



NEWS

CHINMAYA MISSION® WEST BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

January 2008, No. 121

In This Issue

SPIRITUAL TRAILS

The Art of Serving with Vision
a dialogue

IN HIS PRESENCE

Effort for Grace
The Beauty of Purity
To Revel in the Joy of Love

NEWS & EVENTS

Inauguration of *Chinmaya Yamunotri*
New *Shivalaya* Heralds New Year
Bhumi Puja at CM Orlando
Light of the Buddha

HAVE YOU MET...?

Pujya Gurudev

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upanishad Ganga
Chinmaya Naada Bindu
Dharma Sevak Course 2008
CM *Mahasamadhi* Camp 2008
2-Year Residential Vedanta Course
CIRS Admissions
International Camp 2008
New Chinmaya Publications
Tapovan Prasad

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

www.chinmayamission.org



Happy 2008!

Wishing for All . . . Love of OM



❧ CHINMAYA MISSION® CENTERS IN NORTH AMERICA ❧

CENTERS in USA

Arizona

Phoenix (480) 283-8447; phoenix@chinmayamission.org

California

Bakersfield (661) 872-7784; bakersfield@chinmayamission.org

Los Angeles (714) 991-5274; losangeles@chinmayamission.org

Piercy (707) 247-3488; piercy@chinmayamission.org

San Diego (858) 549-2908; sandiego@chinmayamission.org

San Jose (408) 998-2793; sanjose@chinmayamission.org

Tustin (714) 832-7669 tustin@chinmayamission.org

Connecticut

Fairfield (203) 878-0945; fairfield@chinmayamission.org

District of Columbia/Maryland

Washington (301) 384-5009; washingtondc@chinmayamission.org

Florida

Miami (305) 279-8456; miami@chinmayamission.org

Orlando (407) 699-7331; orlando@chinmayamission.org

St. Augustine (904) 692-4121; staugustine@chinmayamission.org

Tampa (813) 909-4142; tampa@chinmayamission.org

Georgia

Alpharetta (678) 566-5018; alpharetta@chinmayamission.org

Atlanta (478) 922-9710; atlanta@chinmayamission.org

Illinois

Chicago (630) 654-3370; chicago@chinmayamission.org

Indiana

Northwest Region (219) 322-7268; nwindiana@chinmayamission.org

Iowa

Iowa City (319) 339-8624; iowacity@chinmayamission.org

Massachusetts

Boston (978) 470-2661; boston@chinmayamission.org

Michigan

Ann Arbor (734) 663-8912; annarbor@chinmayamission.org

Flint (810) 230-2430; flint@chinmayamission.org

Minnesota

Minneapolis (612) 924-9172; minneapolis@chinmayamission.org

New York

Buffalo (716) 633-1633; buffalo@chinmayamission.org

New York (718) 671-2663; newyork@chinmayamission.org

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia (215) 396-0390; philadelphia@chinmayamission.org

Pittsburgh (412) 366-3022; pittsburgh@chinmayamission.org

New Jersey

Princeton (609) 655-1787; princeton@chinmayamission.org

North Carolina

Raleigh-Durham (919) 484-9768; raleigh@chinmayamission.org

Ohio

Columbus (740) 917-9227; columbus@chinmayamission.org

Oregon

Portland (503) 299-4091; portland@chinmayamission.org

Texas

Austin (512) 255-6786; austin@chinmayamission.org

Beaumont (409) 898-2565; beaumont@chinmayamission.org

Dallas-Fort Worth (972) 250-2470; dallas@chinmayamission.org

Houston (281) 568-9520; houston@chinmayamission.org

Virginia

Dulles (703) 845-0524; dulles@chinmayamission.org

Washington

Seattle (509) 392-8325; seattle@chinmayamission.org

CENTERS in CANADA

Calgary (403) 203-0751; calgary@chinmayamission.org

Halton (905) 637-7448; halton@chinmayamission.org

Niagara Falls (905) 374-7644; niagarafalls@chinmayamission.org

Ottawa (613) 738-7466; ottawa@chinmayamission.org

Toronto (905) 417-2377; toronto@chinmayamission.org

Vancouver (604) 433-3441; vancouver@chinmayamission.org

Chinmaya Mission® is registered trademark of Chinmaya Mission® West.

Editor: Brahmacharini Aparna Chaitanya

Layout: Odalis Valdivieso

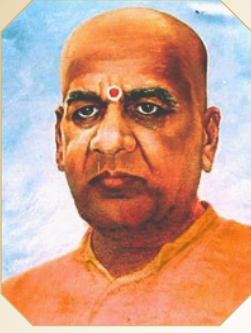
Submissions: cmwnews@chinmayamission.org

‘Krishnalaya’ CMW Headquarters/Retreat Center: (707) 237-5321
fax (707) 247-3422; info-krishnalaya@chinmayamission.org

CMW Executive Secretary: Brahmacharini Aparna Chaitanya
(305) 279-8456; fax (305) 477-5362; secretary@chinmayamission.org

 CHINMAYA PUBLICATIONS 

Toll Free (888) CMW-READ
publications@chinmayamission.org
(215) 396-0390; fax (215) 396-9710



It deserves to be specially mentioned that the state of Knowledge, which is the sole source of everlasting Peace, can be attained only by right thinking, and not by *dhyana* or *samadhi*. Some do mistake these for *jnana*. They are under the impression that the practice of *dhyana* is the end-all and be-all of existence—and that a man who daily practices *dhyana* for half an hour or an hour has completed his spiritual duty, and is free to do anything thereafter. They are laboring under the mistake that a person who reaches the state of *nirvikalpa samadhi* for a minute or two has attained his goal, and is a *jivanmukta*. It is only when we examine whether this man of *nirvikalpa samadhi* has attained an unwavering state of spiritual devotion, which is a devotion beyond doubt,

that we realize the hollowness of his *jivanmukti*. This class of people is of the unfortunate who haven't been able to understand the cause, nature, and result of *jnana* and *dhyana* through association with real mahatmas.

Dhyana and *samadhi* may be regarded as cooperative factors contributing to the perfection of *jnana*; but they are neither *jnana*, nor the cause of *jnana*. One may attain that exalted state of *jnana*—where one finds one's Self in everything, and everything in oneself—only by cultivating detachment and Vedantic thinking. Source: *Wanderings in the Himalayas*

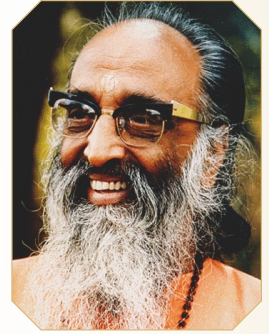


His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda

The more we revel in the relative plane of joy and sorrow, the more we will be tossed about between the pairs of opposites. We cannot say that these will not affect us when we grow old. Age cannot dull, and time cannot soften, the harsh brutalities and sharp sorrows of the pairs of opposites. So long as we live identified with the mind, the ego will have to suffer the buffering storms of joy and sorrow, of success and failure, of likes and dislikes, and a thousand other such pairs of opposites. . . .

In fact, we cannot run away from sorrow without stepping into joy; nor can we retreat from joy without stepping into sorrow. There cannot be the crux of a wave without its hollows. Thus, by moving horizontally, we cannot escape the pairs of opposites. However far away we may go, [while we are in the ocean,] we cannot escape the waves of the ocean, can we? Yet, vertically, by rising into a higher plane of consciousness, we can definitely end the restlessness and exhaustions provided by the pairs of opposites. . . .

True seekers, after some amount of study and discussion, must turn indifferent to mere learning, and strive to cultivate and experience the tranquility of the Self within. Source: *Ashtavakra Gita*



His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda



It is wrong to expect that you can get rid of your negative qualities with a certain amount of activity or effort, or in a certain amount of time. What is important is to understand the cause of the problem, because as soon as you do, the problem is solved immediately. For example, you may have been angry or jealous for years, but one day you understand the reason for it (your own misunderstandings), and change your attitude. Your negativity instantly disappears. This is why it is difficult to give an answer in chronological time for a problem that is psychological. . . .

