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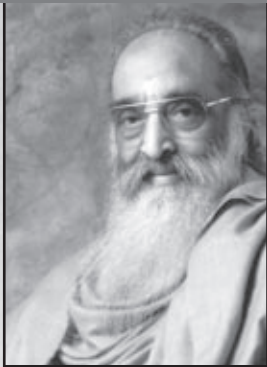
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To provide to individuals, from any background, the wisdom of Vedanta and the practical means for spiritual growth and happiness, enabling them to become positive contributors to society.

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Gurudev's Message



The Infinite is one. It can only be one. Its manifestation is the world of plurality with its endless varieties of names and forms. . . .

The finite alone can be comprehended—by man's sense organs, mind, and intellect—in his present 'state' of Consciousness. The spiritual student's attempt is to transcend his present instruments of perception and awaken to the Higher in Him, from where he can experience the One, objectless Awareness. The great rishis experienced this great Reality behind the universe, but were helpless in directly defining, explaining, or demonstrating it to their students.

All indications that point out the Infinite—through the world of manifested finite objects—are His glory alone. Each of these [1,000 names] is a glory of the Lord. . . . The thousand names of Vishnu provide us with a thousand clear arrow-marks, rising from the known, indicating the unknown. Contemplation upon these can deepen our faith in, broaden our devotion to, and steel our understanding of the all-pervading Reality (Vishnu).

Source: Vishnu Sahasranama:
Thousand Ways to the Transcendental

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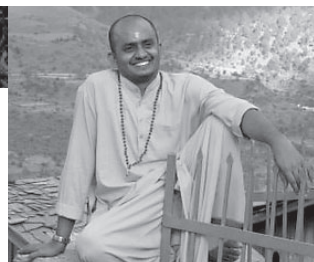
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Things My Mother Never Told Me

Q&A with Brahmachari Uddhav Chaitanya

Continued from CMW News, January 2006



Various scriptures and masters refer to a 'spiritual heart.' Is this what we use when dealing with the world? What is this spiritual heart and where is it?

The spiritual heart is called '*hrdaya-guhā*' and '*hrdayākāsha*,' and it is located just to the right of the physical heart, where the rib cage parts. In *Yoga Shastra*, it is also known as the *anāhata chakra*. In *Kathopanishad*, there is a reference to the spiritual heart that says, "It is in this lotus of the heart that you meditate on the Supreme, with or without form." So this spiritual heart is a point of meditation. It is the core of your being, so it is easier to meditate there; anyone can do it.

Meditation on the Supreme is of two types: meditating on the formless aspect of God or meditating on any one form of God (even just looking at a form of God). Beginners are always advised to start with a form. The purpose of such meditation is *yad bhāvam tad bhavati*, or "as you think, so you become."

When it comes to meditation focal points in the body, we hear about the third eye, the tip of the nose, the *chin-mudrā*, etc. Why are these points given? What is their significance?

The whole human body is a magnetic force (spiritual force), and when you sit poised with the *chin-mudrā* [hand symbol where the tip of the thumb touches the tip of the index finger, forming a circle], the circuit is complete. This closed circuit is just like any other electrical wiring, where energy is conserved within and not dissipated anywhere outside. This posture makes it easier to contemplate on the Supreme. It increases your concentration, and this in itself is a big thing.

Meditation on the third eye and the tip of the nose—it's not that one is better than the other. Whatever you can tune into, relate to better, use it. Why are these particular points given? Because they are the highest energy points in the human body.

Concentrating on the tip of the nose is similar to the exercise of staring at a steady flame; the purpose of

both is to make the mind single-pointed. Focusing on the tip of the nose actually refers to focusing on your breath. [See *CMW News*, March 2005.]

The third eye is also known as the *ājñā chakra*, and it is a powerful energy point. Our body has a total of seven chakras, all of them energy points: *mūlādhāra*, at the base of the spine; *svādhishṭhāna*, in the navel; *maṇipura*, in the solar plexus; *anāhata*, in the heart; *viśuddha*, in the throat; *ājñā*, in the center between the eyebrows; and *sahasrāra*, at the crown of the skull. Meditating on these chakras is a powerful means to increase *prāṇik* energy.

Start by mastering your posture in the *chin-mudrā*, then steady the breath by focusing on the tip of your nose, and then lift your attention to the stillness behind your third eye. It's not that you are totally off if you are not using these techniques. But it is true that using these three techniques, in this order, leads to effective and substantial growth in meditation. These techniques are also mentioned in *Upadesha Sāra*, *Art of Contemplation*, and *Meditation & Life* [go to www.chinmayapublications.org].

What about *haṭha yoga* and *prāṇāyāma*?

Don't do it unless you have true master teaching and guiding you. Don't mess with *prāṇāyāma*. You can mess with God, but not with *prāṇāyāma*. God is all-forgiving, but not *prāṇik shakti*. *Prāṇāyāma* is a highly advanced science and it requires a highly authoritative teacher to bless you with the know-how.

The same warning is given for *kuṇḍalinī shakti*. What exactly is *kuṇḍalinī*? What part does it play on the paths of *jñāna* and *bhakti*?

Kuṇḍalinī is energy, life energy, and much more than that. It is dealt with, in its entirety, in *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, also known as *rāja yoga* or *haṭha yoga* (see Sage Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*). The physical exercises done in *haṭha yoga* are called *yoga-āsanas*. These are a part of *haṭha yoga*, but not all of *haṭha yoga*.

When it comes to the spiritual paths of *haṭha yoga*, *jñāna yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, or *karma yoga*, it is not that

one path is better than, superior to, or even easier than another. It all depends on your aptitude and tuning—what comes more easily to you and what is right for your temperament at a given time.

