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CHINMAYA MISSION® WEST BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

March 2008, No. 122

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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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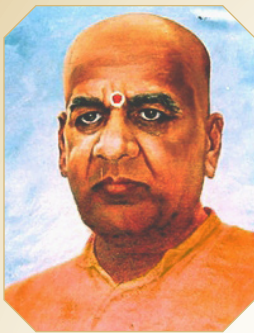
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His Holiness Swami Tapovanam

Love, like electricity, is universal. It is immanent everywhere, and in all people, and it will manifest itself in congenial surroundings. Love begets love. If you want others to love you, you must love them yourself. If on the principle of “Vasudaiva kutumbakam,” a man loves all others as members of his own family, to him the whole world will be full of love; nothing will appear to be loveless.

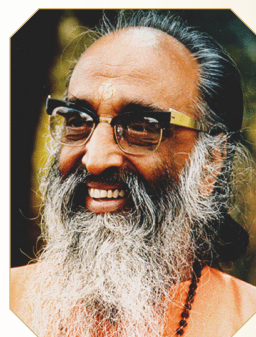
So, one must try to sublimate one’s narrow, brutish, and pleasure-loving loyalties into unselfish, unlimited, and divine Love. If one does, one can certainly find sweet love everywhere. None will hate us; none will desert us.

Source: Ishvara Darshan

His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda

Love is not love if it does not serve and sacrifice. Love alone is the law and life of the Self. Self-realization is the experience of love in its absolute nature. You have loved yourself the most. “Realize thy Self.” Thereafter, you know nothing but love for the outside world. There is no greater moral truth than Love.

When the devotee’s mind melts in the contemplation of the loving form and infinite qualities of the Lord, in the warmth of His supreme, single-pointed love, the sublime fusion of the finite and Infinite takes place. At that supreme moment is the dynamic experience of the Whole, and there is no individualistic part beyond the Whole that could converse with It.



Source: Devotion: Loving God (Mananam)

His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda



Knowledge is a sign of devotion. What is called knowledge at one level is called devotion in another, and action or service in yet another level. They are all the same, just as water, ice, and steam are the same.

When you are knowledge-oriented, the object of inquiry is God. The object of devotion is also God. If you love Him, you naturally want to know more and more about Him.

Doubts about the supremacy of knowledge or devotion arise out of a superficial understanding of the words. If you are a true seeker of knowledge, you will become a devotee of God also. Temperamentally, you may be more emotional or intellectual, but these are only different ways of expression.

Source: Tapovan Prasad, January 2006

[Click here for Puja Guruji’s Itinerary](#)

The Blessings of CHYK

by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Address to youth in Kasargod, Kerala (India); originally printed in Tapovan Prasad, October 2007



Once read somewhere that a person in his old age feels he doesn't know anything, a middle-aged person wonders whether he really knows anything, and it is only the young person who feels confident and certain that he knows everything. So, when an elderly person like your mother or father tries to tell you something, you generally say, "I know it."

When you are a child, you tend to go on asking various questions, "Tell me why . . ." But when you become a teenager, "Tell me why . . ." changes to "Why tell me?" as in, "Tell someone else." And when you grow old, then you will perhaps say, "Tell! Why me?" The sentence remains the same, only the words are interchanged and the tone varies. Someone once asked, "How do we know that a boy or a girl has become a teenager?" The answer is, when the boy or girl stops asking from where he or she came, and refuses to tell you where he or she is going, then we know that he or she has become a teenager.

Elderly people feel that youngsters think too much of themselves; they presume to know everything, and dismiss old people as if they know nothing. To some extent, this is true. In our youth, for whatever reason, we think that we know everything. I heard a good joke: A father called his young son and said, "Let's talk about life." The young boy said, "Okay, tell me what you want to know."

Youngsters get very enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is a good thing, but over-enthusiasm causes problems. Similarly confidence is also a good thing, but over-confidence causes problems. All of you are in the prime of youth, looking forward to the next stage of your life, planning out what you are going to do. At this time, it is good to understand a few points.

If you really want to become successful and make a mark in life, then there are certain prerequisites. Nothing happens coincidentally. Many people have wishful thinking that things will happen automatically. "One fine day, I will become a great

person!" The only thing that happens automatically, without any effort, is growing old! But no one wants to grow old automatically. We want to make the best of life. So, give the benefit of the doubt to your parents and the older generation. They may not be men of letters. Perhaps they never went to school. But they have gone through life's school of experiences. They have learnt something. Hence, learn your first lesson: Humility. Without humility, you cannot learn anything.

The second important quality you must have: Gratefulness. Today we may be flying supersonic jets and space shuttles, going to the moon, and traveling in outer space. But remember that all this is possible today because of the Wright brothers. When we look at their first model of a flying machine, it may appear crude and amateurish. But remember that they started it all and because of them, we are flying to new heights today. Remember them with gratitude. When the first wheel was invented, it was a giant leap for mankind. Today you take the wheel for granted, but only because it wheel was made is so much progress possible today. So, be grateful to all the earlier generations for what they have done. Gratitude and humility are very important qualities that you must cultivate.

Anyone who wants to start a factory, industry, or business, in whatever field it may be, has one common requirement: Capital. If you have wealth, you can invest it in any area you want. Similarly, you need to have good health and physical fitness for whatever you want to do. If you want to become a sportsman, you can train for the game of your choice, but first of all, you must be physically fit. This is the basic, common requirement for anything you wish to start up. And if the basics are not taken care of, greater achievements will not be possible.

Consistency in effort or practice is required to always stay alert and fit. In school and college also, if you start preparing only a few days before the exam, there is stress, fear, fever, tension, etc. But if you prepare and plan from the beginning, your full

energy will be available for the exam. If you want to become a wrestler and you practice once in 15 days, will you ever become a good wrestler? All athletes, whatever sport they specialize in, have a specific regimen of physical exercises. The actual sport or game itself is never considered as an exercise.

You have to exercise everyday. Do not only physical exercises, but also mental and intellectual ones, to become a strong person who is not carried away by the whims and fancies of the mind or swayed by outside events. If you are strong, there will be no suicidal thoughts. You will become confident, enthusiastic, and focused. Chinmaya Yuva Kendra (CHYK) helps you become a strong person with a vision.

CHYK was initiated and inspired by Pujya Gurudev in 1975. Now it is growing and spreading

everywhere—not only in India, but also abroad. It has become global. This shows that it is highly relevant in the present times. The project of launching CHYK in our schools and colleges is a noble one. The thought behind it is noble. Secondly, it is the need of the hour. It provides a vision and a sense of direction, when both these are lacking in today's world. We talk of guided missiles, but they are in the hands of misguided people. Imagine the disaster that will follow!

The goal and work of CHYK is noble and relevant in present day and context. The earlier you join CHYK, the better it is, because it gives you a vision, and teaches you how to harness all your energy and achieve that vision. No longer will you be a victim of circumstances, but the master of your destiny, a master of circumstances. Your life can become a blessing to yourself and a blessing to others.



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Global Youth Wing of Chinmaya Mission®

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THE CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION (CIF) IS PLEASED TO INVITE ALL SPIRITUAL STUDENTS TO ENROLL IN ITS PROGRESSIVE HOME-STUDY PROGRAM FOR VEDANTIC STUDIES.

OBJECTIVE

The primary aim of these courses is to provide clarity and depth in a seeker's Vedantic studies. Each course covers, in a series of 24 detailed lessons, various central Vedantic concepts as taught in introductory texts such as Vivekachudamani, Atma Bodha, Tattva Bodha, Vakya Vritti, and Panchadashi.

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ABOUT CIF

Established in 1989, CIF is a research center for Sanskrit and Indology, recognized by the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, India. Swami Chinmayananda visualized CIF as a bridge between East and West, past and present, science and spirituality, pundit and public. CIF is located in Kerala, India, at the maternal ancestral home and birthplace of the Advaita Vedantin, Adi Shankara.

REGISTRATION

Students may choose to enroll at any time during the year in either a postal correspondence course or an online correspondence course (lessons are sent via e-mail).

E-COURSE: US\$100; POSTAL COURSE: US\$175
VISIT WWW.CHINFO.ORG TO REGISTER
OR GET MORE DETAILS.

