



mu NEWS

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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Dear Readers,

Hari OM! Pranam.

We are almost at the end of another year! It is striking to see that each month of 2007 has been as eventful and celebratory as the next—from January (New Year and *Makara Sankranti*) to February (*Mahashivaratri*) to March (*Holi* and *Rama Navami*) to April (*Hanuman Jayanti*) to May (*Chinmaya Jayanti*) to June (Pujya Guruji's birthday) to July (*Guru Purnima*) to August (*Chinmaya Mahasamadhi*) to September (*Janmashtami* and *Ganesha Chaturthi*) to October (*Navaratri* and *Dassehra*) to November (*Dipavali*) to December (*Tapovan Jayanti* and *Gita Jayanti*)! And while this short list doesn't include the variegated communal and familial festivals inundating Indian homes every other day, it is a calendar that reminds us to celebrate every day and moment with love and laughter, as taught by our *guru-parampara*.

We have all had a blessed 2007, whether we have realized it or not. As this year closes, we put away the past to move on to the future. Ever steeped in Presence, may we serve on in the present as directed by divine will.

Hari OM.

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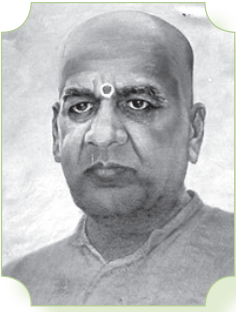
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His Holiness
Swami Tapovanam

Indeed, thinking alone helps in determining the nature of Reality. No amount of penance or ritualistic worship can take us to the goal. Penance, by itself, cannot destroy the I-consciousness. That can be rooted out only on the direct perception of Reality resulting from thought. Until that is done, there cannot be real peace and freedom from suffering.

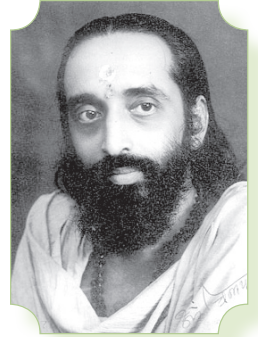
All creatures, from the worm to *hiranyagarbha*, are strung on the ego-sense called *adhyasa*. The impression that something is what it is not—the notion that the *atman* is the body (which it is not)—is called *adhyasa* or *ahamkara*. *Ahamkara* is *samsara*. The escape from *samsara* is called *moksha*. The state in which one has destroyed egoism, realized the *atman*, and found the *atman* in everything movable or immovable, is called *mukti* (liberation). The attainment of this state is the highest purpose of life.

Source: *Wanderings in the Himalayas*

People want to forget their sorrows, not remove their sorrows. . . . [But] a weakness is always a weakness, and no seeker has the right to perpetuate it. No instruction should entertain the audacity to argue for it. . . .

Liberation is unique. It will not suffer any other mental preoccupation. It must be everything or nothing. If it is sought with total mind, it is gained forever. . . .

The journey is long, and alone you have to walk. With love and devotion, serve all on the way. And you will meet me one day. For that blissful moment, I shall wait!



His Holiness
Swami Chinmayananda



His Holiness
Swami Tejomayananda

Q: Parents just do not understand us; there is a big generation gap. They think we are not ambitious enough and only want to have too much fun. They think we aren't serious about anything and don't work hard enough.

A: Stop blaming your parents! When you were a child you can say that your parents were responsible for everything you do. It is they who decide which school you go to and so on. But once you mature and go to university, you can no longer say that your parents are responsible for everything. It is not that your parents do not understand you. They will understand and support you, provided you show consistency and results in whatever you do. Simply being adamant without any consistency, and changing your interest every now and then will not serve any purpose.

Enough of putting the blame on someone else! Take responsibility for your life and put it in your hands! Start from wherever you are and show results! Have faith in yourself. There is no place for low self-esteem. If you are determined enough, you will find that all support and guidance will automatically come to you.

In all stages of life, everyone will face some type of obstacle. There may be many who criticize and discourage you. But hold on to your faith. If a task is worthy of doing, then do it. Don't get angry when a person criticizes you. If support does not come from one source, then it will come from another. Learn to enjoy your work and make the most of it. Do not let the fear of failure hold you back. And stop looking for excuses and sympathy.

Take charge of your life! You have to lift yourself up; do not depend on others to pull you up. Take charge and you will be successful!

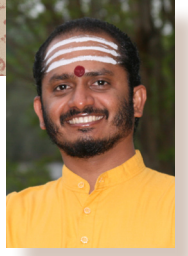
([Click here for Pujya Guruji's Itinerary](#))

Tasmai Shri Gurave Namaha

Talks on *Guru Stotram* by Brahmachari Uddhav Chaitanya

Transcribed by Rupali Gupta

Continued from CMW News, September 2007



At a camp in Chicago, someone asked Guruji a question: “In spite of attending *satsanga* regularly for 30-40 years, I don’t find a systematic development or change in myself. So what is the necessity or purpose of attending *satsanga*?”

Guruji said a similar question was asked in a spiritual journal, and it stirred up a lot of doubts and discussions. All the discussions came to an end when someone wrote this letter to the editor: “For the past 49 years, I have been eating regularly, three times a day. And today, if you ask me what I ate and when, I will not be able to give you exact answers. But I definitely know that if I had not eaten regularly for the past 49 years, I would not have been able to write this letter to you.”

We may not remember what happened, how it happened, what we read, or what all we experienced, but all of what we did has made us what we are now. So all our efforts will definitely have their effect and these effects will impact our life. It’s just that these effects may not appear immediately, because what we are trying to clean up is lifetimes’ accumulation of dirt.

Aneka janma samprapta . . . All these impressions have to be totally wiped out from our *chitta*, the memory bank. *Chitta* is like RAM (Random Access Memory), where everything we process or experience gets recorded. As these recorded patterns pile up, they express as actions. Just to reach where we are now, we have gone through countless different *yonis* (wombs).

If someone does or says something wrong, we tend to get irritated, “Have I not told you how to do it? Why did you make the mistake?” Think of the guru’s love and compassion. He keeps repeating the same *tattva* in different ways so that different students can easily understand it. Never does he get disappointed that the students are not catching it, because he knows it is lifetimes’ worth of processes to be corrected.

Once there were two disciples who fought vigorously with each other. They both approached the guru and said, “Swamiji, he did this . . . !”

“Tell me,” said the guru, “Who started it all?”

One said, “Swamiji, he beat me! He called me names!”

The other disciple said, “He also called me names!”

The guru asked, “What did you call him?”

“I called him a donkey.”

The guru, instead of solving the problem, started laughing loudly. The students were puzzled. The guru asked, “How many years have you been in the ashram?”

One student said, “Six years.”

The other said, “Seven years.”

The guru laughed even louder and said, “For six to seven years, I have been telling that you are *sat-chit-ananda svarupa* and it has never clicked. Yet today he called you a donkey, and you think that is real!”

The guru always patiently repeats the same to us, “You are *sat-chit-ananda* .” He communicates with tremendous compassion and understanding. In *Vivekachudamani*, Adi Shankaracharya calls this *ahetuka daya*, or “compassion without cause.” It is not a compassion born of reasoning or logic. If it were, we would not be deserving of it. In spite of what we are, the master still showers his grace on us.

To eliminate the tendencies we have accumulated over many lives, he teaches us *karma yoga* (for the body), *bhakti yoga* (for the mind), and *jnana yoga* (for the intellect). When someone asks, “Are you a karma yogi, bhakta, or jnani,” the three cannot

be separated, because we don't just exist at a body level, mind level, or intellectual level. Whatever action expresses through the body should be *karma yoga*. All our emotions should be dedicated to the Lord. Intellectually, our *mananam* should be continuous.

Shoshanam bhava sindhosh-cha jnapanam-sara-sampadah. Mirabai, in one of her *bhajans*, beautifully sings about her *guru bhakti*: “*Mohe lagi re lagan guru charanan ki.*” She says, “I need my guru's help to take me across *bhava sagara* (the ocean of transmigration).” A master does this by indicating that *tattva* in every moment, through every experience.

Many people went to Ramana Maharshi, who was a master with unique style. He was lovingly called Tata (grandfather). If someone came to him and said, “*Tata*, I have a stomachache,” his remedy would be, “Ask who has the stomachache.” People would be puzzled, “What does a stomachache have to do with finding out who I am?” Ramana Maharshi would reply, “When you answer that question, you will no longer have a stomachache or any other kind of problem.”

Every kind of problem we face in this world arises from our non-apprehension of who we really are. Our non-apprehension leads to misapprehensions and confusions about who we can be, should be, may be, etc., which leaves us searching for some identity in this world. The master is the one who always indicates our true nature through every experience and type of *sadhana*. All that we can say in gratitude to such a master is, “*Guroh padodakam samyak tasmai shri gurave namah.*”

There is a beautiful analogy in this *shloka*. If we think the *bhava sagara* is disturbing us, then offer that *bhava sagara* at the holy feet of the guru. The moment we offer it, what we get in return is *padodakam* or *prasada*. Here, *prasada* refers to *prasada buddhi*. This *prasada buddhi* is not the kind of *buddhi* that asks for *prasada*! It is when the *buddhi* (intellect) accepts all that comes in life as *prasada*; it is this attitude of acceptance that makes our life happier. The day we learn the art of accepting life 100% without reacting to it is the day the guru's grace is flowing in us in full measure.