Throughout his life, a seeker predominantly follows one path—*jñāna*, *bhakti*, etc.—but he can also use other yoga practices along the way, as needed, for his spiritual growth. The three types of yoga are used for purification and disidentification at their respective levels: *karma yoga* at the body level, *bhakti yoga* at the emotional level, and *jñāna yoga* at the intellectual level. So all of them are required; you can't do without them because there has to be integration at all levels. And eventually, you will see all their borders disappear.

How does *bhakti* express for someone who is primarily on the path of *jñāna*?

It expresses as love for the goal. To want the goal badly enough. *Bhakti* is that which enables you to disentangle yourself from the emotional level and get established in the Self. It is the process of dedicating yourself to something higher than your small egoistic existence. This kind of expansion and intensity is seen in *mātr-bhakti*, *desha-bhakti*, and *ātma-bhakti*, in which the barriers of my-ness get erased. Thereafter, the beings and things of the world are accepted as they are, without the distinctions of 'mine' and 'not mine.'

For example, the distinction that Indians living in India often make is, "You're a North Indian and I am a South Indian," which is then fine-tuned to, "You are from Andhra. I am from Tamil Nadu." But when these Indians come to the US, they start looking for a group called India. They want the company of their own countrymen, their own culture; and for this, they are most willing to expand beyond their little states and towns. So perhaps when we start living on the moon with alien beings, we will start seeking out a group called humans. But

the point is that we shouldn't wait until we start living on the moon for our expansion to take place.

What is meant by 'expansion'? Is it supposed to bring us to a point where we just can't stop ourselves from hugging everyone on the street?

No, hugging isn't a requirement, nor is it a prerequisite. In your expansion, there is overwhelming joy. You understand others easily—not reading their minds as such, but feeling an effortless comfort everywhere you go, with everyone you meet. It just happens. It's not an accident or a miracle; it's the natural process of growth and the result of being immersed in *sattva*.

In this expansion, does it also mean that you feel others' pain just as easily?

Yes.

How do you deal with 'total pain' when 'individual pain' is hard enough?

You don't have to. Expansion means 'you' expand into 'totality.' In totality, there is nothing that is not you or not yours, so there is nothing to shun; there is only love and understanding.

You said expansion is the natural result of being immersed in *sattva*. But remaining in *sattva* for someone with a lot of *rājasik* and *tāmasik* *vāsanās* is impossible.

Yes. This means you have to consciously and steadily change your habits and way of life day by day, step by step, moment by moment.

Isn't this crazy hard? What if takes thousands of lifetimes to become *sāttvik*?

It already has. Just for you to think along these lines has taken lifetimes. Keep going: *Charaiveti*. What is there to think about? Worrying isn't going to solve anything, so chill. You're already on the ride and you can't get off.

to be continued

She was obsessed with Light Like a moth It was her destiny To stare vacantly at
To flutter around All that was bright But The irony and perplexity of it all
The one thing she couldn't tell As she kept blindly looking outside of herself
Staring at the brightness Objectively The brightness that Blinds her
Without centering As the one with eyes, instruments, and analysis
As the one doing the work With energy in her system Blind to the greatest glow in the room
She, the Source

~ 'Centering' by Preeti Sharma

THE SCIENCE OF ASTROLOGY



by Jujhar Singh

“It’s all in the stars!” Well, the question is, “Is it?” Is our destiny the handiwork of the stars? Or is it the result of our own actions? Is there a connection between the two?

One person eminently qualified to answer these questions is Swami Brahmananda, the regional head of Chinmaya Mission in Karnataka, India. He is a master of Vedanta, but he has also studied astrology with great passion.

Is astrology a science?

It is a great science. A beautiful science. It has its genesis in a poetic text called *Prashna Mālā*.

How do planets affect what’s going to happen to us?

All celestial bodies emanate rays. These rays affect all people, animals, and plants living on Mother Earth. For example, when the moon is directly perpendicular above the Earth, there is high tide. This is because the forces of attraction or gravity are at work on the water. Now think about the fact that our bodies too are 80-85 percent water. Won’t there therefore be an effect on our bodies and minds when the planets move?

According to the Law of Karma, for our every action, there is an equal reaction. Therefore, our present is the result of our past actions. Our future will be the result of our past and our present actions. So how do the planets fit into this action-reaction chain?

It is true that everything that happens to us is the result of our own prior actions, or karmas. It is not that the planets per se are dictating our lives. The planets and their configurations just end up being a reflection of our own actions.

For example, when a child is born and a chart of the planetary positions at the time of his birth is made, the planetary positions are a reflection of the child’s karmas until that point. On the other hand, to put it simply, the planets are, you could say, placed that way according to the karmas of the child.

Therefore, if you look at a chart and make predictions for a child’s future, you are interpreting the planetary positions, which are based on the child’s past karmas. Thus, the karma theory and astrology go together.

And what is the relationship between palmistry and the Law of Karma?

Same thing. The lines on your palm are there according to your actions. When your son is due to be born—that is shown in your hand and in your astrological horoscope. Palmistry and astrology also go together.

But why is it that when we go to an astrologer, so many of the predictions turn out wrong?

It’s all in the interpretation. Varahamitra, the famous court astrologer of Kashi, predicted that the king’s son would die on a particular day because of a boar. On the fateful day, the king made sure his son was in a room built above a pillar, so that no boar could reach the room. Every half hour, he asked for a report on whether or not his son was all right.

At the appointed moment, the son came out of his room to proclaim that he was still fine. And just as he stepped out of the room, the royal crest hoisted on top of the building broke. The crest included the figure of a boar! The brass boar fell on the boy’s head and the boy died.

Thus, interpretation depends on the skill of the astrologer. It really is a wondrous science.