Dharma Sevak Course

August 9-22, 2008
Krishnalaya, CMW Retreat Center
Piercy, Northern California



Conducted by

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Text

Shvetashvatara Upanishad

Registration

(includes lodging/boarding; excludes transportation)

- Full Course only: \$1,100 per person
- This camp is for adults only, and is not a family camp. Space is limited. Register early.
- Arrive on Aug. 9 before 2 p.m. at San Francisco Airport. Our group chartered bus will leave at 2 p.m. for Piercy.
- Departure from Piercy will be at 5:30 a.m., for arrival at San Francisco Airport at 11 a.m.

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

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

Travelogue

India's Five Renowned Shiva Temples

by Sita Mutyala



Over three years ago, our CM Houston's Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty spoke on India's five renowned Lord Shiva temples that are symbolic of the five basic elements, or *pancha-mahabhutas*. This talk inspired my husband and me to visit these temples, a pilgrimage that didn't take place until a year ago.

As our Vedic scriptures have taught—and as science has confirmed, at least when it comes to life on Earth—our body and this entire universe are made up of the five *pancha-mahabhutas*: space (*akasha*), air (*vayu*), fire (*agni*), water (*jala*), and earth (*prthvi*). The variegated names and forms we see in this universe are but permutations of these elements, and all five elements are in each name and form.

There are five renowned Lord Shiva temples that are symbolic of these five elements: 1) Chidambaram (space), 2) Kalahasti (air/wind), 3) Tiruvannamali (fire), 4) Tiruvanaikaval (water), and 5) Kanchipuram (earth).

We visited Shri Kalahasti Temple first, where Shri Kalahastishvara is *Vayu Linga*, representing the air that is essential for our existence. I was enchanted by the decorations on and around the Lord. There are two lamps, called Rahu and Ketu, constantly flickering in the inner sanctum, though there is no air movement in there. These flickering lamps reminded me that our mind is made up of *vayu*, and it flickers all the time in the presence of pure Consciousness.

Shri Kalahasti temple is named after the Lord's three intense devotees: a spider (*shri*), a snake (*kala*), and an elephant (*hasti*). This temple is legendary for the touching story of Bhakta Kannappa and for Goddess Jnana Prasannamba, the sister of Lord Venkateshvara, who graces supreme Knowledge on all sincere seekers. This temple is also known as the "Kailasa of the South."

The *Prthvi Linga* in Kanchipuram is in Ekamabaranatha Temple, which was built in the 16th and 17th centuries. Here, when Lord Shiva was meditating, Mother Parvati playfully covered his eyes and this resulted in darkness and suffering on the Earth for several years. An angry Lord Shiva cursed Mother Parvati to go to the Earth and perform severe penance. So she created and worshipped the *Prthvi Linga* under a mango tree. Lord Shiva sent several obstacles to test her sincerity. When he sent floods, she clasped the *linga* so tightly that her hand imprints made on the *linga* are visible to date.

The *Prthvi Linga* signifies the birth, sustenance, and dissolution of our body from and into the earth. It is a reminder that the body's ailments are temporary and part of the natural process that we have to inevitably accept.

The Arunachaleshvara Temple houses the *Agni (fire) Linga* in Tiruvannamalai. At the foot of Mount Arunachala, it is one of India's largest temples. In fact, Mount Arunachala itself is considered as a *Shiva Linga*. The inner part of the temple dates back to 11th century; the sculptured *gopurams* and thousand-pillar hall were built by Krishnadeva Raya in the 15th and 16th centuries.

During the annual, ten-day *Kartika Dipam* celebrations, a huge bonfire, representing Lord Shiva, is lit on the hilltop. The fire burns for many days and can be seen for kilometers around. Only through the burning of our lifetimes' worth of *samskaras* and negativities can we enter the gateway of Self-realization.

The *Akasha (space) Linga* in Chidambaram is in the sanctum of the vast, 40-acre Sabhanayaka Nataraja Temple. *Chit*, or "Consciousness," and *ambara*, or "sky," together mean "infinite Consciousness." The temple, built by Vira Chola Raja in the 10th century, is presided over by Lord Nataraja in his famous *ananda tandava* pose. Countless classical dancers of India have danced here, offering their talents as worship of the Lord.

Paintings depicting scenes from the *Skanda Purana* adorn this temple that worships Mother Parvati here as Shiva-kama-sundari. Built in the 12th century, the uniqueness of this Shiva temple is that it houses within its compound a Lord Vishnu temple that dates back to the 14th century.

The real secret, the *Chidambara Rahasya*, is in the inner enclosure of this temple. To the right of Lord Nataraja is a curtain with a string of golden *bilva* leaves in front of it. Behind the curtain is the *Akasha Linga*, and it is known as the *Chidambara Rahasya*. It is made of the subtlest of the five elements, space. Indeed, everything exists in space, yet, space itself is not visible.

The impressive Jambukeshvara Temple is two kilometers east of the famous Shrirangam Temple. Both temples stand on the same island, in the middle of the Kaveri River, near Tiruvanaikaval. Here we find the *Jala Linga* (or *Appu Linga*) under a *jambu* tree. The base of the *linga* is submerged in water that flows from a natural spring in the inner sanctum. The form of Divine Mother worshipped in this temple is Devi Akhilandeswari. Seeking divine Oneness, spiritual aspirants flow here in different names and forms, with the same longing to merge as the river waters that rush into the one ocean. As individual waves they suffer; as the ocean at large they revel; as pure water they go beyond all names and forms.

Our pilgrimage included other famous temples along the way. We visited Lord Venkateshvara in Tirupati, Shri Kamakshi and Shri Varadaraja in Kanchipuram, Shri Ramana Maharshi's ashram in Tiruvannamalai, Nageshvara and Kumbeshvara Temples in Kumbhakonam, Sarangapani (one of the most sacred Lord Vishnu temples in South India), Brhadeshvara Temple (considered as one of India's grandest temples) in Tanjavur, and Shri Ranganatha (foremost of the eight self-manifested shrines of Lord Vishnu) and Rock Fort Temples in Shrirangam.



For me, this 'elemental *yatra*' rewarded deep reflection. If our body, mind, and intellect are layers mere permutations of the *pancha-mahabhutas*, it is imperative we realize the Truth behind these layers. The scriptures advise the average seeker to cleanse the mind to go in the direction of inner Self. Grace will surely follow.

SHIVA-SHAKTI'S COSMIC DANCE IN THE GOLDEN HALL

In Reality, my Mother and my Father are one
One with each other, united as indivisible *Brahman*.
Yet, in this theater of creation, they are seen as two
Here the yogis of yore have seen them dance
Their Cosmic Dance of Creation.
Mysterious and wondrous is their dance, they say
They dance in a vast hall of golden-hued clouds.
He stands majestic in the center of the hall
While She dances to the beat of His *damaru*.
She, Maya, is hard to glimpse
Leaving but a fuzzy wave as She dances veiled behind clouds.
With every drumbeat He generates a brilliant flash
A flash that is brighter than a billion suns
A brightness that parts the clouds for one brief moment
In which She magically appears, leading a child in dance.
Child of Maya, utterly riveting is its charm
Now laughing, now tearful, angry one moment, hugging in love the next
Many, indeed, are its varied winsome moods.
My Mother's child, they say, is you and me, and the entire cosmos.
Thus it is, that the world dances to the beat of His Cosmic Drum
Led by Her every step of the way.
This dance plays around us, all the time unseen
Witnessed in joy only by the One who is detached from it all.

- RAJU CHIDAMBARAM



A Devotee in the Making

by Bela Pandya

It was another typical Sunday morning in our Bala Vihar class. After chanting was over, it was time for everyone's favorite activity: story time. As Pujya Guruji says, listening to the divine stories of the Lord helps us glide effortlessly into a state of meditation. In Sanskrit, this is called *sajatiya vrtti prabhava*.

I started narrating the episode of Lord Rama's exile. Five minutes before the conclusion of the class, I wrapped up the story and told the kids that we would continue the rest of the story next week. No sooner had the words left my mouth, a small voice piped up, "A few more words! Pleecease! Just a few more words. Pleecease don't stop now." My joy as a *sevak* knew no bounds, for here was a devotee in the making.