We must understand that we carry with us precious wealth. If someone were to ask us to give our most precious possession away, for a trifle, we would refuse. Yet this is what we do everyday in our life. A person makes a passing comment and our peace of mind is disturbed. Just for a remark, a sentence. We sell our most precious possession for such a trifle. If we realized the seriousness and consequences of losing our peace of mind, if we rightly valued our peace of mind, we would be unwilling to part with it so readily. To learn this, the most important tool is awareness. Source: *Vision of Gita*

The Art of Serving with Vision

by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Transcribed by Anjali Singh, in celebration of Hanuman Mastaka Abhishekam (Sidhabari, India)



Shri Hanumanji is the embodiment of loyalty and the ideal example of *seva* to Bhagavan Shri Ramachandraji. To sing Hanumanji's glories is to recognize His greatness. To live by His example is to practice true *sadhana*.

Transforming Action into *Seva*

Most of our life is wasted action because we do not understand what transforms an ordinary action into *seva*. Three factors are involved in an act of *seva*: 1) the altar of *seva*, 2) the doer of *seva*, and 3) the act of *seva*.

The most important factor in *seva* is the altar at which our service is rendered. This altar can be God, Guru, one's religion, country, community, organization, family, or even one's self. All these altars can be positive factors and serving them can surely benefit us. And while we may not initially be fully attuned to serve the highest goal or altar of God or Guru, we can start from where we are, and expand to include more noble and universal altars.

There is a saying: "An altar in life alters your life." When I started my spiritual life, all I wanted was to study Vedanta. When I stayed in the *Sandeepany* ashram, and studied and served in small but different ways, my understanding developed and my altar became more universal. Through Gurudev, I saw how a vision comes to fruition when people come forward to serve with love, inspired by a noble cause. My thinking expanded, and thereafter, not only did I want to learn Vedanta for myself, but I was also inspired to join Gurudev's Mission.

The Altar of *Seva*

The altar of service can be of three kinds: *sattvik*, *rajasik*, and *tamasik*. A *sattvik* altar can be God, Guru, a religion that teaches love, *devatas* who inspire, good people with *sattvik* ideals, saints, sages, or institutions that help the needy. The higher your altar of service, the faster your subconscious *vasanas* get exhausted, and mind-purification takes place.

While the goal of taking care of your children is higher than just looking after yourself, *vasana*-exhaustion is still slow. As one evolves, one's goals slowly stretch beyond the family. Mahatma Gandhi is accused of not giving time to his children, but he made this sacrifice at the altar of his country and his non-violence movement thus came to be a guiding force in the service of humanity.

When Hanumanji was serving Sugriva, his service was not considered great. His greatness came out only when he began to serve Rama, a higher altar. By serving God or a knower of God (both are the same), there are two advantages. The first is, you will not develop the ego that "I am doing *seva*," as if all others are beggars around you. The second is, you will not have the attitude that "I will only give; I will not take." While you may be able to serve in one way, there are many areas in which you, too, need to be served by others. These services rendered to you are God's gift to you through others.

A *rajasik* altar is limited in vision, time, and place, for it values love of power, control, and fame more than love of humanity. If an organization's lofty ideals of raising society's standard of living are mixed with profit-making goals, there may be worldly success, but *vasana*-exhaustion will be slow, because while certain related activities will decrease *vasanas*, others will increase them, depending on motive and mood. Overall, *rajasik* activities are maintained at a precariously even pace. Even a religion can become a *rajasik* altar if its vision is not God-oriented, but mixed with other motives, such as increasing numbers through conversions brought about by force, bribery, or blackmail.

A *tamasik* altar is of villainous persons like smugglers, gangsters, killers, or thieves, who create anarchy, destruction, suffering, and disease. Their vision in life is to create hatred and divisions among mankind. Service to such an altar degrades a person, and his *vasanas*, restlessness, and agitations increase. He thus loses his focus in life and falls in stature to become a burden on society.

Therefore, discover and serve a *sattvik* altar, whatever it may be. As you grow, you will discover new channels. As you serve, your thinking will become clearer, your vision will expand, and your goals will automatically be raised. Through service and inner purification, you will see the world from aerial standpoints and gain a more expansive vision.

The Doer of *Seva*

As there are three kinds of altars, there are also three kinds of people who serve. A *sattvik* person does not serve for the sake of recognition. He may be accorded recognition, but he does not run after it. He does not seek power, but he naturally attracts it through his selflessness and love. The power a *sattvik* person wields is not dependent on things and situations, but is far superior; it is a power of the Spirit, born of love. Gandhiji attracted this kind of power with his selfless goal, and an entire nation stood up to serve his vision.

A *rajasik* person wants recognition, appreciation, or some gain from his *seva*. The power a *rajasik* person wields is limited, for his *seva* is more like a business deal, where one has to give something to get something.

A *tamasik* server is one who chooses to serve a *tamasik* altar, thereby contributing toward creating division, destruction, or dictatorial control. The power such a person wields is of imposition and fear, and it is limited to where and how long he can overwhelm and suppress people with his tyranny.

The Act of *Seva*

When I was the *acharya* at Sidhabari, a person came to me asking for some *seva*. I said, “*Seva* is done, not told.” The attitude of serving the Lord should be one where I think of myself as His un-bought slave,—not one where, “If you send me a car, I will come to the ashram to do *seva*.”

Service is a complicated gesture. There may be one or more motives in an act of service that make it *sattvik*, *rajasik*, or *tamasik*. *Sattvik seva* takes many forms, but the basic principle is selflessness. When you share with others anything you have—knowledge, values, wealth, time, energy—it is *seva*. Even the kind of wealth you share and in what manner you gained it, makes a difference. What kind of knowledge you impart, what kind of food you give to others, and your attitude in giving—all these color the minds of both, the giver and the taker.

Service should elevate, not degrade the server. This is the hallmark of true service. A man may think, “I have done so much for society! And what did I get?” If he wanted to get something in return, he was just doing his own *seva*. Then what did society get?

Service is not merely a transfer of material objects. What about the joy one gets from serving? What about the love one gets from people? Indeed, through *guru seva*, we ultimately get the Lord!

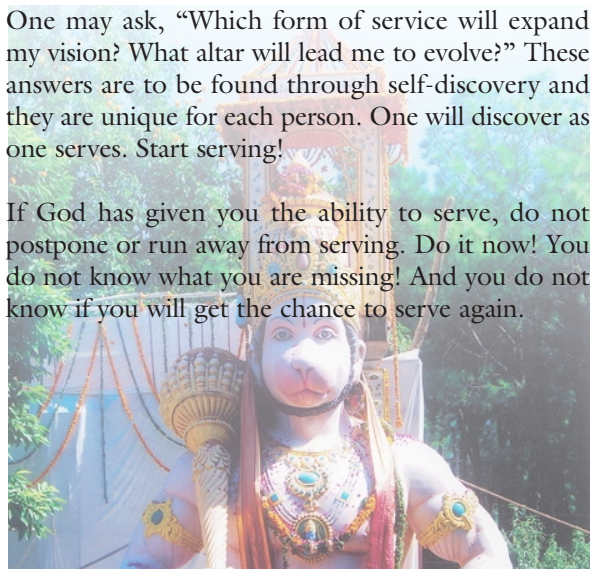
The spirit of true service is not limited by time and place. For example, a lady who works late at the office will demand overtime. But if the same lady goes home to find her child is ill, she will stay awake the whole night and look after him without complaint or compensation. What changed her attitude? Love. When our love is offered to the altar of God, it transforms into a higher power known as devotion. Thereafter, even if the world does not reciprocate our love, our joy of giving remains unaffected and complete.

Serve Now

The results of service are manifold. We hesitate to serve because we think we will lose so much time, energy, and wealth that we could have kept for ourselves. First of all, wealth given in charity rebounds ten-fold. More importantly, the mind experiences newfound peace and purity. *Bhakti* finds her way into the mind (heart) and the light of consciousness finds an opening in the purified intellect (head). But service should not be done with even these expectations, for the results will come automatically.

One may ask, “Which form of service will expand my vision? What altar will lead me to evolve?” These answers are to be found through self-discovery and they are unique for each person. One will discover as one serves. Start serving!

