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CHINMAYA MISSION® WEST BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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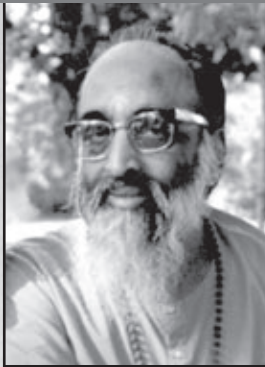
To provide to individuals, from any background, the wisdom of Vedanta and the practical means for spiritual growth and happiness, enabling them to become positive contributors to society.

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*Tuned Up and Tune In:
Wishing All A Joyous Shri Chinmaya Jayanti!*

Gurudev's Message



With every changing vicissitude of national life, with every war, with every revolution, there is a thorough rearrangement of material values lived, and consequently, there is a change in mental and intellectual attitudes toward life.

With every disturbance in the brain cells, in kaleidoscopic variety, we get a library of philosophies from Plato to date. But in India, the eternal Vedas and Upanishadic truths are as true today as they were when taught in the flowery valleys of the sacred Ganga.

Though scientific developments, communal awareness, political consciousness, and international situations may meddle with our outer and inner worlds of objects and feelings, the experience of deep sleep, you will admit, is one and the same at all times. We may have progressed and thoroughly changed in the world's external setup, and consequent inner psychological and intellectual assessments of things, but the experience of sleep is not different at any time.

So too, is the external experience of Godhood. This is the goal preached in the Upanishads. It is not changing or changeable, whatever be the outside change in our gross life.

Source: *Mundaka Upanishad*

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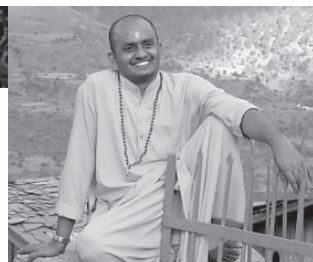
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Things My Mother Never Told Me

Q&A with Brahmachari Uddhav Chaitanya

Continued from CMW News, March 2006



Is a sharp, smart mind required in spirituality?

No. The goal is to have a pure mind, not a sharp mind. What is needed is alertness, awareness, 24-7-365—at least every waking moment. The extent of awareness is such that Vedanta seeps into your dreams and you are awake even in deep sleep.

One doesn't need a highly intelligent mind to realize the Truth. A genius was hired by a large and successful firm, and his mind worked at lightning speed. In his later years, he said, "I wish I could be as simple-minded in my faith as a village illiterate. I wish my mind would slow down, so I could know and appreciate the simpler joys of life."

What is a pure mind?

A *sāttvik* mind, where, even if there are thoughts, there is no identification with the thoughts. The quantity and quality of thoughts determine what a pure mind is. It is not just a mind without malice. It is a focused mind—one that is ready to be applied in any field, as and when required. It is creative and inspired, but throughout all thoughts and actions, there is still no ownership of the creativity and inspiration—everything just flows through a *sāttvik* mind.

Initially we try to keep good thoughts and reject bad thoughts. This is fine, but it is more important for our practice to culminate into not being influenced by any thought in the mind. The reason scriptures give importance to values, ethics, and morals is that these refine the texture and quality of our thoughts. Dis-identifying with noble thoughts is much easier than dis-identifying with baser thoughts. Don't get caught up in labeling thoughts as good and bad. Always keep in mind the purpose of maintaining good thoughts. When I remain uninfluenced by a thought, it means I can make use of a good thought, but at the same time, I don't claim ownership of it. The thought expresses as action, but without a doer or enjoyer.

The realized master is above the *sāttvik* mind. He is in the state of what the scriptures call as 'no mind,' wherein 'no mind' is *Brahman*.

What is total mind?

Gurudev explained it like this: A citizen in a democratic nation has a voting right and this is his individual right. Once all the citizens elect a president as their collective representative, the president represents the totality.

Everybody's thoughts put together is 'total mind.' Total mind can go in any direction. And the laws of karma apply both individually and collectively.

Collectively, times seem to be getting harder and *adharma* more rampant. Different people say different things about our present age. What part of what *yuga* are we in now?

Kali Yuga. We are about 5,130 years into it. Its total span is 432,000 years. Then there is *pralaya*, and then *Satya Yuga*. Don't worry, it's as simple as, "What goes around comes around."

Despite trying times, it is said, "Grace showers upon all." How should we understand 'grace'? Is it divine will? Is this divine will random? Or is grace attained through constant prayer and praise?

The term 'grace' is highly misinterpreted. Grace can be termed as 'divine will,' but a better term may be 'divine existence.' 'Will,' as it is used today, has a completely different connotation. Grace is not something that 'falls' on you when it feels like it.

In *Yoga Vāsishṭha*, grace is defined as self-effort. Grace is that power which is omnipresent, ever-present. When you put forth self-effort, when you raise yourself to higher levels through your *sadhanā*, then grace, or divine law, or the law of being, reveals itself to you. Through the effort of your *sadhanā*, you become qualified to have this grace flow through you. The one who raises himself up to it, for him, this grace is abundantly available. Raise yourself to *sattva* and grace starts flowing through you effortlessly. From then on, things just happen for you. You don't need to get agitated or worried; you will just see cosmic energy flowing all around you—in your *sadhanā* and in all aspects of daily life.

For many devotees today, their present understanding of grace creates a kind of expectation on the devotee's part. To put a purchase price on grace through prayer is to reduce grace to a form of negotiation, and prayer to a form of beggary; it is wrong. No, grace is not unconditional. Grace is an effortlessness that you earn and deserve after you have put forth all the effort required to reach a certain stage.

Grace is always there, freely flowing, like electricity in the wiring, but you need the right instrument to see and feel its flow. Raise yourself from *tamas* to *rajas* to *sattva*. Grace flows in *sattva*. In *sattva*, you will come to see that there is no other power behind your will; you are the power. For now, you are not aware of this because you are in *rajas* or *tamas*. Abide in *sattva* and you will see your own power.

Shri Krishna teaches in *Bhagavad Gītā* to be *nimitta-mātra* (like an instrument). Then why is so much importance given to chanting and the power of prayer?

Because *japa*, chanting, and prayer take you to the point of living life as a *nimitta*. Prayer is not an art of begging; it is about dedication, love, praise, adoration. We don't need to ask for a single thing in our lives. If you believe that the Lord has created you, you don't need to ask for help. He will provide all that you need, right time, right place.

Face life as it comes. To do it, you need more willpower—the ability to deal with everything that comes, to take care of it square and neat. Prayer helps you face life better, but it doesn't mean *namaskaar chamatkaar ho jaata hai*.

It is often prescribed that chanting a mantra, or doing *japa*, should be done with a *japa mālā*. What is the significance of using a *mālā*?

In the practice of *japa* with a *japa mālā*, we are told not to use the index finger because it represents the ego; the index finger is the accusing, pointing finger. Chanting with the attitude that I am not a limited ego reminds the practitioner that ultimately, he is not the one 'doing' *japa*.

