



NEWS

CHINMAYA MISSION® WEST BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

July 2009, No. 130

In This Issue

SPIRITUAL TRAILS

Spiritual Vision and Surrender
Keeping a Spiritual Diary
Travelogue

REFLECTIONS

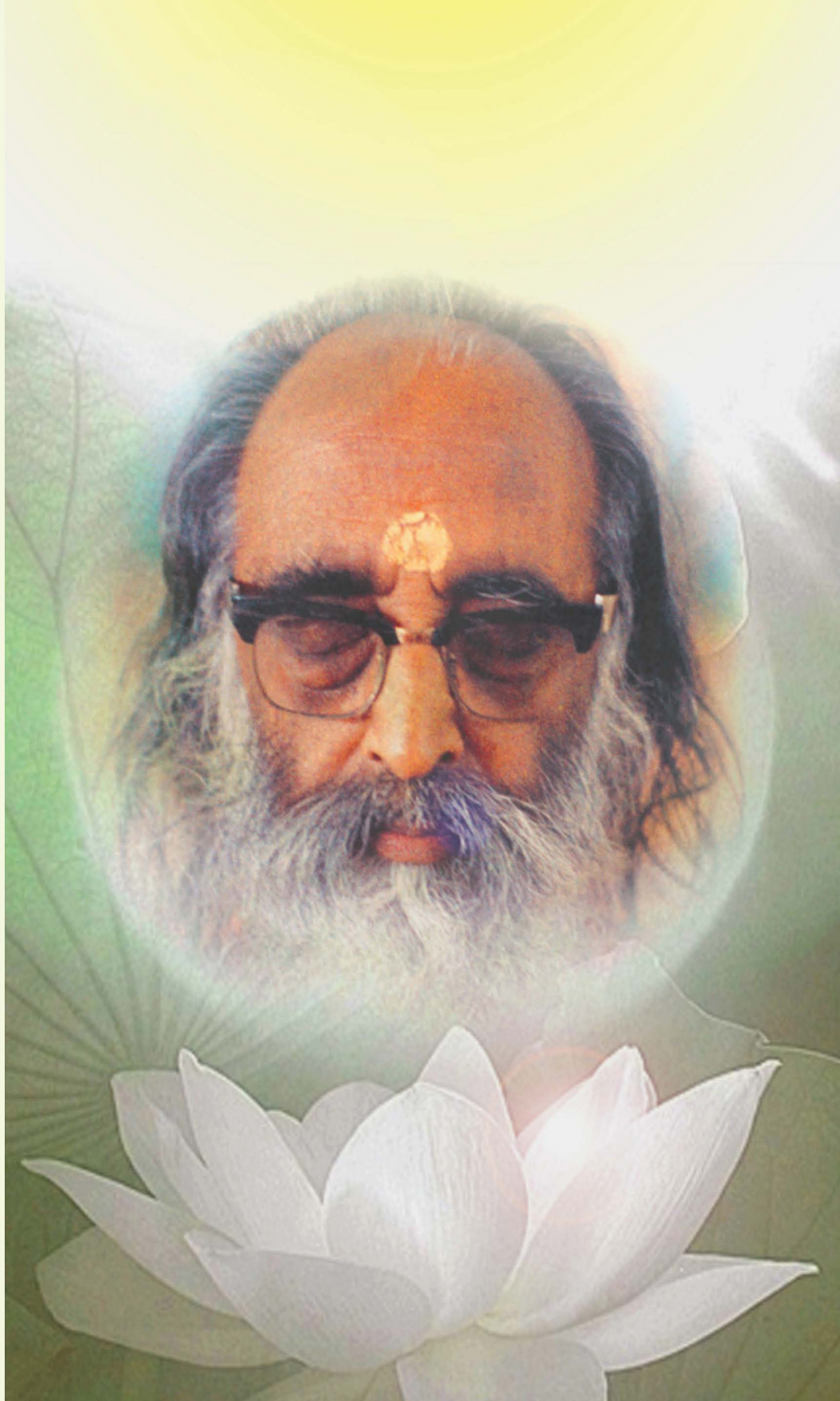
Compilations of the Open Heart

NEWS & EVENTS

CM Minneapolis Has a New Home
CM Beaumont Welcomes Lord Balaji
Overseas *Acharyas'* Conference 2009
Chinmaya Naada Bindu Opens
CM Houston's Gala Celebrations
CM Vancouver's First Bala Vihar Camp
Balafest! at CM Columbus
Mother's Day Extraordinaire
CM Princeton's Memorial Camp
When Science Meets Spirit
CM New York's New Web Site
CM Tampa: Paving Brighter Days
In Memoriam: Smt. Rukmini Gali

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sanskrit Study Course
Young Married Couples Seminar
Mahasamadhi Camp 2009
CM Chicago Youth Camp
CIF's E-Vedanta Course
CHYK Retreat
Vedanta Course 2010
21 Weeks with Lord Ganesha!
CM Dallas Family Camp



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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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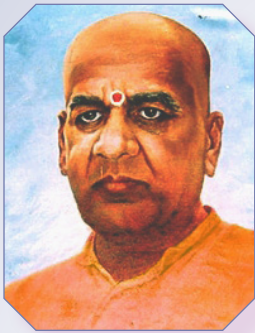
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His Holiness Swami Tapovanam

It is the vision of God that brings all worldly sorrows to an end, and it is therefore the holiest of holy experiences. He who has seen God, and has thus once and forever put an end to the sorrows and tribulations of worldly existence, is the one who has fulfilled the purpose of human life. Sooner or later, all creatures will certainly reach that goal. It may take ages and ages, but it is bound to happen. Even as all water ultimately reaches the ocean, the individual self must reach the supreme Self. It is the final resting place.

Source: *Ishvara Darshan*



His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda

The technique of self-mastery expounded in all the great textbooks of true living advise us not to escape from life, but to maintain an intelligent way of living, according to our circumstances in life, and to use diligently and profitably all the inner and outer situations of our life. Religion is to be practiced not only in temples, prayer rooms, or hermitages. Religion, if it is to bless us with its joy, must be lived in the office, at home, and in the government chambers.

In every walk of life and at all moments, we must make use of the ever changing pattern of challenges, and while consciously meeting them, we must train ourselves to become stronger individuals with greater mastery over ourselves and the outer world.



Source: *Meditation and Life*



His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda



Education is only partial; knowledge gives us a complete view of a thing. Education prepares man for a living only one aspect of his daily life, but it does not bring about a transformation in him or prepare him to discover the truth of life itself. Knowledge, on the other hand, prepares man to face life squarely and brings about the transformation that makes him into a new person. The purpose of knowledge is also to eliminate all false concepts, and at the same time, actuate a withdrawal from wrong ways of living. . . .

When the vision of oneness comes, one's life completely changes. Do not wait for others to change: Begin with yourself. You are the world and the world is not different from you. If you say the world is terrible, it is because your attitude constitutes your vision. But begin to change your attitude, and your vision of the world will change. Everything will be peaceful and good. This is the non-dualism of the Vedantic vision. This is the highest knowledge.

Source: *Atma Jyoti*, July-August 1997

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



Spiritual Vision and Surrender

by Puja Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Reprinted from Vedanta Vani, August 2005/ May 2007

Q: Are spirituality and religion one and the same?

A: Yes they are—if we understand them correctly. Generally, we can say that religion is that which involves various rituals, dogmas, worship, and pilgrimages. However, once we begin to inquire about who is God, what is worship, and who am I, spirituality truly begins. Normally people are satisfied with doing various rituals, going to church, praying, and so on. Very few inquire further.

Q: Does this mean that to be spiritual, one need not be religious?

A: One need not be ritualistic in order to be spiritual. But rituals are not against spirituality. For instance, Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a spiritual giant, used to worship Mother Kali Devi.

Q. Are religion, spirituality, and God three different entities?

A: It all depends on how one perceives these three. Unfortunately, most people have limited ideas of them. Religious people tend to think of God as an entity distinct from the real world, as one who dictates terms, rewarding some and punishing others. Also, religions are identified by their founders, specific scriptures, modes of worship, and traditions. Spirituality, on the other hand, is considered as renunciation of the world by a person, one who spends the rest of his life meditating in a solitary retreat. In Vedanta and the Upanishads, God is defined as, “That which is the Self of all beings,” the essence in everything, and the support and substratum of the entire universe—not a personal or individual entity.

If we understand religion to mean a set of rituals, it would be distinct from spirituality. But actually, these rituals are only ways of purifying our mind to help us understand these concepts of universality or the oneness of life. God, religion, and spirituality

are not different or isolated entities. They are one and the same.

When our ideas about God and religion are limited, we believe all religions are different and impose our faith on others, sometimes even by coercion. Vedanta and the Upanishads acknowledge no such division. All rituals and practices purify the mind and are therefore essential to understand the vision of Oneness.

Q: Some skeptics argue that India has seen more religious masters than any country in the world. Yet it has so many social, political, and communal problems. How do you explain this?

A: It is because we have so many problems that we need so many masters! Those people who have followed the teachings of the scriptures and the masters have attained nobility and peace. It is not the scriptures or the masters that will change the world, but whether or not people follow their teachings.