If God has given you the ability to serve, do not postpone or run away from serving. Do it now! You do not know what you are missing! And you do not know if you will get the chance to serve again.





a dialogue

Q&A with Brahmacharini Sumati Chaitanya
(Chinmaya Mission United Kingdom)

student: please talk more on effortlessness. devotees say, “live life leaving all on god.” no effort. is this right? sometimes i wonder that i may have learned vedanta and have *jnana*, but there is no *anubhuti*.

teacher: even after learning vedanta and getting *jnana*, efforts are a must. this *jnana*, gathered from the teacher and through scriptural study, is only information about the truth. it can neither give us the truth, nor make us experience the truth right away. *jnana* to the sincere *sadhak* gives a correct vision of the truth, or *samyak-drishti*. the nature of this *samyak-drishti* is the vision of oneness, that is, one alone ‘appears’ as many; therefore, the sense of otherness is only an appearance. this correct vision completely changes one’s perspective of oneself and the world, and prepares a *sadhak* to go higher on his spiritual journey. therefore, based on *samyak-drishti*, one must necessarily put conscious self-effort to correct one’s vision of separateness and otherness, for these alone are the causes of suffering.

s: so having gotten *jnana*, what do i do next?

t: *samyak-drishti* or *svarupa drishti* changes one’s attitude in life and purifies one’s motives; this is called *bhava (bhaava) shudhi*. with conscious and sincere efforts, when the *sadhak* lives this vision of oneness everywhere, at all times, it is called *vyavahara shudhi*. over time, *raga* and *dvesha* (likes and dislikes), born of the wrong vision of otherness, decrease and lead to purification of mind, or *antahkarna shudhi*.

this entire process of correcting one’s wrong vision and changing one’s old ways of living demands intense, hard work and continuous enthusiasm (*utsaaha*). these can be gotten only when one has fixed one’s goal as *moksha (atyantika dukha nivritti and sukha prapti)*, and is in absolute love (*ananya-bhakti*) with the goal, the self (*atman*).

a *sadhak*, having set his goal, should consistently strive for *antahkarana shudhi*, and be convinced that living according to mood swings and mental vagaries is exhausting and unworthy. if the *sadhak*

is clear that his purpose, in all actions, is to purify the mind, then *bhava shudhi* is inevitable. for such a *sadhak*, however much *raga* and *dvesha* may arise in the mind, there is no change in his conviction and practice. he will tirelessly apply great effort to go against his moods, to ensure that the mind’s convictions and practices in the right direction remain firm.

s: more often than not, our learning does not get translated into action.

t: increase your love (*bhakti*) for the goal. the mind gravitates naturally toward the object of its love. love keeps us connected to our chosen goal. it removes lack of enthusiasm, laziness, and tiredness (*pramada, alasya, and nidra*). this love for the truth cannot be developed unless one feels the agonizing pain of limitation that is caused by the false notion of “i am this body.” if you are in love, if you are in pain, you will surely put forth effort.

s: how do we achieve *vyavahara shudhi* and the remaining steps on the road to self-realization?

t: so long as the mind is in a state of *sattva*, we are able to appreciate divinity and act well. but when our latent negativities are awakened, all our knowledge of oneness and divinity disappear. therefore, a sincere *sadhak* remains alert and aware of every passing thought, and fervently scans every thought to remove the *mithyatva* (wrong attitude/vision) hidden in it. having spotted the *mithyatva* in the thought, he removes it with the help of correct vision.

thus, for a *sadhak*, merely performing actions for a noble cause is not enough. he must, without inadvertence, purify his mind while performing any action. a pure mind with fewer likes and dislikes become relatively quiet, and the seeker’s love for the goal, the self, becomes more prominent. his love grows and takes the form of a desire to become one with the goal. such a *sadhak* with *antahkarna shudhi*, in the spirit of surrender to the *sadguru*, begins the next phase of his spiritual journey: *shravana-manana-nididhyasana*.

- *shravana* is grasping the import of the scriptures as taught by the *sadguru*; grasping the idea that i am what i am seeking—the all-pervasive self of all
- *manana* is reflecting on this knowledge and correcting one's old belief of being the body
- *nididhyasana* is consistently contemplating on 'i am that.'

nidhidhyasana is at the thought-level, but it is an intense state that "i am that pure *atman* alone." through continuous contemplation, one day, this just clicks or opens up for the seeker who is in meditative poise. that which was in thought form, concretizes into 'knowledge'. a shift in one's level of awareness occurs. this shift is at the level of awareness, not mere thought. from the thought of "i am that" the seeker shifts to knowing that "i am the knower of this person and its world." it is not the person who is important anymore, for the seeker's awareness has shifted from being a person to being *sakshi* (witness); he is clear now that "i am not this person. i am! and i am me! i am not this or that. i just am."

"i am the knower" is the only definition of this "i am." words cannot help hereafter, because even if you try to explain to someone, the words may sound the same as what you have been saying all along, but the depth of this experience is eons afar. before it was the *vega* (force) of thought. now it is experience. as clearly known to you is the taste of water when you drink it, that much clarity and intensity there is in this experience.

in this shift of awareness, one comes to 'see' oneself as the *sakshi* of the pft experiencer, the bmi instruments, and the oet world. now, the effort is to remain in *sakshi bhava* as the knower (*jnata*) and the seer (*drashta*), and not the doer (*karta*) and the enjoyer (*bhokta*). to practice *sakshi bhava* here means to constantly remain in the 'awareness' of being the *sakshi*. from here, a seeker may temporarily slip down to the known person's personality traits and patterns. but the seeming fall and rise here are temporary and short. the seeker always quickly comes back to the practice of *sakshi bhava*, because he has awareness that is doubt-free, or *samshaya rahita*: "i am this, and not that." this is *samyak darshan*, change in belief.

until the practice of *sakshi bhava* becomes effortless, one should not give up efforts. in the long and

consistent practice of *jnata/drashta bhava*, or *sakshitva*, the seeker's attention remains on the seer. and "i alone am" is the *bhava* that ultimately remains. thus, *sakshi bhava* leads to *savikalpa samadhi*, which means remaining in the constant *bhava* of 'i am that'; this is *brahmakara vrtti*. this is still all at the subtle mind level, but it is a far greater, more intense level, nonetheless. from here, through the long and consistent practice of the awareness (not mere thought) of being *sakshi*, the mature seeker will discover from within the path to go deeper.

the single-pointed thought of "i alone am" is *savikalpa samadhi*. when this thought also merges into thought-less state of being, it is known as *nirvikalpa samadhi*. in this state of *nirvikalpa samadhi*, the truth is revealed. as much as *nirvikalpa samadhi abhyasa* (the long and steady practice of the *samadhi* state) increases, *mano-nasha* (destruction of the mind, meaning its strength and influence) and *vasana-kshaya* (removal of *vasanas*) occurs. the truth reveals when *vasana-kshaya* and *mano-nasha* are complete.

because of the force of *nididhyasana*, this *sakshi bhava* gets merged in its source. it is not the *jiva* merging in the self, because there is no *jiva* to begin with. the wave doesn't come to know itself as water. once the wave-ness is dropped, water comes to know itself as water. so, too, is the realization of the truth.

s: does life remain the same even after we have discovered the truth?

t: no. the whole perspective of life, oneself, and the world gets completely changed. the experience of "i am the body" thereafter becomes "i am this body also." being in all names and forms is a conscious experience of the man of realization. the master experiences his own self alive in all forms and yet beyond all names and forms—just as, right now, we consciously experience our self in all parts of our body. with the experience of oneness, all sorrows and fears end, and one experiences one's self as bliss-love.



Effort for Grace

by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

Beginner spiritual students ask, “How can we expect ourselves to pursue the uncharted spiritual life all alone when even in the material world we often gain success only through the help of others? Who will help us? Is there any source from which we can draw inspiration and receive the required help from time to time? How can we invoke the required guide?”

If help were not possible, the courage to start on this heroic march to perfection would run out, and we would hesitate. Sage Narada’s *Bhakti Sutras* state, “Pure devotion is attained primarily through divine grace and the grace of great souls. (*Sutra* 38)”

Among early spiritual aspirants, it is an endless controversy as to whether divine grace alone can help them, or if the entire path is to be built by their independent self effort. The scriptures, however, are very clear about this. When the mind of a seeker is purified through self-effort, divine grace will rush in to flood his life with light and joy. This fact is clearly repeated in all religions. Self-effort is required first. Ask, seek, and knock, and divine grace will flow. It shall be given to you.

Therefore, spiritual practices that enable us to take advantage of the guru’s grace, of the Lord’s grace, should be adopted by sincere seekers at all times, in all conditions. The means to develop may be fully and diligently pursued, and entirely accomplished, in our lifetime.

In Hinduism, the guru’s grace itself is God’s grace, since the guru is none other than the Lord Himself, expressing in manifest condition to help the disciple.