To chant a mantra, does one have to be formally initiated into it (*mantra dīkshā*)? Should it be gotten from a guru, or can you choose and chant what you know?

I don't think you have to be formally initiated. There are many great masters who started chanting

on their own and attained realization through it. So if you haven't been formally initiated, don't wait. Pick one and chant it—regularly, perseveringly, devotedly, with discipline.

When the scriptures talk of *mantra dīkshā* from a guru, the mantra is empowered with the spiritual energy of the master, which accelerates the disciple's growth. The point is that whatever the mantra is, gotten from wherever or whomever, the faith, regularity, discipline, dedication, and devotion to it are what will make the difference.

And how do you find your guru?

You don't. If you go to *satsanga* and end up trying to judge if this one's for you, you will fail. Don't go guru-shopping. Your *sadguru* will come into your life when he deems right, period. And when he does, you will find immense peace and clarity in your own living. In the presence of realized masters, it's always like this. And yes, you will know, without question.

Isn't it dangerous for beginners on the spiritual path to go to too many places, try too many things?

Yes, it can do harm if your spiritual understanding and foundation are not firm. You will keep coming back to square one. It is better just to pray intensely to be guided—He will take you where you need to go.

When the scriptures advise a seeker to gather dry twigs in his hand (to indicate dispassion and the readiness to undergo discipline) and then humbly approach a *shrotriya* and *brahma-nishṭha* guru, it means that once such a spiritual teacher has entered your life, always implicitly obey all that he says.

What about spiritual masters who teach that a guru is not needed? Are they right?

For most of us, we need a physical guru. Masters who say we don't are talking from a whole other level. Rise to their level and yes, they are right. They invoke guidance and grace from within. This inner power is nothing other than the *guru-tattva*, the infinite Truth alone. People get confused by such statements because they make the mistake of limiting their understanding of a guru to mean a mere physical form. If this is the case, then they still have a long way to go.

Journey to the Source

by Rupalī Gupta

Continued from CMW News, March 2006

We wake up around 3:00 a.m. to attend the 3:45 *pūjā* in the temple. The temple is a five-minute walk from the hotel and at the foot of the icy and imposing Kedarnath peak. There aren't many people around and we are one of the first groups to perform *pūjā* there. It is said that over 5,000 years ago, the Pandavas installed the *Shiva-lingam* here and built the temple, which is constructed of large, heavy, and evenly cut gray stone slabs. I am awestruck, thinking of how many generations before me have sat on this very spot to worship the Lord. We take turns and offer *abhishekam*. My heart continuously overflows with love and gratitude.

We come back from the temple and try to warm up with some hot tea. The sunrise on the mountain peaks is breathtaking. I climb to the second floor and am lost in the grandeur of the mountains changing color as the rising sun's rays hit the peaks.

Kedarnath is also the place where Adi Shankaracharya attained *mahāsamādhi*. We go twice to the *samādhi sthala*, but it is not open.

Time to hit the road, or rather, the *paalki*, after breakfast. The *paalki* bearers are late, but by 8:30 a.m., we are on our way. The ride downhill is much faster and choppier. I let myself relax and let go by chanting *Om namah Shivāya*.

On our return from Kedarnath we take a detour and stop at the temple of *Triyugi* Narayana, where we have *darshana* of the beautiful silver *mūrti* of Lord Narayana, with Mothers Lakshmi and Sarasvati on either side. It is said that the marriage of Lord Shiva and Parvati took place here and that the fire in the *havan kunda* has been burning since then. We sit and perform *pūjā* at the very spot that the *kanyā-dāna* of Parvatiji took place.

On to Badrinath, the last *dhām* on our *yātrā*. We miss the 4 p.m. entry as well as the possibility of performing the early morning *pūjā*, but are still able to make it for the Vedic chanting that follows. It is dark by the time we reach our hotel, which is aptly called 'Narayana Palace.'

The temple of Badrinath is the abode of Lord Vishnu. It is situated on the banks of the Alakananda,

against the spectacular backdrop of the Neelkantha Mountain. Near the temple is a hot sulfur spring: *Tapta Kunda*. Before going for the *darshana* in the morning, we go for a dip there. It is unbelievably crowded. There is a separate area for men and women. I stand in line, awaiting my turn, but keep getting elbowed and shoved. I am finally able to make it to the edge. Nirmala pours the hot water on me; it is not as hot as I expected. We somehow manage to change and get in line to enter the temple. We had been advised to sit in the center, but I am not able to do so; I am just content to be there. After the chanting in the temple is over, we go to the open verandah behind the temple and chant *Shrī Vishṇu Sahasranāma*.

We are planning to leave Badrinath after lunch, so there is some free time. Most of the group decides to go shopping with Prasadji; I decide to stay back. I am not in the mood to shop, so I go for a short walk and find a quiet place to sit and contemplate. It is not too cold. From my vantage point, I can see the clear blue sky, the mountains, and Mother Alakananda flowing below. Immense calmness and quietude engulfs me. I remember Prasadji telling us that if we look quietly at Nature, after a while, we feel one with it.

to be continued

The Need of the Hour

Address by Pujya Swami Chinmayananda (1961)

We are assembling here for the tenth anniversary celebrations of Chinmaya Mission under a very sad shadow: the shadow of the demise of two mighty missionaries of this country [India]. We are left alone like orphans. Swami Sivananda, who was working very hard, who made a mark in this era, is no more. So too, Swami Ramdas of Kanhangad, who had indeed made a 'temple of *sāadhanā*' in his own ashram. They are no more with us.

In this sad, gloomy darkness in the spiritual kingdom of the country, when we look around, we are almost left alone without anyone to lead us to light. There are *pandits* and *mahātmās*; I am not saying that there are not. But they are not working in the sense of 'missionary work.' In our own times, Sivananda and Ramdas did such mighty work.

Today, we do not find any institution wherein seekers can get personal or individual attention. In this condition, it is all the more incumbent upon us to stand together. And in our total strength, we can gather a certain amount of strength that these mighty masters could individually give to the country by themselves.

Also, in the present context of the country's political and economic problems, with a foreign power almost on our borders, as we prepare for a great, catastrophic war, we are here to join together and take new decisions.

A missionary should not be misunderstood to be a visionary. Mission and vision in life are two totally different things. A missionary must have a vision, admitted. But a visionary need not be a missionary. A visionary is a dreamer—he cannot stop dreaming, getting wonderful new ideas every moment. But the missionary's job is not merely to visualize the possibilities. Having visualized a single idea, the missionary must discover in himself the right type of energy and integrity, and put forth all his energy in that direction until he executes that vision and brings it into the world.

At the same time, over-enthusiasm is a curse to the missionary. It is not possible for any single individual to do all the work in a nation, community, or society. All work is done by the Creator: the Lord from whom all activities flow. You and I are His agents; we have been appointed for certain work, and if we do it truly and dedicatedly, that in itself is the greatest of all *sādhana*s.

