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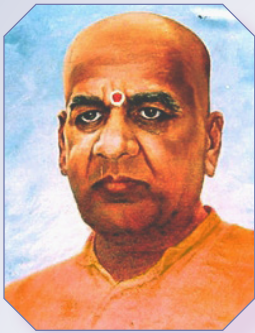
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His Holiness Swami Tapovanam

Grace of the Self, grace of God, grace of the Guru, and grace of the Scriptures: Those who have gained these four realize the Truth and rejoice beyond the shadow of fear.

Of these, grace of the Self means self-effort. God helps those who help themselves. By the grace of God, an aspirant comes into contact with a Guru who is established in *Brahman*. And through the grace of the Guru, he learns the secrets and puts them into practice.



His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda

People want to forget their sorrows, not remove their sorrows. . . .

Even after repeated failures, we refuse to understand why we fail. Even under the sledge-hammer of misery and sorrow, we are blind to our own false values. A thousand repeated disappointments do not teach us how to use our productive intelligence more efficiently. In short, man refuses to learn, although Mother Nature and Father Life, day in and day out, tirelessly give us wise tuitions! . . .

A weakness is always a weakness and no seeker has the right to perpetuate it. No instruction should entertain the audacity to argue for it.



His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda



A life of dynamism is one where there is a combination of great vision and action, one that stems from quietude, contemplation, and inspiration. . . . This is precisely why great masters continue to inspire even after their death. The mere utterance of their names inspires so many even today.

When we hear of a person's demise, we generally ask, "How did he die?" We never ask, "How did he live?" Our focus should be what kind of life he lived. Did he live a life of inspiration or perspiration? When we look into the lives of great missionaries from different walks of life, we see that they have lived life in its true sense.

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



The Dharma Preached by Lord Rama

by Puja Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Reprinted from Vedanta Vani, April 2008

The famous and holy *Ramayana*, an immortal work of Sage Valmiki, although found in many Puranas, is not a Purana but an Itihasa, in fact. It appears in the Puranas because one of the subjects dealt with in the Puranas is *vamshanucharita*, or “the history of the Solar and Lunar Dynasties (*vamshas*).” Shri Rama was a descendant of the Solar Dynasty. Thus, his life, as it were, contributes to the history of the Solar Dynasty.

The Itihasa, as we know, is *ghatana pradhana*, or “a report of the factual happenings in another period of time,” while the Puranas, sometimes under the cloak of these historical events, go further in conveying teachings, instructing and guiding mankind by pointing out ideals and showing how they can be reached. Rama avatara, however, was essentially intended only to educate all mortals. His life, and the incidents in it, thus personified education. Thus, because the purpose of the Puranas is herein fulfilled, though an Itihasa, *Ramayana* is also considered a Purana.

Adarsha Purusha

Shri Rama was called the *Adarsha Purusha* and *Maryada Purushottama*. What is meant by the term *Adarsha Purusha*? Literally, it means the ideal person. Was he considered the ideal person because he had many ideals? In that case, any idealistic person could be called an *Adarsha Purusha*, but that is not what is conveyed here. *Adarsha Purusha* refers to the heroic heart that stands stout through the trials and tribulations on the path to Perfection, and having overcome them with a resolute heart filled with faith and courage, unites, as it were, with that Perfection, to verily translate the Ideal into a concrete Reality. He no longer remains separate from the Ideal, but has become the Ideal. Further, he then represents and preaches that Ideal by his very existence. Such a one is called an *Adarsha Purusha*, and such a one was Shri Rama.

Maryada Purusha

And what is meant by the term *Maryada Purushottama*? Literally, it means the best among men who follow a standard of righteous living. Does that mean that he mechanically followed a *dharma maryada*? No. He, in fact, not merely followed dharma, but established the *dharma maryada*, meaning, he set the standard of dharma by his exemplary life, which was the embodiment of righteousness. To appreciate this, one has to study the *Ramayana* in its entirety. However, there are a few striking examples that are self-explanatory.

For instance, Shri Rama, being the eldest son and a beloved prince of the Solar Dynasty, was the heir-apparent to the throne. King Dasharatha, his father, was an idealistic man who wanted “*Rama-rajya*” (rule of the one who revels in the people’s hearts) to prevail. So he thought that placing Rama on the throne would naturally result in *Rama-rajya*! Thus, he decided to coronate the young prince as regent.

At this point, Kaikeyi, Rama’s stepmother raised an objection and dramatically opposed the proposition, suggesting that Rama be exiled for 14 years and her son, Bharata, be placed on the throne. Now, Rama too wanted “*Rama-rajya*” to prevail—not by merely positioning himself on the throne of Ayodhya, but by finding his way into the hearts of his subjects—the citizens of Ayodhya—by occupying the everlasting throne of love in their hearts, wherein they unanimously accepted him without any discordant note of protest or dissatisfaction to be heard. Only then would he consider himself fit to wear the crown of sovereignty. This, indeed, is nobility. While others would have endeavored to gain the kingdom by force, usurp it, or perhaps even go to the extent of assassinating the old king, Shri Rama humbly stepped aside and nobly sought to express the Ideal of true religion. This was the uniqueness of

his *maryada*. For him, his Ideal came first, next his people, and lastly himself. This is the essence of religion: Love God and serve thy fellowmen. He sought to rule by love over the hearts of all. He did not seek a perishable throne and empire, but the everlasting kingdom of the Lord who is enshrined in all beings. This is seen to be the strain throughout the *Ramayana*.

When Kaikeyi asked that Rama be exiled and Bharata be placed on the throne, we must remember that she and her wicked maid, Manthara, were the minority that wanted this. No one else was in favor of this—not King Dasharatha, not the citizens of Ayodhya, and not even Bharata. They all were against this irrationality. Shri Rama undoubtedly had the majority on his side, and thus could have easily thrust Kaikeyi aside and occupied the throne, for the happiness of one and all. But no, Shri Rama was not shortsighted as our present day politicians seeking immediate gains. He was the epitome of wisdom and sane judgment, who knew well the transient nature of all earthly achievements and that the only enduring factor, the eternal Principle amid this flux, was dharma. Thus, he focused his entire life on it and viewed all his actions from this standpoint, and not from the prospects of immediate gains. Hence, being the veritable avatar of dharma, how could he stoop to ascend the throne by *adharmik* means?

There is a possibility that if he had allowed himself to be crowned, deaf to the protests of his stepmother, then at some later date, the citizens of Ayodhya would have pointed an accusing finger at King Dasharatha as one who was unable to fulfill his promise to his wife. And this would amount to mistrust and disbelief in their king's and his successor's ability to fulfill the needs of the subjects, resulting in a blemish that would tarnish the history of the glorious Solar Dynasty. They also may have thought later that Rama's avid desire for the throne was merely a thirst for power and suzerainty.

Dharma Maryada

Shri Rama affirms that one's word, once given, will never stand compromised. A promise should never go unfulfilled. The throne of truth and righteousness was the only throne he sought. This is called *dharma maryada*, the very basis of the philosophy of life, the extension of our *satchidananda svarupa* into the grosser realms of relative existence.

When we see King Rama, we see him not as a king

seated on the throne, above the common man, issuing orders, and ruling and advising his subjects like a dictator. On the contrary, we find that he mingled and became one with his subjects. Although hailing from the noble descent of *Surya Vamsha*, his simple and humane nature brought him humbly and lovingly down to the level of the common man, to rub shoulders with them and live their life. We find several examples of this through the chapters describing his fourteen years in exile—when he donned bare bark as a garment and exposed his gentle skin to fierce weather, when he lived on roots and fruits, and subjected himself to privations. Here, he befriended the *vanavasis*, the tribals, the boatmen, the rishis, the *munis*, the ascetics, and even the birds and beasts! He lived with them, lent a sympathetic ear to their difficulties, and alleviated their sufferings at every turn. The whole forest became his family and he undoubtedly won their love, reverence, and confidence. This is *dharma maryada*. In order to establish dharma, one has to be willing to sacrifice one's insignificant, petty status and rise or expand to unite with the totality through *sarvatmabhava*, or “seeing Oneness or the one Self in all existence.”

In the forest, though Shri Rama apparently seems to be distraught and pines for his lost Sita, this is not really so. Shri Rama was by no means a carnal, passionate human, tortured by gross attachments. He truly felt such a union with all beings that he deeply suffered everyone's pain. We see at various points during his search for Sita that he seems to forget her entirely. Seeing Jatayu fallen and bleeding from his noble sacrifice, he is moved to tears at Jatayu's suffering. Similarly, when he hears of Sita's miserable plight, he feels her pain deeply. When he meets Shabari, he is so touched by her faith and devotion that he is filled with love and joy. So we find that wherever he met the love and affection of people, he, too, spread the fragrance of his love; and where he met sacrifice and suffering, he was reduced to tears, arising from the deep compassion that welled up in his bosom due to his love for all beings.

