



# mm NEWS

CHINMAYA MISSION® WEST BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

May 2007, No. 117

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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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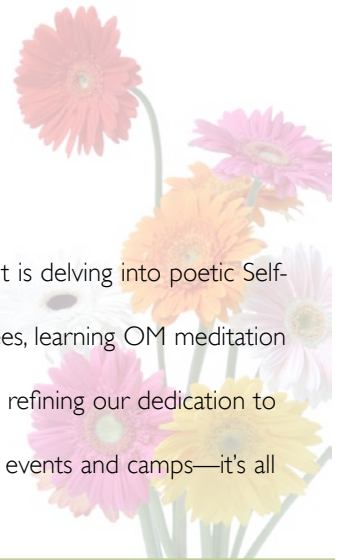




Hari OM! Pranām!

Wishing our Chinmaya Family Worldwide a blessed *Shri Chinmaya Jayanti*!

Our May 2007 issue is filled with *guru bhakti* in creative shapes and forms. Whether it is delving into poetic Self-inquiry, celebrating monumental and momentous milestones, reminiscing with devotees, learning OM meditation from the Master, smiling at the successes of CM centers big and small, redefining and refining our dedication to the *sat-guru*, clarifying our understanding of *avatars*, or checking out CM's upcoming events and camps—it's all here! Enjoy! Hari OM.



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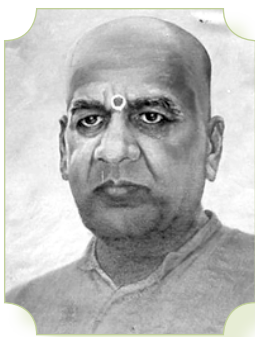
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His Holiness  
Swami Tapovanam

*Ātman*-force can never be acquired except through the knowledge of *Ātman*. Such knowledge is by no means a monopoly of *sannyāsins* like me who pass their days in solitude in out-of-the-way places like Badrikashram. Anyone can attain It, no matter to what *āshrama* or profession he belongs. Anyone can have It, whether he is a *brahmachārī*, householder, farmer, or judge. There is nothing incompatible between the realization of *Ātman* and the maintenance of wife and children, or the cultivation of land. You may be a politician, social reformer, or religious leader. Whatever you be, do your work with the knowledge of *Ātman*.

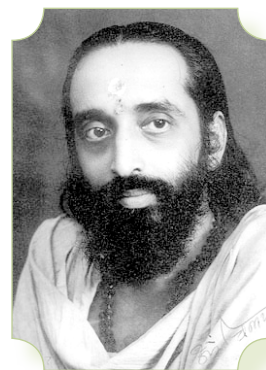
The work of the man who does it with the knowledge of *Brahman* will certainly be more efficient and more conducive to the welfare of the world than that of the man who works without the knowledge. Know you are the *Ātman* that cannot be cut into pieces or burnt to ashes. Knowing this, attain invincible *Ātman*-force. Use that force for the welfare of the world, performing desireless actions (*nishkāma karma*), and thus make yours a rishi's life. . . .

Source: *Wanderings in the Himalayas*



Carve out a new canal in your mind with repeated, good thought-waves. Repeat to yourself, "I love all," "I am very, very tolerant," "I am kind," "I will never get angry," etc. Go on repeating these self-suggestive thoughts and in a short time, you will observe that you have no anger at all in your mental makeup.

Be aware of your weaknesses. Be fully aware of them. Man is his mind. He is the very composition of his mind. When one performs certain actions repeatedly, one's mind gets fixed with certain impressions. We live in a world of reactions related to the outer world of objects. The quality of one's experiences depends upon the quality of the mind that one brings up to undergo the experience. The mind, being what it is, is ordered and set by the various impressions it has gathered in its different transactions in life. Thus, when we control and chasten the motives and thoughts in the mind, we purify it.



His Holiness  
Swami Chinmayananda

Source: *Vedanta Vani*, February 2006



His Holiness  
Swami Tejomayananda

[In cultivating focus at work,] if you are truly inspired by your work or job, then you will be totally absorbed in it, and things or events around you will not distract you. So, most importantly, you have to find that work or job that truly inspires you. Also realize that someone else cannot live your life and you cannot live someone else's life. You must remind yourself of this and therefore commit yourself to taking charge of your life. This way you will remain focused.

[If one doesn't get an opportunity to do what one loves to do,] one can either be a master of circumstances or a victim of them. If one says that he has the inspiration but has no opportunities, then that person is not sufficiently inspired. A truly inspired person will create the opportunities and charge ahead. I heard a joke recently that illustrates what I am saying. "It is said that one must learn from Noah. He floated his company when the world was in liquidation!"

Source: *Youth: Keeping the Balance*

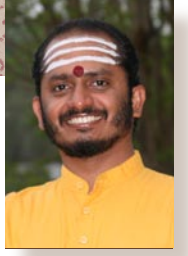
([Click here for Pujya Guruji's Itinerary](#))

## Tasmai Shri Gurave Namaha

Talks on *Guru Stotram* by Brahmachari Uddhav Chaitanya

Transcribed by Rupali Gupta

Continued from CMW News, March 2007



Once, Gurudev made a powerful statement: “Cry not for me when I am not here. Dropping this physical form, I shall reach you from different counters.” Know that whatever form you prostrate to and take blessings from is your own guru blessing you through that form. Understanding this is very necessary for a disciple. Otherwise, we tend to get easily confused. Neither can we afford to be fanatical, nor refuse sacred blessings from different sources.

Once we understand that the guru cannot be limited to one physical body, we truly understand the guru’s nature is *ādi-anādi*: Beginning and beginningless. He is *parama daivatam*. The moment we accept the master as nothing less than God Himself, this knowledge subtly transforms how we relate to everyone and everything around us.

When I was growing up in India, I had a neighbor who worked as a railway guard. It was funny to listen to the language he used. When he got angry with his children for being too slow, he would say, “Why are you working like a goods (cargo) train? Why can’t you work like a super-fast express? I have already given you the green signal!” He used train metaphors in all his thoughts and expressions because he found it so easy to draw from his daily work experiences. So too, if we draw from our experiences with our guru, recognizing the guru as the Lord Himself, we grow out of our body identification and stop expressing in this world as a limited body.

Having taught us to recognize the eternal and omnipresent guru *tattva*, it is not necessary for the master to come down to our level and live with us. Yet he does so, because *yad yad ācharati shreshṭhah tat tad evetaro janāḥ; sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate* (*Gita*, Ch. 3), or “whatever a high-principled, exemplary role model does in his life, we implicitly follow.”

During a Bala Vihar camp in India, a brother and sister presented a skit. The sister was playing the part of a wife and the brother was playing the part of a husband. The husband enters and sees that his wife sitting on the sofa, her feet up on a stool, reading a magazine, and watching TV. He throws aside his briefcase, coat, shoes, and tie, glares at his wife, and barks, “*Kucbbh chai-vai milegi?*” (Will I get some hot tea or not?)”

Then, *Shrimati uvācha*: “*Roj roj bolnaa partaa hai kyaa? Fridge mein pari hai!*” (Do I have to tell you everyday? It’s in the fridge!) Go! Heat it up and drink it!”

The brother (fifth grade) and sister (seventh grade) presented this drama for 15 minutes. At this tender age, their spontaneity and delivery was hilarious, but the sad part was that it was all inspired from their home life. We are tuned to, and trained by, what happens in our surroundings and the actions of those whom we accept as *shreshṭṭha* in our lives. For those children, their parents were their role models and they would soon be imitating them. The masters carefully live their lives following the scriptures just to lead their students to the ultimate pinnacle of perfection.

When I first met Gurudev, there was a lot of bubbling enthusiasm to realize God and understand the meaning of spirituality and *samādhi*. I had also recently read about Swami Vivekananda’s meetings with Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. So I went to Gurudev with a list of questions, hoping to bombard him and get my answers like Vivekananda did. With this attitude, expecting Gurudev to tell me different kinds of *sādhana* or *abhyāsa*, I said, “Swamiji, I want to meditate and realize *Paramātmā*.”