Spiritual development is a silent process. Nothing will happen all of a sudden. We cannot immediately demonstrate spiritual development as a scientist can do in his field of work. You will not be praised. You won't find your work on the front page, or the last page, of a newspaper. You will be cursed and beaten; but the missionary is one who, the more kicks he gets, the more he serves.

In the Land of the Lords

by Radha Bharania

Continued from CMW News, March 2006

I have gotten used to seeing the majestic Himalayas as I wake up each morning. I am still as speechless; the sheer beauty is something that I cannot put into words. I have become more courageous in exploring my surroundings. I've walked in all possible directions from the project building, sometimes going down the mountain to the closest villages or

in the opposite direction toward the massive forest that is filled with thousands of tall pine trees. It is the perfect spot to get lost for some time and with the number of trees and surrounding beauty, one could argue that it is also the perfect spot to film a Bollywood movie!

My Hindi has gotten much better since my arrival. Many have taken it upon themselves to teach me and I think I provide good entertainment for them. Broken sentences with horrible grammar, a very non-Indian accent, and frantically waving hands to help the description—surely, it is not a pretty sight! I have also realized that even those who speak English don't understand me because of my very Canadian accent. So now I always speak in English with an Indian accent. All that practice back home has helped! :-D

The other day one of the students from Bihar who is staying here was desperately trying to ask me something in Hindi. I just couldn't pick up what it was. I tried a dozen guesses and she also tried a million different ways to explain in other Hindi words, but I just didn't understand! Finally, I called the little 12-year-old girl who lives on the grounds to translate. It turns out that the student was trying to ask me what penguins are like. I tried to inform her more than once that there actually aren't penguins rampant in Canada and that I have never really seen one in my life. No doubt, she didn't believe me, because she answered with, "No? Canada? Cold? Penguins? Brrrrrr!" I just smiled and replied that penguins are nice-looking birds.

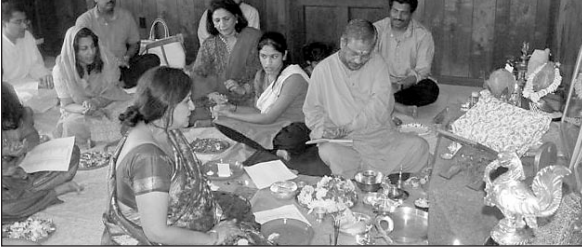
Most of the villagers don't know where Canada is. The top-most question that I get asked is where am I from. At first I was confused at the response—as to why they repeatedly asked the same question. Then someone explained to me that some of them had misunderstood and thought I am from Karnataka in India. So to avoid confusion, most people here say that I am American. Some days, when I am feeling especially patient, I go into explaining—in Hindi—that I am from Canada, which is geographically above America. But for the most part, I too have started referring to myself as an American! I would normally be offended, but don't really blame them. Many have never traveled outside their village and definitely not outside of India. On the other side of the globe, Canada seems insignificant. This is perhaps a symbol of how small we all really are in the grand scheme of the world!

to be continued

CM Tampa's New Ashram: 'Chinmaya Prasād'

by Ira Lalwani

By Pujya Gurudev's grace and Pujya Guruji's blessings, CM Tampa acquired property in early 2006 for its new ashram in the Tampa bay area. Pujya Guruji has named it 'Chinmaya Prasād.' The



property is a 1.4-acre corner lot with northern and eastern entrances. The three-bedroom/two-bath house of over 23,000 sq. ft. has two large rooms that are ideal as *satsanga* halls. There is an additional converted garage of one room with one bath, and a pool. The CM Tampa Family has chosen, with Pujya Guruji's blessings, to install Lord Hanuman as the presiding deity in the ashram shrine.

Swami Shantanandaji presided over the *Navagraha Pūjā*, *Gaṇeśha Pūjā*, and *Vastu Homa* that were conducted on March 3. Swamiji decided to conduct a *Vishnu Sahasranāma* and *Satya-Nārāyaṇa Kathā* on March 4, so everyone hurriedly made the preparations. After some cleaning, not particularly knowing all the proprieties, the first picture we put up was of Swami Tapovanji Maharaj. Swamiji later told us that Gurudev always wanted Pujya Tapovanji's picture to be the first installation in a new center. Just as we finished cleaning the altar, Rohit and Geeta Shah walked in, carrying a sealed *kurtaa* of Pujya Gurudev. We were all so overwhelmed. Overflowing with tears of devotion, we felt truly blessed that, in his unfathomable kindness and love for us, Pujya Gurudev had found this unique way to walk into our center himself, to remind us that he is always with us all.

CM Tampa's activities will commence at the new ashram from September 2006. Classes in remote satellite areas will continue for the convenience of the community. The first celebrations at the ashram will be *Rāma Navamī* on April 9 and *Chinmaya Jayanti* on May 8. Arrangements have been made to bring Lord Hanumanji's *mūrti* from India.

CM San Diego is 'Chinmaya Jyoti'

Submitted by CM San Diego

Hari Om! Very hearty congratulations to all the members of Chinmaya Mission San Diego. I am very pleased to know that you will be celebrating the center's fifth anniversary. The light of spiritual knowledge given by our Pujya Gurudev has reached there and should be kept glowing forever. The new center that will come up there in the very near future—we will call it 'Chinmaya Jyoti.' Hari Om! ~ Pujya Swami Tejomayananda

Chinmaya Mission San Diego (CMSD) celebrated its fifth anniversary on January 28, 2006 with a gala banquet. The banquet hall was filled to capacity as members of CM San Diego and guests from CM centers in Los Angeles, Bakersfield, San Jose, and Phoenix gathered to commemorate this momentous milestone in San Diego's 'Little India.'



Swami Ishwarananda (CM Tustin) and Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya (CM Los Angeles) were greeted at the entrance with a ceremonial welcome. As they proceeded toward their seats, Bala Vihar children lined along the walkway enthusiastically chanted *Guru Stotram*.

After the welcome address by Srinivas Sukumar, the adult and youth 'Chinmaya Dhvani' choir, led by Lakshmi Sukumar, chanted an invocation to Lord Ganesha and then sang 'Jayati Jayati Bhārata Mātā,' in praise of Mother India. The third selection, 'Chinmaya Bala Vihar Laayegaa Naveenataa,' was a moving tribute by children to Pujya Gurudev, wherein the students pledged their resolve to spread the message of *Vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* and keep the culture of *Bhārat* alive.

A video documentary entitled, 'Tasya Bhāsā Sarvamidam Vibhāti' (in His light all else shines), chronicled CMSD's history and activities from inception, and included interviews of Lakshmi and Srinivas Sukumar on the center's start-up, and the comments and reflections of many *sevak*s, parents,

and children on how the Mission has influenced their lives. There was also a moving interview with Nandini and Venkat Rangan, whose home Pujya Gurudev was visiting when he suddenly fell ill; San Diego is regarded with special reverence, as it is the place where Pujya Gurudev attained *mahāsamādhi* on August 3, 1993. The video ended with Pujya Swami Tejomayanandaji's message.

