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Love of God is the highest and the best means to man's happiness here and hereafter. This is why the man afflicted with sorrows, the man of curiosity, the man who desires wealth, and the man of right knowledge turn to Him. . . . The practice of bhakti requires no material wealth like cow and gold, no stupendous effort to control the activity of the mind, no exceptional powers of discrimination. Without a touch of devotion, all the three other methods become dry, dull, insipid, and vain. . . . The man who takes refuge in God with faith and devotion is never cast out of the path of earthly joy or Liberation. Intoxicated with divine love, he loses consciousness of external and internal suffering because in him there is no longer the identification of the Self with the body. Taking shelter in God is, therefore, the best means to either of these ends [of earthly joy or Liberation].

Swami Tapovanam Maharaj

Although mere meditation upon the Absolute in itself can give a subjective experience of the Self, the *jīvanmukta* state cannot be peaceful and tranquil without the firm hold on the life-belt of a staunch and unshakable love (*prema*) and devotion (*sraddha*) for the Lord of the heart. Mere Vedantic perfection does not make a man fit to live in the community of men and work in the field of *avidyā* (ignorance) to redeem his generation from the mental and intellectual dustbin into which it has fallen. . . . The great Master will have to face different types of challenges in which he can easily find his equilibrium and poise only when he is efficiently guided and continuously rejuvenated by his limitless devotion to the Lord of his heart.

Swami Chinmayananda

Love for the Self is the most important and interesting fact of life. Unfortunately, we do not know our own true Self, and therein lies the problem. We consider ourselves as a finite, perishing entity, the BMI (body-mind-intellect) and suffer. This identification with the finite makes us extremely selfish. But suppose, one was to realize that the Self in me is the Self in all. Then, there would be no trace of selfishness—only love for all. This realization releases us from all bondages even while acting in the world. . . . Knowing that the Self in me is the Self in all, one becomes fearless. He lives like a king (maharaja) and is the master of all circumstances (swami).

Swami Tejomayananda

SPIRITUAL TRAILS

Truthfulness in Speech

by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

Speech in man is a powerful vehicle, and it reflects the intellectual caliber, the mental discipline, and the physical self-control of the speaker. Unless one is well-formed at all these levels, his words will have no force, no magic, to convince and inspire others. Speech, the almost constant activity of most people is an outlet through which the greatest amount of one's energies is wasted. To control and conserve this unproductive waste of energy through constant speech would provide a great inner wealth, indeed, for the seeker.

In an effort to control speech and conserve wasted energy, one need not observe a self-ruining, disgustingly irritating, silence (*mauna*). The power of speech must be used judiciously for integrating the personality of the seeker. There is an art to using this power of speech in the right way, so that it is beneficial to the aspirant as well as to others.

The technique of employing speech in the most profitable way is indicated in the following stanza from the *Bhagavad Gītā*. This stanza clearly suggests that austerity (*tapas*) is not a diabolic act of breaking and destroying oneself; it is a benevolent scheme for remaking and rediscovering oneself. Furthermore, this stanza is complete in its explanation of the technique. The first line indicates the channels of economy possible in the daily expenditure of energy. The second line shows the avenues of investment wherein the seeker can expect to gain for himself a greater dividend of a fuller joy. Both the schemes so suggested completely indicate "austerity in speech."

Speech which causes no excitement, and is truthful, pleasant, and beneficial, and the practice of the study of the Vedas—these constitute austerity of speech. (*Gītā*17.15)

Speech that Causes No Shock—Right Expenditure

The words spoken must be such that they bring no disturbance to others; they should be neither irritating nor obscene. The real touchstone for knowing whether or not we are speaking the right words is the reaction expressed unmistakably on the faces of the listeners. Generally, however, people speak with their eyes shut, or even when they are open, they are as though blind because they do not see the effect of their words on the listeners. Some people have failed in their efforts in life, losing all their friends and relatives, merely because of the bitterness of their tongues and the harshness of their words. Yet true, agreeable, and beneficial (*satyam-priyam-hitam*) words uttered to express the truth in a pleasant style, for the blessing of others, constitute speech that will bless the speaker himself.

Much energy is wasted in the telling of a lie, and this waste is avoidable if one adopts the policy of truthfulness in his expression. Words that harmoniously bring forth the exact shade of ideas in the intellect are "truthful" expressions, and those that deliberately distort the

intentions and meanings of the intellect are called “falsehood.” In the name of truthfulness, one can become a disagreeable person in society—an unacceptable practice in a seeker of Truth. The *Gītā* accepts only that speech as truthful, which is also agreeable. Through unsaid words the Lord’s Song seems to say that when a truth is disagreeable to others, the speaker is required to maintain a discreet silence!

It is not sufficient that the words in the speech should be honest and agreeable, for they should also be beneficial. Speech should not be wasted. Unprofitable talking is a great drain upon man’s energies. Talk only when you want to express agreeable ideas of permanent values that will be useful to the listeners. Those who are respecting these qualities in their day-to-day vocal activities can be considered as men performing “austerity in speech.”

Regular Study of the Scriptures—Right Investment

Control of speech certainly does not mean entering into the state of inert and lifeless silence of the grave. Investing the energies of speech in spiritually self-profitable and self-creative channels of endeavor is considered by Krishna as austerity in speech. *Svādhyāya* is a technical term used in our sacred literature to indicate the careful study of and deep reflections upon the theme of the scriptures. The vital energy so economized in daily life by speaking only that which is beneficial, agreeable, and truthful is to be invested in chanting, reflecting, and meditating over the mantras of the Upanishads and other scriptures.

Yajna: The Ritual of Sacrifice by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

*Talk on Purusha Sūktam, Mantras 6-8, June 3, 2014;
transcription by David Brown and Lynne Matous*

Ultimately, the ritual of sacrifice, or yajna, in its deepest, most spiritual sense, can be seen as worshipping the Lord, and giving up our sense of possession and attachments as a sacrifice to the Lord. It is the mystic’s view of the observable universe, in which there is only *Purusha*, the inimitable One without a second.

Mantra 6: “When the gods invoked *Purusha* [the supreme Self] (in the beginning), they considered Him as their very oblation, the spring season as ghee, the summer season as fuel, and the autumn season as the grains needed for the offering.”

The term *yajña* has more than one meaning. It is the offering of an oblation to God into the sacrificial fire, and it is making the offering as “not mine, not mine.” In yajna, there are these two aspects—one is to honor and worship the Lord, and the other is to sacrifice and give up our sense of possession and attachment and our selfish, self-centered ego.

When we love someone, we are willing to sacrifice for that person. Love expresses as sacrifice; we sacrifice something to express our love for our beloved. Even if we are busy, we will make some time for that person. Only if we are willing to sacrifice what we value—for some it is time, money, etc.—can we say that we worship, that we love.

As described in Mantra 6, what happened is that the hearts of the devas were filled with bhakti, or devotion for God. Therefore, they conducted a yajna. They offered to God and only God, the supreme Self—*Purushēṇa havishā*. He was their oblation. This means the Lord alone has manifested in all forms. If they worshipped the Lord, then all they could offer could come only from the Lord. “O Lord, what I am offering to You already belongs to You.”

Sometimes a devotee would give Pujya Gurudev a flower from the ashram garden, and he would smile and say that this is yajna—giving back what is already His. I can say, “O Lord, all I want is to worship You, but there is nothing that is not already Yours!” Father’s Day celebration is one of my favorite examples for this. Children take money from their father to buy a gift for him, and say, “I love you, Dad.” The father is very happy and tells everyone, “What a beautiful gift my child has given me!” Just as the child proudly shows off his iPhone or his iPad, and the father says, “iPaid!”

The devas thus worshipped God by taking whatever was available and offering it as a sacrificial yajna. This is what we are doing as well. The devas considered the spring season as the sacrificial ghee; the summer season as the fuel; and the autumn season that comes after the rains as the offering of grains. All of these offerings require the appearance of Time. The total mind of the cosmos is represented symbolically here, for only when the mind appears does the time factor appear. All appearances thus emerge into the time-space framework. All the sacrificial rituals conducted by the devas were at the level of mind only; so they considered the spring as the ghee, the summer as the fuel, and the autumn as the grains.

Purusha Sūktam is to be understood in two ways—one is as a ritual and the other is as *upāsanā*, or devotional worship, which becomes a form of meditation. We can see that the whole world is nothing but the effect of *Paramātmā*, the Lord. The Lord alone is appearing as the effect, which merges into the cause.

One aspect of devotion is the awareness that the Lord alone is and I offer all to the Lord (*Purusha*). The other aspect is that all effects are nothing other than the cause, and the cause and effects merge into the supreme Self that includes all.<

Aham and *idam*, or the sense of I-ness and my-ness, are dissolved in this yajna sacrifice, as stated in the third chapter of *Bhagavad Gītā*: “The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice (yajna). Do thou, therefore, o son of Kunti, perform action for that sake [of yajna alone], free from all attachment (3.9). With this [yajna], cherish the devas, and may those devas cherish you in return. Thus mutually cherishing each other, you shall attain the highest good” (3.11).

When the whole world came into being, the world was created with the spirit of yajna. It is said, through this yajna may you prosper! Only when people have this yajna spirit of worshipping the Lord, by sacrificing their petty selfishness, will there be real prosperity. This was the original spirit of yajna. Read the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, in which it says that this yajna will become a wish-fulfilling cow for you! When you read *Purusha Sūktam* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*, you will find many wonderful pointers.

The devas, who came into manifestation with pure minds, worshipped the Lord with what was available to them. They realized that what was available to them was nothing but the Lord in

another form. The rituals themselves are further detailed in the *karma kāṇḍa* of the Vedas. But when we read these stanzas, they are not clear to us, because we are not performing rituals in Vedic form. The next mantra depicts the Vedic form of rituals.

Mantra 7: “For this yajna, the devas appointed seven places of fire and created 21 kinds of fuel in all. The very Lord whom the Devas desired to invoke with their yajna—that very *Prajāpati*—was tied to the sacrificial post as the animal offering.”

There are many kinds of yajnas in existence. In this mantra, it is said there are seven places of fire, a priest to conduct the yajna, householders, and so forth. We need to remember, however, that even though the many details and specifics are not given in this mantra, the ritual itself is performed in the mind only. The seven places of fire are the two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, and one mouth. The flames of the fire represent the capacities of these sense organs to see, smell, hear, and taste. The oblation offerings are symbolic of all the colors, forms, sounds, smells, and tastes the sense organs perceive. In essence, the sense organs become the seven fireplaces; the oblations are all the different kinds of fuel, or the experiences that take place during the sacrificial yajna.