The Mysterious Ram Sevak

by Bharati Sukhatankar

Originally printed in Tapovan Prasad, Dec. 2007; edited for print herein

Hotel Sonnenberg sat atop a short, steep climb in Zurich. This was where Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda was lodged in a suite for the Zurich *yajna* in May of 1982. It was my first trip to Europe with Swamiji, and each day brought new experiences, full of wonderment and delight. Our small, immediate group included Krishnan and Ammini Padiyath, Mammy (Erica Proells), Elisabeth Hallower, Nicole and Pierre Paschoud, Daniella, Monica Gross, and Urmila (Ursula Zieschang). And a familiar face in unfamiliar surroundings was that of Anjali Singh, who had come to Zurich with her nephew, Uday.

One day, soon after morning class and breakfast, we—Urmila, my nine-year old son Mandaar, and I—trudged up the slope to the Sonnenberg. The hotel entrance was an expanse of fragrant linden trees and horse chestnuts with their incongruously delicate, pink blossoms. Under these were laid out

some cafe tables with bright and happy, red and white checkered, gingham tablecloths.

It was a sunny morning and we came upon Swamiji at one of the tables, bathed in a warm glow. A David Niven look-alike waiter with a short, clipped French mustache hovered solicitously at the back. The climb had made us slightly breathless and it was a few moments before our lungs seemed normal again.

We did our *pranams* while Ammini and Nicole rearranged some chairs. Swamiji appeared to be preoccupied. Then he waved his hands a little impatiently and said to me, "Take a paper and pen, and sit down." Almost immediately, he started dictating a letter, copies of which were to be sent to a number of people, soliciting their articles on Lord Hanuman for a souvenir, *Hanumat Vibhuti*, "to commemorate the *mastaka abhishekam* of the Shri Hanuman idol at Sidhabari, on the 10th of October, 1982. . . . The article must reach us by 30th June, positively."

Then he looked at me squarely and said, "You are the editor of the souvenir. As soon as you are back in Delhi, take up the work." I wasn't going back till mid-August. The souvenir was to be ready by the end of September. This left me with just about six weeks to produce the souvenir. I wondered if this would be possible and if I would be able to do it.

Swamiji's voice cut through my squirms and doubts, "Learn to forget that you are doing the work. When you retire, He starts His work divine." Among the many lessons I had learnt at his feet was never-argue-with-a-*satya-sankalpa*-moreso-if-it-is-your-guru's.

"Yes Swamiji, I'll do it", I said. Brave words, but I decided to cross the souvenir bridge when I came to it. Wasn't Swamiji always telling us to live in the present? So I chose not to squander this wonderful present by worrying about the how of the future. I reveled in the bliss of Swamiji's discourses in Switzerland on *Bhaja Govindam* and the 12th chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and cooking for him intermittently in Elisabeth Hallower's kitchen.

The *yajna* was over at the end of May and Swamiji left for America. I traveled to Switzerland, Austria, France, and Germany with Urmila, as planned, and was with her till mid-August. While summer in Europe was great, it was wonderful to be back on Indian soil, steaming with the enveloping fragrance of the monsoon rains. But there was no time to dream about the European experience or think about picking up the threads of domesticity. A mountain of articles waited to be edited or typed. Keep cool, I told myself. One at a time, one at a time.

After the first, second, and third proofs that spread across my living room, bedroom, dining room, and kitchen, after the collection of advertisements, after endless trips to the printer, the souvenir was finally in place.

Luckily for me, my husband Ajit, who was then posted in Nagaland, came home on leave for a month. My workload became easier in those days of the letterpress. No DTP, offset, computer, Internet, scanning—no nothing. Every word had to be painstakingly and laboriously composed. Blocks had to be made of every drawing and illustration. Photocopying existed, but it was rare and expensive.

Several visits to the National Museum and Lalit Kala Akademi yielded some unusual Hanumanji pictures, most of them in monotone: an eleven-headed Hanuman from South India, ancient and primitive drawings from Rajasthan and Paithan, a tribal rendering from Madhubani, a stone rubbing from Karnataka. There were five endearing sketches of Hanumanji by the well-known architect and artist, Madhav Naik. It was opportune that Madhav was our neighbor, so it was relatively easy for me to nag him into doing the sketches a.s.a.p. His sketches were brilliant: Hanumanji absorbed in *bhajan*, Hanumanji towering in the sky, Hanumanji under the Ashoka tree, holding Shri Rama's ring, his large, bright eyes full of soulful devotion.

Then began the layouts. This picture with that article? Which article where? Some contributors had issued peremptory instructions that their article be given "a proper place in the souvenir." Did that mean there were improper places? And where were we to find the professional calligrapher we needed to do the lettering for the cover title and selected *Ramacharitamansa* verses?

In the midst of this, I received a message from

Swamiji: "I will be in Delhi on Sunday morning. Hope to see you with the cover completed and the other illustrations for *Hanumat Vibhuti*." This was Saturday evening. I went into a double spin and tottered over to Madhav Naik's doorstep. "The time is too short," he said. "Who will do it for us by tomorrow morning?" My head spun and went blank. Who indeed? With hunched shoulders, a clouded brow, and ten kilos of lead in my heart, I came back home glum, dismal, dejected.

This was perhaps the only chance we had to show Swamiji the final proof of the souvenir. And we wouldn't be able to do it. We couldn't find one calligrapher in the huge sprawling capital of India!

Just then, the doorbell rang. There was Madhav—and behind him, a shy, nondescript, unshaven young man. Madhav introduced him as an etching artist from Jaipur who had, minutes back, come to him looking for work. "I engrave on metal," said the young man, and told us his name was Ram Sevak.

"Naik *sahib* told me that you need some lettering work done. I can do English as well as *Devanagari* calligraphy."

My eyes grew wide as saucers. I was gushing as I ushered him in. "Come, come. Where would you like to sit? Where would you like to work? Will you be comfortable at the dining table? What will you need? Paper? Poster paints? Ink? Pens? Brushes?"

"No, thank you." Ram Sevak had his own paper, pens, brushes, and etching inks, which he proceeded to take out of his briefcase. He just wanted a table and good light. Easily provided. Now came the tricky part—selecting the style and size of the lettering. After lengthy discussion, we reached a consensus. Endless cups of coffee and a staggering tower of sandwiches saw us through to midnight and into the early hours. Finally, there were five cover options for Swamiji to choose from.

Ram Sevak stood up, yawned, and stretched. And so did we. Whoosh! It was done! Finally! "What should we pay you?" we asked.

"Pay me? Nothing. Nothing at all. No, don't try to force anything on me. I won't take it. Besides, I am a *bhakta*. This was worship for me. Hanumanji's work is my work. It is late. I will go

now. My relatives in Daryaganj will be waiting for me.” And Ram Sevak disappeared like a twinkling star into the cool, dark September night.

The following morning, we arrived bright and early at the Nambiars’ doorstep. How can I describe what it felt to meet Swamiji each time? The anticipation was always palpable. But today, there was a silly light-heartedness, which had everything to do with our God-sent calligrapher from Jaipur.

Swamiji finished breakfast, came to the living room, and settled himself onto a large sofa, while we clustered on the carpet at his feet.

“Let me see,” he said, and put out his hand for the *Hanumat Vibhuti* portfolio. He looked carefully at all the pages and asked a few questions. “Plenty of ads? . . . Good quote from the printer?”

His eyebrows shot up appreciatively when he came to the cover choices and the beautiful calligraphy of the *Ramacharitamansa* verses Behind two of the covers he wrote, “My first choice” and “My second choice.”

Then we told him the story of Ram Sevak, how he

came and worked through half the night, and how he refused payment for his work. Swamiji listened intently to our story and said, “Don’t forget to send him a copy of the souvenir when it comes out.”

Madhav, Ajit and I looked at each other. In our excitement, none of us had bothered to ask for his address, either in Delhi or in Jaipur. (Later, Madhav did try to locate the engraver on metal from Jaipur, but with no luck.)