A ceremonial lighting of lamps to the melody of 'Jyota se jyota jagaate chalo, prema ki Ganga bahaate chalo (let the Ganga of love flow forever by continuing to kindle light with light)' prefaced Swami Ishwaranandaji's address. Swamiji congratulated CMSD and said that *Chinmaya Jyoti*, or 'the flame of Consciousness,' is the most appropriate name for the upcoming ashram: "Over 300 Mission centers worldwide are eagerly waiting for *Chinmaya Jyoti*!" Swamiji announced the goal of establishing the ashram in San Diego by 2008, and urged CMSD members to do their utmost to reach this goal.

In his address, Brahmachari Girishji recounted his student days at *Sāndeepany Sāadhanālaya* in Mumbai. His *āchārya*, Swami Ishwaranandaji, had taken him and his classmates on a journey to Uttarkashi, where Gurudev studied at the feet of his master, Swami Tapovanji Maharaj. Girishji recalled Swamiji's referring to Uttarkashi as *Chinmayottari*, from where River Ganga flowed down in the form of Swami Chinmayananda, who had left the Himalayas to bring the message of Vedanta to the populace. Girishji said that San Diego is thus *Ganga Sāgara*, the place where that river merged into the ocean.

Pranji Lodhia, CMW Treasurer and CMSD Secretary, said it is a privilege to be a part of the loving, close-knit CMSD family and the Chinmaya Family at large, adding that *Chinmaya Jyoti* would be a fitting tribute to Pujya Gurudev.

CMSD's Harish Babla presented the new center's construction plans. He outlined well thought-out strategies to collect the necessary funds to construct and furnish a space large enough to accommodate the growth of CMSD, which at the end of 2005 consisted of 101 families and over 150 Bala Vihar students.

Yuva sevaks assisted in serving appetizers before the sumptuous dinner buffet, during which Ashok Bhatt sang melodious *bhajans*. After dinner, Bala Vihar *Sevak* P. Neelakanthan warmly thanked the Sukumars for their tremendous efforts and tireless energy and dedication in fostering and sustaining CMSD over the past five years.

The evening concluded with a raffle for which there

were ten prizes, including airline tickets to India, *Shrimad Bhāgavad Gītā* and *Shrimad Bhāgavatam* DVDs, a laptop, a plasma TV, an iPod, and an Xbox 360. Swamiji and other guests drew the winning tickets. One winner generously donated his prize back to CMSD. In conclusion, each Bala Vihar child received a memento: a beautiful scroll inscribed with the Chinmaya Mission Pledge.

The banquet was a great success, due in no small part to the efforts of the Sukumars and a contingent of volunteers who helped plan, organize, and execute. We hope to enjoy many more years of growth in an ashram of our own, where we may continue to carry out the spiritual work that our beloved Gurudev began so many years ago. Together, we will keep *Chinmaya Jyoti* glowing!

CM Houston's New Lord Shiva Temple

by Seshadri Kumar

The nearly 25-year-old Chinmaya Mission Houston (CMH), already renowned for its spiritual education of young and old alike, will soon have a beautiful Lord Shiva temple in its midst. On *Mahāshivarātri* (February 26, 2006), the formal groundbreaking ceremony was conducted for the construction of the Shiva temple. Over 1,000 devotees participated in the bricklaying ceremony.

Pujya Gurudev, when he inaugurated '*Chinmaya Prabha*' in Houston, in the early 1980s, had



envisioned a Shiva temple on the premises. This vision will soon manifest into a temple that is a hexagonal structure with glass walls at the front, surrounded by a pool of water, with a *Shiva-lingam* for a dome. The project's cost is estimated at \$1.2 million. CMH members have already contributed \$1 million. The temple inauguration is tentatively scheduled for February 16, 2007.



The groundbreaking ceremony commenced a week before *Mahāshivarātri*. Each CMH member worshipped Lord Shiva by offering 108 pennies. Those

pennies were symbolically placed into the earth where the Lord Shiva idol will be consecrated. All CMH devotees also invoked Lord Shiva's presence and blessings through *likhita japa*, wherein they wrote His name in a book hundreds of times; hundreds of such books were also placed into the earth. Every Bala Vihar child participated in the *Guru Pādukā Pūjā* and *Shiva Sahasranāma Pūjā*, through which they learned the 16-steps of a Vedic *pūjā* and about the need to invoke, and get blessings from, Mother Earth, for the new temple.



The Vedic *Bhūmī Pūjā* was conducted by Rajarathna Bhattar, former chief priest of Shri Meenakshi Temple in India. CMH Acharyas Gaurang and Darshana Nanavaty-ji led the *pūjā* and other families joined them in performing the rituals.

On *Mahāshivarātri*, devotees began chanting Lord Shiva's name at 6 a.m. and continued until the bricklaying ceremony completed after noon. Every participating family laid one brick of the temple foundation. The *Bhūmī Pūjā* concluded with a special lunch that was suitable for everyone fasting on *Mahāshivarātri*.

CM Los Angeles: Tenth Anniversary

Based on articles originally printed in India Journal

At the tenth anniversary celebrations of the '*Kāshi*' center of Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles (CMLA) on February 11, Swami Ishwarananda (resident *āchārya* of CM Tustin) shared his vision for the Mission in Southern California and appealed to all to help achieve it. Speaking in his simple yet powerful and persuasive style, he said he hoped that in the next decade CMLA would become a center for all activities related to Hindu culture. Along with spiritual knowledge, Swamiji encouraged the development of cultural knowledge, such as music, art, literature, and language, so that CMLA could be a place where people of different faiths and backgrounds could gather and learn about Hindu culture.

Swamiji pointed out that CMLA's tenth anniversary celebrations marked a milestone to ensure continued growth in the years to come. In expressing his reverence for Pujya Gurudev, he commended the teachers in Southern California who are helping fulfill Pujya Gurudev's vision. The 'institution,' Swamiji pointed out, is not the building of brick and mortar, but the people in it. Recognizing that what parents do today will determine what the Mission stands for in the future, Swamiji said the Mission's most important function is imparting spiritual knowledge for self-unfoldment and inner growth.



The celebrations began at 9 a.m. with Swamiji's arrival into the outdoor tent. As he walked to the dais, two rows of teachers reverentially held lamps of welcome. Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya, *Kāshi*'s resident *āchārya*, opened the program by acknowledging Swami Ishwarananda's role in CMLA's expansion and growth. He spoke on how grateful and proud he was to have studied under Swamiji during the two-year Vedanta course in Mumbai, India. In explaining Pujya Gurudev's vision to pass on Vedantic knowledge, Girishji said he looks forward to being at *Kāshi* to further this work.