Medical science is well developed. Yet why is there so much disease and illness even in the most advanced countries? Those who live clean lives and take their medicines are fine. But those people, who do not follow a sensible diet and live totally unnatural lives, are more prone to falling ill. This is not the fault of medical science. It depends on whether or not people choose to follow the disciplines of medical science.

Nowadays many people mechanically go to temples, pray and perform a few rituals. But the spirit of religion and what religious masters have been saying are not being followed. This is why there are problems.

Q: If all the saints have the same philosophy, then why is there no harmony in society?

A: Countless people in society, being at different

levels of spiritual evolution, cannot have the same knowledge. Even saints have a past life. They, too, were not the same. The requirement is that whosoever understands the importance of righteous living should put forth effort to live that way. The whole of society cannot get transformed at the same time. This is its uniqueness.

Q: Rishis who have done *sadhana* are shown in our Puranas to have sometimes lost their tempers and also given curses. How can we explain this lack of control on their part?

A: The rishis were at different levels of evolution. There were some who were only seekers and, as a result of some penance, had acquired some mental powers. They had not acquired complete self-control or purity of mind, and therefore misused their powers. There were other rishis, who through their *tapas*, had not only acquired special powers, but also purity of mind. They cursed not out of anger, but as a blessing in disguise, for a specific purpose. And this became an act of purification. There were yet others who were totally in oneness with God. The curses of such persons were expressions of the will of God Himself.

Q: Is the Lord's justice really just?

A: How can we ever know the justice of the Lord? Most of the time, we do not know whether what we do is right or wrong! Also, we are totally incapable of knowing what the results of any of our actions will be (though we are free to hope). He alone knows. Fortunately for us, He is as compassionate as He is just. If He were merely just, we would have had a much harder time!

Q: How relevant can scriptures that were written thousands of years ago be in the 21st century?

A: The nature and cause of the world, and the Reality behind it, have not changed over the years. Man is almost the same now as he was then, in terms of his likes, dislikes, anger, ambitions, and frustrations. The scriptures talk only about this universal struggle of mankind. Therefore, these scriptures are as relevant today as they were then, and in fact, more so. Today, we find that man's problems have multiplied, while his freedom has decreased.

Q: God is love and happiness. If God is everywhere, then why is there unhappiness in the world?

A: Air is everywhere, yet asthma patients gasp for air. Some are even known to die without air. The trouble is with the person, not with the air. Sunlight is everywhere, yet the blind person does not see it. Even when the heat of the sun is felt, its light cannot be seen. Similarly, even though God is happiness and is everywhere, because of spiritual ignorance, we do not experience this. We are only repeating someone else's words that He is everywhere. Whatever glimpses of joy we experience are due to His all-pervading presence alone. Because of the veil of ignorance, man gets deluded by it and becomes unhappy.



Surrender is the language of devotion. In the language of knowledge, that same state is called Self-realization. It is a state of total annihilation of the ego. In the path of knowledge (*jnana yoga*), the focus is initially on making the mind subtler through inquiry (*vicara*), and finally the ego—the finite I-notion—is destroyed by the knowledge of one being the infinite Self. In the path of devotion (*bhakti yoga*), the first step itself is the surrendering of the ego at the altar of the Lord. All efforts thereafter are put forth in this direction alone.

There are many aspects of surrender. Normally when we say that we have surrendered, we do not really know what it means. The attitude, “Thy will be done, not mine,” shows surrender. When Mirabai, the great saint, was sent poison by her husband, she drank it with joy, because she truly believed the Lord sent it. The poison turned into nectar. Such is the glory of total surrender.

Surrender and self-will cannot coexist. On the one hand, we say that we have surrendered to God, and on the other, we hold on to our own will and ego. Sometimes we attribute things to God's will and sometimes to our own. A criminal justifying his action as God's will has to accept the judge's decision also as God's will. Either we exercise our own will, and own up to the results in a gracious manner, or we surrender totally to His will. We cannot have it both ways. We may say that we have surrendered our will, that we have handed over all our responsibilities to the Lord and that He will take care of everything, but are we truly convinced that the Lord will do all of it? We pray to God, but at the same time, we harbor doubts whether He will listen to us and take care of us. Only when we trust God fully are we able to experience the benefit of total surrender.

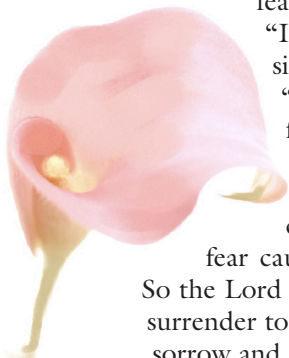
Why Surrender and to whom? Why do we seek refuge? When it rains suddenly, we run for shelter. In the scorching heat of the sun, we seek the shade of a tree. When we are suffering from a disease, we seek the help of a doctor. In a financial crisis, we look for support from a rich colleague. In family troubles, we seek the company of a sympathetic friend. We seek the support, help, company, or refuge of another to alleviate our physical and mental sorrows, to get solutions to life's problems. We naturally surrender to one who is capable of alleviating our sorrow.

However much a pauper sympathizes with our condition; we do not turn to him for help in time of a financial crisis. We cannot surrender to one who is himself insecure or miserable. Such a person may only add to our own insecurity and sorrow, or in turn, seek sympathy and help from us. Also, the person who may be able to give us financial help may not be able to provide psychological solace or physical security. So, it is best to surrender to the Lord alone, as in Him, we get support, help, and solace for all our problems at once. We can attain real peace in the Lord alone, for He is omniscient, omnipotent, all-bliss, ever-present, and all-love. Sant Tulsidasji says, "Surrendering unto Him, I have found supreme Peace."

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, when Arjuna was confused about the right course of action, Lord Krishna gave him the knowledge of the *Bhagavad Gita*. After expounding various means to purify the mind and gain knowledge through the path of action (*karma yoga*), the path of meditation (*dhyana yoga*), and so forth, the Lord concludes with the famous *Bhagavad Gita* verse: "Give up all other means, duties, paths, and surrender all unto Me alone. I shall free you from all sins. Rest assured, do not grieve" (18.66). In *Valmiki Ramayana* also, Lord Rama says: "It is my vow that if a person comes to Me and says even once, 'O Lord, I am yours,' I will make him

fearless." Lord Krishna says, "I will liberate him from all sins," and Lord Rama says, "I will release him from all fears." Are these promises and results different? No.

Sin causes fear, and fear causes sin. Both sin and fear cause bondage and sorrow. So the Lord assures us that those who surrender to Him will be free from all sorrow and bondage.



Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda's Summer North American Tour

June 29-July 5

San Diego, California

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita Chapter 6

11715 Treadwell Dr., Poway, CA 92064

(858) 549-2908, sandiego@chinmayamission.org

July 6-12

Austin, Texas

July 7: Guru Purnima

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita Chapter 9

801 Bluff Dr., Round Rock, TX 78681

(512) 731-2392, austin@chinmayamission.org

July 13-18

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita Chapter 14

2824 Benton Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55416

(612) 227-1859, minneapolis@chinmayamission.org

July 19-23

Columbus, Ohio

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita Chapter 7

2524 Mallards Dr., Powell, OH 43065

(614) 325-8868, columbus@chinmayamission.org

July 25-26

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Seminar for Young Married Couples

4760 Packard Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48108

(734) 434-1740, annarbor@chinmayamission.org

July 27-28

Flint, Michigan

Satsanga

4545 Warwick Cir., Grand Blanc, MI 48439

(810) 695-0188, flint@chinmayamission.org

July 29-August 3

Toronto, Canada

Mahasamadhi Camp:

Essence of Shrimad Bhagavatam

9796 Dufferin St., Maple, Ontario L6A 1S2, Canada

(416) 824-2851, toronto@chinmayamission.org

Chinmaya Mission's Code of Conduct

by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda



By thought, word and deed, every member of the Chinmaya Mission should try to live up to and fulfill the motto as well as the pledge of the Mission.



He or she must spare time daily to meditate and study the scriptures.



Once a week, on any convenient day, he or she must offer worship at a nearby temple with members of the family.



He or she must discover a life of harmony, at home first. It is expected of the member that he or she does not, on any account, create any domestic unhappiness.

If there are children at home, they must have a *satsanga* at least once a week. It should consist mainly of members of the family, and an important part of it should be reading of the *itihisas* like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, or *Puranas* like *Bhagavatam*, in a language the children know.



When a member meets another Mission member, he or she must greet the other with "Hari Om."



Daily offering of *pranams* by younger ones to the elders in the house should be followed and inculcated by the Mission members.

Easy Sanskrit Online Study Course

Blessed Self,

Hari Om! Salutations!

Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF), a center for Sanskrit Research and Indology, is pleased to introduce its new "Easy Sanskrit Online Study Course" for beginners interested in starting their journey into Sanskrit. This course covers the salient aspects of Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary, and simplifies intricate details for easy learning. Students do not even need to know the Devanagiri (Sanskrit) script, or the script for any other Indian language for that matter.

So it is truly Sanskrit made easy!

