhagavad Gita*.

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