There are so many astrologers. How skillful are they these days?

Today it has become a moneymaking profession. So many of them only want to earn more from their predictions. When this selfishness comes in, the mind gets disturbed. But those who practice the art with a real scientific approach can become great astrologers.

In Kerala, there is a village near Kanhangad called Payanoor. It is famous even today for the

Puduvals. They are very learned astrologers, but they don't show off.

Astrologers make horoscope predictions for the zodiac signs, as seen in newspapers. But how can the weekly predictions made for Aquarians be applicable to the entire world's hundreds of millions of Aquarians?

When the whole world is divided into 12 *rāshis* and predictions are made for each *rāshi*, these are general predictions, not specific. If the prediction is of romance, what romance will a four-year old Aquarian have? But a 24-year old Aquarian can accept the prediction as a general prediction, as a general trend.

Is it healthy to be astrology-conscious?

It is, so long as you treat it as a warning—as a possibility, not a fact. If a person is told that there could be problems with work this month, he should treat it as a warning, not as a guarantee.

But can he change that destiny?

Yes, by self-effort. The prediction of your future is made based on the cumulative reading of your karmas till that point in time. But from then on, if you take the prediction as a warning and put in the effort to make changes, you can modify your future.

Our future is the result of our past and present actions. We may not be able to change our past actions, but we can modify their effects on our future by modifying our actions in the present.

The best example is Patanjali. Someone saw his hand and said he had no career line! He questioned why this should be and went on to become one of the greatest exponents of *Yoga Shāstra*.

At the end of the day, if the force of your past karmas is too strong to be sufficiently modified by your present actions, it doesn't matter. Regardless of what happens, always continue to put forth all your efforts; don't just sit and worry. Even if sometimes some things don't happen the way you want, it doesn't matter. Your work must continue.

Apart from self-effort, astrologers often also suggest rings and stones as a way of modifying the future. Do these help?

Yes. For example, if you are ill, three remedies are

suggested in our tradition: *mani* (stone), mantra (special prayer), and *aushadha* (medicine).

If you are not well and the astrologer suggests that you wear a particular stone, that particular stone is recommended because it absorbs the negative rays of the planet that is affecting you.

Another option is mantra. You can go to a person who does *pūjās*. Let's say he chants a particular mantra a thousand times for your sake. And then he puts the mantra inside a small, hollow, metal locket and you tie it around your neck, arm, or waist. It helps.

And of course, the other option is medicine. A person must make the requisite self-effort to take care of his illness and act on one of the above options.

But how does all this tie in with the Law of Karma? If I can modify something negative by just wearing a stone or getting somebody else to chant mantras, how is this my own self-effort?

Even for you to go to a person to seek advice, and then wear the stone that he is telling you to wear—all this too is your own self-effort.

But suppose the prediction is that I won't do well in my job. To modify this prediction, shouldn't I be making an effort to work harder or better at the workplace, rather than just making the effort to wear a stone?

If you are not doing well in your job because of the power of a planet, the rays of that planet are counteracted by wearing the relevant stone.

But wearing the stone is not an effort directly connected to doing well in the job.

It is directly connected. Because of the rays of that planet, you are not doing well in the job. But with the stone, the rays are nullified.

Yes, but shouldn't my self-effort within the job be what matters? And shouldn't the planets be just a reflection of my actions?

Yes and yes. But even your present actions are happening because of the positioning of the planets, which in turn is a reflection of your past actions. It's all interconnected.

This means planetary positions are a

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In His Presence

Journey to the Source

by Rupali Gupta

Continued from CMW News, January 2006

We leave the next day to go to Gangotri via Harsil—this turns out to be one of the most memorable parts of the yatra. The bliss of a dip in Mother Ganga cannot be described. Actually, ‘taking a dip’ is a misnomer. We sit on the steps, one by one, and are baptized by one of the three *brahmachārīs* with three buckets of ice-cold water. As Prasadji pours the freezing water on me, I feel the air being sucked out of my lungs. Strangely enough, when I get up, I do not feel cold; rather, I feel as if I have been enveloped in the Mother’s warmth. The sun shines brightly and quickly warms us up. Where are my fears, my inhibitions? Gone—for the time being at least—washed away in the Ganga. No wonder Uddhavji had said, “*Kisi ko chodoongaa nahin. Sab ko line mein bithaa kar paani daaloongaa.*” What joy to sit on the bank of Mother Ganga after the dip and perform *samashṭi pūjā*!

After our *darshan* of Ganga Ma in the temple, we go to Tapovan Kutir in Gangotri to have *darshan* of, and *satsang* with, Swami Sundaranandaji. All of us listen spellbound as Swamiji describes his last days with his beloved guru, Shri Tapovanji Maharaj, and how he always feels his guru’s presence guiding him every step of the way, helping him overcome every difficulty. Swamiji said, “He takes care. Why worry?”

Harsil is the only place we spend two consecutive nights. My tent is right next to the Bhagirathi and all night I am lulled to sleep by her music. After our return from Gangotri, I start feeling sick with stomach cramps and diarrhea. Seethadevi, one of the doctors traveling with us, gives me some medicine. I cannot eat much, and just sleep. In the morning, my stomach cramps are better, but I feel feverish and cold.

On one of these days, we make an impromptu stop on the banks of River Bhagirathi. We all dip our hands and feet in the pure,

cold water and collect unusual stones. Everyone is in a relaxed mood, playing in the lap of the Mother, basking in the sacred serenity of the surroundings. I am reminded of what Prasadji told us about why Nature has a calming effect on us: “It is because we look upon the mountains, the sky, the rivers, and accept them as they are, without trying to change them.” Non-acceptance of what is, is the root of all agitations.