So, now, whenever we see something very beautiful with our eyes, we can inquire into whether it is our eyes that feel happiness or the “I” that feels happiness. Even though the “I” experiences happiness as an oblation through the eyes, who experiences this happiness? It is Consciousness (the supreme Self). What we thus understand is that this *Ātma-svarūpa* (Self alone) is shining. The fireplaces are there and all the oblations are being offered. We do not simply enjoy all these pleasures, but offer them to the Lord, knowing that all, in truth, is His. This way, the perception of all objects becomes our yajna.

And what is this *Purusha* described as tied to the sacrificial post? It is said in the past there were animal sacrifices. In present day, sacrificing animals is not considered a good thing. But what was really meant to be sacrificed even then was animalism. To be sacrificed was sensuality, which focuses on physical appetites and neglects the spiritual. Animalism is in our human nature and this animalism should be sacrificed. However, when people are not mentally refined, they have the idea of actual animal sacrifice.

But some have said that if the entire scripture was understood properly, then everything can be accepted as a potential sacrifice, because it is said that any animal that is sacrificed for the sake of that yajna will attain heaven. In another example, when a nation is at war with another nation, it is a yajna in which the soldiers give up their lives as a sacrifice for their country.

We see that to achieve anything of value, there always has to be some sacrifice. To gain the freedom of a nation from foreign rule, there has to be sacrifice. To preserve that freedom, there has to be sacrifice. Even parents in bringing up their children have to sacrifice. Without sacrifice nothing happens. If people are not able to sacrifice, then nothing of value can be achieved. So, in the rituals in which sacrifice is given, such as a yajna, it is said that the animal *jīva*, when released from its body, attains heaven. Just as it is said that soldiers who sacrifice their life for their country are honored and attain *vīra svarga*, or heavenly state, as well.

Ultimately, the meaning of tying the *Purusha* to the sacrificial post says that in order to ensure

the prosperity of the whole world, the Lord sacrificed Himself. Consider the ordinary example of someone who wants to become an industrialist. He has to construct the entire infrastructure himself. He has to appoint many different employees as officers to manage the business. They are grateful to him for their jobs, but later on, when problems arise, they take them to the industrialist and ask his help to solve them. That's where "the buck stops." Then the industrialist wonders why he started all this work. The person who starts the business becomes the one who is asked to make all the sacrifices. This industrialist has to be completely devoted to the success of the enterprise in order to ensure that it continues. Originally he may have worked eight or nine hours a day, but if he starts his own business thinking he will gain freedom and free time, he soon finds himself 25 hours a day! In the beginning there are no profits, so even his pay has to be sacrificed to pay others. And even these employees come to the boss to get their problems solved—another form of sacrifice. Thus, the industrialist sacrifices himself in his yajna for the sake of his vision and his employees. In the *Gītā*, the Lord says if He does not work tirelessly, the whole world will perish. The Lord gives up, or sacrifices, Himself for this goal.

The points can thus be summarized as follows: 1) In order to attain the goal of prosperity in the world, someone has to make the sacrifice, even an animal. 2) Only the animalistic tendencies in our minds are to be sacrificed so that we may grow spiritually. As Pujya Gurudev has noted in his commentary on this mantra, the higher level of understanding that *Purusha* Itself is sacrificed is to dedicate our mind completely to the Lord alone. This is the real sacrifice. Earlier, in Mantra 6, we saw that in making an offering to the Lord, all that was offered was already His as it is.

Mantra 8: "The first-born *Purusha* was offered as an oblation to the sacred Fire, and by this divine act, the gods, celestials, and rishis all became victorious."

Here, the term yajna refers to the worship of the Lord. The worshipful *Purusha*, or Self, becomes the offering that all the gods or devas worship. Who all worship Him? The great rishis, who are the seers of the mantra, all the many categories of devas who have attained to godhood due to their sadhana. From this great yajna did all beings come into existence. And they worshipped the Lord, the *Purusha*, by offering Him to Himself. All these beings who belonged to Him, had come from Him, and they offered to Him. This yajna became their expression of gratitude and love, just as little children on Mother's or Father's Day want to give something to their parent, but have nothing of their own to give. So where can they get their gifts? They only can get them from their parents, who are so pleased and proudly exclaim to others, "My baby loves me so much!" Their pockets may be emptied, but they have no concerns. Here, too, worship and sacrifice are offered in the same way.

A swami went to a home where a birthday party was being held, where guests were coming with gifts. The swami wondered what he could give, so he took a small Krishna idol from their home and gave it to the birthday person, who was overjoyed. When the householder examined the idol more closely, he said that looked just like the one already in his home. He then saw that the place where he kept that idol was now empty. The swami told him he had taken the idol from there and given it to him. In the same way, we come to realize that everything we give to the Lord is already His. In our ignorance, we think that the gift or offering only belongs to us, but when we offer this gift to the Lord, He says, "Thank you," for at least we are not keeping it for ourselves alone.

We worship God by loving surrender, by giving up the ego's I-ness and my-ness, by giving up our sense of possession and attachment to anything and everything, including ourselves, by knowing that all things are His, created by Him, and belonging to Him alone.

REFLECTIONS

A Sip and a Dip in *Gītāmritam*
by Trishna Gulrajani

Devotees from different places and from different walks of life came together May 18-23, 2014 for a unique camp by Pujya Guruji at *Chinmaya Vibhooti*. This camp, beautifully titled by Pujya Guruji as “*Geetaamrit*,” featured the text of *Bhagavad Gītā*, Chapter 5 and *Amṛtabindu Upanishad*. In typical Chinmaya Mission tradition, Pujya Guruji also taught Upanishad class in the mornings and *Gītā* class in the evenings. And so took place *Chinmaya Vibhooti*'s first-ever *Gītōpanishad* camp, with over 170 devotees.

Pujya Guruji's wonderfully simple style of sharing meaningful insights of the ancient scriptural wisdom is something that never fails to amaze *sādhakas* who are lucky enough to be a part of his audience. One can only marvel at the fresh and new ways in which he approaches texts despite having been a teacher of Vedanta for more than 40 years. Campers eagerly sipped each delicious drop of the eternal nectar of *Amṛtabindu Upanishad*, and equally enjoyed each melodious and uplifting note of the fifth chapter of Shri Krishna's song divine.

The opportunity to offer *bhikshās* and *pādukā pūjās* was readily taken up by campers. There were also several new releases and exciting offers thanks to the *Chinmaya Vāṇī* bookstore, *Chinmaya Upahār* gift shop, and Shivashakti rudraksha specialists. Happy campers doubled up as happy shoppers, armed with precious gifts to take back for loved ones.

Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan is always a special experience, and set against the *Geetaamrit* camp, it was really quite something to take the journey of Pujya Gurudev through the spectacular permanent exhibition that outlines just how he became such an incredible Vedantin.

Each camp at *Chinmaya Vibhooti* has a unique touch brought to it by Pujya Guruji. In this camp, one evening he went for a walk to the *Chinmaya Maruti Mandir*. As he walked, more and more campers joined in for a strolling satsang. Spontaneously, he comfortably seated himself under a *vaṭa vṛksha* (banyan tree) in the *Swāgatam* compound, and an impromptu recitation of *Dakshināmurti Stotram* followed. This then resulted in a special outdoor screening of the two *Upanishad Gaṅgā* video episodes on the life of Dārā Shiko, completing the memorable evening.

To celebrate Chinmaya Naada Bindu's Fourth Annual Festival of the Arts, more than 75% of the campers stayed back until May 25 and were treated to sitar, *taal-vaadya*, Kathak, Bharatnatyam, and Hindustani and Carnatic vocal performances by world famous maestros who

delighted their audience with their talent, depth, and love for the arts. At the end of each program, Pujya Guruji offered words of appreciation and inspiration, and the audience looked forward to this highlight as well. It was plain to see that the wonderful programs that take place at *Chinmaya Vibhooti* do not happen by chance, but rather, by Guru's grace. This pervading grace alone keeps Pujya Gurudev's divine vision glowing at all times.



Vedanta Camp 2014 by David Brown

A year since the last Vedanta retreat has rolled around, and once again we find ourselves steering our little rental car beside the hills and along the valleys of northern California en route to Piercy. Such a beautiful place is *Krishnālaya*, nestled in the loving arms of the hills and river that we call our Californian Ganga. *Krishnālaya*, the abode of the beloved Lord in the form of Shri Krishna, waits for the sound of the bhajan and harmonium to once again sing the Lord's praise.

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, whose presence we eagerly await, is not arriving until Monday evening, we are told—technically, the end of the first day of the camp (June 1-7). A little disappointed, we stroll along the quiet country road after lunch on Sunday, admiring the beauty of the river. When we return to the ashram, we find to our delight that Pujya Guruji has already arrived. What miracle is this? It turns out that he had traveled from Hong Kong, which is on the opposite side of the world across the date line. In travelling west, Pujya Guruji gained a day unbeknown to our camp organizers and arrived on the evening of Sunday, even before the bus from San Francisco airport arrived with the bulk of the attendees. What a joy! And it's a great lesson for us in the direct experience of the play of maya—making fun of our impressions of time and space.

So the camp starts as planned with meditation in the morning, followed by two classes on *Purusha Sūktam*. Even better, Pujya Guruji decides that he will have the time to include an extra class on *Bhagavad Gītā*, and chooses the section on *Sthitaprajña-lakṣhaṇa*, or the characteristics of a man of steady wisdom, established in the Self (2.54-58).

What a wonderful example for us students to witness the joy, love, and steady flow of blessings that comes to us as we listen to these discourses. We hear the clearest expression of the deep inner meaning of yajna—the sacrificial offering of all our sense impressions are His Alone! We understand that *Purusha* is Itself the ultimate offering, nothing is separate from the blessed Lord. We see that the whole world is nothing but the effect of *Paramātmā*, the Lord. *Paramātmā* alone is appearing as the effect, which merges into the cause. So, one aspect

of the devotion is the awareness that you, the *jeīva*, alone are being offered unto You, *Paramātmān*. The other aspect is that all effects are nothing other than the cause, which merges into You, *Paramātmān*. How beautifully these teachings complement the *Gītā*'s unfoldment of *Sthitaprajña-lakṣhaṇa*.

Each morning we enjoy an excellent study group experience, as we are divided up into small groups. Every evening we are blessed with interesting presentations by various camp members who share their professional experiences with us. Frequently Pujya Guruji blesses us with bhajans, as do some of our fellow campers, with great talent and expertise. All too quickly the week flies by, with scarcely a pause—arti each evening, beautiful meals, sharing with friends rediscovered and newly made.