The Beauty of Purity

Based on a talk by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda on Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 12

Shuchih means “pure.” There are four factors that comprise *shuchih*, and these are *svacchata* (cleanliness), *shuddhata* (purity), *sundarata*

(beauty), and *pavitrata* (sanctity). Only when all four terms are met is there *shuchih*.

Inner purity, or *antah shuchih*, refers to purity of motive in thought, word, and deed. When we do anything, our intention is pure or not? Or is there some ulterior motive? Our actions by themselves may appear to be good on the surface, but they may still be ignoble because the intentions behind them are not right. An example is if I do something good because I want someone to appreciate it. I am doing my meditation, but I want someone to see me doing meditation! When it comes to inner purity, if any thought even flashes in the mind, we must be aware of it.

External purity, or *bahya shuchi*, is called cleanliness, which is *svacchata*. External cleanliness is the first, simple step. One’s clothes must be clean; one’s room must be clean. There should be neatness, tidiness in all our living.

Some spiritual seekers think they can wash their clothes any which way, or sometimes, not at all. Their *janeyus*, or “sacred threads” even go black! If you wash yourself with soap, you should wash your sacred thread with soap! It is required.

But external cleanliness should not become an obsession, such that you use a full cake of soap each time you wash your hands! Cleanliness is next to godliness, yes. But this is next to madness!

In my early days, I once stayed in a big house of a rich man who was single—no wife and no children. He was alone. In that big house, there was never anyone to disturb anything anywhere. The sofas and chairs were all perfectly placed. I would imagine the chair saying, “Please come sit here!” because there was no one there to use anything in the house. But that man would come home every night, go to some corner in the house, and find one dust particle somewhere! And then he would get so angry with the servant. Even during my stay, the servant went away! Then the man would run after the servant and beg him to come back!

Such obsession is extreme, and it is madness, not

cleanliness. The other extreme says, “*Kyaa farak padtaa hai* (how does it matter)?” Such people may take their teacup into the kitchen, but they will leave it there for an eternity!

Shuchih can be seen in how the open courtyards in front of Indian village homes are maintained. Every morning, the villagers sweep their courtyards and remove the dirt and dust. This cleaning is *svacchata*.

After this, they purify the place by sprinkling it with water and cow dung. Both are great purifiers, for cow dung is *pavitra* and it acts like an antiseptic after water has cleansed the place. This is *shuddhata*, or “purity.”

When they decorate their courtyard entrance with *rangoli*, they bring in *sundarata*, or “beauty.” But the most important step in the fulfillment of *shuchih* is when they write “Shri Rama” in their welcoming courtyard. When you write Bhagavan’s name, it makes the place perfect, for it brings in *pavitrata*, or “sanctity, holiness, divinity.”

After you just sweep a place, it looks a certain way. But after you wash it with water and purify it, it looks different. And after you decorate the place with *rangoli*, it has an altogether different look and feel. And then you make it perfect by bringing in the Lord’s name there. With this you bring in divinity. All this put together is *shuchi*: cleanliness, purity, beauty, and divinity. This must be everywhere, in everything we do.

In poetry also, a sentence must have *rasa-svada* for it to be poetry. Where there is *rasa*, where any sentiment expressed gives joy, then such a joy-giving, sentiment-filled sentence is called poetry. There is a vast difference between saying something as a regular sentence and saying something in poetic form.

We may have great poetic style, but what is important is what our subject is. *Gadhe ki daur?* (Is our subject “A Donkey’s Stride”?) *Humpty Dumpty* is a nursery rhyme, not poetry. The subject should be an elevating theme. Sant Jnaneshvara says where there is the touch of the transcendental, there is poetry. Such poetry never becomes old or stale. It is ever new. Take the *Ramayana*, for example. Thousands and thousands and thousands of years have gone by, but people never tire of it, because that is poetry. There is *shuchita*, or “purity.”

All these four factors make up *shuchih*: *svacchata*, *shuddhata*, *sundarata*, and *pavitrata*. It is important to keep our home neat for ourselves and our guests. Where there is *shuchih*, there are all the four aspects: cleanliness, purity, beauty, and sanctity/divinity. And if these are in our home, every time someone comes into our home, we will learn to see it as, “God is coming into my home in different forms!” This is the greatness and importance of practicing *shuchih*.

To Revel in the Joy of Love

by James Hausman

Ask the layman for his thoughts on enlightenment and to him it is only the stuff of myth. Buddha meditated underneath the *pipal* tree in the same way Zeus hurled thunderbolts from the heavens in the same way Anubis, the jackal-headed Egyptian god, weighed hearts of the dead against the feather of truth. These seem as stories, nothing more. Even the most open-minded of laymen who actually believes in enlightenment also believes it is reserved not for him, but for a person from another era. Compare this perspective to ours in Chinmaya Mission. Laid before us, we have a clearly defined path to the Supreme. We owe much thanks. Pujya Gurudev demystified enlightenment.

Give the *Bhagavad Gita* or the Upanishads to an initiated friend and see what value he extracts from it. Without much gain, your friend will return to you baffled, claiming the scriptures are inscrutable. Though we have grown familiar with its special frame of thought, Vedanta at first challenges a thinker with a total shift in perspective. It purports that *Brahman* alone is real, and all else is a projection of *maya*. In this subtlest science of self-inquiry, each student must get inducted by a master. A *sat-guru* teaches the special language tools and attitude (which is reverence) that his student requires for the investigation. Pujya Gurudev accomplished this feat the world over. The legacy of his life resonates in each one of us.

Gurudev distilled Vedanta; he simplified it and made it practical. His BMI Chart at once sheds light on the human condition. It reveals that the “individual” actually functions through a composite of separate personalities: perceiver, feeler, thinker. Thereupon, it diagrams an easy-to-follow path toward experiencing the supreme non-dual Reality. Remove the *vasanas* through intelligently selfless

actions, without meanwhile creating fresh *vasanas*, and your birthright, which is enlightenment, shall be yours. Thus the BMI Chart clarifies Vedanta into a simple step-by-step process. If the Vedas are milk and the Upanishads are butter, his teaching is the purest ghee.

Gurudev focused our attention on the very substance of religion and philosophy, bestowing us with incomparable wealth. He led by example, serving vigorously. As evidenced by the worldwide success of the Chinmaya Mission, he unlocked Vedanta and made it accessible even to children. Humble prostrations to our beloved Gurudev: the dynamo, the saint, the sage, the humanitarian.

Any who doubt enlightenment must not have received the sacred gift of seeing such a master in his *padukas*. He walks with lovely grace, the dust of his feet smelling like sandalwood, soft at heart yet firm in speech, loving, disciplining, both a mother and father to all, unshakably peaceful, impossible to turn away from, a model of purity, forgiving, kind, a treasure trove of love. Indeed, all people have witnessed glory—hiking under the ancient redwoods or standing at the base of a waterfall, blasted by its spray—but not all have not witnessed this glory of the *sat-guru*. Through his radiance, divinity makes itself known. All worldly tribulations get soothed by a bliss that descends from the sacred beyond.

Our beloved Gurudev lives on as pure Consciousness, existing infinitely. But not only that. He pervades our intellections, our very viewpoints of the world. Every time a study group assembles, or whenever a Mission member sits in quiet introspection, it occurs within the intellectual framework Pujya Gurudev provided. The effects of his work, the world over, proliferate each and every one of us. We hold up our hearts, again and again, to the Ideal he set forth.

We, as seekers, may not understand the full imports of enlightenment—that *paramahansa* state in which the experiencer, experiencing, and experienced merge into one, but we understand the way to get there. We have been blessed, granted attendance with a master of the highest order. Let us not, by familiarity, accept this highest blessing as status quo. Sharpened as the arrow strung in its bow, let our every thought aim at the end goal of life; and as the arrow in flight, let our every action be unwavering and true. In the words of Pujya Gurudev, “We can and we must!”

Restlessness and Peace

Restlessness . . .

*I was lonely
without
you.*

*You led me
to the
silver smell
of moonlight.*

Restlessness . . .

*I wanted to
escape
from
you.*

*You floated
my lazy afternoon
on
ponderings
of
shadows and light.*

Restlessness . . .