We leave Harsil early morning for Guptakashi, en route to Kedarnath. I get on the bus bundled up in layers, still feeling cold. Everyone is so supportive and caring. Just minutes before the bus leaves, Pankaj insists on getting down and magically gets a hot water bottle. What a lifesaver! The combination of the hot water and everyone’s loving concern warms me up. I sleep the whole day in the bus; rather, I pass out. I am not sure if I will be able to make it to Kedar the next day and I don’t want to hold up the group. All the three *āchāryas* assure me that I will be able to make it. Their firm conviction gives me the resolve to go on. The next day, I bounce back to almost normal—how I still don’t know. Grace.

We depart from Guptakashi for Gauri Kund. Kedarnath is a 14 km. trek from there. We start out, most of us on ponies, some of us on foot, and some in *paalkis*. I am again in a *paalki*. This time, it is going to be a much longer and more arduous ride, but I am ready for it, as I have no



choice. “Choiceless existence is bliss!” is what I have been taught.

We stop halfway for lunch at the GMVN (Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam) rest house. All of us enjoy the brief respite and the hot lunch of *puri-aaloo*. Lalita is very worried because her two sons, who are in *pithoos*, have not yet made it; they arrive much later. I make the mistake of drinking too much water at lunch and I can feel the water sloshing inside as I am carried up. The constant mental refrain of *Om namah Shivāya* carries me all the way up.



So far, we have been blessed as far as the weather is concerned. In the last 2 km. of the climb, it starts raining, and then hailing. We are lucky to find shelter in a wayside *dhaabaa*. We are on our way again as soon as the rain subsides. I zip up my windcheater and drape my rain poncho over my legs. Fortunately, the rain is not too severe, and I reach the Punjab Sindh Hotel fairly dry, but others who come a little later were not so lucky. The *āchāryas* arrive one by one, soaked to the skin, having given away their rain gear to those who didn't have any. By now it is sleeting, and then snowing! What a change! Beautiful, but bone-chilling cold! We cannot go to the temple that evening because of the snowfall. In spite of the cold, I feel uplifted, as if on a higher plane, as if being in the mountains means you are closer to God.

Kedarnath is at an elevation of 13,000 ft., so there is a lack of oxygen. Prasadji especially is affected by this. Despite the extreme cold, we keep one of the windows open so we can get enough oxygen. We all huddle together under numerous blankets and quilts, trying to get warmed up. Satish, Rupa, and I spend the night in the same room, sharing two hot water bottles, checking up on each other. None of us get much sleep that night.

to be continued

In the Land of the Lords

by Radha Bharania (CHYK)

Continued from CMW News, November 2005

Greetings from the ‘Land of the Lords.’ My three-month stay in beautiful Sidhabari has begun. I came here from Ottawa, Canada to learn about and write reports on CORD (Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development) projects. CORD is headed by Dr. Kshama Metre, who is more commonly referred to here as Doctor Didi.



After spending a few days in Delhi, I had the great opportunity of traveling with Guruji to Sidhabari. Traveling with him was fun—there is always so much to observe. I am surprised to see how much I have already learned and discovered about myself. It is quite clear that my own personal growth is a large part of this experience.

As we passed Punjab and entered Himachal Pradesh, leaving behind India's plains for her majestic Himalayas, I saw a small sign that read, “Welcome to the Land of the Lords.” It is quite a fitting description. I am speechless at the beauty of the Himalayan landscape and cannot describe it in words. There are a billion things worth mentioning: the majestic mountains, the miles of valleys and paddy fields, the glorious sunrises and sunsets. In the grandeur of these mountains, one feels smaller and humbler.

My CORD work has begun. The women are amazing. It is so nice to watch how proud and confident many of them have become. Communicating with them is still a challenge, for they speak Pahadi. My broken Hindi is limited and I cannot follow them when they speak fast. But one thing remains clear despite the language barrier: they are hard workers and determined to succeed.

At a *Mahilā Maṇḍala* (women's group meeting) in one village, I met an enterprising woman who started to explain her work to me in Pahadi. I tried my best to follow her, smiling and nodding in the conversation gaps. I soon found myself at her home; she wanted to show me her honey-gathering work. Before I knew it, I found myself standing in her garden with hundreds of bees swarming around! All I kept thinking was, “Isn't this a safety hazard? Shouldn't I be wearing a mask or gloves?” But, as seems to be the theme of my trip, I have learned to go with the flow and enjoy the moment.

I am able to attend many meetings here and learn

about various projects; this has helped give me a clearer overall picture on CORD. While making rounds one day, a lady invited me to attend her meeting. I realized she was a *Bālwādi* director (*Bālwādis* are like Bala Vihar for children in villages and slums). She explained the work and I tried my best to follow, but it seems I missed something important in her conversation: she asked me to speak to the teachers while she attended another meeting. Without fully realizing what had happened, I found myself in front of 40 women who were waiting for me to coordinate and start the meeting. For the next hour, I played a rather embarrassing game of charades using broken Hindi. By the end of it, my nerves were on edge and I was sweating, and these poor women were politely trying to guess what I was saying. As I walked back home, I found myself laughing at the experience, thankful that no one from back home was there to watch.

Each moment here is an adventure in itself, with plenty of opportunities to learn, grow, and laugh. Before coming to Sidhabari, I was always rushing through life. Before reaching a destination, I was already planning for the next journey. I have seen here the importance of enjoying the journey and the destination equally. So I am slowly learning to enjoy the moment, take things as they come, and give up my constant anxiety about the future. I think I'll finally go finish unpacking my bags.

to be continued

continued from page 6

reflection of our actions, and actions too are a reflection of planetary positions.

Exactly.