We enjoy a mini-concert, together with arti in the garden before the Krishna murti, concluding with a deeply moving *Guru pādukā pūjā* and *Guru dakshina* ceremony that consciously celebrates the gracious and loving awareness of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, without whom none of this would be happening. Our heartfelt thanks to Pujya Guruji, and the Chinmaya Mission family, organizers, and volunteers for this lovely spiritual experience.



How to Find Happiness in an Unhappy World

by Lavina Melwani

Edited for print herein

It costs nothing and you can't buy it in a store. Yet we all hanker for it. We are talking, of course, about happiness. And everyone wants it. No one says, "I want to be unhappy. I want sorrow." Yet, happiness is elusive. We all think we will be happy if only we could change our job, our spouse, our status, and our lives. If only, if only! The change happens and initially we are happy, but very soon we are once again needing some other change to be really happy. But what is real, lasting happiness? And how do we find it?

His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, Head of the Chinmaya Mission, a global spiritual organization with over 300 centers worldwide recently visited New York. Down-to-earth and

humorous, he gave insightful discourses on *Tips for Happy Living*, a book he has authored. He is masterful in conveying the profound and complex truths of the Vedanta in simple, easy to understand language, often through stories that all of us love to hear.

One such story was as follows. Once there was a young boy who lived with his mother. They were so poor that whenever the son asked his mother for milk, she always fed him only water mixed with flour. He was happy, thinking he had milk to drink. Once, he went to stay with an uncle who had plenty of cows and there he drank real milk for the first time. When he returned and was once again given the mixed water and flour, he said, “Mother, this is not milk!”

Pujya Swamiji said this, in a way, is our situation, too. We have never tasted real happiness, so we think that a new job, a new relationship, or a new house will bring us the happiness we crave. He pointed out, “We think this place or object is making me unhappy, and if I change it, I will be happier. We want a challenge—say, a challenging job. Yet when a challenge comes, we say it’s too challenging! So we keep changing jobs, people, and relationships. The more we change, the more we remain the same. We have to pretend to be happy, and after some time, we are in the same rut again. Some external change has taken place, but an internal change has not taken place.” He observed that what we think is a cause for sorrow is not really a cause for sorrow, and what we think is a source of happiness is not a source of happiness either. He said, “Both are projections of the mind. This mind of ours alone is the cause of all our problems and our sorrows.”

Like the boy who had not tasted real milk, we, too, do not know what real happiness is, so we get absorbed in make-believe happiness, in worldly pleasures and sensations, thinking they are the real thing. Sometimes we catch a glimpse of real happiness—when, by chance, we wake up early, and everything is calm and peaceful; or at some satsang or spiritual gathering. We tend to connect with objects, situations, and people that we like, and run away from those we don’t. But it is not possible to always do this. Another problem is that our likes and dislikes, our wants and desires, keep changing—what made us happy earlier may no longer make us happy. Pujya Swamiji said, “Appeasement of your senses or other people’s will get you into trouble, for there will be compromises. Do not come under the sway of your personal likes and dislikes because, as it says in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, these are the looters of your knowledge, your being, and your happiness. Your action should be guided by what is the right thing to do, not by gratifications. The real source of happiness is to do the right thing.”

Have you ever noticed that when you’re angry with someone, you tend to shout at him, even if he’s standing right in front of you? This is because psychologically you have created a distance between the two of you. Can there be happiness when the mind is agitated and restless? For real happiness, objects are not necessary; you only need a peaceful state of mind. Be mindful of giving in to desire, anger, and passion because these are the destroyers of mental peace, which is the true wealth—it is hard to find and so easy to lose.

Swamiji said, “We will recognize them as wayside looters, who destroy our knowledge and wisdom. Remember that a rajasic or tamasic mind creates sorrow, whereas sattvic mind bestows peace. We give what we have. A peaceful person spreads peace. He or she can motivate and inspire others by their thoughts, words, and deeds. Peace and joy in us reflects as peace and joy in others. Hence, in developing virtues in oneself and others, all are benefited.” Swamiji quoted mountaineer Edmund Hillary: “I did not conquer Mt. Everest. I conquered

myself.” He added, the higher the goal, the greater the ability we manifest in overcoming the obstacles from within and without.

Hence, we should not be like the musk deer who runs here and there in search of the fragrance emerging from its own navel, or like the thirsty fish in the pond which searches everywhere for water. As Pujya Swamiji observed about human beings, “Not only is the treasure trove with me, but the key to open it is also with me. In fact, both are the same.” He said the wisest move is to make our life a continuous learning experience, gaining from each interaction: “We need to open an account in the Bank of Learning, and deposit each day our earnings and learnings from each experience, thereby increasing our balance of knowledge and wisdom. This capital can be banked upon in facing the trials and travails of life.”

Finally, as Pujya Swamiji said, we all have to remember that there will always be some incompleteness in life, be it in wealth, or a life partner, or perhaps the lack of a child. In accepting God’s will, we realize that finite objects or beings cannot make us complete. We have to turn to God for that fulfillment, and once we do that, life’s questions and longings all fall into place, like the pieces of a puzzle, and there will be true happiness.

Here are some profound tips from Pujya Swamiji that hit the mark:

1. Be tender towards the faults of others, be strict towards your own.
2. Meditate on God instead of trying to play God.
3. Thoughtless actions and action-less thoughts are the cause of failure.
4. Valuables are of value, but values are invaluable.

Inauguration of the New *Sāndeepany* Ashram in San Jose
by Deepa Rai and Jayanti Balachandran

We moved into our new home on June 1 and what a celebration it was! After years of anticipation, hard work, and multiple fundraisers, members of Chinmaya Mission San Jose were treated to two weeks of events and activities to commemorate the move into our brand new, state-of-the-art facility at 10160, Clayton Road, in San Jose, California.

Every aspect of the move was meticulously planned and executed, starting with moving our beloved deities on June 1. An ingenious contraption, nothing short of an engineering marvel, was designed by one of the Mission members to move Lord Shiva’s heavy marble form and carry Him gently in a palanquin to his new abode. The four members of this team had a dry run of the process a day earlier to make sure everything would work as envisioned. Pandit Ravichandran, who has been associated with Mission from the early days of Pujya Gurudev’s arrival in the US, led an auspicious beginning to the series of events with a short puja. This was followed by melodious bhajans and arti. Several Mission members were chosen to carry the different deities in their respective cars to the new ashram. As this long caravan of cars arrived at the new ashram, the deities were welcomed to the sound of auspicious, *nāda-svaram* music, and by a reception team that was were eagerly awaiting their arrival. The deities were taken in ceremoniously and placed gently on long wooden platforms on the floor. They remained there until the various ceremonies were performed as part of the formal consecration according to sacred Vedic rituals.

The most exciting moment of the day happened when Pujya Guruji himself unexpectedly walked into the ashram just as the congregation was listening to the proposed plan of activities for the next few days! Everyone gasped in surprise and pure delight to see his orange-robed form walking toward the meditation hall where everyone was assembled. Due to a small glitch in travel dates, he was able to stop by at this exact right moment to bless us all with his divine presence before heading over to *Krishṇālaya* in Piercy for the Vedanta Camp 2014 on *Purusha Sūktam*. His unexpected visit was the topic of conversation for everyone for a long time after.

Each day, June 5-8, the pujas and homas began early in the morning and concluded at noon with lunch prasada in the beautiful new dining area that easily accommodated the hundreds of devotees who attended these programs every day. Panditji officiated the Ganapati, Navagraha, Nakshatra, Subrahmanya and Vastu homas on June 5. Following this, all the *utsava* murtis were placed in large tubs of water for the *jalādhivāsam* ceremony.

Swami Ishwarananda (CM Los Angeles) arrived on June 5 to be part of the inauguration festivities and conduct a three-day series of discourses on *Mukunda Mālā*, a devotional composition dedicated to Lord Krishna by Kulashekhara Alvar. Swamiji had us rolling with laughter with his humorous comments, and brought tears to our eyes when he extolled the supreme nature of bhakti.

Panditji conducted another series of pujas and *homas* on June 6, which is when several *sūktams* were chanted and the deities that had been immersed in the water were taken out, cleaned, dried, and placed on a bed of rice and other grains for *dhānyādhivāsam*. We were treated to beautiful bhajans on this evening, sung by the Chinmaya Swaranjali of San Ramon. Following this bhajan session, Swami Ishwarananda continued with his discourses and the hours seemed to pass by in a trice as we listened spellbound to Swamiji's exposition on the traits of a true devotee.

Several more *homas* were conducted on June 7, including the *Sudarshana Homa*, which was accompanied by the chanting of *Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad*. Also performed were the *Dhanvantari Homa*, *Shri Rama Mūla-mantra Homa*, *Shri Ānjaneya Mūla-mantra Homa*, and *Ayyappa Homa*. On their completion, the deities that had been placed on grains the previous day were now laid to rest on cushions as the final part of the ceremonies to welcome them into the new home. Swami Ishwarananda concluded the series of his discourses, after which the Chinmaya Swaranjali of Fremont entertained us with their beautiful rendering of bhajans.

The next morning, following the *Rudra Homa*, the murtis of Lord Shiva and Lord Ganesha, and all the *utsava* murtis were finally installed. The *utsava* murtis looked resplendent after their ceremonial cleansing, and were decorated with new clothes and garlands. After the arti, devotees enjoyed lunch prasada. By this time, it was also wonderful to see Divine Mother Annapūrṇā installed in the new commercial kitchen. Devotees returned in the evening for yet another Chinmaya Swaranjali presentation, this time, by the San Jose choir. After the presentation, we gathered at the altar for the beautiful chanting of *Rudra Kramarchanā*, followed by arti and prasada.

We had our monthly Shiva Puja for the first time at the new ashram on June 9. Panditji performed *abhishekam* to the Shiva-lingam, followed by arti. Devotees gathered at 5 p.m. on June 10 for the chanting of the entire *Bhagavad Gītā*, followed by arti. We welcomed Swami

Shantananda (CM Princeton), the president of CMW and CM San Jose on the morning of June 11. After a half hour of Vedic and Upanishad chanting at 7 p.m., Swamiji enthralled devotees with a discourse on the glories of Pujya Gurudev. The next hour and a half flew by as we listened to Swamiji recounting his experiences with Pujya Gurudev. Swamiji recalled the circumstances under which he and Pujya Guruji had on one occasion in Lucknow initiated the composition of the 108 names of Pujya Gurudev, and had surprised him with this offering during a *pāda* puja at a devotee's home. Swamiji led us in the chanting of the *ashṭottaram* one name at a time and had a beautiful anecdote or experience to share about each name. Alas, time went by too soon and Swamiji could not complete expounding on all the names. He said, however, that he would continue this discourse sometime in the near future. We all eagerly await his return.