The course covers 13 topics that presented in modules, which students have up to 30 months to complete. A student who completes the full course will be awarded a Certificate of Completion from CIF. CIF is the academic front of Chinmaya Mission worldwide, and is affiliated to Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan (New Delhi) and recognized by Mahatma Gandhi University (Kottayam).

Registration is US\$150. Hurry to register online and become one of the first students to begin this Easy Sanskrit Course!

You can also get your own Easy Sanskrit Self-Study Kit, which includes a textbook, workbook, and interactive CD for only \$75!

Visit www.easysanskrit.chinfo.org

Questions? E-mail easy Sanskrit@chinfo.org

CHINMAYA MISSION® WEST

MARRIAGE - A MELODY

YOUNG MARRIED COUPLES SEMINAR

Blessed Self,



Hari OM. For the first time ever, Chinmaya Mission West is pleased to announce "Marriage - A Melody," a two-day seminar exclusively for young married couples between the ages of 25 and 38 years (either spouse). We are in challenging times that can cause ripples in any family's relationships. Come explore with His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda and Chinmaya Mission Acharyas on how Vedanta can strengthen our relationships and help us find deeper satisfaction amid life's challenges.

The seminar sessions will be in the form of discourses, group discussions, Q&A, and interactive workshops.

Topics addressed will include the following:

- Vision of Life for Married Householders
- Joys and Challenges of Married Life
- Parenting
- Dealing with Emotions and Relations

When: July 25-26, 2009

Where: Chinmaya Avantika

Chinmaya Mission Ann Arbor, 4760 Packard Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108

Cost: \$200 per couple (charges for hotel room, if needed, will be extra)

A block of hotel rooms at discounted rates have been reserved for this event. This event is limited to the first 100 couples.

Register online at www.chinmayamission.org/annarbor and click on "Event Registration."

For more information, contact:

Dr. AppaRao Mukkamala: apparao@chinmayamission.org, (810) 257-9828

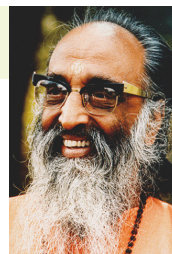
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Keeping a Spiritual Diary

by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

Reprinted from Veda Vani, May 2007



Even after following all prescribed spiritual practices faithfully, you may run into obstructions in your efforts at meditation. In almost all cases where a seeker complains of lack of progress, it is because his subtle body has grown grosser. Do not be misled into thinking that your lack of progress is because of “destiny,” or “a bad day,” or the withdrawal of God’s or your guru’s grace! During an unconscious moment of relaxation, the sensuous world has invaded your inner world through the sense organs and brought forth from your subconscious mind the lower tendencies. The only way out is to gather your strength and fight out the battle with your baser tendencies.

In order to protect the growing spiritual wealth in you and not suffer the sorrow of setbacks, it may help to post 20 “soldiers” around you, in the form of 20 questions to put to yourself at the end of each day’s activities. Keep track of the questions and answers in the form of a spiritual diary that you keep strictly and continuously for three months, but never for more than six months at a stretch. You must not let yourself become habituated to diary-writing. Whenever you feel a setback in your spiritual growth, take up the diary again for a week. It is the experience of many masters and thousands of seekers that this diary-keeping is the sovereign remedy for spiritual fervor turned into sour skepticism.

Following are the 20 items that constitute your diary: The list is compiled to suit all temperaments. Select 15 of the 20 items and pursue them diligently. Enter the items as 15 column headers and write your daily report under each category. At the end of the month, study the chart you have made to determine the progress or decline for that month.

1. How many hours did I sleep?

Normally six hours of sleep are sufficient for a quiet-living spiritual seeker.

2. When did I get up from bed?

You should be out of bed between 4:30 and 6:00 a.m. The early morning’s quiet will assist you in your spiritual evolution. The great masters have found, from their own personal experience, that this part of the day is most beneficial for spiritual practice. In the early stages, you may need an alarm clock to awaken you. If you find yourself being too sleepy after getting up, let a brisk shower freshen you up.

3. How long did I practice concentration?

Begin with small doses, and increase the period of concentration slowly and steadily.

4. What religious books am I now reading?

Reading the lives of the great masters and their declarations of Truth in a spirit of inquiry will greatly help you in thinking intelligently. In reading such books, do not be content with their story content alone. All such stories have deep symbolic and philosophic significance, and your aim should be to unravel the deeper meanings.

5. For how long was I in companionship with the good (*satsanga*)?

Satsanga here does not mean merely attending prayer meetings and religious discourses. Once you have developed the spirit of inquiry, you will automatically seek out friends interested in discussing religious topics with you. Where such friends are not available, good books will serve as good company; discover companionship with them.

6. For how long did I engage myself in selfless service (*karma yoga*)?

Any act of service, performed in a spirit of detachment, will further the growth of the noble qualities of love, tolerance, mercy, and so on. Learn

to serve Him through the people you are helping.

7. How many *malas* (rosaries) of *japa* (chanting God's name) did I perform?

One *mala* consists of 108 beads, and a mantra is chanted at the turning of each bead. In order to do *japa* effectively, you must strive as far as possible to exclude all extraneous thoughts from the mind during the period of *japa* practice.

8. How many Upanishad mantras did I read?

Read only a little each day, but digest what you have read and allow your mind to reflect over the great truths behind the words of the mantras.

9. How many mantras did I write?

Writing your mantra is the easiest way of fixing your concentration. Keep a separate notebook for this purpose and regularly write about a page of your chosen mantra. While writing the mantra, do not speak or look around; do not move away from the work until the allotted amount is finished. This exercise will aid your concentration immensely as you soak your mind with the ideal suggested by the mantra as you whisper and write. The hand is writing the mantra, the eyes are seeing the mantra, the mouth is softly chanting the mantra, and the ears are listening to the mantra. The mind thus becomes easily single-pointed.

10. How many hours did I observe silence?

Keeping silence does not mean expressing all your thoughts in relation to the outside world by making signs. If you do so, your mind will be entertaining thoughts that relate to the objective world. The aim is to withdraw one's attention to the inner world of the spirit.

11. How many days did I fast?

Fasting here does not mean abstaining from food continuously for long periods of time, such as 21 or 41 days. Fast regularly—once a month, once a week, or once a fortnight.

12. What did I give away in charity?

Giving here means giving in thought, cash, or kind.

13. How many lies did I tell and with what self-punishment?

A lie is something uttered against your conscience, with a view of obtaining some advantage for yourself. During the act of lying, you will all the time be conscious of uttering something against your natural inclinations in order to surmount a real or imagined difficulty. Such conflicts will haunt you after the lie has been told and will become a stone wall in your spiritual practice. Do not allow yourself to console yourself by saying that the lie was small and did not affect anyone detrimentally. In all events, lying disturbs your mental poise. If you tell a lie, give yourself a severe punishment, such as fasting or increasing the period of daily silence.

14. How many times was I angry and for how long did each attack of anger last?

Anger arises out of the non-fulfillment of your desires. Array the forces of tolerance, mercy, sympathy, and understanding for the weakness in yourself, and in others, in order to win a victory over anger.

15. How many hours did I spend in useless company?

In all spiritual practices, you should attempt to see yourself as a child who desires to come home after having stayed away for a time, charmed by some pleasant attraction elsewhere. In spiritual practice, this coming home is possible only if you scrupulously avoid useless company, thus creating a proper atmosphere for your inner work.

16. How many times did I fail in *brahmacharya*?

Remember, *brahmacharya* means “self-control” in all areas—eating, talking, sex, and any other indulgences. Self-control within bounds is the safest rule.

17. What virtues am I developing consciously?

For a month at a time, take to the cultivation of a single noble quality, such as love, tolerance, or kindness.

18. What evil quality am I trying to eradicate?

Become conscious of thoughts that hold you down and slow your spiritual progress. Negative qualities are like a millstone tied around your neck while you are trying to swim. You have to snap the cord, let the weight sink, rise to the surface of the water, and swim to the shore. You must diagnose your own malady and find its proper cure.

19. How many times did I fail in controlling an evil habit and with what punishment?

Punishment here may be dealt out similarly as Point 13.

20. When did I go to bed?

Simply enter the time of retiring. Life is full of change. The faster the changes, the faster we are moving. See His hand in all change.

My Master's Voice

Quotes of Pujya Gurudev

☒ Live Vedanta and thus let us all reach that Destination where, having met, we shall never part. Meet me There. Reach There through love, service, and purity.

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

☒ The Guru is not a person; He is a personality, an institution. He is the radio through which the Lord contacts the student. When a student meets his Teacher, it is always a miracle. In fact, it is love at first sight. He is immediately attracted to Him and His words ring a bell.

☒ I know no Sanskrit. I know no Hindi. I know no language to express what I know. In brief, I know that I know not how to make you know what I know. I know that I know not, yet I know what I know. My Gurus know what I know, but I know not how to make you know what my Gurus know. Knowledge is unknowable yet the unknowable becomes known when a knower explains it to be the knower's own Self, which illumines for him the very urge to know.

☒ I am Being. I am not experience. I allow experience to exist around me.

☒ Devotee: Don't worry, Swamiji. It will be done.
Gurudev: Have you ever seen me worried?