Further, we see that although at times he had to kill or slay the *adharmik*, for instance, when he discovers that the heap of bones lying in the forest was of the rishis, *munis*, and ascetics who were mercilessly slain by the *rakshasas*, his aggressive annihilation of the *asuras* was only to protect the innocent, the good, and to uphold dharma. However, even when he did kill the evildoers, they were directly transported to His abode. So in fact, whatever he did and wherever he went, he gave only life, true Life.

We also find that in different situations, he gave counsel and imparted knowledge. When he visited Shabari, overcome by her faith and devotion, he instructed her on *nava vidha bhakti*, or “the nine types of devotion.” To Lakshmana, he gave advice on *vairagya*, *viveka*, *maya*, and, at times, *raja niti*. To Tara, who was weeping over the death of Vali, he imparted Self-knowledge, which removed her ignorance and filled her with *ananda*. He was filled with love for all beings and gave of himself in every way, at every level. When he finally had to kill Ravana, he told Vibhishana to perform the final rites, considering Ravana as a brother. In this way, Shri Rama translated his divine nature, *satchidananda*, into everyday living—the Ideal into practical reality, thus, distinguishing himself as the *Adarsha Purusha*, the *Maryada Purushottama*, the great and noble Shri Ramachandra.

Shri Rama’s greatness lay in his ability to make the meanest creature as himself—not so much in trampling over, intimidating, and sitting in lordship over others, like Ravana did, but instead, in searching out the lurking potential of greatness in each individual and providing occasions in which it could be made to manifest or bloom in full splendor, as he did with Hanumanji, who, until then, had been humbly inconspicuous. So, too, he did with Vibhishana and Bharata. The world would have been absolutely ignorant of these great devotees had it not been for Shri Rama bringing them into the limelight. This indeed is greatness.

Perceiving that one, great Essence pervading the entire universe, to live thereafter, glorifying, worshipping, and extolling this Divinity through all actions, however humble and insignificant, and offering it all as worship at the altar of the Spirit universal, is the dharma preached by Shri Rama. This was the principle upon which he based his glorious life. If these points are kept in mind while commencing a sincere study of the *Ramayana*, true understanding is bound to dawn upon us. These are eternal values, and this is what we have to learn from the Puranas.



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Text

Panchadashi, Chapter 7

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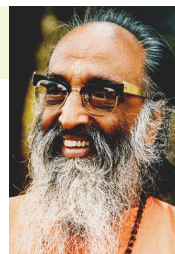
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The Life Divine

by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

Reprinted from In the Company of Sages (Mananam); edited for print herein

Q: Swamiji, if what you say is true, I have made a terrible mistake, in that I do depend on relations, husband, children, money, home, friends, and sense objects of “the outer world,” as you say, for my happiness. Your call is to detach from these and take to God. Yes, I shall, but how am I to know that the swami who is preaching these new values is right, and that the world that taught me the false values is wrong? I cannot afford to make yet another mistake.

A: Your question is marvelous. I admire your intelligence and courage. The aspirant in you has, with these questions, proven herself to be a worthy student. How few of you honestly convey your sincere doubts. Bravo! Never hesitate to approach a spiritual teacher with all your doubts. Doubts are the various milestones on the pilgrim’s path to Truth, and when all of them are answered, one has reached the Truth.

Dear mother, you have hastened to conclude that you have this doubt. If you still had an unshaken faith in “the world that taught me the false values,” you would not have cared at all to ask this question. Your own experiences have proved to you that at the moment of your greatest trials, the false values did not protect you. They deserted you and you found yourself helpless in your despair. So, the world and its values are not reliable. You know this from your own bitter experiences.

The swami is offering you another set of values, and declares that all this that we perceive through our senses, mind, and intellect constitute the great, grand game of the Lord, Who is seated in our own hearts. It is admirable of you to ask so candidly, “How am I to know you are right?”

Certainly, you cannot afford to make another mistake, and you should not. This is the anxious cry of the scriptures when they, with loving insistence, force us to detach ourselves from the false, changing values of life and command us to accept the true

eternal values of life. The Life divine is today an unknown thing to you. It is a distant land, and a life that looks strange and bewildering when compared to the present dreamland of the one immersed in the dream. Now, how does one ascertain whether the life in that unexplored, little-known world of Godliness is more perfect than the painful existence here and now?

You know that there was a war in Europe some years ago, do you not? You know that the Germans fixed their flags all over the continent. You know that the allies at last defeated them. You know of the great discovery, the atom bomb, and how maliciously inhuman it is to use it in war. You know all this, do you not? Yet you have not seen any of it. You have not experienced the pains of defeat or the joys of victory. But how do you know it all? You will probably answer, “From newspaper reports. And the entire community of people around me believed it, talked of it, and discussed its implications daily. I have seen wounded soldiers and heard their stories. Moreover, even today, we experience the distant shocks of it in our day-to-day financial, social, and political lives.”

If this is your answer, you have correctly enumerated the usual sources of all knowledge as: 1) personal experience or personal contact with people who had the experience, 2) reports of experiences lived by others, 3) company of believers and their daily discussions. In the Life divine, too, the sources of proof and knowledge cannot but be the same.

Satsanga is being in the company of believers and listening and reacting to their daily discourses. Unknown saints and sages have given their reports to us in every scripture and religion of the world. Some rare giants of heroism, at intervals in the history of humanity, visited the thick of the Experience divine, and came back to report to the world what they heard, lived, and experienced in the land of the Beyond.

You sought the wounded soldiers. Now seek and find, even around you, some who face their daily life with a smile and mysterious, charming courage. Talk to them with as much sympathy and sincerity as you did when you shared the confidences with the disabled soldiers. You will then hear, from these rejuvenated champions of the Life divine, their own experiences in the world of devotion to God, which is yet unknown to you.

In addition to *satsanga* and the study of the scriptures, start living the divine Life. Then yours shall be the daily experience of the blessings of the Lord, even in your simple domestic life. The abuses of others will then be but rare music of divine sweetness to your ears, for the pains of life automatically turn into the joy of existence in the devotee's heart.

At the magic touch of a selfless God-lover, despair turns into a fulfillment of hope. Bereavement and losses may blow wild and blasting, wrecking everything around, but you will ever be living quietly in a safe island, undisturbed by these storms. You will rediscover yourself as ever enjoying the scenes of life's captivating strength and ferocity.

In short, a divine Lifer lives in the world, but he is not of it. A true divine Lifer is a holiday maker on this planet; he merely looks on and observes life and its joys and sorrows, as lived by the natives. He lives in himself, rarely identifying with his

surroundings. The joys of the world are not his; the sorrows of the world he knows not. He, the divine Lifer, knows that he is only on a pleasure trip to this strange globe of impermanence, where a mad emperor—His Majesty, the Ego—runs wild in the fantasies of his own deranged brain, and laughs and weeps alternatively!

Now that you are here, would you not like to enjoy the sights of this magic land? You sought a mental identity with His Majesty Ego, and you are now as mad as the mad emperor. Take some rest and regain your breath. At the refreshing waters of devotion, comfort yourself: *Om Shanti. Shanti. Shanti.* As you cool down, you will realize what a sad, tragic, stupendous mistake you have made. To again be the holiday maker is to live the real Life—the Life of one who is liberated. To dance in the embrace of the mad ego is to sigh and weep all the days of your life—the life of a *samsarin*. Make your choice now, here.

You must be in a position to know whether you are actually living a mistake, or would be living a mistake if you were to accept the swami and his “new values.” Please give yourself a chance. Do not condemn yourself to remain in the wretched, dung-ridden, backyard of life. Start repeating the name of the Lord, chanting, and mantra-writing, and come up the ladder of perfection to enter into the hall of Joy. Live *Om. Om. Om.*

The true smile is where the intellect is crystal clear and uncompromisingly firm in the chosen ideal, but at the same time, the heart is loving and forgiving others unconditionally. Only a true devotee with an unwavering faith in the Lord can do this wonder.

In a hospital, a 65-year-old man suffering from a minor ailment, and a 12-year-old girl suffering from a terminal disease, were admitted in the same ward.

The old man was seen grumbling and complaining throughout the day, narrating his hardships to the doctors and to everyone who passed by.

To the contrary, this little girl, though knowing full well that her days were numbered, was seen cheerfully wishing the doctors with a warm, “Good morning,” and consoling and delighting other patients! When she was asked about this uncommon behavior, her answer was, “My beloved Krishna loves and cares for me so much! He wants me to reach His abode as early as possible! I know that He is always with me and whatever decisions He takes are the best for me. So why fear?”

It is this adamant faith in the infinite wisdom and unconditional love of the Supreme that makes a devotee strong and fearless, enabling him to smilingly face all challenges of life. Hence, holding on to Him, keep smiling!

- Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

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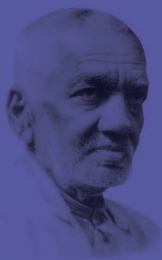
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Free yourself from the ordinary by immersing yourself in the extraordinary! Our diverse schedule is designed to encourage learning and not compromise on enjoying. From morning to evening, being in the company of our Acharyas will make a lasting impression.