After an invocation sung by CMLA's '*Chinmaya Shruti*' choir, President D. V. Pillai briefed the audience on CMLA's history, starting with Pujya Gurudev's first visit to California. In 1988, he said, Pujya Gurudev persuaded the CMLA group to start a center and later blessed the property on which CMLA now stands. Dr. Pillai expressed his deep appreciation of Swami Ishwarananda's efforts to expand CMLA's membership and activities over the years.

Vice President Chandra Sharma said *Kāshi* is a clear demonstration of dedicated families uniting and practicing *karma yoga*. Secretary P. Mahadevan spoke on the growth of Chinmaya Bala Vihar and Yuva Kendra. He said CMLA's Bala Vihar had started with 15 students, with classes in various homes. Today, it includes over 750 students across Southern California. Scriptural study, service, and living a spiritual life, he said, are the main themes of the curriculum. Speaking on CHYK, Bala Bharadvaj said, "The Mission's youth are a different kind of

ABCD: Adaptable, Balanced, Confident *Desi*.” Anaheim’s Mayor Curt Pringle and Council Member Harry Sidhu had sent messages of appreciation, which were read aloud. After the vote of thanks, all the CMLA Board members recited the Chinmaya Mission Pledge.

Interspersed in the speeches, emcee Raj Mantha introduced fun and thought-provoking skits by Bala Vihar students. Topics included scriptural stories and the lives and teachings of Pujya Gurudev and other spiritual teachers. Swami Ishwarananda was also not spared a few laughs at his expense, which he accepted in good humor.

The program concluded with *ārati* and lunch *prasād*, after which attendees visited the impressive exhibition detailing CMLA’s history and activities.

As a part of its anniversary celebrations, CMLA also hosted a *Mahā-Rudra Yajna*, February 15-26. This was the first time a Mission center in the US organized a such a *yajna*, which is conducted not for the benefit of any single individual or organization, but for the welfare of society at large. The presiding deity at the *Kāshi* center is Lord Shiva, so the grand event appropriately concluded on the auspicious day of *Mahāshivarātri*.



The chief priest, Yagnarama Dikshitar, flew in from Chennai, India to conduct the *yajna*. The other 11 *ritviks* were CMLA members, including Bala Bharadvaj, P. Mahadev, Dr. Iyer, Sridhar Narasimhan, and Balasubramaniam. There were 11 people, who, for 11 days, daily chanted 11 times, the Vedic hymn *Rudram*. Swami Ishwarananda presided over the *yajna*, which began each day at 6 a.m. Through Vedic mantras, the 11 forms of Lord Shiva were invoked in the 11 *kalashas* filled with water. This was followed by a *havan*, during which the hymns *Rudram* and *Chamakam* were again chanted with special offerings.

Over 700 people attended the *yajna* and participated enthusiastically, even on weekdays. Brahmachari Girishji said he hoped more people would come to *Kāshi* to avail of its spiritual glory and power, which have been intensified through Vedic chanting and

traditional ceremonies.

In addition to the morning *yajna*, *Lakshārchana* conducted each evening, during which youth and adults offered *pūjā* to their individual *Shiva-lingams* while reciting Lord Shiva’s 1,008 names.

On the morning of *Mahāshivarātri*, the *vasordhārā* ritual was performed, with a special, continuous offering of *ghee* to Lord Shiva. The consecrated water from the *kalashas* was then offered as a special *abhishekam* to the *Shiva-lingam*. The day was filled with numerous activities, including *bhajan* sessions by different groups. Another *abhishekam* was also conducted, this time, by attending devotees. Families came in large numbers to take part in the *Ashtottara Pūjās*, which were held in two batches in the evening.

Swami Ishwarananda gave donors and sponsors special *prasād* that had been consecrated during the *pūjās*. *Mahāprasād* was served to all after midnight.

Inauguration of ‘Chinmaya Gokul’

Submitted by CM, Bakersfield

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda will be inaugurating ‘Chinmaya Gokul,’ Chinmaya Mission’s new center in Bakersfield, California, on July 9. We cordially invite our entire Chinmaya Family to join us on this auspicious occasion. Your presence and blessings will help us make this event a grand success. If you wish to attend, please let us know by e-mailing <bakersfield@chinmayamission.org>.

Construction of the 10,000 sq. ft. ashram has begun, and is proceeding on schedule. The tentative completion date is June 2007. Several members of the Bakersfield community are working on this project under the guidance of Swami Ishwarananda. The shrine will have a beautiful marble statue of Lord Krishna. The assembly hall has been designed to seat 400 people. There will be eight classrooms, a library, *āchārya*’s quarters, and a dining and lounge area.



The inaugural ceremonies are scheduled for July 9, 8 a.m.-12 p.m. Details will be posted online as they become available.

CM Washington DC Fundraising Banquet

by Vandana Bapna

Family members of the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC, which

covers Maryland, Virginia, and Washington D.C.) united at the University of Maryland Banquet Hall on the evening of December 3, 2005, for CMWRC's 7th Annual Fundraising Banquet to benefit CMWRC's 'Chinmayam' facility.

Chinmayam was inaugurated in 2002, and since its inception, has been bustling with three weekend sessions of Bala Vihar classes (directed by Acharya Vilasiniji) and simultaneous *Bhagavad Gītā* adult classes (conducted by Swami Dheerananda). The \$2.5-million facility hosts a shrine, auditorium, classrooms, and administrative offices. A *sāttvik* serenity pervades *Chinmayam*, which is a spiritual haven for nearly 300 families.

The banquet was an eagerly anticipated event, attended by all in their finest attire. CHYKs welcomed and seated the guests, and the hall was filled with smiling faces and festive vibrations. An altar for Pujya Gurudev was beautifully arranged near the stage, amid flowers and other decorations.

The program commenced with an invocation by 22 children, who chanted *Hanumān Stuti*, *Bhagavad Gītā shlokas* and a *shānti mantra*. They displayed true team spirit as they harmonized with each other and offered meaningful renderings. Various children also performed later in a cultural program prepared by Bala Vihar teachers and youth and parent volunteers.

Swami Dheeranandaji's address was humorous and focused on de-stressing and sweetening our lives. This was followed by the much-awaited address by our keynote speaker, Swami Ishwarananda (CM Tustin). His address on stress management featured a Power Point presentation on the dynamic combination of Vedanta and science. It was an apt and interesting topic, and related to modern-day challenges. (The presentation is available online: www.chinmayadc.org.)

The evening ended with the fundraising drive and a delicious dinner. Dinner turned out to be, literally, a magical experience. The main caterer and cook fell sick and only one assistant showed up. Lakshmi, our in-charge of the evening's dinner, ended up cooking a timely and delicious meal for 300 people in four hours, with the help of the one assistant!

During the fundraising drive, two members, Vijay Kumar and Andrea Beri, spoke about their Mission experiences. Vijay Kumar spoke about how CMWRC helped him deal with a personal loss and how he found solace through Mission activities on all levels: physical, emotional, and spiritual. Andrea Beri presented an insightful, touching, and unique

perspective on how Vedanta has influenced her life. Here are some excerpts:

Vedanta has helped me find answers to my questions and make well thought-out decisions in a land where choices come at you like the lights of Times Square. . . .