The moment finally arrived for us to share our joy and excitement with His Holiness, Pujya Swami Tejomayananda-ji, the Head of Chinmaya Mission worldwide, on the morning of June 12, at 10:30 am. Pujya Guruji was welcomed and honored at his new ashram in traditional fashion by our Mission members, who all chanted in unison while Pujya Guruji's feet were washed with devotion by Acharya Uma Jeyarasasingam (CM San Jose). After being garlanded, the *pūrṇa kumbha* was humbly offered for blessings and arti was performed. The atmosphere was charged with love and joy. As always, Pujya Guruji looked radiant, an embodiment of Bliss. He had been appointed by Pujya Gurudev to be acharya of CM San Jose, where he resided from 1988 until August 3, 1993. By God's Grace, it is no surprise that the center has grown to a membership now of nearly 1,000 families.

The two-story ashram is approximately 22,500 square feet and sits on 1.7 acres, surrounded by the Evergreen Mountains. Acharya Umaji had mentioned to us that Pujya Gurudev foresaw that the Bay area membership would grow in leaps and bounds and would need a huge site to accommodate all the Chinmaya families. Pujya Gurudev had even described His vision of this new site to Umaji in the early 1990s as a venue that would be more majestic and grand than she could ever imagine, up on a hill, surrounded by mountains. It is not surprising that the right people with the appropriate expertise came at the right time to help with this monumental task.

CM San Jose's new *Sāndeepany* ashram at Clayton Road was formally inaugurated by Pujya Guruji at 6:30 in the evening, with approximately 500 people in attendance. Pujya Guruji unveiled in the lobby a beautiful inaugural plaque that reads: "May this Chinmaya Mission center always shine victoriously. May there be study and teaching of the Vedas and Vedanta here. May all members worship God with devotion, and may the beautiful spirit of karma yoga be in the hearts of all." This is the translation of the Sanskrit verse that Pujya Guruji composed for each CM center. The original verse and Pujya Guruji's signature are both engraved on the plaque as well.

Devotees took their seats in the auditorium for the start of Pujya Guruji's three-day series of discourses on *Shiva-sankalpa Sūktam*. Before this, architect Kartik Patel, civil engineers Phalguni Shah and Dilip Kishnani, and project superintendent James Crady, who were all instrumental in the vision, creation, and design of the new ashram, were thanked and received gift bags from Pujya Guruji.

Pujya Guruji thus conducted the first official *jñāna yajña* at the new *Sāndeepany* ashram on "Divinizing the Mind." The six mantras, found in Chapter 34 of the *VājasaneyiSamhitā* of *Shukla*

Yajur Veda, are simple, yet powerful and inspiring, teaching us that the will of God acts through all minds and achieves all tasks. Pujya Guruji has said, “It is the guiding force behind all our words and deeds . . . that makes the world go round, and the universe to revolve and dissolve. . . . Each mind is unique and amazing. When many minds come together, that has its own dynamics and influence. Thousands of minds put together are a force to reckon with. . . . the Total Mind, or God’s power, is infinite and inconceivable by any individual.” Pujya Guruji introduced the hymn of six sacred verses as the praise of Truth, which illumines the mind and “sings the great glory of the mind” as well. It is a heartfelt continuous prayer to fill the mind with auspicious thoughts (*shiva sankalpa*). As we purify our minds, the eternal Truth of the Vedas reveals in our meditation.

It is in this divinized yajna spirit that all Mission members worldwide have been trained from Day 1, serving “as an army, courageous and disciplined.” From the preparation phase to the move, to the pujas and *homas*, to the food preparation thrice a day for 500-800 people, CM San Jose’s devotees’ hearts and minds were single-pointedly focused and dedicated to His service, with the one *sankalpa* (resolve) of seeing a grand spiritual beacon manifest and serve its purpose to carry forward Pujya Gurudev’s vision.

Volunteers prepared a multitude of to-go food boxes that were distributed at various exits. The kitchen also accommodated the 250 devotees who ate in the cafeteria dining room where Pujya Guruji was served *bhikshā*. Recycling and composting were applied in an organized and efficient manner. Dinner prasad was completed every evening in less than an hour, leaving families feeling satisfied and happy, ready and excited for the next day’s event.

Pujya Guruji had a satsang with over 40 Bay Area CHYKs on June 14. In spite of his busy schedule, he made himself available at different times of the day for anyone who needed to see him. After the close of his last discourse in the series, he awarded winners of a silent auction the watercolor paintings by young Mumbai artist Arun Raman. Each painting depicted a different mode of devotion featuring Lord Krishna. The artist prepared the paintings on request and they were showcased for auction at the center’s fundraising concert, “One in Eleven,” held in June 2011.

With Pujya Gurudev’s grace and Pujya Guruji’s blessings, the evening ended beautifully with Pujya Guruji singing some of his soulful bhajans. The design of the ashram allowed for the smooth and easy flow of hundreds of people throughout the days. From Day One, everything unfolded just the way it needed to, including Pujya Guruji’s unplanned and unexpected visit to the ashram. Through all this, Pujya Gurudev’s words came to mind: “Pure Consciousness cannot express Itself. He is expressing His glory through you!” In our new home, we pray to live Pujya Gurudev’s words: “Seek Him through love. Search for Him through devotion. Invoke Him with prayer. And finally, meet Him in meditation.”



NEWS

New Directors on CMW Board
by Aparna Devi

Pujya Guruji appointed new directors, as shown below in bold, to the CMW Board of Directors at the meeting held on July 13, 2014:

- Officers and Directors:

Chairman: Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda
President: Swami Shantananda (CM Princeton)
Treasurer: Pranjiwan Lodhia (CM San Jose)
Executive Secretary: Aparna Devi (CM San Jose)

- Directors (in alphabetical order by first name):

Anish Shah (CM Houston)
Apparao Mukkamala (CM Flint)
Ashok Dandekar (CM Dallas)
Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty (CM Houston)
Gopal Dwarkanath (CM Boston)
Gulu Advani (CM San Jose)
Swami Ishwarananda (CM Los Angeles)
Mahalakshmi Pula (CM Boston)
D.V Pillai (CM Los Angeles)
Acharya Shailaja Nadkarni (CM Orlando)
Acharya Shanker Pillai (CM Chicago)
Acharya Sharada Kumar (CM Ann Arbor)
Sivaprasad Pandeyaram (CM Princeton)
Acharya Vilasini Balakrishnan (CM Washington DC)

Shānkara Bhāshya Pārayānjali

New Website for CCMT and All Centers
by Brahmachari Saket Chaitanya

The Internet is no longer just a place to access information, but a virtual world in itself that offers a virtual life to billions around the world. And what is life, if it is not dynamic, full of choices and connections?

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT) is pleased to launch its new website, chinmayamission.com, a virtual home and hub for the global Chinmaya Mission family, providing dynamic interface and customizing options to users.

CCMT's earlier website included the following features:

- Events upload and registration
- News and Pujya Guruji's itinerary
- Database of CM acharyas and centers
- Articles and photos
- Shopping and donation carts

While the prior website was feature rich, the new website brings a new experience. Its added key features are:

1. Information Integration

- Global Presence:** An integrated global website helps the users grasp the magnitude of the presence of Chinmaya Mission across the globe. The integration of all Chinmaya Mission websites under one global site will help users to know about all activities from one place.
- One Site, One Look:** The website can serve as a platform where all integrated local sites receive seamless access to the contents of the global website. Centers will be able to manage their local site, thus making their site truly Local yet Global.
- Information Sharing:** Sharing information and resources by acharyas and centers are made easy with a global site. Acharyas can individually upload their itineraries. A central site for all information of events, itineraries, and news will remove redundancy and outdated content.
- Dynamic Content:** The new site integrates the Chinmaya Mission YouTube Channel and the Chinmaya Internet Channel, thus allowing for direct audio and video access to discourses, satsangs, and other special programs. Also included are many letters written by Pujya Gurudev, thought-provoking articles, and messages of Pujya Gurudev, Pujya Guruji, and other acharyas. Almost each page carries a dynamic photo gallery supplemented with videos to give a visual appeal of various Mission activities.

2. Outreach

- Chinmaya Publications:** The shopping cart on the new site is one of the best available online. It caters to present online sales needs and is highly customizable and scalable to accommodate future needs. It also provides links to e-books in various e-stores.
- Social Media:** Integrated in the new site are Facebook, Twitter, and other social media options, enabling users to share information and inspiration instantaneously.
- Career Page:** To serve the growing need in Chinmaya Mission for dedicated manpower, this page displays employment and *sevā* opportunities in Chinmaya Mission worldwide.

3. Support for Service and Sadhana

- Spiritual Miles:** This innovative initiative allows users to earn spiritual miles and maintain an online log of their daily spiritual disciplines. The more miles earned, the more enthusiasm to pursue daily sadhana.
- Donations:** Donors are presented donation categories that each list a variety of projects for their choosing. Coming soon will be the option for enthusiastic donors to fundraise by creating their own page, setting targets,

- and raising funds online for various projects.
- c. Volunteers: Event planners can avail the volunteer registration page to keep record of the volunteers at their center.
 - d. Database: The site is vital in creating a global database of Chinmaya Mission members' information and preferences.

Inauguration of *Chinmaya Goloka* in Phoenix
by Uma Roy

Pujya Guruji inaugurated CM Phoenix's new ashram of *Chinmaya Goloka*, at 325 S. El Dorado St. in Mesa, Arizona, on June 18, 2014. Devotees were eager to welcome Pujya Guruji for his first visit to Phoenix since the centers' activities began at the Mangal family residence several years back. *Sevaks* worked long hours with devotion and enthusiasm to prepare the ashram, including the acharya quarters for Pujya Guruji's stay.

It was a joyous *jñāna yajña* along with various satsangs in a quiet and cool atmosphere despite the scorching Arizona heat outside. Swami Ishwarananda (CM Los Angeles), a long-time gracious guide for CM Phoenix, had reached a day earlier to help guide and encourage the *sevaks* for this momentous occasion. The presiding deity of Shri Radha-Krishna, and the idols of Lord Shiva and Lord Ganesha were adorned. The hall and stage were decorated with flowers and garlands.