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- Aarti
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a dialogue

on *viveka*

with brahmachari prabodh chaitanya

continued from cmw news, march 2009

as far as close family is concerned, the seeker's spiritual life and inner peace will help everyone around him in the long run. so even if family members do not understand the changes right away, they also will, in due time.

s: can *viveka* help me dis-identify from someone else's pain and depression? i feel compassionate and want to help someone who is going through pain, but i cannot help getting sucked in and affected in some way myself. how do i know how much to get involved and where to draw the line?

t: *viveka* will help me dis-identify not only from someone's else's pain and depression, but also from my own personal problems. *viveka* will help me identify who i am in reality, so what is not 'i,' including the emotions of pain and depression, will not be able to taint me.

student: i am trying to live a spiritual life. i see people hurt by the changes i have made in my life and in my attitude toward them. they can feel that my energy, my laughter, my attitude aren't the same. this is because they are used to my excitement and extroversion. how do i know i am practicing *viveka* correctly when i feel good that i am more peaceful, but it still pains me to see others' sadness because of how i have changed?

teacher: when we decide to walk on the spiritual path, such adjustments will need to be made. if my objective is to seek unconditioned happiness, i need to withdraw from an indiscriminate way of living. in this process, if some friends see me as less exciting and somewhat introverted, it is okay. in time, they will understand. also, true friends will realize what is more important for the seeker. just as when we graduate from elementary school, we are ready to move on to middle school and then further, in the same way, moving on to a spiritual way of life is another change that we, and people around us, will have to accept.

to feel compassionate is good, but one should not get drowned into situations. to draw a line, we must know our strengths and our own weaknesses. when we can help, we must, but we need not lose our balance of mind or peace by accepting others' problems. otherwise, we ourselves will need help to come out of this new problem.

s: is a sense of dryness and dislike of life and worldly things inevitable in one's spiritual journey? is it a sign of the correct practice of *viveka*?

t: dispassion toward worldly things is inevitable with the right practice of *viveka*. but it is not a dryness or dislike, as much as it is the right evaluation of life and the world. any false value given to the world is bound to cause sorrow, just as the overvaluation of real estate, stocks, etc. have caused the sorrows of the current economy.

vairagya or "dispassion," aids in re-evaluating the world, and in this new valuation, if one no longer feels attracted to things unrelated to one's spiritual goal, it is a healthy sign.

s: please elaborate on what is known as the “dark night of the soul” on a seeker’s spiritual journey. it is said to be an intense, *sattvik* longing for more spiritual, not worldly, gains. this, too, is said to be a painful process.

t: it is a painful process only so long as we like the unreal more than the real, and feel sad to reject the unreal (the ego and the ego’s experiences, attachments, etc.). if we understand that every joy in the world is always mixed with some sorrow, if we are sure that we want permanent happiness and not temporary pleasure, if we are convinced that we should accordingly pursue goals that do not tie us down to this world of sorrows, when one feels like running away? from objects and experiences of the world will automatically lessen, and it will no longer be a dark night.

to seek more spiritual goals is good, but right now, as a householder, you need to balance this priority with your family’s basic needs. participating in family activities while remaining unattached to them is not easy, but slowly one needs to move in this direction. this may be painful in some cases.

s: so where do i find encouragement along this long road of effort? because it sounds like i will need it.

t: the best source of encouragement and inspiration is by seeing how things are getting better in my life as i apply *viveka* and reduce attachments. if i can see the benefit in my own life, i will be inclined to move more toward spiritual living.

if i feel that i am struggling, i need to see others who have successfully walked on this path and feel good about this goal. there are people in society who have given up lower pleasures and values for higher, nobler pursuits. even in one’s passion for dance, music, sports, or research, one becomes less interested in many other worldly goals. the freedom fighters of india gave up their personal worries and identified themselves with only one goal: a goal of national interest. we can take such examples and work our own way.

s: what is the best way to work with the same family, social circle, and workplace at a time when feels like running away? what can i tell myself? are there any methods?

t: one method is to understand that the law of karma functions all the time. if people, family, etc.

have come to me due to my karma, then they will be around so long as my karmas with them are not exhausted. so there is no point in trying to run away. understand them as associates due to past karmas. when the karma connection is over, even if we desire, we cannot be with them. the most potent example is the death of near and dear ones—even if we want them around, they cannot be.

another method is to understand that everyone and everything is related to god, and that my only real connection is with god. it is because of god that they are in my life and i will serve them as god’s relatives—they are not directly related to me. a girl getting married gets many new relations that she never asked for, but she accepts them only out of love for her husband—and vice versa. in the same way, we can learn to accept everyone in our lives because they are all connected or related to god, and he is the one whom we really love. god represents that which is all-complete and full.

s: how does one think of god in this process of living with *viveka*? is he real? are the avatars and their stories real? or are his stories also as unreal as mine and everyone else’s?

t: god is as real as my own body and my own mind. if i need to give reality to my physical and mental instruments and their needs, then god’s role is equally real in my life. all his stories are real, and they are a way for me to learn how to expand my vision from individual to total, how to identify with god instead of the world.

when one is ready to say, “my stories are unreal,” this is the realization of someone much advanced in spiritual life. only from the standpoint of pure consciousness is everything “else” unreal. until the absolute reality is known, all appears as real.

s: *viveka* means to discriminate between the real and the unreal. this simple statement is profound in application. where have you seen it best applied in scriptures? in modern day?

t: in the scriptures, it is well defined and applied in *mandukya upanshad* and *yoga vasistha*. lord rama lived a life of *viveka* with total understanding and abidance.

this concept is best applied in modern day by all *acharyas* of vedanta. the most memorable for me is pujya guruji. he is abiding in reality all the time, yet he is most practical in all his dealings of

day-to-day mission work.

s: so what is stopping us from doing what such masters do and living how they live?

t: lack of our abidance in the real, which is due to lack of the four-fold qualifications, or *sadhana-chatushtaya*.

s: how do i get committed to *sadhana*? what is it going to take? people cry out asking, “where is my guru’s grace?”

t: guru’s grace is always there, as is the grace of god and the scriptures. the very fact that we do not get stuck anywhere in the world no matter how much we want, is grace. since everything of the world is mixed with sorrow, sooner or later, we all move on from everything. the faster we learn this lesson, the more dispassion we will have.

the simplest ways are to do basic *puja* and *japa* with love, to attend *satsanga*. as we continue these, our commitment to *sadhana* increases. this is the grace we bestow on ourselves: *atma krpa*. may we get committed to do our best.

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Texts: *Kaivalya Upanishad* and

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travelogue

Yatra to South India

by Nimmi Raghunathan

12 days

5,000 kms. by air, water, and road

22 temples

3 states of India

42 *yatris* (pilgrims) from across the U.S., Canada, and India

Swami Ishwarananda led this pilgrimage to some of South India's most sacred sites. But little can encapsulate the beauty of the unparalleled *darshans* or moving encounters and *satsangas* with spiritual leaders of various organizations.

The *yatra* began from Chennai on the early morning of December 14, basking first in the grace of Lord Arunachaleshvara in Thiruvannamalai. It culminated on the evening of December 25 in Mangalore, after getting the blessings of the resplendent Lord Krishna at Udupi. Throughout, the *yatris* journeyed as if wrapped in a joyous bubble—far from the humdrum of daily life, focused instead on the Lord's glories.

The days brought on a gamut of unsurpassed emotions as we choked back tears of bliss while in the presence of the dancing Lord at Chidambaram, marveled at the serene grandeur of Padmanabhaswami at Trivandrum, understood the power of the petite deity of Madurai Meenakshi, and bowed in awe at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada, Swami Vivekananda, and Sage Thiruvallavur at Kanyakumari.

At Thiruparakundram, in a dark cave was Lord Muruga, imparting the secret to the world that a family, despite the varied experiences of its members, could live in eternal harmony in the same space. At Chottanikkara, Mother Bhagavati granted balance by curing mental illnesses. At Tanjavur, history and sacred spaces merged happily.

Brihadishvara, the icon of the Chola dynasty evoked amazement for transcending time and his sheer



colossal physicality. Gangakondaicholapuram, a faded little town, showed no signs of its past eminence as the capital of the Cholas, but the Lord Shiva temple there provided a glimmer into those ancient times. We were drawn by the iconography from the Hindu pantheon and awestruck, as we were in Tanjavur, of the enormous political and religious power gathering at the feet of one deity.

While our minds tried to grasp the magnanimity of these several hundred-year-old sacred structures, our senses admired the zodiac pillars in the Vidyashankar Temple at Sringeri Matha, the endless and magical stretch of *gopurams* at Srirangam, the *sapta-svara* pillars in Madurai, the slew of famous temples that peppered Kumbhakonam, and the beauteous setting of the Kukke Subrahmanya Swami Temple, all of which brought home the antiquities of *Sanatana Dharma*.