Swamiji removed his glasses, looked at the ceiling, and closed his eyes. “So,” he said, stroking his beard. “You don’t know who came and did the calligraphy for you! Splendid! You don’t have his address! Excellent! You don’t know where to locate him! Tremendous!” Then after a small pause, he added, “Make no mistake. It was Hanumanji Himself. This is how He works.” Swamiji smiled softly.

We found our hair standing on end. We, logical students of Vedanta, who always sought to rationalize, could not comprehend divine grace when we came face to face with it, for it could not be refracted through our intellectual prism. *Tat-padam darshitam yena, tasmai shri gurave namah.* At his feet, we felt gently chastised and humbled.

Chinmaya International Camp 2008

Dec. 26, 2008 - Jan. 1, 2009

Chinmaya Vibhooti, India

Conducted by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Vibhuti Yoga: Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 10

New Year Puja and Celebrations

Chinmaya Vibhooti is Chinmaya Mission Worldwide's new Vision and Resource Center. Situated in Maharashtra, India, it is a one-hour drive from Pune and a three-hour drive from Mumbai.

This camp is only for adults and youth (16 years and older). It will commence on the afternoon of Dec. 26 and conclude on the morning of Jan. 1.

Camp Registration: \$150 (includes full camp lodging and boarding)

To register, e-mail chinmaya_vibhooti@yahoo.com or contact Central Chinmaya Mission Trust at (91-22) 2857-2367.



India's Padma Shri Awarded to Dr. Metre for CM's Sidhabari Project



CMW heartily congratulates Dr. Kshama Metre, Director of CORD (Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development) and the driving force of CM's Sidhabari Project, for being awarded India's prestigious Padma Shri Award for Social Service.

The Padma Shri is awarded by the Government of India

in recognition of the distinguished contributions of Indian citizens in various spheres of activity, including the Arts, Education, Industry, Literature, Science, Sports, Social Service, and public life. The Padma Shri Award stands fourth in the hierarchy of India's civilian awards, after the Bharat Ratna, the Padma Vibhushan, and the Padma Bhushan. The Padma Awards were announced on January 25, 2008 by the President of India, who approved the 119 award winners.

The ongoing social, economic, and spiritual work in the Himalayan foothills of CORD's Sidhabari Project is vast and unique. Dr. Metre and her team have been serving entire villages through innovative vocational, micro-banking, medical, educational, and social programs for over 15 years.

From the Desk of Swami Tejomayananda

Dear Mission Members,

Hari Om!

I am extremely happy to inform you that our own Dr. Kshama Metre has been awarded the Padma Shri for her social work. We are proud of her and congratulate her.

With *Prem* and *Om*,

Tejomayananda

Letter from Dr. Kshama Metre

Dear Chinmaya Mission Members,

Hari Om!

Thank you for your kind greetings and message to Pujya Swamiji for the Padma Shri Award.

It is with gratitude and humility that I acknowledge your wishes. The award is the grace and blessing of Pujya Gurudev and our Pujya Swamiji. They have made CORD what it is today, and by their grace, it will continue to bless many more people in our country.

This award also acknowledges the many thousands of people who have contributed to the work in many diverse ways. My salutations to all.

To all of you in Chinmaya Mission, I extend my congratulations, as you are an essential part of this honor.

With warm regards,

Kshama Metre

The Place To Be: CM Orlando Camp

by Seema Jani

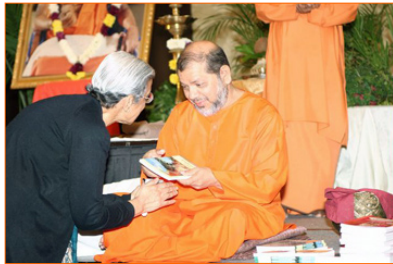
Our family usually loves going to Chinmaya Mission Family Camps, but for some reason, this year my two teenagers were less than enthusiastic. "Why do we have to spend our winter break going to camp? Why can't we just stay here?" All I heard was a constant "why." Of course, I gave the standard replies, "It will be good for you" "You'll grow spiritually," and finally, the dreaded, "Because I said so!"

Two grudging teenagers and one enthusiastic 11-year-old got up early Monday morning to drive from Atlanta to Orlando. Halfway along, I remembered we had forgotten our camera. I checked off all the items in my head. What else did

we forget? “Oh well, so be it. I need to remember why we are going,” I told myself.

Several stops and construction zones later, we found ourselves in Orlando’s Wyndham Resort. As we began our search for the camp registration desk, I started seeing the familiar faces of our extended Chinmaya Family. It felt like a joyous reunion of family and friends who were meeting after a prolonged absence. Soon, we all received our camp bags and put on our name tags. It was now official: We were equipped and all set for the camp to start.

In addition to Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, this year’s camp was graced by the presence of several CMW *acharyas*: Swami Shantananda, Swami Siddhananda, Swami Sharanananda, Swamini Shivapriyananda, Swami Prakashananda, Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya, Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya, Brahmacharini Bhamati Chaitanya, Brahmacharini Arpita Chaitanya, Brahmacharini Aparna Chaitanya, Brahmachari Eric, Acharya Anant Sarma, and Acharya Vilasini Balakrishnan.



The camp’s inaugural ceremonies began with the procession of all the attending *acharyas*, led by Guruji, followed by a lovely dance program by CM Orlando students. After the opening prayers, Guruji commenced his discourses on the second chapter of *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*.

Back in the room, I looked at my schedule. I had to familiarize myself with the layout of the hotel, for morning would be here before I knew it. Morning meditation was first, followed by *satsang*, three lectures, and a nightly cultural program. The day was packed and rest was essential.

Three generations in one room—grandmother, daughter, and granddaughter; in the next room were the father and two sons. We succeeded in figuring out our schedules and waking times. And when morning came, and we were off for the day.

We mingled with all the *acharyas*—*swamins* and *brahmacharins*. We ate meals with different groups, learned about other CM centers, and caught up on friends and family. We listened to discourses



by Swami Prakashananda, Swami Shantananda, Swami Sharanananda, Swami Siddhananda, and Swamini Shivapriyananda. We were treated to Brahmacharini Arpita's video documentary, *Pujya Swami Tejomayananda: A Light for Us All*. We had small group discussions led by various teachers, and yoga sessions by Swami Sharanananda every afternoon. Of course, in between all of these were Guruji's lectures!

Guruji's lectures were the highlight of each day, and listening to him automatically invoked a sense of belonging and grounding. Every example, every joke, and every bit of advice that Guruji gave not only made sense, but also hit home with significance, providing us with deeper insight. I saw many around me frantically scribbling notes in bits and pieces, in an effort to capture the wisdom that was being imparted.

Each day concluded with a special program. One evening, we were privileged to watch a preview episode of *Upanishad Ganga*, a made-for-television serial by Chinmaya Creations. *Upanishad Ganga* is a brilliant media project dedicated to Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, and is a tribute to the Ganga of teachings he devotedly and dynamically imparted to all seekers throughout his life. The episode was phenomenal, leaving everyone in anticipation for more.

Another evening, we were entertained by an uproarious play directed and produced by CHYKS (Chinmaya Yuva Kendra members). These students left no holds barred in their rendition of 'Gita-student meets Gita-teacher.' The play was complete with commercial breaks, and the

funniest video advertisement (on wearing *bindis*) featured all the attending *acharyas*, with Guruji as the anchorman.

One of the most exquisite dance performances was staged one night by acclaimed mother-daughter dancers, Rama and Sweta Bharadwaj. The contemporary, fusion presentation entitled, *Jwala*, or "Flame," combined Bharatanatyam and jazz, and depicted an immigrant's transformation processes in rediscovering her roots and adapting to new, foreign surroundings. This celebrated production was featured in New York's Battery Park Dance Festival in August 2007 and broadcast nationally by PBS in December 2007. A rapt audience reveled in the artistic and articulate expressions and movements of dancers in metamorphosis.

My kids became so immersed in their daily camp routine that I hardly saw them. Every once in a while I'd see a child at a meal, in the lobby, or when they wanted money. My 11-year-old took time in the afternoon to go to the arcade with his friends. My teenagers met up with their friends from Michigan, Chicago, Portland, Orlando, and Toronto, and sat at the end of the day by the pool, discussing and debating about what they had learnt in class. Late at night I would have to find them and bring them back to the room to get some rest.