*I was
incomplete . . .*

*. . . until you
walked
sunset in,
to meditate
on the
boundary
of
night and day . . .*

. . . and you left

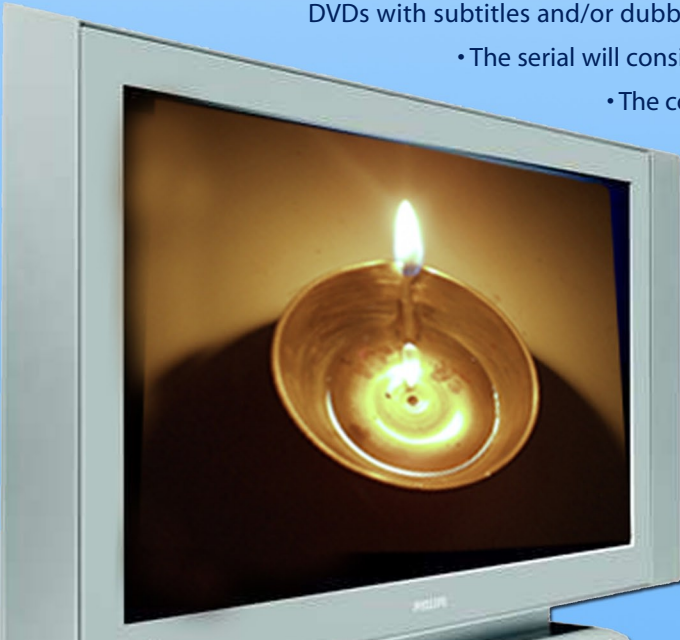
me

*a watermark
of peace.*

upanishād ganga

The impact of televised media is tremendous, as seen by the success of the TV serials on *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The theme of the Upanishads, however, is unique and has never been telecast as a serial to date. Chinmaya Mission® is privileged to take up this project under its new wing, “Chinmaya Creations.”

- *Upanishad Ganga* is a made-for-television serial that will be dedicated to Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji, who began his spiritual work with teachings on the Upanishads.
- In each episode, the main Upanishadic concepts will be explained through a blend of traditional and contemporary approaches, through drama, dance, music, and captivating stories. Each episode is aimed at depicting teachings that have practical implications in daily life and that inspire individual, inner transformation.
- The episodes will address both: 1) the lay audience or the general public, who know little about the Upanishads and 2) the scholars who are already exposed to this knowledge.
- This serial will emphasize the Upanishadic message that “All problems are due to lack of right thinking. Human life is rare and precious. Its main purpose is to enquire into and realize the supreme Truth, which is the support of this world and the Self of all beings. This Realization can be gained through purity of mind and the Upanishadic wisdom learned from an enlightened Master. The realized Master ever remains engaged in the welfare of all beings.”
- A core team of Chinmaya Mission acharyas and scholars will do the research and conceptualization of each episode.
- Chinmaya Mission has selected and appointed Dr. Chandraprakash Dvivedi (of *Chanayka* fame) as the Creative Director of this serial.
- The serial will be in Hindi, as its largest audience will be Hindi-speaking. Eventually DVDs with subtitles and/or dubbing will be released in various languages.
- The serial will consist of a total of 52 episodes.
- The cost of each episode is approximately \$35,000.
- To date, over 13 episodes have been completed and previewed by the creators as well as people from different backgrounds. Their high acclaim and positive feedback has been greatly inspiring.



We invite all those who value this project to donate generously. All donations are tax-deductible.

Interested donors who wish to donate in US\$ may contact their local Chinmaya Mission centers and specify the purpose of the donation. Donors who wish to donate in Indian rupees may contact Central Chinmaya Mission Trust at ccmt@chinmayamission.org for details.

Inauguration of *Chinmaya Yamunotri*

With Pujya Gurudev's grace and Pujya Guruji's blessings, '*Chinmaya Yamunotri*,' CM Chicago's new center in Grayslake, Illinois, opened with sacred ceremonies and celebrations over the weekend of Dec. 1-2, 2007. Swami Sharanananda, CM Chicago's resident *acharya* at the '*Badri*' center presided over the daily *pujas* and *havans* that commenced in the early morning hours of Saturday, Dec. 1, and concluded with *prasadam* and a *bhajan* program. All the rituals were performed under the guidance of Shri Srinivasasastry, assisted by Shri Srihari and Shri Sriram Chitti. The all-day event was attended by 300 devotees in spite of the freezing temperatures and snowfall, which created an atmosphere similar to the original *Yamunotri* in the Himalayas.

The next day, Swamiji and the *pujaris* began the

ceremonies with a procession on the grounds of *Chinmaya Yamunotri*, carrying the *utsava murtis* and *kalashas*. At the entrance of the new building, several solemn ceremonies were conducted prior to the official ribbon cutting. Once Swamiji lit the ceremonial lamps inside, a video clip of Pujya Gurudev was shown. The entire congregation joined in chanting *Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram* and participated in the *shodashopachara puja*. Swamiji and various devotees performed *Guru Paduka Puja* and *Chinmaya Arati*. The day ended with *prasadam* and a two-hour cultural program by the Bala Vihar children.

A long-awaited dream of the CM Chicago Family has become a reality with the support of the Northern Illinois Indian community. *Chinmaya Yamunotri* now hosts all CM classes and other activities, including Bala Vihar, Study Group, language class, and yoga.



Mark your calendar!
International Camp at *Chinmaya Vibhooti*
December 2008

Kolwan (near Pune), India

Conducted by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Bhagavad Gita Ch. 10: *Vibhooti Yoga*

Don't miss this first international camp at *Chinmaya Vibhooti*!

Mark your calendar and stay tuned for details.

Chinmaya Naada Bindu

is one of Central Chinmaya Mission Trust's most enterprising and visionary ventures. Its conception was based on the same premises as of Chinmaya Mission's many educational institutes for Vedantic studies, academics, nursing, and management. It is therefore of no small significance that a new educational institute, one fully dedicated to Indian classical music and dance, will soon be added under the Chinmaya Mission banner.

Situated on the *Chinmaya Vibhooti* site in Kolwan, near Pune, India, *Chinmaya Naada Bindu*, a residential school of Indian classical music and dance, will invite and welcome students from all over the world. The main subjects will be vocal music, instrumental music, and all major Indian dance forms. Affiliated to a reputed university, *Chinmaya Naada Bindu* will house appointed, highly qualified faculty and a visiting faculty of celebrated contemporary artists. The school will be an ideal place of inspiration for musicians and music lovers to follow in the music traditions and lineage of a *guru-shishya parampara*.

If you would like to support this project through funding or personal talents, please contact ccmt@chinmayamission.org.

To learn more about the programs that will be offered at *Chinmaya Naada Bindu*, contact Director Pramodini Rao at pramodini_rao@yahoo.co.in.



New Shivalaya Heralds New Year

Excerpts from a report by Seshadri Kumar and Radhika Nair; Photos by Nilesch Shah, Jay Deshmukh, and Kailash Dangayach

With the opening of the *Shri Saumyakashi Shivalaya* temple on the premises of *Chinmaya Prabha*, Houston has gained a new landmark. Multitudes flocked with devotion as Lord Shiva was enshrined in *Shri Saumyakashi Shivalaya* amidst great pomp and ceremony in mid-December of 2007.

Situated in CM Houston's ashram in Sugar Land, Texas, this new temple was reverberating with the sounds of chanting and *bhajans* during the week-long inaugural festivities that ended on Saturday, Dec. 22.

The majestic temple dome is a replica of the *Shivalingam* that has been installed as the main deity within the shrine. The *lingam* symbolizes the formless, attribute-less, God-principle described in the Vedic scriptures.

At the onset of the festivities, on Sunday, Dec. 16, the celebrations began with a worship of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, whose vision of building a Shiva temple in Houston has become a reality. Beautifully decorated floats carrying the idols of Lord Ganesha, Shivalinga, Shiva, Sita-Rama, and Radha-Krishna made their way into the temple premises with special prayers, song, and dance. Colorfully dressed children, women, and men danced through the crisp and sunny morning, rejoicing in the temple courtyard.

In accordance with the Vedic scriptures, several *pujas* were performed throughout the four days. The rituals commenced on Monday, Dec. 17 with *Ganga Stotram*, which was chanted to sanctify the water to be used in all the ceremonies. The *Vastu Shanti Puja* was performed to cleanse and purify the temple premises before its opening.

Chinmaya Mission members received Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda according to Vedic traditions on Dec. 18. A *Ganapati homam*, *Kalasha Puja*, and *Murti Sthapana* were included in the inaugural proceedings. In the evening, members invoked the blessings of Lord Shiva by performing the *Shivasahasranama Puja*.