Okay, so one option is wearing a stone. The other is mantra. How does the mantra work?

As the man chants the mantra, he knows he is chanting it for you. So if you are ill and he prays for you to get well, you will be benefited even if you are far away.

This means results are not dependent only on our actions, but also on the motivated actions of others?

Sure. Because ultimately, there is only one mind, and this one mind is what manifests as the plurality of minds. This is one way of looking at it.

Another way of looking at it is that even though someone else may be doing something for you, somewhere, it is your own initiative or effort that is behind the person who is doing it for you.

If you are faced with an illness, you could wear the prescribed stone, have *japas* done for you, and/or go to a doctor and take the right medicines. All the three are part of your own self-effort. Swami Chinmayananda would say, "What comes in your life is your *prarabdha*, or destiny. How you face it is your *purushartha*, or self-effort.

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News & Events

Chinmaya Vibhūti Inaugurated

by Maya Hinduja



It was blissful to see a dream project taking shape and enthralling its dreamers. Pujya Guruji had been envisioning for the past few years a befitting gratitude to Pujya Gurudev, and now this dream project, *Chinmaya Vibhūti*, which has just bud, will soon blossom into a flower.

Work had sped up once Pujya Guruji announced the deadline for the first of the three construction phases: December 25, 2005. In December, around 2,000 devotees gathered at the inauguration of the Hanuman temple, administration block, kitchen, dining hall, and four residential buildings (housing for 200).



Havans and *vastu pūjās* were performed for three days (December 23-25) for the installation of the Hanuman *mūrti*.

In the presence of

Swami Brahmanandaji, on the morning of December 23, 15 priests from Pune commenced the ceremonies at 8 a.m., with *mandapa vyavasthā*, Ganesha *pūjā*, and *puṇya vachanas*. The *yajamāns*, Mr. and Mrs. Pratapbhai Patel and Mr. and Mrs. Narain Bhatia, sat in the portico of the beautifully decorated Hanuman temple to perform all the *pūjās*. They first underwent *yajamān deha shuddhi* and then recited a beautiful *sankalpa* written by Pujya



Guruji. The English translation of the *sankalpa* is as follows: “With a pure mind, to please the Lord, by Pujya Gurudev’s grace, seeking their blessings for the all-round development of Chinmaya Mission worldwide and the complete success of the newly conceived *Chinmaya Vibhūti* project, I perform this *pūjā*.” This was followed by invocations of Lord Ganesha, Lord Varuna, and Pujya Gurudev.

The evening *pūjās* started at 4 p.m. in the tent set up especially for the *havan*. Here Hanumanji’s *mūrti* was kept covered and rituals like *āsana shuddhi*, *pinḍa sanskāra*, and *vastu pratishṭhā* were performed. The first spark for the *havan* was ignited by rubbing two pieces of wood together. Thereafter, *abhishekam* of Hanumanji’s *mūrti* was performed with various materials, including: water from five rivers; mud collected from under a cow’s feet, horse’s feet, elephant’s feet, the place of a *yajña*, at the crossing of four roads, and a snake’s nest; five items that are derived from a cow: milk, dung, *gomaya*, curd, and ghee; *pañchāmritam* of milk, curd, honey, butter, and sugar; and juices from five types of trees: *peepal*, *adumbar*, mango, *jāmbu*, and *vaṭa*. Hanumanji was then laid to rest for the night on a bed specially prepared for Him.



The morning of December 24 resounded with *mantras* and *bhajans* being offered to Hanumanji. Pujya Guruji, Swami Purushottamanandaji, and Swami Brahmanandaji went into the sanctum of the temple to perform *prānā-pratishṭhā* before installing the *mūrti*. The devotees then carried Hanumanji to the temple, where He was set on the altar by the three Swamijis.



The three Swamijis were welcomed on the morning of December 25 with a *pūrṇa kumbha*, after which they unveiled the plaque of the new Hanumanji temple: *Chinmaya Māruti Mandir*. The attending Swamijis, *brahmachārīs*, and trustees offered *ārati* to Hanumanji and then proceeded to the tent for the inaugural function.

The ceremonies commenced with Puja Gurudev's *pādukā pūjā* and was followed by a design presentation by *Chinmaya Vibhūti*'s architect Nitin Kilawala. Sunil Sachdev and Ramesh Mulye gave a presentation on the Enlightenment Park, which will exhibit the theme of 'Journey with the Master.' Mr. Sachdev said that 'Journey with the Master' would not be an exhibition, but an experience. Everyone greatly appreciated Mr. Mulye's detailed presentation on the project. Thereafter, the MC, Guruprasad, gave the vote of thanks to various project workers and the Swamijis distributed to them tokens of appreciation.

When Swami Purshotamanandaji spoke to the house-full audience of approximately 2,000, he said that two MPs were required for the project: Man-Power and Money-Power. Congratulating Swami Tejomayanandaji, he said ideas have no legs and hands, but when heart is put into them, they become works of love.

In his address, Swami Brahmanandaji said that Puja Gurudev's vision was to transform every individual, and *Chinmaya Vibhūti* would do the same. He mentioned that the special *Chinmaya Vibhūti* badge that all the attendees were wearing had monogram of Puja Gurudev's feet and His signature of Om, which meant that we all must always keep Puja Gurudev's lotus feet in our hearts.

Puja Guruji began his formal talk by thanking the people of Kolwan in Marathi and assured them that once the lecture hall was completed, he would conduct talks in Marathi especially for them. He used the phrase, "*Tumchaa amcha jamloa*," which means, "We both have clicked." He then explained (in English) that if followers do not understand

the vision of their master, then a "*sāadhanālaya* could become an *ausadhbhālaya*," and therefore we must express our gratitude in the right way to our beloved and revered Puja Gurudev. Guruji said that since Hanumanji is the guardian and protector of *Chinmaya Vibhūti*, he was brought first. Lord Ganesha, the main deity of *Chinmaya Vibhūti*, will later be installed on the top of a hill, so that His knowledge flows down to the devotees coming into *Chinmaya Vibhūti*. Guruji concluded by singing the *bhajan* 'Veera Maruti.'