He must have had a good laugh within, but he replied, “That is fine. I will give you one spiritual practice. If you can follow it, it will lead you to a good path.” At that time, his instruction did not



sound sensible to me, but it makes very good sense now. He said, “We have numerous accounts of the lives of mahatmas. Search for the biographies and autobiographies of such mahatmas and go through them—not like a novel. Read through every page and every line, understanding the essence.” He suggested 15-16 names. I was taken aback. I had come to him for meditation, for *samādhi*, for me. Why was he telling me to read books about other people? This reaction came in my mind then, and it was only later that I understood that reading the vivid and detailed biographies and autobiographies of mahatmas encourages us to live that same elevated spiritual life. Because whatever the scriptures have stated, these people have lived practically in their lives. The moment we are confused, the experiences of masters who faced similar problems give us the courage to rise above our doubts and confusions, and live a spiritual life. *Sarva-shruti-shiro-ratna*: Indeed, these masters are the crown jewels of our scriptures.

To be blessed to be introduced personally to a living guru is the result of a person’s *punya* (meritorious deeds). The *punya phala* is reaching the feet of the master. Our job is done once we reach the master. Our *punya*, our *sukrta*, all that we have to do, is done. Now it is the master’s responsibility to direct us, teach us, and tune us to see the Truth that is *akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalākāram*.

Suppose you are planning to go to a resort for the weekend. Normally, when *brahmachārīs* travel, there isn’t much packing required. *Do kapade yeh le liye, do kapade roh le liye* (take a couple of these clothes and a couple of those). If you are going with the whole family, you need a checklist. You rush to the airport in tension-o-tension and get your boarding passes, still trying to remember if you forgot something. Only once you have boarded the plane and settled in your seat do you really feel there is nothing more that can be done/changed. All that you had to do comes to an end. Now there’s nothing to do other than sit back and relax; the pilot will take you to your destination.

Similarly, if we are sitting here today, in front of the master, it is the result of our *punya*. So what do we have to do? Sit back and relax. Let him function. I still vividly remember one of Gurudev’s statements: “Even when I leave the body, I will be waiting at the gate to see that each one of you enters. And then I will enter.” He has taken up this duty. All we have to do is let him fulfill his responsibilities. This art of the guru functioning through us is called

*sharanāgati* (surrender). More than the Sanskrit word, I love the English word, ‘surrender.’ It speaks volumes. ‘Surrender’ in Hinglish means *meraa sar unke under hai*, or “I am under His protection.”

Before I came to the US, Guruji called me up and said, “Prepare your passport and visa to go to the US.” I wanted to postpone it or avoid it altogether. I tried all my logic, but Guruji had an answer for every point I tried to make and he knew I wasn’t going to say no in the end. After hearing me out, he made one powerful statement that completely shut me up because I did not have any logic to refute it: “*Dekho bhaiya, sharanāgati mein ‘par’ nahin hote.*” In English, this statement has two meanings: If you say you have really surrendered, you do not have any if-s, and-s, or but-s. We can’t say, “I have a lot of faith and I have surrendered, but . . .” *Par* also means “wings.” If you have really surrendered, you do not have wings to fly off to wherever or whatever you want. It is the master’s responsibility to direct you and take you to the other shore.

The word *namana* beautifully expresses the essence of surrender. *Na mana iti namana*—where my will, my *mana* (mind), stops functioning and lets the master function through me. There is a profound saying by Kabirdasji: “*Prema ki gali ati saankri, jahaan mein do na samaayen,*” meaning “the path of love and surrender is so narrow it cannot accommodate two people at the same time.” *Jab main thaa to hari nahin, jab hari hai to main nahin.* As long as I think I am the one who has surrendered, I am the one who is trying to do *sādhana*, ‘I’ remains and I am at square one. The day I know it is not this ‘I’ that has to function, but He alone, is the day I allow the ‘I’ to be annihilated by my Lord who stands before me as my guru.



to be continued

Brahmachari Uddhav Chaitanya is the resident acharya of Chinmaya Mission Dallas-Fort Worth and has been a contributing columnist for 'Spiritual Trails' since May 2004.

[About the Author](#)

The Sanskrit symbol OM, also written as AUM, is the word representing God. All other words for God are limited in their significance since adjectives must be added to differentiate the personal, impersonal, or absolute God. The word OM, however, encompasses all the aspects of God and therefore may be accepted by everyone. Of all the mantras, the most powerful and significant one is this single-syllable incantation called the *praṇava* (OM). Literature on the significance of Vedic mantras is voluminous. Nowhere in this world can we meet with a more sacred symbol that has such a vast significance.

From Vedic times to present day, the word OM has been taken as an aid to meditation by spiritual aspirants. It is accepted both as one with *Brahman* and as the medium connecting man and God. The entire history of OM is in the revelation of the Vedas and the declarations of the Upanishads, and this history, in the hands of the later philosophers, developed into *sphoṭa-vāda*, or “philosophy of the word.”

The perceptible universe is the form, behind which stands the Eternal, the Inexpressible, the *sphoṭa*, manifested as the word. This eternal *sphoṭa*, the essential material basis for all ideas or names, is the power through which God creates the universe. *Isvara—Brahman* as if conditioned by *māyā*—first manifests as the *sphoṭa*, the inexpressible word, out of which He evolves as the concrete, sensible world.

There is a verse in the Vedas: *Prajāpati vai idam agre āsīt*, or “In the beginning was Prajapati (*Brahman*).” *Tasya vāg dvitīya āsīt*, or “With Whom was the word.” *Vāg vai paramam Brahman*, or “And the word was verily the supreme *Brahman*.” The idea belongs to Hinduism; in the Bible, we read it repeated: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”

*Maitrayani Upanishad* tells of 1) *Brahman* without words and 2) word-*Brahman*: the syllable OM, also called *praṇava*, or that which pervades life or runs through *prāṇa*. *Taittiriya Upanishad* indicates OM as “the sheath of *Brahman*,” or the container for the Supreme. Therefore, invoking OM is invoking the Supreme.

In every song piece, there are three aspects: the meaning of the song, the laws of music, and the sound of the song. Similarly, in OM there are three aspects: the mere sound (the mantras pronounced by the mouth), the meaning of the syllable that is to be realized through feeling, and the application of OM to your character (singing it in your actions and so, through your life).

to be continued

# A Tribute

Excerpt from 'The Chinmaya Movement' in Preservation of Eternal Wisdom (1984)

Pujya Gurudev Swami

Chinmayananda is a spiritual master whose service toward the cultural and spiritual revival will, without doubt, be recorded by history.

At times of national need, whether in war or famine, the Chinmaya Movement has always come forward to lend its broad shoulders for the cause. Recognizing his selfless service to humanity, as a token of gratitude, the Vice President of India recently presented to Swamiji a *tāmra pātra* (metal plate) at the Bombay Citizens' Reception. [Excerpts of the inscribed tribute are given below.]

“His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda, in the name of *Sanātana Dharma*, bequeathed to the entire human race by India's *rishis* (seers) and *munis* (sages) at the beginning of time . . . . We the citizens of Bombay heartily welcome you as a dynamic torchbearer and a shining symbol of India's age-old, but ever fresh heritage. We venerate you as Gurudeva, the innovator of a unique *sādhanaśāla*, harmoniously blending, in the true spirit of *Bhāratīya Sanskriti*, the finest features of the ancient *gurukula* and modern educational systems . . . transcending caste, creed, religious, and national boundaries . . . to preserve, protect, and promote ethical and spiritual values . . . . We hail you as a pacesetter treading the path blazed by Swami Vivekananda, Swami Rama Tirtha, and other great modern masters in transmitting the life-giving, invigorating, and man-molding message of the Vedas, Upanishads, Itihasas, Puranas, and the *Gita* . . . to the four corners of the world. We revere you as luminous lodestar in the perennial procession of minstrels of God adumbrated by Bhagavan Shri Krishna . . . in the *Gita*. We greet you as one of the greatest living spiritual dynamos ceaselessly striving to kindle the light in, and dispel the darkness from, the minds of millions of men and women by providing wholesome food for the soul. We bow to you in deep reverence and eternal gratitude for blessing us with the alchemy to transmute our base passions, frailties, and limitations into the pure gold of devotion to God, thereby helping us to help ourselves to give meaning and purpose to our lives, individually and collectively. And as a humble token of our soulful *guru dakṣiṇā*, in an attitude of *Isvara-praṇidhāna*, and in prayerful humility, we pledge to you, Pujya Swamiji, with all our heart and soul, our firm will and our dedicated efforts to steadfastly foster ethical and spiritual values among all people and nations, for which you have consecrated your life.”