Most often, however, because of various external pressures, we pretend to be cool and accept what is happening to us, but internally we keep

reacting to it like an active volcano. This is called *baahar se chandra-mukhi, andar se jvaalaa-mukhi*. This internal resentment keeps bottling up, and when given a chance, explodes suddenly. Whenever I see a person in rage, I immediately draw a mental caricature of a pressure cooker in place of his head!

There are two ways we can live life. The first method is, if we have the guts and courage to react completely, then react 100%! But most of us don't have this courage, and on the spur of the moment, we react externally, but feel guilty internally for having reacted. The second and easier method is the path already walked by many masters: Accept what comes 100%, without reacting.

In every individual's life there must be at least one person to whom you will never say no, one person to whom you are answerable, one person to whom you will not say, “No, this is not possible.” This could be God or the guru; for me, Gurudev is both. The moment we recognize this being and fully dedicate ourselves to him, we face life with a different kind of courage.

Whatever our altar of dedication asks us to do or brings forth in our life, we must keep the faith that it is for our benefit. Accept it 100% and see it through. We may have plenty of doubts, but follow through regardless. Only later on will we see the tremendous changes and experiences resulting from such instruction or occurrence.

We may have a lot of *shraddha* (faith) and *bhakti* (devotion) for the guru, but whenever possible, whenever given a chance, we should try to spend as much of time as possible personally in the *seva* of a guru, a living master. A bloated ego will consider itself a great *sadhaka*, but only when we are personally with the master do we realize that serving a master is no easy task.



Na guror-adbhikam tapah: Being with, and serving, the guru is one of the highest forms of *tapas*, because the guru's aim is not to please his disciples. He does whatever it takes to lead the disciple to strive for, and know, his own true Self. It is similar to the rigorous heating and cleaning process gold undergoes in its transformation from raw ore to designer jewelry. The disciple must become such a beautiful gold necklace, though the process is long and hard. Being with the master puts us through this process. Whenever we get a chance to be with the guru, we should consider it as the Lord's blessing, a bonus.

Guru is the Truth. To eradicate the ego and reach the state of Perfection, one has to undergo training through a guru. Nothing is comparable to the experience of being with a master who helps us realize that *tattva*. All we can offer such a master are our humble prostrations, as Arjuna did after seeing the Lord's cosmic form: "*Namo namaste'stu sahasra-krtvah* (salutations unto You a thousand times)."

What can we give to that master who has given us the best and nothing but the best? What can we give to such a master who does not care about anything in this world? The first time some people met Gurudev, their first thought was on his red carpet welcome, the chauffer luxury car, his flowing silk robes, his Rolex watch, etc. His devotees would shower him with all kinds of presents—gold chains, rings, watches, and more. He would accept all of them with joy. In the next moment, he may listen to a child chanting all 72 *shlokas* of *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 2. He would hug the child, take off the chain he got just five minutes ago, and put it around the child's neck. When the parents would protest, he would say, "You people think the *shastras* (scriptures) cannot give money? This is the first payment *shastra* is giving!"



He was just not bothered about material things. To such a master, what can we give back? To one who always has everything, to one who does not desire anything? All that we give are humble prostrations. And however many times we give, we are still left feeling, "Is there more I can give?" Nothing can compare with what he gives us so freely. *Tattva-jnanat param nasti.*

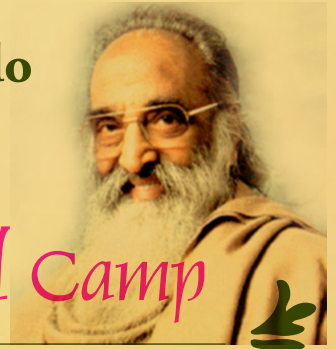
The first time Gurudev spoke in Chennai, orthodox *pandits* threatened him, "If you don't stop speaking about Vedanta in this *mlechha bhasha* (English), we will pour hot lead into your ears and mouth!" Gurudev did not bother about who was saying what. He knew he had his guru's blessings and his purpose was crystal clear. So much so, that when these *pandits* complained to the Kanchi *Paramacharya* Shri Chandrashekharendra Sarasvati, the *acharya* said, "Who can stop him when Sarasvati Herself is dancing on his tongue!" Gurudev gave nothing but the absolute Truth, without contamination, blessings all he came across.

A *sadhaka* who is synchronized with a master is indeed a blessed disciple. When there is no difference left between God and the guru, and both are seen and intensely loved as one, *man-nathah shri jagan-nathah, mad-guruh shri jagad-guruh*. Through such acceptance and gratitude, what expresses in the disciple's life is unison with the entire universe. To understand that "I am the Truth" is merely half-Realization. In *Narayana Sukta* it is said, "Whatever I experience within as the supreme Reality is the same Reality expressing in all the apparent multiplicity I see." This is complete Self-realization, where the master reveals the unison between the master and the Lord, and shows us unity in everything.

In his *Guru Ashtakam*, Adi Shankaracharya says, "*Shariram surupam yatha va kalatram, yashash-charu chitram dhanam meru-tulyam. Manash-chenna lagnam guror-angbri-padme, tatah kim tatah kim tatah kim tatah kim.*" Everything we have may be just perfect—beautiful body, beautiful gadgets, beautiful mind, beautiful spouse, name and fame, secure job, as much wealth as *Meru Parvat* (Mount Meru)—yet, in spite of having all these, if our life is not dedicated to the feet of the guru, *tatah kim tatah kim tatah kim?* What good are all these things? They come and go, but surrender to the guru's holy feet makes a devotee greater, happier, and simpler.

continued on page 27

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conducted by

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

on

Sankhya Yoga: Gita, Chapter 2



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Cake or Cookie?

by Brahmacharini Sumati Chaitanya
(CM United Kingdom)

Before we start moving toward freedom and happiness, we will have to question about their whereabouts and their nature. The understanding of ‘where’ will give us direction, and the knowledge of their ‘nature’ will help us recognize them. The journey toward freedom and happiness must therefore begin with inquiry.

Are we not all constantly trying to be free from limitations and be happy? Is this pursuit new to us? Have we ever questioned why all beings constantly strive for freedom and happiness? Despite an ardent desire and zealous efforts, why haven’t we found it (freedom-and-happiness, for one is the other)? Is it because it does not exist? Or is it because we are too familiar with it, too close to it, and therefore fail to recognize what is in plain sight? Perhaps it is already my own nature?

One cannot say that it does not exist or cannot be found, because we do see and hear about men of Realization, all around the world, experiencing it. Also, it is seen in the world that one does not have desire for something that is completely nonexistent. So the inquiry boils down to this: Is it my own nature? Is it so intimate that I completely overlooked it?

Our constant seeking itself proves that freedom-and-happiness is our essential nature. Even the laws of physics can, and do, explain our need to return to our original state of being. But we haven’t found this original state [the Self] only because our search is in everything other than the Self.

We often hear people saying, “We are not yet ready for Self-realization. We still have lots of worldly desires to fulfill.” My question to them is, “What is your understanding of Self-realization? What do you expect to get from the fulfillment of worldly desires?”

They say, “We don’t know much about Self-realization except that it is too divine a state for a wretched person like me. But I know I can be happy if I work hard to fulfill my desires.”

I ask, “What kind of happiness?”

They say, “The happiness that is freely available, at all times, without much effort, in abundance, never exhausting, everlasting, where I don’t have to depend on anything.”

I say, “Do you know you are asking for the Self and not the world? Your description of your desired happiness is the description of the Self.” Inquire, in each and every experience: What is that which is constant, ever present, everlasting, effortless, and does not depend on anything? Is it not the Self, the Self which we know as ‘I’?

In short, what we want is the Self alone. The problem is we do not know that we want the Self. Being ignorant about the nature of our desire for freedom-and-happiness, we search for it in an absolute opposite direction. Will we ever find it?

I have a desire to eat cake. But I do not know that it is called cake. I call a cake a cookie. So when I ask for a cookie, naturally, you will give me a cookie. When I get a cookie and say, “No, this is not what I want,” you may get me innumerable varieties of cookies. But I will still not be satisfied, because in the name of ‘cookie’ I am searching for ‘cake’.

I may say, “These taste good, but this is not what I want. I want cookies.” Now, if you are wise, you will ask me a simple question: “What do you mean by ‘cookie’? What do you really want?” Then, when I begin to describe what is in my mind, I will say, “It is that which is soft like sponge. It is sweet and may even have cream on the top.”

Because you understand that I am describing a cake, you will get me a piece of cake. Seeing that, I will say, “Yes! That’s what I wanted!” I had wanted cake alone, but I called it a cookie, so I kept getting cookies. In the same way, we want the ‘Self’ alone, but keep calling It ‘worldly desires,’ therefore the dissatisfaction.

But it is this constant discontent and disappointment, even in the midst of comforts, with a continuous search for freedom and lasting happiness, that will bring a Guru into our lives to first make us aware of the nature of our desire and then the correct direction to fulfill it. With the grace of our Guru and right efforts in a right direction, may we all get that which we have been yearning for—true freedom and happiness, the Self.

Objective of Festivals

Reprinted from *Hindu Culture*
by Swami Tejomayananda

India is famous for its variety of festivals. Thanks to the innumerable deities, regions, and various other subdivisions, we seem to be having festivities throughout the year.

Man, being a social animal, has devised various ways of getting together. None of want to remain alone; we are always in search of company. Festivals provide a platform for this get-together. People seem to relish festivals for two main reasons: company, and consequently, entertainment value.