In a conversation with our son, we learned how religion gives us values to help stock the toolbox of our intellect, and how it has a great, practical impact in teaching us to make the best choices—whether it is about what to eat, how to speak, or with what friends to associate. . . . The most important message Vedanta has given me is what is the goal of human existence. I truly had no idea of what I was doing here on Earth. I was going with the program, but all along, questions were lurking in my mind: you grow up, get an education, become an adult, get a job, establish a career, and raise a family—but how did I land in America while someone else was born to hunger and war in Africa? Vedanta answered these questions and more. I learned to see more clearly the reasons for people's behavior (which I couldn't explain for years). . . . Vedanta confirmed for me the legitimacy of, and essential need for, intuition. . . .

Vedanta has come to me in the form of Chinmaya Mission. It has come in a digestible format. It has come to me 20 minutes from my home. It has helped sort out my individual path and the single goal to be reached.

Sometimes I read a Chinmaya publication, particularly Gurudev's writings, or the Gītā, or an Upanishad, for an hour or two, and I find such a resonance of harmony and inspiration in what I read. On other occasions, there are only 15 minutes to read, yet sure enough, some wonderful phrase strikes a chord. For example, I read in Hasten Slowly, "Now and then allow the mind to beat you down, and smile it away with a sportsman's spirit of fairness and ease. Be cheerful. Feel confident of the Lord's grace, and so of ultimate victory." Gurudev's words, in a single stroke, render advice, provide direction, prescribe an action, fill you with confidence, and give you comfort.

Vedanta is my beacon of light; it is my guidepost in the forest of choices. It is a perpetual fountain of grace. From the moment I started to learn Vedanta at Chinmaya Mission three years ago, my cup runneth over. It is all received as a rush of inspiration and wonderment. For all these things I want to say, thank you.

Thank you, because Vedanta explained how mere thoughts turn into desires, attachments, and ultimately, every sort of imaginable behavior.

Thank you, because Vedanta explained how children in wealthy families can fall into a miserable existence and children of the most modest means can rise to not only live in material comfort, but more importantly, contentedly and as a source of inspiration to those around them.

Thank you, because Vedanta explained why I feel happy eating a piece of chocolate, and why I want a second piece.

Thank you, because Vedanta explained why people throng to Disney World, but why they also throng to Haridwar.

Thank you, because now I understand why the Himalayas are the seat of meditation and why Truth seekers are attracted to such a place.

And thank you, for explaining the mundane and the magnificent, all the while saying and revealing that whatever we perceive out there are our thoughts alone.

Our Mission is a place of invaluable knowledge and growth, for our children and for us as parents. I know that we are all committed to sustaining both the spiritual and the physical Mission—they can't be separated. Let us do our part by giving generously.

CMWRC's 2005 year-end banquet raised \$100,000 through member pledges and donations.

"I am Chinmaya Mission" Wristbands

Submitted by San Jose CHYKs

In a fundraising effort to benefit a new ashram for the growing CM San Jose Family, San Jose CHYKs proposed and planned the marketing of their new "I am Chinmaya Mission" Krishna-blue wristband. With over 1,300 Chinmaya Bala Vihar students in the San Francisco Bay area, the CHYKs envisioned this service project as one way for them to give back to the Mission and to keep the lamp lit for future generations. CHYKs said, "We have greatly benefited from our Chinmaya Bala Vihar and Yuva Kendra education. And we would like future generations to also be exposed to our rich cultural heritage and the fundamentals of Vedanta."

Inspired by Pujya Gurudev's quote, "Youth are not useless; they are used less," San Jose CHYKs launched this campaign after receiving the blessings

and enthusiastic support of their resident acharya, Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya.

All CM centers and members are welcome to purchase these wristbands (youth or adult size) for \$3 each. "We seek the support of every Mission member to get a wristband, wear it with pride, and feel part of our one Chinmaya Family, bound to each other with love and respect." To purchase a wristband or get more information, e-mail Vikram Prakash <vikramprakash1@gmail.com> or Vinidhra Mani <vinidhra@yahoo.com>.

Sādhus Flowed into Ottawa

Author unknown

Vedantic vocabulary can be abstract. While studying in Chinmaya Mission familiarizes us with Sanskrit terms and their right usage and interpretations, it takes a true *sādhus* to portray living Vedanta. During a CM Ottawa camp, Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose) enlightened us in various *satsangas* on *sādhus* and the glory of *bhakti*.

Prabodhji spoke on verses of Pujya Guruji's *Bhakti Sudhā*, which portrays the scriptures as a giant tree, the fruit of which is *jnāna*, and the nectar, or *rasa*, of which is *bhakti*. The path of devotion often holds a greater appeal for the layman because *bhakti yoga* does not have the prerequisites or qualifications that *karma yoga* and *jnāna yoga* do.

An anecdote that Prabodhji enthralled us with took place some 800 years ago, between the Maharashtrian saints, Sant Jnaneshvara and Sant Namadeva. Jnaneshvarji and Namadevji traveled to every corner of the Indian subcontinent, and on one such journey, in Rajasthan's deserts, Namadevji felt very thirsty. When the saints finally found a well, its water level was too low and beyond reach. Jnaneshvarji used his *siddhis* to become a small bird and get a drink. But Namadevji had not acquired any such *siddhis*. So he simply surrendered to the Lord's will and said that if the Lord wished, He would get water to him somehow. At the thought of the Lord, as Namadevji's tears of devotion fell into the well, the water level instantly rose and overflowed. When the saints had had their fill, the water decreased to its previous level.

How is one to develop such devotion? Prabodhji expounded on the advice given in the scriptures: Spend more time with God. Give up common pastimes of argumentation, excessive sleep, and sensual addictions. Substitute this time by embracing noble pursuits like selfless service, scriptural study, and chanting.

Karma yoga requires the effort of detaching oneself from the fruits of actions and offering them to the Lord. In *bhakti yoga*, one need only request the Lord to make one's heart pure and devoted. Shri Ramakrishna's example best illustrates both paths: The child of a monkey grips the mother's bosom with all its might and hangs on for dear life as the mother swings from tree to tree. On the other hand, because of his complete surrender to the mother, a kitten is carried by the neck in the tight grip of his mother's teeth. Shri Ramakrishna compares the latter to a devotee's unconditional surrender to the Lord and the Lord's infinite love for his child. Growth in such *bhakti* results in complete identification with the Lord. In complete identification, there is complete servitude.