Pujya Guruji was received with a *pūrṇa-kumbha*, after which he inaugurated the new ashram. As he entered and greeted one and all, the atmosphere was one of elation. Everyone spontaneously did their best on their assigned tasks and rejoiced in his divine presence.

In the evening, the first of the three-day *jñāna yajña* on the "Message of *Gita*" began with bhajans and the lighting of the lamp at the altar of Shri Radha-Krishna. The number of attendees exceeded all expectations; many families came from other towns and even states. Everyone listened in rapt attention as Pujya Guruji's teachings took listeners to deep contemplation. It felt like the *yajñashālā* was bathed in the grace of Lord Krishna and the maharishis of past and present.

A *Guru Pādukā Pūjā* was performed on the second day, through which the whole ashram reverberated with Pujya Gurudev's 108 names and other sacred mantras. Soon after, Pujya Guruji inaugurated the library, the bookstore, and the many classrooms sponsored by devoted members. The Donor Tree and dedication plaque—featuring a Sanskrit verse composed by Pujya Guruji that states the purpose of the center—were unveiled.

Though time was short, Pujya Guruji met with Bala Vihar teachers, *sevā* groups, and out-of-towners, and Bala Vihar children. The children were spontaneously cheerful and comfortable in asking questions. Even the young ones had many questions, such as, "Have you seen God? How can we know Him without seeing Him?" One could see how much Pujya Guruji enjoyed hearing the questions and conversing with the children.

As it was to be, it was too soon that the three days were over. No one wanted this

blessed time to end so quickly. Pujya Guruji reminded all devotees to have faith in the Lord, in Pujya Gurudev, and to continue practicing their personal sadhana and service to others. Devotees hoped his loving and assuring words meant he would soon return.



Rejoicing at CM Austin's *Chinmaya Sundaram* by Nila Bala

With God's Grace and Pujya Gurudev's blessings, CM Austin was pleased to welcome Pujya Guruji to inaugurate its new center, *Chinmaya Sundaram*, on June 26, 2014. Also in attendance were Swami Ishwarananda (CM Los Angeles) and Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya (CM Austin).

The *Chinmaya Sundaram* ashram is on a beautiful, wooded, eight-acre property that is in a prime location of northern Austin. As part of Phase 1, two buildings have been built. The first is 10,000 sq. ft. for Chinmaya Bala Vihar; it houses 12 classrooms, a large assembly hall, and a full kitchen with two service windows for a covered patio and outdoor picnic area. The second is a 5,000 sq. ft. temple that houses a shrine, assembly hall, and four rooms (for the priest, audio/video, stage dressing, and parental childcare).

Pujya Guruji unveiled the center's dedication plaque in the Bala Vihar assembly hall, toured the facility, and was then welcomed with a *pūrṇa-kumbha* and *ārti* at the shrine building. After the center's president welcomed the guests and recognized the volunteer workers, architect, and builder, Brahmachari Girish thanked all the priests and acharyas who helped in the installation and *prāṇa-pratishṭhā* of the deities, namely, Lord Krishna (on Kāliyā-nāga), Shiva Lingam, and Goddess Mīnākshī. Pujya Guruji then gave his celebratory address for the inauguration of the new ashram. The program concluded with lunch prasad for all attendees.

During his two-day visit, CM Austin was also blessed with Pujya Guruji's enlightening three discourses on "*Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram.*"

CM Austin will start its Bala Vihar classes at *Chinmaya Sundaram* at the end of August, by which time the move from its current ashram of *Chinmaya Vāṭikā* will be complete. The center is pleased to extend a warm invitation to all CMW acharyas, directors, and family members to visit *Chinmaya Sundaram*.



CM Chicago Celebrates Pujya Guruji's Birthday at *Yamunotri*
by Rashmi Mehrotra

Pujya Guruji gave the divine gift of his presence to the devotees of Chinmaya Mission Chicago on his birthday, June 30, 2014. With love in their hearts, the day became a celebration and inspiration for all devotees at the *Yamunotri* ashram, which was filled with song and prayer to ask for Pujya Guruji's blessings and good health. Devotees also offered a recitation of *Sundarakāṇḍāḍa (Rāmacharitamānasa)*. The Bala Vihar children of the *Badriand Yamunotri* ashrams sang bhajans with accompanying instruments that included the flute.

Also featured was a surprise video of birthday greetings for Pujya Guruji from Chinmaya Naada Bindu, Chinmaya Mission's residential *gurukulam* for Indian performing arts. The video included a special music and song composition, and photographs and videos of Pujya Guruji from all over the world, demonstrating the love that flows in his every action. The highlight of the evening celebrations was Pujya Guruji singing bhajans, including his original compositions of music and lyric.

In a befitting tribute to the presiding deity of Yamunotri, Shri Radha Krishna, Pandit Ronu Majumdar, a Grammy-award winning flautist, offered an enchanting performance in Raga Jhinjhoṭi and was accompanied by Shubhashish Mukherjee on tabla. He also sang select verses from *Rāmacharitamānasa* and offered a recital in Raga Desh.

The evening concluded with a birthday feast and devotees felt blessed to be in Pujya Guruji's presence on this most auspicious occasion.



New Virigina Ashram of *Chinmaya Somnāth*
by Sitaram Kowtha

On the most sacred and auspicious day of *Guru Pūrṇimā*, July 12, 2014, Pujya Guruji inaugurated CM Washington DC's new and second ashram of *Chinmaya Somnāth* in Chantilly, Virginia. Filled with festivity, *Chinmaya Somnāth*, was at full capacity with enthusiastic devoted members, friends, and children, all soaking in the presence of Pujya Guruji and the special occasion. The ashram houses the beautiful form of Lord Shiva as the presiding deity.

In addition to the local acharyas, namely, Swami Dheerananda, Acharya Vilasini Balakrishnan, Acharya Anant Sarma, Acharya Pramila Poudel, and Acharya K. Sadananda, many more CM acharyas from across the country graced the inauguration and five-day yajna.

The inaugural ceremonies began with Pujya Guruji unveiling the dedication plaque, which describes in Sanskrit and English the purpose of the CM center. Brief congratulatory addresses were presented by Pujya Guruji, CMW President Swami Shantananda, Swami Dheerananda, Acharya Anant Sarma, the local center's president, and the Fairfax County supervisor. Acharya Vilasini then spoke on the celebration of 25 years of service by Swami Dheerananda at CM Washington DC.

The *Guru Pūrṇimā* celebrations commenced with a *Guru Pādukā Pūjā*. Pujya Guruji invoked the *Guru Paramparā* by citing Veda Vyāsa, Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya, Swami Tapovan Maharaj, and Pujya Gurudev. He then led the chanting of 108 names during the puja.

The evening also featured the beginning of Pujya Guruji's five-day yajna on *Shiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam*, a hymn on divinizing the mind. In explaining the compound, *Shiva-saṅkalpa*, Pujya Guruji said it means: 1) May our resolve (*saṅkalpa*) be auspicious and divine (*shiva*) 2) May our resolve be like the one that the noblest of all (Lord Shiva) would take 3) May our resolve be aligned with the Lord's will (all resolves are His; we are His instruments). The evening concluded with dinner prasada for over 750 adults and children.

A long journey of planning, fundraising, and perseverance has brought the northern Virginia home of *Chinmaya Somnāth* to fruition. By the Lord's grace, Pujya Gurudev's work will now shift into higher gear to serve the community for generations to come.



2015 Inauguration for CM Atlanta's New Ashram
by Acharya G.V. Raghu

By the grace of the Lord and the blessings of the *Guru Paramparā*, CM Atlanta's long-awaited dream has been realized with the purchase of a large church property to serve as its new ashram. The ashram will be inaugurated in 2015 in the august presence of Pujya Guruji, who has blessed it as "*Chinmaya Niketan*."



CHYK Niagara: We Stand As One Family by Sheela Gupta

CHYK Niagara organized a lively spiritual camp at the idyllic Oakwood Resort in South Huron, Ontario, February 21-23, 2014, where over 60 children and adults gathered as one big family for a weekend of family fun and satsang.

“We Stand As One Family” was conducted by the newly formed CHYK Niagara under the guidance of Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara). Having traveled to many cities in the Niagara region, he conceived the idea of bringing together in one place different families from different cities. Present at the retreat were families from Niagara Falls, London, Toronto, and Buffalo (NY).

The retreat began on a cold but sunny Friday afternoon. Families wearily wiped their eyes after 2-3 hours of road travel. Upon arriving and freshening up, everyone was treated to a gourmet vegetarian meal followed by fantastic activities organized by the CHYKs. People of all ages were completely immersed in the games—running, shouting, and acting like children!

In addition to the fun and games, the CHYKs also had a great activity to encourage self-development. The campers were asked to write a personal goal that would improve their relationships with family members. They offered their hand written goals at the feet of Pujya Gurudev and reflected throughout the retreat on what they written.

The following morning started with laughing yoga followed by a healthy but hearty breakfast. The campers then split up into their respective groups and the knowledge began to flow! Vivekji’s discourses during the retreat were on Spiritual Parenting, Independence in Relationships and Marriage Demystified. The adults thoroughly enjoyed group discussions, wherein they had the opportunity to share their personal struggles and triumphs of marriage and parenting.

The children and youth engaged in varied creative activities that brought out the importance of teamwork and learning from one another’s strengths. They also had the opportunity to share their feelings on prevalent issues such as peer pressure, cultural identity, and sibling issues.

A highlight of the retreat was walking to Lake Huron, which the resort overlooked. The children had a tremendous time walking on the frozen lake, while the adults were shocked to find themselves knee deep in snow! Another highlight of the retreat was a family photo scavenger hunt. Families were given a list of photos to take, giving them an opportunity to express their creativity and work with each other’s strengths and weaknesses. It was wonderful to see adults and children learning from each other and growing together.

The retreat concluded with campers gathering with their families and discussing with one another the personal goal they had reflected on throughout the retreat. They discussed how to cultivate the goal after the retreat and how to work together to improve their relationships with each other. It was truly inspiring to see adults and children, alike,

share their feelings with such humility and innocence.

The retreat was a huge success and all families left asking the same question: “When will the retreat be next year?” The CHYKs offered their gratitude to the *Guru Paramparā* for infinite inspiration and grace, to the CM Niagara Steering Committee for giving them the courage to learn from their mistakes, and to Vivekji for giving them independence in their *sevā* offering.