Over a period of time, the real significance of celebration seems to have been covered by the overemphasis on the ritualistic aspects. Thus, the original purpose of showing both the goal of life and indicating its means through these festivals has been lost.

The prime objective of any festival, or for that matter, any ritual, is purification of the mind—to render it quiet and fit for contemplation. Thus, a *Janmashtami* or *Shivaratri* or *Durga Puja* is meant to take us nearer to the Lord by creating a conducive environment. The mind usually goes out through all the sense organs and ends up dissipating its energy. During festivals, the form of the Lord, *arati*, ringing of the bell, burning of incense sticks, chanting mantras, and singing His glory, turn the outgoing mind inward. Such a mind, which is constantly chanting the Lord's name in front of the altar, let goes all its worries, anxieties, etc., and is totally peaceful. This results in the mind's purification. The lesser the thought disturbances, the more fit the instrument to lead an ideal life.

The essence of *karma yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, and *jnana yoga* is attained by the seeker who sincerely takes part in festivals, understanding fully well their inner significance.



Love to Love

Based on a talk by Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya
Transcribed by Madhu Sharma



In one of the most masterful and symbolic scriptural stories, found at the start of Veda Vyasa's great *Purana*, *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, the glory of devotion is extolled.

Once, during his world travels, Sage Narada saw a strange sight in Vrindavan. He saw a young, beautiful woman crying bitterly. She was surrounded by her friends, who included Ganga, Yamuna, and Narmada. Narada then noticed two old men laying unconscious at the woman's side.

Upon being asked about herself and the two old men, the grief-stricken woman replied that she was *Bhakti* (devotion) and that the two old men were her sons, *Jnana* (knowledge) and *Vairagya* (dispassion). Narada was astounded to see such a young mother with such aged sons.

Bhakti told the sage that she had been born in Karnataka (state in India) and grown up in Maharashtra. She said in Gujarat, she and her sons all became old. It was strange therefore, that when she arrived in Vrindavan, she became young again, but her two sons, *Jnana* and *Vairagya*, became unconscious.

Symbolically, this story reveals that Vrindavan devotees have great love for, and joy of, devotion; so *Bhakti* was rejuvenated. But the case was not the same for knowledge and dispassion.

Bhakti pleaded with Narada to somehow revive her sons. Narada assured her that he would help her sons and also see to it that she, devotion, was established in every human heart in *Kali Yuga*. Thus, the sage began chanting the Vedas, *Upanishads*, and *Bhagavad Gita* in her sons' ears. To his surprise, even this did not revive them.

This indicates that scriptural studies and Vedantic philosophy do not appeal to most people—first, because they are difficult, and second, because many consider them to be too dry a subject.

After his many attempts to resuscitate the sons failed, Narada consulted many mahatmas and yogis. But they, too, were unable to help. At last, Narada came upon his older brothers, Sanaka, Sanandana,

Sanatana, and Sanatkumara. Seeing a worried and dejected Narada, the four brothers inquired into the reason behind his sadness.

When Narada told them, the brothers exclaimed in surprise that Narada should have immediately known what to do to revive the boys. They reminded Narada that by merely listening to *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, *bhakti*, *jnana*, and *vairagya* would all blossom in everyone's hearts.

Feeling greatly relieved and happy, Narada requested Sanatkumara to narrate *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, which he joyously did. As he recited, *Bhakti* started manifesting herself in all the listeners' hearts. Her sons started to stir, moved by the Lord's divine stories, and soon became fully conscious.

Through *satsanga*, once true devotion manifests in the heart, knowledge and dispassion surely arise. The more we love a person or object, the more we want to know about that person or object. Love gives rise to knowledge. And as we grow in our knowledge and love for that person or object, we automatically or voluntarily give up, or detach from, our interests in all other things and beings. Devotion to God thus results in knowledge of the Truth and dispassion for the world.



Art, such as paintings, sculptures, handicrafts, is essentially an expression of what is within oneself. Art is in the producing and in the experiencing. To produce art, one needs love, ability, resources, and practice. In the art of meditation, love is innate. Finding the latter three, within and without, is preparing oneself for the most adventurous journey of life.

Having ability means having the willingness and capability to say and believe, "I can do it. I can train. I can practice."

A main resource for meditation is the body. Training the body requires following important principles:

- Don't sleep too much; don't sleep too little.
- Don't eat too much; don't eat too little.
- Ensure optimum exertion of energy.
- Don't be lazy.

Another main resource is the mind. Mind is a flow of thoughts.

In the initial stages of the meditation process, internal management of the mind is needed. When thoughts arise in the mind, learning how to manage and use them as a resource is an ability to be developed. As Pujya Guruji says, "Learn how to think. It is a great art."

Thoughts can be turned into resources. For this, one may need to initially develop thoughts of strength and willpower to keep away from or eliminate unwanted thoughts. One may need to bring a wandering mind back and channel it for contemplation by watching the breath and chanting OM.

In and through the theories on the art of meditation, practice is a must. Even though one intellectually grasps and understands the factors, principles, and logistics of the meditation process, practicing this process, at certain times each day, is a must.

Beyond all instruments and processes stands the goal, the true state of meditation: the Self. One may consciously experience variegated glimpses of bliss—in the joy of mother holding her newborn, in the satisfaction after a night of undisturbed sleep. But deepening in spiritual intensity to transcend the world and rediscover the Self is known as merging into the ocean of Bliss.

Some helpful hints for new meditation practitioners include:

- Start your practice in the early morning hours, as soon as you awaken, which is when you have the least number of thoughts.
- Sit comfortably in a quiet place, with your head, neck, and spine in a straight line.
- Keep your eyes closed or half closed.
- Place your palms gently in your lap or over your knees.
- Ensure that your body remains absolutely still throughout the session.
- Stay alert, and if your mind wanders, focus on watching your breath and chant "Om" or any other mantra with each breath.
- After arising from your seat of meditation, spend some time in maunam (complete silence).

Travelogue

Brahmacharins on the Run . . .

by Vivek Gupta

Guruji told us we were going to Uttarkashi sometime in October [2006]. This was in February, before he left for Kolkata, and a long eight months away. Yet days passed into weeks, into months, and October arrived. Having to take care of matters in other centers, Guruji left for the North before us *brahmacharins*. Thus, classes ceased and preparations were in full effect. The *brahmacharins*, for the first time in over a year, were on the run . . .

We left *Jagadishvara Mandir* in ‘Sandeepany’ [Mumbai] on the morning of October 5, chanting *Marga-bandhu Stotram*. Well-planned, our entire group (*brahmacharins*, guest students, and day scholars) totaling 65, was accommodated into one train compartment. The real motive for this was so we could collectively chant all day, minimizing disturbances to others . . . and that is exactly what we did. Many of the students’ parents, knowing of our journey, gave us a surprise reception in Vadodra, and then again in New Delhi. The extra hands were of great help to quickly shift all our luggage onto the two buses awaiting our departure for Haridwar.

After 32 hours of travel, we arrived at *Someshwar Dham* in Haridwar. There, Shri Maha-Mandaleshvara Vishokanandaji welcomed us with open arms, leaving us all wondering how we came to be so blessed. His ashram and devotees exemplified the true spirit of service. Moreover, Shri Maha-Mandaleshvara Vishokanandaji honoured us by conducting *satsanga*, where he emphasized the need to be vigilant about *samay* and *saamaan* (time and possessions). It was an unforgettable experience, especially for many who were being embraced by Mother Ganga for the very first time—and that too, on *Kartikeya Purnima* or *Sharad Purnima*. Morning dawned; thanks and farewells were exchanged. We were on the move again. Moving to where those unmoving Spirits lived and learned. . .

‘*Tapovan Kuti*’ rose before us like a deepening meditation. Guruji once told us that *Tapovan Kuti* is the most important place for the entire Chinmaya Mission. Pujya Gurudev’s words undoubtedly confirm this, as he calls Param Pujya Gurudev Swami Tapovanji Maharaj the Grandsire of Chinmaya Mission.

Our battle to Uttarkashi was not a battle at all—rather a breeze upon which we floated into our new home. Under Guruji’s guidance, Swami Dhyananandaji and his devotees have inimitably married timeless Vedic auras with modern amenities, allowing *Tapovan Kuti* to be accessible for anyone with the devotion to be there. Our devotion manifested on October 7.

After unloading and resting (as seekers, living with roommates for the first time was a pleasure-struggle memory), in our initial *satsanga* at *Tapovan Kuti*, Guruji encouraged us to simply absorb Uttarkashi. That is, if we could. How could we not? We were studying *Taittiriya Upanishad*, *Shrimad Bhagvad Gita* (Chapter 2), and *Ramacharitamansa* under Guruji, in the same place where Pujya Gurudev was transformed and our Param Pujya Gurudev reveled. This was our ordinary schedule! A seeker’s dream . . .

Dreaming on, whenever we were not in class, we were rushing. Rushing to be with our Mother. Ganga Mata. Mother Ganga is the soul of India. India is the soul of the World. No Ganga. No India. No World. This fact was so evident in her perennial roar and laughter that beckoned each and every one of us personally, specially. Exactly as Pujya Gurudev did and does. Unflinchingly, we responded to Her call. Whether reading or writing, bathing or drinking, the eternal Mother never let us leave Her side. To call oneself fortunate to have lived with Her for a month is blasphemy. She carried us to realms beyond. Simply because She is unlike any other river in the universe. She is ever alive. On no day was Her sound, color, temperature, taste, or strength the same. And She, being the elixir of life, energizes all of Nature around Her to play just like She does.