Nowhere does the past seem evoked with such clarity as in South India. Transporting were the lit oil lamps in soot-lined, granite *sanctum sanctorums*, with traditionally dressed priests chanting Vedic verses and making prescribed offerings. Other than prayer and ritual, equally captivating were the ladies clad in nine-yard saris who casually bent over to make intricate, five-line, rice flour *kolams* in the temples. Vendors sold deity-specific items like *bilva* leaves, butter, *chandan*, *kavachams*, and rose water with the Lord's stories, as if He had manifested just a short while ago. Needless to say, the oral traditions of India are still alive and vibrant.

For all of us as *yatris*, Swami Ishwarananda played no small part in synthesizing it all. At many *sthalas* where the crush of pilgrims was manageable, the group gathered around him to hear his profound words. After a long wait in lines to get the *darshan* of Arunchaleshvara, he quietly pointed out to discomfited participants that it is for us to earn His grace, for when we yearn and seek, Lord Shiva showers us with His presence and gives us *darshan*.

Swamiji's love for Ramana Maharishi was plain for all to see. Before getting to Shri Ramana Ashram, he exhorted us all to remember that it was a place where internal inquiry and external silence was to be maintained. At the ashram itself, the group took his lead in sitting for meditation, chanting *shlokas*, and focusing on his instruction to "always remember the eternal question and address it: who am I?"

Near the Sage Vyasa Temple in Sringeri, Swamiji talked of the greatness of Adi Shankara and the monumental work he accomplished in his brief life span. Atop the Uchi Pillaiyar Temple in Trichy, Swamiji chanted *Shri Ganapati-Atharvashirsham*, pointing out that the Lord usually sits at the *muladhara chakra*. Thus, the climb a *yatri* makes to get the Lord's *darshan* at the top, "*uchi*," is symbolic of the seeker's climb to reach the *sahasrara chakra* of Self-realization.

Perhaps most powerful of all for many of us was Rameshvaram. It was a scenic ride over Pamban Bridge, which connects mainland India to the temple island. Once there, it was a dip in the Bay of Bengal under overcast skies . . . the thrilling dousing at each of the 22 wells, where Lord Rama is said to have placed his feet while scouting the area to build the bridge to Lanka . . . making a *sankalpa* in an ancient corridor of the temple . . . all of which culminated in a magnificent *archana* at the small but heart-stopping Rama Lingam.

The *Jyotirlinga* seemed to enshrine the divine love that Lord Rama, Mother Sita, and Bhakta Hanuman bore for each other. It is among the holiest of places for Shaivites as well as Vaishnavites. Seated near the hall of over one thousand pillars, Swami Ishwarananda spoke with great love of the glory of the Lord, pointing out that shrines like these are kept vibrant not by devotees who pass by, but by devotees who come regularly, who sweep the *prakaras*. It was a talk that humbled us and lingered in our minds.



Swamiji also provided us with the opportunity to meet holy men. In Karnataka, we met the Shankaracharya of Sringeri Matha and he made personal inquiries about Swamiji and Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. We also met the young head of Kukke Subhramanya.

Swami Sugunendra Tirtha (Shri Puthige Matha) arranged for Swami Ishwarananda to be welcomed with *nada-svaram* and garlands. He then personally escorted Swamiji to the Gita Mandir where all 700 verses are inscribed on the walls.

At Dharmasthala, Padma Bhushan Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade, Jain leader and the 21st in succession to the *Dharmadhikari Pitha*, addressed us. He is venerated by thousands, who see him as a judge, saint, philanthropist, and master administrator. It is estimated that 10,000 partake of *anna-danam* daily at the Dharmasthala, and countless students attend the educational institutions he administers.

The *yatra* would not have been complete without paying obeisance to Adi Shankaracharya—at Kalady and at the Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) in Veliyanad—the places that mark where Adi Shankara was born and raised. At CIF, we met the resident *acharya*, Swami Advayananda, who gave us a tour of the ashram and its traditional Kerala structures. He pointed out that the water that was to be served at lunch would come from the same well that the great Adi Shankara had also used. Swami Ishwarananda did a *guru-paduka puja* that was emotional for many. At CIF, devotees lingered in wonder at the spot where Gurudev once stood and browsed through the rare books and documents in the library.

In Mangalore, Pujya Swami Brahmananda sang soul-stirring *bhajans* and imparted words of wisdom on the efficacy of undertaking pilgrimages. It was a fitting and moving conclusion to the *yatra*, giving much meaning to the devotional and inspiring journey.



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Guru's Grace Liberates

by Pujya Gururji Swami Tejomayananda

Reprinted from Vedanta Vani, May 2008

We generally live under the influence of three moods, or *gunas*. In the technical language of Vedanta they are called *tamoguna*, *rajoguna*, and *sattvaguna*; it is difficult to translate them, but their expressions can be described respectively as inertia, activity and nobility (virtue and knowledge).

The expressions of *tamoguna* are sleep (*nidra*), inadvertence (*pramada*), carelessness, lack of alertness, indulgence, and procrastination (*alasya*). Procrastination is when a person knows and remembers the duties he or she has to perform, but keeps putting them off for a later time. In *pramada*, one does not even remember what one has to do!

Sattvaguna is of the nature of contemplation, devotion, alertness, and inquiry. The pursuit of knowledge, literature, fine arts, music, and science are expressions of *sattvaguna*. Sage Narada tells us to overcome the effects of *tamoguna* and *rajoguna* by *sattvaguna*. This means that laziness should be conquered by activity. But the motivating forces of desire, anger, and passion should be removed first, so that the work is done as selfless action, without the effects of *rajoguna* and *tamoguna*. When asked about the effect of *sattvaguna*, Narada Muni says that when the mind becomes highly *sattvika*, it will become absorbed and quiet in the Self (*upashama*), and a quiet mind cannot bind you. In short, slowly change your attitude from one of *tamas* to *rajas*, and from *rajas* to *sattva*. Finally, *sattva* will take you to realization of the Self. Just as we control the temperature in a car, we should control all of the climatic conditions of our mind. By understanding these *gunas* we can learn to conquer our moods and not come under their control.

Now, with all these prescriptions to follow, one might think the spiritual path to be very difficult. Therefore, Yudhisthira says to Sage Narada, "I cannot manage so many different things. Please show me one way by which all these vices can be conquered."

Narada replies, "Man can conquer all these in a quick manner by devotion to his guru." All things are possible by pure, total, and unconditional devotion to your teacher. Though we may claim that we have devotion to our teacher, it is generally conditioned by many things. For example, we may feel that our guru should look only at us and should smile at us in a certain manner, or that he should write a certain number of letters to us. If the guru shows a little anger, we complain. Such are the conditions we put on him. In *Bhaja Govindam*, Shri Shankaracarya says, "Be devoted to the lotus feet of your teacher and become liberated from *samsara* immediately."

We have so many notions and conditions in our mind that we deprive ourselves of the great gain of Self-realization. The devotee who has great devotion to his or her guru will be liberated in as much time as it takes a river to become one with the ocean into which it merges. It takes a long time to cultivate that faith, but once the faith is there, we are liberated in no time.

Brahman in Hand

by Anjali Singh

In 1991, Swamiji was to fly from Detroit to Madrid. He had been suffering from left ventricular and other heart failures. Since I was the only person traveling with him on this flight, I was given charge of his medications. I knew nothing about medicines. In Flint, I asked Dr. Patel, a devotee-doctor from Philadelphia, to write a list of types and dosages in case of emergency. On seeing the list and instructions, I became very nervous, and my fear weaved countless possibilities. For once, I wished someone more knowledgeable was traveling with us. Usually, [Acharya] Vilasini or Jyoti [Barucha], a trained nurse, would travel with him. Swamiji had seen me in consultation with the doctor in Flint, so I told Swamiji that he had better not fall sick and that I felt incompetent traveling with him this time.

I didn't sleep even for a minute that night. One rarely gets a chance to travel alone with Swamiji, but my state of mind was like a zombie's and I wasn't able to enjoy the opportunity. We spent

the day in Detroit and boarded the night flight to Madrid. We had dinner on the plane. Swamiji was very sleepy. He could see I had not slept, as there were dark rings. He held my hand and said, “Don’t worry! Nothing will happen to me. I will just sleep now.” And he put his head on the pillow and was fast asleep within a few seconds. His hand was still in mine! I could not believe my luck! I did not let go of it since he was already asleep and it would make no difference to him, whereas to me, it was like holding the Lord of the universe in my hand. It reminded me of Swamiji’s fruit-in-hand analogy from *Vivekachudamani*.