# In His Presence

## Teachers and Teaching

Reprinted from Vedanta Vani, July 2004

Gurudev's methods of teaching were as various as the people who came to learn from him. Some he prodded gently and lovingly, and yet others he brought to a state of surrender by allowing them to attend to him in his daily needs. And for the same person, his method of bringing a particular lesson home varied according to the state of mind of the student at that moment.

Students at his *Sandeepany* institutes received particular attention. He said in a letter to a devotee about his work with the *brahmachārīs* who had begun their work of service and teaching: "Sweepers go out and clean the street gutters and in the process they get dirty. Then they need to go home to wash themselves and their clothes. They are then ready to go out and get dirty once again. So it is with my *brahmachārīs* and *brahmachārīṇīs*. I send them out into the world and they get dirty. They come back to me all dirtied up—and with a lot of patience, a touch of the whip, and a lot of love, I clean them up and send them out into the world again. And do it goes on. All I can do is hope that one day they won't need to come back at all!"

This is what Gurudev meant when he said, "I am not a mule guru." He was always inspiring us, teaching us, cajoling us to raise our minds every higher toward the Source of all life, but he refused to make pretenses about carrying anyone into God-realization on his back. In fact, over and over, in many ways, he reminded us that he was but an instrument of the Higher and a catalyst for our own striving toward God-realization.

## Dialogue with Shri Nisargadatta Maharaj

Excerpt from I Am That

**Question:** All teachers advise to meditate. What is the purpose of meditation?

**Maharaj:** We know the outer world of sensations

and actions. But of our inner world of thoughts and feelings, we know very little. The primary purpose of meditation is to become conscious of, and familiar with, our inner life. The ultimate purpose is to reach the source of life and consciousness. Incidentally, practice of meditation deeply affects our character.

We are slaves to what we do not know. Whatever vice or weakness in ourselves we discover, [when we] understand its causes and its workings, we overcome it by the very knowing; the unconscious dissolves when brought into the conscious. The dissolution of the unconscious releases energy; the mind feels adequate and becomes quiet.

My teacher told me to tenaciously hold on to the sense 'I am' and not to swerve from it even for a moment. I did my best to follow his advice, and in a comparatively short time, I realized within myself the truth of his teaching. All I did was to remember his teaching, his face, his words—constantly. This brought an end to the mind; in the stillness of the mind I saw myself as I am—unbound.

I simply followed (my teacher's) instruction, which was to focus the mind on pure Being—"I am"—and stay in it. I used to sit for hours together, with nothing but the 'I am' in my mind; and soon, peace and joy, and a deep all-embracing love became my normal state. In it all disappeared—myself, my Guru, the life I lived, the world around me. Only peace remained, and unfathomable silence.

My Guru ordered me to attend to the sense 'I am' and to give attention to nothing else. I just obeyed. I did not follow any particular course of breathing, or meditation, or study of scriptures. Whatever happened, I would turn away my attention from it and remain with the sense 'I am.'

It may look too simple, even crude. My only reason for doing it was that my Guru told me so. Yet, it worked! Obedience is a powerful solvent of all desires and fears.





## Blessings after Death

Reprinted from At Every Breath, A Teaching

At a spiritual camp in *Krishnalaya* in 1992, a group of devotees were sitting in satsang with Gurudev, who was seated in front of a row of stately fir trees next to his kutiya. A woman, her mind filled with thoughts about Gurudev's delicate health and advancing years (75), asked: "Swamiji, is it true that the guru's blessings to his devotees increase after he has dropped his body?"

Gurudev answered, "If he is a real guru, he will have dropped his body long ago. The physical guru you think you see before you is only the mind's projection. The real guru is always there, ready to bless you."

## The Vastness

by Mimi Robins

*In the Vastness of subtle energy*

*Infused with consciousness,*

*Oneness*

*Swirls through oceanic currents*

*Carrying singular bubbles,*

*Separated from the Vastness by*

*A fragile membrane formed by memories*

*Reflecting past actions*

*In a cause and effect dance with the cosmos.*

*Each small bubble of manifest consciousness,*

*Tossed in the restless sea of dynamic vibrations,*

*Seeks uniqueness . . .*

*Yet yearns for absorption back into*

*The Vastness of our Forever Being.*

## Pujya Gurudev As I See Him

by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

The Upanishads, *Gita*, and innumerable spiritual texts and works use the most fascinating and powerful words to 'describe' the indescribable Brahman. Every one of these words also describes Pujya Gurudev for *Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati* (the knower of *Brahman* is verily *Brahman*). I cannot describe Him better than these great scriptures, yet I will try.

*Shri Dakshinamurti Stotram* and *Upadesha Saram* describe the Lord as *ashṭa-mūrti*, or "eight-faceted" divinity. For us, Pujya Gurudev is indeed the Lord Himself. Hence, I will present some of my ideas and reminiscences about Him through eight of His countless facets.

### ☞ A Peerless Personality

Even though the guru is the supreme Self, still he has an individuality and personality that attracts devotees and disciples. He blesses them with knowledge and devotion. Pujya Gurudev had a many-faceted personality that is difficult to capture in a few words or names.

### ☞ An Epitome of Evolution

I saw Him as a perfect *jīvanmukta puruṣha*. Many a time I have felt that it is easier to describe *Brahman* than to describe a *jīvanmukta*. We find many verses in our scriptures in praise of such an enlightened soul. One such characteristic that comes to mind is that the enlightened person is one who is free from worry over the past, anxiety for the future, and is totally detached and objective in dealing with the present. Gurudev described such a person as a mirror: "A mirror accepts everything, rejects nothing, reflects everything, but keeps nothing." Indeed, He was that *jīvanmukta puruṣha*.

### ☞ A Cosmic Charmer

His presence was most appealing. It spoke more than His words and taught more than His lectures. I see His presence in His pictures also. Just to be with Him was a great joy and an experience in itself. No one was immune to His cosmic charm.

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## Hanumāna Jayanti at Chinmaya Vibhooti

by Maya Hinduja



This year's *Hanumān Jayanti* celebrations at *Chinmaya Vibhooti* will be remembered in CM annals as unique and historical, for it marked the completion of Phase 1 of the *Chinmaya Vibhooti* Project.

The *kalasha pratishthā* ceremony at the *Chinmaya Maruti Mandir* was performed, the kitchen and dining facilities in *Annashree* were commissioned, and Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda stayed there overnight, as did other *āchāryas* and devotees.



J o y o u s devotees received Pujya Guruji on April 1 with a *pūrṇa kumbha*. The colorfully decorated premises sprang to life

with the streaming in of *āchāryas* in yellow and orange. *Gaṇeśa Pūjā* and other elaborate rituals began at 5 p.m., with H. K. Hinduja and his wife officiating as *yajamāns* in the august presence of Pujya Swami Brahmananda and many other *āchāryas*, including (in alphabetical order) Sw. Advaitananda, Sw. Ameyananda, Sw. Bhaskarananda, Sw. Chidatmananda, Sw. Dhyanananda, Sw. Madhavananda, Sw. Sadananda, Sw. Subodhananda, Sw. Swaroopananda, and Sw. Vivikatananda.

After dinner, everyone assembled in *Vichar Vatika*, the beautifully landscaped grounds outside *Annashree*. In the glow of the full moon and lit oil lamps, CM Pune members performed a folk dance called *dindi*.

All preparations were set for the next morning's *Hanumān Jayanti* celebrations. *Hanumān Janma Pūjā* was performed at 6:30 a.m. and devotees welcomed Hanumanji with full fervor. A host of *pujārīs* performed the *kalasha pūjā* rituals and *havan*, and ceremoniously installed the *shikārā* atop the temple. Led by Pujya Guruji and other *āchāryas*, the devotees offering gold, silver, or copper *kalashas* walked the ramp to the *shikārā* and performed their *abhishekam*.



A short program, '*Svāgatam*,' was performed in the newly constructed administrative block. Pujya Swami Brahmananda addressed the 750+ devotees and expressed his joy at the quick construction progress of *Chinmaya Vibhooti*.

Pujya Guruji said, "Vision without action is imagination. Action without vision is division. And action with vision is transformation." He spoke about the completion of Phase 1, which includes four residential units with 67 rooms, and gave a brief sketch of Phases 2-3. He thanked Pratapbhai Patel and H. K. Hinduja for their dedicated drive, and Narain Bhatia, Ravi and Nandini Nene, Mr. Damle, and others for their tireless efforts.