The last day came and we had a beautiful *paduka puja* led by Guruji. This was followed by the offering of *guru dakshina*. Even though the camp had come to a close, I was surprised to see that I wasn't sad. I felt uplifted and inspired. I knew that we had all

continued on page 18



Chinmaya Mission®
Washington D.C. 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 adjacent to Rocky Gap 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*

YOUTH

- Talks, discussions, and Q&A led by *acharyas*,
geared toward college students and young professionals
- Outdoor activities, including Nature Trails

CHILDREN

- Bala Vihar classes and activities by *acharyas* and dedicated teachers
- Cultural activities, evening bonfire, outdoor games

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.

There are a limited number of Suites available for larger families.

Please contact us for cost and availability.

	FULL CAMP	PARTIAL 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)

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

YOUTH/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

been blessed to have been there and that our lives had been touched by this magical reunion. And yes, even my teenagers were glad that they had come.

Nothing is Forever

A CHYK Perspective on the Chinmaya Family Camp 2007
by Bhavana Shivakumar

The hustle-bustle and excitement began on Monday evening, as everyone did their part to get ready for the inauguration of the Chinmaya Family Camp in Orlando with Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda. It had been a few years since I had attended a camp in the U.S., but I still remember how my spine would tingle with anticipation when Pujya Guruji would walk into the hall for the inaugural lecture.

I watched eagerly as the other *acharyas* were introduced and took their seats on the stage. The hall was jam-packed, and in that hall of joy, entered Guruji. He began his lecture, invoking the memory of Dr. Shyam Nadkarni, a long-time devotee and the late President of CM Orlando, telling us that true to his word, Dr. Nadkarni was amongst us in spirit. After setting an uplifting tone, Guruji started his first lecture on the second chapter of *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*. As I started to take notes, in between trying to catch glimpses of his pure smile of knowledge and understanding, I came to realize that this camp would be more magical and thrilling than any ride in Disney's Magic Kingdom!

I was sharing a room with other fellow CHYKs (Chinmaya Yuva Kendra members) at Orlando's Wyndham Resort. We had all come there to attend a Chinmaya Family Camp, so we automatically became family. It just happened, without any effort. Within five minutes of meeting, my roommates and I were talking to each other as though we had known each other for ages. We formed a bond that will last a lifetime.

For the next five days, every morning started with Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya's meditation class. What a great way to start the day! Soon after breakfast, we had a class with Swami Prakashananda, whose bright smile I can still see in my mind's eye. The topic of his lectures was 'Eastern Mind and Western Living,' and how the seeming generation

gap has been created. One of the things he told us was that we need to learn to see the deeper meaning behind what our elders tell us, and try and follow the essence of their teachings. This is what our scriptures teach as well.

Following a short break, we had a class with Prabodhji on different topics each day, like 'The Purpose of Life' and 'The Basics of Vedanta.' He spoke eloquently on what we are *really* searching for, and elevated our minds to a higher level.

As the week progressed, I felt that Prabodhji's style was more analytical, while Swami Prakashananda's lectures focused more on the practical application of the knowledge imparted to us so far. Both of them were appealing in their own way, and I feel that all of the 75 CHYKs who attended the camp enjoyed every one of their classes.

It was an exhilarating experience for me to be among like-minded peers. We got several Q&A opportunities with the *acharyas*, and we asked various questions, such as what is the cycle of life and death, what ends the cycle, what happens to karmas after *samadhi*, and if *samadhi* is the ultimate goal. All of us are already waiting for the next camp so we can clarify more of our doubts.

After the intense morning classes, the afternoons were relatively light, giving all of us time to rest and be prepared for Guruji's evening lecture, which I compared to the light of the setting sun.

Following dinner each evening was a cultural program. The most special one in my eyes was the CHYK skit entitled, "Cabbie Krishna Cabbie Gham," about a cab driver named Krishna, who meets a different Arjuna-passenger in each scene. Creatively scripted in one day and practiced the next, the skit included commercial breaks between scenes, which were a parody of popular TV ads, embellished with Vedantic messages. One ad was a spoof of the Zales motto, "Diamonds are forever," which was presented as "Nothing is forever." I have always enjoyed taking part in such shows, and the icing is always the many new friends I make by the end of them.

It is difficult for me to describe in words the entire camp experience, for this ultimately is each individual's personal, inner transformation. We all came with our own ideas and this in itself made it a unique experience. It would be hard to find an event like the Chinmaya Camps, where we can learn from

Guruji, be in *satsanga* with beloved *acharyas*, and meet like-minded people. I hope more families and CHYKs will be enthused to join future Chinmaya Camps in the years to come. I know I am!

Chinmaya Camps: “A Must” Experience

by Lavanya Mandavilli

Chinmaya Mission’s annual family camps are a treat not to be missed. If you’re planning your annual family vacation for 2008, consider the upcoming summer spiritual camp that appeals to all ages.

People often wonder how spirituality and relaxation can be combined into a trip. At a Chinmaya Mission family camp, it is done [because spirituality is meant to be relaxing]. “A family that prays together is a family that stays together,” says Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide. And this family camp accomplishes this goal by bringing families together for a spiritual retreat.

The most recent camp in December 2007 was held at the Orlando Wyndham Resort. The resort was a tropical paradise with a lovely garden setting, dotted with flowering pink and red hibiscuses and bougainvilleas. The two-storied buildings with rooms and suites were surrounded by water fountains, an abundance of tropical plants and trees, and walkways under sheltering trees. Our kids were delighted to have their own space within the suite with bunk beds, desk and chairs, and a TV set.

Guruji’s Discourses

Most people conceptualize spiritual lectures as being heavy, pedantic material that is difficult to imbibe. Contrary to this notion, Guruji’s lectures were prolific with a generous dose of humor, jokes, and interesting anecdotes that made the concepts entertaining and informative.

Perhaps the biggest misconception held by the average individual, Guruji said, is that spiritual texts like the *Gita* apply only to retired or senior citizens. With a phenomenal understanding of how the audience would perceive or interpret the teachings in Chapter 2, Guruji cited real-life examples to enrich their understanding.

Guruji has an amazing ability to make you laugh at yourself and your world, but before you know it,

you would have already absorbed the concept he is teaching. He empathizes with what the average working professional, the housewife, and the child encounter in their daily life, and translates that empathy into an offering of concrete Vedantic solutions. Delving into his experiences with people and events, he easily coverts theory into comprehensive examples.

Activities

A team of dedicated local *sevaks* served tirelessly and with happy smiles throughout the camp, arranging *sattvik* meals for *acharyas*, answering attendees’ questions, arranging requested resources. When our son experienced pollen allergies, a *sevak* who was a pediatrician immediately called in a prescription to the drug store across the street.

Often, attendees gathered for impromptu *satsang* sessions with *acharyas*, and during meals, Bala Vihar teachers exchanged ideas on teaching techniques and challenges. The bookshop, with a wide selection of Chinmaya Publications was a treat for everyone. You could spend hours browsing, leafing through various books, or getting recommendations for the beginner or advanced Vedanta explorer. For those still desiring to socialize after the cultural evening performances, there was an ice cream social accompanied by indoor games.

The younger kids participated in arts and crafts activities. Using felt fabric, beads, tinsel strips, and paints, the kids created a complete setting of Vrindavan with Krishna, *gopis*, trees, and mountains. It was amazing to see how quickly kids [and all the campers, for that matter] made friends and found a social avenue for playing sports in the afternoons and working as a team during classes.

Youth Classes

Our teenage son was enrolled in the youth classes for ages 13 to 15. He was enthralled by the lectures and literally had his vision expand on what Chinmaya Mission offers to families and their children worldwide.

“I learned skills that I can actually apply in my life,” he said. He states that having six different *acharyas* teach the classes on ‘Eastern Mind, Western Living’ gave him an enjoyable exposure to their varying teaching styles. What really bowled him over is how each of the teachers actually “connected”

with the kids during their teaching session. “They understood everything about us,” he said. “There was nothing they didn’t understand about us.”