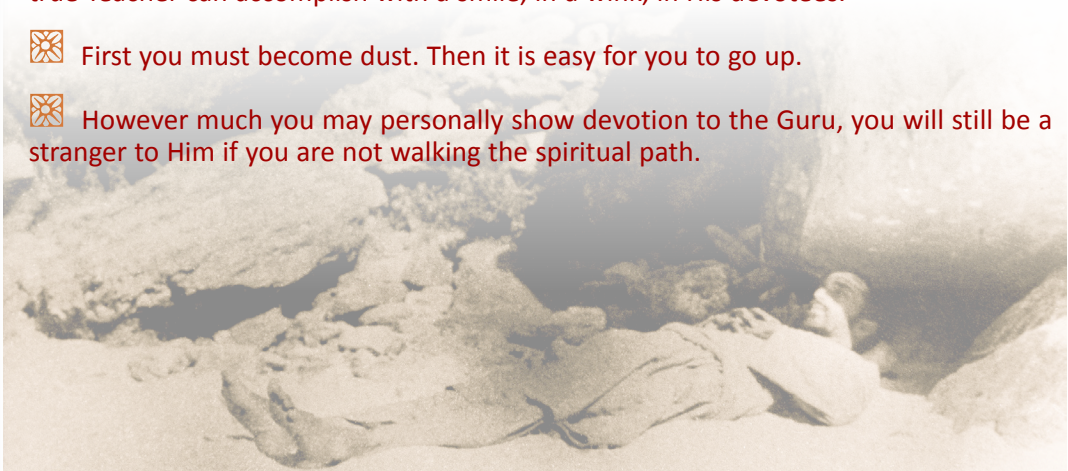
Devotee: Did I disturb you?

Gurudev: You did. But I did not get disturbed.

☒ A thousand learned *pandits* in a hundred years can, perhaps, bring about what a true Teacher can accomplish with a smile, in a wink, in His devotees.

☒ First you must become dust. Then it is easy for you to go up.

☒ However much you may personally show devotion to the Guru, you will still be a stranger to Him if you are not walking the spiritual path.





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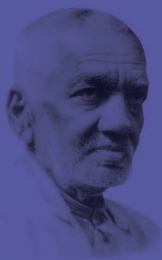
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travelogue

Vande Mataram
by Varun Khanna

December 18, 2007

My finals are finally over, and the packing phase has begun. I leave on Wednesday, but before that I have to pack EVERYTHING. It's a big word. The questing has only just begun.

December 20, 2007

I'm at home already, unpacked, settled in, and it feels like I have nothing to do. But now I need to REpack everything to bring to India. Another big word. I need to shop, get vaccinated, and tie up loose ends for the next six months. Countdown to takeoff: 8 days.

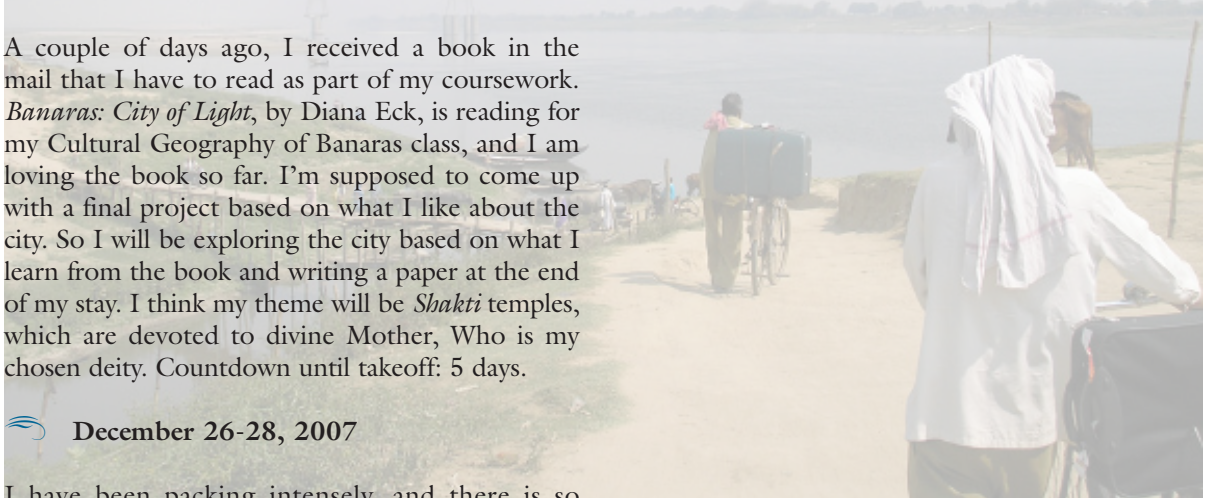
December 23, 2007

It was freezing today and felt like below 0°F. But mom and I decided to make a trip to the mall to find some "stuff." This included stuff for me, stuff for her, and gifts for people we were going to visit. On our way to the mall, we realized it was the last weekend before Christmas and that there would be tons of traffic. Sure enough, there was a 7-8-minute wait to even get into the parking lot, let alone park and get inside. Walking into and out of the mall, we were blown away by the 40 mph wind gusts. When we were done shopping, though we weren't done, it was a moment of relief and accomplishment.

A couple of days ago, I received a book in the mail that I have to read as part of my coursework. *Banaras: City of Light*, by Diana Eck, is reading for my Cultural Geography of Banaras class, and I am loving the book so far. I'm supposed to come up with a final project based on what I like about the city. So I will be exploring the city based on what I learn from the book and writing a paper at the end of my stay. I think my theme will be *Shakti* temples, which are devoted to divine Mother, Who is my chosen deity. Countdown until takeoff: 5 days.

December 26-28, 2007

I have been packing intensely, and there is so



much involved when you're going away for six months, especially to a country where you can't eat anything that is not freshly made or packaged, and where you need bottled water from an authentic source. So I have packed snack foods and other sustenance items, just in case, and clothing for both cold and hot climates. One of my first stops is Kashmir—potentially the most beautiful place on earth from what I've heard—where there is already 10 feet of snow.

I finally got everything that was once sprawled throughout my room into my bags, successfully. From school supplies to toiletries, my 2 large bags are loaded with lots of “stuff.” It took way more effort to pack than I imagined. Now, only my laptop remains.

Copies of my visa and passport, and my passport-size photos, are now ready. My first adventure is my 17-hour flight to India, direct from Chicago to Delhi. I am actually becoming nervous as the time is fast approaching. Countdown until takeoff: 4 hours and 20 minutes.

 **December 29, 2007**

No traffic, no lines, full flight . . . so far, so good.

Mom and I arrived in my uncle's Noida home after midnight, ate dinner, and chatted for a while. Such is life in India: Chat, *chai*, then, business. I do water, not *chai*. D-103, Sector 40 is like a mansion, with four stories and a home theater. And when I say theater, I don't mean just a surround-sound system—it had the works. This house is ridiculous.

Our rooms were on the second floor, next to my cousin's family. Mom and I unpacked, slept around 3 a.m., and awoke at 7 a.m. We were hoping to see the sunrise, but the tall buildings blocked any possible view, even from the rooftop. Rooftop events are common in India, and most of the houses have flat roofs. So I guess my sun-gazing routine can start only when I get out of here. I went with Kunwar Bhaiya, the house servant, to the Mother Dairy market to get milk and eggs. It was cold, but not as cold as Chicago. There is no snow here, but it gets down to 4°C. Yesterday was the coldest day in Noida in 5 years, and the next few days are supposed to be even colder. I guess we

brought Chicago with us.

 **December 30, 2007**

Today, my cousin, my aunt, and I went to see Delhi's new metro line. The drive to the nearest train station, called Indraprastha, was over 20 minutes. Now that I, too, was a driver, I took a little more interest in the system here.

First of all, it's right-hand drive. There are lines on the road, but nobody heeds them. On a road with 3 lanes, there will be about 6-7 vehicles next to each other, with drivers cutting each other off left and right, back and forth, from every possible direction. Some roads seem too thin for 2 cars to pass each other, but they are two-way. Running red lights is commonplace. In fact, it's almost wrong to stop at a red light if there is no cross traffic. There is every possible type of vehicle on every road—trucks, vans, SUVs, cars, auto rickshaws, motorcycles, scooters, bullock carts, bicycles—not to mention pedestrians and animals, including camels, cows, and dogs. And despite all of the seeming chaos, there is a method to the madness. Accidents are far less frequent than expected and you won't ever see 2 cars in a situation where they cannot cross each other, though it may look like it. The drivers here are visual, spatial geniuses. They know exactly, and I mean EXACTLY, how much space they need to get through any obstruction, which explains the saying, “If you can drive in Delhi, you can drive anywhere in the world.”

We rode the metro and rode it to Rajiv Chowk, where we switched from the yellow line to the blue, which we rode to Vishwavidyalaya. The metro is still under construction by night, with hardcore work that includes trucks and cranes. The beautiful thing is that the city is keeping this construction completely clean. When the construction vehicles leave the site, their tires are sprayed down with water so they don't trail dirt behind them. In the morning, there are no traces left, which is an impressive feat. As each section of the metro is completed, it becomes available for public use. This major construction is being done in preparation for the Commonwealth Games to be held in Delhi in 2010. They expect massive attendance from all over the world, so there is intense construction going on, but it is a wonderful makeover for the

city. The metro itself is much like the BART in San Francisco. It is a little bit more advanced though; it even tells you how long until the next train, down to the second! I was impressed.