I looked at Swamiji’s face and thought that in this moment, even the mind that we observe as a mind is totally at rest in Swamiji. He is one with *Brahman* and not even *avidya* is there in him, as it is in us, when we go to sleep. I was in contact with *Brahman* through my hand. The power of God, invested in a realized mahatma, was in my hand! I felt I was in touch with the Almighty. I felt so elevated in such a short time—so this was Swamiji’s “electricity yoga!” Swamiji always said that you have to put your finger into the socket to experience it. And this was like being in a state of meditation for all seven hours of a transatlantic flight. I did not sleep at all because such an opportunity was never going to come my way again. My mind was totally still while we crossed what felt like *bhava sagara*, or “the ocean of transmigration.” When the mind is still, you are out of the world of change.


Swamiji never moved from the position in which he slept. There is no restlessness in mahatmas that makes them move in sleep. When he woke up, he looked at my face and said, “You did not sleep!” It may have been my second sleepless night, but I was feeling energized, revived, bright, and happy. I had imagined so many things and worried for nothing. Not even one medicine had been needed. We think that we can keep things in control, but in the presence of great mahatmas, things happen as they are to happen. His presence had imparted peace to those around him. Sometimes I wonder about the people who happen to travel on the same flight. They must also be getting some sort of blessings in the radius of that aura, because it is not without reason that their paths have crossed a realized master’s. Wanting to serve mahatmas is a blessing, for herein lies our salvation. But really speaking, we are not the ones looking after them; they are looking after us.

It was a symbolic flight, a fruit-in-hand experience,

a crossing of *bhava sagara*, and best of all, a blissful holding on to a mahatma. While I thought holding on to a mahatma solves all my problems, Swamiji said holding on to a mahatma’s feet (or hand, in this case) is never to be taken literally: It means surrendering your worries to him.

In Madrid, Asha Kamdar and Isabel Taylor met us, and sat with Swamiji in the connecting flight to Las Palmas, Canary Islands. And I slept like a log.

In Silence and Thought

 Letter from a former CIRS student to a former CIRS acharya

Hari Om!

I was pacing across my room a second ago and this was my train of thought:

1. Who is experiencing right now? I feel my body. I experience these thoughts. I experience emotion. I experience them all.
2. Who am I, then? Dead silence. Waiting . . . waiting . . . I’m hungry. This is subtle. Focus. Now I’m agitated.
3. I should ask Didi. I’m going to email Didi.

The silence is temporary. Then comes a gush of random thoughts and wants. What now?

Pranams.

 Acharya’s Reply

Hari Om,

Silence and thoughts are both states of mind that happen in you. You are the constant presence that can never become known like you know the silence or the train of thoughts.

You are like the sky in whom the clouds, sunshine, darkness, rains, rainbows, birds, animals, mountains, trees . . . appear and disappear, move and remain steady . . . but you remain untouched by them. All is in you, yet nothing can affect you.

You can never experience your absence. You are the very knower, not a person, but the Presence, the

Awareness in Whom even this person is seen or known.

Love, Sumati Chaitanya

Dealing with Others

Reprinted from Vedanta Vani

“Silently hear everyone,” Gurudev said. “Accept what is good; reject and forget to remember what is bad. . . . Accept all and take only what you want; reject the rest and live happily.”

When asked what to do in a case when someone is not necessarily bad, just a “pain in the neck” because of his or her incessant jabbering, Gurudev twinkled his eyes and said, “Just draw down the shades in front of your mind and let the others go on as they will.”

Words to Live By

by Rupali Gupta

During a *satsanga* at the *Dharma Sevak* Course a few years ago in Piercy, California, Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda told us, “Spirituality is not an activity, but a vision,” and gave us three succinct pointers for leading a spiritual life:

- *Drishti mein ekataa* (oneness in vision)
- *Karma mein asangataa* (detachment in action)
- *Karma-phala mein samyataa* (balance in the fruits of action)

Truly, words to live by. As seekers, we always ask for the practical application of what we study. These three simple phrases give us the essence of scriptural teachings that our so-called practical mind can understand and implement in daily life to raise it from the mundane to the divine.

Pujya Gurudev said, “You have two eyes, but [have] only one vision.” But we typically have two

eyes and multiple visions. So when we look at the world and its diversity, our vision focuses on the differences, based on which we pass judgments and form preferences. This division in vision does not allow us to see the underlying unity, because it is clouded by the dense fog of our impressions. This means when we look at anything or anyone, we don’t see the object or person as it is. We see only the picture of it that was formed when our mind first came in contact with it. . . .

Oneness of vision, then, would be to see the object or person as is, with no external coloring—to let our *chitta* be a black box that records experiences without editorial comment. In other words:

seeing + impressions = division

seeing – impressions = vision

How do we go from division to vision? There are many folds of *sadhana*. One such fold that spiritual masters have taught is a simple, miraculous, mystical four-letter word: Love. They have said that expansion in love is the expression of oneness in vision. As Pujya Gurudev said, “Love is to the heart what sunshine is to flowers.”

No Complaining Allowed

Reprinted from At Every Breath, A Teaching

Someone had written to Gurudev complaining that a local Chinmaya Mission worker had refused to give him Gurudev’s address. On Gurudev’s instructions, for the time being, his whereabouts were to be kept unknown except for those transacting Mission business.

Gurudev’s response was, “If I say ‘No Address’ to anyone, as an organizational instruction to everyone, you, too, will have to respect it. It is not right for any member of the organization to grumble, murmur, complain. This means that such members are not fit for the organization trim and disciplined. The members must learn to live in the discipline of the organization. Must. Or else work cannot proceed smoothly, efficiently.”

Celebrating Shri Chinmaya Jayanti

For me, Pujya Gurudev is . . .

Majestic, Dynamic, Eloquent, Powerful, Towering,
Brilliant, Tranquil, Divine

- *Swami Prakashananda*

Guru, Master, Achiever, Guru with a
Difference, Spiritual Giant

- *Brahmacharini Bhamati Chaitanya*

Yuga Purusha who taught us with
boundless love, with truth, beauty,
and perfection. This Guru is
Chinmaya for me!

- *Swamini Shivapriyananda*

Inspiring, Powerful Orator, Cannot leave
his presence

- *Acharya Asha Ghate*

Radiant, Stern, Inspiring, Compassionate,
All-knowing

- *Acharya P.B. Ghate*

A great man of achievement whose work
is just blossoming

- *Acharya G.V. Raghu*

The one who brought Hindu Scriptures
in the language of millions

- *Acharya Geetha Raghu*

Focused, Compassionate, Earnest, Vibrant,
Enduring

- *Brahmachari Eric*

Immortal, Savior, All-pervasive, Free, Wizard of
Wisdom, Spiritual Chameleon

- *Acharya Vivek Gupta*

The fearless, blazing Fire of the Light of
Truth!

- *Brahmacharini Arpita*

Ocean of Compassion, Visionary, Practical,
Down-to-Earth

- *Brahmachari Uddhav Chaitanya*

Never Born, Only Being, Ever Being, Every Being

- *Brahmachari Prabhat Chaitanya*

His powerful words, remembered forever, bring turning
points in lives. His knowledge and wit, fun with wisdom,
inspired my life.

- *Acharya Pramila Poudel*

Mother, Father, Beloved, Kind, My Life

- . *Acharya Sharada Kumar*

Spiritual Giant, Best Orator, All Love,
Magnetic Personality

- . *Acharya Saurang Nanavaty*

Awesome, Inspiring, Magnificent,
Compassionate, Electrifying

- . *Acharya Darshana Nanavaty*

An eternal compassionate source of instant
maximum inspiration for all

- . *Acharya Krishna Moorthy*

Lord Krishna declares in Bhagavad Gita that His
devotee is never destroyed. I feel strongly that
this assertion, with rising fire and enthusiasm, is
the same from Pujya Gurudev, too. Even today,
we can feel his presence and guidance in taking
care of all of us.

- *Swami Siddhananda*

Razor Sharp, Loving, Sense of
Humor, Patient

- . *Acharya Vimal Chaitanya*

An Icon, A Rebel, A Rebel for the
Causeless Cause, A Visionary, An Activist
for the Action-less

- . *Acharya Anant Sarma*

Pujya Gurudev is our father, mother, nay, our
own Self.

- *Swami Sharanananda*

Indescribable, Visionary, Persistent, Self of
All, Sishyavarya

- *Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya*

Love, Compassion, Perfection, Unique, Divine

- . *Acharya Uma Jeyarasasingham*

Krishna, Shiva, Abode of Self, Ultimate
Refuge, Walking Vedanta

- . *Acharya Shailaja Nadkarni*

He was a lion among rishis, a
disciplinarian with compassion, well versed
in the shastras, established in Truth.

- *Swami Shantananda*

Intelligent, Inspirer, Determined, Devoted, Sevak

- *Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya*

Like Swami Vivekananda, our Gurudev influenced
people all over the world with his teachings of
Vedanta.