The most important puja in the inauguration of a temple is the *kumbhabhishekam*, which took place



Welcoming Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda



Pujya Guruji, Brahmachari Bhasa, and Acharyas Gaurang and Darshana Nanavaty carrying kalashas



CMH members receiving the idols of Lord Ganesha, Shivalinga, Shiva, Sita-Rama, and Radha-Krishna with special prayers, song, and dance as the idols arrive on beautifully decorated chariots.



Priests performing Kalasha Puja

on Dec. 19. The *kumbha* is the *kalasha* that holds the consecrated water from the *Kalasha Puja*. The *kalasha* is carried on one's head to the temple, and the deity is bathed with the holy water in it. The water represents the flow of thoughts in one's mind; this flow, in meditation, embraces the deity. *Kumbhabhishekam* is thus a symbolic, external ritual of one's inner practice of meditation. Hundreds of devotees made their way up the steps of the temple with *kalashas* on their heads, and bathed the idol with the spiritually charged water.

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda consecrated the temple. In his inaugural address, Guruji explained that the temple dome in the shape of *Shivalingam* symbolizes the infinite nature of the Divine, with no beginning and no end. The Lord Shiva idol represents what the eyes could see as a form, while the *Shivalingam* symbolizes the Self or formless Lord in one's heart.

Guruji's message to the congregation was that everyone should find time to pray within one's heart and mind, at least once a day. In this context, Guruji said, "God does not care about one's ability or inability. He only looks for one's availability." He added, "God gives and forgives, whereas we always get and forget."

CM Houston's Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty said Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda had envisioned for this ashram the construction of a congregation hall, classrooms for the Bala Vihar children, and a Shiva temple. "In this fulfillment of Gurudev's vision, the greater Houston Hindu community has also now gotten a place of worship for generations to come." In his address to CM Houston members, he said, "Soaring on the wings of faith, we had embarked on a sacred journey some 20 years ago—that of bringing *Bhagavan* Shiva to *Chinmaya Prabha*. Today, as all of us flocked to our very own Shivalaya, my heart brimmed with joy and appreciation for you all. You, my brothers and sisters, have made Gurudev's vision a reality. . . . You had 'believed in what you did not see' and now you get to 'see what you believed in.' And what a beautiful sight it is!"

For the next three days, Guruji enthralled the devotees as he regaled Lord Shiva's glory through three discourses on *Shiva Stuti* from *Shri Ramacharitamana*.

All the rituals were conducted by Achutha Ramiah, Manickasundara Bhattar, and N. Kalyana Sundaram

Acharyas Gaurang and Darshana Nanavaty performing Vastu Puja



CMH Bala Vihar children carrying small kalashas



Fireworks display illuminates the night sky over the temple

from the Meenakshi Temple in Houston, and Narasimman Kannan Battar from the New Orleans Temple. They were joined by Brahmachari Bhasa Chaitanya, the head priest of *Shivalaya*. City leaders, priests, and religious heads from various spiritual organizations also attended the ceremonies.

A special function was held for the children on Friday, Dec. 21. Because all the inaugural events took place on weekdays when the children were at school, a special abridged version of the rituals were conducted to ensure that the Bala Vihar children did not miss out on the inauguration of their temple. All the pujas were explained and performed briefly, and each and every child bathed Lord Shiva with holy water. A surprise awaited all that evening when the lights were turned off and a breathtaking representation of the temple was created with candles. The evening ended as Lord Shiva sat in all His glory in Shivalaya while a spectacular fireworks display illuminated the night sky above Him.

Shri Saumyakashi Shivalaya is open to the entire Hindu community. Brahmachari Bhasa Chaitanya will perform pujas regularly, according to Vedic rites, including *Rudrabhishekam*, *archana*, *Shivasahasranama Puja*, and *arati*. He will also offer discourses in Telugu on scriptural texts. For a detailed schedule or more information, visit www.saumyakashi.org.

Bhumi Puja at CM Orlando

On December 23, 2007, in the august presence of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, CM Orlando held its *Bhumi Puja* for its new Classroom Expansion Project on the ashram grounds in Casselberry, Florida. The event was also blessed by visiting CMW Acharyas: Swami Shantananda, Swami Shivapriyananda, Swami Sharananada, Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya, Brahmacharini Arpita, and Brahmachari Eric.

CM Orlando's purpose for this new facility adjacent to the current *Kaivalya* ashram building is to enhance the spiritual development of the coming generations through the teaching of Hindu scriptures, various Indian languages, and mathematics. Dr. Mohan Saoji, Chairman of the neighboring Hindu temple, gave CM Orlando the deed to a portion of the land where the school will be constructed.



After conducting *Ganesha Havan* and *Sarasvati Puja* according to Vedic tradition, addresses were delivered by Pujya Guruji, Swami Shantananda, Chief Guest Dr. John Hitt (president, University of Central Florida). Dr. Shailaja Nadkarni (In-Charge, CM Orlando) thanked the Acharyas for blessing the new project, and appreciated the donors and devotees for making the school a reality.

Pujya Guruji inspired the audience of over 300 devotees as he highlighted the importance of "making our smart children 'good.'" He added, "If we can make guided missiles, then it is imperative that we . . . guide our children to learn [how to] lead a peaceful life."

Light of the Buddha

by Saranyan Palaniswamy

Dance and music hold a special place in Indian culture and traditions, as a medium to touch the Divine. In celebration of Indian art forms, CM Columbus youth, in collaboration with the Nalanda School of Dance, presented "Buddha: The Enlightened One," a spectacular light and sound extravaganza. The event, CM Columbus' annual fundraiser, was held on Sep. 15, 2007. It offered the community and persons of different faiths a philosophical and educational performance on the life and teachings of Lord Buddha, and a glimpse into significant aspects of Indian culture. As the performers depicted the story through a variety of dance forms, the story was narrated scene by scene.. With graceful movements and dazzling costumes, the experience was multifaceted, and visually and emotionally rich.

CM Columbus' Bala Vihar students portrayed young Siddhartha's noble qualities with the ease of seasoned players. Written and produced by CM Columbus volunteers, the performance was conceived and superbly executed by Indira Satyapriya (Director of the Nalanda School of Dance).

The dancers were professional and well-rehearsed, and they all thoroughly enjoyed their participation in the program. Over 100 performers donned vivid costumes, vibrant jewels, and lively bells for the rich extravaganza. The presentation showcased an integrated mix of Bharatanatyam, Kathak, folk dance, and contemporary, ethnic dance forms. The beauty and commitment of the dancers drew the respect of the Full House (650+) audience.



Dharma Sevak Course

August 9-23, 2008
Krishnalaya, CMW Retreat Center
Piercy, Northern California



Conducted by

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Texts/Topics

- *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*
- *Krishna Janmashtami* Celebration

Registration

(includes lodging/boarding; excludes transportation)

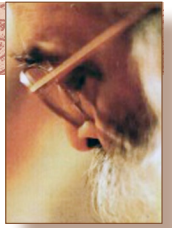
- **Full Course:** \$1,100 per person
- **Partial Course:** \$85 per day
(based on space availability after July 15)
- This camp is for adults only, and is not a family camp. Space is limited.

Register early.

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

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

Have you met ...?



Pujya Gurudev

Below is an excerpt (edited for print herein) from an interview of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda by Pritish Nandy. The interview was telecast in the 1980s on BBC.

He wears a strange shade of ochre, which looks almost like pink. There are silver knobs on his wooden sandals, which add at least three inches to his [six-feet]. His long tresses cascade on to his shoulders, framing with black and gray an intensely intelligent face. Swami Chinmayananda, 65, is Hinduism's answer to the countless young men and women who have strayed away over the years, disgusted with the meaningless rituals and the tired theology of the world's oldest living faith. A distinguished scholar, an ardent teacher, and a compulsive globetrotter, the Swami is today held to be one of the few serious and credible missionaries that Hinduism has to offer. His missions are all over the world. So are his devotees and students. And they are growing at a rate which will soon, perhaps, make Swami Chinmayananda numero uno in the glittering pantheon of gurus, rishis, bhagavans, and babas who hold sway over India's millions and many abroad. In many ways, this is the best thing that could have happened to Hinduism. For the Swami is no quack healer or fast-buck merchant. He offers no miracles to lure the gullible. He makes no predictions, reads no fortunes, and sings paeans to no politician. He makes no claims to being a God, except for argument's sake; nor does he offer you, for a fee, the quick route to nirvana. He simply teaches.