December 31, 2007

We drove in a van to Mathura and Vrindavan, today, a three-hour drive. We arrived at 9:15 a.m. in Mathura, the place of Lord Krishna's birth. En route to the temple we had to go through some intense security—more than airports—to get in because of the recent bomb threats to all places of worship, all over the country. There were two lines, one for men and one for women. My mom and aunts were inside within a minute. My line, however, was half a football field long. And it took forever because security was so tight. After checking in our shoes, we entered the temple, which was truly beautiful. The intricacies of the decorations in and around the temple were fascinating, and strikingly detailed. I could not believe this was the work of human hands. I went around the temple, reading everything (thank God I can read Hindi, albeit slightly slowly), soaking in the atmosphere. I was so in love with the place that when it was time to leave each area, I found it hard to move. We saw the actual cell where Lord Krishna was born, the place where his parents were imprisoned, and some other interesting historic sites. We left the temple in awe of its grandeur.

From there, we headed straight to Vrindavan, the place where Shri Krishna was raised. It is fascinating and devotion-filled. Here, no one says, “Krishna!”—only, “Radhe!” for it is believed that Lord Krishna will come running whenever He hears Radhaji's name. If you get in the way of a rickshaw, the driver will not ring his bell; he will just call out, “Radhe! Radhe!” until you get out of his way.

We went to the Banke Bihari temple, where there were more people amassed than I have ever seen in one place at one time. We checked in our shoes in front of the temple and positioned ourselves at the entrance. With the number of people in the hall for *darshan*, it seemed impossible that we could even get inside. I could hardly stay standing, let alone walk. I could not get any photos because they did not allow any cameras, cell phones, or other electronics. Within a minute, without any conscious moving or pushing, we made it all the way inside the temple, right next to the idol. People were climbing on top of each other to see the Lord. I could not see the idol from where I was, and at

one point, my feet were literally off the ground. I could not move. I flailed my legs, but was unable to reach the ground. Eventually I got down with a little squirming. On top of all this, I was trying to watch out for pickpockets because my mom had given me money to safeguard. But I ended up putting my faith into the Lord of the temple, letting go of my inhibitions, and flowing with the crowd instead. I found myself right in the middle of the temple, albeit crushed between people, but directly in front of the Lord. I got my *darshan* right on! And as soon as I did, everything seemed to freeze. The Lord seemed to be staring me right in the face and I could not move. I did not want to move. My mom and my cousin were calling out for me from the side and I knew they were there, but I could not look away from the Lord. All went quiet and I could not hold back my smile. I knew what was happening as it happened and I relished each moment of it to the fullest.

Once the world fell back into place, I was pushed right back into the din and roar, and I found myself in front of my family, with my shoes. Like I said, in India, there is an order to the madness. I was wonderstruck when I realized that my trip was only 48 hours old and I was already in love.

Next, we went to the ISKON temple, which was different in that it was filled with more foreigners. It was as if a different world, where there was only a fraction of the number of people, the place was entirely clean, and everyone had money of their own. We had lunch at the restaurant at the back of the temple, searched for our driver for an hour, and drove straight home, without stops.

When we got home, my aunt and I were the only ones awake. Everyone else was too tired and could hardly walk. I wanted to buy a book in Hindi so I could improve my reading speed, so my aunt and I went to the bookstore, where I bought 2 children's reading books. I felt a little awkward buying them at 19 years of age, but was glad to be fulfilling a lifelong quest to learn the language.

No matter when I come to India, where I am, or how old I am, the beggars are the one thing I cannot bear to see here. It makes me want to cry every time I see a person so debilitated that they need to beg to survive. If I give to one, 50 others come jumping at me, because they are not the type of beggars who merely stand on the side of the road; they actively and unrelentingly pursue you. It is an overwhelming sense of helplessness, for them and for me.



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Compilations of the Open Heart

by Simmy Makhijani

Symmetry

Symmetry is the heart of beauty. Asymmetrical things have a shock in their embrace. To seek beauty and to express it is the goal and function of art.

- Swami Chinmayananda

from his lecture "The Destiny of Art" (June 1992; Piercy, CA)

Metaphor

Do you ever notice how one reads the Sunday papers? First the X, then the funny sheets, then the sports column, then the magazine, then the theater news, then the book reviews, then the headlines. Recapitulation. Ontogeny. Phylogeny. Define your terms and you will never use words like time, death, world, soul. In every statement there is a little error and the error grows bigger and bigger until the snake is scotched. The poem is the only flawless thing provided you know what time it is. A poem is a web which the poet spins out of his own body according to a logarithmic calculus of his own divination. It's always right because the poet starts from the center and works outwards. The phone is ringing. Pythagoras was right, Newton was right. Einstein is right.

- Henry Miller reading

from his novel Black Spring (June 1949; Big Sur, CA)

Oneness vs. Separateness

We create first the idea, the concept of something as one and then we create a separation and as a result of that separation we suffer.

- Tenzin Wangyal

from his lecture "The Elements in Shamanic, Tantric, and Dzogchen Views" (March 2002; San Rafael, CA)

Wholeness

A Cartesian would look at the tree and conceptually take it to pieces, then he would never

really understand the nature of the tree. A systems thinker would look at the tree and see the seasonal exchange between tree and earth, earth and sky. The annual cycle which really is one big breath the earth takes through its forests providing us with oxygen—the breath of life, linking the earth with the sky and the earth with the universe.

A systems thinker would look at the tree and see the life of the tree only in relation to the life of the whole forest. But the tree is a habitat for birds, a home for insects. But if you look at the tree and try to understand it as something separate, you will be bewildered by the millions of fruits it is producing in its lifetime because only one or two trees will grow from those fruits. Though if you look at the tree and see it as a member of a larger living system, that abundance of fruits will make sense because hundreds upon hundreds of forest animals and birds will survive because of them. Interdependence. And the tree cannot survive on its own either, to draw water from the ground it needs the fungus that grows at the tip of each root and the fungus needs the root to survive and the root needs the fungus. If one dies, then the other dies. And there are millions of relationships like this in our world each depending on each other for life.

- From Brent Capra's film, Mindwalk

(1992; based on Fritjof Capra's book, The Turning Point)

I was spending the summer on Long Island with my family and I heard about this community in Scotland called Findhorn where people sang and talked and meditated with plants and it was founded by several rather middle class English and Scottish eccentrics. Some of them intellectuals, some of them not. I heard they had grown things in soil that supposedly nothing can grow in because it is almost beach soil. They have grown the largest cauliflowers in the world and cabbages. They've grown trees that can't grow in the British Isles. So I went there. It is an amazing place. If there are insects bothering the plants they will talk with the

insects and make an agreement, by which they will set aside a special patch of vegetables just for the insects and the insects will leave the main part alone.

- From Louis Malle's film, *My Dinner with André* (1981)

sense of being united to all things and suddenly you understand *everything*.

- From Louis Malle's film, *My Dinner with André* (1981)

New Poetry

I keep thinking that what we need is a new language, a language of the heart. There are languages in the Polish forest where language wasn't needed. Some kind of language between people that is a new kind of poetry, the poetry of the dancing bee that tells us where the honey is. And I think in order to create that language you are going to have to learn how you can go through a looking glass into another kind of perception where you have that

Beauty to Spiritual Knowledge

When once your mind is fascinated by beauty, stay there! Don't initiate a new talk. On the beauty or the object that reflected the beauty. But stay there in the heart silence of experiencing the beauty. The rest will happen. You will dissolve as it were into a total self-forgetfulness. You are no more the person who sought beauty, but how am I to say, you have become beauty.

- Swami Chinmayananda

from his lecture "The Destiny of Art" (June 1992; Piercy, CA)

Teachings from the Heart

Quotes of Pujya Guruji

- ☼ In everyone, there is some spiritual spark, somewhere. Fuel this spark into a blazing fire! Encourage such thinking and don't let it die.
- ☼ Respect every breath you breathe. For there is no guarantee that once you breathe out, you will be able to breathe in again.
- ☼ *Sannyasa* was looking for an abode and it found Tapovan Maharaj.
- ☼ To learn is good. To understand is better. To practice is best. And to realize is supreme.
- ☼ Even before you prostrate, the Guru has already saved you.
- ☼ For realization, you need purity of mind, clarity in knowledge, and *Guru upadesha*.
- ☼ It is good to know many things. But it is always to better to make good use of whatever little we know.
- ☼ In spiritual life, the *sadhana* is alertness. We forget very quickly what we have to keep in mind.
- ☼ In life, we often campaign for *Brahman*, but vote for *maya*!
- ☼ Look at upon everyone as yourself, not like yourself.
- ☼ Learn to read and write; then you can master any subject. Similarly, learn to serve and obey your *Guru* with devotion and humility. Then you can master any spiritual *sadhana*, leading you to realize the Truth.
- ☼ Wisdom is not in knowing and talking. Wisdom is knowing when to talk and when to keep silent.