The inaugural event concluded with the sumptuous *prasād* served in the new *annakshetra* (kitchen and dining facility).



For more photos, go to www.chinmayamission.com.

Going OM

by Siddharth Raghuraman

The First National CHYK-West Camp got off to a terrific start on December 21, 2005. College students and young professionals from the ages of 18-32, from different parts of the United States and Canada, gathered in Dallas, Texas, united by their search for spiritual knowledge. The camp was hosted by CM Dallas-Fort Worth at *Chinmaya Sāket*. We were fortunate to have three dynamic and knowledgeable acharyas: Swami Prakashananda (CM Trinidad and Tobago), Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya (CM Los Angeles) and Brahmachari Uddhav Chaitanya (CM Dallas).

The theme of the camp was "Arise! Awake! Stop not till the goal is reached!" Aside from lectures on *Kaṭhopanishad* and *Hanumān Chālīsā*, workshops, meditation, yoga, *bhajans*, and cultural programs, the camp also provided an opportunity for young Hindus to meet each other and share their views. It was "a great chance to meet like-minded individuals," said Saheel Sutaria.

The camp commenced with a welcome address by Uddhavji. Following the inauguration,

Girishji held the first of his daily discourses on *Hanumān Chālīsā*. Jayabharath (JB) Goluguri said that he felt that Girishji's devotion made these lectures "extra special." After a short break, everyone gathered in the hall to sing *bhajans*. The daily *bhajan* sessions gave everyone a chance to relax and enjoy the wonderful talent at hand. After *bhajans* and *ārati*, campers reveled in some magnificent dining. After dinner, we had cultural activities and icebreakers, which gave us all a chance to get to know each other better.

The next morning started bright and early at 7 a.m. (as it did everyday after that) with a 30-minute session of meditation, followed by another 30-minute session of yoga; these were two activities most of us really enjoyed. After breakfast, Swami Prakashananda would hold his daily lectures on *Kāthopanishad*. These discourses "helped me to refocus my priorities and reminded me of what we are really striving for in life," said Mitul Kapatia. At the end of each discourse, Swamiji would give us questions to discuss in our respective study groups. These discussions on various topics were another favorite amongst many of the attendees, including Anjal Chande who said they were "the best part of this camp" for her. The discussion sessions gave us an opportunity to voice our opinions and hear varying arguments and perspectives on the same topic.

Another favorite for the campers were the Q&A sessions with the *āchāryas*. These sessions gave us a wonderful break to clear our doubts about the day's topics and any other aspect of Hinduism we didn't quite understand.

The camp also included fun activities like laser tag and whirleyball, *raas-garba*, and a tour of Fort Worth's stockyards. These R&R sessions gave us some respite and gave the out-of-townners a flavor of Texas. On December 25, we performed Pujya Gurudev's *pādūkā pūjā* and then had our camp banquet. A highlight of the *pūjā*, during which we all felt Gurudev's presence, was Swami Prakashanadaji's melodious *bhajan*, "*Aao Gurudeva darshana deejō*."

The camp included a forum for discussions about upcoming activities and future camps. An important topic in these discussions was what people can do to spread information on CHYK and how they could make it accessible to more people around the country. Together we formulated various ideas and pledged to try to spread the word and make

Vedantic knowledge available to more youth around the country.



The camp was a grand success, with over 60 attendees. Camper Sapna Sutaria said it was "an uplifting experience, mixed with entertaining workshops, good fun, and great company." The prospect of bigger and better camps is a welcome and exciting one for all CHYKs.

Medical Camp at Bhadrachalam

Submitted by Chinmaya Mission Hyderabad

Over the years, the Chinmaya Seva Trust (Hyderabad) has actively served society through various projects, including its *Hari Sevā* initiative to help the underprivileged in rural areas. In 2005, Chinmaya Seva Trust collaborated with Seva Bharati, a local service organization, and conducted a medical camp in Khammam.

This camp specifically sought to reach the victims affected by severe flooding. Heavy rains had affected tribes and tribal living, especially in the Bhadrachalam area of Khammam. The Godavari and Shabari Rivers had washed out several tribal villages, and most of the tribes had lost their huts and cattle. In some areas, people remained near their homes surrounded by water for days together.

Chinmaya Seva Trust and Seva Bharati volunteers found various epidemics—including diarrhea, dysentery, respiratory problems, and enteric fever—spreading in these areas. In a short time, 11 medical camps with teams of professionals were organized. The medical teams conducted these camps and covered 35 tribal villages in nine days. Chinmaya Seva Trust's donated medicines of approximately Rs. 1 lakh were used to treat over 1,400 patients.

These medical teams were one of the first to visit and serve the flood-impacted areas, providing free medicines to the patients. Chinmaya Seva Trust feels greatly privileged to have been able to contribute volunteer services, medicine, and clothing through this service project.

***Gītā* the Beautiful**

by Anu Ramachandran

In spite of the uncertain and turbulent winter conditions, ardent CM Ottawa members enjoyed divine warmth for five days during Swami Ishwarananda's talks on *Shrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*.

Swamiji spoke on Shri Krishna's step-by-step instructions on living a peaceful life. These instructions—simple and practical, yet challenging—included reducing anxiety for the results of our actions, sharing the fruits of our actions with others, and finally, renouncing doership and ownership altogether.