Wherever Ganga Maiya resides, naturally, other *devatas* cannot be far. Uttarkashi is proof of such ‘ideas’ being

facts. The *devatas* of Kashi Vishvanatha, Mahishasura Mardini, Annapurneshvari, Laksheshvara, and on and on and on, sanctify this already holy land. *Brahmachari* Samvid Chaitanya, a personality of immeasurable depth, was once a wanderer of the North. As our teacher, in *Sandeepany* he taught us the tunes and imports of various *stotrams* pertaining to the highly regarded *mandirs*. As our guide throughout our *yatra*, he enabled us to offer more of ourselves to these *devatas*.

Mata Ganga without, and *devatas* within—a city so sacred is called a *tirtha*. This *tirtha* is what pulled Param Puja Gurudev and Puja Gurudev from Kerala. In turn, these *tirthas*, our ageless Gurus, draw seekers from all around the world. Everywhere we went *sadhus* and saints were there, too. Sometimes we were fortunate enough to sit and listen to these *sannyasis*. And if this was not rare enough, when they came to know we were from Chinmaya Mission and were residing at *Tapovan Kuti*, their words naturally drifted to speak of the glories of our beloved Gurus. We smiled, realizing that as children of the Chinmaya Mission, wherever life was to take us, we would be welcomed without question. This truth became apparent when we were instructed to go out to the different *ksbetras* to collect *bhiksba*. Again, if this was not rare enough, one day, Swami Dhyananandaji arranged for a *bhandara* at the ashram, where all of us students were privileged to serve the many *sadhus* and saints from various ashrams. An honor beyond compare . . .

Tapovan Kuti truly is a spiritual heaven on Earth. In such an environment, our *sadhana* was lifted and deepened, not by choice, rather by force. Particularly so, because all of us were offered the rare, rare, rare chance of time alone in Param Puja Gurudev's actual *kuti*. Moreover, this spiritual energy led our *Acharyas* into a mood of their own. Every night after *satsanga*, Guruji would relax on the terrace outside the 'Chinmayam' block or in the original *satsanga* hall, and sing or narrate stories of his times with Puja Gurudev. Every noon, Swami Dhyananandaji would sit on the steps of Param Puja Gurudev's *kuti* and relate his experiences and learning over the years. Every morning, Swami Nikhilanandaji (CM Delhi) would be here and there, narrating his observations and jokes, primarily about us students! Special.

Equally special was celebrating Dipavali in North India. We students sang and danced as our *Acharyas* lovingly looked on via body, mind, and soul. "*Sadgurunath Maharaj ki . . . JAI!*"

The dream continues. Further north we go. Gangotri. The maternal home of one, of all. Our journey was long—landslides abound. Our journey was cold—deep autumn setting in. Our journey was cramped—65 on two undersized buses. A comfort amongst all our discomfort was a break at Parashara Ashram. We happily obeyed the custom of bathing in, and prostrating to, the hot waters of Gangani, which flow through the ashram itself.

Still, our continuing ride continued to drain us. Yet, as soon as we stepped off the buses at Gangotri, Ganga Maiya smiled and rejuvenated us. Walking turned to jogging, and in turn, to running, to meet Her. There She was. No pain was going to stop us from drinking Her waters. After our rendezvous, we worshipped Her created form in the famed *Gangotri Mandir*. Considering that we chant the *Ganga Arati* every evening at *Sandeepany* (and at *Tapovan Kuti*), finally being able to connect our words to Her image was indescribable. In those moments, all we could release was a passionate cry of peace.

Samvidji then educated our group on the beauty of *Ganga Ashtakam* right outside the *mandir*. Crowds were left in awe at our enthusiasm and devotion. Rightly so. After all, Gangotri had captured the attention of Param Puja Gurudev also. His legacy was left in the form of a quaint *kuti*, where his disciple Swami Sundaranandaji now resides. Company with Swamiji and absorbing the aura was too surreal. . . .

As our *yatra* was reaching its closing days, our many compassionate caretakers arranged for trips to *Nachiketas Tal* and *Vimaleshwara Mandir*. To reach the former, we hiked high and low, finally arriving at the blessed land where *Kathopanishad* had been propounded. In sheer reverence, we, too, chanted the entire text. Fulfilling our day, we performed a *parikrama* (circumambulation) of the *tal* (lake) and admired the Himalayas. (And before hiking back, some even dared to try to meet Lord Yamaraja through their impish adventures.)

Reaching *Vimaleshwara Mandir* was less arduous, yet equally captivating, equally sacred. The lonely *mandir* on top of a hill was where the Pandavas once worshipped Bhagavan as Vimaleshwara, before journeying further north. Swami Nikhilanandaji beautified the tranquility with words and we, in turn, tried with deeds. Collecting dust and blessings, we returned to our rooms, to pack our bags once again.

Time taunted, home called, and October 29 brought us the message that it was time to go home. We bowed low to the ground in reverence to Mata Ganga, Uttarkashi, and *Tapovan Kuti*, and in gratitude to Swami Dhyananandaji and devotees. The return ride to Haridwar was quiet.

On reaching *Someshwar Dham*, we once again were welcomed with open arms. The blissful completion of our *yatra* was shining in the eyes of all. A night's rest and we were back at it again. Rishikesh awaited our exploration.

Our first stop: Sivananda Ashram. Pujya Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj was a revolutionary par none. His works, whether in the form of books, centers, or disciples, are majestic. Being in the midst of his *kuti* and *Samadhi Mandir* was a humbling experience.

After partaking of the offered *bhiksha*, we paid homage to the *Akhanda Nama Mandir*. Here, the entire hall was covered with pictures of great *sadhus* and saints the world over. Pujya Gurudev was not to be missed.

Post-cleaning out the Sivananda Bookstall (everyone bought everything!), we visited the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy, which undertakes activities similar to Chinmaya Mission's *Sandeepany*s.

Next stop: Vasishtha Rishi Guha (the cave of Rishi Vasishtha). It is said that a Pujya Swami Purushottamanandaji (who completed the trio of the mighty *Himavat Vibhutis* alongside Param Pujya Swami Tapovanji and Pujya Swami Sivananda Maharaj) engaged in deep *tapas* here, invoking peace within the Universe.

We made our way to *Rama-Lakshmana Jhula* (a rope bridge), where we wandered around until the *Ganga Arati*, and then ended our day by offering our respects at *Kailasa Ashram* and the ISKCON *Mandir*. Endless blessings . . .

A short sleep later, we found ourselves taking on Haridwar. Paying tribute to Pujya Mata Anandamayi's *Samadhi Mandir* was soul stirring. This stirring intensified at *Daksha Prajapati Mandir*, which happens to be the *mula-sthana* for all the 64 *Shakti Pithas* (main worship centers of Divine Mother) around the world. Chanting away, we made our way for *Manasa Devi Mandir* and *Chandi Devi Mandir* via the cable cars. Mother's *darshan* is once and forever.

We were bursting with devotion, but in need of food. The Chinmaya Family is always with each other, for each other. A devotee treated us all to *bhiksha* at his restaurant. Pujya Gurudev as Divine Mother always feeds His children, and how.

Finally, Hari-ki-pauri awaited our group. Some bathed. Some shopped. All sang. The famous *Ganga Arati* was a little louder with our voices joining the crowds. One more night of wonderful hospitality at *Someshwar Dham* and the *brahmacharins* were moving again . . .

Halfway to New Delhi, our drivers were notified that the city was under curfew. Particularly in the area we were to stop for *bhiksha*. Now what? The decision was made to forge ahead. With the blessings of all our *Guru-parampara*, we entered the city unaffected.

Time was passing quickly. Would we have enough time for Akshara Dham? Some said no. Regardless, the decision was taken to forge ahead the same evening, though many preferred starting afresh the next day. On experiencing the majesty of Akshara Dham, our exhaustion transformed into exuberance. Indestructible. Indescribable. All were leveled by the precision, passion, and pain that went into creating this sacred monument. The Chinmaya Mission name bestowed us with a private tour and the complex even stayed open late to accommodate us. The IMAX movie, *Mystic India*, leveled us further, and then lifted us to respect and appreciate our inimitable Indian culture. Live hard. Be proud.

Riding on the high of *Akshara Dham*, the Lotus Temple and Chinmaya Centre for World Understanding inspired us to no lesser degree. It was in a flash that our adventurous traversing as wandering monks on the beaten Himalayan paths—physical and spiritual—led us back home. *Sandeepany*. Safe. Sound. Sublime.