Established in 1990, Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) is the last project undertaken by Puja Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji during His lifetime. The infrastructure is limited and the realisation of Gurudev's vision is possible through accelerated investments on infrastructure. We seek to complete these enhancements by 2016, the birth centenary of Puja Gurudev, and dedicate them unto Him. The constructions have already begun from February 2009... we beseech you to donate liberally.

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6.	Office and Information Centre	1,00,00,000	2,00,000
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"CIF, a very significant part of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide, is on a continuous mission to unravel and keep lit the glorious knowledge tradition of India. By dedicating ourselves to Project CIF we offer our gratitude to our beloved Puja Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji and keep the Light of Wisdom ever lit."

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji
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Swami Shantananda: *Dakshinamurti Stotram, Sat Darshanam*

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

CM Minneapolis Has a New Home



On the blessed day of May 8, by Pujya Gurudev's grace and Pujya Guruji's blessings, CM Minneapolis acquired new property for its center, which serves the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota. The new ashram, named by Pujya Guruji as "*Chinmaya Ganapati*," will be inaugurated by him on July 13. A video tour and photos of the new property can be viewed at www.chinmaya-twincities.org/cmtc04.html.

The inauguration will be followed by a *Gita jnana yajna*, July 13-17. The trustees of CM Minneapolis solicit the blessings of all our Mission *acharyas* and devotees for the occasion.

CM Beaumont Welcomes Lord Balaji

CM Beaumont's recently purchased property has been named by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda as "*Chinmaya Shripati*." The presiding deity of the new ashram will be Lord Balaji and it will be inaugurated by Guruji in December.

Overseas Acharyas' Conference 2009

by Brahmachari Eric

At *Chinmaya Vibhooti*, in the small village of Kolwan, India, 12 *swamins*, 17 *brahmacharins*, and 12 *acharyas* gathered from Australia, Canada, France, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Trinidad, and the United States to meet at the feet of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda for five days, May 19-23, for the Mission's first Overseas *Acharyas'* Conference. *Chinmaya Vibhooti*, located a one-hour drive from Pune, is the Mission's new vision and resource center, situated in a valley silhouetted by steep-walled mountains, with exposed layers of

stratified rock and tree speckled irregular ridges. The wide valley is fruitful with agriculture, and threaded with a narrow river that meanders its way down to the coast.

The conference provided an opportunity for all the offshore *acharyas* to get to know each other personally, share information about their respective centers and regional activities, and participate in Vedantic study discussions together. Pujya Guruji conducted the conference in his flawless, easygoing, and forthright style, blending content and humor in a way that only he can do.

The conference covered a range of material, including organizational matters, workshops on Vedanta *vichara* (reflection), presentations by senior *acharyas* on how Gurudev's vision has grown on different continents, and invaluable lectures by Guruji on Vedantic principles. The workshops/study groups brought forth a wealth of information, showing the depth and range of Vedantic thinking, and Pujya Guruji's commentaries clarified the subtle aspects of these discussions. Each day ended with the viewing of episodes from *Upanishad Ganga*, Chinmaya Mission's new series made for television, one that continues Gurudev's tradition of bringing the values and culture of Hinduism to all of India and to Indians around the world.



Guruji indicated one item of exceptional importance during this conference. He presented the idea that the birth centenary of Pujya Gurudev, which will occur in 2015-2016, should be celebrated in a fashion that reflects the unparalleled eminence of Pujya Gurudev. With this in mind, from now onward, all of us are to keep thinking of the ways in which to best celebrate the centenary and help develop the plans to bring this about, both on local



Top Row to Bottom Row, Left to Right:

Row 1: Brni. Arpita (USA), Br. Eric (USA), Ach. Vivek Gupta (Canada), Sw. Prakashananda (Trinidad), Ach. Anant Sarma (USA), Sw. Sharanananda (USA), Ach. Vimal Chaitanya (USA), Ach. Parameswaran Mahadev (USA), Ach. G.V. Raghu (USA), Ach. P.B. Ghate (USA)

Row 2: Swni. Umananda (France), Sw. Dheerananda (USA), Sw. Shantananda (USA), Swni. Shivapriyananda (USA), Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda (Worldwide), Swni. Gangananda (India), Sw. Siddhananda (USA), Sw. Ishwarananda (USA), Sw. Abhedananda (South Africa), Swni. Amritananda (New Zealand)

Row 3: Brni. Sujata (Australia), Brni. Nivedita (Australia), Brni. Nishita (Hong Kong), Brni. Aparna (USA), Br. Bhasa (USA), Br. Uddhav (USA), Br. Gopal (Australia), Br. Darshan (Sri Lanka), Brni. Bhamati (USA), Ach. Shailaja Nadkarni (USA)

Row 4: Ach. Asha Ghate (USA), Ach. Uma Jeyarasasingham (USA), Ach. Geetha Raghu (USA), Br. Prabhat (Canada), Br. Adarsh (New Zealand), Br. Prabodh (USA), Br. Girish (USA), Br. Gautam (Australia), Br. Jagrat (Sri Lanka), Ach. Pramila Poudel (USA), Ach. Sharada Kumar (USA)

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].

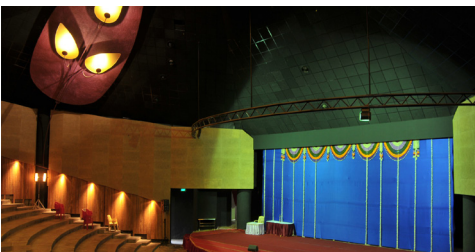
E-COURSE: US\$100; POSTAL COURSE: US\$175
VISIT WWW.CHINFO.ORG TO REGISTER
OR GET MORE DETAILS.

and worldwide levels.

Eagerly anticipated daily at the conference was the evening *satsanga* session, in which each *acharya* spoke for five to eight minutes on a quarter-verse from *Bhagavad Gita*. Each *acharya* selected a verse from a list provided months earlier by Guruji, and Guruji called on the *acharyas* at random. The verses were delivered in a wide range of presentation styles, from modern with contemporary comparisons, to thought-provoking and concept-laden, to simple with illustrations, and some sprinkled with a constant supply of unexpected humor. Although the Vedantic values in the *Gita* have been taught for thousands of years, the examples the *acharyas* used were as diverse as the continents from which they traveled, while the underlying principles remained unchanged as the day they were written.

Undoubtedly, the major highlight of the week was our visit to the “*Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan*,” the multimedia exhibition dedicated to Pujya Gurudev—his life, work and teachings. The tour began with a recorded chant of Gurudev’s 108 names, presented in a darkened room with many tiny lights that come to focus attention on Gurudev in a beautiful and unique way. From here, each one of us moved silently for the next couple of hours through the rest of the exhibition, viewing pictures, writings, drawings, and paintings on Gurudev’s life and work. This movement is reminiscent of a quote by Balakrishna Menon in 1948 on a travelogue photo, in which he wrote, “Each with his thoughts, the pilgrims marched on.”

Among the displays, everyone comes to meet Gurudev anew. Living and breathing, Gurudev infuses new enthusiasm and resolve to all who have chosen to dedicate their life to his values and vision. There are endless archives of essays, quotes, pictures, videos, and audio recordings accessible at a handful of computer kiosks, where one could easily spend an hour or so before remembering to move on. Some displays are so beautiful and moving that words cannot do them justice, so you must come and see them, nay, experience them, for yourself.



The last display of the museum mirrors the first display with Gurudev’s 108 names. But here, the names are painted in Sanskrit around the edges of a room-sized marble *dipa*, encircling a large multi-flame lotus in front of an artistic image of Gurudev.



All too soon, five days passed by, and the conference came to a close with a *paduka puja* to Gurudev. After lunch there were many *pranams* to Pujya Guruji, with his wishes and blessings to the *acharyas* before the group parted company into different vehicles and vanished down the narrow roads to points around the globe.

Chinmaya Naada Bindu Opens

Chinmaya Naada Bindu, Chinmaya Mission’s residential school for classical Indian music and dance will be inaugurated on September 13, 2009 by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, in the august presence of various renowned music and dance artists. The chief guest of honor will be *Padma Vibhushan* Pandit Jasraj. Notable offerings as part of the inaugural ceremonies will include a dance performance by Ramaa and Shweta Bharadwaj, and a vocal performance by Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar.

CM Houston’s Gala Celebrations of Shri Chinmaya Jayanti

by Uma Aggarwal and Radhika Nair;

photographs by Nilesh Shah

From Houston to Hastinapur, the spirited devotees of Chinmaya Mission Houston (CMH) came together in a confluence of fun, food, and faith to celebrate Pujya Gurudev’s birth anniversary at its *Chinmaya Prabha* ashram, May 9-10. With the blowing of a conch, a celestial parade that was resplendent with forms of gods, goddesses, and demons, along with devotees in folk dresses and children singing and playing instruments, burst onto the ashram grounds carrying a palanquin



with Pujya Gurudev's image. They walked past thousands of cheering people who showered them with flower petals. Shortly after the opening prayers, the game and food stalls opened, the rides started to spin, and the toy train beckoned passengers to board. Make-believe street vendors from remote Indian villages weaved through the crowds with loaded carts carrying assortments of bangles, *bindis*, and toys for anyone to pick up.