Bala Vihar Training Seminar in Houston by Padmashree Rao

Acharya Darshana Nanavaty (CM Houston) conducted an intensely thought-provoking Bala Vihar teacher training seminar to a rapt audience of over 150 attendees on June 28, 2014. Chinmaya Bala Vihar teachers from several centers in North America assembled enthusiastically at the *Sarasvati Nilayam* hall of CM Houston’s *Chinmaya Prabhā* ashram to participate in this much-anticipated, comprehensive training experience.

The attendees included an assortment of teachers with many years of experience, new entrants, and other volunteers interested in serving the Mission through Bala Vihar. They all became eager students delighting in the expansive vision that unfolded in the presentation. The audience also included teachers from other Hindu organizations who came to learn about effective teaching methods.

In discussing the main vision of Bala Vihar, Darshanaji said, just as every aspect of Nature finds fulfillment in a picturesque whole, so, too, Bala Vihar is a path to fulfillment for teachers and children, alike. Bringing attention to the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual personalities embedded in each person, Darshanaji emphasized, “Integrate your personality.” She labeled Bala Vihar as the special place where children learned through integration and called it “a gym for young minds.” She said it would be the happy responsibility of every teacher to help tone the muscles of the mind and intellect while connecting with each child through love and understanding.

The decades of experience in designing the worldwide Chinmaya Bala Vihar curriculum and bringing out the related teachers’ handbooks for all grades made Darshanaji’s training valuable to every listener. Reminding everyone about Pujya Gurudev’s vision to “tell; never teach,” she outlined how to inspire children to reflect as they grow and make knowledge their own.

As she provided an insightful overview of the scriptural-based curriculum for grades kg-12, she also demonstrated some key instruction techniques with the help of CM Houston teachers. She shared ideas to show how learning should be interactive and appealing to children through entertaining and engaging games and activities. She stated that the

teaching handbooks are structured around Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy, which is the theory of educational psychology used in US schools countrywide. Every aspect of each book aims to help children understand, analyze, and apply scriptural concepts as they grow, so that they can eventually evaluate to what extent they have imbibed the knowledge and created an integrated, wholesome life.

All the attendees then toured the ashram classrooms, where child-friendly board displays brought alive what Darshanaji had presented. After the walk-through, the acharya addressed the challenges Bala Vihar teachers have to overcome. She said teachers should first be good students of the scriptures and worthy role models who lived what they taught, for this would allow Bala Vihar classes to grow in strength and spirit.

Visiting teachers attended Bala Vihar at CM Houston the next day, after the final training session was completed. In the last session, Darshanaji said all Bala Vihar teachers should aspire to be the Lord's instrument, with the conviction that they can pass on scriptural wisdom to humanity. As the teachers bowed in gratitude before Pujya Gurudev, they received the *yajña prasāda* of a key ring with the symbols of the 16 steps of puja. It was a gentle reminder to invoke and worship Knowledge through every step of Bala Vihar *sevā*.

In his address, Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty reinforced the greatness of the Guru and spoke about Maharishi Veda Vyasa. He also led a meditation session to demonstrate the importance of memory and reflection in spiritual progress.

The training weekend in Houston was the culmination of caring and effort that began many months earlier. Darshanaji acknowledged the teachers who had helped her prepare the Bala Vihar handbooks and these training sessions. She also thanked everyone who had fed the attendees and all the volunteers who are serving Pujya Gurudev's Mission in Houston.

All the attendees were filled with gratitude for Darshanaji's untiring and loving guidance. By His grace, the lessons from this training will go far and beyond, to hold high Pujya Gurudev's vision for Chinmaya Bala Vihar.

Kids' Summer Camp at CM Phoenix
by Uma Roy

Chinmaya Mission Phoenix organized its second annual children's camp, July 14-18, 2014, in its new center of *Chinmaya Goloka*. Ashok and Sudha Bhatt of CM Bakersfield helped lead and coordinate the camp. With their sincere enthusiasm, profound expertise, and precise planning they supervised every aspect of the week-long camp. Many dedicated volunteers, led by Sreedhar Bharath, Madhu Lakshamanan, Nandita Verma and Anish Kumar, worked side by side with them to make every camp activity an unforgettable and delightful experience.

The theme for the Senior Group (grades 7-12) was "The Art of Self-Perfection," based on *Uddhava Gītā* from *Shrīmad Bhāgavatam*. The theme for the Junior Group (grades pk-6) was "The Glory of Lord Shiva." The campers also learned stories, *stotrams*, mantras,

bhajans, and more. They performed pujas of Lord Krishna and Lord Shiva, and engaged in discussions and debates, extempore speaking, yoga, arts and crafts, and recreation. While the younger campers painted pictures of different forms of God, the older ones created, among many things, the beautiful *damaru* of Lord Shiva. The yellow shirts with the sketch of *bāla* Krishna were a befitting tribute to the *Chinmaya Goloka* experience!

Plays were presented on stories of Lord Kārtikeya and Ganesha, and Lord Shiva and Bhasmāsura. The children not only acted, but also understood the underlying moral and spiritual significance of the stories. The older campers, with great enthusiasm, volunteered to help administer the camp and directly experienced the joy of serving with full attention.

On the concluding day, a cultural program was held, in which the camp organizers shared heartwarming messages filled with devotion and wisdom. The children performed before their parents and guests to show what they had learnt during the camp. The program included chanting, singing, acting, quizzes, and the sharing of personal camp experiences. Prizes were given to encourage the children. After the program, children, guests, parents, and volunteers enjoyed a delicious dinner in the ashram's spacious kitchen. Every child kept requesting to have the next camp soon. It was an amazing experience for everyone and parents found it difficult to comprehend how much the children had learnt in just one week.



Happy Feedback
by Jayashree Rajagopalan

One of the most rewarding aspects of Chinmaya Mission is the family that we create throughout our time and interactions with so many individuals who stand together in the service of one vision. This vision was seen in action during the last two weeks of April when CHYK West led a special program for *Hanumān Jayanti* celebrations, where members of all ages at seven Mission centers across five states gathered for the *Hanumān Chalīsa*-thon, or the chanting of *Hanumān Chalīsa* 108 times.

The project raised over \$50,000 for the cause of YEP 2014. Many centers gave positive feedback about how much their members enjoyed the event and the vision it represented, and suggested this become an annual program. The centers' board members were also pleased with the efforts of all CHYKs, who learned many new skills under their guidance. The event also increased members' awareness about YEP and its goals, and provided an opportunity to showcase the publications and courses offered by Chinmaya Mission.

Participating centers included CM Ann Arbor, Bentonville, Beaumont, Boston, Dallas, Pittsburgh, and Washington DC. Supporting centers included CM Austin, Niagara, and

Chicago.

In Bentonville, more than 150 families participated in the event, and gave an overwhelmingly positive response for events that support the next generation of Hindu children. Seeing CHYKs and Junior CHYKs in action for nine hours straight, Mission members greatly appreciated their efforts. They said there was such positive energy even after the conclusion of the day-long event. Several community members also asked that this event be an annual occurrence.

In both CM Dallas ashrams, the families who participated looked fondly on the memory even weeks after the event. Everyone participated in chanting and different groups lead the session in different ragas for an hour each. The vision of the “Mission Family” was clearly seen, and many participants, adults and children, alike, felt energetic and positive after the event.



Graduation Ceremony of Valley Bala Vihars by Madhu Sharma

CM Los Angeles’s Chinmaya Bala Vihar students of San Fernando Valley and Simi Valley celebrated their Bala Vihar graduation with joy and ceremony on May 18, 2014 in the presence of Swami Ishwaranada (CM Los Angeles). Two high school seniors emceed the event and blended learning with fun.

The program began with a warm welcome to Swamiji, followed by the chanting of *Guru Strotam*. The children recited a Hindi poem with enthusiasm and their rendition of the ABC of Vedanta was fascinating. They also offered performances on the avatars of Lord Vishnu and on *Rāmayāṇa* characters from *Sundarakāṇḍa*. Swamiji enlightened the assembly with a short story about the complaining nature of human being. The senior students shared the traits and lessons learned from *Mahābhārata* characters. The program had some lighter moments that included a short skit on the victory of India’s new Prime Minister. A touching highlight was the students and parents sharing the importance of Chinmaya Bala Vihar in their personal life.



Tenth Annual Summer Children's Camp at *Chinmaya Gokul*
by Shweta Srivastava

CM Bakersfield's successful and blissful tenth annual summer children's camp was held at its *Chinmaya Gokul* ashram, July 21-25, for 55 campers who came to study "Ennobling Characters from *Mahābhārata*" (grades pk-6) and "The Art of Self Perfection" (grades 7-12, on the topic of *Uddhava Gītā*). The camp was conducted under the supervision of Swami Sharanananda (CM Chicago), along with CM Bakersfield's trained *sevaks*.

Each camp day began at 8:30 a.m. with a prayer assembly, followed by two classroom sessions. The children chanted the 15th chapter of *Bhagavad Gītā* before taking lunch each day. Bhajans and chanting illumined the shrine after lunch. The afternoons were filled with activities such as arts and crafts, sports and games, an extempore speech competition, and yoga. The day usually concluded with an interesting story by Swamiji, prayers, the Indian national anthem, the CM pledge, and *ārti*. During the camp, the children also learned how to perform a 16-step puja to Lord Krishna.

The camp would have been incomplete without the fun fair on the ashram playground. A water slide, popcorn, snow cone machines, and piñata were the biggest attraction on Thursday afternoon. The fun activities blended with learning as a representative from "Keep Bakersfield Beautiful" presented the proper ways to recycle, reduce, and reuse resources. The children were also mildly surprised and delighted to see two fire engines pull up with firemen who quenched their curiosity about firefighting and showed them how to practice fire safety. The children were even had the chance to go inside the fire engine and explore.

On Friday, the final afternoon, the campers played Jeopardy game created and conducted by a local Junior CHYK. The game was themed based on camp teachings and tested what the students had learned during the camp. Some children said this was their favorite part of the camp. Family members also attended this concluding day program, which also featured children from the junior group presenting skits with costumes on short stories from the *Mahābhārata*. The legends were brought to life and it was a feast for the eyes to see these little sages perform. The day's presentations were creative, and included drama, singing, chanting, games, and the distribution of various prizes to children for meritorious participation during the camp.

This weeklong camp would not have been successful without the selfless and tireless work of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers and parents. They worked for several weeks before, during, and after the camp. The youth volunteers and senior students who helped throughout the camp were great assets.

The parents called the camp educational and fun, saying it helped their children move a step further in getting a wholesome education, and in allowing them to take a dip in the limitless waters of India's rich culture and epics. They described the experience as, "A summer well spent."