A memorable story Prabodhji told was of Hanumanji's first encounter with Shri Rama. When Hanumanji, disguised as a young *brāhmaṇa*, approaches Shri Rama and Lakshmana, who are dressed as ascetics, he is overwhelmed by their presence and prostrates devotedly. He wonders whether they are Lord Brahma, Vishnu, or Shiva. On second thought, he wonders if they are Nara and Narayana. After Shri Rama introduces himself and Lakshmanji as the sons of King Dasharatha, he asks Hanumanji, "Who are you?" At that moment, Hanumanji realizes that Shri Rama is the Lord Himself, and asks: "It is understandable that I was ignorant of the Lord, but how could the Lord ever forget who I am?" Shri Rama smilingly tells him that the Lord only accepts the devotee who comes to Him undisguised. We may forget the Lord, but the Lord never forgets us. When we peel off our layers of disguises, which are born of ignorance, we will find the Lord in our heart, and then we will see Him everywhere.

One oft-repeated scriptural advice is to let go of I-ness and my-ness. Prabodhji brought this point home by reminding us that because of our petty identifications with I-ness and my-ness, we deprive ourselves of our true inheritance of lordship over the universe. How insignificant is our pride over time, space, and objects when one realizes that space itself is no more than a fraction of an iota of a quantum fluctuation in the dust of the Lord's feet!

Mahāshivarātri at CMWRC

by Vandana Bapna

Chinmaya Mission Washington DC Regional Center (CMWRC) celebrated *Mahāshivarātri* on Sunday, February 26, 5 a.m.-midnight, at the 'Chinmayam' ashram. During our weekly Bala Vihar meditation sessions, our resident *āchārya*, Swami Dheerananda,

describes Lord Shiva as the divine Life Force, or the light of Consciousness, that illumines our body, mind, and intellect. Thus, in observing *Mahāshivarātri*, we celebrate Life itself.

The entire day was planned beautifully and executed immaculately by the many volunteers, who brought *prasādam*, decorated the shrine and altar, set up sound and light, and arranged all the *pūjā* materials. By the Lord's grace, the day climaxed to a symphony of harmony and peace by midnight.

Shiva Mānasa Pūjā was offered at 5 a.m. by 20 members (throughout the day, adults offered their *pūja* in turns); this was followed by *Shiva Mahimna Stotrams*, recorded chants by Pujya Swami Brahmananda. The state-of-the-art sound system served its purpose of filling the entire hall with serene and powerful vibrations. Lord Shiva's altar shone with flowers, fruits, and silver *pūjā* materials. Holy waters continually flowed from a copper pot onto a *sphaṭika Shiva-lingam*. Swamiji instructed the participants to perform their *pūjā* with this intention: "I pour the water that represents my thoughts unto the sacred *Shiva-lingam*, the light of Consciousness. I watch the water's flow, which represents my thought flow at Lord Shiva's feet."

In between the regular Bala Vihar session (10 a.m.-3 p.m.), each Bala Vihar child offered his *pūjā* to small *Shiva-lingams* with plates that contained tiny bells, flowers, and chocolate raisins. The children were taught that the *pūjā*, which was complete with sacred chants, was to invoke the Lord to purify us externally and internally. Swamiji also explained the symbolic details of worship.

CMWRC devotees, music teachers, and invited music artists sang *bhajans* 7-11:30 p.m., with 150 attendees. "*Om namah shivāya*" *nāma-sankīrtanam* was conducted 11:30 p.m.-midnight. This was followed by *mahā-ārati*, during and after which, all lights were turned off and Lord Shiva sat in the resplendent glow of *dīyās* all around Him. The sense of stillness and fullness was undeniable.

In essence, Bliss alone is; but until we realize this, we call It as *moksha* or *samsāra*, and accordingly, we continue to seek, resist, do, and pursue. Unconditional, joyful, and loving acceptance of whatever life brings us needs to be natural, intuitive, and effortless. Deliberate, strained, and habitual living is based on gathered information. Our need today is not for information; it is for transformation. *Mahāshivarātri* celebrates the Fullness called Life and teaches us that there is nothing to renounce, nothing to seek, nothing to gain, and nothing to lose, for "I am That."

Have You Met....?

Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya

by Nidhi Kaul (CHYK)



One of CMW's newest ācharyās is Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya of Chinmaya Mission in Los Angeles, California.

Girishji was born and brought up in India until the age of 13, when his family moved to the United States. He graduated from the University of California at Davis with a degree in Electrical Engineering. Upon completing his degree, he worked as an environmental chemist and electrical engineer for more than ten years in Northern California's Sacramento area. In 2002, Samir Desai left for India to join the 12th Vedanta brahmachārī course, where he studied under the tutelage of Swami Ishwarandanda. Upon completing the course, he was posted as the resident acharya of CM Los Angeles. He is fluent in Gujarati, Hindi, and English.

I first met Girishji at the National CHYK West Camp held in Dallas, Texas in December 2005. What impressed me most was his deep devotion, soft-spoken manner, sense of humor, and the ease with which he was able to communicate with all of us, whether college student or young professional. Having studied in the US from middle school onward, and having worked here as a professional, Girishji is well equipped to relate to the challenges Indian youth in the US face today.

Bhavya Trivedi (a key sevak of CM Raleigh-Durham), who had been Girishji's roommate during the Dharma Sevak Course in 2000 at Krishnālaya in Piercy, California, recalled, "We had a great time that month! We played volleyball or badminton with the Swamijs. I remember Girishji always working very hard. He was always either working in the kitchen or busy taking care of something."

Where in India were you born? Have you traveled much in India?

Girishji: I was born and raised in Baroda (Gujarat) until I was 13. I love India. Not just Gujarat, but all parts of India. I have traveled from the north to the south, from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari, and I thoroughly love all of it.

Did you have a religious or spiritual upbringing?

My upbringing was very much centered around religion and spirituality. I think all kids growing up

in India are surrounded by spirituality. My mother, especially, is a very spiritual person, and she made sure that both my brother and I were raised with the right values. I remember that from when I was six years old, she used to send me to this Lord Shiva temple in our neighborhood. Every Monday morning, she would prepare a *thaali* with flowers, *agarbatti*, *kumkum*, *akshata*, a *kalasha* of water, and a *kalasha* of milk, and send me to the temple. So, from that age onward, I had a great affinity for doing *pūjā*, even though I had no idea what I was doing. But I always did my *pūjā* because it gave me a lot of joy and peace; otherwise I wouldn't have done it.

Even though you were just six years old?

Yes. I followed my *pūjā* routine everyday all the way up to the age of 13, and it was something I really enjoyed! Even to this day, when I go back to my hometown, the first thing I do is to go to that temple, because it brings back my happy childhood memories. This *pūjā* played a very important role in my upbringing and in shaping my life to make me who I am today.

Did you have a rebellious teenage life? Did you get into trouble or go through the phase of questioning your elders, the way most kids do?

I understand your question. While growing up in my younger years, I was a very quiet child and my parents didn't have many problems with me when it came to school or getting into trouble in general. But my brother used to get into a lot of trouble. So my brother was always compared to me and told, "Why can't you be like your brother?"

But when it came to my teenage years, especially the late teenage years, I started rebelling a lot. I wanted to be this individual that you know all kids at that age want to be. So I think I gave a lot of heartache to my parents in my later teenage years.