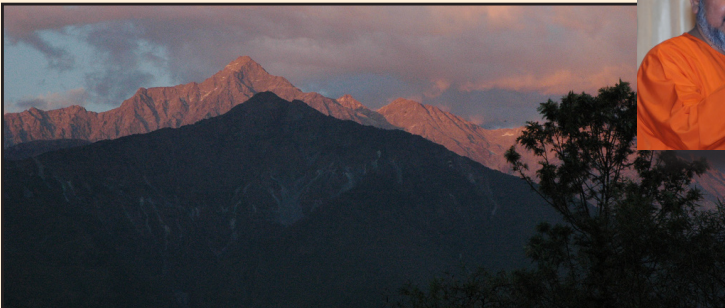
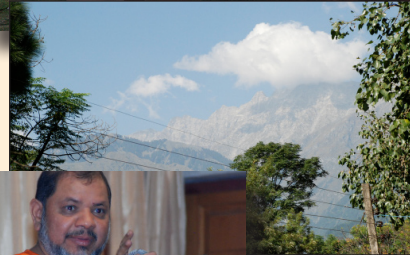
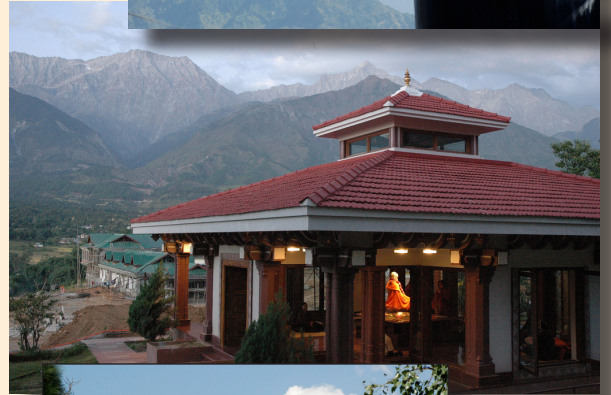
Shri Hanuman Mastaka Abhishekam

by Sheetal Parvani

S miles from strangers, the scent of fresh air, and rocky roads were my first moments into Himachal Pradesh. From Dharamsala Airport to the Sidhabari Ashram, the drive itself began the surreal experiences I had long been enthusiastically anticipating. My first impression was seeing the drive as life's journey of ups and downs, one that ultimately leads to an ashram of sacredness, knowledge, and devotion.

Mere words could never do justice to the breathtaking views of mountains, valleys, streams, sunsets, and endless beauty that surrounds the ashram and all of Sidhabari. As I toured the ashram, I saw first-hand the glory of the Hanumanji idol. Pujya Gururji later described in his talks how the sculptor, a great devotee, had prayed every morning at the *murti*-site during this creative process of building it with his own two hands. Every morning the sculptor meditated on his image of Hanumanji, and soon brought forth a stunning and beautiful idol of one of the greatest servants and devotees of the Lord.

As I stood focused gazing at the handsome Sidhabari Hanumanji, His innumerable extraordinary qualities effortlessly came to mind. His physical might, His underlying moral strength and character, His inspiring power of discrimination, His practical smartness, His profound wisdom, and His incomparable and immeasurable devotion. And then I saw the flaw. The flaw in man that His presence so easily reveals—man's identification with, and attachment to, the body. Hanumanji is clear—the goal is *moksha*—and before His luminous silence, it seems effortless.





During my first evening, in the serenity of the ashram, I sat peacefully with a *bramarcharini* and friend, and we watched the sun set into the mountains. It was incredible to see how my thought flow had calmed so drastically within the first few minutes of being there. It brought me a sense of fulfillment that no material success or physical pursuit could ever match. The following day, Guruji expounded in his talk on inquiry into the source of the I-thought, the inquiry that reveals pure Consciousness.

My days at the camp consisted of attending Guruji's talks on *Hanuman Chalisa*, listening to his illuminating stories, hiking through the nearby mountains and fields and slowly hiking out of my own mind, meeting great friends, getting the chance to serve, and conversing with the gathered *acharyas*, from whom there is always something new to learn.

From the many hikes we took—striding through streams, eating rice grains from the fields, and traveling unfamiliar paths with delightful company—I learned and experienced new concepts, such as the joy of simplicity and the conquering of fear.

One evening, while walking back to the ashram in utter darkness, a friend decided it was the appropriate time to talk about a tiger that roams the area. My fear kicked in, undoubtedly, but it was also let go within a matter of minutes, as I remembered Guruji words on fear of death being merely a fear of change. He said when something changes in our life or in our understanding, the old dies and the new is born. But this is a part of the normal, finite cycle in which we live, he said. Essentially, the goal is to try to remove ourselves from the finite and reach higher for the Infinite.

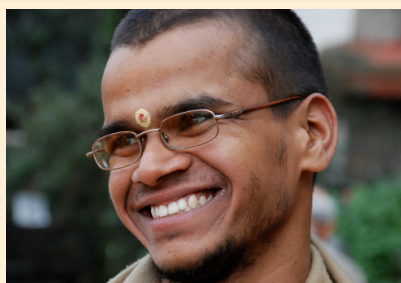
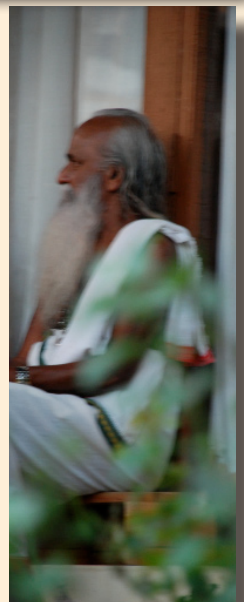
A powerful and memorable experience for me was the tranquility I felt when I entered Pujya Gurudev's *samadhi-mandir*. Facing the Himalayas was his murti of holiness, on the spot where his flower garden once thrived. I learned that a short while before his *mahasamadhi*, Gurudev hinted that the flower garden would soon be removed, for he knew that his *mahasamadhi* was close at hand.



The focal point of the camp was Hanumanji's *mastaka abhishekam*. With the pouring of holy waters from gold, silver, copper, and mud *kalashas*, we all celebrated Hanumanji's silver jubilee year of arrival into Sidhabari. We performed *pujas* and *havans*, and consecrated the kalashas for two days. The third day, the day of the *mastaka abhishekam*, was glorious, and it was made particularly special by the tireless and loving service of many devotees, resulting in a beautiful and smooth procession.

On October 10, 2007, we all performed a three-hour puja in the morning, followed by the chanting of Hanumanji's 1,008 names. Invoking His presence within and remembering all His glories that were described by Guruji in detail throughout his talks, we lined up to offer *abhishekam* to Hanumanji. As we proceeded to the last floor of the ashram's "Hanuman Block," we crossed over to the top of the 35-foot idol on a ramp specially built (as it always is) by the Indian army. The group of army men worked had endlessly on all the days before the event to construct a sturdy and unfailing crossover. Volunteers manned the entire ramp and walkway, instructing devotees at every step. Throughout, the loud and continuous chanting of "*Om shri hanumate namaha*" reverberated in each devotee's heart, filling the ashram with joy, warmth, and power.

Concentrating wholeheartedly on Hanumanji's glory, when my turn came to offer Hanumanji *abhishekam*, I was overwhelmed with immense peace and joy deep within. When I looked below, I saw many *acharyas* and devotees singing the Lord's name and dancing with abandon. It was such a beautiful and moving sight to see everyone's hearts charged with love.



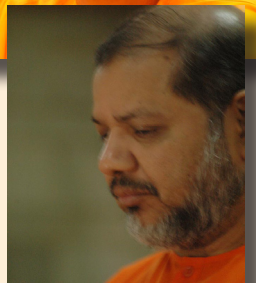
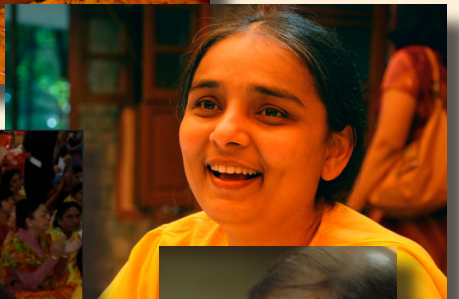
This love was the permeating spirit of the entire camp: Pujya Guruji's talks on Hanuman Chalisa, the rare music concert by Padmabhushan Pandit Jasraj-ji, the bhajan sessions, the previews of Upanishad Ganga episodes, the drama performance by brahmacharis, the satsangs among new friends, the walks with indescribable vistas, the havans and pujas, and the grand finale of Shri Hanuman mastaka abhishekam. Love conquered all. Love helped all, including in succeeding to wake up in the wee morning hours and to brave through the cold nights.

The love that the exemplary devotee Hanumanji held for Bhagavan Ramachandraji captivated our hearts and minds, reminding us that Hanumanji is present at all times, in all. To discover this oneness in all, to see all as the Supreme, to always be aware of His eternal presence and blessings, to be available for the Lord in our heart—these are the requirements on the path of *moksha*. Guruji wonderfully pointed out that it is one thing to say, “God bless you”—the Lord’s blessings are always with us. But it is another thing to always be aware that the Lord’s blessings are with us at all times.

Of Hanumanji’s qualities, the five that left an unforgettable mark in my mind (to be emulated) are the ability to: sacrifice and renounce, be great in compassion, be great in knowledge and wisdom, be great in charity, and be great on the battlefield. Above all, my most precious Hanumanji teaching from Guruji was to be ever-eager to serve the Lord, and to revel in His glories and stories as our Hanumanji always did.

However it had come to be, I had crossed certain paths in life that gifted me the opportunity and blessings to be in the presence of greatness—Swamijis, *brahmacharins*, and blessed devotees, alike—a fulfilling experience, for which I am humbly grateful.





CMW Welcomes New Acharyas

With the 13th *Brahmachari* Vedanta Course over, CMW is pleased and honored to introduce, and heartily welcome, its new *acharyas* who will greatly help all CMW centers in expanding and enhancing Puja Gurudev's vision and Mission in North America.