He is best known for his interpretation of the *Gita* and almost every day of the year, somewhere or other, in Bonn or Bangkok, Bombay or Baltimore, he has a class on. He is either trying to explain Arjuna's dilemma in the midst of battle or the innate logic of Krishna's persuasion. Not all his students are Hindus. Neither are they all believers in any religion. More often they come out of curiosity to see the Swami defend a faith grown old and decayed by centuries of blind belief and senile commitment to rituals. There are the usual pot-bellied devotees who come to donate fractions of their ill-gotten wealth in the hope of buying happiness in another life. There's the same bunch of rich, semi-literate women in chiffons and diamonds who attend every religious event wearing the same moronic demeanor. There are also, thank God,

the young ones, from whom the Swami derives his largest following. Pleasant faced young men, quietly listening to the voice of religion.

Swami Chinmayananda is, naturally, not his real name. He was born P. Balakrishna Menon on May 8, 1916, somewhere in the Malabar. There was nothing very brilliant about this particular Malayali child, who grew up and eventually joined *The National Herald* as a cub-reporter. He joined India's nationalist movement in 1941 and was briefly jailed. On release, he went to Rishikesh to meet Swami Sivananda Saraswati, to write a journalistic piece on the religion racket. The Swami persuaded the young skeptic to stay back for six months at his ashram, to see things firsthand. By the end of the six months, Balakrishna Menon gave up his name and his profession, and assumed the name of Chinmayananda.

From Rishikesh, at the foot of the Himalayas, he went further north to spend ten years at the feet of Swami Tapovan Maharaj, the well-known sage. While Swami Sivananda Saraswati gave him his name and his robes, it was Tapovan Maharaj who educated him in the *shastras*.

Much of this is, of course, hearsay. There is no official biography of Swami Chinmayananda and, unlike most of the other gurus, he offers very little information about himself or his achievements in Mission handouts, books, or lecture papers. When I asked him about his past, he laughed it away and said, "Never ask a Swami his past. If you knew the source of a river, would you ever drink from it?"

He is modest, intelligent, and accessible. He speaks with a sing-song accent and often mispronounces his words. But his passion shows. "Hinduism is the religion for our times," he asserts with confidence.

I met him over two long sessions in Calcutta, watched him deliver quite a few famous *Gita* lectures, saw some of his Mission centers, listened to him articulate his views on life and death, freedom and spiritual bondage, religion in action,

and the existence of God. I saw the tired lines on his face as he smiled and bore the fawning and the sycophancy of his devotees, suffered stupid questions about the behavior of the stock exchange, drank coffee and fruit juice from persistent hostesses at half-hour intervals. “It must be tough to be a guru,” I said to him, after a particularly tiresome session. “Not tough; it’s lonely,” said Hinduism’s most famous hostage.

Why do you give so much importance to the study of the *Bhagavad Gita*? You seem to imply that the *Gita* is the only way to gain insight into the Indian mind, into the Indian sensibility. Don’t you think our other religious texts are of equal importance?

Every religious textbook is of equal importance. But I have no authority to recommend books I have not studied myself. I studied the *Gita*—and it was of great help to me—therefore, I recommend it to everyone. Unlike the other scriptures, the methodology followed by the *Gita* appears to be more conducive to the modern, scientific mind and the educated classes, for they don’t believe in anything. They want everything to be rationally proved, intellectually defensible. And the approach of the *Gita* is very rational because Krishna had to address a dynamic, young, educated, intelligent man who was a born skeptic. Arjuna did not believe or understand that Krishna was an intellectual giant. It is only in the eleventh chapter that he got a glimpse, and, thereafter, his attitude changed. But till the eleventh chapter, he was absolutely rational. He did not believe a word of what Krishna said. Krishna had to make him believe it by the strength of logic. This approach appeals to people like you and me. It converted me from an atheist to a believer. . . .

You were an atheist!

Of course. Any intelligent, rational man is an atheist. Until, of course, he is initiated into religion. So when you write and attack religious people at times, I sympathize with you because I was also like that. I also thought that religion meant ritualism. I never knew there was a science to it, that ritualism was just a bark—the outer bark of the great tree that shelters the whole community. The bark is necessary for the tree. But the bark is not the tree. That I what I try to explain to young people like you.

You are often exhorting young people to search for a new ideal that would give them motivation for self-sacrifice and dynamic action. Wherein do you think such an ideal lies?

Each one will have to find such an ideal. When I say you must have a good, faithful wife, don’t ask me where you can get such a wife. A wife you can never get. A girl you can find and make her your wife. . . .

Are you quite sure? That I can never get a wife . . .

(Laughs loudly) An ideal I can never give you. You have to find your ideal. Like, let’s say, excellence in your profession. Or a political belief, an economic system you may like to propound, a social value. Or, simply, your own moral attitude. Uncompromisingly you will have to live up to it, under any circumstance. You must be ready to die for it, if necessary, but not yield an inch. One ideal you find and the best in you starts coming out. Until this ideal is [found and set], the best never comes out. You might get superficial efficiency, but that’s not enough. It’s not the best.

For example, look at Mahatma Gandhi. So long as he was M. K. Gandhi, he was a third-rate man with no hope of any success. All that he achieved was that he passed barristery. And that is because nobody ever fails in barristery. (Laughs) Now, when he comes to India . . .

Yes?

In Africa, nothing happened. African politics, third-rate. . . . All that he gained was that he lost his teeth. Nothing else. When he came back to India, as luck would have it, he suddenly got an ideal to pursue. Freedom for 400 million people! Once he got that ideal and was ready to sacrifice everything else for it, look how the man’s personality grew up from week to week, month to month. He was no more a four-foot or five-foot high, big-headed man with spreading ears, a chinless man with effeminate words and stammering language—everything useless. Out of him came a brilliance such that he carved a permanent niche in world history. History is not complete without Gandhiji’s chapter. Where did he get it all from? From his so uncompromising personality! One ideal, and the whole thing changes.

Vivekananda must have been there in Narendra. But as Narendra, he was impotent—an ordinary, useless, university student. But once he got an ideal and started pursuing it, in five years’ time you saw a magnificent unfolding of his personality. Out of Narendra came a Vivekananda.

A third-rate prince, Siddhartha—a stupid fool I

would call him—because at the age of 28, the fellow did not know that there was death, that there was old age, that there was disease in the world! Think of the enormous ignorance of the man! Once he got an ideal and held onto it, out of the stupid mud-plaster beamed out the eternal prince of compassion: Buddha. Without an ideal to hook yourself onto, that depth of possibilities in you cannot be unearthed, dredged out.

Would you believe that political ideals can also help to transform the condition of our society? Straight political ideals, without any moral or spiritual strings attached?

Any ideal can. Not just political ideals. Artistic ones too. The belief that I can be the greatest artist—maybe a dancer, a painter, or a musician . . . it doesn't matter. The best in you then starts coming out.

But this can also create a great but completely amoral artist. A great musician with a fascist vision of the world. A great writer or painter who is committed to his work but has a completely perverse worldview that can spark off totally negative political movements. Surely, an artistic ideal is not enough. A moral stand is important for any creative person. Otherwise, he could well be taking mankind backwards. Towards fascism, for instance.

It is not the ideal that puts man back. It is the interpretation. You can't say that religion is the cause for wars or the disaster in Iran. Can you say that? Islam is not the cause. It is Islam interpreted in a particular way. Similarly, Hinduism is not the cause for the Harijan problem in the country now. It is the interpretation of Hinduism.

Caste is a universal principle; it is man-made and you suffer for it. It's not Hinduism. Take democracy. Government of the people, for the people, by the people. But by the time you practice it in a parliament, it becomes government of the people, for the people, by the people, on the people . . . and people suffer. So, even the best things, when man-handled, become the worst of things.

So, don't say that Nietzsche was the cause for Hitlerism. *Na na*. What Nietzsche said was that the Aryans are the best among people. But Hitler took only that out of context and interpreted it in his own way, and damned himself. What can we do?

to be continued



Question in Answer

*In a hut
sits the man who claims
He talks with God as he talks
with goats*

*Seemingly,
Once puzzles were the heart of his
soul,
Now a fragmented mirror is
full of whole, new life.*

*For he dares to stop and
think, to look and see
If he can find the question in
the answer.*

*How much love can you put into the
word 'heart'?*

*Life is not easy
when dis-illusion-ment does not exist.*

-Priya Krishnan

Chinmaya Mission®

Residential Vedanta Course 2008-2010

Mumbai, India

His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission® Worldwide, invites applications for the 14th Residential Vedanta Course to be conducted in Mumbai, India, September 2008-September 2010. The Vedanta Course encompasses the study of the Upanishads, *Bhagavad Gita*, and other Vedantic literature, as well as basic Sanskrit. The Course is taught in English. After completing the Course, students may opt to work for Chinmaya Mission or pursue their individual goals.