Is your brother elder to you? How old is he?

My brother is younger than me. He is two-and-a-half years younger. He is turning 34 this year.

Did he have a hard time since everyone was asking him to follow in your footsteps? Because of the constant comparisons?

At that time, he did have some problems. But, for the most part, we were friends. We fought a lot just like many brothers do while growing up, but after we passed our teenage years, we grew into a greater understanding of what we meant to each other. We have a good relationship now, and it has been like this for number of years.

What is your daily schedule like?

I am a morning person. If I go to bed late, then I wake up late; and when I wake up late, I feel my whole schedule is completely thrown off. We have a temple of Lord Shiva in the ashram. I like to wake up early in the morning, do my *sandhyā*, perform *pūjā* and *abhisheka* of Lord Shiva in the temple, do my own study, and prepare for the day's classes. I spend some time in the upkeep of the ashram. In the evening is when I have most of my classes. Study and *pravachan*—this is basically my ashram life. Oh yes, I also love taking care of the garden and watering the plants.

Oh, you do gardening?

Yes, I enjoy gardening—looking after plants, pruning them, watering them.

What else do you do in your spare time? What are your hobbies?

I enjoy taking long walks. I go to the beach. I go hiking. I listen to Indian classical music. I used to listen to Western classical music a lot, but I gave away all my CDs to my friends. I also love to read.

What kind of books do you read?

Biographies of noble people, saints of India, saints of the West—those who have not only grown spiritually themselves, but have also contributed to the world at large.

Do you surf?

Yes, once in a while I do.

What keeps you motivated throughout your work?

My one motivation that keeps me grounded is working to fulfill Pujya Gurudev's vision. The work that he has done! What a phenomenal, colossal Mission he has created in a mere 50 years! When I think of that, it is a great motivation. When I am feeling down, all I have to do is read books like *Wandering in the Himalayas* and *Ishwara Darshan* by Tapovan Maharaj. The experiences that he went through! They are a tremendous inspiration to get me going again. I am greatly affected and inspired by biographies of saints and sages.

What makes you feel low or frustrated?

I have begun to understand that the expression of anger or frustration is just a way of purging my own negativities. What are the things that make me feel low, angry, and frustrated? (*Pauses*) That's a tough question. When people don't do what they are supposed to do, it makes me angry. When people don't follow the rules, it makes me angry. In the ashram, I like to keep things neat, clean, and in their proper place, and when that is not done, it really gets me going. But when this happens, and it has happened quite a few times, I catch hold of myself and say, "You are not blowing up! You are not blowing up!" I just keep telling myself that and keep chanting a *shānti* mantra to calm myself down.

During your graduate or undergraduate studies, you might have stayed with roommates. Since you are so particular about neatness, how did you deal with them? How do you see your past reactions in retrospect?

Oh, at that time, I was known for my bad temper. Perfect, typical Scorpio: I had all the traits. But I have grown out of them to a great extent. I have understood the limitations of holding onto negativities and how all these traits inhibit me from growing. Having understood Vedanta a little bit, trying to put it into practice has helped me tremendously. So if some of my friends from my college days were to meet me and look at me now, they would surely agree that I am far better off now than I was back then. I wouldn't blow up on them anymore and they wouldn't feel like they were walking on eggshells!

Is that how you made them feel back then?

Yes. (*Laughs*)

Are there certain things you look back at in retrospect and think you should have dealt with differently?

Definitely. But the whole beauty of life is that I wouldn't be here had it not been for those past experiences. So I look back at all those experiences as things that shaped me and made me the individual I am today. I would not want to change anything. I have to acknowledge everything. The good, the bad, the ugly.

What has been the saddest moment in your life?

When I did not get into the pharmacy school I really wanted to get into: UCSF [University of California, San Francisco].

to be continued

In the light of an electric bulb, we can see many objects in a room, but not electricity itself. That, because of which there is light in the bulb, is electrical energy; yet the light itself is not electricity. In the same way, That, because of which there is life in the body, is Brahman, the Self. No one can deny Its existence. Therefore, Brahman is said to be the origin of all creation and seated in the hearts of all beings as Consciousness.

To know that this Consciousness is Me, is a human being's highest achievement in life, because once we know that it is the Self that appears as the total universe, our sense of limitation and finitude ends. We will look at the same world, but our vision and understanding will be entirely different; all will be seen as my very own Self.

Source: *Hindu Culture: An Introduction*



Photo by Ben Passarelli

Pujya Swami Tejomayananda's Itinerary May-July 2006

April 29-May 8 / Sidhabari

Shrimad Bhāgavatam, Canto 2; **Sidhabari Ashram Silver Jubilee Celebrations**

Chinmaya Mission, Sidhabari, Kangra District,
Himachal Pradesh 176 057, India.
Phone: (91-1892) 234325. Fax: (91-1892) 236199.

May 11-July 4 / Mumbai

Classes for *Brahmachārīs*

Chinmaya Mission, Saki Vihar Road, Powai,
Mumbai 400 072, India.
Phone: (91-22) 2857-8647. Fax: (91-22) 2857-3065.

July 5-6 / London

Satsanga

Chinmaya Mission, 2 Egerton Gardens, Hendon
NW4 4BA, U.K. Phone: (44-20) 8203-6228.

July 9 / Bakersfield

‘Chinmaya Gokul’ Inauguration

Anil Mehta, 4708 Panorama Drive
Bakersfield, CA 93306, USA.
Phone: (661) 872-7784. Fax : (661) 322-5902.

July 10-22 / Piercy

Dharma Sevak Course; Guru Pūrṇimā (July 10)

Chinmaya Mission West,
P.O. Box 129, Piercy, CA 95587, USA.
Phone: (707) 247-3188. Fax: (707) 247-3422.

Though I have learned from management gurus, corporate idols, and enterprising role models, I have found the superlatives of gentle solace, infallible logic, and precise clarity only in the teachings of spiritual masters. At their feet, I have learned more about business management than from any corporate seminars, business textbooks, or technical training sessions. As the spiritual head of Chinmaya Mission worldwide, Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda is one such world-renowned expert. During my visits, here are some pointers I picked up.

~ Radhakrishnan Pillai

On Delegating

When you assign a task or project to someone, trust him completely. Only then will the work go smoothly. Otherwise, there will be a lot of problems for both of you.

On Problem Management

When you tackle a problem thinking it is big, it will appear enormous. When you tackle it thinking it's nothing, the same problem will appear miniscule. On an everyday basis, there are no such things as 'serious' problems. We unnecessarily and repeatedly brood over certain events, and so they become—or we consider them to be— serious problems. Keep your mind focused on God instead.

On Time Management

I know how to manage my time. If I am late by half an hour and I have two things to do, I just cut 15 minutes from each task.

On Mind Management

When I get on a plane for one of those long flights, I prepare my mind first: “Get ready. You have to sit here for a long time, and no, feeling bored and complaining is not an option!”

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