Our new *acharyas* have been posted at the following CMW centers:

- *Brahmachari* Prabhat Chaitanya (Nishant) (CM Toronto)
- *Brahmachari* Eric (CMW Headquarters, Krishnalaya)
- *Acharya* Ananth Sharma (CM Dulles)

Various guest students who completed the course will also be teaching or doing seva for Chinmaya Mission full-time, from their respective homes. These are: P. B. and Asha Ghate, Dr. and Renuka Nagaraju, G.V. and Geetha Raghu, Pramila Poudel, and Vivek Gupta.

The Course's concluding *diksha* ceremony was held in Sandeepany *Sadhanalaya* in Mumbai, India, on Sep. 16. Before receiving their new name, the students chanted the sacred convocation found in *Taittiriya Upanishad*. Students taking the yellow cloth were given a new first name and last name (Chaitanya). Students serving the Mission in white cloth retained their previous name with the added title of *Brahmachari/Brahmacharini* or *Acharya*. Both sets of students received new clothes, which they donned after receiving.

The ceremonial initiation into Chinmaya Mission's order of *acharyas* was observed in various ways throughout September. From the select sacred thread initiation (presided over and blessed by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda and Pujya Swami Purushottmananda), to the students' elaborate and heart-rendering offering of *Guru-pada puja* to Guruji, to the naming and cloth *diksha* ceremony, to the special gifts of photos and books to the new *acharyas*, to the *bhiksha* feasts that became an almost daily ritual, to the private interviews and closed sessions with Guruji, to Guruji's special talks on public speaking and CM's worldwide organization, projects, classes, and activities . . . this 13th batch of students served, and were

served, with immense love and care throughout their two-year stay, which began and ended on *Ganesha Chaturthi*.

The students' most cherished blessings came at the *diksha* ceremony from the presence and words of CM's most senior *acharyas*—Pujya Guruji, Pujya Swami Purushottamananda, and Pujya Swami Brahmananda. All three spiritual masters blessed the students and offered them wise advice on *sadhana*, self-study, conduct, service, and the value of a spiritual life.

Transforming Mumbai's Corporate Sector

Based on a report by C. K. Guruprasad



Mumbai's Grand Hyatt Hotel saw the influx of multifarious business leaders on the morning of Sep. 8. They entered with curiosity and energy into CM Mumbai's day-long workshop, entitled, "Live Forever, Richer and Richer." With a title like this, given by none other than Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, it was an inviting event not to be missed.

Guruji spoke at, and attended, this large-scale, first-ever CM workshop of its kind. The similar but smaller day-long seminar, held a month before at the *Sandeepany Sadhanalaya* ashram in Mumbai and headed by Swami Ishwarananda (CM Tustin), was the prelude to the Grand Hyatt event. The quality of the talks and activities in this earlier symposium became the talk of the town, especially Guruji's address on the seminar theme, "Spiritual Transformation in the Workplace."

As a result, many reputed business leaders heard about, and registered for, "Live Forever, Richer and Richer." In total, an auspicious number of exactly 108 CEOs, managers, seniors, and officers attended the workshop, which was aimed at introducing business leaders to spirituality and its

relevance in the corporate world. Prominent figures included Kumarmangalam Birla, (Chairman, Aditya Birla Group), Hashit Dani (Director, Asian Paints), and Dr. Swati Piramal (Director, Strategic Alliances & Communications).

Presided over by Pujya Guruji, inaugurated by the Birla scion, and emceed by Anil Sachdev, the topics and orators drew, and held, great interest throughout. In her keynote address, Dr. Piramal spoke about how spirituality is often looked down upon in the corporate sector, yet how much strength corporate leaders derive from the principles in *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* on righteous actions and living.

When Mr. Birla took the podium, he spoke on the relevance of spirituality in today's corporate arena, emphasizing the importance of a controlled mind for ensuring success. "To become an outstanding leader, a CEO also needs to master his mind."

Guruji addressed how imperative it is to treat every individual in the organization with respect. Quoting an example from *Ramayana*, he said the greatness of Lord Rama was in that He knew how to value every living being, no matter how seemingly insignificant that being may appear.

Anil Sachdev, Founder and CEO of Grow Talent (a human resources consultancy firm) and CM Delhi member, presented human resource management by stating, "Corporations that have strong core values become 'living companies' with sustainable growth and development." He added that when the core values are leveraged to define a worthwhile purpose, people are inspired to give their personal best.

Each speaker's insightful presentations were followed by thought-provoking Q&A sessions and later laced with contemplative group discussions. Topics covered included employee attrition and personal growth.

The resounding success of a day well spent was evident in the departing words of enthusiasm and appreciation. Now "richer and richer" in knowledge and inspiration, many delegates were eager to imbue into their organization concepts from *Gita* and *Ramayana*.

Successfully "living forever" is every organization's aim in today's competitive arenas. As businesses continue to look for differentiators that can

significantly improve net profits, a strong value-driven base may just be the answer.

CMW Website Downloads

CMW's website has new, interesting, and revealing info-bits that everyone will want to check out! All files are in easily readable PDF format, and include 1) Sanskrit greetings by Pujya Guruji for birthdays, wedding and anniversaries, new year's, and graduation, 2) correct pronunciations for all the Sanskrit names and terms in *Bala Ramayana* and *Bala Bhagavatam*, 3) Goswami Tulsidasji's entire *Ramacharitamansa* in English transliteration, 4) Vedic and Chinmaya *Aratis*, and more.

Visit www.chinmayamission.org/downloads/documents. Keep checking the site for new postings. If you would like to submit files for posting, e-mail cmwnews@chinmayamission.org.

CMW Standard Settings

For uniformity and consistency, some standard presentations and Sanskrit spellings set and used by CMW are:

- Chinmaya Bala Vihar
- Chinmaya Yuva Kendra (CHYK)
- "Pujya Swami . . ." or "His Holiness" (not H. H.)
- *jnana* (not *gyana*)
- *yajna* (not *yagna*)

Chinmaya Bala Vihar is for children and teenagers, Grades KG-12.

- The Chinmaya Bala Vihar Motto is:
Keep smiling!
- The Chinmaya Bala Vihar Mission Statement is:
To help children learn
Values with fun
To delight like the moon
And shine like the sun.

- Subscribe to CM's international magazine for kids, Balvihar, by e-mailing publications@chinmayamission.org.

- Related website: www.chinmayakids.org.

Chinmaya Yuva Kendra (CHYK) is for university students and young adults, ages 18-30. A new group, YUP (Young Urban Professionals), has also been formed for CHYKs, ages 31-35.

- The CHYK Motto is: Harnessing Youth Potential through Dynamic Spirituality.
- The CHYK Mission Statement is: To empower youth with the vision, values, and dynamism for success in all fields.
- Subscribe to CM's international magazine for youth and young adults, *Chinmaya Udghosh*, by e-mailing publications@chinmayamission.org.
- Related websites: www.chyk.net and www.chykwest.com.

CMW Uniform E-mails and Website Links

Ever urgently want to contact a center or *acharya* and can't remember the e-mail address? Ever want to visit a CMW center's website and can't easily find it in one click?

CMW is pleased to inform that it has set up uniform and easy-to-remember e-mail forwarding addresses and web site links for all CMW centers (USA, Canada, Caribbean). Centers using these new tools will be presenting Chinmaya Mission as a uniform and easily identifiable organization across North America.

- *Acharyas*: firstname@chinmayamission.org
- *Centers*: centername@chinmayamission.org
- *Centers' Websites*: www.chinmayamission.org/centername

Memory Reboot

by Chetana Neerchal

*Next life,
will memory reboot
to remember,
not to order the mocha cake
I ordered today?
Will that (dis)taste linger
on next life's taste buds?*

*Next life,
will memory reboot
to remember,
spring storming your
eight year-old window?
Will that sight erase
next life's irritation
at your undone tasks?*

*Next life,
will memory reboot
to remember,
a soft cheek
against mine?*

*Will that touch brush away
next life's complaints
on your naughtiness?*

*Next life,
will memory reboot
to remember
your voice, your footsteps
that lighten my heart?
Will those sounds mellow
next life's temper?*

*Next life,
will memory reboot
to remember
the scars
from clashing with egotisms?
Will those scars shield me
from next life's wounds?*

*Next life, will memory reboot
to remember
that happiness is a function
of our own perceptions?
Will that wisdom
master next life's mind*

Chinmaya Publications is pleased to offer the following new releases from Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, India:



The Balvihar Book of Hanuman Chalisa

\$5

Pujya Gurudev said, "Keeping in mind love and service to our children, let us bring out a series with different titles on saints and sages, heroes, short stories, history, creative activities, and even jokes and puzzles. Let our children learn to recite the prayers and hymns that are full of strength and positive energy."

This children's book of *Hanuman Chalisa* is a beautiful book on one of the most powerful prayers ever composed.



Himalayan Hermit

Radhika Krishnakumar
Biography of Param Pujya Swami Tapovanam

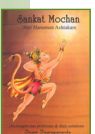
\$10

"We gain spiritual eminence when we visit the Himalayas. But he was a rare one who brought glory to the very Himalayas!"

Great spiritual masters have said this of Swami Tapovan Maharaj, the spiritual luminary and enlightened sage who lived in obscure hamlets in the lap of the Himalayas for most of his life. His disciple, the internationally acclaimed spiritual leader, Swami Chinmayananda, carried his guru's name and image to the far corners of the globe.