Chief Acharya: Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Resident Acharya: Swami Advaitananda and other visiting Acharyas of Chinmaya Mission

Eligibility:

- Male or female university graduates
- Unmarried and free from family encumbrances
- Age 20-30 years
- With a sincere interest in the study of Vedanta and a zeal to propagate the message of the rishis

Course Duration: 2 years residential, no holidays

Cost: For Indian residents committed to working for the Mission after the Course, lodging, boarding, and medical care will be provided for free by Tara Cultural Trust. For guest students and non-Indian residents, a nominal charge will apply. Details will be given in the personal interview.

Application Deadline: March 15, 2008

Personal Interviews: Personal interviews of all candidates will be conducted. Specific locations will be intimated.

Applications: To receive an Application Form, e-mail jagadis@vsnl.net or write to: Chief Executive, Tara Cultural Trust, "Sandeepany Sadhanalaya," Saki Vihar Road, Powai, Mumbai 400 072, India.



Chinmaya Mission®

Washington Regional Center

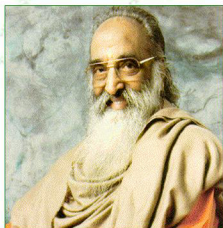
Mahasamadhi Family Camp 2008

JULY 28 - AUGUST 3, 2008

Rocky Gap Resort

Cumberland, Maryland

Conducted by Pujya Swami Tejomayananda



Listen to talks on *Mundaka Upanishad* by Pujya Swami Tejomayananda (Head of Chinmaya Mission® worldwide) and absorb the timeless teachings to experience our inner Self. Several Mission *acharyas* will conduct guided meditation, spiritual discourses, and activities for children and youth.

The backdrop for the retreat is the serene, nature-filled, award-winning Rocky Gap Resort (www.rockygapresort.com), in Cumberland, Maryland (near Washington DC). The resort is surrounded by hills and an alpine lake, and is adjacent to Rocky Gap State Park. It combines the best of quiet resort luxury and the calm serenity of Mother Nature. The entire lodge has been reserved for use by the Mission during the retreat.

ADULTS

- 3 TALKS DAILY BY PUJYA GURUJI SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA ON *MUNDAKA UPANISHAD*
- MORNING GUIDED MEDITATION, GROUP DISCUSSIONS, DISCOURSES BY ACHARYAS
- A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A MAHASAMADHI DAY PUJA WITH PUJYA GURUJI AND ACHARYAS

CHILDREN

- BALA VIHAR CLASSES AND ACTIVITIES BY ACHARYAS AND DEDICATED TEACHERS
- CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, EVENING BONFIRE, AND OUTDOOR GAMES/ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY THE RESORT

HARI OM

Registration is now open. Registration Forms are also online.
For more information: www.chinmayadc.org ~ mahasamadhicamp2008@chinmayadc.org

CHINMAYA MAHASAMADHI FAMILY CAMP 2008 - REGISTRATION FORM

JULY 28-AUGUST 3, 2008 (Check-in: July 28, 3:00 p.m., Check-out: August 3, 11:00 a.m.)

ROOM & BOARD - All "Individual" rates are per person. Children under 3 years are free[†].

[†]Note: Parents will need to make arrangements for babysitting at their own cost.

FULL CAMP Part Camp (Per Day**) TOTAL

Individual: Single Occupancy*	\$1,200	\$250 x _____	= _____
Double Occupancy	\$ 800	\$165 x _____	= _____
Triple Occupancy	\$ 700	\$130 x _____	= _____
Quadruple Occupancy	\$ 600	\$115 x _____	= _____

(* Will you consider double occupancy if single occupancy room is not available? **Y / N**)

Family: Family of Two	\$1,600	\$325 x _____	= _____
Family of Two/Sharing	\$1,200	\$250 x _____	= _____
Family of Three	\$1,950	\$400 x _____	= _____
Family of Four	\$2,250	\$450 x _____	= _____

**** Partial Attendance Dates:** from _____ to _____

Couple sharing a room with another couple is subject to room availability. Otherwise, the rate for Family of Two will apply.

REGISTRATION (FULL OR PARTIAL CAMP): - Required for all attendees (Tax Deductible)

After April 1st, 2008	\$100 x _____ (# Persons)	= _____
	\$125 x _____ (# Persons)	= _____

ROCKY GAP CHILDREN'S PROGRAM PASS: - Required for all children 3 years and above

\$50 x _____ (# Children) = _____

TOTAL*** = _____

***REGISTRATION AND ALL OTHER CHARGES ARE DUE BY: MARCH 31, 2008

Enclosed Total Amount \$_____ Check No. _____ for Registration/Room & Board/Pass

Make check payable to "CMWRC" & mail to CMWRC, 46 Norwood Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20905; Write "CMS Camp" in the memo field

Family Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Tel (H) _____ Tel (W) _____ Tel (C) _____

ADULTS:	First Name	Gender	First Name	Gender
1. _____		M/F	2. _____	M/F
3. _____		M/F	4. _____	M/F

CHILDREN:	First Name	Date of Birth	Grade (Fall 2008)	GENDER
1. _____		_____	_____	M / F
2. _____		_____	_____	M / F
3. _____		_____	_____	M / F
4. _____		_____	_____	M / F

Do you plan to travel to DC Area by air? **Y / N** (If yes, please include details.)

Please COMPLETE THE FORM and Return With Your Check By Mail to: CMWRC at the address given above.

Contacts: Sri Gopalakrishna (Camp Coordinator) 703-801-7311; Raju Chidambaram 703-461-8592;

Ramesh Golla (Registration) 571-220-9653

For more information visit: www.chinmayadc.org or e-mail mahasamadhicamp2008@chinmayadc.org

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

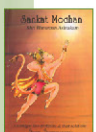
Radhika Krishnakumar
Biography of Param Pujya Swami Tapovanam
\$10

"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 Tejmayananda

\$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 Tejmayananda'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 Tejmayananda

\$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 Tejmayananda, 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

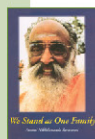
And veil the light in my heart,

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

TAPOVAN PRASAD

*Give yourself, and your family and friends,
a gift of love, service, and knowledge!*

Tapovan Prasad is the highly acclaimed international monthly magazine of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide. In publication since 1963, its substantive and worthy content is acclaimed to date, enhanced by its cover-to-cover, newly improved design with color spreads. It includes meaningful and vibrant articles on profound and practical Vedanta, interviews with Mission acharyas, worldwide news and events, and Q&A forums.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: \$25

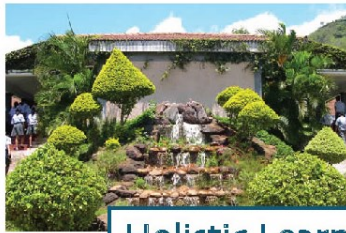
15-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION: \$250

In striving to keep costs low for our increasing readership, we invite you to sponsor pages and/or advertisements in the magazine at any time throughout the year.

FULL PAGE AD SUBSCRIPTION: \$160

Submissions: tapovanprasad@chinmayamission.org

Subscriptions: www.chinmayapublications.org, publications@chinmayamission.org



Holistic Learning at

Chinmaya International School (CIRS)

Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

www.cirschool.org admissions@cirschool.org

- A school where every tenth student is a teacher
- A classroom under skies that span over 100 acres
- Lessons that come alive through dance, drama, and song
- Sports as thrilling as rock-climbing and Taekwondo
- A curriculum that goes far beyond academics

At CIRS, we strive for every student's holistic development through a perfect balance of work and play. Through modern educational facilities, along with a healthy dose of traditional values, we teach our children to take on life with courage, pride, and honor.

Gift your children an educational experience that embraces yet transcends the ordinary and the body, mind, and intellect. Watch your child flourish amidst 480 students from 21 states of India and 17 other countries.

Registration is open for the 10th batch of our IB program. For details or to set up an admissions exam for your child at your nearest Chinmaya Mission center, contact anu.bathala@gmail.com