## Samashṭi Upanayanam

by Rupali Gupta

*Upanayanam* is one of 16 major *samskāras* prescribed for a Hindu in Vedic scriptures. The ancient *Apasthamba Sutra* describes *upanayana* as a *samskāra*, or "purificatory rite" that is performed to impart the sacred *Gayatri Mantra* before the student is taken to a teacher for Vedic studies.



CM Dallas-Fort Worth organized a *samashṭi upanayanam samskāra* on Sunday, April 22 for Bala Vihar students and CHYKs. Resident *āchārya* Br. Uddhav Chaitanya and Br. Bhasa Chaitanya (CM Houston) initiated 27 *vaṭus* (boys and girls), ages 5-25 years.

The ceremony was held at a local park on a baseball diamond. Under a tent and atop a tarp, seven *havan kuṇḍas* and all the required *pūjā sāmagri* were kept ready. The ritual began with the lighting of the lamp, followed by *Gaṇapati Pūjā*, *punyāhavāchanam*, *rakshābandhanam*, *upavīta pūjā*, and *dhāraṇam*.

The *vaṭus* invoked the blessings of Lord Agni and performed a homa. They individually approached the *āchāryas* for *Brahmopadesham*, their introduction to *Brahma-jijnāsā* (desire to know Brahman). After the ceremony, each *vaṭu*, now a *brahmachārī*, went around asking for *bhikshā*, begging for food or any other materials to offer to the *āchārya* under whose tutelage they would be learning the scriptures.

Br. Bhasa conducted a four-day training workshop thereafter to teach the new students the proper procedure and mantras for performing *sandhyā-vandanam*.

## Tropical IFW Fun



Fund of Central Chinmaya Mission Trust's Education Cell.

More than anyone else, Mother Nature supported IFW 2007! The heavily cloud-covered day allowed everyone needed, cooling shade along the lakeside walkway. The rains came after everyone had eaten to their hearts' content what was called "the best, finger-licking food spread ever!" Gourmet mom chefs and their sous chefs put together an International Food Fair to be remembered:

Mexican *chaat*, Bombay *chaat*, mango *lassis*, Chinese dumplings, Italian pasta, masala chai, sweet treats, and the most popular of all (as in, we had to finally say, "The Fair is now closed."): fresh and hot *idli*, *dosa*, *saambaar*.



Little kids set up their personal stalls and used all their salesmanship to entice passersby to purchase their donated storybooks, food, and drinks for charity. (Moral: Cute faces can sell you anything.) Professional artists freely gave their time and materials for face painting and *mehendi*, both of which had lines throughout the event (2-5 p.m.).



Community members donated 250 water bottles for the walkers and various raffle prizes (Baume & Mercier Watch, Citizen Watches, hand-woven floor rug, and 14K OM pin).

Every walker went home beaming, having enjoyed a day of whole-hearted fun and the chance to serve a noble cause. The day ended with kids playing cricket in the light rain, loving every minute and droplet! And their parents? Well, let's say our volunteers had their hands full trying to get them to clear the Food Fair Stalls—they wanted take-home boxes for dinner!

Over the years, CM Miami's IFW has funded the Sidhabari Project, *Chinmayaranyam*, Orissa Cyclone Relief, Gujarat Earthquake Relief, and the *Chinmaya Vibhooti* Project. This year's project, CCMT Education Cell's Merit Scholarship Fund, is for students who are academically meritorious, but unable to continue school because of financial difficulties. The Fund provides US\$250 for each qualifying student's annual school fees, uniforms, books, stationery, meals, and transportation. Underprivileged students of *Chinmaya Vidyalyayas* apply annually. To help or get more information, visit [www.chinmayamission.com](http://www.chinmayamission.com) or e-mail [mumbai@chinmayamission.org](mailto:mumbai@chinmayamission.org).



## Spreading the Message

by Sandhya Gavva

The winter of 2006 manifested the abundant grace of Pujya Gurudev and loving blessings of Pujya Guruji in the form of a series of discourses by Swami Chidatmananda, Regional Head of Chinmaya Mission, Andhra Pradesh. The discourses were jointly organized by Chinmaya Mission West and the American Telugu Association (ATA), a non-profit organization, to reach out to communities across USA who had not been previously exposed to CM teachings and activities.



Swamiji's discourses were hosted by local ATA chapters in Indianapolis, Phoenix, St. Louis, Augusta, Gainesville, Des Moines, Oklahoma City, San Antonio, Denver, Kansas City, and Omaha.

Through this tour, Swamiji touched many lives with his inspiring message on "Learning through Relationships." The teachings focused on spiritual development by recognizing and understanding every interaction and experience to be a reflection of our inner beliefs and impressions. Swamiji emphasized personal growth and harmony was possible by learning to love, forgive, and serve through appropriate adjustments in attitude and behavior.

"Experience is just a thought." When dealing with unpleasant experiences, he said, what causes suffering is not the experience itself, but the thought of that experience still clinging in our mind. If we are able to recognize and learn to drop the thought, what is left is pure awareness alone.



Audiences all over the country were intrigued and spellbound by the breadth and depth of the concepts S w a m i j i

presented. His powerful message raised awareness about Vedanta, integrating spirituality in daily life, and the Chinmaya Movement. Attendees are eagerly looking forward to Swamiji's future talks.

## The Day We Painted the Town Red!

by Manju Menon

CM Dallas-Fort Worth (CM DFW) witnessed its largest gathering of over 1,100 members and guests at its Annual Picnic on March 4 at Myers Park, where we also celebrated *Holi* in true *desi* style (everyone who stayed for *Holi* left covered from head to toe in *gulaal*!).

We started the event off at 10 a.m. with opening prayers and a fundraising walkathon organized by the Senior Bala Vihar class. Shortly after the walkathon started, guests started arriving at the Show Barn arena, the setting for the indoor-outdoor picnic. The Barn was spacious enough to accommodate all the attendees and provide protection from the whimsical Texas weather. As it turned out, we were blessed with a pleasantly cool, sunny, spring day!



Guests were warmly welcomed and checked in by the Registration Team. There was a whole array of morning snacks, such as chutney sandwiches, cookies, brownies, and chips, which allowed guests to start 'grazing' as soon as they arrived.

The Barn was soon buzzing with a variety of activities ranging from the industrious Food Team boxing *pulao* and bagging hot *baturas* for lunch, to the *melaa*-style booths set up by the Games Team. The *melaa* included *desi* games with a modern twist, like Shravana's Balance, *Nimbooda*-Spoon Race, Candy Catch, and the most popular one, Place a *Tilak* on the poster of our Acharya's smiling face.

By this time, our enthusiastic DJ Gauthami Vemula had the Barn reverberating to the tune of old and new *desi* numbers. You could not help but get caught in the festive spirit, which led into the hula hoop contest and *bhangra*-ish electric slide.

Just as the food and fun were getting into high gear inside the Barn, the Corn Team fired up the grills

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## Avatāra

Transcribed talks of Swami Swaroopananda



The supreme, omniscient Lord of the universe, in the spirit of a divine sport, taking a form and coming to live among the mortals of the world—due to His infinite love and compassion towards all beings—is known as an *avatāra*. This apparent descent of the Supreme is probably the most daring of all philosophies accepted only in Hinduism. Other religions believe in the Son of God or messengers of God, but none have the daring and knowledge to accept that the supreme Almighty Itself comes to bless the world.

In India, too, there are many philosophies that do not recognize, and even argue against, the concept of the avatar. The *Chārvākas*, or materialists, do not believe in any reality or a conscious entity other than the body; for them, the world is just an accident. There is no almighty Creator, and therefore, no avatar. The Buddhists do not accept there is an *Ishvara*, the Lord of the universe. The Jains believe in *tīrthankaras* who come again and again to save our souls. These *tīrthankaras* are said to be highly evolved souls who, through *tapas*, have become pure and resplendent.

Among those who accept *Ishvara* are the ritualists, who follow only the *Karma Kāṇḍa* of the Vedas. The *Traitavadis* speak of *Ishvara*, *prakṛti*, and *jīva*, but do not accept that there can be an avatar. They believe in the historic existence of Shri Rama and Shri Krishna as great men, but not as avatars.

The existence of Shri Rama and Shri Krishna is known only through literary works such as the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Bhagavatam*, all of which ecstatically declare, on almost every page, the divine, supreme nature of these enchanting heroes. Accepting a part of the work and rejecting the other is like accepting part of a man to be young, while the other remains old. In the language of logic, this is known as *ardhajāri nyāya*.