CM Bakersfield's annual summer camp is a small attempt to offer *vidyā-dāna*, or the gift



CM Phoenix, *Chinmaya Goloka*



CM Portland, *Chinmaya Haridwar*



CM San Jose, *Sāndeepany*

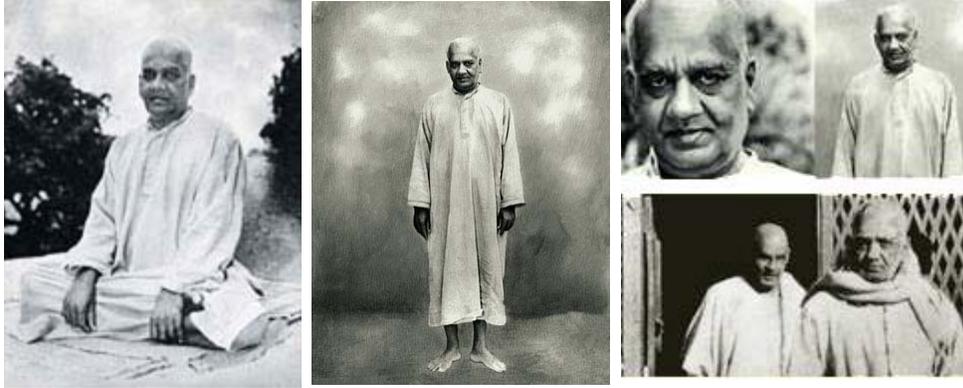


CM Washington DC, *Chinmaya Somnāth*



Guidance from the Guru

Letters from Swami Tapovan Maharaj; edited from the booklet, Guidance from Guru; continued from CMW News, July 2014



Param Pujya Swami Tapovan Maharaj, known to India's mahatmas as the glory of the Himalayas, spent his monastic life in intense austerity, reveling in the bliss of Brahman and the beauty of Nature. A number of sadhus and other aspirants sat at his feet and received his grace and guidance in spiritual knowledge. Well-informed as he was in Vedantic scriptures, his teaching was considered as the most authentic. An enlightened master and renunciate, his guidance was always sought by monks and householders, alike.

It is the good fortune of all seekers that his spiritual guidance in letters to a devoted couple in the 1950s became the booklet, Guidance from the Guru. The letters were written by Maharaj in his own hand, in Malayalam, to Mr. and Mrs. Chandrasekhara Menon. Swami Mahadevavanam published the originals in book form and TN Pillai translated them into English.

Balance of Mind is Moksha

Om Nārāyaṇa Smṛti

November 8, 1951

Uttarkashi

It is several days since the letter was received. The food parcel arrived even earlier.

Incidentally, Swami Chinmayananda happened to tell me of your dispassion, fasting, and other religious observances, imbued with firm devotion to a godly way of life. It is a matter of regret that in sending replies and directions to even such deserving people, there is so much delay owing to my habitual indifference. Hope the old warning not to get worried or vexed over the delay will be remembered.

Concentrate your mind upon *japa* and meditation. As a rule, in the early morning (*Brahma-muhūrta*) and night, sit in a firm posture as long as possible and go on repeating the name of God. Also meditate upon His form. In the early stages the mind will be prone to stray, but don't give up practices. If one has sincere faith in God and love for Him, the exercise can give

only joy; in no way can it be distasteful.

Moderation in conversation is a great sadhana. As far as possible, talk of God. Don't pollute your mind with petty talk of love and hate. Avoid criticism of other people. Spend not much time listening to news and newspapers. Keep away from bad company, for it will upset the mind. Now and then observe a day of silence. Eat only pure and sattvic food. Never eat too much. Impure or excessive food will put aspirants into difficulties. On some days it is good to eat fruits alone or fast completely. Along with it, it would be better to keep silence and devote the entire time to worship of God.

Reading books of devotion and Self- Knowledge, and consideration of their purport for an hour or two daily, will help to lift the mind above worldly affairs and strengthen the spirit of dispassion. Association with mahatmas is still more beneficial. No book, no scriptures can confer the same degree of benefit. But real sadhus are, of course, rare, and opportunities to associate with them are rarer still in these days. In the circumstances, a study of the works of ancient rishis will be something of a substitute for personal contact. What else can be done?

Try to raise the mind above such pairs as pleasure and pain, friend and foe, honor and dishonor. Maintain equanimity. But all this will be possible—the mind will rise above all these—only if the goal is Godhead and nothing else. If the mind plunges into the thought of God and immerses in it, when will it have the time and the opportunity to think of matters like honor and dishonor?

Balance of mind is moksha. It is God-realization. It is all-transcending Peace, all-transcending Bliss. It is the supreme object of human life. All spiritual sadhanas aim for it. Perpetual delight of the mind in God-principle is its real balance.

Affectionately,
Swami Tapovanam

The World is His Form
Om Nārāyaṇa Smṛti

Wish both of you very well.

Received your letter several days ago. Here, it is now intensely cold winter. I hope you will not be worried or saddened by the delay in getting a reply, as it is quite usual for my letters to be late.

One must perform one's duties not for the sake of sensuous pleasure, but out of devotion to God. The scriptures, as well as experience, show us convincingly that desire is at the root of all action. No desire, no action. If one has absolutely no desires, why should he stir out of his seat? One desires physical cleanliness, so he bathes. One desires to satisfy his hunger, so he eats. So also, a devotee performs his actions out of love for God, as an act of service to Him. God fills the world. The world is His form. So, whatever is done in the world, for the world, is an act of service to God. The devotee sitting in the world performs his duties out of love for the world,

which is His form, and thus worships Him. He does nothing to enjoy the world of senses or to glorify himself. It is a worldly man who labors night and day to enjoy sense objects.

Until the mind becomes perfectly tranquil, until it transcends all doubt, it will not be free from desire. Desires will sprout until then, either for good or for evil. Worship of God is a good action, done out of a good desire. As one worships God with flowers and *nāma-japa*, another who follows the path of karma worships Him with good actions. His aim is to win the grace of God and reach His presence. These are his ultimate gains. In his eyes, therefore, there is no distinction between a great action and a small one. With whatever God has bidden him to perform, whether it is big or small, he worships Him. This is an important truth householders ought to know.

What makes an action good or bad is the absence or presence of selfishness. Selfishness makes an action sinful and impure. If one has no selfish consideration or motive for his action, why should he be affected by its success or failure? Why should he be anxious about its outcome? Leave off all selfish thought that defiles the mind. Make the mind sit, and fix it upon the feet of God. Sit in a steady posture as far and as long as possible and worship Him regularly. Be like children living in the present, worrying little about the past or the future. Convince yourself by proper thought that it is peace of mind that is the highest pleasure, not even the status of Indra. A life of this kind is the true spiritual life—blessed and blissful. It is coveted even by Indra. There are steps still higher than these. Daily, unbroken, steady, intense practice enables an aspirant to ascend them.

With affection,
Swami Tapovanam

The Householder Can Be a *Jñānī*, Not a *Tyāgī*
Om Nārāyaṇa Smṛti
March 4, 1952
Uttarkashi

Writing with good wishes.

“Om. A householder should not conduct himself like a *vāṇaprastha* or a *sannyāsin*; nor should a *vāṇaprastha* or a *sannyāsin* behave like a householder.” This is one of the important injunctions of the scriptures. A householder should perform all the duties pertaining to his station in life. It is not for him to live like a *sannyāsin*; nor is it desirable to do so. A householder, wise and dispassionate, discharges his duties not out of any desire to enjoy sense objects, but out of a conviction that it is his duty to do so. He accommodates sense objects so far as they serve him to fulfill his duties, not for selfish enjoyment. In all outward appearances, there may be no differences between him and a purely worldly man. Both perform their duties, but really, in their attitudes there is an ocean of difference.

Rishis Yājñavalkya and Vasishṭha were householders. Full as they were of *jñāna* and *vairāgya*, they continued to perform householders’ duties without relaxation. Confronted with agitation, Yājñavalkya used to say, “To how many persons have I taught *Brahma-vidyā*, and how many of

them have I converted into *jñānīs*! How many of my disciples are immersed in bliss in deep Brahma-samadhi as *sannyāsins*, *avadhūtas*, stark-naked *vairāgīs*! Yet, my *prārabdha* is to be subjected to agitation as a householder!” Were there ever greater *jñānīs* than Vasishṭha, who was the author of *Yoga Vāsishṭha*, or Yājñavalkya, the seer of *Shukla Yajur Veda*? Oceans of wisdom and *vairāgya* as they were, Vasishṭha lived with Arundhati, performing the duties of a householder; Yājñavalkya lived with Maitreyī and Katyāyanī. To them, it was all a *līlā*, or sport.

Without *vairāgya*, there can be no *Brahma-jñāna*. Great *jñānīs* were also great *vairāgīs*. But dispassion and renunciation are entirely different. A householder may have firm dispassion; he may have no desire at all for sense enjoyment, yet he will have to accept sense objects as a householder. A *sannyāsin* may succeed in doing his duty (uninterrupted contemplation of Brahman) without touching a coin, but a householder cannot do so.

Vairāgya means having no *rāga* (desire) within. Rejecting things externally also, out of dispassion, is called renunciation. A householder may lead the life of a great *vairāgī* and a great *jñānī*, but he cannot become a great *tyāgī*—he cannot renounce all objects, because he has yet to attend to his duties as a householder. Yet he may live with self-control and happiness.

What I mean to impress through these examples is this: A householder ought to perform his household duties as duty, as service to God. For him, it is indispensable to receive sense objects and deal variously with them. That agitation should result at times from this is inevitable. By nature, agitation is sorrow and sorrow is the result of *prārabdha*. Yet, for those who recognize agitation and sorrow as a form of Brahman, it will be possible to find happiness even in the midst of suffering—just as a man, standing waist deep in cold water on a sultry day, experiences heat from his head to the waist, and feels the cold below his waist.

With affectionate regards,
Swami Tapovanam

To be continued



Announcements

CBCC Shankara Bhashya Parayanjali at Chinmaya Vibhooti

24 Feb 2014

An Important Letter

To Acharyas & CM Centres Worldwide



Dear All,

Hari Om! Greetings from Sandeepany, Mumbai!

It is with great pleasure that I inform you about a very special programme that we are organising as a part of Pujya Gurudev's Birth Centenary Celebrations details of which are as follows:

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Venue

Chinmaya Vibhooti, Kolwan, Pune

Dates

November 15 to 28, this year

Schedule

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This programme will give a great opportunity to individual members or the centre to offer Bhikshas to all Mahatmas. You may offer Rs 25,000 (or US\$ 500) for bhikshas for an entire day or any other amount. Donations may be sent to Central Chinmaya Mission Trust with a note stating purpose as 'Bhashya Parayana'.