Pivotal to this funfair was the purpose behind it. Swami Chinmayananda's love for children, and his tireless dedication to ensure that they are loved and nurtured, propelled Acharya Darshana Nanavaty and her team to leave no stone unturned in creating a fun-filled birthday celebration for all the children.

Within the *Chinmaya Prabha* building, over 700 posters made by children and adults lined the walls of the corridors. A few months ago, Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty had asked each devotee to create a poster that portrayed what inspired him most about Chinmaya Mission. The result was an outpouring of love, art, poetry, gratitude, philosophy, and teachings. A feast for the mind and soul, each poster was a meaningful and loving birthday gift to each devotee's beloved Gurudev.

Outside on the ashram grounds, a plethora of delights awaited children and adults. The most popular game was "Knock Out the Evil," where players knocked down boxes representing bad habits, and in return, a water balloon was thrown at the player! A 20-foot tall Ravana was the target of paper balls inscribed with bad habits that each person wanted to discard. After tossing his bad habit, a young boy loudly exclaimed that he would never get into trouble again because he was done

being naughty! Several hula-hoops labeled with good qualities made up a 15-foot tall Hanumanji. This enormous toss-the-ball game was a "mega hit" among the sporty. Many creative minds preferred the game where they pieced together a temple, installed the idol, and said a prayer.

Henna artists, palm readers, handpicked music, boiled peanuts, spicy *pakor*s, cotton candy, and fluffy popcorn were included in this *desi mela*, the sights, sounds, and smells of which delighted the senses. A sumptuous meal with mouthwatering delicacies from various regions of India brought the event to its conclusion.

It was indeed a moving and heartwarming sight to behold almost 2,000 pairs of hands firmly connected to each other as everyone chanted the Chinmaya Mission Pledge: "We stand as one family . . . giving more than what we take . . ." After the *arati*, Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty reminded all of the significance of the blessed day and its celebrations.

On May 8, CMH had held its annual *Gita* Chanting Competition. This year, the children had to recite and explain the meaning of several verses from chapter 7. Participation among all ages, including toddlers, was excellent, with over 70 registrants. The number of chanting toddlers has been rising steadily each year, and the insight and understanding of the older ones has been getting more impressive. Some kindergartners were heard chanting verses 1-10 and then again in reverse order! One three-year old cutie even came up a knock-knock joke: "Knock, Knock. Who's there? Bug. Bug who? *Bugavan uvacha*."

Volunteers for the two-day celebration worked tirelessly for months prior to the event. On the day of the funfair, people came in droves at early hours of the morning and stayed on well into the evening until the last decoration was put away. One of the ride vendors commented in amazement, "I have been to countless churches and functions, but I have never seen so many volunteers work with such enthusiasm." One could say that this is what happens when a heart has been touched by a great saint.

Pujya Gurudev's tireless endeavors to make spiritual knowledge available to anyone who seeks it continue to bear fruits that are reaped by millions the world over. With his grace, The Chinmaya Mission Houston family hopes to keep

his work alive for generations to come.

CM Vancouver's First Bala Vihar Camp



CM Vancouver's first-ever Bala Vihar day camp was conducted by Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara Falls) on "Lord Dattatreya's 24 Gurus," April 11-13. Vivekji inspired all the campers and organizers as the camp acharya. The 26 campers, divided into three groups, enjoyed numerous theme-related activities that included projects, puzzles, and games, as well as the snacks, lunches, and t-shirts that had been provided generously by local community members.

Acharya Vivekji was adored and admired by all of the campers as well as teachers. His friendly and affectionate disposition made each individual feel special and unique. He led group activities such as yoga *asanas*, laughing yoga, walks in *maunam*, public speaking, riddles, treasure hunts, and the game, "*Kaun Banegaa Guruj?*" It was a wonderful experience for all and CM Vancouver hopes to conduct such camps with Acharya Vivekji on an annual basis.

Balafest! at CM Columbus

by Priya Arun



All the laughing, roaring, cheering, and applauding made the *Chinmaya Archana* ashram reverberate like a cricket stadium on April 5! "*Balafest!*" had come to town—a phenomenal, jaw dropping, nail biting, mind blowing, exhilarating family game show on one of India's greatest scriptural epics,

Ramayana. Never before had the community in Columbus experienced anything like this. Under the guidance of Brahmacharini Aparna Chaitanya, a team of *sevaks* worked tirelessly for this event, which marked a glorious celebration of *Shri Rama Navami* and *Shri Hanuman Jayanti*.

From little ones to grown-ups, everyone was exuberant and thrilled to be a part of the show. With rounds like *Jaldi! Jaldi!* (a rapid-fire round) and *Agni Pariksha* (a face-off round), Aparnaji kept all the players on their toes and all the spectators on the edge of their seats right up to the end. The hall resounded with *Rama nama* as everyone hailed before and after rounds, "*Jaya Shri Rama! Jaya Hanuman!*" The chanting awoke love for the Lord in the hearts of kids and adults alike, throughout the day.

Balafest! was much more than a game show. It was a joyous celebration of our beloved Shri Rama and of our glorious Hindu culture. With fun, love, laughter, and teamwork, all the participants and *sevaks* were indeed blessed to bask in the never-ending glories of the Lord.

One beaming adult participant said, "*Balafest!* brought me to read *Bala Ramayana* for the first time. I never knew how beautiful it is—I have no words to describe what I felt as I read through it every day. The greatest blessing was growing more and more in love with Lord Ramachandraji and all the great devotees in the *Ramayana*."

Another adult participant said, "*Balafest!* is the best program I have ever attended. I had lots of fun. I want to be part of more such good experiences all my life and I pray that God will give me many such opportunities."

Prior to *Balafest!* came another new event for CM Columbus: the Lock-in. It was a magical night at *Chinmaya Archana* on March 27, as a small group of kids, 7-12 years old, gathered for a one-night ashram sleepover from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. It was a night of sweet surprises that they shared with Brahmacharini Aparna Chaitanya and two "*Didi*" *sevaks*.

The kids had not the slightest idea of what awaited them—from the pizza party, to the ice cream party, to the pajama party, to the dance party. They made their own sundaes; watched an artistic, educating, and enchanting children's movie (Hindi); played games into late night, got story time with Aparnaji, and sang and danced

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

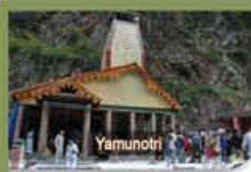
e-mail: camp@chinmaya-chicago.org

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

their hearts out with their *Didis*.

The Lock-in lived true to its publicized slogan as “the most fun sleepover ever!” The kids had a great time with Aparnaji, watching, listening and learning together. She told them stories, played games with them, fed them, and tucked them in. All the children had a gala time, and when it was morning, none of them wanted to leave.

CM Columbus is grateful to Aparnaji for her innovative ideas and hard work in conducting events that make spiritual learning so much fun for kids and adults alike.



Mother's Day Extraordinaire in San Diego

by Venu Babla

Chinmaya Mission San Diego (CMSD) celebrated Mother's Day with a thought-provoking and touching play, “*Jaganmata Janakasuta*” (Universal Mother Sita), that was beautifully crafted on multiple levels.

Written and directed by Lakshmi Sukumar, the play's poignant vignettes focused on Mother Sita as portrayed by sage Valmiki in each of the different *kandas* of the *Ramayana*.

Although enacted on a simple set, the production was soaked with lofty content on the duties of a wife and mother as demonstrated by Mother Sita. The narration unfolded the various themes of the story, and the chanting of *shlokas* created an ambiance that transported the audience to the time of the *Ramayana*.

For the children, the play contained the classic epic essentials: the good guys (Rama and Lakshmana), the bad guys (Ravana and the *rakshasas*), the loving

mothers (Sita, Kausalya, Anasuya), magic, music, chanting, and dance. There was even a live bird that inadvertently flew onto the stage and landed perfectly on the tree in Ashoka *vatika*.

For the adults, Mother Sita's various roles, values, and emotional states were artfully demonstrated. As a strong and dutiful wife, she was firm in her request to the Lord to allow her to join Him in the forest. Mother Anasuya's wisdom on the selfless roles of a wife was attentively imbibed. Mother Sita's separation from her Lord showed the importance of being ever vigilant. During her captivity, she stood steadfastly faithful and bold in showing Ravana the correct path. When she was with Hanumanji, her role as a mother unfolded. The fire test and her final departure signified the true essence of Mother Sita's love, purity, strength, and faith.

In appreciation, one CMSD member wrote, “What was dearest to me was the rendition of the *Ramayana* verses; it was truly soulful and moving. It is after joining CMSD that we have been able to increase our appreciation of the significance of [such] events, rituals, and scriptures.”

The uplifting performances, embedded with reverence for Mother, were appreciated by all. The finale was a sumptuous feast arranged and served lovingly by the fathers.

CM Princeton's Memorial Weekend Camp

Report submitted by CM Princeton

CM Princeton's 2009 annual retreat was held at Camp Lindenmere in the Poconos, and *Isvara Darshan* was our aspiration. Although we missed our resident *acharya* Swami Shantanandaji's physical presence there, we truly felt his spirit with us, helping us execute and experience a rewarding and enjoyable weekend. Approximately 40 families attended the camp and many volunteered to make it an overall fantastic experience.