This book chronicles the life of Swami Tapovan Maharaj, the exalted Himalayan Hermit, called so not just because of where he lived, but also because of his Himalayan wisdom and experiences, which enabled him to constantly revel in the highest Truth.

Swami Tapovan Maharaj's life inspires and elevates, teaches and transforms. It has the rare power to make us look within ourselves and question the very fundamentals on which we lead our lives.



Sankat Mochan

Swami Swaroopananda

\$10

Sankat Mochan, also known as Hanuman Ashtakam, is composed by the renowned poet, Goswami Tulasidas, who first composed the devotional classic,

Hanuman Chalisa, one of the world's most popular and loved hymns.

Sankat Mochan is a moving prayer from a spiritual seeker's lamenting heart, pleading to the ever-compassionate Lord Hanuman, who is known for alleviating the distresses of even the most exalted spiritual personalities. *Sankat Mochan* also secretly reveals the causes of one's inner bondage and sorrows, and how to effectively and permanently remove them.

Swami Swaroopananda expounds on the beautiful sentiments in this poem, as well as related subjective and symbolic nuances. Readers are inspired to actively invoke Lord Hanuman as *Sankat Mochan* ("the remover of difficulties") to extinguish their causes of sorrow, and to find peace at the feet of Lord Rama's most extraordinary devotee.



Stotra Mala

\$7

Stotra Mala means "a garland of hymns." This book of Sanskrit chants is an enlightening aid to all spiritual seekers who recognize the power of chanting as a spiritual practice. It contains easy-to-follow English transliterations, as well as verse translations for fuller reflection.

Just as an exhausted and grimy body is rejuvenated after a shower, so too, a fatigued and impure mind is unwound and healed through the listening and chanting of spiritual hymns.

All the chants in this book are also available on audio, under the same title, in order to facilitate learning. Recorded by the renowned Swami Brahmananda, the chants are highly elevating.



Om Shantih Shantih Shantih

Swami Nikhilananda

\$1

We all desire peace, but do not know how to find it. Like charity, peace begins at home. In fact, it is much closer, for peace is the essence and core of your Self. Our very being is peace itself. From within arise vibrations of peace that spread to the whole world. Our practice is to find the subtle change in vision,

from "I want peace" to "Let there be peace."

In this book, Swami Nikhilananda guides readers on meditation techniques designed to help us to realize and flow into our nature of peace.



Tell Me a Story (1-2)

\$6

Enter the fascinating world of celestial beings, noble kings, holy sages, gruesome giants, cheeky animals, and sweet birds!

Find out how an egoistic personality destroys! Meet the foolish lion! Attend Shri Rama's coronation! Laugh with the clever monkey! See the greedy barber run!

All these characters and many more come alive in this series of storybooks for 8- to 12-year-olds.



Transformation Technology

Swami Tejomayananda

\$1

Change is the changeless law of Nature. Any change that is intelligent and deliberate is called transformation. Real transformation is a blessing for the individual and for society at large.

Swami Tejomayananda's techniques for bringing about a metamorphosis in the human personality are simple and practical. For transformation toward perfection, among other things, we must be careful of:

- The literature we read
- The company we keep
- The value of time
- The power of thought.



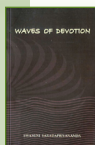
Victorious Youth

Swami Tejomayananda

\$1.50

Youth alone can. With an increasing world population falling into the age bracket of below 35 years in many countries, the future of the world clearly lies with present-day youth.

In this book, Swami Tejomayananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide, plays the role of a youth motivator par excellence, and guides them on the fast track to success and victory with user-friendly tips.



Waves of Devotion

Swamini Saradapriyananda

\$3

Swamini Saradapriyananda's poetic thoughts and mystical expressions are clearly seen in this revealing book of a seeker's intense spiritual longing. Redolent with fervor, her words tell of a seeker's quest to know the Divine and find fulfillment in love.

When clouds of gloom spread thick

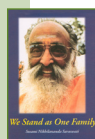
And veil the light in my heart,

When masses of ignorance spread thick

And obstruct the flow of my mind ...

... Send a spark of Thy grace

To clear off the obstacles ...



We Stand as One Family

Swami Nikhilananda

\$1

The first step in our spiritual journey begins with a decision to practice goodness. In *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna says that even the worst sinner becomes a sadhu (man of goodness) the moment he decides to change for the better. An ordinary person becomes a seeker the moment he wills his transformation. In this decision lies the difference between the mundane and the sublime.

Our search for Truth leads us to the scriptural studies. And ultimately, we turn to the words of a realised master.

His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda dictated with inspiration the Chinmaya Pledge, which conveys simply his vision of spirituality and its application in life. In this book, Swami Nikhilananda eloquently and lucidly elaborates on the subtle messages and teachings in the Chinmaya Pledge.



To order:

**www.chinmayapublications.org
publications@chinmayamission.org**

Have You Met . . . ?

Brahmachari Bhasa Chaitanya

by Vivek Gupta



These days, whenever a CM Camp is held in North America, a new face is becoming more familiar—that of CM Houston’s new acharya, Brahmachari Bhasa Chaitanya. A 12-year CM veteran, ever-fresh and deeply inspired, Bhasaji is a purebred from Andhra Pradesh, India. With gratitude for the shared insights of his blessed beginnings and work with CM, we welcome to the CMW Family Brahmachari Bhasaji . . .

Introduction

Where were you born and raised? What were your growing years like?

I was born and raised solely (and proudly) in Andhra Pradesh as Tejomurti. As a child and youth, I loved all the people around me, and they in turn loved me, so my growing years were a happy time. After finishing Grade 12, I studied tailoring for three years and earned the title of “tailor master.” I enjoyed working with all types and styles of clothing.

Under whom, where, and when did you begin your Vedantic studies?

Before I joined Chinmaya Mission’s two-year Vedanta Course, I participated in the one year *Dharma Veera* Course at *Chinmayaranyam*, under the tutelage of Pujya Swamini Saradapriyananda (Amma). It is a momentous date for me: February 9, 1992.

Immediately after this one-year course, despite my parents’ reluctance, I joined the Vedanta Course in 1993 at *Chinmayaranyam*, again under Amma’s tutelage. After the two-year course completed, my family did not permit me to take the yellow cloth of a *Brahmachari*, so I worked in the Mission wearing white.

Over a time of another two years, my family realized my passion and commitment to Chinmaya Mission, so they finally permitted me to take *Brahmachari diksha* (initiation), whereby I came to be known as *Brahmachari Bhasa Chaitanya*. *Bhasa* [pronounced *bhaasa*] means “light or reflection of Consciousness.”

In which Mission centers have you been posted so far?

From 1995 on, I was posted in *Chinmayaranyam*, where I kept busy with teaching Vedic chanting (to the students of the next batch) and Vedanta classes on introductory texts. In addition to the ashram activities, I conducted *satsangs* in various villages within three districts of Andhra Pradesh and, for three years, coordinated *Gita* Chanting Competitions in dozens of schools. In the third year, 26,000 students learned *Gita* chanting!

I was posted to CM Houston in August 2006.

Guru and the Quest

When and where did you meet Pujya Gurudev and Pujya Guruji?

Sadly, I never had the fortune of physically meeting Pujya Gurudev. This *darshan* was just never meant to be. Pujya Gurudev was scheduled to visit Andhra Pradesh near the end of 1993, and Swamini Saradapriyanandaji had told me that I would have the honor of performing his *pada puja* when he came. But he attained *mahasamadhi* before the trip.

My first meeting with Pujya Guruji was in 1997 when he conducted his first *jnana yajna* in Vijayawada. All the *Brahmacharis* in Andhra Pradesh came to receive him. When I was asked, and I replied, what my name was before I joined the Mission, Pujya Guruji jokingly said, “You are me!” (referring to the similarity in our names: Tejomayananda and Tejomurti).

People often ask for descriptions of Pujya Gurudev and Pujya Guruji. How would you respond?

I never met Pujya Gurudev, but my impression is that he is all-powerful and miraculous . . . God. Whenever I get a chance to see or hear Pujya Gurudev, I love it. Even though I do not understand English well, his presence and force is unmistakable to the point that my hairs often stand on end!

What to say of Pujya Guruji . . . he is the mother of all. All qualities a mother possesses Pujya Guruji possesses—especially total love. I simply cannot express what Pujya Guruji is like. My experiences in serving him and sleeping outside his room for one month when he was recovering in Michigan this past year are blessed and deeply cherished.

What would you like to know most about Pujya Gurudev? Pujya Guruji?

I would like to know how it is that Pujya Guruji is able to fulfill all of Pujya Gurudev's work! And I know it is only Pujya Guruji who can do this! Again, words cannot express him.

What is one great lesson you have learnt from Pujya Gurudev?

Like so many others, one discipline I have learned to practice from Pujya Gurudev is time management and punctuality.

What do you find most inspiring about Chinmaya Mission?

With other spiritual organizations, I feel they tend to focus on a single yoga—whether *jnana*, *karma*, *bhakti*, or *hatha*—a balanced meeting point of all these is not readily found. In Chinmaya Mission, all these yogas are synthesized and available for one and all.

The Brahmachari Vedanta Course

What led you to Vedanta?

As a child, I was always fond of visiting temples—to the extent that my grandfather told me I would one day become a *sannyasi* just because of this. Later on, I started taking my teacher's father from village to village on my scooter, so he could give discourses to them on texts like *Ramayana* and *Bhagavatam*.