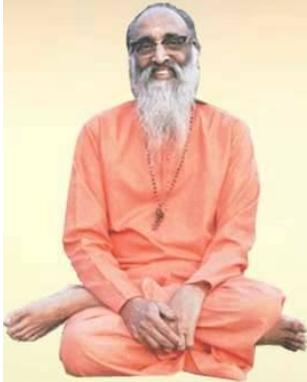
For further details on sending donations please send an email to ccmt@chinmayamission.com

Those who wish to attend the programme are welcome. For further information on attending and registering for the same please send an email to

chinmaya.vibhooti@chinmayamission.com

*With Prem & Om,
Tejomayananda*

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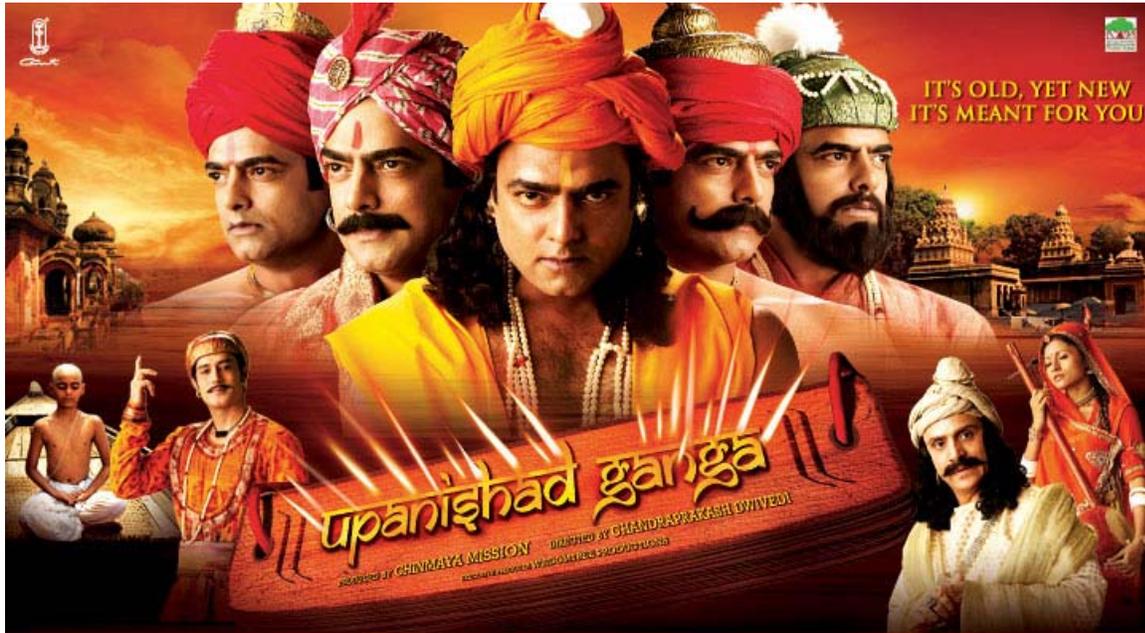
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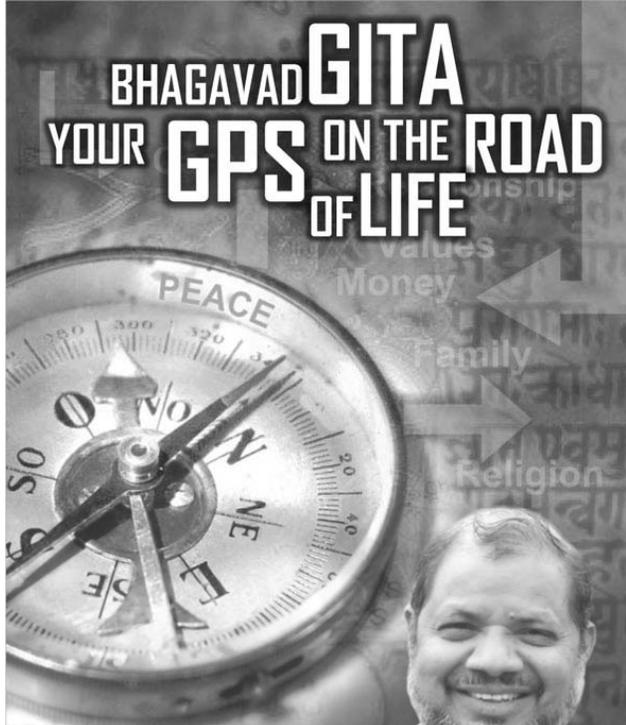
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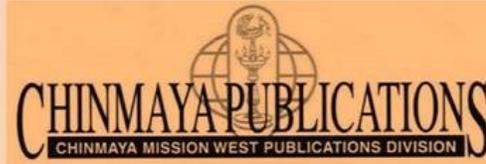
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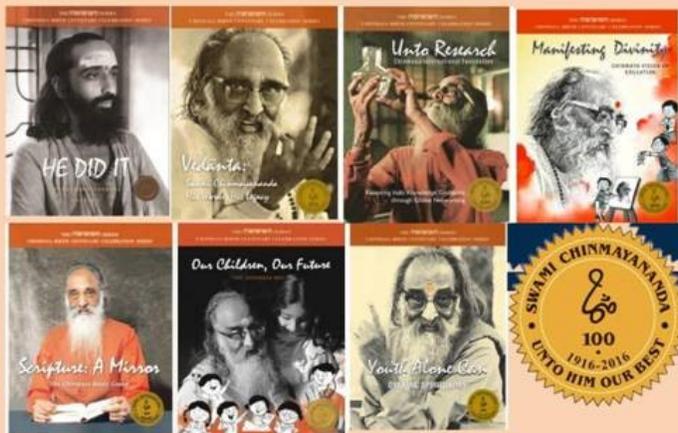
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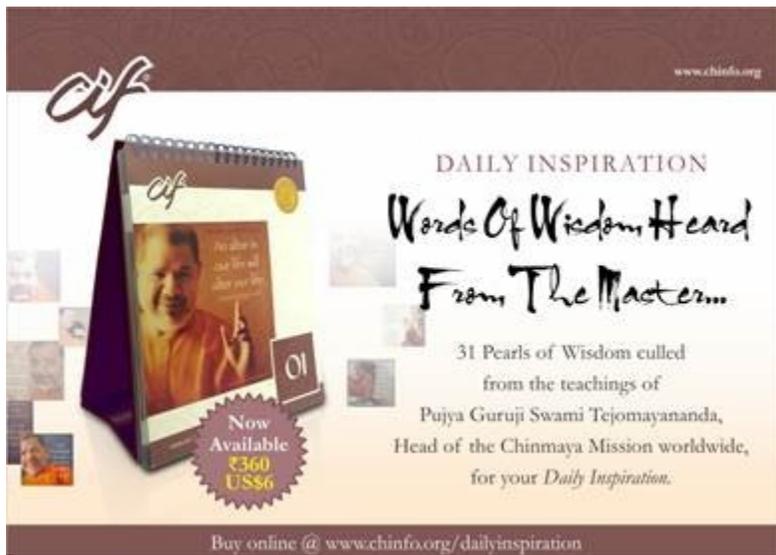
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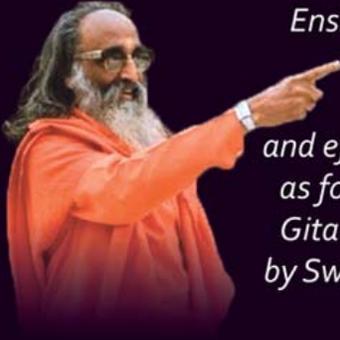
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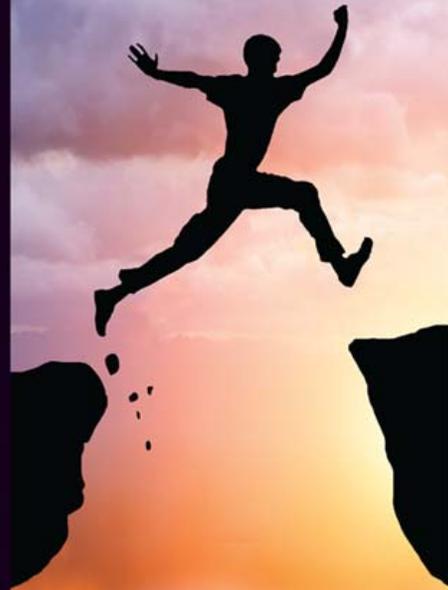
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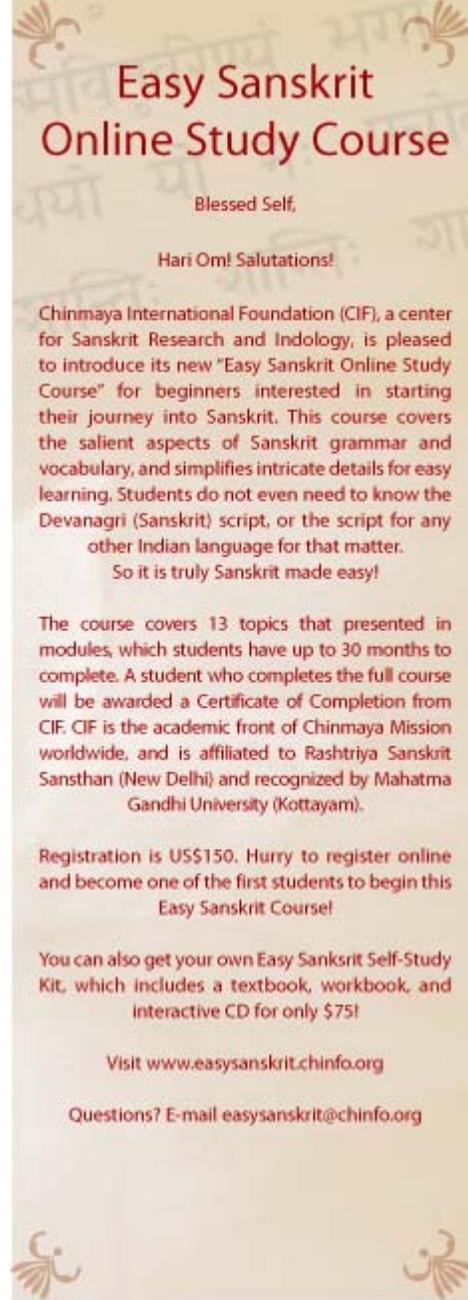
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