Avatar is a fact and not mere metaphysical twaddle. The philosophy behind avatar gains authority especially when it is declared by Shri Krishna Himself in *Bhagavad Gita*. Shri Krishna

tells Arjuna that the knowledge He had just now initiated Arjuna into was taught by Him to Lord Sun at the beginning of creation. Arjuna could not understand how his friend and charioteer, who was almost his own age, could have done so. The Lord then explains to Arjuna how He takes divine birth again and again to bless the world. He says, “Though I am unborn, of imperishable nature, and though I am the Lord of all beings, yet ruling over my own nature, I am born by my own *māyā*.”

The Lord, who is truly birth-less and imperishable, manifests Himself, but His birth and death are not like that of an ordinary *jīva*. The *jīva* is forced to take birth according to his karmas and *vāsanās*. But the Lord, in His total freedom, projects a form yet rules over His own nature (*prakṛti*), not victimized by His own inscrutable, divine power (*māyā*) that deludes all beings of the universe, veiling their true, all-pervading nature.

There are people who point out that the Lord, being infinite, must necessarily be *nirākāra* (formless) and that He cannot be limited by a form and so He cannot take any form. In fact, the formless alone can take any form. Before creation, were not *prakṛti* and *jīva* formless considering they were both in an unmanifest condition? If they can manifest as form, why can the formless Lord not? To say that God, who has created the entire universe of names and forms, cannot take a form is to limit the Infinite. No religion in the world can dare to say that God is finite, yet in arguments against the avatar, people try to limit the Limitless. In the Supreme there can be no limitation of form or any modification, and if it appears, it can only be due to His *māyā*, the power of illusion. Without being born, He is born as all forms.

The *jīva* has the notion “I am the body,” but the Lord has no such delusion. Being truly and fully aware of His divine nature, He manifests Himself by His *māyā*, which is not independent of Him, and spends His life on Earth as a divine sport, or *līlā*. Unlike in a *jīva*’s life, in the Lord’s *līlā*, there is no sense of doership or ego; therefore, there are

no *vāsanās* or fruits of action, which are the cause of bondage for the *jīva*. The Lord remains as a Master reveling in His play on the stage of the world, while the *jīva*, deluded by his own ignorance, suffers the agonies of *samsāra*.

When does an avatar take place? The Lord says: “Whenever there is decay of righteousness (dharma) and rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself.” The word ‘dharma’ has a wide range of meanings. The word is derived from the root ‘to uphold.’ Therefore, dharma means ‘that which upholds.’ It is that without which a thing will not remain that thing; it is the essential nature of a thing. For example, sweetness is the dharma of sugar. Has anyone heard of a sugar crystal that is not sweet?

The substratum of the ever-changing universe is *Sat-Chit-Ānanda* (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss), *Ātman*. *Ātman* alone is the Self of all beings. The world has no reality apart from *Ātman*. Thus, the dharma of the entire universe is *Sat-Chit-Ānanda*, *Ātman*. Therefore:

- To abide in one’s own true nature is one’s dharma.
- Any means that leads man to his goal is called dharma. All *sādhana*s that make the mind introvert constitute dharma. Thus, the spiritual goal and the means to attain it are both one’s dharma.
- *Jñāna*, which is the direct means to abide in the Self, is dharma.
- To gain knowledge, one needs purity of mind (a mind free from likes and dislikes). This is achieved through *karma yoga*, which is the performance of duty in the spirit of *yajna* (selfless service). One’s duty at any given time is determined by one’s position and status in life (based on one’s *varṇāśrama*). Dharma as performance of duty can be classified into two broad categories: a) *Sāmānya Dharma*: Common to all members of society (e.g., truthfulness, charity, etc.) and b) *Vishesha Dharma*: Special duties for each *varṇa* and *āśrama* (e.g., to spread knowledge is the duty of one in *brāhmaṇa* *varṇa*, or the educated class. Service of the teacher and study of the Scriptures is the duty of one in *brahmacharya āśrama*, or the student stage of life.
- Performance of duty—one’s own duty, not

another’s—is dharma. When everyone performs his respective duty in *yajna* spirit, there is both spiritual and material progress in society. All that which brings about spiritual beauty and culture, as well as material prosperity in society, is dharma. This naturally brings about peace, harmony, and unity in society, for dharma is that which unites.

The Self is *Sat-Chit-Ānanda*. Therefore, in general, the common and foremost duties for all humanity are:

- Live and let live. Do not harm life in any form.
- Learn and teach. Do not deceive or make fools of others.
- Live happily and let others live happily. Spread joy everywhere. Cause no suffering to any being.
- Be united and unite others, for the nature of the Self is Oneness.

*Adharma* constitutes all that is opposed to dharma. It is not a mere absence of dharma; it is the opposite of dharma. To kill, to bring about suffering, disharmony, and disunity, to live a selfish life, etc. all constitute *adharma*. The Lord says whenever there is a decline of dharma as the means for the prosperity and absolute good of all beings, there is the rise of *adharma*. When the majority of people live *adhārmik* lives, the Lord makes His mighty descent.

The Lord’s apparent descent is for totality’s need. It is not that He takes birth when dharma is flourishing or when there is total *adharma*. It is when *adhārmik* forces become strong enough to choke and prevent the growth of those who follow dharma, that the Lord projects Himself in the world of mortals.

For any manifestation there must be a motive: The supreme Lord has no desire of His own. His desire is the desire or need of the totality. When the total *vāsanās* of all *jīvas* demand a Master to protect and guide them, then the Lord, out of His immense love and compassion, manifests Himself. Shri Krishna points out the purpose for which He is born: “For the protection of the good (*sādhū*), for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of dharma, I am born in every age.”

To protect dharma, one has to protect those in whom dharma abides. Dharma, as such, is abstract.

Therefore, the Lord specifies that He comes into the world to protect the *sādhūs* who are sincerely walking on, or established in, the path of dharma. At the same time, He has to eliminate the sinful people who are living *adhārmik* lives. Here, elimination is not so much about the destruction of beings; it is about the destruction of their negative tendencies. When wickedness is gone, the ‘wicked man’ is no more. But those who are beyond redemption have to be wiped off the globe, just as a badly affected body part has to be amputated if it cannot be cured and is a threat to one’s life.

Last but not least, the avatar’s purpose is to establish dharma and give it a strong footing. It must be noted here that it is not to create, but to re-establish dharma that He is born in every age. Dharma is eternal (*sanātana*), for man’s essential nature and his basic duties (e.g., a mother’s duties) ever remain the same. It is only when there is value degradation in society that the majority has forgotten ‘the law of being.’

The Lord re-establishes dharma by imparting the knowledge of the absolute Reality and of yoga, and the means to attain the supreme Goal. Shri Krishna gave this knowledge to Arjuna and Uddhava, Shri Rama to Lakshmana and others, and Kapila Muni to his own mother, Devahuti. By Himself living a perfectly *dhārmik* life, each avatar sets an example and standard for people to follow.

Shri Krishna listed three main motives for the Lord taking birth, but there can be numerous other reasons, for He cannot be limited to any particular purpose. In *Tulsi Ramayana*, Lord Shiva says the Lord manifests due to His infinite love. According to totality’s need, the Lord manifests different types of *avatāras*:

- *Nitya Avatāra*: In this form of saints and sages the Lord is ever present in the world. Saint Ramdas has said, “Those who work for the establishment of dharma are none other than *Ishvara* Himself.”
- *Amsha Avatāra*: The Lord manifests only a part of His potencies to accomplish a particular deed (e.g., Matsya (fish), Varaha (boar), and Vamana (dwarf) *avatāras*).
- *Āvesha Avatāra*: The Lord manifests suddenly when a devotee is in trouble (e.g., Lord Narasimha for His devotee, Prahlada).
- *Pūrṇa Avatāra*: The Lord manifests all His

potencies (16 *kalās*) in full splendor and fulfills all the three main motives. Shri Krishna is considered as a *pūrṇa avatāra*. The Lord is ever full, but to express His full potency, the right equipment is needed. He takes up a particular equipment depending on the needs of the times.