- *Brahmachari Bhasa Chaitanya*



**CHINMAYA
MISSION
WEST**

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

**ONE-YEAR,
RESIDENTIAL,
FULL-TIME, INTENSIVE
VEDANTA COURSE**

AUGUST 2010-2011

**AT CMW's
KRISHNALAYA ASHRAM
IN NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA, AMIDST
SERENE REDWOODS**

**CONDUCTED
IN ENGLISH**

**ENHANCES ONE'S
UNDERSTANDING AND
CLARITY OF BASIC
AND ADVANCED
VEDANTIC CONCEPTS**



Vedanta 2010

HARI OM . . .



With the blessings of His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission worldwide, Chinmaya Mission West (CMW) is pleased to announce its one-year, residential Vedanta Course at CMW's headquarters, the ashram of *Krishnalaya* in Northern California, amidst the serene Redwoods.

This residential, full-time course, without any holidays, will be conducted in English.

ELIGIBILITY

This Course is open to sincere seekers between the ages of 20 and 70 years.

REGISTRATION

\$12,000 (covers registration, lodging, boarding, and books; payable in installments)

DATES / ACHARYAS

The course will commence August 7, 2010 and end in August 2011.

Full-time Resident Acharya

Smt. Sharada Kumar

August

Pujya Swami Tejomayananda

August-October

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya

November-December

Swami Ishwarananda

January

Swami Shantananda

February-March

Swami Ishwarananda

April-May

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya

July-August

Pujya Swami Tejomayananda



TO REGISTER

Complete the online form at

www.chinmayamission.org/piercy

All applications received will be reviewed. Eligible candidates will be asked to schedule a personal interview, the details of which will be provided at a later date.

For more information:

prabodh@chinmayamission.org

(707) 207- 5011

TEXTS

His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda: *Mandukya Upanishad, Tattva Bodha, Essence of Shrimad Bhagavatam and Ramayana*

Swami Shantananda: *Dakshinamurti Stotram, Sat Darshanam*

Swami Ishwarananda: *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya: *Upadesha Sara, Atma Bodha, Drg Drshya Viveka, Panchadashi Ch. I, and Upanishads (Ishavasya, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, Taittiriya)*

Acharya Sharada Kumar: *Vivekachudamani, Sanskrit, Vedic chanting, bhajans, suktams, sahasranaamavalis,*

CIF'S CORRESPONDENCE VEDANTA COURSE

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.

LEVELS

CIF's one-year correspondence Vedanta Course is offered on two levels, Basic/Foundation and Advanced. While students must have general Vedantic knowledge before opting for the advanced course, CIF's specific basic course is not a pre-requisite to sign up for the advanced course, which provides an in-depth understanding of principal Vedantic concepts.

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.

CIF's Easy Sanskrit Online Course

Report submitted by CIF

In the auspicious presence of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to collaboratively offer CIF's Easy Sanskrit online course. The MoU was signed at the Chinmaya Center for World Understanding in New Delhi on March 12, 2009, and marks a milestone in fulfilling Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's vision that CIF should be a Sanskrit university. The first student enrollment process for 300 entrants will commence in June 2009.

IGNOU's vice chancellors, Dr. Sri Vathsan and Dr. Latha Pillai, were also present, and expressed their keenness to collaborate with CIF in developing higher level Sanskrit courses. They were joined by CIF's Swami Advayananda, K. Rajan, and Dr. Geervani.

CIF is a research center recognized by Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and Rashtriya Sanskrit Samsthan, New Delhi. CIF's main projects include promoting research and courses in Sanskrit, Indian philosophy, manuscriptology, and Indology. CIF's new Sanskrit online course, which teaches Sanskrit basics, was developed under the guidance of Brahmachari Gagan Chaitanya, and has been acclaimed as "enjoyable" and "student-friendly."

IGNOU, a central university established in 1985, aims at disseminating knowledge through novel techniques and methodologies for the benefit of society, and disadvantaged groups in particular. IGNOU, also a national resource center, currently serves two million students in India and 35 countries abroad, in 21 schools of study, through an elaborate network of 62 regional centers, 1,900 study centers, and 46 overseas centers. In addition to teaching and research, training and field work form the mainstay of its academic activities.

Chant Mumbai, Shaant Mumbai

by C.K. Guruprasad; photos by Murli Nambiar



CM Mumbai's landmark event of the *Hanuman Chalisa Samashti Havan* was held on February 15 at the Andheri Sports Complex. After months of tireless planning and preparation, the event came to fruition in an arena filled with 108 *havan kundas*, where *Hanuman Chalisa* was chanted 108 times by the thousands of devotees present.

The *samashti havan* also commemorated the completion of Swami Swaroopananda's 100th *Hanuman Chalisa jnana yajna*. While Swamiji has conducted these discourses around the world, Mumbai was chosen for his 100th *yajna* for multiple reasons. Swamiji, once a citizen of Mumbai, received part of his academic education in Mumbai and completed his Vedantic studies at *Sandeepany Sadhanalaya* in Powai. He described Mumbai as an epicenter of world events. In helping Mumbai heal from the recent traumatic events, Swamiji said the chanting of *Hanuman Chalisa* bestows fearlessness, confidence, and inner peace. One's desires are fulfilled and one can gain material benefits by chanting this divine *chalisa*. And when chanted in a group, the benefits are manifold and accrue to society at large. Thus the slogan "Chant Mumbai, *Shaant* Mumbai"



was coined, and an extraordinary publicity campaign was launched.

Swamiji's series of 15 discourses over 15 days on *Hanuman Chalisa* was organized across the city almost every weekend for approximately two months prior to the grand *samashti havan*. The CHYK team was instrumental in developing numerous innovative campaign ideas, including an eye-catching promo that was uploaded on YouTube, screened across the city in coffee shops and movie halls, and advertised on public buses. A press conference was held and SMS-s went out in masses. An outbound call center was engaged to reach out to the many devotees in the Mission's databases. Billboards were put up across the city and fliers were distributed in the thousands. And all these efforts paid off.

Over 15,000 devotees participated in the *samashti havan*. The *yajnasbala* was designed beautifully, with 108 *havan kundas* lined throughout and a huge dais, the backdrop of which was a massive main altar featuring Lord Hanuman, Lord Ganesha, and Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. Additionally, there were three smaller altars that featured the Shri Rama *darbaar*, the Lord Shiva *parivaar*, and the Guru *parampara*.

The *samashti havan* began at 4:30 a.m. with a *puja* at the main altar, followed by a Lord Ganapati and Hanuman *shodashopachara puja*, and an *agni* ritual. Swami Swaroopananda briefly welcomed all the *yajamans* and spoke on the significance of the event. The chief guest for the inaugural function, Dr. Shubha Raul, the mayor of Mumbai, congratulated Swamiji.

After the *maha-sankalpa* was taken for all the *yajamans* throughout the day, the chanting of *Hanuman Chalisa* began at 7 a.m., initiated

by renowned singer, Anuradha Paudwal. The chanting was thereafter led by the singers of Mumbai's *Chinmaya Swaranjali* group, led by Pramodini Rao and supported by musicians led by flutist Himanshu Nanda. The *Swaranjali* groups from Thane and Navi Mumbai also led the chanting during the different time slots throughout the day.

Other renowned singers who joined the chanting during the day included Padma Wadkar, Ashok Khosla, Anup Jalota, Richa Sharma, Mahalakshmi Iyer, and Lavanya. Various television and movie celebrities also attended the event to chant and perform the *havan*.



The *mukhya yajamans* for the *havan* were Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group, and family. Mr. Birla inspired all the other *yajamans* and volunteers by sitting through the entire 108 chantings of the *chalisa*. Other main *yajamans* included Ajay and Swati Piramal, Sanjay Goenka, and many prominent Chinmaya Mission members from across the globe, including UK, Australia, Singapore, Africa, USA, and the Middle East.

At large, the majority of *yajamans* represented the entire spectrum of Mumbai society—from taxi drivers to homemakers, executives, government officers, police officials, politicians, businessmen, and students. The representatives from various media groups who came to cover the event were also seen participating in the chanting. In addition to the *havan yajamans*, thousands of *geet yajamans* came solely to chant, and sat in the stadium stands. It was truly heartwarming to see groups of school students in their school uniforms, seated in the stands, chanting with all the devotees.

After every seventh round of chanting, there was a brief pause to allow for the next batch of *yajamans* to be seated at the *havan kundas*. The entire flow of *yajamans* was managed smoothly because of the meticulous planning by the core committee, headed by Parindra

Kadakia. An army of almost 500 volunteers, including many youth, worked tirelessly for days prior to, and on the day of, the event. Undoubtedly, the most inspiring leader and dynamic worker for this event was Brahmachari Sattvika Chaitanya, acharya of Chinmaya Mission Mumbai.



The highlight of the day was a surprise visit by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, who completed his morning discourse at Kanpur and flew in by a special chartered flight to spend an hour in the *yajnashtala*, after which he flew back to Kanpur for his evening discourse. Guruji also sang one round of *Hanuman Chalisa* with the *Swaranjali* group, and briefly addressed the gathering, in which he explained the philosophical significance and practical aspects of the *ashta siddhis* that are attained by all who consistently chant *Hanuman Chalisa* with complete faith and devotion. World-renowned singer Asha Bhonsle came to the stage during Guruji's visit. On behalf of CM Mumbai and the organizers, Guruji offered tokens to Swami Swaroopananda and Brahmachari Sattvika.