An additional highlight of Swamiji's visit were his two sessions on 'Mind and Meditation.' Through a concise PowerPoint presentation, Swamiji covered all the basics: what mind is, what defines a thought, the state of a chaotic mind that thinks on several subjects, the state of a mind thinks on one subject at a time, and the role of Awareness as a witness of all the mind's wanderings and fantasies.

Swamiji explained the difference between contemplation (many thoughts on one subject) and concentration (a few thoughts on one subject), and then delved into factors that help develop concentration. Moderation in food, sleep, and work is extremely important in practicing quality meditation. Proper posture, solitude, and a set time and place greatly help minimize physical discomforts and help prepare the mind for higher thinking. One can minimize thoughts by reducing desires, developing equanimity toward all beings, and maintaining self-respect regardless of past experiences.

Swamiji also expounded on the benefits of *japa* and taught how to synchronize the breath with the mental repetition of "Om." He said that with disciplined practice, the deep silence between two chants becomes longer and the mind eventually dissolves in that silence so that pure Awareness alone exists.

Referring to the *Gītā*, Swamiji said that a true yogi shines with all virtues: he is humble, truthful, straightforward, fearless, kind, forgiving, and tolerant. Such a yogi understands that he is not the known world of names and forms (*kshetra*) but the Knower (*kshetrajñā*); and so he lives in the world like an innocent child (not conscious of body and mind), full of joy, giving joy to others.

Swamiji also elaborated on the beauty of *sharanāgati* (surrender) and grace, quoting Shri Krishna's loving

promise to His devotees: "Surrender to me and I will free you from all sins" (*Gītā* 18.66).

During his visit, Swamiji gave riveting and entertaining talks for the Bala Vihar and Yuva Kendra students. Not only the kids and youth, but the adults also were glued to their seats, not wanting to miss any of the stories, jokes, examples, or morals.

Bala Seva

by Radha Ramesh

The Basking Ridge/Bridgewater Bala Vihar students of CM New Jersey were thrilled to serve over the last holiday season. *Seva*, or selfless service, means putting the interest of others first, and our first, second, and third graders proved this by sharing their talents and enthusiasm with the local community.

Over Thanksgiving in 2005, our first graders visited the Eastern Star Nursing Home. The residents were delighted to see the little ones. The children quickly made friends and conversed about school, their interests, and Thanksgiving. They also did a coloring and decorating project with the residents. After singing *bhajans* and holiday songs, they concluded by serving their elders homemade treats. It was a memorable event for all and these *bala sevaks* were a great source of joy.

Our second graders had visited the same nursing home during Halloween in 2005. The first time, they organized a birthday party for some residents, with games, dancing, stories, gifts, and treats. On their second visit, they sang *bhajans*, told stories, had a costume Halloween Parade, and trick-or-treated. Each visit ended with hugs, thanks you-s, and I love you-s to and from the 40 residents.

As part of United Way's Family Volunteer Day, our third graders went to the local 4H center in November 2005. There were over 300 volunteers, including all the students and their parents. The children chose from various holiday projects like making holiday greeting cards for hospitalized citizens or decorations for the food bank's Thanksgiving dinner. The *sevaks* also prepared a mailing for the



local charity, helped with shopping for holiday gifts for the needy, and created murals for gift-giving. It was a fun filled afternoon with families working together to bring joy to others.

Sādhana-Sādhya Viveka

Talks by Pujya Swami Tejomayananda

Transcribed by Bela Pandya; Continued from CMW News, January 2006

Even though *sāadhanā* is ‘being,’ initially, ‘doing’ is important. How you manage your time, what you do, and with what attitude you do, is up to you. You will see that your own mind is capable of solving all your problems. Otherwise, how long will you continue asking someone else? You have to build your own understanding and self-confidence.

The last point to be covered is subtle. We often become anxious to reach the goal, and, as in worldly matters, our mind starts to calculate: “I am starting a business; I am investing so much money, so for one year I am willing to suffer some loss. But after that, my business should break even, if not make a profit. This is the time, money, and effort I have invested, so this should be the result.” This type of calculation is habitual for us. And if things do not move or happen as we planned, we feel discouraged or feel that nothing is happening. “I am not reaching anywhere. I am not progressing. Today, I chanted the Lord’s name 108 times, so, at least x-amount of peace should be there.” This is not the way.

In actuality, there isn’t any field in life where things work like this. Even businesses often make unexpected profit in some season; sometimes, different things suddenly just happen. Like in India: The Congress Party won the elections. They do not know why they won and the other party does not know why it lost.

This suddenness, to be taken by surprise—this is the beauty of life; it is so uncertain. Therefore, someone defined life as, “Life is what happens to you when you are busy making other plans.” You might think you are going to do one thing, but what actually happens is totally different. So, in *sāadhanā*, please do not have a calculating mind. Sometimes you will sit for meditation for half an hour and really enjoy it. Another day, it will be difficult to sit even for five minutes. Do not measure your success based on any amount of time or type of feeling.

The best thing is to enjoy your *sāadhanā*—all of it. You must know that you have chosen the right *sāadhanā* and that you are on the right path—of

this much you should be sure. Thereafter, keep on and enjoy your *sāadhanā*. In your *sāadhanā* there will be struggle—enjoy the struggle also. And when you start enjoying your *sāadhanā*, along with the struggles, you yourself will not know when you reached your goal. But those who are anxious from the start will not enjoy their *sāadhanā*.