What is the use of knowing all the details of the Lord’s birth? The Lord declares, “He who knows in true light (subjectively, or *tattvataḥ*) My divine birth and actions, such a person, upon leaving the body, is not born again.” Divine indeed is the birth of the Lord, for though He is unborn and imperishable, He appears to take birth. Divine are His actions, for they are part of His *līlā*, wherein there is no sense of doership, attachment, or expectation, and no resulting *vāsanās*, the cause of bondage. This *saguṇa upāsana* (worship of the Lord with attributes) leads to the same goal of Immortality as *saguṇa upāsana* (worship of the attribute-less Lord). The birth of the Lord is a “wonder of wonders.” The *Puranas* sing its glory. The Lord’s divine actions are incomparable. Only a few days after birth, Shri Krishna killed the terrible demon, Putana. He protected His kinsmen from many calamities, lifted Mount Govardhana on His little finger, played divine games with the *gopīs* of Vrindavan, and captured the hearts of all with His mischief and enchanting smiles.

By reveling in His divine birth and *līlā*, devotees purify themselves, and in their total love and identification with their Beloved, reach the immortal state of Perfection. Experience is the final evidence. The Lord takes birth in the totality (macrocosm) and in the individual (microcosm). Pure Consciousness is neither opposed to evil in the world nor to ignorance in the individual; It is the substratum of all. Just as the Lord assumes a form to remove *adharma* from the world, so too, when Consciousness rides an unbroken thought like “*Aham Brahmasmi* (I am *Brahman*),” ignorance and its effects are removed once and for all. This *vṛtti ārūḍha chaitanya* is the avatar of the Supreme in one’s heart.

When the pure mind (Vasudeva) weds (integrates with) the discriminating intellect (Devaki), in the dark prison chambers of the seeker’s heart is secretly born *jnāna vṛtti ārūḍha chaitanya*, the effulgent One who dispels the darkness of ignorance and breaks the chains of bondage. He plays within, destroying all evil, and finally Himself ends His avatar so that the *akhaṇḍa ākāra vṛtti* gets absorbed in the final experience of Truth, which is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* alone.

to start roasting corn. The plan was to roast corn in batches and line it up with other snacks, but this was quickly abandoned as the corn was picked up right off the grills (and liberally sprinkled with lime juice, chili powder, and salt) by the eager crowd of kids and adults milling around. The continuous stream of takers kept the Corn Team busy well into the afternoon.

For those kids who preferred a quieter pace, there was an Art & Crafts Corner. There were many new artistic renderings created not only on paper, but also on hands and faces using *mehendi* and paint!

Meanwhile, the super-efficient Food Team had set up lunch to-go. Guests conveniently picked up a box and settled down anywhere to munch while taking in the fun all around. Our Security Team kept a keen eye to make sure everyone was safe. We also had a well-stocked Medical Team on hand to attend to minor scrapes and bruises.

Shortly after lunch, it was time for *Holi masti*. Everyone got their ration of *gulaal*, the troughs were filled with water, and in no time at all, the air was filled with color! Everyone dived in and no one was allowed to be a bystander. We were inspired by our own fearless Acharya who was “sharing” *gulaal* and water as freely as he does words of wisdom during his *yajnas*!

The water-weary *Holi* players left the arena to pick up welcome cups of steaming masala chai, *dhokla*, and a wide array of delicious *mithais*. Soon after, our Clean-up Team restored full order. For a short time, we got a glimpse of how the *gopas* and *gopikas* must have felt after they played *Holi* with the Lord himself in Vrindavan, without a care in the world!

## Chanting Gita

Report from CM Philadelphia

CM Philadelphia hosted its annual *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* Chanting Competition on Chapter 7 at the *Chinmaya Kedar* Ashram in Langhorne, Pennsylvania.

The Preliminary Round, conducted on April 21, included 100 adults and kids (from pre-kindergarten to high school) from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. While the adults’ group had to recite from memory all the Sanskrit verses of Chapter 7, the kids’ group was categorized by grade and

chanted select verses.

The event was held 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and packed with excited participants and spectators. Parents, wanting to instill righteous cultural and spiritual values to their children living outside of India, said they felt such events are very important for their family.

The competition was quite tough and it was magnificent to see the spirit of learning spiritual teachings among all the participants. The Final Competition was held on April 28.

## Spring Break Kids’ Camp

Submitted by CM Miami

CM Miami held its Annual Kids’ Spring Break Camp on April 2-6 at the DoubleTree Guest Suites in Boca Raton, Florida. Over 70 kids and sevaks united to ‘Discover India.’

Detailing all that transpired at camp, in particular, the smiles, joy, and laughter, is impossible. Campers (grades 1-8) cricket-ed, water-gunned each other, Vogued (posed in workshops and photos), swam like fish endlessly, watched movies with popcorn, ate gourmet meals and desserts like there was no tomorrow, outdid each other’s costumes and props at the themed dinner parties, chanted their hearts out with Br. Bhasa (CM Houston), rocked to Bingo, Jeopardy, and Top Design workshops with Brni. Aparna (CM Miami), and expanded their vision about spiritual India from Br. Uddhav (CM Dallas). Those who came to get the very best did.

Parents complained about their kids not wanting to leave camp. When their kids enthusiastically chanted ‘*Mantra Pushpam*’ for them on the way home, they understood why.





## CM Bangalore's Golden Jubilee Celebrations

Based on reports in Vedanta Vani, February 2007

Kudos and congratulations to CM Bangalore for its amazing 50<sup>th</sup> Year year-long celebrations! So how did one of CM's oldest (1956) and largest centers celebrate its momentous golden anniversary? With grand, joyous, love-flowing hearts—where *sādhana* is key, service is abundant, and harmony is natural. The year-long celebrations included:

- *Akhaṇḍa Gītā Jñāna Yajna*, wherein various *āchāryas*, from various centers, conducted 14 consecutive, week-long, evening spiritual discourses on various *Gita* chapters in Bangalore's urban, suburban, and rural areas, in Kannada or English. Some *yajnas* included morning talks on another Vedantic text.

The 14-week *Gita yajna* series concluded with the 'Mega Screen Yajna,' which featured Pujya Gurudev teaching Chapters 16-17. It was scheduled to coincide with Shri Chinmaya *Ārādhanā* Day on August 3.

Four months later, Pujya Swami Brahmananda (Acharya of CM Bangalore and Regional Head of CM Karnataka) commenced the final month of the 50<sup>th</sup> year celebrations by conducting, for the first time, a *Gītā yajna* in Kannada, in the auditorium of the CM Bangalore ashram, *Deenabandhu Devasthānam*, on Chapter 18.

- General *Satsangs* or *Gītā Jñāna Yajnas* in the Bangalore area by various *āchāryas*

- Free Gastroenterology Camp at Chinmaya Mission Hospital: A five-day camp, offering free specialist consultation by Dr. Lt. Col. Praveen Kumar, serviced 86 patients.

- 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Day Celebrations and Silver Jubilee Celebrations of *Chinmaya Vidyalaya*

- CHYK Refreshing Day at Chokkahalli Ashram in Kolar

- *Guru Vandana* Program, wherein two *āchāryas* received *sannyāsa dīkshā* from Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda: Swami Krutatmananda (Br. Sukruta) and Swami Hamsananda (Br. Udaya)

- Festival Celebrations: *Shivarātri*, *Chinmaya Jayanti*, *Gaṇeśha Chaturthī*, and *Navarātri*

- 'Chinmaya Family Meet' and 'Chinmaya Bala Vihar Parents' Meet' at CM's new *Shrīpādakshetra* ashram in J. P. Nagar

- Bangalore Book Festival: CM Bangalore participated in a successful ten-day book fair that was held at Palace Grounds and featured over 300 stalls. Leading officials, including the Minister of State and the Governor, visited the CM stall and expressed their appreciation.

- *Bhajan* Program by local Devi Groups

- *Sampūrṇa Gītā Jñāna Yajna*, the concluding event in CM Bangalore's *Suvarṇa Mahotsava* celebrations. The 14-day *yajna*, conducted by Pujya Swami Brahmananda, covered all 18 chapters of the *Gita*. The inaugural ceremony featured Chief Guest Swamini Gurupriyananda (CM Delhi), and renowned singers and sisters, Roopa and Deepa Kasarvalli. Also featured were noteworthy and laudable performances by Bala Vihar students.

Daily *ārati* was offered on stage by different Bala Vihars, study groups, Devi groups, Chinmaya Vidyalayas, Chinmaya Hospital staff, and CM Bangalore trustees and staff—giving the audience a glimpse of the workforce involved in building CM Bangalore from its humble beginnings in 1956 to the gigantic movement that the city is proud of today.