Upanishad Ganga

Guruji explained about the *Upanishad Ganga* project initiated by Chinmaya Creations, a wing of Central Chinmaya Mission Trust. This monumental project with the objective of presenting Upanishadic themes and stories as a television series is under the creative direction of Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi (of *Chankaya* and *Pinjar* fame).

[It was thrilling to hear that] each 20-minute episode will be nationally aired in India, and through it, the message of Vedanta will reach every corner of India. Eventually to be released in DVD format with English subtitles, this series will play an invaluable role in the Vedantic education of our children and all spiritual seekers around the world.

The project is involved painstaking efforts and requires major financial funding. Please contact your local CM center to support this project [and its goal of delivering the message of Vedanta to every household].

Chinmaya Vibhooti

Guruji gave an overview of *Chinmaya Vibhooti*, CM’s international vision and resource center, based near Pune. Designed as a self-contained campus, it will house an ode to Gurudev’s life, work, and teachings. It includes auditoriums, lodging and boarding for visitors, and *Chinmaya Naada Bindu* (a residential school for Indian classical music and dance). Notably, a Chinmaya International Family Camp will be held at *Chinmaya Vibhooti* in December 2008.

Chinmaya International Residential School

Gautam Varma-Pathial, a junior at Chinmaya International Residential School (CIRS) in Coimbatore, India, adeptly presented facts about the school and his personal experiences. With his family currently based in Portland, Oregon, Gautam has attended numerous CM family camps since he was a child.

The audience gave him a thunderous applause when he said that he made a personal decision to go to CIRS, with no influence or pressure from his parents. A deep desire to learn more about India, not just in the role of a short-term visitor, but to

learn about the real India, prompted him to choose to study at CIRS. He described his class trekking trip to the Himalayas, and how they cooked, cleaned up, trekked, and lived in pitched tents in the snowy mountains. It was truly a “life-changing experience” for him.

He also volunteered and cleaned up the streets of Coimbatore with a team of CIRS students. As a leader on the school’s planning committee, he helps plan student events and festivals, all of which are celebrated at the school with “pomp and splendor.”

Banquet

A banquet was held on the final evening of the camp, where some of CM Orlando’s key camp *sevaks* were introduced. A short documentary with interviews of camp attendees was shown on a large screen. The evening included a classical vocal concert by a local artist.

Logic and Spirituality

Living in a society where logic and cause-and-effect relationships play a strong role in our understanding of the world, it is natural for one to question whether our spiritual quest can synchronize with our materialistic world. Chinmaya Mission’s *acharyas* gave perceptive insights and could skillfully create a connection and harmony between both. Our *acharyas* come from a variety of backgrounds, from engineers to software analysts to math professors, and their lives are an inspiration for spiritual pursuit.

Documentary on Guruji

Brahmacharini Arpita (CM St. Augustine) produced and directed a documentary on Guruji that features Guruji’s tireless efforts in traveling worldwide and spreading the message of Vedanta. Interviews with various CMW *acharyas* exhibited their reverence for Guruji and how he carries forward the Mission’s objectives.

Resources

The camp had ended, but our quest to absorb the spiritual guidelines into our daily lives had just begun. One couldn’t help being astounded at the incredible resources offered by the Mission to help us improve our daily lives and experiences—from *acharyas* willing to answer questions in person or by email; a plethora of books, CDs, and DVDs;

family camps, *satsangs*, Bala Vihar programs—the list is extensive.

Guruji's talks in Orlando are available on CD for \$61 or on DVD for \$161. To order, contact CM Orlando. Personally, his lectures uplift my spirits and renew my energies for life's daily chores and responsibilities.

Chinmaya Family Camp 2008

Interested in attending the next family camp? It is planned already at the Rocky Mount Resort in Cumberland, Maryland, July 28-August 3 (see pp. 16-17). So round up your friends and make this a family-friends vacation!

Grace and Blessings of Chinmaya Dhara

Report submitted by CM Niagara Falls

CMW was pleased to introduce and welcome *Chinmaya Dhara*, the new ashram of Chinmaya Mission Niagara Falls in 2007. Congratulations again to the CM Niagara (CMN) Family for their dedicated and devoted efforts in establishing this ashram for spiritual upliftment.

CMN was born in the early 1990s with activities being held in various devotees' homes. The quality of programs attracted greater numbers of kids, youth, and adults. CMN soon began CM classes in larger venues like temples and schools. As the center matured, more stability was sought—a place to call our own.

The new ashram was discovered in the early months of 2005. By chance, the entire CMN Board, accompanied by Swami Shantananda (CM Princeton), spontaneously visited the property one wintry Niagara day, and loved it at first sight. The momentum was slow for a year, but the *sankalpa* was not lost. A year later, enthusiasm and commitment were firm and the new property proposal was approved and blessed by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda.

CMN began its fundraiser, “Niagara *Surabhi*,” under the guidance of Swami Shantananda and Swamini Shivapriyananda (CM Toronto). The event was a thundering success. On June 21, 2007, 5743 Valley Way Avenue became the new home of Chinmaya Mission Niagara Falls. It was purified and blessed with a *shudhi puja* on July 22. The new ashram was officially blessed and named by Pujya Guruji as *Chinmaya Dhara*.

The CMN Family and community at large saw a joyous and flowing stream of spiritual seekers at CMN's first Open House on September 9, 2007. In late 2007, Vivek Gupta, who completed the two-year Vedanta course in India, moved back to Niagara Falls and now conducts classes at CMN.

Since its Open House, the number of devotees and scope of activities at *Chinmaya Dhara* continue to grow. This growth is due only to the Lord's *dhara* of grace and our *guru parampara's dhara* of blessings.

CM Dallas: All Fired Up!

Report submitted by CM Dallas-Fort Worth

CM Dallas-Fort Worth's (CM DFW's) annual banquet, considered as the center's family gathering, was celebrated with over 375 Chinmaya Family members. This banquet proved to be a milestone in CM DFW's history, for it was announced that Pujya Guruji had approved and blessed the CM DFW Board's proposal to purchase a new 28-acre plot in the northeastern suburb of Melissa, Texas. The existing house on the property will be used to start a new satellite of CM DFW.

Held at the Hilton Anatole Hotel on Dec. 9, 2007, the banquet served as an opportunity to showcase Mission activities, fundraise for future growth, and enjoy an evening of entertainment and fine dining.

The invocation of *Guru Paduka Stotram* was chanted by Bala Vihar students. The event was officially inaugurated with the traditional lighting of the lamp by Keynote Speaker, Swami Ishwarananda (CM Tustin).

In his address, Swamiji inspired all with his talk on the value of social service. Emphasizing that social service is not merely pitching in to help victims of a natural calamity, he spoke on the significance of imparting spiritual education to one another.

Participants of CM DFW's *Gita* Chanting Competition 2007 recited select verses from *Gita*, Ch. 2. Participants in the center's dance and music program offered devotional presentations. Several *Shlokathon* trophy winners were recognized for their outstanding achievement.

Ashok Dandekar, CM DFW President, presented an overview of the Mission's local activities. He spoke on the phenomenal growth of the center's

Bala Vihar program, which reached an enrollment of 865 registered students in 2007.

A highlight of the evening's program was the touching testimonial given by Pallavi Chavda, a mother of three Bala Vihar students. Recounting the tangible and intangible benefits that she and her family have enjoyed by coming to the *Chinmaya Saaket* ashram, she concluded by saying that the Mission has become a "welcome habit."

Another eloquent testimonial, by high school student Aditya Rahalkar, addressed how involvement with the Mission made a positive impact on his *ucchara* (speech), *vichara* (thinking), and *achara* (conduct). Aditya, who has been attending Bala Vihar since he was a first grader, concluded his speech by offering *dakshina* to the Mission of \$121, which he had saved up from his allowance.

Sunil Maini and Pankaj Asundi led the fundraising efforts and raised approximately \$175,000 toward Mission activities. The concept of the Chinmaya Family Tree was introduced during the course of the evening. The Tree will have the names of donors in three categories: *Phalam* (\$3,000), *Pushpam* (\$1,500), and *Patram* (\$750). It will be unveiled by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda during the tenth anniversary celebrations of *Chinmaya Saaket* in 2009.