By the end of the day, the chanting picked up momentum and the entire atmosphere was electric. The decibel level kept increasing and the entire stadium reverberated with the



sacred mantras gifted to the world through Sant Tulasidasa. Toward the conclusion, the chanting reached a crescendo, and by then, many youngsters and *brahmacharis* were on their feet, dancing to the beat of the drums and cymbals. On the completion of the

108th chant, a peaceful silence reigned across the *yajnashtala* as the *purna abhuti* was offered. This was followed by a brief address by Swami Swaroopananda, a vote of thanks by Parindra Kadakia, and a glorious *arati* of Lord Ganesha, Lord Hanuman, Lord Rama, Lord Shiva, and Pujya Gurudev.

Devotees collected their *prasada* and returned home in joy and awe. Everyone was heard expressing heartfelt praise and gratitude for the wonderful and blessed experience received on this day. Indeed, as the chanting of *Hanuman Chalisa* continued to resonate in their minds, everyone knew that this lifetime event was now indelibly imprinted in their hearts.

Essence of Gita

by Sameer Pateria



Swami Ishwarananda (CM Tustin) conducted a four-day *jnana yajna* on select verses from *Gita* chapters 1-6, February 17-20. The event, hosted by Chinmaya Mission Alpharetta, was attended by 120-150 enthusiastic seekers who ignored and overcame the severe winter weather conditions of hail, thunderstorms, and tornado warnings. Everyone enjoyed Swamiji's discourses and was awestruck by the clarity of thought, incontrovertible logic, and eloquent delivery laced with humor. Almost everyone expressed that they could relate to the daily life examples Swamiji gave.

Swamiji also conducted meditation sessions and gave morning discourses on *Mukunda Mala*. His presentation on "Medication and Meditation" highlighted how modern day's medication, with its side effects, can be avoided by preventing illness and disease through the practice of meditation and intelligent living.

In his address to the Chinmaya Mission volunteers, Swamiji urged them all to



become sincere *sadhakas* first, before becoming *sevakas*.

Swamiji began his *Gita* talks with a brief

introduction to the text, emphasizing that it contains the essence of the Upanishads. He also spoke on how the characters of the *Mahabharata* metaphorically relate to our own tendencies and inner instruments. Here are some of the many take-aways from the series:

1. Only humans have the choice between organized and unorganized thinking. Unorganized thinking is worry. Mahatma Gandhi referred to *Bhagavad Gita* as *Ashokopanishad*. So the first wisdom that should come to us is: No more worries. A practical experiment to see the futility of worrying can be dedicating half an hour daily to no other thought than worrying, and to consciously restrict it only within this boundary.

2. The fear of death is nothing. What one fears is losing everything, all the joys and the objects. Our scriptures tell us to become aware of the phantom self and become fearless.

3. Due to ignorance, we know only one way to handle the desire: to fulfill it. Desire creates agitation and fulfillment removes the agitation, giving a glimpse of the joy already present within. Had it not been so, extreme indulgence would have, in proportion, increased the joy.

4. Shri Ramana Maharishi defines the mind of a *siddha* mahatma to be like a moon visible in broad daylight. They [mahatmas] do not mind the mind.

5. The four principles of work/action are:

- a) Choose your work intelligently.
- b) You cannot choose the result. (You may plan and execute, but you cannot choose the result.)
- c) Do not become the victim of the result.

d) Always be inspired in your work.

6. Purity of the mind is a prerequisite for gaining Self-knowledge. To shift the attention from body, mind, and intellect to the Self, is meditation.

Mahashivaratri Celebrations

CM Houston

by Radhika Nair; photos by Nilesh Shah

Mahashivaratri was celebrated at CM Houston's *Shri Saumyakashi Shivalaya* temple on February 22 and 23, with a grandeur that stems from the simplicity and outpouring of love of the Lord's devotees.

Of His many personas, the reflective and serene form of Lord Shiva is worshipped at *Shri Saumyakashi Shivalaya* with rituals that enhance the pervading peace. Over one thousand people came to seek the Lord's blessings during the course of this auspicious day, yet inside the *sanctum sanctorum*, the external noises seemed to give way to a quieting of the mind.



Three major *pujas* were devotedly conducted by Brahmachari Bhasa Chaitanya and the resident *pujari* celebrating this sacred festival. Of the three, the *Mahalinga Abhishekam* on Monday night was when most devotees attended. Here, 108 copper pots, representing the various elements of the universe, were worshipped. Once sanctified, the devotees received the pots to perform *abhishekam* to the Shiva *lingam*. Earlier in the day, *Rudra Abhishekam* was conducted at the temple,

which was packed with devotees and charged by the powerful presence of the Lord.

The *Mahamrtyunjaya Homa*, a powerful fire ritual for the well-being of all, was conducted in the ashram's *Smriti Hall* on February 22. The ritual is said to liberate one from the cycles of physical, mental, and spiritual death. The chant "*Om namah shivaya*" lilted through the air, penetrating every heart. Materials were provided to seated participants who wanted to perform the *puja*. The beatific and enigmatic smile of Lord Shiva filled every corner and heart with tranquility and love.

CM Fairfield

by Narasimhan Ganapathi

CM Fairfield's Bala Vihar joyously celebrated *Mahashivaratri* in Connecticut on February 22. Each family sat together and performed a brief *puja* of Lord Shiva. The event began with the chanting of "*Om namah shivaya*" for a few minutes, followed by a devotional hands-on exercise, wherein each family made their own Shiva *lingam* from a mound of sand and a pebble. In the *puja*, they offered water, flowers, leaves, rice, sacred ash, and fruit *prasada* to Lord Shiva. After the *puja*, everyone sang Shiva *bhajans*, enjoyed the chanting of select Shiva *stotrams*, and listened to two stories of Lord Shiva. The festivities concluded with the distribution of *prasadam*.



CM Minneapolis

by Manu Madhok

CM Minneapolis celebrated *Shivaratri* with an assembly program that everyone enjoyed, featuring a special game show entitled, "*Kaun Banega Shivabhaktapati*," which was based on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" Contestants earned good-karma dollars toward their spiritual evolution and had the help of audience participation. The questions tested their

knowledge on Lord Shiva.

Select Chinmaya Bala Vihar students also participated in the celebrations at the local Hindu temple, where they chanted *Lingashtakam* and Shiva *bhajans* that were well received.

CM Philadelphia

CM Philadelphia's *Mahashivaratri* celebrations with an elaborate Vedic *puja* were held at the *Chinmaya Kedar* ashram on February 22, under the guidance of Swami Siddhananda.



CM Chicago

Badri: *Mahashivaratri* was celebrated with joy and devotion at CM Chicago's *Badri* ashram with a *puja* held from 10 p.m. to midnight on February 23. Resident *acharya* Swami Sharanananda gave a discourse on the significance of the festival, and explained how we can purify the mind and grow spiritually by fasting and praying to Lord Shiva on this blessed night. The *puja* included chanting, *bhajans*, and meditation, followed by *prasadam*. *Mahashivaratri* celebrations for the Chinmaya Bala Vihar students were held on Sunday, March 1, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. The grand function began with *Rudra abhishekam*, which was presided over by Swamiji and a priest. Devotees who sponsored the *puja* each had a small altar of Lord Shiva, to which they offered flowers as instructed. The children's cultural program began at 10:30 a.m., in which they performed several entertaining and educational skits on Lord Shiva. The audience enjoyed the lively *bhajans* sung by the kindergarten students and other classes, as well as the Odissi dance performed by select students, depicting the power and vigor of Lord Shiva. The program concluded with *arati* and delicious lunch *prasadam*.

Yamunotri: “Why do we pour water and milk on the *Shivalinga*?” asked a Bala Vihar student. In addition to the symbolic ritual, the *abbhishekam* offered at CM Chicago’s *Yamunotri* ashram served another important purpose of arousing the students’ natural desire to learn and understand. Their curiosity was a perfect opportunity for the teachers to explain the benefit of performing *abbhishekam* to Lord Shiva, and the power of chanting *Rudram*.

Rudrabhishekam was conducted at *Yamunotri* on February 23. An additional Bala Vihar program was held on February 28, and it included a *puja*, *Rudram* chanting by *sevaks*, and students’ presentations of dance and *bhajans*. For the first time, all the students offered *abbhishekam*, after which they went to their respective classes. Acharya Swami Sharanananda guided the students and *sevaks*. Swamiji narrated a story on Lord Shiva’s glory and the importance of honesty and truthfulness.

Blissful Events at CM Buffalo

by Sujata Shah and Krishna Divakaran



CM Buffalo has been blessed with much growth in spiritual awareness in the past year through the teachings of Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara Falls). His past few Bala Vihar camps have included the themes of “Colors of Life,” “Live to Give,” and, the most recent one, “*Holi* Habits.”