## Pujārī Training Course

Reprinted from Vedanta Vani, February 2007

The two-year training course for *pujārīs* at the *Chinmaya Veda Vidya Peetha* in Chokkahalli concluded on January 6, 2007. The course covered all the 16 *samskāras* and various *homas* (*havans*). Of the 18 who joined, 14 students completed their intensive training (based on *Rg Veda*) under the guidance of *Veda Brahma* Satyanarayana Bhat. Of the 14 graduates, five received parental permission to work under the Chinmaya Mission banner.

Pujya Swami Brahmananda addressed the graduates at the valedictory function. He blessed them and spoke on their future code of conduct, emphasizing that they perform all their *karmas* with total faith and devotion.

## Chinmaya Lock-ins

by Lalitha Rajagopalan

CM Dallas-Fort Worth (CM DFW) periodically holds ‘lock-ins’ for various grade groups every year. Says the resident *āchārya*, Br. Uddhav Chaitanya, “Lock-ins are very popular throughout CM centers in India. Here also, they provide a creative, *sāttvik* gateway for Chinmaya kids and youth to bond, learn about themselves, and learn from each other. Held at our ashram, *Chinmaya Sāket*, the event consists of workshops and fun activities for elementary, middle school, or high school students. For high schoolers, it is an overnight mini-camp that starts at 6 p.m. and ends at 8 a.m.”

CM DFW hosted a High School Lock-in on Friday, March 2. The evening began with dinner and *ārati*. The evening’s main activity was an interactive workshop conducted by Uddhavji, BV Teacher Pankaj Asundi, and several CHYK assistants. The workshop, based on teachings from *Kathopanishad*, focused on the theme of “Arise! Awake! Stop not till the goal is reached!” The analyzed and discussed topics, covered through interactive games and activities, were: 1) purpose of life, 2) vision of life, 3) clarity in the choices we make, 4) accepting the present, 5) rate of adaptability, and 6) personal assets and liabilities.

Each concept was skillfully introduced through fun activities that revealed insightful messages. Debriefing followed the completion of each activity, highlighting the key points and bringing the message home. It was remarkable to see the kids coming up with brilliant ideas and analogies.

One of the activities was designed to demonstrate the ability to find equilibrium within oneself and others. This exercise required focus and the ability to listen internally and externally. By the fourth round, they all performed in perfect rhythm, with closed eyes and calm breathing. The debriefing covered the importance of calm breathing, listening, quietness, thought concentration, and tuning in at the macrocosmic level.

CM DFW hosted a Middle School Lock-in on Friday, January 26 (India’s Republic Day). The event was successful and attended by 30 enthusiastic middle schoolers. The main activity was a screening of the Hindi movie *Iqbal*. It was a treat for young and old—a movie about a deaf-mute youth from rural India with a passion and

talent for cricket, and his dream to play for India’s national team. The movie shows a touching *guru-shishya* relationship and how determination and perseverance can overcome all obstacles.

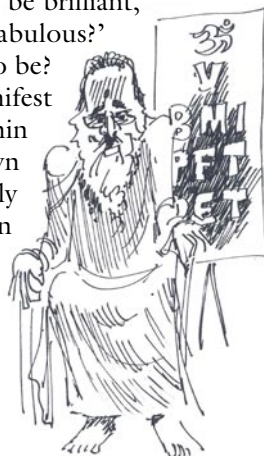
We faced some technical difficulties at the crucial moment when Iqbal was close to realizing his dream and saw the kids on the edge of their seats waiting for the movie to resume. On conclusion, Uddhavji’s debriefing highlighted *Iqbal*’s enthusiasm, perseverance, and vision to realize his dream.

CM DFW’s annual Elementary School Lock-in for Grades 2-5 was held on Friday, December 8, 2006. The event was a grand success with over one 100 attendees, and it was particularly encouraging to see parents and children actually arriving early! The evening started with hot pizza served in the ashram kitchen, followed by fun and games organized by Bala Vihar *sevaks*.

At 7:15 p.m. sharp, Uddhavji shepherded the kids to the temple to perform *ārati*, after which everyone assembled in the main hall for the screening of *Akeelah and the Bee*. This movie about a precocious 11 year-old girl from Los Angeles who sets out to win the National Spelling Bee had Uddhavji, the kids, and the adult volunteers spellbound for the next 112 minutes! All those who have not yet had a chance to watch it should put it on their priority list.

The movie dealt with Akeelah’s journey and the root, origin, and meanings of words. The most striking quote Akeelah reads is from *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of a Course in Miracles* by Marianne Williamson: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?’ Actually, who are you not to be? We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.”

In debriefing, Uddhavji discussed this quote and advised the kids to keep these words of wisdom in their hearts forever.



# Dharma Sevak Course

June 15-29, 2007

Krishnalaya, CMW Retreat Center  
Piercy, Northern California



Conducted by

Swami Ishwarananda  
Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya  
Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya

Texts/Topics

- *Upanishad Sāra*  
(the essence of nine Upanishads)
- *Shrī Vishṇu Sahasranāma*  
(1,000 names on the glory of the Self)
- Sanskrit grammar
- Vedic chanting

Registration

(includes lodging/boarding; excludes transportation)

- **Full Course:** \$1,100 per person
- **Partial Course:** \$85 per day  
(based on space availability after June 1)
- This camp is for adults only, and is not a family camp. Space is limited.

Register early.

To get more information or to register  
(online registration is available),  
go to [www.chinmaya.org/krishnalaya](http://www.chinmaya.org/krishnalaya).

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



# Ordinary Hands

These are  
ordinary hands  
in whom the residue of  
those  
fourteen billion year-old  
quarks and gluons  
still float around,

still lit by  
the fire  
that makes  
these  
ordinary hands  
produce something  
extraordinary.

- Chetana Neerchal

continued from page 9

## ☞ A Matchless Role Model

His greatness went beyond His presence and that He revealed in every little thing. In big things every one shows off, but Gurudev revealed His greatness even in small things.

When I was studying Vedanta at Sandeepany, Mumbai, I also used to teach Sanskrit to the *brahmachārins*. There was a small hall where I used to hold the class. Once, Swamiji wanted to discuss something with a group of people. He brought them there and only then saw that I was teaching. He could have asked me to finish the class at once, but He humbly requested, “May I use this hall for some time?” That was His greatness. He did not say, “Get out. I want to use this place.”

## ☞ A Magnificent Mentor

I also had the great fortune of learning from Him. Actually, I felt that He used to teach just me. Every now and then, He would ask questions, and if out of ten questions, I did not answer just one, or did not answer quickly enough, He would say that I did not know the answer or that I was sleeping through the class! Or, sometimes He would speak and pause in the middle of the sentence and wait for me to complete it. And if I spoke softly, He would ask me to go out on the banks of the Ganga and speak so loudly that the man on the other side could hear me! Of course, He knew what I would be doing for the best part of the rest of my life!

## ☞ A Divine Disciplinarian

Discipline was one thing that He loved. Not only was He Himself a very disciplined person, but He also enforced it on others. The beauty of His discipline was that it was not dry or harsh, but was accompanied with compassion. For instance,

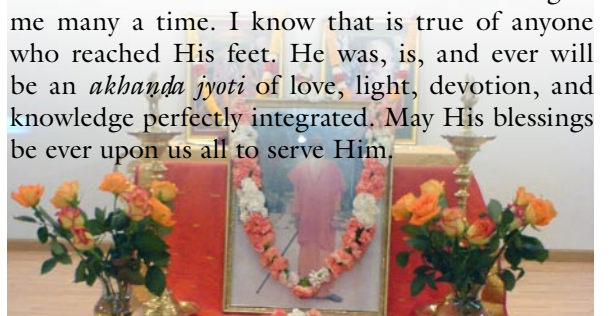
once, during a *Gītā Jñāna Yajna* some of the *brahmachārīs* skipped the meditation class. That day He ordered, “The *brahmachārīs* will not be given lunch today,” but at tea time, we were given special *upamaa*. Thus, He punctuated discipline with compassion.

## ☞ A Vast Visionary

His vast vision for the Mission was essentially two-fold. The first aspect was external, relating to activities and projects, while the other was internal, the unfoldment of the personalities of the members while undertaking those projects. The outer activities started by Him have expanded, grown, and benefited society, but unfoldment by itself is subjective, and each worker will have to sincerely and honestly evaluate himself. The very fact that thousands of people have been working for such a long time shows that they have been getting something or else they would not work. So we have succeeded to a great extent. However, never think of stopping at a final goal. Both outwardly and inwardly, the sky is the limit.