CM San Diego's 7th Anniversary

Report by Rajasekar Vaidyanathan

CM San Diego (CMSD) celebrated its seventh anniversary with a *mela* on January 27 at the Marina Village in picturesque Mission Bay. The program began with an invocation to Lord Ganapati by the *Chinmaya Dhvani* choir. India's Republic Day was also celebrated with soul-stirring renditions of patriotic songs and its national anthem. Three Bala Vihar students spoke on the lives and sacrifices of Subhash Chandra Bose, Subrahmanya Bharati, and Mahatma Gandhi.

Srinivas Sukumar spoke on CMSD's progress in the past seven years, from 27 children to 233. "CMSD has shown me what it means to be a Hindu," said seven-year Bala Vihar veteran, Akshai Subramanian, now a high school student. Other members and children also reminisced about their personal journey with CMSD over the years.

The highlight of the *mela* was a grand "Chinmaya Jeopardy" contest between three sections of

the audience. Conducted by Maya and Ranga Sampath, and assisted by Anu Kumar, the game covered a wide range of topics, including the ABCs of Vedanta, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, Saints of India, and Vedic culture. The competition was intense at times, with the children eager to provide questions to every answer. After Grades PreK-2 completed their section, they continued to astound the audience with correct responses in the Grades 3-12 categories!

Ranga Sampath made an interesting observation about the similarities between Jeopardy and Chinmaya Mission, "They both provide the answers, but you have to ask the right question!"

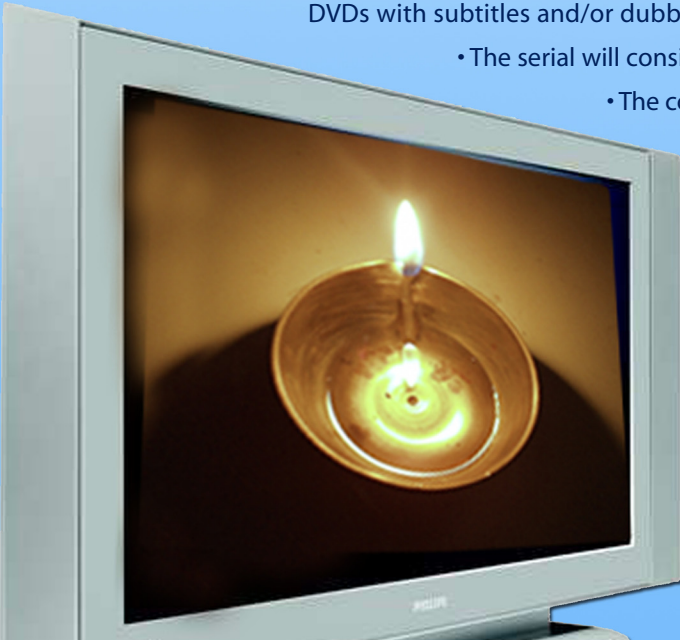
The event concluded with a sumptuous potluck lunch around 12:30 p.m. A new CMSD member, Krishna Masur, aptly commented, "We really enjoyed the company of so many devoted people. The game of Jeopardy was amazing. I salute the commitment of the sevaks at CMSD."



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 Dwivedi (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.



Pujya Gurudev

Continued from CMW News, January 2008

An interview of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda by Pritish Nandy, telecast in the 1980s on BBC; edited for print herein

Many people believe, Swamiji, that there is a vast hiatus today between the world of religion and the world of everyday reality, and that this explains why more and more young people are moving away from the spiritual quest. Instead, they are seeking their answers in the tough, materialistic world around them where survival itself is the most challenging battle. Would you agree? Would you agree that religion is a luxury in a scenario where staying alive is difficult, particularly in the poorer countries of the world?

I think you are partially blind. You see only with one eye. You see only people moving away from religion and striving to find their values in materialism. You don't see the other stream. People dropping out of universities, colleges, and professions, and seeking spirituality. There were 30 students who came here for [Vedantic training and studies] in the last batch. Americans. Young boys and girls. It is they who are now running my Hindu seminary in California. So, don't think it's only one-way traffic.

No. It's only that I still feel that this traffic of people moving away from religion is considerably larger than the traffic you speak of—purely in numbers.

I wouldn't say that. It can be, because materialistic attractions draw people away from religion and self discipline. . . .

But why is there this vast gap between the search for spiritual values and the quest for a materialistic reordering of society based on justice and equality?

First tell me what religion is. Tell me; then you'll understand. Materialism you know; it is purely selfish: I want to be one up; my happiness is all important; my wife and my children must be happy; I don't care a hoot for others. It is utterly self-centered.

But surely religion is the same. Each and every religious person is searching for his own private

nirvana, his or her own Self-realization. This is an equally self-centered search.

What does nirvana mean?

Self-realization?

You see, nirvana is not a piece of cake he wants to get. It is not wealth he has to put in a bank. He is trying to expand his consciousness. He wants to embrace the whole universe. Not with his hands. Not with power. Not with money. But with understanding. It's a new dimension of consciousness he is attempting [to reach].

On one hand you have *bhoga*, or sensual, materialistic living. To withdraw the mind's attention from these wonders—this dissipation in the world of objects—to quiet it to turn it toward the spring of life within you, is called yoga. *Yoga* and *bhoga*. *Yoga* is not in the physical body; it is not in the place where you live, nor in the clothes you wear; it is in your mental attitude. Coated, booted, suited, with *beedi* in hand, you can still be a yogi. A man who is a *jatadhari* (one with matted locks), *vibhuti* (sacred ash) all over, and nothing but a *langot* (loin cloth) can be the greatest of *bhogis*. Isn't it? It's not the physical appearance; it's the mental attitude.

One is expecting, demanding, or hoping for happiness from the aggrandizement of things outside—to acquire, possess, embrace, indulge, and enjoy the objects outside. The other is [also] in this finite world, in this realm of time, and he feels he cannot have a permanent, peaceful, happy state [here]. [For him,] these are all right as recreation, but [he feels] permanent happiness cannot be here. [Such a] man withdraws his attention from the outer world and with a steady mind, and through contemplation, tries to reach the higher echelons of consciousness in himself. This is religion or spiritualism. In fact, religion is the technology by which . . . spiritual ideals can be reached. So, without religion, spirituality is zero. Religion means the . . . the . . .

Wherewithal?

No, not wherewithal. The gymnasium where the mind is trained to withdraw from all these and turn toward the higher. For good health, . . . you must have good food and discipline, [and] . . . go to the gym to develop your muscles. Similarly, in order to evolve spiritually, it is not sufficient to know philosophy (Upanishads, etc.). We must have a technology by which we can reach there. Purify your mind. Learn how to turn your mind away from the outer world. Find out in which direction you should turn your attention.

But this spiritualism you are talking about has often been a means to social exploitation. Many practitioners of faith have, over the centuries, hoodwinked, shortchanged, and manipulated the weak and the gullible. Many societies have been kept under the yoke of religion for years, without hope of escape or redemption. Look how the church exploited people. Look at how Hinduism has exploited our illiterate masses and kept them shackled over centuries. Look at the track record of most religions and you will know what I mean. Where do you find purity in such an exploitative system? Why has religion allowed itself to be used as a tool for social subjugation or political aggrandizement?

Have you noticed that in India religion has never been organized? In the West, on the other hand, it has always been so. This is because Christianity had to organize. They had to fight with Rome. When religion becomes organized, it becomes a power. And power always has a tendency to be abused.

The state versus the church--with both sides equally corrupt.

State versus church, right! Until at last the church won and became as tyrannical as the state was. This is natural. Now, in India, religion was never organized. Look at you. You are a Hindu, and yet you have the right to say you don't believe! You are allowed this freedom. But if a Catholic had said this, his marriage would be annulled, his children would be in deep trouble, his body would not be accepted in the burial ground. He would be under tremendous pressure. In fact, from birth onward, he is under the pressure of church. The *namakarana* (naming) ceremony, baptism, christening—and then marriage, the christening of the children, and so on—it goes on until you are dead and your body is buried. From birth till death, you are tied down

to the church. If you don't obey, they can throw you out.