Through Vivekji’s innovative, interactive, and inspiring style, the children have learned many values. The “Live to Give” camp was all about giving back, wherein Vivekji taught the students how much we receive from God, Nature, and the Guru, and how many ways there are for us to give back. The “*Holi* Habits” camp, held around the *Holi* festival, taught students that most habits are a matter of choice. Habits can be constructive or destructive. The students understood that they have the ability to break unhealthy habits and cultivate healthy ones.

Puja Sasankan, a Bala Vihar student and camper, said, “I learned from Acharya Vivekji that God is in everything and everywhere. So if you insult someone, you insult God and yourself.” Shaaranya Pillai said, “I liked the way Acharyaji put things simply and explained to us in a way that we would fully comprehend.” Divya Penumaka said, “I learned that everyone has habits. Some may be good and some may be bad, but you need to learn how to slowly turn the bad habits into good ones.”



Vivekji’s discourse on “Embracing Change” was held on March 15 at the local temple, and it was received with much enthusiasm by an audience of all ages. April 2009 marked the completion of one year of the weekly satsanga class conducted by Acharya Vivekji in Buffalo. Under his guidance and tutelage, the group studies and discusses Vivekachudamani, and has grown from 10 to over 25 members. CM Buffalo feels fortunate and blessed to have Acharya Vivekji give so much of his time and effort to help support the growth of CM Buffalo.

Acharya Vivekji wrote to CM Buffalo, “Each and every time I come to Chinmaya Mission Buffalo (CMB), I feel more and more at home. The young and old students have come to know me and I have come to know them. This friendship allows for a greater learning experience. Thus, when I came to CMB for our third Bala Vihar and Youth Camp everyone was shining, including the March sun. In our discussions, we discovered that we have many habits that prevent us from growing. Almost all of these habits we have created ourselves.

Knowing this, we all understood that we have the power to break our unhealthy habits and cultivate healthy ones. A similar message was shared at the Temple: Every facet of our lives is changing and we have the choice to resist this and suffer, or embrace this and be at peace. *Satsanga* is fundamental to our personal betterment. This is the purpose of our Chinmaya Bala Vihars and Study Groups. Still, the spiritual ideas gained in such environments must further be nurtured in the home for them to fructify, and the Bala Vihar parents were made aware of this. CMB will always

be a special center for me because of everyone's sincerity. I am already looking forward to our next camp and *satsanga*."

Inspire-Love-Peace, Acharya Vivek



New Chinmaya Publications Website

The new Chinmaya Publications website, www.chinmayapublications.com, was introduced last year, and is being regularly developed and updated with more salient, user-friendly features. Features include categorization by subject, keyword find, photos and descriptions, and an overall better design. The new site has been well received with positive feedback.

Holi Celebrations at Chinmaya Kedar

CM Philadelphia celebrated *Holi* on Sunday, March 8, at *Chinmaya Kedar*, with lots of colors and the Holika-burning ritual. The event rituals were performed by CM Philadelphia's resident *acharya*, Swami Siddhananda.



Satsanga: Live Webcasts and Videos

Chinmaya Mission Tustin hosts www.chinmayachannel.com, which airs live webcasts of Swami Ishwarananda's discourses on various texts and topics. Visit the website for a detailed schedule.

Chinmaya Mission Dallas-Fort Worth uses UStream to host live webcasts and archived videos of Brahmachari Uddhav Chaitanya's discourses on various texts and topics. Visit www.chinmayasaaket.org/resources/video for details.

Chinmaya Publications Downloads

Chinmaya Publications has digitized and posted online some of its most popular audio content to make it easily available for Mission members and others. Uploaded on amazon.com are *bhajans* by Swami Siddhananda from various CD albums, *bhajans* by Swami Brahmananda, and *Gita* chanting. The tracks can be downloaded to any MP3 player or iPod: <http://www.amazon.com/s/?url=search-alias%3Ddigital-music&field-keywords=chinmaya+publication&x=11&y=24>.

CM Sacramento's Gita Yajna

Inspiration and excitement were in the air as CM Sacramento planned and hosted its fourth *jnana yajna*, February 13-16, at Sacramento Country Day School. Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose) conducted this *Gita jnana yajna* on Chapter 2, which was attended by approximately 120 devotees, including community members, and current and former Chinmaya Bala Vihar students. Devotees also came to the *bhikshas* and the Q&A sessions that followed.

At the *yajna*, the bustling bookstall and babysitting were managed by volunteer Bala Vihar teenagers. It was encouraging to see Bala Vihar students not only attending the talks, but also actively taking notes and trying to understand the discourses. One student recapped what he learned: "Grief over the past, delusion in the present, and fear of the future can all lead to a psychological breakdown. The idea is to not lose energy worrying about the outcome, over which we have no control. Instead, we should focus on the process through which the goal is to be achieved."

Chinmaya Mission Chicago



Vedic Heritage Youth Camps



2009

Conducted by Acharayas of Chinmaya Mission

Badri

July 13th thru
July 19th 2009

Yamunotri

August 10th thru
August 16th 2009

*Life is a Gift;
Living an Art*

(Grades 9 thru 12)

*Holy Places
and
Temples of India*

(Grades Kg thru 8)

*The Art of
Self Perfection*

based on Uddhav Geeta
(Grades 9 thru 12)

*Shree Krishna
Leela*

(Grades Kg thru 8)

115 R883, Willowbrook, IL 60527
www.chinmaya-chicago.org
Phone: (630) 654-3370

1 Child - \$200

2 Siblings - \$375

3 or more Siblings - \$450 (from same family)

Please register by:

Mail * At the mission - Badri/Yamunotri * Online

50% off of the 2nd camp, if attending both the camps.

Free accomodation and local transportation for out-of-state children, 10 years & above

www.chinmaya-chicago.org

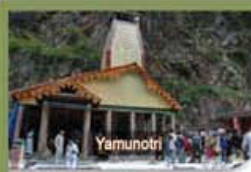
e-mail: camp@chinmaya-chicago.org

Contacts:

Vasavi Chakka (630) 527-0326
Sonia Chugh (708) 479-4528
Shanker Pillai (630) 789-6607
Ashok Dholakia (708) 349-6396

Contacts:

Shubi Mansukhani (847) 680-8555
Archana Anant (847) 549-0501
Rajul Bhalala (847) 295-2383
Ashok Bhatia (847) 680-4735



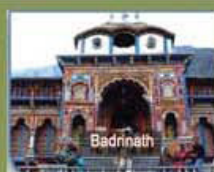
Yamunotri



Puri Jagannath



Gangotri



Badrinath



Rameshwaram

From the Desk of Swami Tejomayananda



To: All Members of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

Blessed Self,

Hari OM!

I am pleased to inform you that the second phase of *Chinmaya Vibhooti* is nearing completion in January 2009. The third phase will commence soon after that. The main feature of this third phase will be the temple of Lord Ganesha—named Shri Pranava Ganesha—on the hilltop. To make this temple project a successful and memorable event, we have designed a new initiative in which all our Chinmaya Family can easily participate.

21 WEEKS WITH LORD GANESHA!

- Each participating devotee should write the mantra, “*OM GAM GANAPATAYE NAMAHA*”—in any language—everyday, 21 times, continuously for 21 weeks (147 days) only.
- Each week, each devotee should make some offering as well, of Rs. 11 or \$11 (it can be more or less).
- Each devotee can start writing on any day, but once started, it must be done everyday for 21 weeks continuously.
- Upon completion, devotees should send their notebooks and offerings to their local center or to Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (Saki Vihar Road, Powai, Mumbai 400 072 India).
- The notebooks received will be deposited directly under the shrine on the day of the temple’s consecration. The funds received will be utilized for the temple.
- Please encourage your children also to write this mantra. They can make an offering of Rs. 1 or \$1 each week.

It is said that prayers go up and blessings come down! Lord Ganesha’s blessings will be with you forever. While writing this mantra, pray to Lord Ganesha for the peace, prosperity, and happiness of all.

May the Lord’s grace and Pujya Gurudev’s blessings be with you!

In the Service of the Lord,

Tejomayananda

Ramayana Parayana by Pujya Guruji

Photos by Murli Nambiar

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda celebrated *Shri Rama Navami* in March 2009 by conducting *Ramayana parayana*, a nine-day music recital of *Shri Tulasi Ramayana*, in the open-air theater of the *Sandeepany Sadhanalaya* ashram in Powai, Mumbai. Attended daily by a full audience of Mission *acharyas* and devotees, the event concluded with *Shri Rama Sahasranamavali*.



*The evening was damp, the sky almost dark, except for pearly blue patches,
brilliant under the cover of the storm that had just passed.*

*In my mind, I saw the strokes I had made several years ago,
giving shape to the skeletal sweeps of trees.*

- Ghetana Néerchal