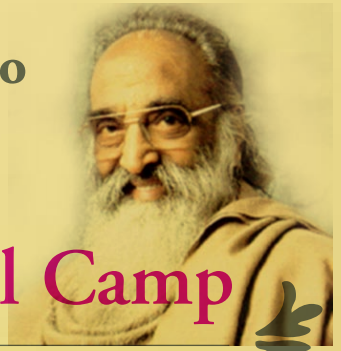
## ☞ A Lamp of Love

I consider myself extremely blessed to have come in contact with Him and served Him. The most striking quality that I saw in Him was His unconditional love for me that made Him forgive me many a time. I know that is true of anyone who reached His feet. He was, is, and ever will be an *akhaṇḍa jyoti* of love, light, devotion, and knowledge perfectly integrated. May His blessings be ever upon us all to serve Him.





Chinmaya Mission® Orlando  
proudly presents



# Chinmaya Family Spiritual Camp

December 24-30, 2007  
Wyndham Resort in Orlando, Florida

conducted by  
Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

on  
*Sankhya Yoga: Gita, Chapter 2*



## Highlights

CHYK West Annual Conference  
(ages 18-30 years; visit [www.chykwest.com](http://www.chykwest.com))

The Wyndham Orlando Resort is near all attractions.

Note: This is the only spiritual camp Pujya Guruji will be conducting  
in North America in 2007.

Register early for discounted rates.

## Mark your calendars!

To register or get more information:  
[www.chinmayaorlando.org](http://www.chinmayaorlando.org) ~ (407) 963-6301  
[familycamp2007@chinmayaorlando.org](mailto:familycamp2007@chinmayaorlando.org)

**Registration:** Vibhu Agrawal  
**Camp Coordinators:** Shailaja Nadkarni, Jogi Pattisapu, Ganesh Ramachandran  
**CHYK Camp Coordinator:** Vishaal Gupta

# LORD HANUMAN AT SIDHABARI

Sidhabari Ashram, Himachal Pradesh, India

**October 4-7, 2007**

*Hanuman Chalisa*: Camp in English by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

**October 8-10, 2007**

Silver Jubilee Celebrations: Shri Hanuman *Pūjā* and *Mastaka Abhishekam*

*Mastaka-abhishekam* means the pouring of holy water on the idol. The water, collected from India's holy rivers, is kept in a *kalasha*, energized with mantras, and poured on the idol to energize it and invoke the deity's presence. Symbolically, it represents our mind's thought flow (water) embracing the deity in meditation.

Chinmaya Tapovan Trust invites all CM devotees and centers worldwide to participate in this celebration. To perform the *pūjās* in person or offer them in proxy:

- *Utsav Yajamān* (couple or individual) will perform the *homas* and *archanās* on all three days. The *Yajamān* will participate in all four *pūjās*, and will receive a gold *kalasha* and a commemorative coin. Contribution: US\$2,500
- *Dainik Yajamān* (couple or individual) will perform one *pūjā*, and will receive a gold *kalasha* and a commemorative coin. Contribution: US\$1,250
  - *Abhishek with Gold Kalasha*: Contribution: US\$700
  - *Abhishek with Silver Kalasha*: Contribution: US\$500
    - *Abhishek with Copper Kalasha*: Contribution: US\$250
    - *Abhishek with Mud Kalasha*: Contribution: US\$10
    - *Archanā* Contribution: US\$10
    - *Camp Fees*: US\$60 per person

Net proceeds benefit the *Chinmaya Vibhūti* Project, Chinmaya Mission's worldwide vision and resource center.

To register for the camp and sacred rituals, complete the form below and mail it with your contribution, payable to 'Chinmaya Tapovan Trust' to: **R. Kalra, Chinmaya Tapovan Trust, 'Sandeepany Himalayas,' Sidhabari, H.P. 176057 India.** A confirmation with final details will be sent upon receipt.

For more information, contact [sidhabari@chinmayamission.org](mailto:sidhabari@chinmayamission.org) or (91-1892) 234324/325.

Full Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Full Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

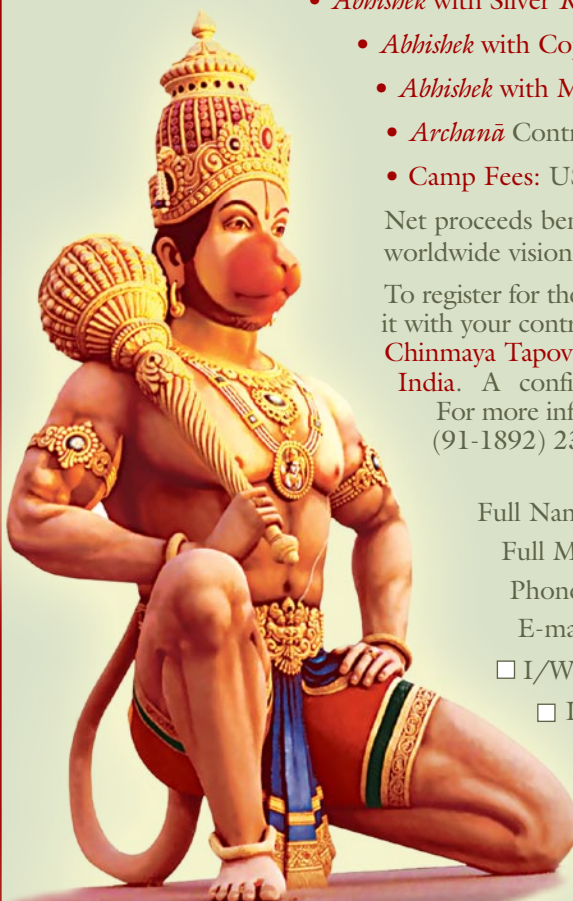
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I/We wish to attend full-time, October 4-10.

☐ I/We wish to attend part-time. Specify dates and timings of arrival and departure.

☐ I/We wish to perform or offer the following (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my/our Check # \_\_\_\_\_ for \$ \_\_\_\_\_.



# CHINMAYA MISSION® CHICAGO

✧ BADRI ✧ A SCHOOL OF VEDANTIC STUDIES

25<sup>th</sup> Annual Vedic Heritage Youth Camp 2007

July 16 - 22, 2007 (Monday-Sunday)

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. daily

## GRADES 7-12: TIMELESS VALUES

Select topics from *Ramacharitamanasa* and *Bhagavad Gita*

## GRADES KG-6: DASHAVATARA

Devotional and Inspiring Values from the Incarnations of Lord Vishnu

## CAMP ACHARYAS

Swami Sharanananda (CM Chicago), Brahmachari Uddhav Chaitanya (CM Dallas-Fort Worth), Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya (CM Los Angeles), Brahmacharini Bhamati Chaitanya (CM Boston), Lakshmi Sukumar (CM San Diego)

Registration includes all camp materials, lunch, snacks,  
and supervision before and after camp hours.

**Full Camp:** \$200 per child; \$350 for 2 siblings; \$400 maximum

**Partial Camp:** \$40/day, maximum 3 days

**Out-of-Town Participants:** Parents from outside the Chicago area may send their children (10 years and above) to attend the Youth Camp.

Local transportation and host family accommodation will be provided.

**Contacts:** Sonia Chugh (708) 479-4528; Roopla Khanna (630) 357-4564;

Padmini Makam (219) 322-7268; Rajul Bhalala (847) 295-2383;

Sarala Kareti (217) 546-7921; Asha Bhatia (319) 339-8624

## REGISTRATION (Separate form per child)

(Check One) ☐ Full Camp ☐ Partial Full Camp (specify dates):

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE (Entering Sep. 2007) \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S FULL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER'S FULL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

ONLY FOR OUT-OF-TOWN RESIDENTS . . .

TRANSPORTATION REQUIRED? ☐ YES ☐ NO

ACCOMMODATION REQUIRED? ☐ YES ☐ NO

EMERGENCY CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PEDIATRICIAN'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIFY any food, drink, or drug allergies, medical problems, or special needs:

Check #: \_\_\_\_\_ Check Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card (circle one: VISA MC AmEx) #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Enclosed for \$: \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal # (if any): \_\_\_\_\_