The campground, nestled in the mountains, away from the hustle and bustle of the cities, was the ideal location for a spiritual retreat. Our mornings started with Vedic chanting, followed by meditation and then yoga led by one of our senior *sevaks*. It was the perfect start to the day, preparing the mind to receive the spiritual teachings that followed.

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

A highlight of the camp this year was the celebration of Lord Shiva and Mother Parvati's marriage. Devotees put in great effort with all the decorations, from flowers to props to Mount Kailasa. All the attendees came dressed in colorful saris, *lehngas*, and/or *kurtas*, and reveled in the festive atmosphere.

A few sevaks researched the significance of a typical Hindu wedding ceremony and explained each of the 18 steps. Commencing with the *Ganapati puja*, a priest performed the wedding for Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Lord Vishnu was given the place of Goddess Parvati's father and He "gave away the bride." Some important steps included *yajnopavita-dharanam*, *raksha-bandhanam*, *kanya-danam*, *mangalya-danam*, and *sapta-pati*. Also explained were aspects of Lord Shiva's unique wedding ceremony.

The children learned about Swami Tapovan Maharaj and stories of Lord Shiva and Mother Parvati. The weekend culminated with their skit performances, for which the children and the Bala Vihar teachers did a wonderful job. From the preschoolers' presentation of the churning of the milky ocean, to the elementary students' wonderful depiction of Rishi Markandeya's story, clearly everyone had learned a lot during the course of the weekend.



The camp volunteers and kitchen staff well provided healthy and delicious meals throughout the weekend, for all age groups. The camp also offered everyone an opportunity to indulge in some fun physical activities in the afternoon. The weather cooperated beautifully throughout the weekend. Many enjoyed paddle boating in the lake, while adventurous kids tried rowing and kayaking as well. Also included was the zip line, rock climbing, a challenge course for rope walking, swimming, basketball, tennis, and mini-golf, volleyball, and cricket. At night, everyone relaxed by the campfire and played *antakshari*.

The three days passed in a flash, filled with pleasant memories for all. Everyone left with an eagerness to return next year, hopefully having grown in devotion and having applied the teachings of Swami Tapovan Maharaj.

When Science Meets Spirit

by Surendra Dara

Spirituality, it seems, is deeply entwined with the scientific universe. Even though technology and scientific thought overwhelm every aspect of our modern experience, we should not feel overwhelmed or disconnected from a spiritual purpose in life.

To help provide a deeper understanding of life, CM Bakersfield and the Bakersfield Memorial Hospital (BMH) collaborated for the fifth year in presenting the annual series of talks that focus on the connection between science and spirituality.

When professionals renowned in their fields—a physicist, a physician, and a technocrat-turned-spiritual guru—explained their approaches to life on May 2, 2009, the profound connection started to make sense.

In his welcoming remarks to the packed audience, the president of CM Bakersfield, Anil Mehta, spoke about the importance of treating the mind, the body, and the soul as a whole. Ravi Patel, founder of the Comprehensive Blood and Cancer Center, introduced the three main speakers: John Hagelin, Robert Schneider, and Swami Ishwarananda (CM Tustin).

Hagelin is a quantum physicist and the director of the Institute of Science, Technology, and Public Policy in Fairfield, Iowa. Hagelin discussed his scientific approach to life, explaining the different

levels of the universe and its foundation—the unified field—where all forces of the universe unify. “It is the pure consciousness of all the laws of nature,” said Hagelin. “It is a dynamic field of intelligence. A self-directing one,” he added. Changing tones, he emphasized that the goal of transcendental meditation (TM) is allowing the conscious mind to unite with the unified field. (TM is a state where mind stops thinking and is in complete rest, thereby functioning at a higher efficiency.) He also stated that, according to several scientific studies, TM has the opposite effect of aging.

Robert Schneider is a physician as well as the dean of the college of Maharishi Consciousness Based Health Care at the Maharishi University of Management. He opened his talk with the statement that most of the societies in the world have been using ancient systems of health care, making modern medicine almost an alternative form of medicine. He stressed the importance of integrating modern medical science with ancient science for a more comprehensive health care approach. Schneider, who has received more than \$20 million in federal grants for conducting research on TM and consciousness-based health care, explained that psychosocial stress is a major risk factor for many illnesses.

Both Hagelin and Schneider presented the results of scientific studies where TM had a significant positive effect on illnesses ranging from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to arthritis. In one study, meditation helped students to discontinue the use of their ADHD medications. In another study, after three months of TM for 20 minutes per day, the electroencephalography (EEG) of a subject showed improved communication among different parts of the brain. Individuals practicing TM were shown to live longer, have a higher IQ, recover from smoking addiction more easily, and have reduced atherosclerosis and mortality from cancer. Even the rate of going back to prison among ex-convicts was reduced significantly after practicing TM.

Swami Ishwarananda, who has authored several books on spirituality, started his talk with a prayer for the well-being of the whole world. He then discussed that life is full of experiences, and that instead of focusing on objective facts alone, people need to focus on the subjective part of themselves, the part that encounters experiences. He compared life to a game, saying, “Just like we

do not enjoy a game when we do not know its rules, life is not enjoyable when we do not know its rules.”

Swamiji spoke on self-control, pure intention, faith, and inner freedom as the rules in each of these four ashrams of growth, action, maturity, and solitude, respectively. Punctuated with his usual wit and wisdom, his talks refreshed as well as stimulated the audience.

Following the lectures, the audience asked the speakers several questions in a session moderated by CSUB professor, Stafford Betty. Subject matters included meditation, yoga, death, dark matter, and dark energy. Overall, audience members felt that the talks were useful and thought-provoking.

CM New York's New Web Site

CM New York is pleased to announce the release of its new official web site, which features information on local Mission events, Bala Vihar and CHYK classes, Study Groups, and other resources. Under the guidance of resident Acharya Krishna Moorthy, there are various exciting developments and announcements. Visit www.chinmayamission.org/newyork.

CM Tampa: Paving Brighter Days

by Ira Lalwani

CM Tampa is a small community with common demographical sensitivities. Among our members there is a healthy sprinkling of children and their parents from all across India. About 60 registered children is our Bala Vihar strength. We also have five vibrant study groups plus a challenging youth class. What we have noticed in the new parent pool is their great love for the work of the Mission and willingness to participate and volunteer their time in all our activities. Their smiling faces, kind hearts, and eager hands are a great strength in our pursuit of excellence.

This past year, we celebrated Divali with Swami Shantananda (CM Princeton). Many of our children focused on service by spending several Saturday afternoons working at local community centers. Our annual picnic was well attended and used as an informal venue for a parent-teacher meeting, which resulted in valuable suggestions



Celebrating Shri Guru Purnima

*With humble prayers and deep gratitude
to Bhagavan Shri Veda Vyasa for His countless blessings*

and expressions of gratitude.

During the year, we invited Swami Chidatmananda (CM Hyderabad) and Swami Shantananda for week-long *jnana yajnas*. The Study Group members also enjoyed the monthly talks on *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* by Acharya Shailaja Nadkarni (CM Orlando). Some of our Study Group *sevak*s were also invited to talk on Vedanta in churches and local senior citizens' groups. CORD was also presented at the University of South Florida through a Powerpoint presentation and video.

The coming school year looks more promising, as we will resume classes at our center, introducing new language, art, meditation, and academic training classes—and hopefully, cricket.

CM Tampa hopes to continue Gurudev's work envisioning quality over quantity, striving hard to pave brighter days of self-unfoldment.



In Memoriam

by AppaRao Mukkamala

CM Flint offers heartfelt love to Dr. Rukmini Gali, a long-time Mission devotee who passed away on February 21 in Rochester, Minnesota. Both she and her husband, Dr. Gali Subbareddy, have been ardent devotees of Pujya Gurudev. Rukmini was in the forefront of Mission activities since 1976 and remained an active member of CM Flint, conducting Bala Vihar and Devi Group classes. She is also remembered for the beautiful bhajans she sang at various festivals and for her sincerity and her ready leadership in serving at the local soup kitchen.

Despite her health problems in the past few

years, Rukmini did not slow down in her Mission activities and always remained at the vanguard. Her spiritual learnings were evident in the way she handled everything in her life. She lived her life fearlessly, and even in the last few weeks of her life, remained strong and disciplined. She comforted her family and friends when they were emotional about the inevitable, saying that she knew she was moving higher to be with her beloved Gurudev.

Rukmini will be missed by the entire CM Flint family. We offer prayers of strength for her family. May the Lord grant her Peace.

**Mark your calendars to celebrate Winter Break
with Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda at the
Chinmaya Family Camp in Dallas, Texas,
December 24-30, 2009!**

Chinmaya Family Camp 2009

Conducted by:

**His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda,
Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide**

Hosted by:

Chinmaya Mission Dallas Fort-Worth

**Texts: Kaivalya Upanishad and
Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 17 (The Yoga of Three-fold Faith)**

**Visit our website to get details:
www.chinmayamission.org/dallas**