After I became a “tailor master,” I earned a lot of money in a short period of time. In an equally short period of time, all this money vanished from my possession! This led me to reflect on how fleeting wealth can be.

I started seeing the sorrowful nature of the average life. And I found solace for this sorrow only in attending *satsangs*. The spiritual path is a good one, so I followed it.

Was it difficult to decide to renounce your earlier ways? What prompted you to join the Mission's *brahmachari* course?

This decision was not a difficult one. I liked the idea of living a spiritual life. I knew that once one dons the garb of an ascetic, one has to uncompromisingly follow its norms and rules of conduct. It was greater than any of my aspirations to have Pujya Swamini Sharadapriyananda (Amma) tell me to take *diksha*. So I did.

How did you and your relationships change after the course?

Before I joined the course, I enjoyed watching lots of Telugu movies. I used to drink coffee or tea six times a day. And I tried my best to sneak a guitar into the ashram. All this dropped off quite naturally once I took to ashram life. By Pujya Gurudev's grace, my thoughts totally changed.

As for my family and friends, they teasingly have taken to call me “Swami.” Nonetheless, they have accepted this yellow cloth with reverence, and this has been important in my maintaining the same loving relationship with them as before.

What are the significant ways in which ashram life changed your vision?

Funnily, in addition to my given name of Tejomurti, when I was studying, people used to call me Dharmaraj—because I always wanted to help people. I love people. Still, knowledge of how to help was lacking. There was a great reconciliation in this after studying Vedanta intensively for over two years. The combination of love and knowledge has given me a wonderful sense of fulfillment.

Tells us about some of your most cherished moments during the course.

Honestly, every moment. For now, I will share with you a surreal experience I went through after the course. . . . Soon after I took *Brahmachari diksha*, I wanted to learn how to live in society like a *bhikshu*, as many mahatmas in India do—just like Swami Tapovan Maharaj and Pujya Gurudev did at one time. *Brahmachari* Uddhav Chaitanya and I decided to set out on a *pada-yatra* (pilgrimage on foot) from *Chinmayaranyam* to Rameshwaram, a distance of 700 kilometers (~350 miles). We each carried only one bag on our shoulders, and Amma instructed that we were to possess and accept no money throughout the *yatra*. Nor were we to carry any food with us. She said whatever we are offered in the moment, we can partake, and that's it. With her blessings, we started. . . .

Initially, we were slightly apprehensive, as the rainy season was in full swing. Yet everyday when

we walked, the sun shone. And every night when we rested, the rains came down. This was the story of our entire pilgrimage.

Almost everywhere we went, people offered us *bhiksha*. Often they would prostrate flat on the ground before us. Coffee, breakfast, lunch, tea, and dinner was provided throughout. We could not but realize and be humbled by the blessings that were with us.

We had our struggles too. One day, we were starving, exhausted, and near collapse. Just as we felt we couldn't take the pain anymore, someone miraculously came and literally took us by hand for *bhiksha*! They said they had been guided by some mahatma to come get us. So they had already kept food ready for us!

On reaching Rameshwaram, we went to the Ramakrishna Mission for lodging. We asked the secretary if we could spend the night there and send payment when we returned to *Chinmayaranyam*. As soon the secretary heard the name Chinmaya, we were not only given accommodation, but Rs. 500 as well! *Nama mahima* (this is the greatness of the name)! After Rameshwaram, we visited other holy places in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Insights

Do you get nervous about public speaking, whether talks or pujas?

Yes, I am nervous for about the first ten minutes, or more if Pujya Guruji or senior *acharyas* are present. With kids and youth, however, there is no nervousness—only enjoyment!

What is your typical daily routine?

4:30 a.m. *Yogasanas*, 5:30 Bath, 6:30 *Puja* (then coffee), 7:00 Class or Self-study, 8:30 Breakfast, 9:00 Discussions with devotees or Reading, 12:30 Lunch, 1:00 Rest, 2:00-10:30 p.m. Classes, *Japa*, Recreation

What are your outlets for creativity?

My passion and outlet is *puja*. I very much enjoy bringing great detail into this *sadhana* and art, including design of decorations (I offer conceptual designs and others decorate).

What are your personal habits/interests?

Like all Indians, I love cricket! And volleyball.

What would be your favorite place to live?

Either Sidhabari or *Chinmayaranyam*. I cannot think of anywhere more peaceful than these two *tirthas* (holy places).

Inspirations

Can you share any spiritual experiences that changed your life?

Before I knew about Chinmaya Mission, I once traveled to a neighboring village to attend an *aradhana* for a local swami. There I witnessed two young girls (3rd and 4th standard) chanting *shlokas* from *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* so rhythmically and sincerely that I was awestruck by this beautiful and novel sight, to the point of tears.

Naturally, I asked them where they had learned to chant so well. They said at their Chinmaya Mission *Vidyalaya*. I befriended the two young girls and their family invited me to spend ten days at their home during Swamini Seelanandaji's *yajna* there. During this time, Swaminiji also came to my home for *bhiksha* one day, and she is the one who encouraged me to write to Swamini Sharadapriyananda Amma about attending the upcoming *Dharma Veera* Course. And here I am.

Do you have any favorite spiritual texts?

Bhaja Govindam, *Sadhana* Panchakam, *Shiva Kshamaparadha Stotram* (Forgive Me), *Atma Katha* (Telugu) by Swami Atmayogi.

Is there a quote or message that you live by?

Presently, the world we live in expects something before even considering giving anything in return. Thus, we find ourselves stuck and suffering in a miserly attitude of simply not sharing anything. Being aware of this stagnation and the fundamental need of all creatures, the message I have always lived by is, "Share your love and the same will come to you."

What mission statement can you offer to inspire others?

Chinmayudni talastu Chinmayanandaga undo. In Telugu, this means, "Remembering Chinmaya (Pujya Gurudev) be as Chinmayananda (blissful)."



skin peeled
raw

unending inferno
melt

every breath
God

saltwater thrown
intense

sweet bliss
facade

- Anonymous

continued from page 6

The last verse of *Guru Stotram* is the barometer to gauge how complete and final our surrender to our guru is. *Tram eva mata cha pita tram eva . . .* We may know this verse *kanthastha* (literally, “residing in the throat”), but what we need to ensure is that what is stuck in the *kantha* (throat) slides down into the *hrdaya* (heart). These words and their meaning must become *hrdayastha*, not just *kanthastha*.

I once met an old lady in Ahmedabad. It was such a unique experience meeting her; she left a beautiful memory in my heart. She spent most of her time in her own room. So I asked her, “*Mataji, aap saaraa din karti kyaa hain?* (Mother, what do you do the whole day?)”

She caught my hand and led me into her room. She took me before a miniature of a room and said, “*Yeh mere Kaanhaa kaa ghar hai*. This is my Krishna’s house. Early morning, I wake up, complete my morning rites, and come here to give my Krishna a bath.” She showed me a small toothbrush, a small tube of toothpaste . . . everything we have for ourselves, she had for Krishna. Her life was totally dedicated to Lord Krishna.

I asked her, “After having done all these things, after giving Him breakfast and lunch, what do you do?”

She said, “My *Kaanhaa* loves *Bhagavatam*. So I sit in front of him every morning and chant *Bhagavatam*. In the afternoons I write *Bhagavatam*.” She had written *Bhagavatam* two or three times—the entire *grantha* (scripture). She said after completing her writing, she offers all the papers into the sacred Narmada River.”

She had been doing this for the past 10-15 years and said she didn’t have time for anything else in the

world. This is known as a dedicated life of surrender. To get the real import of this example would mean we live every day, every moment, dedicating each effort, each moment, and each thought, at the guru’s sacred feet.

Tram eva mata cha pita tram eva. If at all we have to ask anything of the guru, we should ask as we would ask our parents. Once our life has been offered to our guru, whatever happens to us is no longer our responsibility. Then what is surrender? One way to put it is, “the highest kind of irresponsibility.”

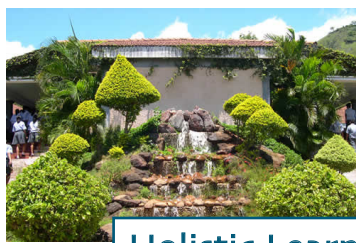
Once we have the attitude of complete and total surrender to the guru, we are in a position to demand what ever we want! He is our father; he is our mother; he is our friend; he is our wealth. Demanding whatever we want here means we have nowhere else to go but to our sole caretaker for all our needs. It is his responsibility to take care of us. He had better take care, for who else will care enough to improve us, cleanse us, and give us the best of the best?

The love for one’s guru, and the bliss that arises from it, cannot be expressed in words. One has to experience it, live it. *Mama deva deva*: All that I can call as mine is you and nothing but you.

The heart and soul of *Guru Stotram* is to surrender to, and know, that Truth that has manifested before us as our guru. He alone will lead us into a life of celebration and the dance of joy. *Tasmai shri gurave namah*.

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](#)



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Don't miss this unique opportunity to attend a Chinmaya Family Camp. It is an ideal vacation of spiritual unfoldment and holistic joy for all ages. Mark your 2008 calendars--Monday, July 28-Sunday, Aug 3--and keep a lookout for details, which will be posted soon.

www.chinmayamission.org/washingtondc/mahasamadhi2008chinmaydc.org