It’s like someone wants to go to Badrinath: he starts his journey from Delhi, and as soon as he starts, he keeps asking every hour, “When are we going to get there?” Why not just enjoy passing through the different towns, the confusions, the delays? Sometimes, you have to wait a long time at a railway crossing. But this is why there are so many roadside vendors out there selling peanuts—so buy and eat! Find out which trains are going and coming. After reaching Haridvara, go see the evening *Gangā Ārati*. Then enjoy Rishikesh. But keep moving; do not stop anywhere. You may see some wonderful spots, beautiful vista points, but remember: none of them are Badrinath. You keep moving, but you enjoy every place. Sometimes, the car may break down or there may be landslide. So sit there—what you can do? Watch the landslide. So many things may happen, but keep moving.

Sāadhanā is also like this and you cannot try to understand it with a calculating, business mind. Do not keep measuring moment to moment. Do you sow a seed and then, after every hour, dig open the ground to see if something is happening? That would be madness. Here, too, if you constantly keep asking, “Is there any progress? Have I made any progress?” it will be madness.

All growth is very subtle. The best example is the growth of a baby. When a baby is born, the mother and father literally look at the baby 24 hours a day. But even if you keep a microscope and constantly watch, you will never be able to see how and when the baby grows. We do not know when, how, or why, but it is growing. So too, a spiritual seeker may think nothing is happening to him, but this is not true. If you are practicing some *sāadhanā*, some

satsanga, there will be an effect. You may not know when, how, or why, but there will be growth.

A poet has said beautifully in Urdu, “I have started enjoying my journey so much that I am not worried about my destination.” All you have to do is make sure you are on the right path and enjoy the journey. Your goal must be clear in your mind; do not just stop somewhere and sit down. But at the same time, don’t be anxious. Go on. Then you will see progress.

Now I will tell you one more secret about *sādhana*. And this relates not only to spiritual matters, but to anything you want to achieve in life. There are always two aspects of any *sādhana*. One part is that which is in your hands (under your control): you should do it. The other part is that which is not under your control: you have to allow it to happen. This [latter] is a very, very important part.

We must first rightly understand what part I have to do and what part I have to let happen. In our anxiety or our lack of understanding, we worry about the part that we have to let happen and in the process, we do not do what are supposed to do.

One example is gardening or farming. You have to prepare the soil, choose the right seed, and, depending on the season, at the right time, sow it, irrigate it, take out the weeds, etc. All these things are in your hands. But when it comes to growth, you have to allow the seed to grow on its own; you cannot do anything about it.

Cooking is in your hands; eating is in your hands; but digestion you have to allow to happen. You cannot say, “I don’t know if my system is digesting the food or not.” After eating, do you keep wondering, “Am I making blood now? Am I making my bones?” No. You eat and sleep.

If I have to travel, I buy a ticket, get to the airport on time, catch the correct flight, and then just sit back, relax, and enjoy. Once you are in your seat, fasten your seatbelt and relax, because now it is the pilot’s job.

So, too, in *sādhana*, chanting the Lord’s name, getting up early, exercising, bathing, sitting for prayers and meditation—all this is in your hands. Just keep doing. But you cannot force love for God to rise in your heart. However, if you expose your mind to all these types of *sādhana*, you will find that this love will also rise. It will happen. Allow some things to happen. Chanting God’s name is in your

hands, but in what form he will appear before you is in His hands. Prayer and remembrance are in your hands. The rest: leave it to Him.

But we get anxious about the aspect that is not in our hands. And then we do not know what we should do and we do not see any results. These are important points. Even if you fail sometimes, fall down and get up—any number of times. But do not doubt your knowledge. Through Vedanta you have understood that you are *ānanda-svarūpa-brahma*. Sometimes you may lose your balance; sometimes you may get angry, tempted, or so many other things. But do not doubt; do not say, “I never learned anything. I will never get [That].”

The problem is abiding in the knowledge that “I am That.” Whatever happens, know that “I am *Brahman* alone” and try to abide in this knowledge. If you doubt whether you know this truth or not, there will always be a problem. “There is a problem, I know. I will take care of it.” The problem is only of abiding, not of not knowing. “I know, but the mind is not abiding. Okay, it doesn’t matter. *Laya, vikshepa, kāshāya, rasa-svāda* . . . I will take care of it. But *Brahman* I am. This is my true nature.”

Do not get discouraged; do not keep measuring according to your own calculations. Sometimes you will feel stagnation, but something is happening, definitely happening. I remember, many years ago, when I went to one of our centers, the secretary of that center said, “I am conducting this study class and attending all these *jñāna yajñas* but there is no change in me.” I said to him, “You should give up all these things. Stop this study class, leave the Mission also. Why should you do that which is not profiting you in any way? It is useless and profitless.” Then he said, “No, no. There is a lot of change in me from how I was earlier to what I am now.”

See, when you say, “There is no change,” it means you are expecting something to happen. Or you compare yourself to highly advanced seeker and feel that you are not growing. But you should look at yourself only from your level, your standpoint: how you were earlier and what you are now. You will see there is change.

Invoke God’s grace and your Guru’s blessings, and keep moving. Grace and blessings play a very important role, a very precious role. With their grace and blessings, go on and on.

Atma-yoga is union with the Self. It is attained by disassociation with the not-Self. The Self, being beyond the purview of the senses and mind, even though ever-present and self-evident, is as though hidden from us. This knowledge is extremely subtle and is not understood by many even when taught. A rare few directly experience it and therefore it is a secret.

The phala-shruti—which gives the result of reading, listening, studying, teaching, and meditation on the knowledge given—of Kapila Gītā says, “The continuous listening and teaching of this most divine dialogue between the Lord incarnate, Kapila Muni, and his pious mother, Devahuti, results in supreme devotion to the feet of the Lord.”

Source: *Kapila Gītā*



Photo by Ben Passarelli

Puja Swami Tejomayananda's Itinerary: March-April 2006: Vedanta *Brahmachari* Course
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