In Iran today, the mullahs are as tyrannical.

This is what I am saying about these Semitic religions. Hinduism, on the other hand, is absolutely open. You, as a Hindu, you want to go to church—go. You want to go to a temple—go. You want to do only social work—do. Why is this? Because we believe that in freedom alone can perfection can be reached. Art can grow only in freedom. Art can never grow under compulsions, under government rules. Freedom is very important. You feel like meditating—meditate. You like doing *puja*—do *puja*. There are no compulsions, no shackles restraining you. You understand?

Hinduism has been so free for a long time, but when the average man is not given taught what religion is, slowly the whole thing becomes tainted. This happened around the 16th century in India. Power politics came into play. Religion, when mixed with politics, stinks, and it decays when politicians enter the fray. Politics also stinks when it comes into touch with religion. In India, they were separate: the king and the *raja-guru*. Dasharatha, when he had problems, went to Vasishtha. Vasishtha clearly said he had no prejudices and no party; he was impartial. He said, “This is dharma. If you think you can do it, do it. If you can't do it, do whatever you can to serve your country and suffer the consequences. But slowly, power became hereditary. . . .

My son, my son, my son! By the time the third generation of kings came, things went awry. The first generation really sweated and carved out a kingdom. The second generation at least saw their fathers going out to fight. The third generation never saw their fathers going out anywhere. The subsequent generations thought it was their privilege to rule: “Some people are lucky. I am a king by birth!” So, by no fault of his, such a king became purely indulgent. The *raja-guru* also became the same. The fourth great grandson of the *raja-guru* had nothing spiritual about him. He said, “Alright, *Raja Saab, aap raja hain*. Why should you get into this mess? Whatever important papers are there, I will bring them to you and you just sign them. You have the harem and you can drink from morning onward. That is your privilege! Why deprive yourself?” The *raja* said, “Perfectly right!” So the *raja* was soon a *de jure* *raja*; the *de facto* *raja* was the minister.

Now the minister wanted to hold all the reins of

power in the community. How could he do so? How can you hold power in a community? You must have a party. So the *raja-guru*, who was a brahmin, brought the brahmin community with him as his party. He became their patron. In those days, you couldn't be a patron by giving someone an import license. You couldn't give money because there was no money. What was available? Only land. So land was given to all the brahmins.

Now land is a funny thing. Any amount of money you get, you can digest it, use it. What will you do after you get three acres of land? You, your wife and three children—how will you plough more than three acres? So you need an army of workers—workers who must work for you for almost nothing and bring in the profit. Only then is it profitable, isn't it?

So you create your own serfdom as well as your army?

Of course. But where will you get it [serfdom] as long as Vedanta is prominent in your society? Everyone knows he is from Narayana; everyone is equal. So, the scriptural books became dangerous for political maneuvering in those times. So, the brahmin class said, "Proscribe the scriptures!" Not only did they proscribe the books, they said, "Non-brahmins may not study Sanskrit." Just as it is happening today.

Ministers [in India] don't want anybody [the populace] to study in English schools, but their own sons must go to English schools (*laughs*)! You see! It's repetition. Man is not intelligent enough to think up new mischief (*laughs*)! He repeats his old mischiefs.

So, Sanskrit was removed. The common people were told, "You are not to read the scriptures. We will tell you everything." And what they told them were Rama-Krishna stories. Five hundred years of this! Today, the brahmin doesn't even know the scriptures! For, why should he study! All the others accept that he is a brahmin, so why should he worry? So you can blame neither the brahmin today, nor the non-brahmin. Neither of them know the scriptures! They must be re-taught. And this is what we have been trying to do for the last 20-30 years. Now, I think the average, intelligent, educated man knows something of his scriptures. At least he knows the spelling of 'Upanishads.' Earlier, they had not even heard of it!

But the average, intelligent Indian is also prey to

a lot of hocus-pocus being peddled in the name of religion.

Look, after all, if I believe my thumb is God, it does not matter. The mind turns to [religion] and . . . gets consolation. Why do we have all these recreations, like the cinema, for instance? Are they not meant to make society happy? Why not religion, if it can make some people happy, give them some comfort?

What about the current Hindu pantheon of gurus and God-men who run their private industries—not just in this land, but also overseas? What do you, as a scholar of Hinduism and one of its most distinguished teachers, think of this strange, esoteric bunch of faith peddlers? I am referring to some of the well-known names like Satya Sai Baba, Balyogeshwar, Rajneesh, Mahesh Yogi, Ananda Murti, or even Krishnamurthy. I know I am clubbing completely different kinds of people together. But what I am trying to ask you is whether you think Hinduism deserves such a vast variety of masters who often suggest completely different routes to salvation. In fact, the routes are quite often contradictory.

Have you watched the followers? They are all voluntary, free—no one forces them. They follow these masters because they find some consolation. So, at different levels, all of them [these masters] are valid. I know that there are too many teachers, too many masters, too many gurus in this country. But I would wish there were more.

Sure. As long as they are teachers—not quack healers or exploiters of the innocent.

Don't think that all teachers will teach only at the B.Sc. level. Or that the M.Sc. level teacher can teach everybody. There are students who must be taught only alphabets, only addition and subtraction. Isn't this true? In education, there are various levels and various teachers. If the M.Sc. teacher is given an elementary class to teach, he will become confused, go screaming mad. Similarly, the elementary teacher cannot take M.Sc. classes. So, at different levels, different teachers are valid. They don't know beyond their levels—just as their students cannot understand beyond the levels at which they speak.

But would you, like teachers of religion, also educate students—at whichever level they may be—with miracles and faith cures, materializing *ladus* and Seiko watches out of nothing? Or by teaching them that salvation and Self-realization

lies exactly six inches below the navel? Do you think magic and group sex have anything to do with an understanding of religion?

It does not matter whether I believe in these things or not.

Do you think these are valid ways of learning and Self-discovery?

Are they not? Look at them. Go there one morning or evening and see the crowds. Don't look at Sai Baba; look at the people. See what an amount of consolation and comfort they are getting. Why the hell should I take it away from them? When you, the writer, the politician, the socialist—no one—is giving them any comfort. This one man moving about there—everybody is prostrating before him and feeling so happy about it. If one can give, by mere *darshan*, so much comfort, why do you want to take it away from them? Let them have it. Just as a few whiskeys inside him make him feel good. *Majaa majaa hai!* We know that drinking is not a *majaa*, but the drunkard thinks it is great fun. Rock and roll is head-splitting noise to a sensitive musician, but there are youngsters who enjoy it thoroughly. Why do you begrudge them their enjoyment?

But that means it is a lower level of consciousness.

Yes, I admit it. It is a lower level of consciousness and therefore, they can only appreciate it at that lower level. When they come higher, they will drop it themselves. There are many who have dropped Sai Baba. They went there first. It was an introduction for them; they were stunned by what the man could do. My intellect cannot explain it. It is scientifically impossible to explain. And when you ask him, he doesn't say it is all because of his glory. He says you can also get this power. Turn toward Him and sing. Someone may do it for some time, and then drop it because he starts finding higher levels of consciousness. Then he wants to study the *Gita*. So he comes to me. He starts reading the *Gita*. And then he wants to go to the Upanishads. I teach him. Then he wants to go to the original, to the Sanskrit text. So he goes to Benares. I know thousands who have thus streamed out—from lower to the higher and higher. I refer to those who are sincerely striving to quiet the mind and experience the world. I am not saying everyone is like this, for everyone is not a Mozart or an Einstein. There are many science students, but there's only one Einstein.

to be continued

It has been raining. Raining very hard. Cooped up inside with nothing to do.

Went to the Master and complained, "Feel so trapped. Nowhere to go."

Pat came the Master's reply, "Your limitations are your imaginations."

*It is so sunny and warm. The chirping of birds, chanting of the river,
and warm breeze caressing the skin. Aah, just soaking it all in.*

*Feel bad for the Master--sitting in a tiny room, replying to letters,
working on crucial administrative matters.*

"Oh Master, do not be inside. Come out and play!"

The Master smiled (a smile that only a Master can), "I Am. It is you who is still inside."

- Bela Pandya

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.

